

# BMI

FALL 1993

# MUSICWORLD



**CLINT BLACK**

## **BMI COUNTRY AWARDS**

**SONG OF THE YEAR**  
"Achy Breaky Heart"  
By Don Von Tress

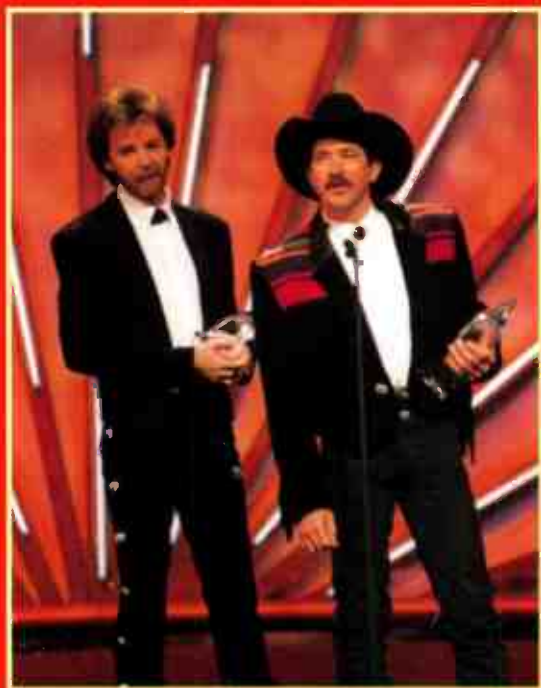
Published by  
Millhouse Music

**SONGWRITER OF THE YEAR**  
Tom Shapiro

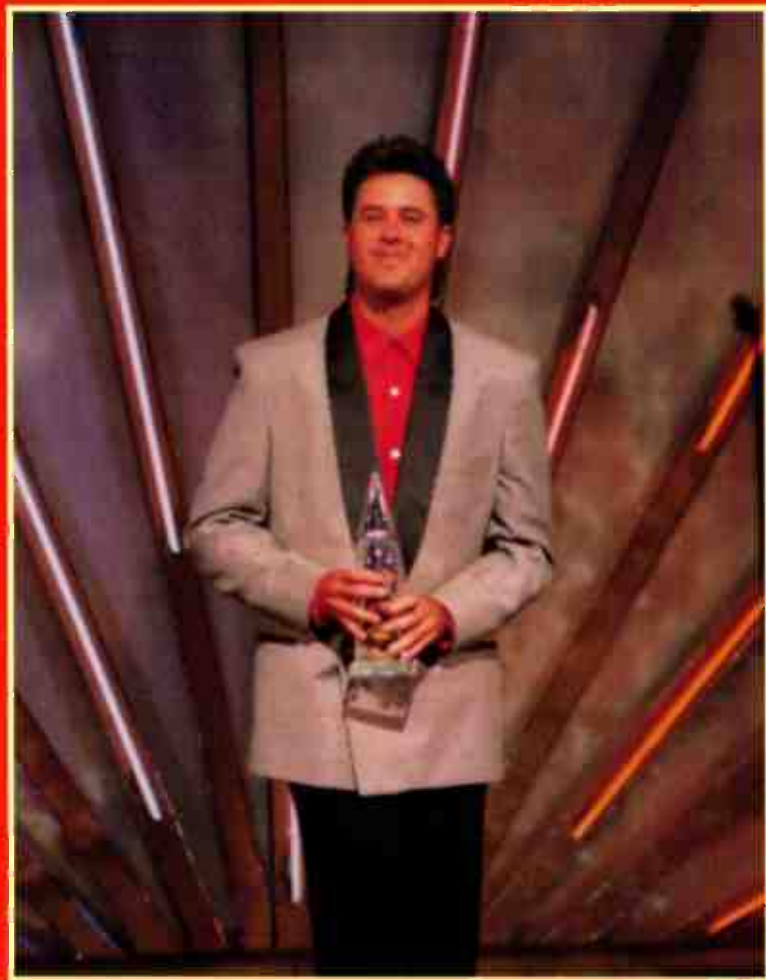
**PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR**  
Sony Tree

# BMI

# WRITERS SWEEP



**BROOKS & DUNN**  
Vocal Duo Of The Year



**VINCE GILL**  
Entertainer Of The Year  
Song Of The Year  
Album Of The Year  
Male Vocalist Of The Year  
Vocal Event Of The Year



**DIAMOND RIO**  
Vocal Group Of The Year

**"IT'S A GREAT TIME TO BE COUNTRY"**

# THE CMA AWARDS

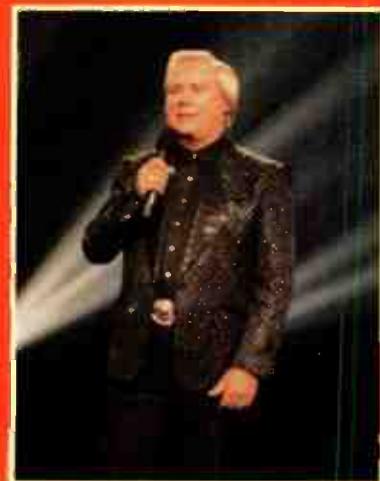


**WILLIE NELSON**  
Hall of Fame

**MARK  
O'CONNOR**  
Musician Of The Year

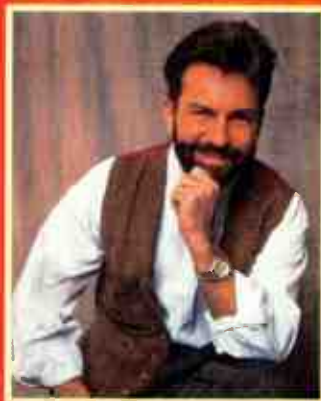


**GEORGE  
JONES**  
Vocal Event  
Of The Year  
with  
**Vince Gill**  
**Mark Chesnutt**  
**Travis Tritt**  
**Joe Diffie**  
**Pam Tillis**  
**T. Graham Brown**  
**Patty Loveless**  
**Clint Black**

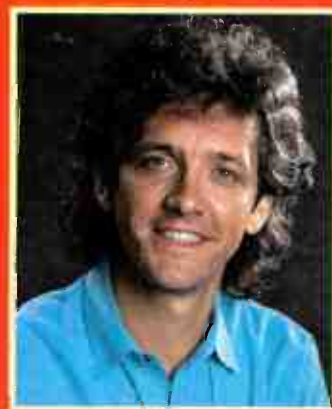


**MARK  
CHESNUTT**  
Horizon Award  
Vocal Event Of The Year

**TONY BROWN**  
Producer  
Album Of The Year



**KEITH  
STEGALL**  
Producer  
Single Of The Year



**AND A GREAT TIME TO BE BMI\*\***

\* Thanks To Tony Hasbun For The Quote.



## A Great Time To Be Country — And BMI

Country music continues to redefine itself and transcend musical boundaries, demonstrating incredible growth and influence in today's marketplace.

Country music is evident everywhere we look: We see its musical champions on broadcast and cable television both in the U.S. and abroad, on the front pages of newspapers and magazines, and in clubs and concert halls previously reserved for the superstars of pop and rock.

The pride the creators of country music take in their craft was never more evident than during the recent Country Music Week celebration in Nashville, as songwriters, publishers and recording artists were all eager participants in the week's events.

Our congratulations to all the winners of this year's BMI Country Awards, including Robert J. Burton Award winner Don Von Tress, writer of Country Song of the Year, "Achy Breaky Heart," and

its publisher, Millhouse Music; to Tom Shapiro, our Country Songwriter of the Year; to Sony Tree, our Country Publisher of the Year; to Harlan Howard, who took home BMI's first President's Award, recognizing his legendary contributions to country music; and to Acuff-Rose Music, Inc., who received a special salute on their 50th anniversary.

We would also like to congratulate BMI's CMA Award winners, including Vince Gill, who walked away with the honors in no less than five categories, Brooks & Dunn, Diamond Rio, Mark Chesnutt, George Jones, Mark O'Connor, Keith Stegall and Tony Brown. Our special congratulations go to Willie Nelson, who was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame (see story, page 14).

As Don Von Tress said when receiving the Robert J. Burton Award (quoting fellow BMI songwriter Tony Haselden), "It's a great time to be country, and a great time to be BMI!"



Frances W. Preston



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CMA Awards  
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## A MUSICWORLD ROUNDTABLE:

# PRODUCERS REFLECT ON COUNTRY'S SUCCESS



By Beverly Keel

**C**ountry music's growing popularity has brought greater financial rewards and creative recognition to its top producers; it has, however, also brought more competition into a field that was once considered to be like a family.

With its "Hee Haw" stereotypes now a thing of the past, country has become a more diverse genre, accounting for 15 percent of the \$4.8 billion in music sales last year, up from 12 percent in 1991, according to the National Association of Recording Merchandisers.

Country is continuing to break records that it only recently set. Garth Brooks was the top selling artist of all music categories last year, and has sold a total of more than 30 million albums. Billy Ray Cyrus broke records set by the pop community when his debut album sold more than 9 million copies last year. There are more country radio stations than any other format, and the country music industry earned more than \$3 billion last year, of which more than \$1 billion was in record sales.

A glance at the charts reveals that a few producers are behind many of the artists who consistently earn No. 1 hits. Many are in the spotlight more now than in the past, as the Nashville divisions of record companies are carrying a heavier load than they did five years ago.

*MusicWorld* recently assembled a panel of five of these top country producers — Tony Brown, Don

Cook, Allen Reynolds, James Stroud and Mark Wright — who discussed their thoughts on country music's new-found success and how it affects what they do.

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*Has the boom in country music changed your job at all?*

**Tony Brown:** No, it just changed my life. The amount of records being sold basically makes a difference if you're a producer. I'll just keep it at that. It hasn't changed my job. It makes you be more on your toes because when it's rolling like it is, if you were aware before, you have to be more aware to stay on top of things, because for the first time in Nashville's history, there's not two or three guys happening as producers in town. There are about 10 guys happening, so the competition is not just between artists and labels anymore; there's a lot of competition between producers, which is good because I like competition.

**Don Cook:** I don't think so because I think my job started before the boom in country music was evident. Other than having budgets and making records in a more efficient capacity, I'm not really doing anything differently than I did 10 years ago.

**Allen Reynolds:** I don't think so.

**James Stroud:** Yes, to the better. It's much larger now and it's much broader creatively. You have a lot more potential from record buyers and from the country fans. Our music is now the pop music. It's the most popular music in the United States. We have the advantage of reaching more people than we did years ago. Record sales are higher and our artists are more media-oriented now and so we're enjoying

the best time in country music's history. **Mark Wright:** I get more calls as a producer because there is more talent to be produced. I've gotten a little busier than I like to be because I like to take a lot of time on a record, and a lot of times you can't do it because of the artist's schedule.

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*What horizons do you see country music conquering next?*

**Cook:** I think it's really exciting that country music seems to have a much greater appeal to young people than it did when I first started. I think country has always had some young fans, but it seems to me like the demographic is shifting over to a younger audience in general. It allows us to almost do two completely different approaches to country. There's the real traditional approach that's pretty much like we've always done, but there's a young market that almost in part crosses over into the rock & roll market, which is real fun to work with.

**Reynolds:** I just don't think that way. I hope we can keep the music and beyond that, I have no predictions.

**Stroud:** I think for us it's going to be around a long time, the way things are right now. Our music offers something to the public that they're not getting from any other types of music. You're still getting the great lyrics, the great chord structure and melodies, and you're also getting more talented artists. Probably the next step for us in country music is to pick up more and more audience.

**Wright:** I feel like country music is headed to reaching more kids than ever before. I mean, my kids used to make fun of it and now they're loving



**Tony Brown, president of MCA Nashville, is the name most closely associated with the country boom. A former piano player for Elvis Presley, Brown produces or co-produces Vince Gill, Wynonna, Marty Stuart, Kelly Willis, Joe Ely, George Strait, Reba McEntire, and McBride and the Ride. He is credited with making MCA the top country label, with sales around \$130 million last year.**

it. The younger the artist, the younger the appeal.

**Brown:** Europe. What we've done in the United States and Canada has already exceeded our real expectations. We've always said we would do this and now we've done it. The thing now is to keep doing it as well as we've got it right now, because this is a pretty big boom we're in. But for the first time, because of CMT going overseas, we've got a shot at letting Europe know that there are more country artists in America than Johnny Cash, Hank Williams Sr. and Dolly Parton.

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*Are there any limitations?*

**Reynolds:** I don't think there should be, not if the music is really good. When it's really good, it's as good as any kind of music.

**Stroud:** Yes, there are limitations to every kind of music. We have a type of music that has parameters, but that's okay, too. We stretch it as far as we can and then we have to remember the roots of country music and we have to keep that in our minds.

**Wright:** I don't want country to leave being country. The limitations we have are making sure that we don't quit being country. I think country songs are pretty clearly defined.

**Brown:** Yes, because I think country music as a genre is not going to ever be totally accepted. It's not an across-the-board, mass appeal kind of music like pop music is, because it's really a

more narrow art form, such as jazz and real r&b. I think really diluted versions of r&b, jazz and country, which end up being crossover, have mass appeal. Country music as we know it has limitations.

**Cook:** Sometimes I think there are limitations to country because I think parts of the business like to accuse you of getting out of the realm of "country music." When you have things like "Achy Breaky Heart" selling the kind of numbers that it generated, it seems like we don't have any limitations at all.

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*What would be the next level that country could reach?*

**Stroud:** Probably something internationally, our music being accepted worldwide.

**Wright:** We could have all 10 of the top-selling albums instead of just four.

**Brown:** The next level is to go worldwide. If you have a big pop record, a big CHR record, you're talking about it probably being number one around the world. When Janet Jackson, Michael Jackson or Michael Bolton have number one CHR records, you can open *Billboard* and look in the international charts and it's probably in the top 10 in every major country. The only country record I've see appear even close to the top of the charts around the world is ["Achy Breaky Heart"].

**Cook:** To me, the next level is just retaining the larger market share that we've gotten because of some of these

new acts. I don't think anybody has any particular thoughts of moving it to a higher level. I think we just all want to keep the new market share that we've gotten and find new ways of entertaining the new audience we've gotten.

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*Are there certain considerations your projects face that they didn't in the past?*

**Wright:** I think the consideration should always be the same: great singer, great song, great record, great promotion, great marketing. I think they've always been that way.

**Brown:** No, it's about the same. Where it used to be that gold was not obtained very easily and platinum was way out there, you almost have to cut a gold record anymore to be considered a contender. If you cut platinum, you're on your way, and if you go multi-platinum, then you're pretty much a superstar.

**Cook:** I think there's a lot more competition. In the beginning of every project, I like to talk to the people I've been working with about the fact that there is a greater sales potential than there ever was in this market, but there is also more competition. I hate to say there's no more room for error, but there's less room for experimentation than there used to be.

**Reynolds:** No. I'm a guy who works from basics, and the basics are the same whether you're experiencing unusual popularity or not. That is why I feel like the work that I do is the same that I've always done. It takes great songs, great performances.

**Stroud:** I think we're jumping through fewer hoops, or we're having to go through less to get more from our music. One of the reasons is because of the mass appeal. Country music is doing what it's always done, except it's doing it a lot better. It's a lot more intelligent. Our marketing strategies are more focused to the mass appeal now, compared to just a small group who liked country 25 years ago. We have a lot more freedom, not only creatively but financially. I know for me, when I named five artists [that I produced], four of them were platinum acts and one was a gold act. That was unheard of 10 years ago.

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*Do you feel pressure from the record company and/or the artist?*

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**Brown:** Never.

**Cook:** I just feel the same pressures that producers have always felt: the pressure to sell product. Each artist has a different kind of pressure. Some artists have the pressure of advancing age, some have the pressure of inexperience, some have the pressure of doing the kind of music that doesn't fit into the "country mainstream."

**Reynolds:** I don't feel too much because I believe I work for the artist. But these days there is a lot of market research going on, a good portion of which I regard as of dubious value, and I regard it as a dangerous influence because it's attempting to go out and ask people what they want. I think that's hard for them to answer, but I know what they want. They want their money's worth. They want a good show. From the artist, I don't ever feel any pressure. If I'm working with somebody, we're a team and we just push each other and try to inspire one another to do a good job.

**Stroud:** As far as the record companies' pressure, I would say you have to be able to handle the administrative side while you're dealing with the creative side — that's the toughest thing. You have to make sure your business is in line nowadays. You can't just make a record and turn it in. You have

to make sure you have relationships with publishers and writers in order to get that top-drawer song, so politics comes into play.

**Wright:** They have a certain spot that they're trying to hit, and you have to consider where they're coming from when you're making a record. I don't know if it would be considered pressure, but you have to pay attention to what they're trying to do when making a record. You just need to be in tune with your artist and what they're trying to accomplish. I don't like the term pressure myself. Most of the pressure is what I put on myself.

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*Now that country music is hotter, are record companies more vocal about what they want or how a record should sound?*

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**Cook:** I think record companies are more open than they ever have been to possibilities.

**Reynolds:** Some of the companies are a little more vocal about it. Radio wants to be more vocal about it, and a lot of them don't know what they're talking about.

**Stroud:** Yes. They're more involved with the creative process, they're more involved in pre-production. And the reason for that is they have more focused and in-depth marketing plans for each artist, so it takes more set-up time, thought, organization, manpower and finances. So therefore they're

going to pay more attention to what the record is going to sound like.

**Wright:** Some are and some aren't. For example, they might come to you and say, "There's a gap in the marketplace that is missing this particular sound. Let's think about taking this artist in that direction."

**Brown:** What's happening is that now that country music has gotten so big, we've entered the age of consultants, who have always been in pop music. They do play a&r. Without trying to appear that I'm a maverick, it drives me crazy that they're getting bolder and bolder about what they think the consumer wants to hear. They talk about how contemporary the music is getting, how much we can expand and how much we can't in a contemporary sense creatively, about what kind of records you can release at a certain time of the year. They dictate creatively how your record should be produced, what kind of artist you can sign and what kind of records they should release. A hit is not a hit anymore, except at certain times of the year, according to certain people.

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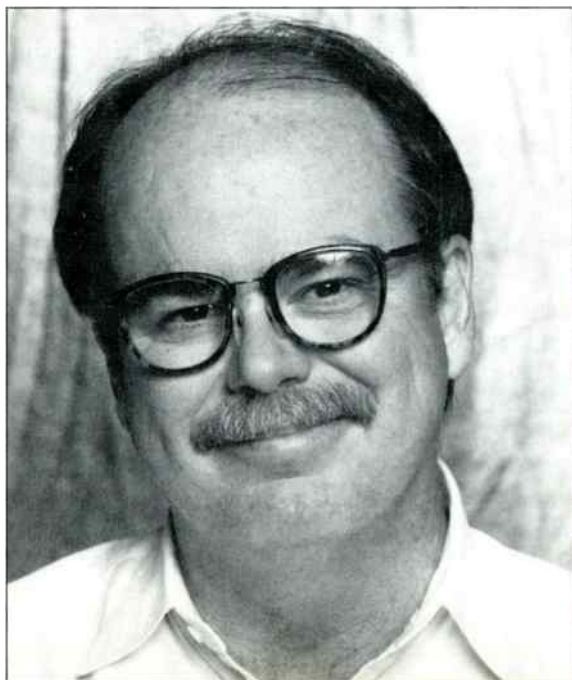
*Do you ever feel compromised or are you still comfortable with the entire process?*

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**Reynolds:** I don't do work that makes me feel compromised.

**Stroud:** The only thing I don't feel comfortable with is letting a political situation creep into the making of my records. It's very rare, but when it does happen, I think it hurts the quality of the records. What I mean by that is my philosophy as a producer is to let the artist do his or her record and not the producer's record and not the label's record. If the label wants to change this artist dramatically, they should get another artist.

**Wright:** I have felt compromised and I'm not comfortable with the feeling. You just find yourself trying to please, and there are a lot of people involved in the process now, from management and songwriters to artists and record companies. You start finding yourself in a position of trying to please everybody, and that is compromising, basically.



**Don Cook was a successful songwriter for Sony/Tree before he became equally as hot as a producer of Brooks & Dunn, The Mavericks, Shenandoah and Mark Collie. He still actively writes and is being hotly pursued by several labels for his a&r talents.**





**Allen Reynolds is one of the few survivors from country music's "Urban Cowboy" boom of the early '80s. He came to Nashville in 1970 as a songwriter and has produced Crystal Gayle, Garth Brooks, Hal Ketchum, Don Williams, and Kathy Mattea.**

**Brown:** The producer's role is to never feel that he has to compromise. But there is some sort of compromise that you always make unless just anything you put out will fly. There is a thing — we can call it being smart about listening to what the feedback is. I never ever let it lead me, I just let it be input. But country music as a music: let's face it, the trends do shift from really traditional to really contemporary. Right now, it's split about 50-50 for me.

**Cook:** I can't say that I feel compromised. I think the things that make people feel compromised are the constraints that reality puts on us. When I first started out in the business, I didn't think there should be any limitations at all, but now I've come to the conclusion that if we're going to keep doing this, we have to find a way of selling what we do, and that's a primary constraint on everybody.

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*When working on a project, do you just try to make the best record possible, or do you consider how it will be accepted by the public?*

**Stroud:** I make people records, I don't make artsy records. I think you're hurting the artist if you don't make a commercial record. I think that if a producer or label says they'd rather go for the art rather than the commercial appeal, they're going to screw up an artist's

career because this is a radio-driven format. I think nowadays to make the best record possible, it's going to be attractive to the public and the kind of record the public would like. They expect quality, and the competition in this town and this format for the producers is unbelievable. It's like no other time.

**Wright:** I want to make something that I love, and if I'm just copying something that the public is already accepting, I'm not going to love it.

**Brown:** You figure the quality of artist you're working with and you figure if you've had success because you're having hit records, you're sort of tapped into what radio wants and hopefully what the public wants. It's not like you think you know it all. Maybe you're either lucky or on a creative roll. The one thing you're constantly thinking about is you figure if you're in with Wynonna or Reba or George Strait or Vince, you're giving the public what they want because they seem to want those artists. What you think about is are you giving radio what it wants because radio is a tool that lets the public know that there's a new record out.

**Cook:** I think I try to do both.

**Reynolds:** I have great faith in the public, much greater faith than most marketing people. They have not let me down. Again and again, I have felt reassurance and uplift from the public reaction. It's

the people in the industry who tend to get too cute and too clever. Like I told you, I know what the public wants. They want a good show, they want their money's worth, they want something that touches them. And that's what I'm thinking of all the time. I feel very much like one of the public. I don't think they're some "them" out there, but I have heard many marketing people speak of them as a "them" or an "it," and don't seem to have a clue. I'm an entertainer as much as the guy who gets on stage. I think about entertaining people and what would entertain me.

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*Does radio acceptance play any part in the choice of songs or sound of the record?*

**Wright:** Yes it does. If you can't get it played, people can't hear it and they won't buy it. You wish you could just go do anything you wanted and radio would play it, but you can't.

**Brown:** Absolutely. And what you're always trying to do is play the radio game, at the same time trying to always keep your records on the leading edge. I think you sometimes cut records that are just so mainstream that sound like a hit that you don't worry about if it's leading edge or right down the middle. But I think that for the most part, when I cut records, I'm always trying to cut records for radio that are a little bit different, because if you're going to grow, you have to be a little bit different.

**Cook:** I think radio acceptance plays a large part in the choosing of a percentage of the material on an album. A certain percentage we really direct at the radio audience and a certain percentage is just an attempt to show the artistry of the artist. If those two overlap, then we've really got something valuable.

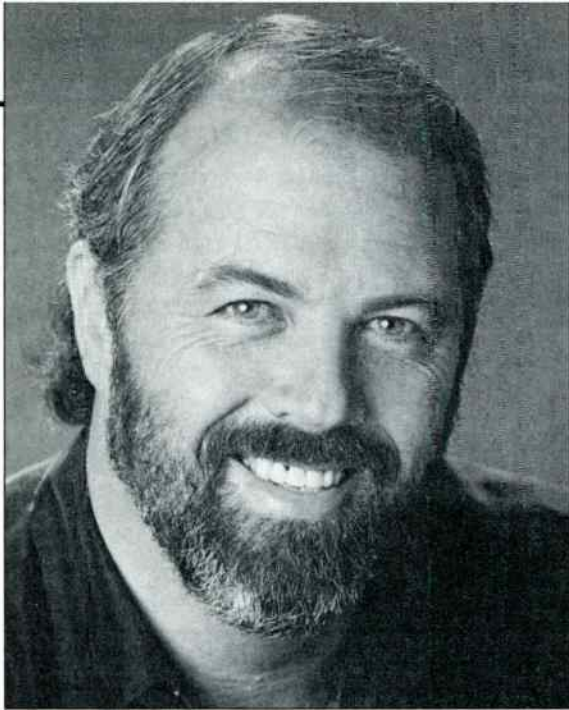
**Reynolds:** Radio acceptance plays a part in decisions about what's going to be a single, but not what's going to be on the album.

**Stroud:** Yes.

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*How do you feel about the extended dance mixes of songs that are being cut for country dance clubs?*

**Brown:** I've done two: one for



**James Stroud was a rock & roll session drummer, playing for Bob Seger and the Pointer Sisters, before moving to Nashville. Now the president of Giant Records' Nashville office, he produces Clint Black, John Anderson, Tracy Lawrence, Doug Stone, Little Texas, Clay Walker and Deborah Allen.**

Wynonna and one for Tracy Byrd. I don't necessarily like doing it, but it's a big part of our business now, those dance clubs. It's called "just do it."

**Cook:** I think it's just fun, period. We did one of the first ones with "Boot Scootin' Boogie." It's just fun. There's no hidden agenda.

**Reynolds:** I don't approve, to make a long story short.

**Stroud:** I think it's important because it expands our format. I don't think it's the most important thing. Radio is still the most important part of marketing our artists down here, but definitely we as a format are taking advantage of these dance mixes to enhance and expand our market.

**Wright:** Some need it, some don't. They don't all need it.

---

*Do you think the dance mixes are an opportunity to further the boundaries of country music or are they untrue to the country genre?*

**Cook:** A primary goal we all have is to entertain, and if it draws in a segment of audience we wouldn't have otherwise, then it's even better.

**Reynolds:** I think it's perhaps possible to do remixes occasionally that remain true to the record, but basically it's a phony deal and I don't think it expands country at all. I think it's a little more of a copycat move than anything. It's the very kind of thing that I saw ruin country or damage

country a lot during the *Urban Cowboy* era. I love records that make people want to dance. But I think when you've made the record, you've made the record and I don't believe in messing with it to make an elongated record for dance halls.

**Stroud:** I think it's a move to expand it because we're covering the bases that are out there. We're giving people what they want, and that's good quality music at every part of our format.

**Wright:** I think it's working. A lot of people are doing it and loving it.

**Brown:** It's staying true. There isn't any genre that is staying true to its art form anymore, or most of the ones that are really true — real jazz and real r&b and real country — don't sell very much. So I think what these dance mixes are doing is expanding the sales base and all it is is the commercialization of country music. It really has nothing to do with creativity at all. It has to do with marketing.

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*When you look for a song, what do you look for?*

**Reynolds:** I look for freshness and emotion, and I look for something that makes me feel something, whether it's sad or funny or romantic or whatever. I look for a melody that catches my ear. If the music doesn't catch my ear, I don't really care what the song says.

**Stroud:** I look for the quality of the

lyric first. I look for the groove and structure next.

**Wright:** Something that makes me feel something, as opposed to feeling nothing.

**Brown:** Used to be the word was it has to have a hook. In most people's eyes, the hook is the chorus. To me, the hook can be the chorus, the hook can be the mood of a song, the attitude or the intro. You can look for something that can hook you in about 20 seconds.

**Cook:** I look for something that will communicate, something that makes me want to listen to it again and again. I'm just like any fan, I just love songs that I love to hear.

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*Are there any sounds or themes that you stay away from?*

**Stroud:** It's according to the artist. I try to apply the music and the songs and the material that I find to every artist. Some artists may not want to sing a certain kind of lyric, but some may want to and can get away with it. It's not my record, it's the artist's record.

**Wright:** Sounds, no; themes, sure. A lot of different themes come up that I just don't care to have my name on and be a part of promoting. To be specific, I couldn't say. I've had cheating songs that I thought had a good message somewhere, and I've had drinking songs that I thought were humorous and fun. There are just certain songs that I don't care to get behind and promote.

**Brown:** As for sounds, I try to stay away from being too retro sounding, old timey sounding. If possible at the same time, I love pulling from old timey sounds as much as possible. I just try to stay away from being too retro or too schmaltzy. At any moment, I could lean toward either one, depending upon the artist. As for themes, I don't necessarily like songs about getting chemically out of your mind too much, but I've definitely cut songs dealing with that subject matter. I just don't like ones that condone it or promote it that much.

**Cook:** No.

**Reynolds:** No. The artist has a lot to do with what the themes are.

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*What are the most effective ways that publishers or writers can sell you on a song?*

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**Wright:** I like for publishers and writers to think about what the artist they're pitching for would say or could say or where that artist might be progressing to next. Think ahead a little bit. Don't necessarily play me what's always worked for an artist. Maybe play me what that artist might say or do next. Help us be inventive in the progression.

**Brown:** Just play it for me. I just have to like it and that's an intangible thing. I can like its simplicity or its complexity.

**Cook:** I just deal on a song-to-song basis. I either like it or I don't. I either have a use for it or I don't. If I'm not sure about it, I always try to run it by the artists.

**Reynolds:** Keep the intro as short as possible and just give me a tape.

**Stroud:** I think giving me good songs from good writers; my policy is that I listen to everything. A publisher knows me and knows not to give me 15 songs on a tape. If they give me three great songs that they feel good about, then I'll listen to them. Another thing that I tell publishers is, don't cast the song. Give me good songs and I'll cast the songs for my artists.

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*Do Nashville writers have an edge in getting songs cut?*

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**Brown:** Sure. It's just like they know what works. Let's face it, if you know what your competition is, you know how to compete. If L.A. is a movie town and New York is television and Broadway, Nashville is a publishers' and writers' haven. And so writers here study what's going on in country radio and they write for radio. I think most writers in New York and L.A. are either artists or just write songs. Most writers here are trained and signed to write for radio.

**Cook:** Sure I think they have an edge, the same way Los Angeles writers have an edge in Los Angeles. When you live and work in the marketplace that you're writing for, you tend to be attuned to what's going on a lot earlier than people who live outside the market. When we hear something that was conceived and produced and manufactured in Los Angeles, generally we hear it a year to a year-and-a-half after it was conceived, and it's the same way with country music.

**Reynolds:** I think they have an edge in the sense that they know who's coming up to record and they're here to nag their publishers. Some of the freshest and best songs I've run into come from writers who didn't live here. I don't think it's necessary to live here.

**Stroud:** Yes, because they're here. I see them on the street, I see them at functions. They are friends of mine. It's easy for them to just drop a tape in my hand and I'll listen to it on the way back from the golf course. I think that professional writers can apply their talents to any format, but Nashville writers are involved in the everyday business in Nashville and the people surrounding the format here.

**Wright:** Sure. We know them, we run into them, we dine with them. I actually cut a lot of songs from guys I know. I know them, I know where they're coming from. Rarely do I cut a song with a total stranger, but it does happen. A song stands on its own, but the access level is higher if you live in Nashville.

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*With country's success, there are more money-making acts than ever for producers to work with. Is it a temptation to work with as many acts as you can?*

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**Cook:** I guess it's a temptation, but I have a pretty clear idea of how much I can handle timewise. And because I'm a writer as well, I leave stretches of time open to do nothing but write.

**Reynolds:** I think there are physical limitations as to how many records you can produce and do well. It varies from producer to producer. I can't do a good job with more than a few artists. I've always tried to keep the load light to work with just a few who really satisfy me rather than mass produce.

**Stroud:** I have been on occasion accused of making too many records. The reason I do as many projects as I do is because of one reason: I love to make records.

**Wright:** No. I just don't want to be that busy. I'm still a songwriter and I like to have time to write.

**Brown:** It was a temptation for me. Now the reality is you have to be very careful with how many acts you work with. That's the reason I've sort of co-produced with the artists on some records and other producers on some records. I just try not to extend myself and be aware that there is only so far you can stretch yourself.

*Beverly Keel is a business writer for the Nashville Banner.*



**Although he's only 35, Mark Wright already has a decade of producing experience, which has included Clint Black, Mark Chesnutt, Shawn Camp and Andy Childs. He still writes frequently and has hits on the charts by several artists.**

# Clint Black

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by **Bob Millard**

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At Country's  
Leading Edge



Country music superstar Clint Black, a singer and songwriter, wants his music to be a complete statement about himself as an artist.

"It's not so much that I insist on recording my own songs," he says. "It's more like I have all these jobs to do: I'm a recording artist, I'm a performer, I'm a songwriter. It just makes sense to me. When you put on my records, I want you to hear what I have created."

As writer or co-writer of every song on each of his four platinum and multi-platinum RCA albums, Black has proved his many facets are a fast-rolling snowball of synergy. Beginning with his 1989 debut album, *Killin' Time*, Black has scored 10 number one singles, including "A Better Man," "Killin' Time," "Nobody's Home," "Walking Away," "Nothing's News," "Loving Blind," "Where Are You Now," "We Tell Ourselves," "Burn One Down," "When My Ship Comes In." His top five singles include "Put Yourself In My Shoes," "One More Payment" and "A Bad Goodbye," his duet with Wynonna Judd.

Winning the Country Music Association's Horizon Award in 1989 and Male Vocalist kudos in 1990, Black represented the leading edge of a new generation of country artists who bring their '60s and '70s musical sensibilities to the traditional honky-tonk musical lexicon. The Nashville Songwriters Association International recognized Black's wearing of both artist and writer hats by giving him the organization's first Songwriter/Artist of the Year award.

Artists who are writers sometimes find the crush of touring, recording, etc. muzzles their muse just when they need strong follow-ups most. This has not been the case with Black, for two reasons. First, his collaborator, long-time pal and lead gui-

tarist Hayden Nicholas, is on the road with him. The two men have developed a telepathic intimacy, an almost psychic ability to read each other's minds that helps when two weeks is all the time that can be carved out to finish songs prior to recording sessions, as was the case early this year for Black's latest album, *No Time To Kill*.

Black's other ace in the hole is foresight. After years of playing clubs

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"I always try to imagine myself in the situation I'm writing about: to be strong but vulnerable, and capable of being hurt, but not of being crushed."

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around Houston, Texas, Black approached his recording career with a savvy prescience that he might not have time later to write the tunes he would need. Before the high-pressure demands of stardom descended upon him, he stockpiled songs.

"I got myself into a mindset back in '88 when I was working in the studio that if I don't get ahead of myself I'll never be able to keep up," he says. "I've always got a few songs [written then] that I have

taken into projects."

The serious, businesslike attitude with which Black approaches his artistry grows out of his own ambition and vision, but there is music in his bloodline. Born in New Jersey while his father was temporarily working there, Black grew up in Texas, great-grandson of a Sicilian orchestral violinist, grandson of a self-taught songwriter, and brother to Kevin Black, a rock & country backyard handleader. Black got his start playing bass in his brother's part-time combo, mixing an unlikely repertoire consisting of bebop, punk rock, art rock and traditional country on the lawns and driveways of Houston's Stratford suburb.

"When you've heard the extremes from Hank Williams to Frank Zappa, it's real easy to know how a country song should sound," he explains.

Black has been happily married to actress Lisa Hartman since 1991. He is observant of his musical milieu, but has not personally sampled the full palette of missteps and transgressions that may have given other songwriters direct experience with the headaches and heartaches of honky-tonk life. With a knack for penning some of the most enlightened contemporary love songs around, Black uses his imagination where life has not given him hard knocks.

"I always try to imagine myself in the situation I'm writing about: to be strong but vulnerable, and capable of being hurt, but not of being crushed."

Gossipy media questioning about whether his trademark black hat is or is not important, or whether his marriage will lead him to "go Hollywood," miss the point, Black asserts.

"If people are wondering where I'm going, listen to my music," he says. "That's what it's all about."

*Bob Millard is a freelance writer and author.*

# CMA SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON BMI WRITERS

BMI songwriters were at the forefront of the 27th Annual Country Music Association Awards, taking home honors in almost every category. Winners included Vince Gill, Brooks & Dunn, Diamond Rio, George Jones, Mark Chesnutt, Mark O'Connor, Keith Stegall, and Tony Brown, while the legendary Willie Nelson was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame.



Co-hosts Clint Black, who was part of the Vocal Event of the Year, and five-time winner Vince Gill (Entertainer, Song, Male Vocalist, Album, and Vocal Event of the Year) opened the show with a spirited "Honky Tonk Blues."



Willie Nelson (c) was inducted into the Hall of Fame with help from Rip Torn, Kris Kristofferson and Johnny Cash.



Repeat Vocal Duo winners Brooks & Dunn performed "She Used To Be Mine."

PHOTOS: DON PUTNAM



Horizon Award winner Mark Chesnutt sang his #1 hit "It Sure Is Monday."

Loretta Lynn, Dolly Parton and Tammy Wynette harmonized on "Silver Threads and Golden Needles" before presenting the Entertainer of the Year trophy to Vince Gill.



Three-time Musician of the Year Mark O'Connor played with fellow nominees.



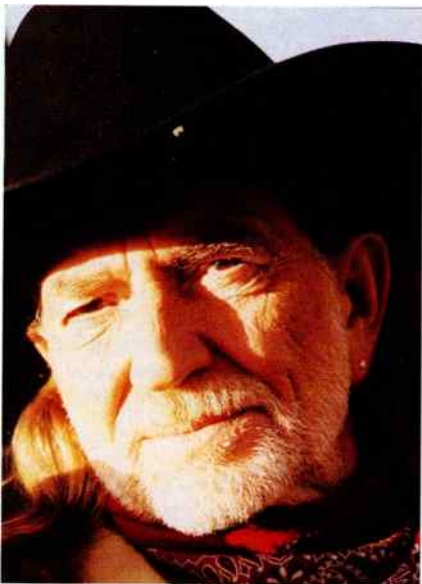
Diamond Rio (Gene Johnson, Brian Prout, Dan Truman, Marty Roe, Dana Williams and Jimmy Olander) snagged their second consecutive Vocal Group of the Year prize.



George Jones, who won in the Vocal Event category, presented a heartfelt tribute to Conway Twitty by singing "Hello, Darlin'."

# WILLIE NELSON

## AN AMERICAN ORIGINAL



**W**hen Willie Nelson moved to Nashville in 1960, the decade stretching out before him must have seemed to have his name on it. He arrived with a trio of major hits in his songwriting catalog: “Night Life” for Ray Price, “Crazy” for Patsy Cline and “Hello Walls” for Faron Young. He became a staff writer for Pamper Music, and then signed with Liberty Records and had his first Top 10 hit with “Touch Me” in 1962, but Nelson’s quirky, jazz-style phrasing was ahead of its time. It would be 13 years before “Blue Eyes Crying In The Rain” brought Willie Nelson, the singer, back to the tops of the charts and helped launch country music’s “outlaw” movement. He could not have imagined in those lean years that he would become the 54th inductee into the Country Music Hall of Fame,

as he did at the Country Music Association Awards on September 29.

Musically, Nelson’s rural Texas childhood exposed him to a rich diversity of ethnic cultures and sounds: polkas from the Czech bohemians, gospel and country from southern whites only one generation removed from the pioneer days, blues from black farm workers, and a variety of festive rhythms from Mexicans. Before he got to Nashville, Nelson added to these musical influences the club hot jazz feel of 1930s’ Paris, the guitar style of D’Jango Reinhardt in particular. Nelson insisted on following his own musical vision, often to the short-term detriment of his career. The ultimate result, however, is one of the most dynamic and broad-based catalogs of any country singer/songwriter, from smooth jazzy pop and classic Tin Pan Alley to country-rock



# COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME ELECTED 1993



## WILLIE NELSON

APRIL 30, 1933

USING HIS WELL WORN CLASSICAL GUITAR, WILLIE NELSON DEVELOPED A STYLE OF SINGING AND PLAYING THAT HAS FOREVER CHANGED COUNTRY MUSIC. AN ABBOTT, TEXAS NATIVE, HIS UNIQUE CHARACTER AND DEVIL-MAY-CARE ATTITUDE HAVE TRANSFORMED HIM INTO AN AMERICAN FOLK HERO, AS MUCH A PART OF TEXAS LORE AS CACTUS AND COWBOYS. HE PENNED SUCH CLASSICS AS "CRAZY," "HELLO WALLS" AND "NIGHT LIFE" FOR OTHERS, BUT HIS BREAKTHROUGH AS AN ARTIST CAME WHEN HE RECORDED "RED HEADED STRANGER" IN 1975. HIS "STARDUST" ALBUM OF CLASSICS STAYED ON THE COUNTRY ALBUM CHART FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, BUT IT IS HIS OWN RICH, MUSICAL STORYTELLING FOR WHICH HE WILL BE REMEMBERED. HUMANITARIAN, ACTOR AND MUSICAL OUTLAW, HIS ARTISTRY HAS GARNERED COUNTLESS FANS ACROSS ALL ENTERTAINMENT FIELDS.

COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

and straight ahead southwestern country, from soulful r&b to romantic international ballads with landmark concept albums and an occasional dash of Eastern mysticism for seasoning. Nelson became, as Johnny Cash called him at the CMA presentation, "one talented, unusual, outstanding American original."

In addition to his sterling solo artistry, Nelson's duets and collaborations cross-pollinated American music. Among his more influential duet pairings include Bob Dylan, Julio Iglesias, Ray Charles, Paul Simon, Dolly Parton, Leon Russell, Roger Miller and Waylon Jennings. His serial collaborations and tours with The Highwaymen (Nelson/Cash/Kristofferson/Jennings) are

unique celebrations of diversity in country music.

While Nelson's vision often led him to widen country music in directions that some pockets of the contemporary industry establishment initially resisted, he has rarely been proved wrong. To date, Nelson has earned 20 gold, 12 platinum, and seven multi-platinum albums, eight CMA awards and five Grammys. He has written 15 songs honored with BMI citations and sang "You Were Always On My Mind" into BMI's Million-Air ranks. His talents, quiet charisma and stylistic breadth has made him a singular country artist, able to write timeless country classics as well as revive decades-old Fred Rose and Hoagy Carmichael compositions or Elvis Presley hits and out-do the originals.

Nelson has not only made his mark as a singer and songwriter, he has pursued a career as a serious movie actor, appearing in such films as *The Electric Horseman*, *Barbarosa*, *Red-Headed Stranger* and *Honeysuckle Rose*, among others. Every successful film outing benefited the country music industry, further revealing one of the genre's unique and most visible representatives to audiences that had not previously realized that country music might appeal to them.

Nelson's record as a humanitarian is borne out by the Farm Aid series of concerts and television specials. Again, in calling attention to a national heart-land tragedy, Nelson was able to blend the concerns and artistry of stars whose styles covered a wide palette.

Kris Kristofferson said it all, in

TO DATE,  
NELSON HAS  
EARNED  
20 GOLD, 12  
PLATINUM, AND  
SEVEN MULTI-  
PLATINUM  
ALBUMS, EIGHT  
CMA AWARDS  
AND FIVE  
GRAMMYS.

introducing Nelson on the CMA stage: "For over four decades he's lifted our spirits and inspired us with his vision, a rare and wonderful artist whose appeal crosses social, racial and political boundaries. By going his own way, traveling his own road, he's expanded the musical horizons and the audience of country music."

# CONTINUITY OF DIVIDENDS

BY EDWARD MORRIS

**B**y the time Sony Music purchased it in late 1988, Tree International had grown from a brave — but undersubsidized — concept into the largest independent country music publisher in the world. The company sold for twice the amount paid a few years earlier for Acuff-Rose, its chief Nashville-based competitor.

To a very great degree, Sony Tree's success, including being named BMI's Country Publisher of the Year, can be credited to its continuity of leadership. Other publishers could also boast legendary writers and immortal songs, but few enjoyed Tree's organizational smoothness. Since the company was founded it has had essentially only three leaders — and the terms of each have overlapped sufficiently to keep the central mission clear and intact. Almost from the start, that mission was to surround staff songwriters with an environment that energized and channeled their talents instead of simply tapping them. Toward that end, Tree has supported its writers through such devices as in-house labels and producers. It has selected songpluggers who were gifted in finding other formats and uses for songs. And it has enabled many of its writers to try their hands at the related enterprises of recording and



**Donna Hilley, Sony Tree senior vice president and COO.**

producing. On top of all this, Tree has made a practice of hiring skilled musicians and promoting them to top executive posts, thereby ensuring the songwriters that they were being guided by those who understood and respected the mercurial nature of creativity.

Local music publishing was still in its infancy when Grand Ole Opry manager Jack Stapp and television

producer Louis G. Cowan established Tree in 1951. At the outset, it was a low-budget sideline for both men, with Stapp scouting for songs in his spare time and Cowan handling the minimal paperwork the business generated. Two years into the undertaking, Stapp decided he needed some help at Tree and turned to an eager young bass player named Buddy Killen to provide it. Stapp charged Killen with the duties of screening songs, singing on demos and pitching such few songs

# LEADERSHIP PAYS FOR SONY TREE

as the new catalog contained. For his services, Killen was to be paid \$35 a week. It was not only one of the most astute hirings on record, it was also one of the most economical.

Although he was only 20 years old when he came to work for Stapp, Killen brought to his new position the perspective and savvy of a seasoned musician. Since graduating from high school, the tall Alabamian had toured with Hank Williams and George Morgan, among others, and had performed regularly on the Grand Ole Opry and Wheeling Jamboree.

Killen recalls that the first cut he secured for Tree was "By The Law Of My Heart." One of Hank Williams's band members, Hillous Butrum, brought him the song, and one of Williams's buddies, bluegrass fiddler Benny Martin, recorded it on Mercury Records. It was released in 1954 and soon relegated to the status of historical footnote. But things picked up



considerably in the years just following this breakthrough. In 1956, emerging rock & roller Elvis Presley delivered Tree its first number one hit with "Heartbreak Hotel." Roger Miller signed on with the company in 1957, and Dolly Parton in 1960, when she was only 14.

Lou Cowan relinquished his share of Tree to Stapp in 1957, and Stapp gave Killen one-third ownership in the company, as well as a pay boost

**Pictured at an informal meeting of Sony Tree executives are (l-r, standing): Dee Hale, director of film & TV music administration; Walter Campbell, vice president of creative services; (seated) Donna Hilley, senior vice president and COO; Harrienne Condra, director of copyright; Phil May, director of royalties; Darren Briggs, director of information systems; and Dale Esworthy, controller.**

to \$90 a week. (In the '60s, Stapp gave Killen an additional 10 percent share. When Stapp died in 1980,

**S**ince the company was founded it has had essentially only three leaders — and the terms of each have overlapped sufficiently to keep the central mission clear and intact.

Killen exercised his option to purchase the remainder of Tree and then became its sole owner.)

In 1963, Tree celebrated its first million-dollar year.

Tree did not score immediately with Roger Miller's compositions. And as a performer of his own songs, it was four years between the time he joined Tree and the time of his first Top 10 hit. But Miller absolutely flowered in the mid-'60s. He earned four Grammys in 1964 and six in 1965 in recognition of "Dang Me," "Chug-A-Lug," "King Of The Road" and other quirky classics.

Twenty-odd years later, Miller would again bring honor and fame to himself and his publisher by writing the brilliant score for *Big River*.

A lover of all kinds of popular music, Killen led Tree into a pop/soul direction in the early '60s by cultivating the talents of Joe Tex. In fact, Killen was such a believer in Tex's potential that Tree established Dial Records primarily on his behalf. Later, other acts would also record for the label. Tex validated Killen's faith with a string of pop hits on Dial that extended from 1965 to 1972.

The '60s was a particularly fertile decade for Tree. This was the era



during which such promising new writers as Dottie West, Bobby Braddock, Curly Putman and Wayne Kemp were signed. In 1968, Tree organized the first extensive network of international representatives. And in 1969, it purchased Pamper Music, a catalog laden with the early hits of Willie Nelson and Harlan Howard.

When Stapp moved into a full-time leadership role at Tree in 1964, he promoted Killen to executive vice president. Killen rose to the company presidency in 1975 when Stapp assumed the title of board chairman and chief executive officer. Throughout his long tenure at Tree, Killen maximized his song connection by finding and producing acts for both the in-house and other labels.

By now a major publishing force, Tree added Donna Hilley to its staff in 1974. The former publicist was such a quick learner and such a

**BMI's Roger Sovine (c) visits with Donna Hilley and Sony Tree vice president of creative services Paul Worley.**

dynamic business mind that she was promoted to executive vice president within two years. From that point onward, Hilley and Killen constituted — in a functional sense — a team of equals, she concentrating on the administrative side of the company and he on the creative. (Because Stapp was in ill health the last few years of his life, he left the day-to-day details of business to his officers.)

At Hilley's urging, Tree established Meadowgreen Music, a Christian music division, in 1981. It soon developed into one of the most admired and lucrative operations of its type, winning industry awards and placing its songs on a series of gold and platinum albums. (Meadowgreen was not, however, included in the sale to Sony.)

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**T**he market aggressiveness that historically marked Tree's growth has intensified under Sony ownership.

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During the '80s, Tree continued to acquire valuable and coveted catalogs, among them the Jensing /Jensong collections in 1983 and Buck Owens's Blue Book Music in 1984. The latter catalog contained a wealth of standards written by Owens, Merle Haggard and Freddie Hart.

Killen stayed on as head of Sony

**The Sony Tree creative staff (l-r, standing): Greg Dorschel, associate director of creative services; Dan Wilson, director of creative services; Paul Worley, vice president of creative services; (seated) Tracy Gershon, director of creative services; Walter Campbell, vice president of creative services; Jim Scherer, director of creative services.**

Tree for two years after the purchase, but ultimately resigned to pursue other business interests. Hilley, who now holds the rank of senior vice president and chief operating officer, has presided over a short period of very rapid expansion, characterized by a greater integration of staff songwriters into the recording process. Many of the firm's writers now have contracts with major record labels; others are active in producing for the majors. In recent months, Sony bought a fire hall near its Nashville office building and converted it into a writers' facility. The company has temporarily relocated from the site at 8 Music Square West it has occupied since

1977 in order to enlarge the structure and modernize its recording studio.

In September, 1993, the company purchased all of Merle Haggard's catalog, as well as the right to all the famed stylist's future compositions. As part of the agreement, Haggard will make new master recordings for Sony of all his number one singles.

The market aggressiveness that historically marked Tree's growth has intensified under Sony ownership. Over the past five years, insiders report, the value of the company has doubled.

*Edward Morris is country music editor for Billboard magazine.*

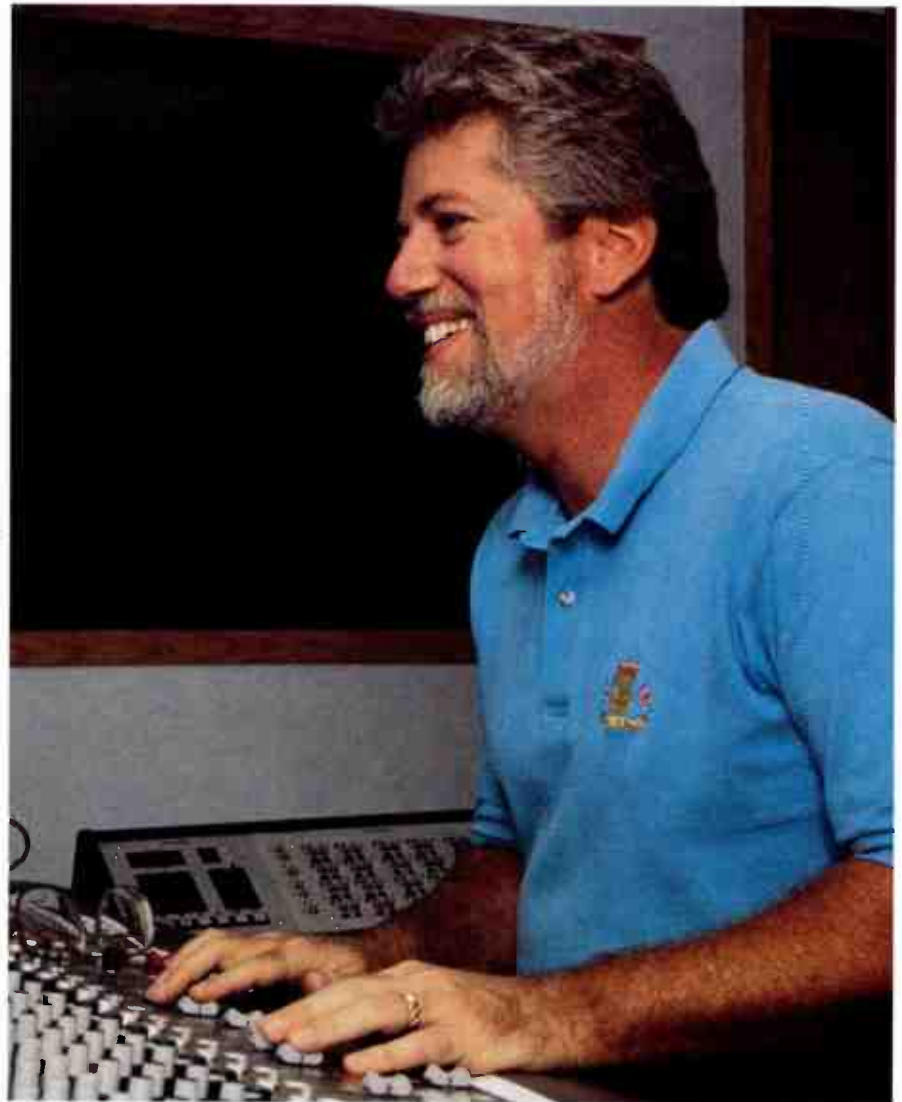


C O U N T R Y  
S O N G W R I T E R  
O F T H E Y E A R

# TOM SHAPIRO

S T U D E N T O F M U S I C , M A S T E R O F S O N G W R I T I N G

**I**n the early 1960s, Chet Atkins quipped about his A-Team session men: “They can read music, but it hasn’t hurt their playing any.” Much has changed about Nashville’s creative community since then, as demonstrated by the considerable talents of BMI’s Country Songwriter of the Year for 1993, Tom Shapiro.



ALAN MAYOR

A composer for Great Cumberland Music, Shapiro, 43, has blended street level pop and country writing experiences in Los Angeles and Nashville with formal music training gleaned from his music studies at Boston University and experiences teaching theory and composition at the prestigious Berklee School of Music. Although he came from what he terms a "non-musical" family in Kansas City, Missouri, his earliest instrument training sparked a latent desire to write music.

"I guess I always had it in me," Shapiro says from his second-story writing room overlooking Music Row office buildings and studios. "When I was taking piano lessons, the first thing I did was try to write rather than just learn the do-re-me. I kind of wanted to do it because I just liked music."

Shapiro played in a mid-'60s high school rock band, then became a Boston University music major and both took and taught courses at the Berklee School of Music, but songwriting was not his first choice of careers. After college, he was co-founder of a private music school. "It was for people who wanted to know how to get a band together, or how to read charts and something about theory so they could get started writing," he explains.

By the time he was 25, Shapiro had shifted interests and moved to Los Angeles to play in a three-piece jazz band while getting his songwriting career started. In 1976, his tune "You Come First At Last" was released by the platinum-selling act L.T.D. It was an auspicious beginning. He followed it with "Never Give Up On A Good Thing" for George Benson and cuts by Sister Sledge, Smokey Robinson, and Frank Sinatra.

Shapiro met Michael Garvin, his co-writer on this year's Diamond Rio smash "Oh Me Oh My Sweet Baby," in Los Angeles. When Shapiro moved to Nashville and shifted his talents to country music, Garvin was there to introduce

him around Tree International and continue a fruitful collaboration. Garvin's good offices led to collaborations with such Tree writers at that time as Bucky Jones and Chris Waters, with whom

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**"When I first came to country there were lots of great lyrics, but I didn't get the melodies. I thought 'three chords? That's so boring.' Then I learned the real beauty of that, the simplicity and the discipline of that three- and four-chord limitation."**

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Shapiro would also enjoy much success in the 1980s.

For a BMI Country Songwriter of the Year, Shapiro has some unusual heroes among the great songwriters. It's not surprising for his generation that he venerates Lennon & McCartney, Paul Simon and Jimmy Webb, "but I go back," he says. "I'm a student of the songwriting of

George and Ira Gershwin, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, and Cole Porter." With writers of such complex and innovative music as heroes, Shapiro had difficulty making the shift to the simpler styles of country; he first had to experience an epiphany of understanding about the genre.

"When I first came to country there were lots of great lyrics, but I didn't get the melodies," he admits. "I thought 'three chords? That's so boring.' Then I learned the real beauty of that, the simplicity and the discipline of that three- and four-chord limitation."

Since moving to Nashville in 1981, Shapiro mastered the form and has scored 25 Top 10 country hits, including eight number ones. His list of BMI Award-winning tunes includes "In A New York Minute," "You Really Had Me Going," "Love Talks," "I Could Use Another You," "Your Heart's Not In It," "Touch And Go Crazy," "I'm Not Through Loving You Yet," "Are You Ever Gonna Love Me," "Only When I Love," "If There Hadn't Been You," "If Your Heart Ain't Busy Tonight," "Only The Wind" and "Watch Me."

Like many of Nashville's professional songwriters, Shapiro writes five days a week, preferring mornings and late evenings. He carries a tape recorder around to catch snatches of song ideas, which he calls "jots." He says the real joy in writing these days is creating something he has never done before, a feat he claims is getting progressively more difficult.

After nearly 20 years at his art and craft, he is interested in expanding into the producer's role. His production of Billy Dean's first two albums generated three number ones and two Top Five hit singles, including the hit "If There Hadn't Been You," which Shapiro co-wrote. His next production project is an international deal for '60s country-pop star Dusty Springfield.

*Bob Millard*

# COUNTRY SONG OF THE YEAR



## A Dream Comes True For Don Von Tress

**B**e careful what you wish for, advises songwriter Don Von Tress, because it can come true. His dream of music industry success was modest: "All I really wanted was to hear one of my songs on the radio." After 20-plus years, one of his songs finally made it to radio, and Don couldn't have been happier — until that song sold over nine million copies, launched the sale of over seven million albums, and hit number one on charts around the world. And now, "Achy Breaky Heart," the first single for both Don and artist Billy Ray Cyrus, adds BMI's 1993 Robert J. Burton Award for Most Performed Country Song of the Year to its list of incredibles.

For Von Tress, professional songwrit-

ing success took the long way. A native of Indiana, he began writing songs and playing guitar in high school rock bands in the 1960s. After college, a U.S. Army-sponsored tour of Vietnam, and owning a Tucson nightclub, Don and his wife, Jeanne, moved to rural Wayne County, Tennessee in 1976. Don soon discovered the music scene in nearby Muscle Shoals, Alabama, and began bringing his rock-and-r&b-flavored songs to studio owner Russ Zavitsen. When Russ moved to Nashville in 1987 to work for Harold Shedd's Music Mill studio and Millhouse Music Publishing, Don began listening to country with a new ear.

While Don and Russ kept in touch throughout the years, a real life for the Von Tresses (including children Sonnie and Cass) required a real job, but the wallpaper hanger never stopped making

music. "There were frustrating near-misses, but I just couldn't give up," he recalls. "And through all these years, Russ has always believed in my stuff and encouraged me to continue. I can never thank him enough."

Now about *the* song . . . "I started 'Achy Breaky Heart' at my sister's house one night; it was a fun look at how easy breaking up would be if your heart wasn't involved, and the lines just kept coming. If nothing else had happened with the song, I certainly got a good laugh when I was writing it."

In 1991, the Marcy Brothers recorded "Don't Tell My Heart" (the song's actual title), albeit changing the hook to "my achy, breaking heart."

"I was thrilled to death to have a record," says Don. "Of course, I never thought it would get cut again."



# 'ACHY BREAKY HEART'



However, producers Jim Cotton and Joe Scaife had this song in their stack of favorites when Harold Shedd approached them about a new kid from Flatwoods, Kentucky. "The song was quite a stretch for country, but it turned out to be a perfect vehicle for Billy."

When did he realize what a monster "Achy Breaky Heart" was? Don says he had a feeling about the great things to come the first time he met Billy. But his proof positive came one evening when he tuned into a Top 10 radio countdown, curious to hear the hits his newly-released song was up against. It came in at number one. "The next day Harold called me at my wallpaper job and said, 'Don, I think you hit a home run'."

While appreciative of the financial rewards and industry attention, Von Tress says his biggest thrills have come "when I go out where Billy's playing. It's very emotional for me to hear 15 or 20 thousand people singing my song and having a great time. I've written songs whose substance meant a lot more to me than 'Achy Breaky Heart,' but to create something that makes you grin for three minutes — in my book, that's quite an accomplishment."

Although he usually writes solo, Don was

**"I started 'Achy Breaky Heart' at my sister's house one night; it was a fun look at how easy breaking up would be if your heart wasn't involved, and the lines just kept coming."**

eager to share ideas with Cyrus on "When I'm Gone" (one of four songs he contributed to Billy's platinum-plus second album, *This Won't Be The Last*). "We were in the studio late one night, and Billy was looking back at all that has happened, and wondering about the future."

"He said, 'What'll you think about me when I'm gone?'. That as a title didn't really strike me, but the next night I dreamed the song, complete with arrangement and background singers."

Presently, Don is on hiatus from wallpaper to develop some of the ideas he has nurtured for years, including a musical Christmas special for children. He will soon be enjoying one of pop music's most coveted honors — a parody of "Achy Breaky Heart" by Weird Al Yankovic (with royalties benefiting United Cerebral Palsy).

"My wife joked when I wrote 'Achy Breaky Heart' that of all my songs, I would probably be remembered for this one. That's okay with me. It's a songwriter's dream to have a song with something in it that catches people's attention. The other day, two guys on National Public Radio were debating if 'Achy Breaky Heart' was a true American folk song. And they said it is!"

*Caroline Davis Newcomb*

# COUNTRY

# BMI



## **MOST PERFORMED SONG OF THE YEAR**

(THE ROBERT J. BURTON AWARD)

### **ACHY BREAKY HEART**

### **DON VON TRESS**

### **MILLHOUSE MUSIC**

**ACHY BREAKY HEART**  
Don Von Tress  
Millhouse Music

**ALL IS FAIR IN LOVE AND WAR**  
Robert Byrne  
Tim Nichols  
Bobworld Music  
Bro 'N Sis Music, Inc.  
Fame Publishing Co., Inc.  
Hannah's Eyes Music, Inc.

**ANYWHERE BUT HERE**  
Bob DiPiero  
John Scott Sherrill  
American Made Music  
Brand New Town Music  
Little Big Town Music Corporation  
of America, Inc.  
Old Wolf Music

**BACKROADS**  
Charles Major (SOCAN)  
Corner Club Publishing Incorporated (SOCAN)

**BILLY THE KID**  
Billy Dean  
Paul Nelson  
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.  
Great Cumberland Music

**BOOT SCOOTIN' BOOGIE**  
Ronnie Dunn  
Alfred Avenue Music  
Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**BUBBA SHOT THE JUKEBOX**  
Dennis Linde  
EMI-Blackwood Music, Inc.  
Linde Manor Publishing Co.  
Right Key Music

**BURN ME DOWN**  
Eddie Miller  
Don Sessions  
Beta Johnston Music  
Regent Music Corp.  
Roschelle Publishing Co.  
Vidor Publications, Inc.  
WarnerBuilt Songs, Inc.

**COULD'VE BEEN ME**  
Reed Nielson  
Monty Powell  
Englishtown Music  
Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp.

**DALLAS**  
Keith Stegall  
Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp.

**DON'T GO NEAR THE WATER**  
Jim Foster  
Chapin Hartford  
Bleamus Music  
Electric Mule Music Publishing  
Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**DON'T LET OUR LOVE START SLIPPIN' AWAY**  
Vince Gill  
Pete Wasner  
Benefit Music  
Foreshadow Songs, Inc.  
Uncle Pete Music

**DRIVE SOUTH**  
John Hiatt  
Lillybilly Music

**EVEN THE MAN IN THE MOON IS CRYIN'**  
Don Cook  
Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

## **PUBLISHER OF THE YEAR**

## **SONY TREE**

**EVERY SECOND**  
Gerald Smith  
O-Tex Music

**EXCEPT FOR MONDAY**  
Reed Nielson  
Englishtown Music

**FIVE O'CLOCK WORLD**  
Allen Reynolds  
Screen Gems-EMI Music, Inc.

**GOING OUT OF MY MIND**  
Kostas  
Terry McBride  
Seven Angels Music  
Songs of McRide  
Songs of Polygram International, Inc.

**GONE SO A GIRL CAN GET**  
Jerry Max Lane  
Big Old Music  
Jerry Max Music  
O-Tex Music

**THE GREATEST MAN I NEVER KNEW**  
Layng Martine, Jr.  
Layng Martine Jr. Songs

**I CROSS MY HEART**  
Steve Dorff  
Dorff Songs  
WarnerBuilt Songs, Inc.

**I SAW THE LIGHT**  
Lisa Angelle  
Andrew Gold  
Sister Elisabeth Music  
Sluggosongs

**I STILL BELIEVE IN YOU**  
Vince Gill  
Benefit Music

**I WANT YOU BAD (AND THAT AIN'T GOOD)**  
Jackson Leap  
Narlan Howard Songs

**I WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY**  
Aaron Tippin  
Acuff-Rose Music, Inc.

**IM IN A HURRY (AND DON'T KNOW WHY)**  
Roger Murrah  
Murrah Music Corporation

**IF I DIDN'T HAVE YOU**  
Max D. Barnes  
Skip Ewing  
Acuff-Rose Music, Inc.  
Hardscratch Music  
Irving Music, Inc.

**IF THERE HADN'T BEEN YOU**  
Ron Holland  
Tom Shapiro  
Careers-BMG Music Publishing, Inc.

**IF YOUR HEART AIN'T BUSY TONIGHT**  
Tom Shapiro  
Chris Waters

**IN A WEEK OR TWO**  
James House  
Mad Women Music

**IS THERE LIFE OUT THERE**  
Rick Giles

**IT ONLY HURTS WHEN I CRY**  
Roger Miller  
Dwight Yoakam  
Adam Taylor Music  
Warner-Tamerlane Pub. Corp..

**JESUS AND MAMA**  
James Dean Hicks  
Danny Mayo  
Tom Collins Music Corporation

**LET GO OF THE STONE**  
Max D. Barnes  
Hardscratch Music  
Irving Music, Inc.

# AWARDS

**LETTING GO**  
 Doug Gruber  
 Matti Rollings  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.  
 Zesty Zacks Music

**LORD HAVE MERCY ON  
 THE WORKING MAN**  
 Kostas  
 Songs of Polygram  
 International, Inc.

**LOVE'S GOT A  
 HOLD ON YOU**  
 Carson Chamberlain  
 Keith Stegall  
 Acuff-Rose Music, Inc.  
 Just Cuts Music  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**NEON MOON**  
 Ronnie Dunn  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**NO ONE ELSE ON EARTH**  
 Stewart Harris  
 Edisto Sound International  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**NORMA JEAN RILEY**  
 Rob Honey  
 Monty Powell  
 Dan Truman  
 Dan Truman Music  
 Mountain Green Music  
 Music Corporation  
 of America, Inc.  
 Resaca Beach Publishing  
 Starstruck Angel  
 Music, Inc.  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**NOTHING SHORT OF  
 DYING**  
 Travis Tritt  
 Post Oak Publishing  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**NOW THAT'S COUNTRY**  
 Marty Stuart  
 Songs of Polygram  
 International, Inc.

**NOWHERE BOUND**  
 Jule Medders  
 Monty Powell  
 Conasauga  
 Troubadours Music  
 Resaca Beach Publishing  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**OLD FLAMES HAVE  
 NEW NAMES**  
 Bobby Braddock  
 Rafe Van Hoy  
 Boyzboys Music  
 Tree Publishing Co. Inc.

**ONLY THE WIND**  
 Chuck Jones  
 Tom Shapiro

**OUTBOUND PLANE**  
 Nanci Griffith  
 Irving Music, Inc.  
 Ponder Heart Music

**PASSIONATE KISSES**  
 Lucinda Williams  
 Lucy Jones Music  
 Nomad-Noman Music  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**PAST THE  
 POINT OF RESCUE**  
 Michael Hanly (PRS)  
 Foreshadown Songs, Inc.  
 Stainless Music Corp.

**QUEEN OF MEMPHIS**  
 Dave Gibson  
 Kathy Louvier  
 Nocturnal Eclipse Music  
 Tiffis Tunes, Inc.  
 Union County Music

**RUNNIN' BEHIND**  
 Ed Hill  
 New Haven Music

**SHAKE THE  
 SUGAR TREE**  
 Chapin Hartford  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**SHIPS THAT DON'T  
 COME IN**  
 Dave Gibson  
 Paul Nelson  
 Maypop Music  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**SO MUCH LIKE MY DAD**  
 Bobby Emmons  
 Chips Moman  
 Attadon Music  
 Chips Moman Music  
 Rightsong Music, Inc.

**SOME KIND OF TROUBLE**  
 Dan Potter  
 Sheep In Tow Music

**SOMETHING IN RED**  
 Angela Kaset  
 Coburn Music USA

**SOMEWHERE OTHER  
 THAN THE NIGHT**  
 Kent Blazy  
 Sophie's Choice Music

**SURE LOVE**  
 Hal Ketchum  
 Foreshadown Songs, Inc.  
 Songs of Polygram  
 International, Inc.

**TAKE A LITTLE TRIP**  
 Ronnie Rogers  
 Mark Wright  
 EMI-Blackwood  
 Music, Inc.  
 Maypop Music

**TAKE IT BACK**  
 Kristy Jackson  
 Fever Pitch Publishing

**TAKE IT LIKE A MAN**  
 Tony Haselden  
 Millhouse Music

**TAKE YOUR MEMORY  
 WITH YOU**  
 Vince Gill  
 Benefit Music

**THAT'S WHAT I LIKE  
 ABOUT YOU**  
 John Hadley  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**THERE AIN'T  
 NOTHIN' WRONG  
 WITH THE RADIO**  
 Buddy Brock  
 Aaron Tippin  
 Acuff-Rose Music, Inc.



**SONGWRITER  
 OF THE YEAR**

**TOM  
 SHAPIRO**

**THE  
 PRESIDENT'S  
 AWARD**



**HARLAN HOWARD**

**THIS ONE'S  
 GONNA HURT YOU  
 (FOR A LONG,  
 LONG TIME)**  
 Marty Stuart  
 Songs of Polygram  
 International, Inc.  
 Tubb's Bus Music

**THE TIPS OF MY  
 FINGERS (4th Award)**  
 Bill Anderson  
 Champion Music  
 Corporation  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**TWO SPARROWS IN A  
 HURRICANE**  
 Mark Alan Springer  
 Murrab Music  
 Corporation

**WALKAWAY JOE**  
 Vince Melamed  
 Patrick Joseph  
 Music, Inc.  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**WARNING LABELS**  
 Oscar Turman  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.

**WATCH ME**  
 Tom Shapiro  
 Diamond Struck Music  
 Great Cumberland Music  
 In The Air Music

**WHAT KIND OF LOVE**  
 Will Jennings  
 Roy Orbison  
 Blue Sky Rider Songs  
 Orbisongs

**WHEN SHE CRIES**  
 Sonny Lemaire  
 Sun Mare Music  
 Publishing

**WILD MAN**  
 Rick Giles  
 Diamond Struck Music  
 Great Cumberland Music  
 Patenrick Music

**THE WOMAN  
 BEFORE ME**  
 Jude Johnstone  
 Mad Jack Music

**A WOMAN LOVES**  
 Rick Giles  
 Diamond Struck Music  
 Great Cumberland Music  
 Patenrick Music

**WRONG SIDE OF MEMPHIS**  
 Matraca Berg  
 Gary Harrison  
 Patrick Joseph Music, Inc.  
 Warner-Tamerlane  
 Pub. Corp.

**YOU AND  
 FOREVER AND ME**  
 Stewart Harris  
 Edisto Sound International  
 Tree Publishing Co., Inc.



BMI



# 'ACHY BREAKY HEART,' SHAPIRO, SONY TREE TAKE TOP BMI COUNTRY HONORS

"Achy Breaky Heart," songwriter Tom Shapiro and Sony Tree took top honors at the 41st Annual BMI Country Awards. BMI president & CEO Frances W. Preston and vice president Roger W. Sovine presented 169 writers and publishing companies Citations of Achievement during the black-tie gala, which culminated in the announcement of Song, Songwriter and Publisher of the Year winners. The salute to the songwriters and publishers of the year's most performed country songs, the oldest such awards celebration, was staged under giant tents at BMI's Music Row site.

"Achy Breaky Heart" earned the 25th Robert J. Burton Award as Most Performed Country Song of the Year for writer Don Von Tress and publisher Millhouse Music. The number one song was the debut single for both Von Tress and Mercury recording artist Billy Ray Cyrus.

Tom Shapiro led all writers with the number of award-winning songs to be recognized as Songwriter of the Year. The four hits earning him the title were "If There Hadn't Been You," "Only The Wind," "If Your Heart Ain't Busy Tonight," and "Watch Me."

For the second consecutive year and the twentieth time overall, Sony Tree, with 12 Citations, captured the Publisher of the Year prize, given to the publishing concern with the highest percentage of copyright ownership in award songs.

Included in the evening's program was the debut presentation of the President's Award to Harlan Howard, recognizing his legendary contributions to country music. Acuff-Rose Music, Inc. received a special salute on their 50th anniversary.



▲ The evening's big winners share a moment with hosts Frances Preston and Roger Sovine. Pictured (clockwise, from top left): Publisher of the Year Sony Tree's Donna Hilley, Sovine, President's Award recipient Harlan Howard, Songwriter of the Year Tom Shapiro, Preston, and Robert J. Burton Award winner Don Von Tress.

◀ Tom Shapiro was named Songwriter of the Year. He is pictured here flanked by Roger Sovine and Frances Preston.

PHOTOS: RICHARD CRICHTON, BETH GWINN, ALAN MAYOR, HOPE POWELL, DON PUTNAM

▶ "Achy Breaky Heart" won the Robert J. Burton Award as Most Performed Country Song of the Year. Pictured celebrating on stage are (l-r) Millhouse Music's Russ Zavitson and Lisa Ramsey, Billy Ray Cyrus, Frances Preston, and writer Don Von Tress.



◀ Acuff-Rose Music, Inc. received a special salute on their 50th anniversary. Pictured celebrating are (l-r): Jerry Bradley, Frances Preston, Jerry Flowers, Roger Sovine.

▼ Harlan Howard received the first President's Award, recognizing his legendary contributions to country music. Pictured during the presentation are (l-r) BMI's Del Bryant, Harlan Howard, Frances Preston and Roger Sovine.



▼ Sony Tree was named Publisher of the Year. Pictured on stage are (l-r): Hiarinne Condra, Pat McMakin, Dan Wilson, Greg Dorschell, Tracy Gershon, Walter Campbell, Richard Rowe, Donna Hilley, Frances Preston, Jim Scherer, Paul Worley, Charlotte Lowther, Darren Briggs, Roger Sovine





◀ Frances Preston, Willie Nelson

▼ Ronnie Rogers, Noel Fox, Celia Froehlig, Mark Wright, Roger Sovine



◀ George Strait, Steve Dorff, Les Bider, Frances Preston, Rick Shoemaker

▼ Frances Preston is pictured with the writers of the last three Robert J. Burton Award-winning songs (l-r): Hugh Prestwood (1991), Don Von Tress (1993) and Jon Ims (1992).



▲ Ronnie Dunn, Mae Boren Axton, Kix Brooks

▼ Brenda Lee, Vince Gill



▼ Lisa Hartman, Clint Black, Mike Greene, Del Bryant



◀ Dana Williams, Dan Truman, Roger Sovine, Monty Powell, Jule Medders, Frances Preston, Dale Bobo, Marty Roe, Barbara Behler, Gene Johnson, Brian Prout, Jimmy Olander, Johnny Wright



▶ Dean Migchelbrink, Jeff Tweel, Richard Perna, Rick Giles, Frances Preston, Chuck Howard



▼ Jimmy Buffett, Del Bryant, Marty Stuart



▼ Troy Tomlinson, Jim Vienneau, Carson Chamberlain, Keith Stegall, Dale Bobo, Barbara Behler, Johnny Wright



▲ Rob Galbraith, Roger Sovine, Johnny Bienstock, Tim Nichols, Frances Preston, Mark Hall, Robert Byrne



▲ Holly House, Dave Gibson, James House

◀ Lance Freed, Jim Vienneau, Max D. Barnes, Troy Tomlinson, David Conrad, Patsy Barnes, Skip Ewing, Frances Preston, Mary Del Frank

▼ Aaron Neville, Julie and Paul Overstreet



▲ Tom Shapiro, Frances Preston, Ron Hellard, Henry Hurt, Nick Firth



◀ Kostas, Billy Burnette

▼ Martin Bandier, Frances Preston, Charles Koppelman, Jim Fifield, Roger Sovine



▲ Erv Woolsey, Connie Woolsey, Frances Preston, George Strait, Jerry Max Lane, Roger Sovine



▲ Roger Sovine, Frances Preston, Aaron Tippin

▶ Allen Reynolds, Jim Rooney, Frances Preston, Pete Wasner, Terrell Ketchum, Vince Gill





▼ Billy Lynn, Terry McBride, Frances Preston, Doyle Brown, Doug Howard



▶ Frances Preston, Jimmy Bowen



▼ Pam Tillis, George Richey, Bob DiPiero, Tammy Wynette



▶ Roger Sovine, Sonny Lemaire, Frances Preston



▼ Vince Melamed, Meredith Carr, BMI's Clay Bradley



▼ Frances Preston, Angela Kaset, Jewel and Barry Coburn



▲ BMI's Charlie Feldman, Freddy Bienstock, Frances Preston, Johnny Bienstock

▶ Frances Preston, Hal and Terrell Ketchum





◀ Frances Preston, Roger Sovine, James Dean Hicks, Danny Mayo, Danny Shirley, Vanessa Gray, Tom Collins, Jeff Gordon



▶ Roger Sovine, Frances Preston, Tony Haselden



▲ Lisa Angelle



▼ Bob Flax, BMI's Tommy Valentino

Doug Crider, Suzy Bogguss, BMI's Jeff Cohen



▲ Chuck Cannon, Lari White, BMI's Barbara Cane, Victoria Shaw, Rick Sanjek



▶ Kent Blazy, Del Bryant, Jude Johnstone, Gerald Smith





◀ BMI's Thomas Cain, Kevin Welch, Dan Goodman

▼ BMI's Jody Williams, Kix and Barbara Brooks



◀ Jon Vezner, Allen Reynolds



BMI's Harry Warner, Aaron and Joel Neville, Craig and Pamela Brown Hayes



▲ Matt Rollings, Rick Giles



▲ BMI's Joyce Rice, Billy Dean



◀ Demetria and Stewart Harris, BMI's Alison Smith, Linda and Layng Martine, Sarah and Thom Schuyler



# Kostas

by Thomas Goldsmith

Songs from Kostas may come from all sorts of places, but lately they all seem to be going in the same direction: straight up.

Listen to Kostas talking about the sources of his songs:

"It's everything from the political arena to the Vietnam war to male-female relationships, to between-male friendships, to dogs, trucks, trains and flying saucers, pine trees, elk, rivers, mountains, blue skies and stars, angels and devils.

"All those things and every breath you take, every heartbeat, all those things."

Songs from Kostas may come from all sorts of places, but lately they all seem to be going in the same direction: straight up.

In the five years since Patty Loveless scored a number one record with "Timber I'm Falling In Love," the first single release composed by Kostas, the Montana-based writer has racked up some 60 cuts by major-label artists. By 1990, he had won the Nashville Songwriters Association International's Songwriter of the Year award. Just a few of those scoring hits with Kostas' imaginative compositions have been Loveless, Dwight Yoakam, Travis Tritt, McBride and the Ride, Sammy Kershaw, and Holly Dunn.

As his account of inspirations indicates, Kostas cuts a distinctive figure in the field of country songwriting. Common sense and tradition dictate that aspiring country



## Sitting On Top Of The Musical Mountain

bards should move to Nashville and spend years learning their craft, and knocking on every door on Music Row. Not Kostas.

"I made a living playing music and writing songs for many a year before I came to Nashville," he said in a recent interview



**Kostas with BMI's Jody Williams (l) and Thomas Cain.**

from his home in Belgrade, Montana, outside Billings.

"I've lived and played in the Northwest since the '50s and '60s — between '67 and '87, I put in 20 years on the road, playing in bands and playing by myself."

**"I've always believed in my music and I've always believed in myself as being an artist, whether it's as a singer or writer or a performer."**

Kostas' entree to big-time music biz came through a familiar kind of songwriter/picker networking: he ran into the superb bluegrass/country singer Claire Lynch when both were playing at clubs in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in the early '80s. Impressed with Kostas' tunes, Lynch recorded a couple of them on an independent-label solo album and gave a tape of his music to Music Row producer/executive Tony Brown. Brown's decision to cut "Timber" and other Kostas

songs on Loveless discs opened Music City's gates to a flood of the writer's finely crafted material.

"I knew that as soon as the people heard what I was doing, there would be a demand for it," Kostas says. "I've always believed in my music and I've always believed in myself as being an artist, whether it's as a singer or writer or a performer."

In addition to having success as a solo songwriter, Kostas has excelled as a collaborator. His writing partners have included Dwight Yoakam, Marty Stuart, the Bellamy Brothers and James House.

"The thing that I believe is that as an artist you're born with certain abilities and talents," Kostas says. "On top of those you get to meet other writers, then you also see how they think and how they create in their own minds. And sometimes what you see in others is useful to you."

"When Yoakam gets an idea he likes, it's kind of like someone who is forging steel — he likes to bang away at things until he gets it to where he likes it. Marty Stuart's got a

youthfulness about him and an exuberance that he brings into the music thing — and a lot of hair."

The writer remains content with an arrangement that brings him to Nashville chiefly to do business and collaborate.

"You can write songs in a jail cell; you can write songs in a hospital bed — you don't have to live in Nashville," he says. "I want to stay independent or distinct. I think you're born with the talent you have to work with; from then on it's a matter of where you want to live and how you want to live."

Kostas today lives a life that many another songwriter might envy — a varied life that includes spectacular mountain scenery, time spent collecting vintage guitars and antiques, periodic writing trips to Nashville and the wealth and fame that hit songwriting brings. Radios everywhere pour out Kostas tunes — some co-written — such as Yoakam's "Ain't That Lonely Yet" and "Turn It On, Turn It Up, Turn Me Loose," McBride and the Ride's "Sacred Ground," Loveless's "On Down The Line" and "Timber," Dunn's "Heart Full Of Love" and Tritt's "Lord Have Mercy On The Working Man."

But as the man born Kostas Lazarides points out, he had come a long road before success plucked him from a mountainside cabin to scale songwriting peaks.

"I was born in Salonica in Greece and

**James House is among Kostas' co-writers.**



we moved to the States in '57," he said. "We moved to Savage, Montana, a small farming community. We lived there for about 16 months and moved to Billings. I started selling papers, shining shoes and playing the bars. I had already been singing back in Greece. It was the music of the times — folk songs or popular songs of the day."

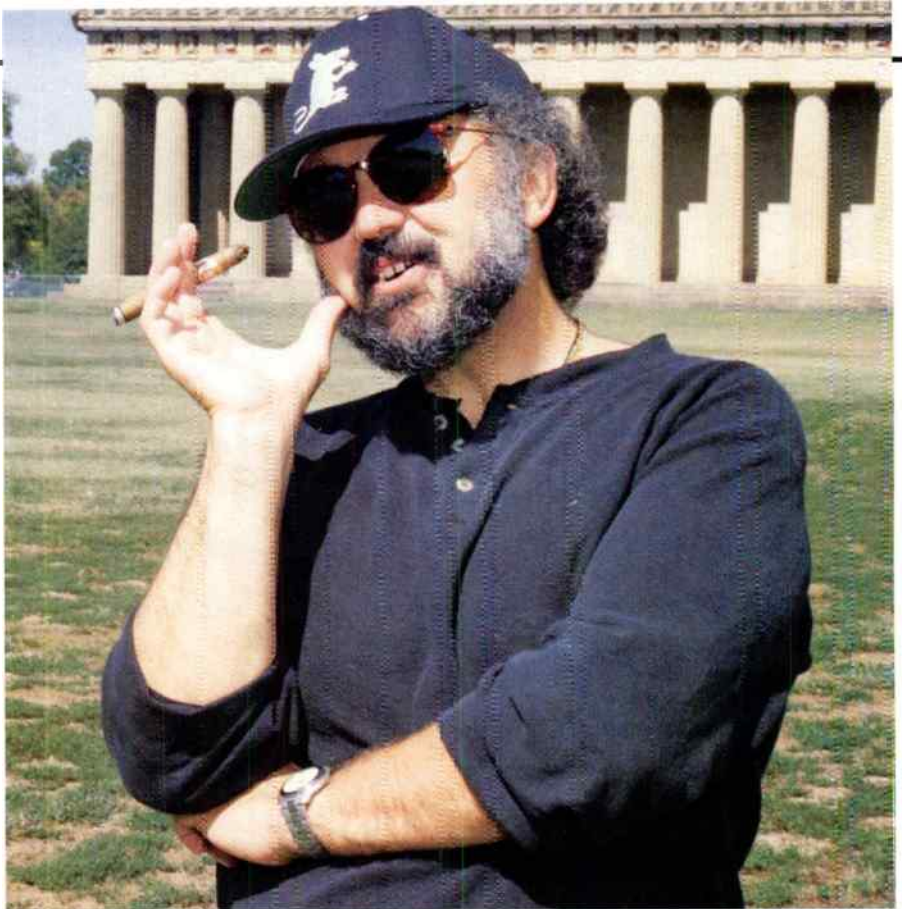
In Montana, the young Kostas' earliest American influences were writers like Felice and Boudleaux Bryant, the songs they wrote for the Everly Brothers. "They had a sound that will stand up forever," he says. He also listened to Eddie Cochran, Buddy Holly, Elvis Presley, Ferlin Husky, virtually everything that

**"For whatever reason, society today is bent on more disposable options . . . Everything is here today and gone three minutes later. I don't think that we as human beings are meant to go through life like that."**

was coming out during that fertile American music era.

"It was real music, both lyrically and musically, and the artists had a distinctiveness," he says. "They maintained their styles and their popularity because the songs were there, the artists were there, the times were right. It was the birth of rock & roll. One radio station played everything from Kay Starr to Perry Como to the Ames Brothers, Kitty Wells, Wanda Jackson and George Jones and Buddy Holly and the Everly Brothers."

Beginning in 1964, Kostas started playing guitar around Montana in bands with names like the Leaders and the



Chancellors, playing songs by the Beatles, Stones, Kinks and American surf-rockers. Still underage, Kostas had to pencil in his mustache to convince club owners he was eligible to play for the \$100 a night they offered.

Next, "I quit high school in '67 and hit the road," he recalls. "It was kind of a time for growing up, but it was also a time that didn't amount to much."

Returning to Montana after sojourns to California and elsewhere, Kostas concentrated on music. By 1980, the Seattle-based First American label had released an eponymous solo album of Kostas' own genre-crossing music.

"It had nothing to do with country; it was just my own style at the time," he says, noting that releasing his music in his own versions remains a major goal. "I may end up just recording my own album. That's all that's important to me: getting the stuff on vinyl. If I don't get the right deal I just sell it off the front porch to the tourists here."

Kostas has entered the industry mainstream to the point of starting his own publishing company under the PolyGram umbrella. He's signed writers Greg Lucas,

Don Mealer and Bobby Boyd and intends to keep his roster small, despite the flood of inquiries produced by a recent *USA Today* story that mentioned the company. Unmellowed by success, he maintains a sharp-eyed perspective on life, politics and popular culture.

"For whatever reason, society today is bent on more disposable options, whether it's hamburgers or love affairs or music," he says. "Everything is here today and gone three minutes later. I don't think that we as human beings are meant to go through life that that."

For Kostas, the basics of life and music remain the same as they were when he was making the rounds out west, an unheralded picker with a healthy share of self-confidence. "My dream then was to be fulfilled as I lived," he says. "My dream was to play the music that I lived and felt at the time. My dream now is to continue doing what I've always done: to live and to write and to sing and to play."

*Thomas Goldsmith is regional editor of the Tennessean in Nashville and a freelance music journalist.*





# Pam Tillis

by Jay Orr

Pam Tillis's first public performance, at age eight, came on the Grand Ole Opry, where she sang "Tom Dooley."

When inspiration comes knocking, Pam Tillis usually finds her favorite songwriting partner nearby. Maybe in the next room. Maybe on the car seat next to her. At least on the other end of a phone line, no matter what hour of the day or night. Of the 20 songs on her gold-selling country albums, *Put Yourself In My Place* (1991) and *Homeward Looking Angel* (1992), 12 are collaborations between Tillis and her husband, Bob DiPiero. Two others are DiPiero tunes written with other writers. The couple met when Tillis visited DiPiero's publisher in search of songs for her first album for Arista Records.

"Every time I said, 'I like that. Who wrote that?' they kept saying, 'Bob,'" Tillis recalls. "So I said, 'Well where is this Bob?'"

Bob, it turns out, was just upstairs. Of the slew of number one country hits he's written since moving to Nashville, the most famous probably is "American Made." A hit for the Oak Ridge Boys in 1983, the song later became the musical theme for a long-running Miller Beer ad campaign.

The two met. Southern girl Tillis told DiPiero how much she liked his work, and they set up that most casual of dates in the Nashville creative community, the songwriting appointment. "We started writing," Tillis recalls, "became friends, and that was that. The couple married

the day before "Don't Tell Me What To Do" became Tillis's first number one country hit.

Tillis, 36, is to the hillbilly manor born. The oldest of five kids, her father is country singer and songwriter Mel Tillis. As well-known for his stutter as for his

## Cultivating A Cultural Inheritance

songwriting, Tillis enjoys great respect in Nashville for his composing skills. Among his most famous song credits are "Detroit City," "I Ain't Never," and "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town."

Like two other famous country music daughters — Carlene Carter and Rosanne Cash — Pam Tillis didn't immediately spend her cultural inheritance. Her first public performance, at age eight, came on the Grand Ole Opry, where she sang "Tom Dooley." But as a student at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, she rejected country, singing instead in a rock & roll band before dropping out of college and moving to San Francisco. On

the West Coast, Tillis formed a jazz fusion group and sang with The Ramsey Lewis Trio. Her first marriage ended in 1978, three weeks after the birth of her son, Ben.

Tillis sang in Top 40 lounge bands, and in 1983 she cut an eclectic, new wave rock album she calls "a portrait of an artist searching for herself." As country music in the mid '80s turned away from the bland pop sound of the late '70s and early '80s toward a harder, more traditional sound, Tillis worked on Nashville's Music Row as a demo singer. She found she could relate more easily to the new, leaner country sound driven by fiddles, steel guitars and trebly Fender Telecaster guitars. To immerse herself in the traditional style Tillis and some like-minded friends in 1986 and 1987 organized a regular series of hillbilly rave-ups at a Nashville club. They were called "Twang Nights."

"For the first time I felt like a country singer," Tillis says of those crowded sessions. "It was my coming out party. I finally felt like I was ready to carry that banner. And it was a real big musical

education — not just the night, the performances, but getting ready for them. I listened to tons of stuff."

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**"Every album is  
like another  
chance to rise to  
the occasion...  
I want to make an  
album that people  
will listen to for  
10 or 20 years."**

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She impressed Warner Bros. Records, the label having success with traditionalist Randy Travis, and the company signed her to a singles deal. Tillis delivered, handing the label outstanding recordings of "Those Memories" (later a hit for Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt), "One Of Those Things" (a hit for Tillis when she re-recorded it in 1991), and Buck Owens's "There Goes My Love." Radio, however, turned a cold shoulder. She sang on the soundtrack for *Rustlers' Rhapsody* and another of her Warner Bros. tunes, "Drawn To The Fire," found its way into a scene in *Thelma And Louise*, a film for which Tillis's best friend, former Nashville waitress Callie Khouri, won an Academy Award for best screenplay. Tillis's deal with Warner Bros. ended, but she kept writing and singing. While in the studio cutting a demo for her tune "Someone Else's Troubles Now" (later a hit for Highway 101), Tillis learned that Arista's newly opened Nashville office wanted her for its roster. She signed in 1990.

*Put Yourself In My Place*, her first album, demonstrated Tillis's broad range as a vocalist and yielded four hit singles: the title cut, her debut smash "Don't Tell Me What To Do," the soulful ballad "Maybe It Was Memphis," and "Blue Rose Is." The hits created demand for concert appearances, and Tillis hit the road, opening shows around the country for George Strait.

She now keeps a rigorous touring schedule, which makes it harder to write. "I feel so much involved in this other thing," she confesses. "I know I'm still a songwriter, but I have to remind myself." Being a performer gives her an outlet she might not have otherwise, she admits. "I never could have got-



ten 'Melancholy Child' cut by someone else," she explains, "and that's a song that a lot of people really have loved off my first album."

Her second album, *Homeward Looking Angel*, released in 1992, continued the hit streak with the folkish, metaphor-laden "Shake The Sugartree," the humorous "Cleopatra, Queen of Denial," the country shuffle "How Gone Is Goodbye," the ballad of independence and strength "Let That Pony Run," and the hard honky-tonker "Do You Know Where Your Man Is?" Her continued success in 1993 drew a Country Music Association nomination for Female Vocalist of the Year.

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"I feel so much involved in {touring}. I know I'm still a songwriter, but I have to remind myself."

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Her marriage to DiPiero makes collaboration easy. The somewhat autobiographical tune "Homeward Looking Angel" grew gradually out of their partnership. The different parts came together over time, prompting Tillis to refer to the song as her "quilt song." One piece came from a riff DiPiero played at soundchecks, another from an Alfred Hitchcock film, another from a visit to Thomas Wolfe's Asheville, N.C., home. The chorus came when Tillis listened to John Prine's album, *The Missing Years*, on a road trip with DiPiero. "We got in, threw our bags on the living room floor and did not move from the kitchen table for a couple of hours, until it was written. It's almost like a baby. 'It's coming now'."



When it comes to making albums, Tillis keeps a somewhat slower pace than some of her country colleagues, who release an album annually. "Every album is like another chance to rise to the occasion," she reasons. "Every time I make a record I want to make [Bonnie Raitt's] *Nick Of Time*. I want to make an album that people will listen to for 10 or 20 years."

Eventually, Tillis hopes to apply her musical talent in other areas. "I'd like to get involved in film and theater,"

she says. Khouri has invited her to submit compositions for a documentary about Native American medicine women. "I think about Dolly [Parton] a lot. She's a big inspiration. It would be neat to have a broader outlet for my material, but it's too soon to worry about that right now. Dolly already had a lot of success. You don't branch out too soon."

*Jay Orr covers country and pop music for the Nashville Banner.*



# Marty Stuart

by Michael McCall

Marty Stuart has never been afraid to wear his influences on his sleeve.



It happens every summer to nearly every hard-working, hard-traveling music performer. As the summer bears down hard toward the end of August, and as the endless schedule of one-nighters runs together like too many early sunrises, there comes that suffocating sense of routine that can snuff the spark out of the most dedicated of entertainers.

Marty Stuart knows about August, but it has a double meaning for him. He left home the last week of August, 21 years

ago, to come to Nashville to become a full-fledged member of Lester Flatt's road band, where he stayed until the bluegrass singer's death in 1979. Shortly after that, of course, he started a long stint as Johnny Cash's guitarist. But Stuart's been working harder than ever the last few years, partly because it's his name on the marquee, and partly because the style of music to which he's devoted his life hit a crescendo at the same time his career took an upward turn.

So, for Stuart, the dog days of summer

**Searching**

**For His**

**Signature**

**Song**

are usually balanced by the sense of celebration and reflection that come with an important anniversary. But even when everything is coming up roses, August has a way of wilting the bloom. Stuart felt it this year and, being an honest sort,

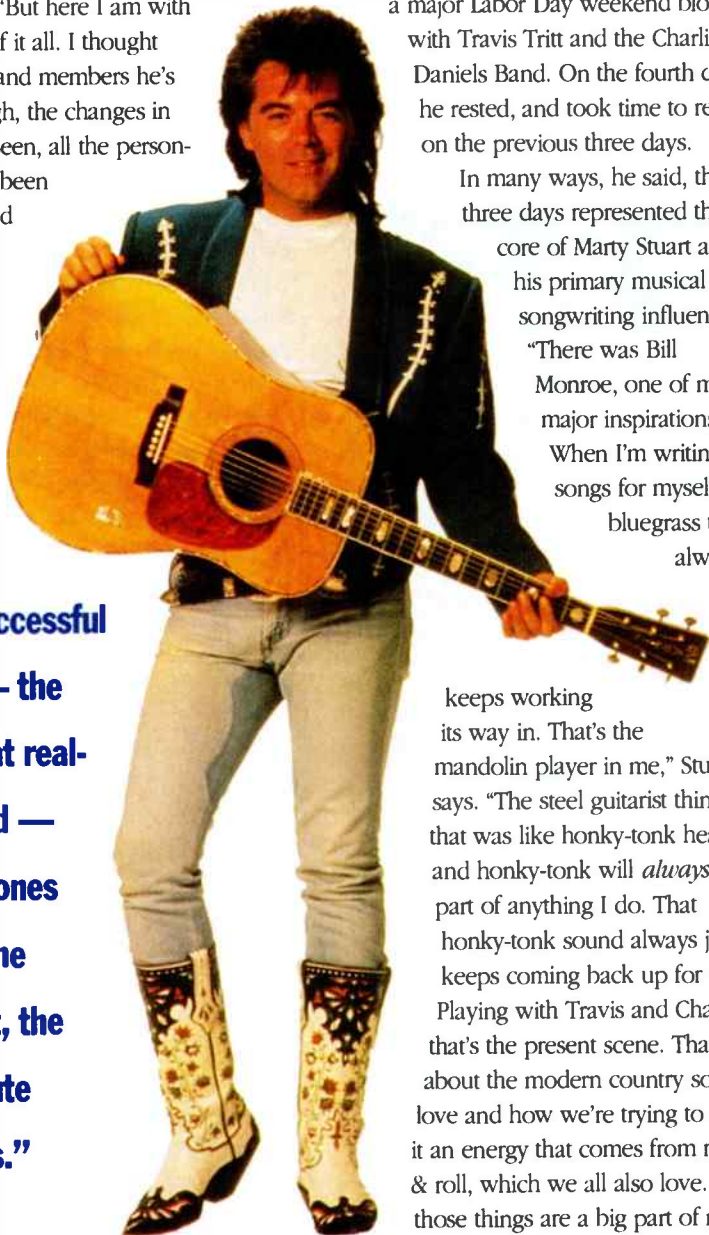
admitted that a grueling schedule and the oppressive weather made it tough to keep beating his chest night after night.

Then, on the Saturday before Labor Day, he picked up a newspaper in a Midwestern town and noticed that Bill Monroe was performing that same night about five miles away.

Marty Stuart, at the time, was 34 years old. Bill Monroe was 81. Stuart contacted Monroe, invited himself to visit, and spent the afternoon with him. If Stuart sometimes feels like he's been hitting the highway a long time — and he has — there's nothing like spending a few hours with someone who has been doing it for about four decades longer.

"Everybody gets road weary," says Stuart. "But here I am with the daddy of it all. I thought about the band members he's been through, the changes in music he's seen, all the personal stuff he's been through. And the thing is, through it all, he's kept working

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**"My most successful songs — the ones that really scored — are the ones that came real fast, the 15-minute wonders."**



hard. He's stayed dedicated. Nothing takes the place of divine inspiration, and Bill Monroe has a whole lot of that. But it's got to be combined with dedication. I ran into him at the perfect time. Talk about a shot in the arm."

The next day, Stuart visited the annual steel guitarists convention in St. Louis that precedes the hall of fame ceremony. Once again he was struck by what he saw. Here he was, surrounded by musicians, many of them unknown but all of them dedicated to the emotional wail of this odd instrument that stands on four spindly legs like an undernourished insect.

The following day, Stuart was in Dallas, where he performed that night in a major Labor Day weekend blowout with Travis Tritt and the Charlie Daniels Band. On the fourth day, he rested, and took time to reflect on the previous three days.

In many ways, he said, those three days represented the core of Marty Stuart and his primary musical and songwriting influences. "There was Bill Monroe, one of my major inspirations. When I'm writing songs for myself, the bluegrass thing always

keeps working its way in. That's the mandolin player in me," Stuart says. "The steel guitarist thing, that was like honky-tonk heaven, and honky-tonk will *always* be a part of anything I do. That honky-tonk sound always just keeps coming back up for me. Playing with Travis and Charlie, that's the present scene. That's about the modern country sound I love and how we're trying to give it an energy that comes from rock & roll, which we all also love. All of those things are a big part of me.

Those influences just keep coming back, season after season."

Stuart has never been afraid to wear his influences on his sleeve, to admit that his music is built on a variety of legendary pillars who drew him into music and who continue to inspire him. At the same time, however, he explains that one way people like Johnny Cash and Roger Miller and Bob Dylan and Buck Owens have influenced him is their willingness to brandish their individuality and to have the nerve to pursue a personal style. "It takes guts to get out there on the edge and bang your own drum, but it's worth it," says the rooster-maned singer.

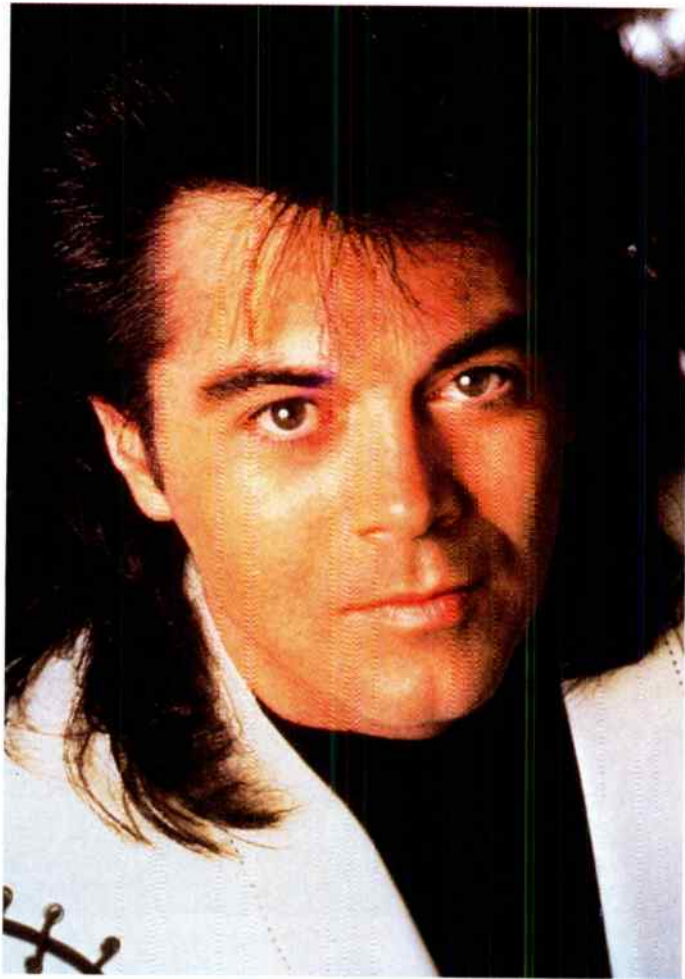
Stuart decided early this year to devote as much of his precious spare time to writing songs. "I really tried to make it an adventure, to not just write songs or find songs that fit a pattern," he notes.

For the first time, Stuart wrote at length with another of his heroes, Harlan Howard. "I think he's the guy who, as a songwriter, has meant more to me than anyone. When I first got into Buck Owens, I noticed that everything Harlan wrote had a smile on it. It was very danceable, and it represented everything good about country music. He has a way of making you smile and forget your troubles, and it's entertaining."

He also contacted another legendary country songwriting veteran, Whitey Shafer, who Stuart had never met until Shafer picked him up at the airport one day. On the ride from the Dallas airport to Shafer's home, the older songwriter said he had a title to play with, "If I'd Have Shot You When I Met You, I'd Be Getting Out About Now."

"That's a thing I've been noticing about these great writers," Stuart says. "They have a smirk on their face through the whole dang deal. They're still contributing, and they're very serious about their work, but they also know how to make fun of themselves and to joke about it all."

The singer has enjoyed a steady stream of hits over the last three years, but he figures he still hasn't put out his



■  
**“There’s a thing about taking an idea, a piece of paper, a pencil and a guitar and sitting down with someone. Once you’ve written a song with somebody, you’ve forged a friendship that will last an eternity.”**

signature song yet. “The only thing I’m missing is that centerpiece, that universal song, that undeniable smash,” he admits. “That’s the thing I’m waiting for. I’m glad I’ve had to work for it and had to wait for it. It would have been heady to come out of nowhere. I respect Billy Ray Cyrus because of that. I think everyone should be given five years of mistakes coming out of the chute, and he’s not making a whole lot of them.”

Although Stuart enjoys the challenge of writing alone, he also has come to savor the relationships formed through co-writing, too. “If one pops through me without any help, and it rings true, I love it,” he says. “I love that feeling. But there’s a thing about taking an idea, a piece of paper, a pencil and a guitar and sitting down with someone. Once you’ve written a song with somebody, you’ve forged a friendship that will last an eternity.”

His hits have come as both a solo writer and as a co-writer. “My most

successful songs — the ones that really scored — are the ones that came real fast, the 15-minute wonders,” he says. “Ronny Scaife and I wrote ‘The Whiskey Ain’t Workin’ ’ in about 20 minutes, then we talked about fishing. ‘This One’s Gonna Hurt You (For A Long, Long Time)’ I wrote on an airplane in Salt Lake City on the runway. I had just left Roger Miller’s home in New Mexico. I could feel it coming as we were leaving. I called Roger and sang it to him when I was finished. I told him I’d finally finished a song I was not ashamed of writing.

“With Paul Kennerley and me, it usually takes us six months to write a song. ‘Tempted’ is probably my favorite song I’ve done, and it was the one that came out the fastest for us.”

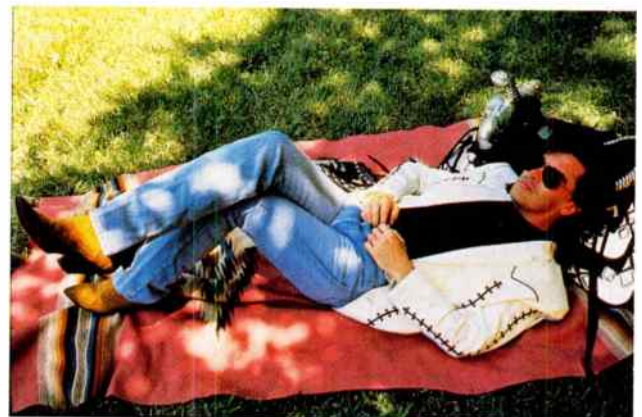
Stuart doesn’t save all of his songs for himself. Among the more successful songs he’s written for others includes “A Little Bit of Love” for Wynonna, “You’re Right, I’m

Wrong” for George Strait and “True Confessions” for Joy White.

Several months before his memorable Labor Day weekend, Stuart had another few days of meeting and working alongside many of his idols. He participated in Willie Nelson’s special 60th birthday celebration in Austin, Texas, which included a series of events culminating in a network TV special. A small jam session with Bob Dylan in a dressing room led to Stuart performing with the famed singer/songwriter for the TV show. He also spent a lot of time watching and talking with Nelson, Paul Simon, Kris Kristofferson and others.

After talking at length about those experiences, he quipped, “If I don’t make a good album this year, it won’t be because the influences and inspirations weren’t there. I’ve had a pretty incredible year in who I’ve been able to be around. I hope a little of that magic rubbed off.”

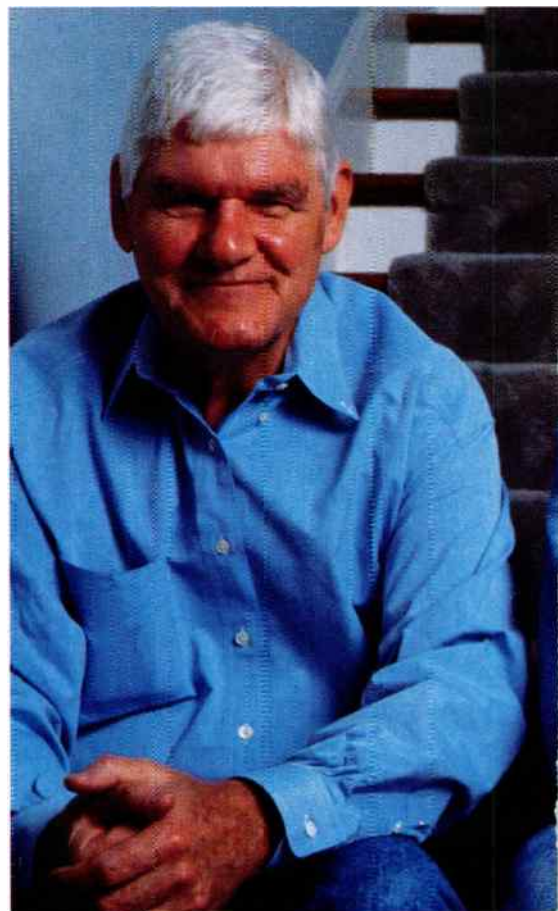
*Michael McCall is a Nashville-based freelance writer.*



# Harlan Howard & Jackson Leap

## Passing the Torch

by Robert K. Oermann



The world of song publishing has become steadily more complex, but Nashville's "Mr. Songwriter" and his "little baby boy" have stripped it back down to its basics.

Harlan Howard and his sole staff writer, Jackson Leap, have reduced this business to its simplest components: a publisher and a composer; a mentor and a learner: a song and a critique; a guitar and a tape recorder.

One of these songwriters is a music legend. One is just beginning to bloom.

Harlan Howard, 66, has written more than 100 hits, published more than 4,000 songs and is the only composer in Music City with a string of songwriting successes spanning 35 years. His classics include "I Fall To Pieces," "Heartaches By The Number," "Life Turned Her That Way" and "The Chokin' Kind." And he's still at it. Howard's co-written "Blame It On Your Heart" was a number one smash for Patty Loveless in 1993.

Jackson Leap, 36, is the co-writer of Reba McEntire's 1985 hit "Have I

PHOTOS: BETH GWINN





Got A Deal For You.” But he has spent most of his 16-year Nashville career trying to find a way to fit into Music Row’s corporate culture.

“The town is so big now, more splintered and fragmented,” comments Howard. “And it seems that the songwriters are more corporate-structured now. Hell, in 1960 there wasn’t even a copyright lawyer in town.”

Like Harlan, Jackson Leap is from country’s “old school.” A native of Lake of the Ozarks, Mo., he has spent years trying to find a publishing home for himself and his back-to-basics tunes.

“I’ve always been real leery about signing with a major publisher because you kind of get lost in the shuffle,” says Leap. “I wanted to be somewhere where there would be some really intense scrutiny of my work.

“And I don’t do a lot of schmoozing and all that.”

He has worked as a full-time cook for most of his Music City sojourn. And with off-work hours devoted to writing, that doesn’t leave much time for socializing.

Leap’s first publishing contract was with Cedarwood, 1980-84, where he got album tracks by John Schneider, David Frizzell, Faron Young and others. A stint at Multimedia, 1984-88, resulted in the Reba McEntire single.

“But I knew how fickle that was,” says Leap. “One single does not make a career. In fact, I wrote a song back then called ‘A Single A Year’; and one of the lines in it says, ‘It don’t mean squat/If your lyrics are hot/If you don’t get a single a year.’ You see, I’ve always been kind of conservative and responsible. I just didn’t feel comfortable financially. And I didn’t want to live off of publisher advances.”

So Jackson Leap continued to cook, everywhere from the Cracker Barrel to the Westside Athletic Club. He also signed with a small company called the Don King Music Group and got mainly independent-label cuts for a couple of years.

By the dawn of the ‘90s, Harlan Howard was the unchallenged grand patriarch of the Nashville songwriting scene. For the past 10 years the community has been saluting him with a fall event called the Harlan Howard Birthday Bash. It gathers the cream of the crop of Nashville’s writers and singers in a massive annual “summit meeting” of talent on the BMI grounds.

The subject of all this hoopla is revered by both peers and newcomers because of his astonishing creativity and longevity. Greats such as George Jones, The Kingston Trio, Brenda Lee, Conway Twitty, Hank Williams Jr., Waylon Jennings, Dolly Parton, Ray Charles, Glen Campbell, Patsy Cline, Kitty Wells and Lefty Frizzell have recorded Harlan Howard’s tunes in years gone by. During the past decade, the songwriting titan has added The Judds, Rodney Crowell, Ricky Van Shelton, Nanci Griffith, Highway 101, Pam Tillis, the Forester Sisters, Barbara Mandrell and Doug Stone to the list of top artists who have scored big with his songs.

But about three years ago Harlan decided that he wanted new mountains to climb. Always his own best songplugger, he formed Harlan Howard Music (with administration handled by Sony Tree) to put his contacts to work for others.

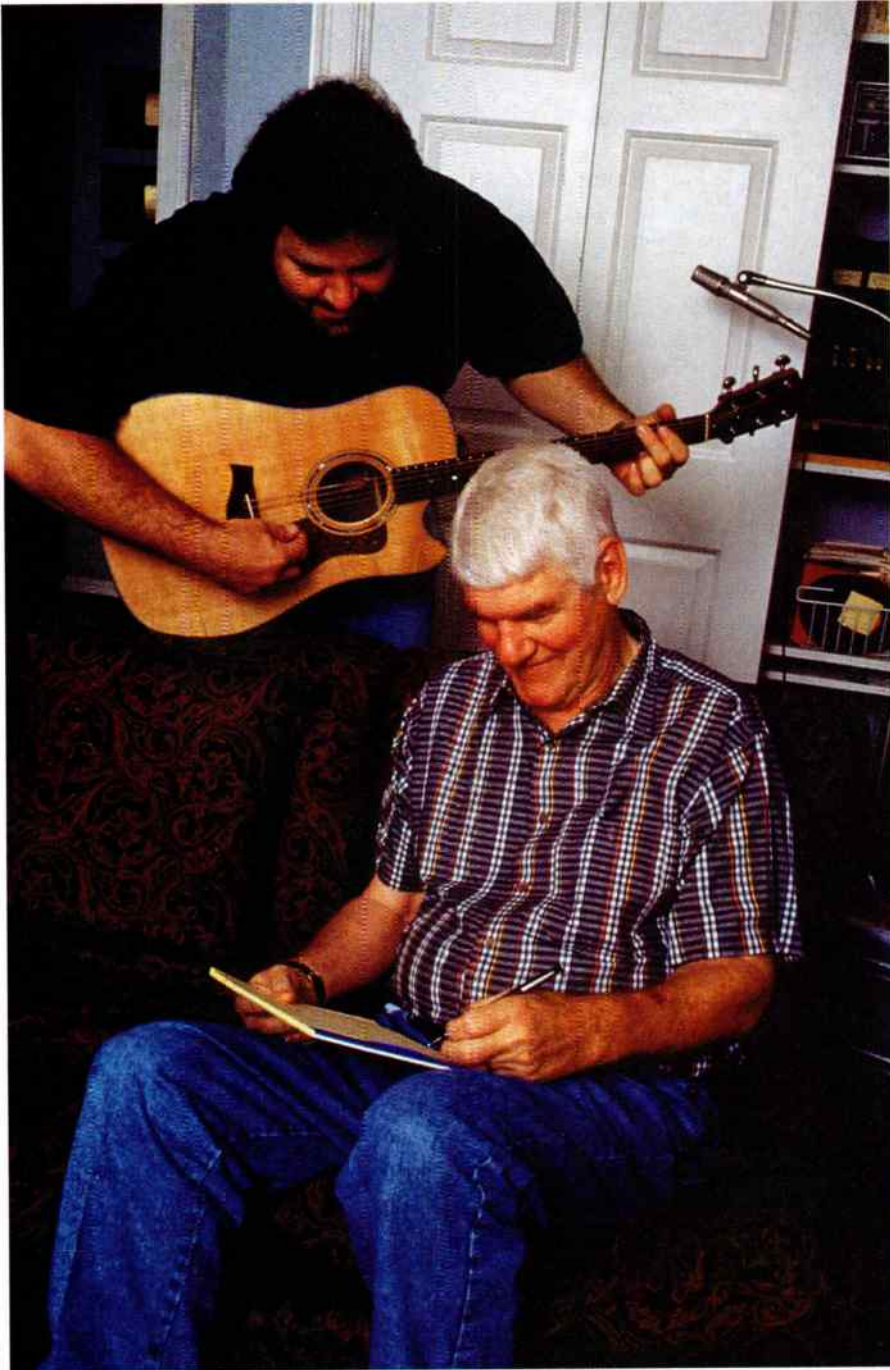
“After 4,000 songs I have said almost everything I have to say,” says Howard. “But I’m still looking for a window that hasn’t been looked through a whole bunch.”

“I haven’t lost it,” says the still-active writing legend. “I can still get it up once in awhile if I’ve got something interesting to write about, something fun or something serious, or just a neat way of saying something.

“After 4,000 songs I have said almost everything I have to say. But I’m still looking for a window that hasn’t been looked through a whole bunch. Most of my time right now is either spent pitching or hanging around, but a little part of my brain is still seeking that unique thought wave.”

Jackson Leap, on the other hand, is at a point in his life where the songs are coming fast and furious. Melanie Howard, Harlan’s wife and business partner, contacted Jackson after she heard one of his tapes in a Warner Bros. Records office in 1990.

Harlan and Jackson met for lunch and “hit it off grandly,” as Jackson



recalls. The next day the legend hosted the younger man at his home and they co-wrote a song in 15 minutes.

"After that day, Harlan just said, 'Bring me everything you've got,'" recalls Leap.

They shared their mistrust of corporate music-making and made a five-year business agreement.

Howard gave Leap \$5,000 to seal the deal and put \$20,000 in the bank so his financially cautious signee would "have a safety net" and feel secure enough to quit his chef job.

"I told him, 'Give me two years to

accumulate enough songs and you'll never have to flip hamburgers again,'" recalls Howard. "We made handshake promises. He promised to do his best to write. I promised him that I would pitch his tunes."

"It is so simple," says Leap, "as it should be." Thus was born the unique partnership between Harlan Howard Music and its one and only staff songwriter.

Jackson Leap quit cooking for a living two years ago. Within six months of signing with Harlan he had 12 cuts as a songwriter, including recordings

by Crystal Gayle, McBride & the Ride, Jo-El Sonnier and George Strait. Collin Raye's "I Want You Bad," plus "I've Got A Love" by Matthews, Wright & King and "Shame, Shame, Shame, Shame" by Mark Collie have all become singles for Leap. "The Will," sung by Mark Chesnutt, is probably next on the charts.

"And he's not nearly as hot as he's going to be," vows Howard. "I'm on a crusade."

"When I'm playing demos for a lot of these producers, they'll say, 'Boy, you are really writing well these days.' And then I'll have the pleasure of saying, 'Hey, that's my little baby boy, Jackson!'"

Harlan's custom for pitching to producers includes playing his newest song, a few of Leap's latest and some golden oldies from the vast Howard song catalog. These pitch recipes are decided at regular song-critique meetings among Harlan, Melanie and Jackson.

"We do six songs in a demo session," explains Harlan as one of these sessions begins in his living room. "Out of that, I think we need two killer songs, songs that are hits for any one of several stars. What I'm looking for is, 'Wow: I'd like to hear that on the radio.' And that's worth the demo cost, \$500 a song, \$3,000 for the session. What we're doing today is trying to get those six songs together."

Melanie puts on Jackson's home-made guitar-and-voice tape of "I'd Love To," a fidelity tune that the Howards already know he's been working on. "That's a great chorus," muses Harlan as the song ends. "The verses seem a little long to me," says Jackson. Harlan suggests some lyric changes to avoid offending female listeners. Everyone seems very enthusiastic about this effort.

"That's one of the four new ones I wrote this week," says the prolific Leap. "See?" smiles his mentor. "He writes 10, maybe 20, songs to my one. And that's fine. He's young. He's supposed to do that."

Harlan next offers his suggestions for a "girl's song" by Jackson called "Somebody Will." When Melanie puts on "Backsliding Again," her husband responds merrily with a tale of a tune with the same title he wrote years

"I've always been real leery about signing with a major publisher because you kind of get lost in the shuffle," says Leap. "I wanted to be somewhere where there would be some really intense scrutiny of my work."

ago. "Have a little more fun with that," he suggests. "It could be redone. I like it, but it's my least favorite so far."

"I don't do a lot of fine-tuning until after I've played a song for Harlan," says Jackson. "Not until we come to an agreement that this is one to really pursue. What I've learned from him is what not to write. Don't waste your time on something that has been beaten to death before."

"If It Ain't You" goes by without much comment, but everyone perks up at a soulful, minor-key number called "Strange Things." "I love that,"

says Melanie. "Oh, it's weird," Jackson demurs. "That's why I like it," responds Harlan.

"Now before you start this one," says Jackson to Melanie, "I have to explain. I was thinking about this session yesterday and wondering what Oermann was going to call this little article. I thought it would be kind of neat to call it something like 'Passing The Torch, Keeping The Flame.' And then I thought, 'Hell, I'm not gonna tell him that: I'm gonna write about it.' This is kind of a neat idea."

Even before the song concludes, Harlan is offering enthusiastic encouragement. Melanie concurs that Leap's

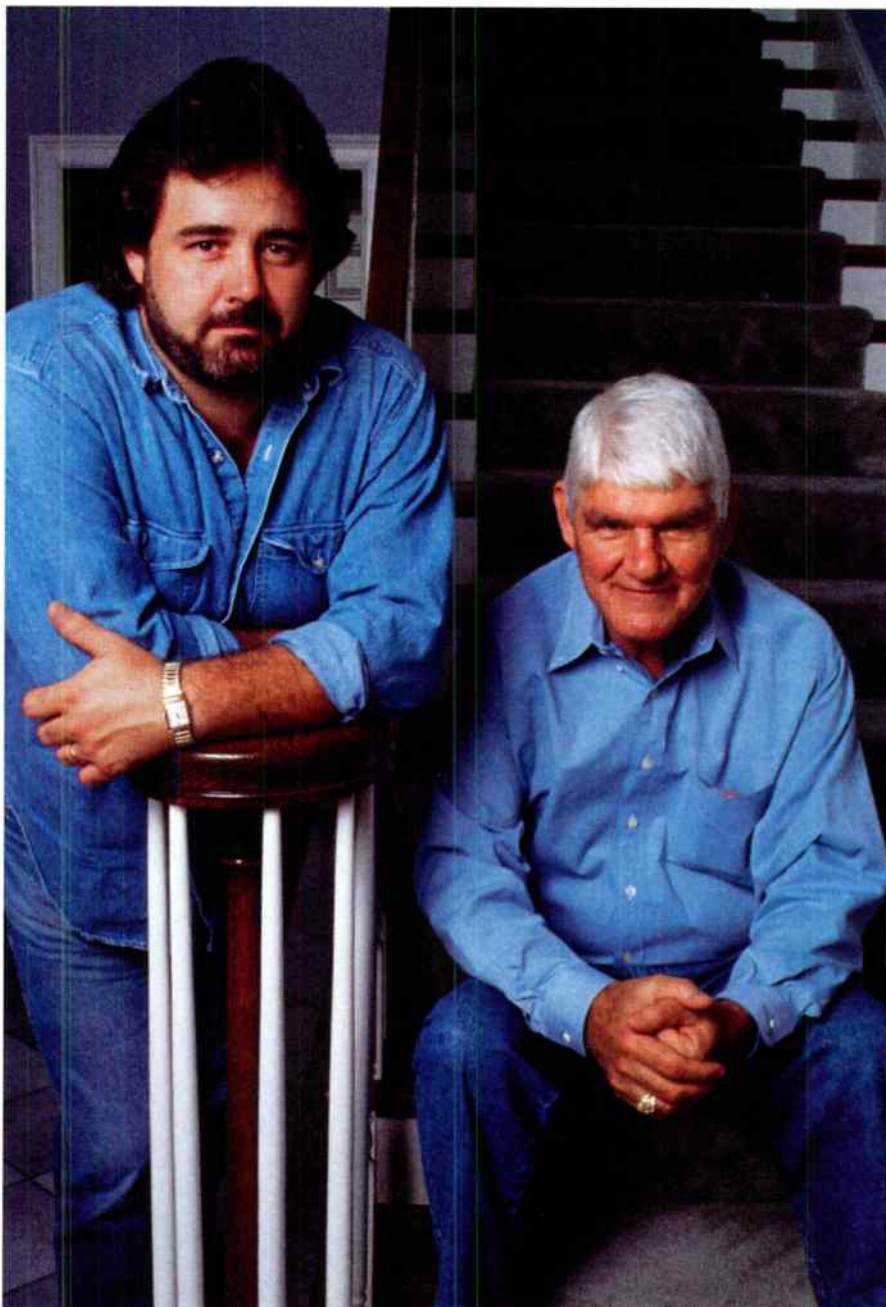
latest are worth scheduling a demo session.

"You know," Harlan tells his staff writer, "you're allowing me to live life as a kid again. There comes a time in your life when you want to go back, to make the circle."

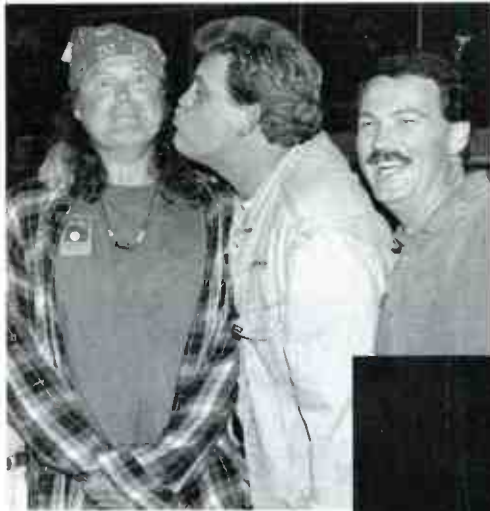
"He's just adopted me," marvels Jackson. "I feel kind of safe now."

Harlan Howard plans to open an office in Nashville this fall, in a building that its owners refer to as "The House That Jackson Built."

*Robert K. Oermann is an author and features writer for the Tennessean in Nashville.*



# BIRTHDAY BASH CELEBRATES 10TH YEAR



► Performers Freddie Hart ("Easy Lovin'") and Stewart Harris ("Only Love").

◄ Songwriter Steve Davis, RCA's Thom Schuyler and Irving Music's David Conrad.



LARRY HILL

► The 10th anniversary of the Harlan Howard Birthday Bash attracted approximately 3,000 music fans to the BMI parking lot for an extravaganza of hit songs and hot songwriters, led by country songwriting legend Howard. More than \$45,000 was raised through the concert for the Nashville Songwriters Association International. Some of those who graced the stage at the Bash were (l-r): songwriter Hillary Kanter, Harlan Howard, BMI's Roger Sovine, co-host Pat Alger, NSAI's Pat Rogers and co-host Ronnie Milsap.



BETH GWINN



◄ Bruce Sudano, BMI's Joyce Rice, surprise performer Donna Summer and NSAI's Pat Rogers backstage.

BETH GWINN

# MUSIC ROW INVITATIONAL RAISES FUNDS FOR PRESTON LAB

**T**he 1993 American Airlines Music Row Celebrity Invitational, now in its third year as a fundraising weekend benefiting the T. J. Martell Foundation's Frances Williams Preston Laboratory at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, collected more than \$170,000 — a 42 percent increase over last year.



▼ John Michael Montgomery and host Billy Dean mix it up at the Music Row Bowling Bash at Hermitage Lanes.



▲ Hanging out at Wind Tree Golf Course were corporate chairman Roger Sovine of BMI, events chairman Paul Jankowski, BMI's Frances Preston and Music Row Celebrity Golf Invitational host Vince Gill.



▲ Sponsorship chairman Stan Moress, Nashville fundraising chairman Jimmy Bowen and BMI's Frances Preston toast the success of the American Airlines Music Row Celebrity Invitational.



► Whitworth Racquet Club was the site of the Music Row Celebrity Tennis Invitational. Key players included tournament director Dave West Kiefer, host Michael W. Smith, tournament director Cindy Davis, and tennis chairmen Rick Blackburn and Linda Albright.



▲ WSIX-FM's John King (at mike) presents a check for \$16,200 to the Martell Foundation as events chairman Paul Jankowski, BMI's Frances Preston and Martell founder Tony Martell applaud. The presentation was made at the weekend's kickoff cocktail party sponsored by BMI and the Nashville Chamber of Commerce.

BETH GWINN

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ALAN MAYOR

BETH GWINN

# BMI HONORS NINE WITH STUDENT COMPOSER AWARDS



The nine winners of the 41st Annual BMI Student Composer Awards received awards and cash prizes totalling \$15,000 at a ceremony and reception at New York's Plaza Hotel in June. Pictured (l-r, rear) are: Michael Oesterle (Princeton University), Derek Charke (University of North Texas), Carlos Carrillo (Eastman School of Music), Philip Kim (Juilliard School Pre-College Division), Laurence Gingold (Manhattan School of Music Prep. Division), Corinne Nordmann

(Juilliard School), Andrew Jacobs (Curtis Institute of Music), Heather Schmidt (Indiana University) and Michael Edwards (Stanford University); (front) BMI's Emily Good, BMI's Ralph Jackson, Awards consultant Ulysses Kay, BMI's Frances Preston, Awards chairman Milton Babbitt and BMI's Barbara Petersen.



The distinguished judging panel traveled from as far away as San Diego and as nearby as Manhattan's Upper West Side to meet at BMI's New York headquarters for a final day of judging. Pictured (l-r) are: Leon Kirchner, Mario Davidovsky, Richard Pittman and David Ward-Steinman.



The preliminary judges took a break after many weeks of examining the hundreds of entries in the competition. They are (l-r): Bun Ching Lam, David Leisner and Chester Biscardi.



Michael Oesterle (r), winner of the 2nd annual William Schuman Prize, is pictured at the awards reception with BMI's Ralph Jackson, who serves as director of the Student Composer Awards. This special award is given each year to the score judged "most outstanding" in the competition in honor of the late William Schuman, who served for 40 years as the chairman and then chairman emeritus of the awards. Oesterle was born in Ulm, Germany, and currently resides in Vancouver, BC, Canada. He is 22 years of age and a composition student of Claudio Spies at Princeton University.



Each year one Student Composer Award-winning work is chosen for a performance by the Young Musicians Foundation (YMF) Debut Orchestra in Los Angeles. In March, the orchestra gave the world premiere performance of "Evocation" for orchestra by 1992 Student Composer Award winner Pierre Jalbert. YMF conductor Daniel Hege (l) is pictured backstage at the Japan America Theater with Jalbert.



Pictured (l-r) at the reception are: BMI's Thea Zavin and Barbara Petersen, and Maestro Carlos Surinach.



Carlos Carrillo accepts his BMI Student Composer Award, presented on stage by Milton Babbitt and BMI's Frances Preston. Carrillo is a native of Puerto Rico and currently studies at The Eastman School of Music. His winning work was "Cantares" for orchestra.

# MUSIC PEOPLE



◀ **Friends In High Places.** Senator Dennis DeConcini (D-AZ) was a guest speaker at the National Music Publishers Association annual meeting, held at the Park Lane Hotel in New York. Pictured with DeConcini (c) are BMI's Charlie Feldman (l) and Del Bryant.

BMI GARY GERSHOFF



◀ **Hot Seat.** Arista chief Tim DuBois (seated) enjoyed the royal treatment from his subjects at a dinner hosted by BMI to honor another number one from Arista duo Brooks & Dunn: "We'll Burn That Bridge," written by Ronnie Dunn and Don Cook. Paying their respects with their souvenir BMI Tennessee Julep cups are (l-r) Dunn, Sony Tree's Paul Worley, Cook (also producer), producer Scott Hendricks, BMI's Jody Williams and Kix Brooks.

BETH GWINN

▶ **Soul Success.** Pictured backstage after Brenda Russell's performance at the Wilshire Ebell congratulating her on the success of her recent release, "Soul Talkin'," are (l-r): "Soul Talkin'" co-producer Ron Fair, songwriter Allee Willis, BMI's Barbara Cane, Turner Management president Dennis Turner, Russell, singer Oleta Adams, actress Rosie O'Donnell and attorney Gary Gilbert.



ARNOLD TURNER



► **Sharing The Blame.**

Songwriters Harlan Howard and Kostas and singer Patty Loveless were the star attractions at a party celebrating their collaboration on the #1 single, "Blame It On My Heart," from Patty's debut Epic album, *Only What I Feel*. Posing with the party favors are (l-r): Epic Records' Jack Lameier, Sony Tree's Tracy Gershon, Songs of Polygram International's Doug Howard, BMI's Jody Williams, producer Emory Gordy Jr., Patty Loveless, Harlan Howard, Harlan Howard; and Kostas.



► **Most Performed Song.** Daryl Simmons stopped by BMI's Los Angeles office to pick up his BMI Film Music Award for the Most Performed Song "End of the Road" from the movie *Boomerang*. Pictured presenting him with the award are BMI's Aja Kimura and Dexter Moore.



▲ **A Team For The Ages.**

A songwriting team for more than 30 years, Bert Kaempfert and Herbert Rehbein were posthumously inducted into the Songwriters Hall Of Fame this year, and BMI celebrated with family members and music publishers at a luncheon held on the afternoon of the ceremony. Pictured during the luncheon at BMI headquarters in New York City are (l-r): GEMA's Reinhold Kreile, Ruth Rehbein, Marion Kaempfert, EMI's Paul Tannen, BMI's Frances Preston, EMI's Joanne Boris, BMI's Ekke Schnabel, GEMA's Christian Bruhn, and Doris Kaempfert.



◀ **On The Right Track.** BMI executives recently joined November Records staffers in congratulating David Broza on the completion of his album *Time of Trains*. Broza (second from right) is pictured at Nell's following his headline performance at a party for *Interview* magazine. Shown with the artist are (l-r): BMI's Del Bryant, November Records president Jamie Biddle, and BMI's Charlie Feldman.

▼ **Lalo-palooza.** BMI and Atlantic Records recently held a reception to celebrate the release of legendary composer Lalo Schifrin's latest album, *Jazz Meets the Symphony*, featuring Ray Brown and Grady Tate. Pictured at the reception are (l-r): CAA's Brian Loucks, Atlantic's Paul Cooper, Schifrin, Brown and BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross.



▲ **Home Boy.** BMI heralded Billy Burnette's return to his country roots with a listening party for his latest album, *Coming Home*, on Capricorn Records. Billy began his career as a country songwriter/artist before joining Fleetwood Mac in 1987. He is currently spokesman for the Crown Royal Country Music Series '93

and has a starring role in the film *Slow Burn*, scheduled for a spring 1994 release. He also performs six of his songs in the movie. Caught in a friendly celebration at the party are (l-r): publisher Juan Contreras, songwriter Dennis Morgan, Burnette, Tanya Tucker, publisher David Briggs, Deborah Allen and BMI's Clay Bradley.

▶ **Thanks A Million (Or Two).** Recording artist Robbie Dupree (r) scored big in 1980 with his pop hit "Steal Away." To prove that a great song lives on, BMI's Mark Fried recently presented Dupree with a certificate marking the song's two million performances on U.S. radio and television. The presentation was made following Dupree's performance on Centerstage at New York's World Trade Center.



BMI/ESTER COHEN

ALAN MAYOR

BMI/GARY GERSHOFF

# MUSIC PEOPLE



▲ **Wheeling And Dealing.** BMI was a sponsor of the recent NAB Radio Convention, hosting a concert/cocktail reception starring Asleep At The Wheel. Pictured at the event are (l-r): BMI's John Shaker and Roger Sovine, NAB president Eddie Fritts, BMI's Larry Sweeney, and BMI board member J. Clinton Formby.

▼ **Ride 'Em Cowboy.** Singer/songwriter Toby Keith enjoyed chart-topping success straight out of the chute with his debut single, "Should've Been A Cowboy," from his self-titled Mercury album. Basking in the glow of a number one record are (l-r, seated): Mercury Records' Harold Shedd, co-producer; Keith; co-producer Nelson Larkin; (standing) BMI's Roger Sovine, Polygram Music Publishing's Doyle Brown, and BMI's Clay Bradley.

ALAN MAYOR



▲ **Give Him A Hand.** Composer Alan Menken (c) needed an extra hand to help carry his numerous BMI Pop and Film/TV Awards for his work on Walt

Disney Pictures' *Beauty And The Beast* and *Aladdin*. Pictured with him are Walt Disney Pictures' Chris Montan and BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross.



◀ **Powerful Pairing.** The singing voices of the Princess and Aladdin will come together once again as Tony Award winner Lea Salonga is joined by Brad Kane on her forthcoming Atlantic Records album. Their debut in pop music follows Salonga's success in *Miss Saigon* and *Les Miserables*, Kane's success in *She Loves Me*, and their success together on the multi-platinum *Aladdin* soundtrack. Pictured celebrating at BMI headquarters in New York City are (l-r): BMI's Norma Grossman and Mark Fried, Salonga, Kane, and BMI's Jean Banks.



▼ **His Cups Runneth Over.** Songwriter Bruce Burch (c) shows off the engraved Tennessee Julep cups, presented by BMI's Thomas Cain and Clay Bradley, commemorating his number one single, "It's Your Call," recorded by Reba McEntire.



▲ **Byrd Watching.** White-hatted country singer Tracy Byrd stood tall at a listening party celebrating the release of his self-titled debut album on MCA. Highlighting the festivities was his champagne launching of two tractor trailers from Humboldt Express — emblazoned with Tracy's

album cover and the CMT logo — ready to truck all over the countryside. Prepared to break the bottle are (l-r): managers Ken Ritter and Joe Carter, MCA Nashville chairman Bruce Hinton, Byrd, MCA Nashville president Tony Warner, and BMI's Harry Warner.

▼ **Rising Sun.** Jimmie Dale Gilmore (l) celebrated the release of his new Elektra album, *Spinning Around The Sun*, with a few tunes during a listening party at BMI

Nashville. Those cheering on Jimmie Dale were (l-r): BMI's Jody Williams, Elektra Records' Danny Kahn, manager Mike Crowley and BMI's Roger Sovine.



▲ **Family Jewels.** Composer Patrick Williams won an Emmy for his work on the TV production of Danielle Steel's "Jewels." Williams is pictured being congratulated by BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross.

► **Simply Smashing.** As members of Delaware grunge band Smashing Orange passed through the Big Apple, BMI invited them into the office to congratulate them on their signing with MCA Records. Pictured outside BMI headquarters in New York City are (l-r): Smashing Orange's Kevin Wiggins and Rick Hodgson, BMI's Jeff Cohen, and Smashing Orange's Steve Wagner and Rob Montejo.



ALAN MAYOR

BETH GWINN

BETH GWINN

BMI/JOHN COLETTA

► **New Music Mavericks.** As the annual New Music Nights Festival moved into the New York City venues, BMI moved into Irving Plaza on opening night to showcase some of the region's hottest alternative bands, including the Dambuilders, Magnapop, the Juliana Hatfield Three, Orangutang, and Smack Melon. The Boston-based Dambuilders started the show off on the right foot with their opening performance. Pictured backstage in the top photo are Dambuilders' Kevin March (front), and (l-r) Joan Wasser, Eric Masunaga, Dave Derby and manager Rachel Felder with BMI's Mark Fried. The Juliana Hatfield Three prepared for a party in their honor next door following their performance. Pictured in the second photo backstage seated in front of BMI's Jeff Cohen (l) and Charlie Feldman (r) are (l-r): The Juliana Hatfield Three's Todd Phillips, Juliana Hatfield, and Dean Fisher.



◀ **Mad Hatters.** Songwriter Paul Harrison (c) receives congratulations from BMI's Harry Warner (l) and Roger Sovine to honor the number one status of "Why Didn't I Think Of That," recorded by Doug Stone.



◀ **Amazon Journey.** Grammy Award-winning electric violinist and composer Charlie Bisharat is celebrating the release of his debut solo album, *Along the Amazon* on John Tesh's GTS Records. Bisharat performs with guests such as Jon Anderson and Strunz and Farah on the album. Pictured celebrating the release are (l-r): Tesh; BMI's Linda Livingston; Ken Antonelli, president GTS Records; Bisharat; Anderson and BMI's Rick Riccobono.

# MUSIC PEOPLE

BIMLESTER COHEN

BIM GARY GERBLOFF

BETH GWINN



◀ **Jazzin' It Up.** The BMI Jazz Composers Workshop held its annual year-end concert for a full house at Mannes College Of Music Concert Hall on New York City's Upper West Side. Pictured with the composers whose works were performed are (seated, l-r): workshop musical director Manny Albam, workshop director **Burt Korall**, and workshop associate musical director **Jim McNeely**.

BMI/JOHN COLETTA

▶ **Something To Celebrate.** BMI and Qwest/Reprise Records hosted a reception honoring veteran jazz vocalist and two-time Grammy nominee **Ernestine Anderson's** latest release *Now And Then*. Pictured at the reception are (l-r): Qwest president **Jim Swindell**, BMI's **Barbara Cane**, Warner Brothers' **Ricky Schultz**, Anderson, *Now And Then* executive producer **Stix Hooper**, and Qwest's **Michael Stradford**.



▲ **On Site With Dwight.** **Dwight Yoakam** (c) performed his way along the East Coast, and some BMI folks finally caught up with him at the

Garden State Arts Center in New Jersey. Pictured backstage with him are BMI's **Kirsten Nichols** (l) and **Alison Smith**.

▼ **Tickling The Ivories.** Singer/songwriter **Suzette Charles** showed BMI's **Jeff Cohen** a few things on the piano during a recent visit to BMI's offices in New York City.



BMI/BARRY MORGENSTEIN

BMI/GARY GERSHOFF

# MUSIC PEOPLE

▼ **Bongo, Bongo, Bongo.** World-renowned bongo player Preston Epps, who staked his claim to fame in the 1960s with his top ten single "Bongo Rock," visited BMI's L.A. office recently. Pictured (l-r) are: manager Jeanne Monti, BMI's Rick Riccobono, Epps, and BMI's Barbara Cane.



BETH COVINO



▲ **Gospel Truth.** Pictured at BMI's Nashville office are (l-r): BMG Music's Joe Shell, BMI's Jody Williams, BMG Music's Elwyn Raymer, and Linda and

Rick Elias, who got together to celebrate Rick's signing to BMG's gospel division.

▼ **Africa Bound.** Latin legend Johnny Pacheco stopped by BMI's New York headquarters just before heading to Cotonou, Benin, Africa for performances with singer Hector Cassanova and his band, Tombao Añjo. Pictured with Pacheco is BMI's Diane Almodovar.



► **Johnny On The Spot.** BMI recently honored composer John Williams (c) for his work on two of the top grossing films of 1992: *Hook* and *Home Alone 2: Lost In New York*. Shown presenting him with the awards following his sold-out performance at The Hollywood Bowl are BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross and Rick Riccobono.



▲ **Making A Splash.** Warner Bros. celebrated the release of its smash summer hit *Free Willy* with a special screening at the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences Theatre. Pictured at the screening are (l-r): Tim Boyle, recording engineer; Basil Poledouris, composer; BMI's Doreen Ringer Ross; Gary LeMel, president, Warner Bros. Music; and Bill Schrank, Warner Bros. Music.

BMI/LESTER COHEN

BMI/JOHN COLETTA

CHRIS HUNTER



▲ **BMI Is... Music!** BMI kicked off a new series this summer, entitled "BMI Is...", to showcase the New York region's diverse music community, and the first of the series, "BMI Is... Hip Hop," moved into New York City's New Music Cafe with performances by the area's hottest new Hip Hop writers. Pictured in the photo at

right following their performance are Kamal Bewise (l) and CeStyle (r) of Columbia Records' Total Pack with BMI's Kim Jackson. Pictured in the photo above following their performance are ATCO East/West recording artist Champ MC (r) and stage partner Tabu with Jackson.



BETH GWINN

BMI/CLAUDIA THOMPSON



◀ **Happy Camp-ers.** Reprise artist Shawn Camp (with guitar) marked his BMI affiliation with a preview performance for industry friends of songs from his debut album. The first single (with video), "Fallin' Never Felt So Good," was written by Camp and Will Smith. In attendance at BMI were (l-r): BMI's Jody Williams, Patrick Joseph Music's Pat Higdon, Warner/Reprise's Paige Levy, producer Mark Wright, Camp, Turn Key Management's Tanja Crouch, Smith, and BMI's Roger Sovine.

▼ **Absolutely Perfect.** A&M recording artist John Hiatt celebrated the release of his latest album *Perfectly Good Guitar* with a sold-out performance at the Roxy in

Hollywood. Pictured backstage at the performance are (l-r): BMI's Barbara Cane, Hiatt, A&M's Bob Garcia and BMI's Rick Riccobono.



▲ **Keepin' The Faith.** Warner Bros. recording artist Faith Hill (seated) signs her BMI writer affiliation agreement as (l-r) WB's Martha Sharp, producer Scott Hendricks, and BMI's Joyce Rice look on.

ALAN MAYOR



# MUSIC PEOPLE

▶ **Divine Diva.** Diva, a jazz orchestra featuring 15 musicians — all women — made its New York debut at Tavern On The Green. Pictured at the event (l-r) are: BMI's Burt Korall and Jean Banks; Diva's leader, drummer/composer Sherrie Maricle; and BMI's Bobby Weinstein.



▶ **The Prince And The Showgirl.** Grammy and Tony Award-winning composer Judd Woldin (l) was visited by BMI's Jean Banks at the world premiere of his new musical, *The Prince And The Pauper*, held at the San Mateo Performing Arts Center.



▶ **Fade To Black.** Singer/songwriter Jeff Black (c), a favorite on the Nashville circuit, is welcomed to the ranks of Music Row songwriters by (l-r) BMI's Clay Bradley, Ten Ten Music Group's Jewel Coburn and Barry Coburn, and BMI's Roger Sovine, upon signing his writing contract with the publishing company.

▶ **Get Ready, Get Set.** Polydor artists Get Set V.O.P. stopped by BMI's New York office to play the first single, "Pretty Brown Babies," from their latest album, *Voices Of The Projects*. Pictured with Get Set V.O.P.'s Infinite Kundalini (seated, left) and Kwabena The Triumphant (seated, right) are BMI's Kim Jackson and Thomas Valentino.



◀ **Mighty Oaks.** The Oak Ridge Boys stopped by the Las Vegas International Hotel, Restaurant and Gaming Show held at the Las Vegas Convention Center. Pictured (l-r) are: the Oak Ridge Boys' Steve Sanders and Joe Bonsall, BMI's Paul Bell, Nevada Hotel & Motel Association president Van Heffner, BMI's Gerry Freeman, and the Oak Ridge Boys' Richard Sterban and Duane Allen.



BMI/GARY GERSHOFF

BETH GWINN

BMI/CHUCK POLLIN



▼ **Walking On Air.** BMI's Clay Bradley (standing) distributes the affiliation papers to new Nashville signees the Floating Men: namely (l-r) Jeff Bishop, Jeff Holmes and Scott Evans.



◀ **Bringing Joy.** Columbia recording artist Joy White (seated) inks her BMI songwriter affiliation papers with encouragement from (l-r) BMI's Roger Sovine and Joyce Rice, and manager Bonnie Garner of Rothbaum & Garner.

# MUSIC PEOPLE



▲ **Lotsa Luck.** Capitol recording artist/songwriter Dave Koz was honored at a party thrown in honor of the release of his latest album, *Lucky Man*. Pictured at the celebration are (l-r): songwriter Stacey Piersa, BMI's Barbara Cane, Koz, and songwriters Allee Willis, and Allan Rich.

## BMI Staff/Titles

*For your convenience, the following is a list of the names and titles of BMI staffers whose pictures may appear in this issue.*

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The background of the entire page is a vibrant American flag, with its stars and stripes clearly visible. On the right side, there is a solid black silhouette of a cowboy wearing a wide-brimmed hat, facing left. The overall composition is patriotic and evokes a sense of American identity and history.

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