MOON-HILL MANAGEMENT

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B.W. STEVENSON
MICHAEL MURPHY
RUSTY WIER
STEVE FROMHOLZ
ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
KENNETH THREADGILL
Can you name the Willie Nelson Picnic people caricatured here by Dallas cartoonist Steve Brooks?
See page 37 for the answers.
"They didn't sell their visions..."

This Looks Like Willie's Year

"They are individuals, families, gangs who are bound together by the blues life... the ones who survive the plagues... The best music - the best of everything that is expressive of all this country's got to give is by and about them... (They are) the only ones who had reached their own rock bottom and got up... They searched for brothers and sisters, not friends... They didn't sell their vision - to sell their vision would have been to pretend it was theirs... They were all innocent. They were felons... They loved. They were the offspring of mid-twentieth-century broken consciousness. They were beyond the possibility of defeat... Nothing moves a mountain but itself..."

(By Emmett Grogan in his autobiographical novel, RINGOLEVIO.)

BY JAY MILNER

This looks like the Year of Willie Nelson! And as several music writers around the nation have written: It's about time.

For instance, a few months ago the staff of ESQUIRE magazine published its annual list of "100 Heavies" for the year ahead. Willie Nelson was among the hundred. The caption under Willie's picture said he was picked "because ESQUIRE believed he was the one most likely to replace Merle Haggard at the top of the mass popularity heap in country music in 1974.

And in June, ESQUIRE's chief competition, PENTHOUSE, ran a lengthy article by Todd Everett on the Willie Nelson phenomenon. Everett's topic sentence was: "Willie Nelson had begun to receive some of the popular recognition he deserves."

Then there was the enthusiastic New York TIMES review printed...
elsewhere in this program.

And in the June 6, 1974, edition of Zoo World, the music magazine, R. Serge Denisoff, in his review of Willie’s album “PHASES AND STAGES,” said, among other complimentary things: “The elegant thing about this album is the character development and the mood it creates, just like a Bergman or Fellini film. If this lp does not establish Willie Nelson as a country music superstar, nothing will. It’s a bit early for statements like this is the best cdw album of 1974, but it very well may be.”

How come all this sudden national attention? One answer to that question is probably catching up with Willie Nelson at long last. Nashville may be beginning to catch up with him; too—at long last. Since leaving Nashville, Willie has made two albums—both for Atlantic Records of New York. These albums have sold far better than any of the 20-odd he’d made previously in Nashville. “PHASES AND STAGES” had passed the 100,000 sales mark at last report, and was still rising. (This shouldn’t be interpreted as a total putdown of the “Nashville Sound”—The kind of commercial success it has enjoyed means it can’t be all bad. But regardless of how great a system might be, generally, it doesn’t necessarily mean that it will work for everybody—particularly artists, and Willie’s steady rising national popularity since he left Nashville indicates it was wrong for him.)

“I thought Nashville was the roughest. But I guess I’ve said that about them all.”
—From “Me and Paul” by Willie Nelson

***

Willie has written so many hit country songs in the past 20 years that when he is singing during one of his three or four hour shows people in the audiences keep saying, “Hey, I didn’t know he wrote that.” The rumor that Willie’s 2,000 years old pops up now and then and few people who know him will deny it with confidence, because it often appears highly likely. The list of Willie’s hit songs is too long to list here. It would include such all-timers as “Hello Walls,” “Crazy,” “Night Life,” “Funny How Time Slips Away,” “Touch Me,” “Yesterday’s Wine,” and later ones such as “Bloodied Mary Morning,” “Heaven and Hell,” “Pick Up the Tempo,” and so on—with each Willie freak having a favorite of his or her own.

The Nashville Songwriters’ Association last November inducted Willie into its Hall of Fame, along with Roger Miller and Harlan Howard.

***

My woman’s tight with an overdue baby
And Willie he’s yelling,
Hey, Gypsy, let’s go.


***

Doug Zabel interviewed Willie last year for Iconoclast, the Dallas weekly. In that revealing interview, Willie talked about the changes many believe he had gone through. When Zabel asked if his music had changed along with his physical appearance—he’d let his hair grow long and sometimes wore a beard—who said: “New, it’s the same show. Some places the kids will go and some places their parents will go, and some places they’ll both come together, which is better.” He said his music had not changed, that he was just reaching groups of people he had not reached when he had less hair. (As I wrote at the time, Willie was singing much the same as always, but the music being played behind him is different—at least it is different from the music accompanying him on all his albums before the first Atlantic release, “SHOTGUN WILLIE.” The current Willie Nelson band is one of the best as far as being able to make the sudden changes that Willie has become famous for as he reacts to the mood of an audience instead of following a planned program. This band was filled out a few months ago with the addition of guitarist Jody Payne. Mickey Raphael, who picked harmonica with B. W. Stevenson, joined Willie in April, 1973. Bee Spears, one of the best bass players in country music, has played with Willie, off and on, for seven years or more. Then there’s Paul English on drums. Paul has been with Willie 14 years. He is the Paul in the song, “Me and Paul.” Hunched over his drums, Paul bears a striking resemblance to the devil himself, with his pointed black goatee, black sombrero, and black cape with a scarlet satin lining. Leon Russell wrote the song, “You Look Like The Devil” about Paul.

Willie’s popularity has spread across several generations. His “groupies” are 17 to 77. Willie probably has done more to bring rock and country music together than any living musician. Many observers regard the First Annual Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic at Dripping Springs in 1973 as the event that did most to break down the barriers once separating the two kinds of popular music. Dripping Springs also focused national attention on the revolution of country music in Texas and the creative energy being generated here.

Although Willie is generally regarded as the leader of the current action in Texas country music, he denies it. Susan Barton, Dallas Times Herald entertainment writer, recently asked him if he was the leader of the progressive country movement. “I think we’re all doing our own thing,” Willie told her. “I don’t think anyone is head honcho—I sure don’t want the responsibility of leading that crazy bunch.”

Paul English has been beating the drum with Willie Nelson for more than a dozen years. He is the Paul in Willie’s song, “Me and Paul,” and the devil in the Leon Russell song, “You Look Like The Devil.”
Willie's Saddle

A few nights before the 2nd Annual Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic, the saddle shown here was presented to that once fast-draw Nashville outlaw, Shotgun Willie Nelson, at a party in Austin.

The custom-made saddle has a silver plate with "Willie" engraved on it. It is a saddle literally fit for a king. It was made by Roy's Saddle and Western Supplies, Inc., in Fort Worth, who have made at least one saddle for a king—a special order from the U.S. State Department about two years ago for an African monarch. Roy's also has made saddles for President Lyndon B. Johnson and Merle Haggard.

Making the presentation in Austin were Jay Milner, Doug Zabel, Tim O'Connor, Sandy Jantzen and Jan Franklin.

"We gave Willie the saddle," Milner explained, "because it is beautiful and we wanted to."

Also contributing to the saddle fund were the Willie Nelson friends and admirers listed below:

JERRY, PAT,
COLLEEN & CONNIE CUBE
Lawton, Oklahoma

SANDY, GAIL,
DANA & SUE HARRINGTON
Dallas, Texas

LOCHWOOD
FOREIGN CAR SERV.
11446 Garland Rd.
(214)324-1134
Dallas

SOAP CREEK SALOON
707 Bee Caves Road
Austin 78746
(512) 327-9016

OLD PECAN STREET CAFE
314 East Sixth St.
(512) 478-2491
Austin

JOINT VENTURE
(Gino & Roy)
Dallas

"ETHYL'S"
Only Bluegrass Club
in Dallas
(Chuck) 522-8900

E G'S METRO
Ray S. Harrington
Dallas

CHERRY TREE PUB
352-0244 (Randy)
Dallas

Sammi Smith... Tough and Tender

Sammi Smith has been singing professionally since she was 13. Some of her fans don't know she is a fine songwriter. Songs she has written include "Saunter's Ferry Lane," "When Michael Calls," and "This Room For Rent."

Sammi's singing style is simple and honest. The term "soul singer" is overworked and often misused, but applies to Sammi Smith. She is no stranger to the smoke and shadows of the dark side of life, and her singing is stronger for it. She won a Grammy Award for her version of Kris Kristofferson's song, "Help Me Make It Through The Night."

Her voice is both tough and tender, but above all honest and homey. Sammi was one of the hits of last year's Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic. She and her band went on stage in the heat of the afternoon and soon had that huge audience's full attention.

More recently, Sammi was one of the hit acts at the Steed Country Concert at Arlington. According to PERFORMANCE magazine writer, Gary McDonald, her performance was one of the best that day, and she shared the bill with some of the big ones including Willie Nelson, Mickey Newbury, Ferlin Huskey and others. McDonald wrote, "Strong response was expected for Sammi's version of "Help Me Make It Through The Night," but the crowd really went wild over, "Up Against The Wall, Red Neck Mother." With several hits already under her belt (with the Pearl Beer buckle,) Sammi Smith should be following with many more."

Her many fans everywhere agree.
Lefty Frizzell

The 2nd Annual Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic is sure to be remembered for many things by many different people. In the running, however, for the most memorable single event of the three-day outdoor affair will be the return of the legendary Lefty Frizzell to his home territory as a performer.

When Lefty Frizzell stands at the mike on the big stage in the giant Speedway infield, it is certain to be an emotional experience for many in the audience and many other performers as well. Old timers will be pleasantly yanked backward to the 1950’s when it wasn’t unusual to find a juke box almost entirely filled with records by Lefty Frizzell and another singer/songwriter of that time named Hank Williams. (Remember Lefty’s “Long Black Veil?”) After experiencing the performance of this living legend, thousands of younger fans will be searching record stores back home for his records.

Many younger performers on the program (Billy Joe Shaver, for one) may be seen acting very much like awestruck groupies when Frizzell goes on. Several have said they learned much by listening to Lefty’s records when they were in their formative years as performers. (Listen, for instance, to the Frizzell Influences in Billy Joe’s new distinctively individual singing style.)

Following several relatively quiet years, Lefty Frizzell came out last year with two new albums that have zinged him back to the center of the action. The latest Frizzell album is titled “THE LEGENDARY LEFTY FRIZZELL.” Although it hasn’t been easy to find in Texas so far, this new Frizzell album is rated by many hardcore Frizzell freaks as one of his very best — which is saying a bunch. (Longhorn Head Football Coach Darrell Royal said not long ago he played the new Frizzell album every morning while he shaved and ate breakfast.)

So — although it hasn’t gotten a lot of advance hoopla in the media — the appearance of Lefty Frizzell at the Willie Nelson Picnic this July 4th weekend has all the earmarks of a genuine show-stealer of historic measure.

Lefty Frizzell was born in Corsicana, Texas a number of years before Billy Joe Shaver was born there. When Lefty was 12, he picked up his first guitar, according to a press release from ABC-Dunhill, his current record company. Two years later, 14-year-old Frizzell earned his first paycheck as a musician — winning the $5 first prize money in a Dallas songwriting contest. It was a sign of things to come.

Later, Lefty had his own band and worked clubs and bars in the Dallas area. Jim Beck heard him and took a demo record to Don Law of Columbia Records. Law flew to Dallas and signed young Frizzell to a contract.

That was in 1950 — the year Lefty Frizzell started unrolling his incredible string of hits. His first Columbia record had “If You’ve Got The Money, Honey (I’ve Got The Time)” on one side and on the other side, “I Love You In A Thousand Ways.” That dual hit was followed by “Always Late” and “I Want To Be With You,” Then came “Long Black Veil,” “Mom and Dad Waltz,” “Cigarettes and Coffee Blues,” and “Confused” to name but a few Frizzell hits that come to mind quickly.

Lefty joined the Grand Ole Opry in 1952 and later moved to California, where he appeared on “Town Hall Party” in Compton for five years and the “Country America” TV show in Hollywood for a year. He returned to Nashville in 1962 and has lived there ever since.

Jimmy Buffett

Death Of An Unpopular Poet

Jimmy Buffett

I once knew a poet who lived before his time
He and his dog Spooner would listen as he’d rhyme
Words to make you happy and words to make you cry
And then one day the poet suddenly did die.

But he left behind a closet filled with verse and rhymes
And through some strange transaction
One was printed in the Times
And everybody’s searching for the king of underground
They found him down in Florida with a tombstone for a crown.
And everybody knows a line from his books that cost 4.99
I wonder if he knows he’s done’ quite this fine.
Cause his books are all best sellers and his poems were turned to song.
They had his brother on a talk show though they never
got along
And now he’s called immortal, yes he’s even taught in school
They say he used his talents, a most proficient tool.
But he left all of his royalties to Spooner his old hound
Growing old on steak and bacon in his dugout tent feet ‘round
And everybody wonders did he really lose his mind
No he was just a poet who lived before his time
Yes he was just a poet who lived before his time.
They Don’t Bounce Like Buffett No More

(The following story appeared in the June 6, 1974 edition of ZOO WORLD magazine. The byline was Jeff Nightbird.)

AUSTIN ~ Jimmy Buffett bounces on stage like a hobo surfer healthy enough to do an orange juice commercial, his spring suntan, straw colored hair, and shell necklace, complemented by an acoustic guitar with an outrageous hula girl swaying on top. “A friend in Montana wood-burned her on there,” he starts out. “He was in love with the girl in the Herbal Essence Shampoo.” For a guy who’s picked music for years in dives all across the south, Buffett transmits an incredible UP energy.

In the intimate environment of the Castle Creek club, where the audience sits close enough to the musician to pull out a souvenir shin hair, Buffett’s Will Rogers humor and rolling guitar work magic. He offers that sense of vagabond intimacy which doesn’t always work in cavernous concert halls. Here everything begins with a story. “The original title of this song was ‘The Unexplained Charge on the Bank American Card’. It came to me after watching a businessman trying to pick up a hooker in Dallas.” He then launched into his overnight underground classic, “Why Don’t We Get Drunk And Screw.” Buffett later says with seriousness backstage, “I hate to be characterized by that, but the audiences love it.” Then with a twinkle he adds, “I wanted to write a song which wasn’t suggestive—something that left nothing to doubt!” Ever since the release of “Living and Dying In 3-4 Time,” Buffett has been recognized as a writer comparable to John Prine and Kris Kristofferson. But where they sing about the traditional themes of love, loneliness, and the destruction of the past, Buffett is apt to sing about shoplifting or frozen dinners from the all-night grocery, write a song for the poet Kenneth Patchen after learning from Walter Cronkite that he’d died, or do one of those tall tale ballads like “God’s Own Drunk,” a Lord Buckley rap he picked up in a bar in New Orleans.

Between sets he slumps in a saggy couch, cradles a drink, and gives off an easy going Key West warmth to well wishers and strangers who come through. Austrian cowboy Willis Alan Ramsey, looking like he’d been setting fence posts all day, strolls in, hand outstretched. “I sure want to thank you for including ‘Spider John’ on your last album,” he says with a grin. Jimmy jumps up smiling, “I’ve always wanted to meet you Willis... Shit! I’m sorry I missed a few words of your song.”

In a minute they’re talking enthusiastically about Jimmy’s five acres in Deep Creek, Montana—“It’s too cold in winter, but if you’re up that way come visit this summer”; the movie he’s scoring for director Frank Perry (“Diary of a Mad Housewife” and “Last Summer”) “It’s going to be a modern western called Rancho Deluxe—I’m going to try my hand at acting”; and the need for a major recording studio in Austin, Willis’ pet project.

Second set, the Castle Creek crowd is ready and loose. Jimmy, his hula hula guitar flashing in the light, throws away the standard show and starts banging out requests. Then he croons his new song, “Life Is Just A Tire Swing,” about the ups and downs of existence ending with a car crash just fifty yards from the tire he used to swing on as a child.

The crowd wants more, calling for lesser known songs such as “Cuban Crime of Passion.” and “They Don’t Dance Like Carmen Anymore.” Jimmy’s into it. “I wanted to finish early and sneak off to the oyster bar before it closed,” he confides. “But hell! I feel like singing all night.”

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Lefty

a man... his music... his life...
one becomes the other
and each means the same.
and all become one.
reach out... touch a giant...
battered with the barnstorm, barleycorn years
scared with the hell-bent-for living life.
tides of fortunes rising and falling
with every changing moon
never steady, never constant.
feel a presence fill the room.
legends made and
scattered careless to the shifting
winds of fame
like heroes of another age
smell the leather-sweat echoes of knights and kings
touch the timeless shadows of Daniel Boone and Wyatt Earp
a question asked and
a question never fully answered...
more is needed than just mortal words.
tell the feelings, Lefty... paint the pictures
behind the mind.
write a song... sing a song.
let me interview your soul.
be lefty,
not just another man.
tell me stories larger than life.
be larger than life.
be a legend.
tell the world a song...
make them hear your life.
stand as tall as heroes stand and
cast a giant shadow.
be lefty.
make another legend.

The Legendary Lefty Frizzell

ABC Dunhill

13
Jerry Jeff Walker
A Little Joy and Sloppiness

One of the most colorful personalities and performers on this year’s Willie Nelson Picnic program is Jerry Jeff Walker. Like Willie, Jerry Jeff was an established recording star before he moved to Austin almost three years ago. Since then, he’s had a marked influence on what’s been happening musically in Texas.

Walker wrote the all-time hit song, “Mr. Bo Jones,” before he moved to the Texas hill country. A native of upstate New York, he’d spent some time in Texas in the middle ’80s, so when it came time to pick a place to settle down away from the centers of the music business, Jerry Jeff chose Texas.

Since he and Willie moved to Texas, however, Austin has become one of the most active music cities in the nation. Many good musicians already lived there, as Jerry Jeff pointed out not long ago, which was one reason he moved to Austin in the first place.

But many more good pickers have moved there in the past two years. Now, almost any night of the week, the hills around the Capital City fairly ring with music by some of the world’s best progressive country musicians.

Jerry Jeff seems to have benefitted professionally by the move. His latest album, “Viva Terlingua,” was recorded live near Austin at Luchenbach, Texas, last year with an audience participating to capture the characteristic spontaneity of a Jerry Jeff performance and the album has sold better than any of his previous albums.

Jerry Jeff’s backup group, The Lost Gonzo Band, played behind him on that album, as they will on the 4th of July Picnic show this year. The Lost Gonzo Band has been called the best one around and includes such standouts as Gary Nunn, who wrote “London Homesick Blues” and sings it on the Terlingua album, Bob Livingston and John Inmon. Many fans believe that all three will one day be solo stars themselves.

In addition to being a prolific songwriter, Jerry Jeff is one of the better musicians among the stars of the new country music. And, although most pickers love to pick with other professional pickers, none love it more than Jerry Jeff, whose favorite “hobby” seems to be hanging out with other musicians after performing until 2 a.m., picking and singing through the rest of the night. He has written songs about the joy of that pastime.

There’s a lot of gypsy in Jerry Jeff. It’s reflected in many of his songs as well as his life style. It may be buried deeper in them, but there’s also some gypsy in most music fans, who like to listen to Jerry Jeff because he makes them feel good about it.

To make sure the unique “looseness” of a Jerry Jeff show carried over to his albums, his record company (MCA) now goes along with the stay in letting him record live, rather than inside a studio. Jerry Jeff says he is intimidated when he plays in a studio. “There’s so many heavies all around you all the time, getting you to do something, clean that up, clean this, and pretty soon you’re sounding like everybody else,” he told a writer for BUDDY magazine not long ago.

“We try to make a party pick thing out of it,” Jerry Jeff continued. “I think the record buyer is entitled to a decent product, but I don’t think it should be so clean and tight it doesn’t have a little joy and sloppiness that comes from being loose and having fun.”

Based on sales totals for Jerry Jeff’s last two albums, he was right about what his fans think. And you can bank on having a fullhouse crowd present wherever he and his Lost Gonzo Band play, even Carnegie Hall.

Jerry Jeff put his thoughts on recording studios in the liner notes he wrote for his next to latest album titled, JERRY JEFF WALKER (Decca DL 7-5384).

“Once a year,” he wrote, “I’m supposed to go to one of the record factories in Nashville- New York-L.A.- motel-hamburg-red light-pick sessions. They call it ‘cutting tunes’ (sounds like surgery) . . . I only know how my songs go on my guitar. I like playing with my friends because we share many things: the music, we share being just one more. My friends do not have to overplay to impress me or to secure my friendship, which is based on the many likes and dislikes we share. . . . I believe people can ‘work together’ for common joy and good and still be loose about it. . . . Anyway I made up my mind a couple of years ago that I was going to have more of my friends and the good-time miles be part of my ‘Record’. So, whenever someone mentioned ‘studio’ I hid. I bought another round, and I looked for a hole to disappear into. Finally, after two broken guitars and three drunken trips to the Key West jail, I headed for Austin, Texas. Old friends and old stompin’ grounds. Many friends from years ago had drifted back to taste the funky Texas dirt road back streets again; the feelin’ was great; the pickin’ was everywhere . . . and anyone who wanted to contribute came by and picked or just listened . . . That’s how it’s been at Jerry Jeff Walker recording sessions every since. Loose. And his last two albums (recorded the Jerry Jeff way) have sold better than any of his others.

Lyons’ Pub
Beer - Wine - Food
Conversation
5535 Yale
Dallas
Hey! Who turned out the lights? Where'd everybody go?

To Bryan man - Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic...

What's so special about a picnic?

Music, man! Live music from

Billy Joe Shaver,
Larry Gatlin,
David Allen Coe, Barefoot Jerry,
Asleep at the Wheel... AND...

Michael Murphey

Yeah?

WOW!

That IS special!

Uh... how do we get outta here?

FOR SPECIAL AT-HOME PERFORMANCES AFTER THE PICNIC, THE FINEST ALBUMS ON THE STREET:

Watch for the new album by Asleep at the Wheel on Epic Records
Billy Joe Shaver Is A Serious Soul

By Jay Milner

There is no such thing as a casual conversation with Billy Joe Shaver. He comes at you just as head-on and open-ended talking as he does in the lyrics of his songs. As somebody once said about William Faulkner, when you're talking to Billy Joe you either lay your gut out on the table or back off and shut up.

In some important ways, this old boy from Waco and Mt. Olympus (if that's Texas) is the best of the new breed of Texas honky tonk poets. His lyrics can bring on personal downhome images so real and sharply focused they're too heavy and sudden for fans with tiny ponder tanks.

A Billy Joe lyric is usually as readable as it is singable, which cannot be said about all songs—the country kind and whatever the other kind is called. You can boogie to Billy Joe songs, all right, but if you've set out to forget where you came from and where you've been, then you'd best find another dance hall.

Consider, for example, the opening verse of Billy Joe's song, "Serious Souls":

"Cool was the stream flowing clear
From the mountain
To the grassy green valley below
And many was the time we all drank
From that fountain
Leaving nowhere but downhill to go."

The chorus of the same Shaver lyric goes something like this:

"We're all wayfaring wandering gypsies
Alone
Looks like looking-for
Is where we'll always be
Cursed to be born
As serious souls
No one will take seriously."

The stark honesty of his lyrics has created enclaves of Billy Joe Shaver fans from coast to coast, although his only album, "Old Five and Dimers Like Me," hasn't burned up the charts anywhere yet. But a Shaver fan displays cult-like devotion and badgers his friends until they buy the album—if only to get some peace. Then they too become Shaver devotees. But (as we Shaver devotees usually say) that doesn't spread the word nearly fast enough for the quality of the goods. As this was written, Shaver's commercial success still lagged far behind his talent.

One reason Billy Joe Shaver hasn't become a household name throughout America may be that too many folks who love his songs think they were written by Tom T. Hall, Waylon Jennings, Bobby Bare, Johnny Rodriguez or one of the other country stars who've made Shaver songs into hit singles.

"There's one in every crowd
For crying out loud
Why was it always turning out to be me?"

("Honky Tonk Hero"
by Billy Joe Shaver)

Billy Joe Shaver waited around, off and on, for eight years—hungry for a glimmer of encouragement. Then Willie Nelson and Kris Kristofferson busted down a couple of Nashville barriers to let some fresh air into country music. Only then was Billy Joe Shaver rewarded with some recognition where it counted.

Bobby Bare was the first established Nashville star to do something tangible about Billy Joe's primitive genius after Willie Nelson went renegade and Kristofferson tapped a new country audience. "Return Music" Bare's Nashville publishing firm, hired Billy Joe. This gives Bare first dibs on all new Shaver songs—if, in the hustle and hubbub of the country music world, somebody else doesn't happen along at the right time and hear one when Bare is otherwise occupied.

Which is the way a beginner named Johnny Rodriguez happened to come out with the Shaver song, "Ride Me Down Easy." Bare reacted quickly to cover the Rodriguez version of that one...but a just a little late and it became one of the early singles that ignited the tail of the Rodriguez skyrocket.

As Bare himself might put it (although probably using a less worn phrase) that's what Billy Joe's primary professional inspiration seems to have been. Willie Nelson and Lefty Frizzell. Something faintly Frizzell flavors Shaver's unique singing style—a surrealist blending of the old and new with a dash of the yet-to-be.

Billy Joe had not met the legendary Frizzell until recently. Willie Nelson, however, is another story.

Wille comes from the same Central Texas, half-cowboy, half-country picker country that spawned Billy Joe. Frizzell also came from the same part of Texas. Was born in the same town as Billy Joe, in fact. Corsicana. But Willie has kept in closer touch with Texas honky tonk poets than most folks in or out of music.

Billy Joe—in a "Music City News" interview a year or so ago—put it this way: "Wille's a hero down there. He'll always be my hero. He really opened the doors for the contemporary stuff. I took some pains writing, 'Wille's the Wandering Gypsy.' He's a gypsy cowboy—look into his face, and it's like looking in the Grand Canyon."

"I've spent a life time
Making up my mind
To be
More than the measure
Of what I thought others
Could see."

("Old Five and Dimers" by Billy Joe Shaver)
Now, Freedom of Choice!

Today, there's one brewery big enough to admit two tastes in beer; proud enough to put its name on two labels; honest enough to give you freedom of choice.

The Pearl brewery.
With Pearl Premium. Here's the beer that started it all, brewed with pure spring water to the same great taste since 1886.
And Pearl Light. This light beer that doesn't leave taste behind because it too is brewed from 1100 springs.
Pearl Premium and Pearl Light.
Now that's Freedom of Choice.

Pearl Brewing Co., San Antonio, Texas
# TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

2nd ANNUAL WILLIE NELSON 4th OF JULY PICNIC  
July 4, 5, 6, 1974  
(Texas World Speedway)  
College Station, Texas

| THURSDAY  
JULY 4 | FRIDAY  
JULY 5  
(Hank Cochran Day) | SATURDAY  
JULY 6 |
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<td>Guy Clark</td>
<td>Alvin Crowe &amp; the Neon Angels</td>
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<td>Dick Crouse</td>
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<td>Johnny Dallas</td>
<td>Alex Harvey</td>
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<td>Kinky Friedman</td>
<td>Ray Wylie Hubbard &amp; the Cowboy Twinkies</td>
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<td>John Hartford</td>
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<td>Sammi Smith</td>
<td>Doug Kershaw</td>
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<td>B. W. Stevenson</td>
<td>Augie Meyers</td>
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<td>Red Steagall</td>
<td>Buzz Rabin</td>
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<td>Jerry Jeff Walker</td>
<td>Leon Russell</td>
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The following were not scheduled at press time:  
Johnny Bush, Johnny Duncan, Billy Gray, Red Lane, Plum Nelly, Kenny O'Dell, Magic Cowboy Band, Silver City Saddle Tramps, Don Williams.
Dee Moeller

Dee Moeller has been writing good songs and singing behind country stars like Willie Nelson on albums for some time now. Lately, a lot of music lovers in Texas and elsewhere have been wondering why she doesn’t have an album all her own; they’d like to buy it. Not only is Dee Moeller good to listen to, she’s good to look at too.

Since she’s been singing in Texas clubs in recent months, an enthusiastic Dee Moeller following has formed. Her appearance at this year’s Willie Nelson Picnic is certain to cause that following to multiply.

Word has now come that a Dee Moeller album is on its way, exciting news to a whole bunch of folks who’ve long thought it was over due.

If you haven’t been lucky enough so far to hear her in person, you’ve probably heard one of her latest songs, “Fascination Outlaw,” on Waylon Jennings’ new album, THIS TIME.

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DALLAS, TEXAS
RED STEAGALL

Russell Steagall, better known as "Red," is a Texan whose life and songs are close to the soil. He graduated from West Texas State University with a degree in Agriculture. Then he worked as a chemical soil expert, but the country music bug got him and he spent all his spare time working with country bands. Eventually, of course, Red went all the way with music.

For years, Steagall wrote songs that became hits for such established performers as Glen Campbell, Ray Charles, Bobby Goldsboro, Jeannie C. Riley and Dean Martin—songs like "Here We Go Again," "Alabama Woman," and "Beer Drinking Music."

Red has recorded for Dot, Warner Brothers and Mira Records. His is presently under contract with Capitol, who recorded his big hits—"Somewhere My Love," "Party Dolls and Wine" and "Texas Silver Zephyr."

He now lives in Saugus, California, and is president of Amos the publishing branch of Amos Productions, Inc., where he heads a staff of pop, rock and country song writers.

BOBBY BARE

Bobby Bare's latest album for RCA is titled, "ULLABYS, LEGENDS AND LIES." It's a natural and very popular. But when Bobby Bare steps on stage at the Willie Nelson Picnic this year, you can bet the audience will be yelling for some of his all time hits like, "Miller's Cave," "600 Miles," and "Detroit City."

When he is not recording, Bare is producing artists like Wynn Stewart or taking care of his music publishing business, Return Music, which has signed writers like Billy Joe Shaver. Bobby also spends a lot of time out doors fishing and hunting.

This California native began singing in night clubs around Los Angeles before he was old enough to vote and started writing songs even before that. Bobby went to Nashville to seek his fortune as a country songwriter and performer after he mustered out of the Army. He soon attracted the attention of executives at RCA. A contract was signed and Bobby moved to Nashville. He has been one of the most consistent writers and performers in country music ever since.

JOHNNY BUSH

Johnny Bush is a Texas whose career has been closely associated with Willie Nelson's. Willie and Johnny played in the same band several years working every joint from West Hell, Texas to the fine hotels. When that band broke up, Willie and Johnny went separate ways. They saw each other from time to time, and promised to keep in touch. The success Johnny Bush enjoys today is testimony to the fact the Willie Nelson kept his promises. In the early '60's, Willie's ship came in, so to speak, when Faron Young made a hit record of his song "Hello Walls," then Willie had his own hit, "Touch Me."

When he formed a band for road tours, Willie's old pal Johnny Bush was one of the first people he contacted.

Johnny played drums. After touring for about a year, Willie dissolved the band to stay home and write songs, and Johnny Bush started playing drums for Ray Price.

Johnny had always wanted to be a singer and after three years with Ray Price he went out on his own and Willie entered the picture again.

After several rejections by major record companies, Willie bankrolled a recording session for Johnny. It resulted in an album called, "SOUND OF A HEARTACHE." Out of that album came the hit song, "You Ought To Hear Me Cry." Before long, people had stopped referring to Johnny as the guy who used to play drums for Ray Price and Willie Nelson.

Johnny Bush wrote "Whiskey River," which Willie Nelson and his band jam on so often. He also wrote the country classic, "There Stands the Glass."
After the release of his first album with Frummox HERE TO THERE, Steve went on an extended tour with Steven Stills. More recently, he has been doing a single in clubs across the country. The word now is that he is putting together a backup band, although at press time it was not known whether the band would play with him at the Willie Nelson Picnic.

DAVID ALLEN COE

Songwriter David Allen Coe has plenty of vivid memories to write about. His childhood was interrupted by misfortunes that sent him to reform school at an early age. He moved from one reformatory to another. At one point, a prison incident put him on death row for several months. Since David's final release in 1967, however, he has met life head on and been remarkably successful.

In 1968, he came to Nashville with three notebooks full of songs. It is no coincidence that Coe's first Columbia album liner notes mention Shel Silverstein, Kris Kristofferson, Leon Russell, and especially Mickey Newbury, to whom the album is dedicated. The public response to David Allen Coe's first recorded songs was enthusiastic. They included "Penitentiary Blues," "Tobacco Road," "Two-Tone Brown," and "Keep Those Big Wheels Humming."

Established stars like Leon Russell, Melba Montgomery, Del Reeves, Stoney Edwards and others made recordings of those. But it was Tanya Tucker's interpretation of David's "Would You Lay With Me?" that proved to be his most important stepping stone. That recording attracted the attention of Ron Bledsoe of Columbia who invited Coe to his office to sing more of his material and later signed him to a Columbia contract.

David Allen Coe has found himself and has also found freedom — the kind of freedom that rides with "the mysterious rhinestone cowboy." The audience at Willie Nelson's 4th of July Picnic are in for a real treat with David's progressive country style.

STEVE FROMHOLZ

Chet Flippo wrote in the ROLLING STONE, "Fromholz can work a certain magic in an intimate club. Steve has been working this magic in Texas a number of years. First with a duo known as "Frummox," he sang and recorded uniquely original songs about the people of Texas. Steve's "Texas Trilogy" has been praised by music critics as "one of the most real and original contributions to Texas folk music in years."
The Martin Guitar. Still handmade. since 1833
Lee Clayton

In one of his new songs, Lee Clayton says that some people say he tries to sing like Bob Dylan and some say he looks like Kristofferson. But it ain’t so, Lee sings, “all I want to do is sing like Waylon.” He holds back a grin when he gets to the punch line, like it’s hard for him not to laugh out loud.

Not that Waylon Jennings isn’t one of Lee’s musical heroes. He is. Lee first heard Waylon’s sound over a Lubbock radio station some years ago. “He sang, ‘House of the Rising Sun,’” Lee recalled in Austin earlier this summer,” and it blew my mind. I told myself right then I had to meet him.”

A few years later, Lee not only met Waylon, but Waylon recorded one of his songs, “Ladies Love Outlaws.” Lee Clayton is a picker poet who knows where he wants to go and has both the talent and drive to get him there. He has stripped his life down to his guitar and what he can carry in an old saddlebag. He travels light, looks, listens and lives hard and moves forward about as much as a man can.

Waylon sings another Lee Clayton song, “If You Can Touch Her At All,” on his latest RCA album, “THIS TIME,” which was co-produced by Willie Nelson. And Lee has his first album behind him (an MCA release titled, “LEE CLAYTON”) and will soon cut his second. He’s also written a song that Waylon will sing on the sound track of a movie. (“It’s kind of a Son of Thunder Road movie about moonshiners.”)

It may be that MCA decided to call his first album “LEE CLAYTON,” because his name is like his songs: Hear them once and they’re not easy to forget. That album has an underlying, unspoken “theme” — lonesome country boy surviving in New York City. Each song stands alone very well, but the album takes on new meaning when you listen to it with that in mind.

Critics around the country have been uniformly enthusiastic about Lee’s first album. He conjures up vivid visual images and packs layers of meaning into a single line. His songs have attracted the attention of several established singing stars. Better Midler has asked for one of Lee’s songs. The Everly Brothers recorded “Ladies Love Outlaws.” And you won’t find her name on the jacket, but Carly Simon does some lovely background singing behind Lee on the haunting, “New York City Suite 409.”

Lee had help on his debut album also from Bonnie Bramlett, members of the Earl Scruggs Review and, (on one cut,) one of Linda Ronstadt’s recent bands, Folks like that can’t hurt a fellow’s career.

Lee grew up on the High Plains of West Texas. When he was 14, his father moved the Claytons to Tennessee. He’s 31 now, with a divorce and a hitch in the Air Force behind him. He has a college degree in, of all things, engineering. When he was discharged from the Air Force, Lee headed for Nashville. (“I’d just about gotten court martialed a couple of times. I was supposed to be an officer and gentleman, but I was picking in bars during the evenings and the Air Force didn’t think both were possible.”)

He’d sold four songs to publishers within a week after he arrived in Nashville. Billy Joe Shaver introduced him to Bobby Bare, who published a couple of Clayton songs. Lee’s songs are now published through Kristofferson’s company.

An audition for Artie Mogul and several others resulted in his recording contract with MCA. When he was in Austin in May, Lee said he was almost ready to cut his second album. He had enough new songs for two albums and, in one man’s opinion, they’re even better, generally, than those on the first one—which is saying something, because the first Lee Clayton album gets better the more you hear it.

Lee played a few club dates in Texas last winter with his first backup group. Now, he has another band that comes much closer to the sound he wants. He’ll bring his new band to College Station.

J. M.

KINKY FRIEDMAN is a Texan who made it big in country music by being different. Kinky comes from South Texas and grew up on what he called, “a dude ranch for over-privileged children. He describes his music as, “uptown country with a conscience.” It appeals to audiences of all kinds — from Grand Ole Opry kickers to the so-called sophisticates on Manhattan Island. Kinky Friedman was almost a household name in the U.S. before most people had heard him because of the uniqueness of his approach to country music. He managed to cash in on his confluence of cultures by turning himself into a sort of comic cosmic cowboy or (to quote BUDDY magazine) “a Jewish jive artist.” But as the audiences at this Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic will discover, Kinky and his band are basically fine country-rock musicians with a difference. Kinky Friedman fans say, “Vive La Difference!”
“One day about three years ago, right after he got out of the Air Force, B.W. told me, ‘Bob, I’m gonna be a star.’ Well, this is a tough business, so I took him back to my office there at the old Rubaiyat, and I told him, ‘Buckwheat, maybe you should be thinking about another line of work just in case things don’t work out.’”

—Bob Johnson, former manager, Rubaiyat coffee house in Dallas

Since he quit his job maintaining Air Force missiles, things have been working out pretty well for B.W. Stevenson of Dallas. Less than a year after he returned to the Rubaiyat (he first played there over five years before) an RCA record company representative heard him and signed him to a contract. His first album was released six months later and, according to RCA regional promotion manager, did “extremely well,” although 30 to 40 per cent of the album sales were in the Texas area.

Stevenson graduated from Dallas’ Adamson High School. He’s been pickin’ and singin’ since he traded in the drum he played in his junior high marching band.

After high school, like many others of his generation, Stevenson hit the road in search of identity. He spent time in California and Colorado, worked on a ranch for awhile, but eventually he returned home. He enrolled at North Texas State University in Denton, but for reasons he doesn’t go into he was “kicked out.”

Seven years ago, the Rubaiyat gave Stevenson his first paying job as a performer. He was still doing other peoples’ songs, mostly country and western, folk, and rhythm and blues. He picked up a local following quickly but he couldn’t seem to get his career off the ground. Then, he began writing some of his own material. His first song, “My Feet Are So Weary,” sounded much like the material he does today and is included on his second album, LEAD FREE. Singing his own songs gave him a boost locally, but the public hadn’t yet discovered “progressive country” as Stevenson categorizes his music.

After a hitch in the Air Force, Stevenson started playing at the Rubaiyat again and things finally started happening. The public was suddenly hungry for country rock and folk rock, and B.W. Stevenson became a Dallas celebrity. People brought friends to hear him and local clubs found themselves competing for his talents. RCA scouts signed him, and B.W. was on his way.

In Dallas, not long ago, he talked about his music and “the business” in general. “I guess I’m more used to talking to a crowd than to an individual,” he drawled.

A number of performers influenced his style, he said — Bob Dylan, Patrick Sky, Keith Sykes, Steve DeWitt, Jerry Jeff Walker and Mike Murphey, who’s a close friend and also from Dallas.

“This business has its hills and valleys,” B.W. said. “I’d rather not hassle with it all. Eventually, I’d like to get to the point where my record sales would support my other aspirations, so I could get out of performing.

“I’d like to be able to get together a studio and use it for some of the pickers who don’t stand much of a chance unless they leave this area. There’s a lot of great pickers around here in Texas and up ‘til now they’ve all had to leave this area to get anywhere with their music. I’d just like to get to a position where I can help other pickers out.”

That time should be near. A series of national hits and wide acclaim for his last two albums prove Bob Johnson’s warning was unnecessary. B.W. Stevenson is a star.
Johnny Darrell may have been the original cosmic cowboy. He was one of the first Nashville singers to dabble in what is now called progressive country, or country rock, and wear his hair longer than was the style at the time. Johnny may be remembered as the one who made the first country version of "Ruby, Don't Take Your Love To Town." His other hits included "Green Green Grass of Home" and "Pen In Hand."

Because he flaunted convention before it was fashionable, Johnny’s career came up against some frustrating barriers some years ago, and he took a self-imposed leave of absence of more than two years. But recently, Johnny Darrell has been making his comeback. He was a hit at the Steed show in Arlington in June. Now he is with Capricorn Records, and those who know him are predicting a great future for Johnny Darrell again.

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AUGIE MEYERS (7th from left with beard) was well-known as the organist with the Sir Douglas Quintet. Now, he's got his own band that's already attracted a large following with hard rocking, Tex-Mex, honky-tonk blues. Augie's band is shown here with some friends and family members. Left to right they are: David Zether, Vangie Newhouse, Jimmy Newhouse, Kathy Zettner, Kevin Zettner, Clay Meyers (Augie's son who plays drums), Carol Meyers, Augie, Jack Barbar, Debbie, Kamila and Chris Holzhaus, Mike O'Dowd, Richard (a friend), Dale Jackson (a guest friend).
SILVER CITY SADDLE TRAMPS — This young country band has been winning a growing, enthusiastic following in recent months, especially in the Dallas and Austin areas. Their performances are marked by an infectious energy, whether they are playing songs written by their own band members or country standards made famous by established stars. From left to right in the photo, they are: Grant Gerondale, Mike Crowe, Ed Lucas, Rob Moorman, Rachael, Sandy Marchbanks and Rughead Laughlin.

Doug Kershaw Makes Records Good Enough To Chew.

Hear Mama Kershaw’s Boy on Warner Bros. Records and Tapes.
Johnny Duncan

Johnny Duncan is a tall (6'4") Texan who's on the brink of stardom. And, like most performers who reach that stage in their careers, Johnny Duncan is definitely no "overnight success."

He comes from a family that has always loved music. His mother, Minnie, played and taught guitar; so, by the time Johnny was 12, he had decided what he wanted to do with his life—he would make music for people. He's been doing just that ever since.

"I knew exactly ... about that time a guitar became a magic thing to me. It meant everything. All of a sudden the whole world became a guitar. My mother, from the time I was a little boy, encouraged me. There were times when I'd come home from school and my mother would be making biscuits. She'd stop to show me a chord, and there'd be flour all over the guitar neck."

At first he just wanted to be a guitarist—("Chet Atkins, Les Paul and Merle Travis were my idols then"). But in his mid-teens, he decided to be a singer, too.

His first big break came when singing on a television show on Nashville's WSM. A Columbia representative saw him and signed him in late 1966. A little later, Johnny got a year-long singing job in Bowling Green, Kentucky, at the Town Towers ("My first real professional singing job.")

Along he wrote songs—and threw many away. One of his big thrills came when Atkins recorded one of his songs, "Summer Sunday." Johnny's most commercially successful song so far has been "Hard Luck Joe," written with Bobby Goldsboro. Other successes include "Baby Me, Baby." "When She Touches Me" and "Window Number Five."

"I really believe the good solid country song is where the industry is going—back to the grass roots," he said.

Duncan has made two albums released on Columbia Records: "There's Something About a Lady" and "Sweet Country Woman."
Larry Gatlin

... A Musical Family

Larry Gatlin's name comes up often these days when you're around Texas pickers. More and more of them ask if you've heard Larry Gatlin sing yet and, if you haven't, they advise you to do so right away. It's no small compliment, coming from other professionals... who won't hand out compliments about musical ability unless they mean it.

Larry Gatlin sings in a clear, straightforward voice. He doesn't have to fake the high and low notes. (Someone compared him with Mickey Newbury.) Background material provided by Monument, the record company that put out Gatlin's first album not long ago, reveals that Larry was born in Seminole, Texas, 28 years ago. He comes from a musical family, a very talented musical family. He and his younger brothers (Steve, 23, and Rudy, 22,) started singing together when Larry was six and thus Steve and Rudy were four and two and a half, respectively. Dona, the baby sister, joined the boys a few years later.

The Gatlin kids sang gospel in those early years. Their inspiration came from the great gospel groups—the Blackwoods, the Statemen, the Imperials, Jake Hess and the Oak Ridge boys. Whenever a gospel show was nearby, the Gatlin kids were there.

Daddy Gatlin was an oil driller and the family moved a lot for a time. One year they lived in eight different towns. About 16 years ago, however, the Gatlins settled in Odessa, in West Texas. Then, as the boys went off to college, the Gatlins appeared in public less and less for a time.

At the University of Houston on a scholarship, Larry tried out for a job as a replacement in the Imperials gospel group. He didn't get that job, but because of the audition he got to do some of his songs for Dottie West, who introduced him to Kris Kristofferson. Kris alerted Fred Foster, president of Monument Records, who signed the Gatlins to a recording contract.

"This sounds like the old cliche," Larry said not long ago, "but we really want to reach out and help somebody else with our music.

"We feel there are people who maybe wouldn't go to church or have no religious affiliations and we try to show them that there's a good side to life, with all its trials and troubles. There's still an innate goodness in man, if we try to help each other... It's the least we can do, considering the help we've received from people like Dottie West, Kris, Fred Foster and Johnny Cash. They've all been good to us."

"I guess there's a reason for so many groups to be so down," Larry continued, "but we think there's hope and if somebody's listening who can find something to hang their hat on something we sing, then it's been worth our time and theirs."

Those pickers were right—if you haven't heard Larry Gatlin yet, it's high time you did.

And a great place to discover new talent (new to you, if not to others) is the 2nd Annual Willie Nelson 4th of July Picnic. For instance, Billy Joe Shaver was "discovered" at Dripping Springs. So was Lee Clayton. Monument best get ready for a run on Larry Gatlin albums, because a big bunch of fans are bound to "discover" Larry Gatlin at College Station this July 4th weekend and want to hear a lot more from him.

THE LION ROARS AGAIN!

MGM RECORDS

HOLLYWOOD, CALIFORNIA
George M. Jones of Dallas is shown here in a more recent photograph than the one seen on another page in this program. Jones, who'll be playing guitar behind Billy Joe Shaver at this Willie Nelson Picnic, has had two frustrating experiences with government censors so far in his career.

He got started as a professional songwriter “just mailing Jerry Reed some songs.” Reed liked the songs well enough to record three of them — including one titled, “Aunt Maudie’s Fun Garden.” Jimmy Dean also recorded the one about Maudie’s Garden. It was Reed’s version, however, that was heading for the top of the charts when censors struck George M. the first time. The FCC applied pressure to radio stations not to play it. “Aunt Maudie’s Fun Garden” was the first country song to openly sing about the marijuana “problem.”

Despite the setback, George M. was doing all right in Nashville. He signed with Gambit Records and his first album there would have been released last year, but the censor suddenly struck again. This time it was the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service that objected to a George M. Jones song — a seemingly harmless song with an ecology message titled, “Smokey You’re a Hokey Kind of Bear.”

“There is no redeeming value at all,” George said. “He said, in fact, that my song was a mockery of an American institution. It was a real bummer, because we worked real hard on that album.”

These days, George M. seems to have become philosophical about the two blows to his career. He will make another album soon, for another record company. Maybe country music fans around the nation will get a chance to judge George M. Jones for themselves this time around.

Ray Wylie Hubbard
...Career on the Rise

More and more people in and around Dallas these days are saying that Ray Wylie Hubbard and his Cowboy Twinkies are ready for stardom. They pack ’em in at places like the Rubiate, Ritz Pub, Fanny Ann’s, Mother Blue’s and other popular spots for Big D area nightcrawlers who love to boogie.

Ray Wylie’s career was given a boost by Jerry Jeff Walker when the latter gave Hubbard credit verbally on his hit album, “VIVA THERLINGUA,” for writing the song, “Red Neck Mother,” and when people turn out to hear him and his band they’re usually hooked.

Ray Wylie attended Adamson High in Dallas and was an English major at North Texas State in Denton. He is a songwriter with a flare for oblique humor, as well as the heartwarming ballad.

In January, he was named by a Dallas country music writer as the winner of the First Annual Willie Award as the newcomer most likely to become a star in 1974. Recently, several record companies have been on his trail, with an album in mind. He and his young band, The Cowboy Twinkies, work together with a fine rapport audiences respond to and, technically, the Twinkies may be the most improved band around.

Ray Wylie paid his dues touring with a singing group called, “Three Faces West,” and he and the Twinkies have played their share of roadhouses and ski lodges. The word is going around that they are Ready. And this time, the word is the gospel truth.

In putting this program together, Whippoorwill Associates had the extraordinary aid and assistance of a number of good folks. We hate to risk leaving out someone who was important to our effort, but feel the following did too much beyond the call of duty not to be singled out here—for reasons known to each: Dick Adams, Walter Lacy, Jerald Smith, H.G. Wells, Billie Rasure, Sandy Jantzen, Jan Franklin, Tim O’Conner, Ron McKeown, Jay Jones, Steve Brooks, Max Drazen, Lou Staples, Gina Mahar, R.W. Zabel, John Young, Susan Streit, Lana Nelson, Carter, Nina, and Sue H.
Willie & Waylon Convert
N.Y. Times Critic

(Note: The following review appeared in the New York Times, Sunday, May 16, 1974. A two- column picture of Willie Nelson ran with it.)

By Loraine Alterman
N.Y. Times Critic

Honesty in music is hard to find these days. With so much emphasis on effect, albums that truly reflect the heart of their makers often get shunted off into special categories which never reach the large audiences they deserve. Classified as contemporary country musicians, Willie Nelson and Waylon Jennings both Texans and veterans of the country music scene have only recently begun to cross over into the Nashville Songwriters Association, but think we deserve. Although they are men who know the value of simple truths simply stated.

Neither Nelson nor Jennings have anything to do with the stereotype image of country performers as fancy dressed dudes hollering in a nasal twang above cornball fiddle and steel guitar riffs. My own prejudices against what I considered a kind of "I'll come an' get it" music have been overcome by the taste and sincerity of these two men. In brief, both Nelson and Jennings are making country music that can even move those of us who think we despise it.

Nelson, a prolific songwriter inducted last fall into the Nashville Songwriters Association Hall of Fame, has carefully constructed "Phases And Stages" as a concept album tracing both sides in a broken marriage. Unlike most other concept albums, this one never forces the idea nor relies on gimmicks. Both the music and lyrics Nelson has written touch us directly because of their genuine concern for the situation that in one form or another strikes many people.

On side A, he explores the woman's point-of-view. His sensitivity is made more extraordinary for me because I've always considered that country singers are by nature macho characters. Just the fact that in this story the woman is the one leaving home should indicate how clearly Nelson perceives women's needs.

His heroing cannot survive as a human being "caring for someone who don't care any more" ("Washing The Dishes"). She determines to walk away because she sees that "I've been lying to me all along" ("Walkin"). Even though she winds up back home with mamma, the past can't be erased as Nelson hits us with images like "jeans fit a little bit tighter than they did before" ("Down At The Corner Beer Joint"). Finally, in what is the most haunting ballad on the album, "(How Will I Know) I'm falling in Love Again," past emotional scars make her wonder about a new-found love.

The side B unfolds with "Bloody Mary Morning" and carries him through his own suffering. Although he's trying to pull together his life and understand what hit him, he winds up dosing his grief with alcohol in his final song, "Pick Up The Tempo." The album begins and ends with "Phases And Stages," the theme that everything goes around in circles and cycles, scenes that we've all seen before. Each song stands as an individual entity, but tied together by a concept, the songs have extra impact.

Throughout his album Nelson's singing is so sincere that he really takes us inside the hearts of these two people. Jerry Wexler's tasteful production reinforces the poignancy of the lyrics, and the restraint exercised in all the arrangements makes the whole performance all the more powerful. The wall of John Hughey's pedal steel guitar perfectly captures the pain expressed in the ballads. On the deeply moving "It's Not Supposed To Be That Way," the pedal steel lines are like tears.

Another traditional country instrument, the fiddle, played by Johnny Gimble, adds a warm and jazzy spark to the upbeat "Sister's Coming Home." Nelson's own acoustic guitar playing, tinted with the blues, underlies the theme song, and in "I Pretend I Never Happened" Barry Beckett on piano provides a good strong rhythmic pattern within a dynamic arrangement.

Although he does write some songs, Waylon Jennings is primarily an interpreter shaping lyrics with his own emotional experience. He has co-produced "This Time," with Willie Nelson and in fact sings three of Nelson's "Phases and Stages" songs.

It's interesting to compare their separate interpretations. Jennings possesses the better voice, richer and more vibrant, while Nelson compensates for his less supple vocals with emotional intensity. By doing "Walkin" which Nelson placed on his "woman's" side, Jennings shows that it's just as expressive of a man's viewpoint. Where Nelson compels us to come to him through his more subtle readings, Jennings reaches out to touch us with a stronger attack.

Throughout his album Jennings conveys a strong sense of reality with his forceful phrasing. Dee Moeller's "Slow Movin' Outlaw," a Peckinpah version of the fading west, is tinged with regret. Lee Clayton's "If You Could Touch Her At All," which shows a man's comprehension of a woman's power in bed, is sung without a trace of bitterness.

The same solid realism is true of Jennings's own "This Time" where a straying lover is warned "each tomorrow will depend on the love you give today." Always Jennings comes across as a man with a strong sense of himself and therefore able to accept life as it comes.

When contemporary music is so filled with tortured, neurotic characters, it's reassuring to hear a real man.

Like Nelson's album, Jennings's is marked by good musical taste and features some sensitive harmonica played by Don Brooks. Both albums shine with such soul that only the most extreme hard-rock fanatics could fail to be hooked.
Kenneth Threadgill is a living legend whose natural singing voice is clear as a bell. His fans include hard core country music lovers as well as fans of rock and they span all age groups. Janis Joplin always gave Mr. Threadgill credit for getting her started in her career. Many magazine and newspaper features have been written about him.

Kenneth Threadgill does not choose to refer to himself as a folk singer, he is just a singer. He was discovered by country and folk fans when he owned and operated a beer and sandwich joint on the outskirts of Austin in the early 1960's. He had an old nickelodeon there filled with Jimmy Rogers records... it cost 5¢ to play it and sometimes you could persuade Mr. Threadgill to sing along with Jimmy.

Later, Threadgill and one of his bands picked and sang the old songs at The Split Rail in Austin and gradually his fame spread until he was in demand for concerts and nightclubs all over the Southwest.

Mr. Threadgill is a deeply religious man. He believes that many of the church hymns and country songs he sings are "talking about the same thing, and in lot's of cases using the same tune." Not long ago a feature story on Kenneth Threadgill ran in THE TEXAS OBSERVER. Wayne Oakes wrote, "One finds every type of person at Threadgills, all enjoying the music and each other. Such an improbable mixture of people never gather at the tavern next door."

Threadgill's tavern is closed now, but the quote is typical of the man's unique tolerance. He has said, "Well I've always advocated (now I don't say I'm to blame for all of it), but I've always advocated giving everyone his right. Like I told someone the other day when they were talking about some of those, they called them 'hippies.' They were criticizing their appearance. And you should have seen some the people doing the criticizing — they were as big as barrels. And I said, 'You don't see any of those hippies criticizing you.' See what I mean. They were huge, huge... just ridiculous looking, but nobody ever said anything to them about it. To me it doesn't make any difference how they dress, I like to see them look clean. I appreciate cleanliness, but as far as a man wearing his hair or beard, it's his. I don't care what he does as long as he treats me all right. My attitude is this, live and let live, and I guess people know that."

We need more Kenneth Threadgills in this world.
These Texas Musicians and Bands congratulate Willie Nelson for His Second Annual 4th of July Picnic:

**AUSTIN**

**JIMMY JOHNSON**  
Acoustic guitar with D. SEDERHOME-Elec. bass  
(214) 348-5662

**GREEZY WHEELS**  
(Gary)  
(512) 453-7511

**DALLAS**  
(For bookings in the Dallas area call the numbers listed here.)

**RUSS ALVEY**  
Acoustic Single  
(214) 691-8927

**TEXAS WEATHER**  
Acoustic-Electric  
Country/Rock  
(214) 348-5662

**RUSTY WEIR**  
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**THE BACON BLITZ BAND**  
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**STEVE FROMHOLZ**  
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(R.D. Lawrence & Wes Schaefer)  
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**PORE, COOKE & NEAL**  
"A unique experience."  
(214) 348-5662

**LAST MILE RAMBLERS**  
(from New Mexico)  
(214) 348-5662

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STEVE BROOKS, the Dallas artist who drew the caricatures on page six, says if you identified them as follows, you score 100 percent:

1. Jay Milner  
2. Willie Nelson  
3. Hank Wilson  
4. Billy Joe Shaver  
5. & (t) Ray & Chris of Asleep at the Wheel  
7. & (8) Kris & Rita  
9. Michael Murphey  
10. B.W. Stevenson  
11. Doug Sahm  
12. Hondo Crouch  
13. Jerry Jeff Walker  
14. Willis Alan Ramsey  
15. Ray Wylie Hubbard  
16. Steve Fromholz  
17. Rusty Wier  
18. Rick Nelson  
19. Paul English  
20. Sammi Smith  
21. Waylon Jennings.

George M. Jones
Keep the good time rolling.