Country Music in the Modern Era: 1940s-1970s
New World NW 207

Country music is a commercial art. The music's artistic development is intertwined with the growth of those institutions that helped or hindered the performance of the music. Radio shows, record companies, and television networks have all had a place in the story. Great artists have left their mark on country music's sound, and great executives have had an equal influence on the music by affecting its packaging and availability.

The term "country music" came into use only gradually in the years following World War II. "Hillbilly music" had been the term used to characterize the music of the white rural South, but after the war the style came under the influence of popular music and an urban audience, and as the music changed "hillbilly" became less and less accurate. The period between World War II and the middle seventies has generally been one of growth in the audience for this most native of American music traditions. In the twenties and thirties country material was essentially folk music placed on disc. By the end of the thirties the music had diversified to a considerable degree, but much hillbilly music continued to reflect British and American folk song. It was most frequently recorded on location in the South and Southwest. Powerful radio stations like Chicago's WLS and Nashville's WSM broadcast live country music to a growing audience. Bob Wills and his jazz influenced western swing thrilled thousands of country fans in the Southwest. Yet, despite these signs of musical growth and diversity, hillbilly music remained unfocused in the thirties. It was a music without a permanent home, and was frequently treated as an embarrassing stepchild by major record companies involved in popular music and jazz.

Hillbilly music entered the 1940s a regional music with a minority audience, and emerged with national impact in the middle of the same decade. Country music after 1945 is not the pure folk art of earlier decades. It is a hybrid of British and American folk song, Hawaiian instrumentation, cowboy costuming, and pop-music vocal techniques. The war years had scattered the audience for southern music throughout the urban North, and this, combined with the stylistic evolution of country performance, helped force country music into the modern era of popular music. A word must be said about the evolution of country style. The earliest country records, cut in the 1920s, reveal what is best described as Anglo-American vocal and instrumental style. The music of the southeastern mountains evolved from British folk songs. The fiddle, dulcimer, and unaccompanied voice are the most archaic elements of this style; the banjo, mandolin, and guitar are American additions. Early country music combined these ingredients in a variety of ways: singers performed in the high, nasal style associated with ballad singing while accompanying themselves on banjo or guitar; string bands used all the instruments but the dulcimer; mountain instruments and tunes were applied to other kinds of music to produce new styles (for instance, western swing merged jazz and mountain music into an exciting bigband form). Cowboy music gained association with eastern mountain styles, and western songs and dress became an ingredient of country performance. The Hawaiian steel guitar, a pop-music fad at the turn of the century, remains a hallmark of modern country instrumental style. This was country music in the late thirties: banjos, fiddles, mandolins, and guitars; vocal solos and duets; large and small ensembles
—all transmitted to a country audience by radio and records.

After World War II the diversity of style was enhanced by electric instruments, popstyle vocalists, increased musical sophistication, and a new urban audience. Eddy Arnold's first solo releases added Bing Crosby-style crooning to country music’s stylistic inventory. Lefty Frizzell, with a mournful cry in his voice, helped develop the blue honky-tonk style. Bluegrass music, in full flower during the late forties and early fifties, retained the string-band sound from an earlier stage in the music's development. New songwriters added new types to the country repertory: songs of love gone bad, of families separated, of country people coming to grips with an urban society. A major change in country music was the rise to stardom of several female vocalists. Women soloists were practically unheard of in country music's formative years. In 1952, however, Kitty Wells had a national hit with "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-tonk Angels," and her success opened country stardom for a second generation of women singers and songwriters—Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, Tammy Wynette, and Dolly Parton.

Perhaps the most important development was that of a geographic center for the production of the music—Nashville, Tennessee. A description of Nashville's rise does much to explain the modernization of country music. Nashville in 1940 was hardly a music center. "Grand Ole Opry" had been a major live country radio show since the late 1920s, but other cities had similar radio programs. In the early 1940s Fred Rose, an accomplished pop songwriter who had begun to explore the country field, teamed with Grand Ole Opry star Roy Acuff to form Acuff-Rose Publishing, Nashville's first country- music business not related to the Grand Ole Opry. Rose was able to encourage record company executives to cut discs in Nashville, and the city emerged in the late forties as one of several southern recording centers. Paul Cohen, of Decca, did some work in Cincinnati but preferred Nashville. Steve Sholes, vice-president of RCA Records, also liked Nashville, and began to use a young Opry guitarist, Chet Atkins, as a sideman on sessions and as a producer. Though Nashville was not a major recording center in the late forties, it possessed the raw material. The Grand Ole Opry provided a pool of resident vocal and instrumental talent. Acuff-Rose gave Nashville an outlet for the fledgling country songwriters. Record executives kept Nashville in contact with the New York scene.

The catalyst in Nashville's transformation into a major music center was the young Hank Williams, a singer of great intensity and a songwriter of major talent, who left Shreveport's "Louisiana Hayride" in 1949 and joined Nashville's "Grand Ole Opry" later the same year. His songs—"Your Cheatin' Heart," "Cold, Cold, Heart," "Kaw'liga"—were not only hit country records but were equally successful in the pop field when cut by artists like Joni James and Tony Bennett. Hank's songs helped make Acuff-Rose a publishing giant, and Fred Rose produced his records for Sterling and later for MGM. The success of Williams' material with a pop audience indicated that country music was beginning to reach beyond its regional market. As a performer he helped establish the gutsy, bluesy, honky-tonk style that characterized much country singing in the 1950s. Williams never lived to see the full impact of his popularity, but singers like Ray Price, Ferlin Husky, and George Jones continued for years the singing style he created. In the early fifties country music's future seemed to be a steady increase in popularity. But an important shift in musical taste stunted this growth. In Memphis, Tennessee, an independent company, Sun Records, was assembling a roster of artists who would rewrite pop-music history. Elvis Presley, Carl Perkins, Charlie Rich, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash all recorded for Sam Phillips at Sun. Though each had a distinct style, all shared two characteristics: they had been raised in environments rich in country music, and they had learned the vocabulary of blues, the black music of the rural South. The blend of black and white traditions in Presley's work produced music of emotional power and wide appeal. Though white performers and listeners had flirted with black music for years, Presley's 1956 release "Heartbreak Hotel" generated a mass audience for countrified blues and initiated the rock 'n'-roll era.

The initial impact of rock 'n' roll was to drain country music at both ends, for artists deserted country material in an attempt to follow an audience that had shifted its allegiance from Hank Snow to Buddy Holly. Johnny Cash cut "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," and Carl Perkins wrote "Blue Suede Shoes." In the middle fifties performers with solid country roots—like Bill Haley, Conway Twitty, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Buddy Holly— who a decade earlier or later would have been country entertainers instead flourished in rock 'n' roll.

Nashville and country music at first resisted rock 'n' roll on every front. Country artists, once maligned as purveyors of an inferior art, attacked rock 'n' roll as music devoid of quality, designed to undermine the morals of American youth. Despite the resistance of the country-music establishment, rock 'n' roll continued to gain popularity. Country radio stations changed to a rock format, and bookings for country acts fell off. Attendance at the Grand Ole Opry reached a low point. It looked as though rock 'n' roll might destroy both country music and Nashville.

But they survived. Country music co-opted some of rock's territory, and country music gained ground with a middle-class audience as rock became the music of rebellious youth. Groups like the Everly Brothers— reared in country music by their performing father, Ike Everly—became successful rock singers. Their success brought money into Nashville and helped bridge the gap between country music's first surge of mass acceptance in the early fifties and the more lasting success the music was to achieve in the sixties.

In a roundabout way the rise of rock 'n' roll sparked country recording, particularly in Nashville. Rockabilly, a blend of rock 'n' roll and hillbilly, was a southern phenomenon, and as artists such as Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, and Johnny Cash left Sun Records for major record labels it was natural that they would be signed by those divisions that had dealt with southern music—with country music. Thus Steve Sholes signed Elvis to RCA. Johnny Cash joined Columbia through Don Law, their country-music man since the 1930s. As these artists produced hit records, the men who had signed these new stars gained power. Sholes became president of RCA Records and was able to use his new influence to commit RCA to an extensive autonomous Nashville operation headed by Chet Atkins. Don Law was able to build a similar Nashville operation for Columbia, and Paul Cohen hired bandleader Owen Bradley to do the same for Decca. By the late 1950s the three major labels were heavily committed to recording in Nashville. Each controlled studios and was represented by a major producer. Though country music was only slowly working its way from under the rock landslide, by the late 1950s the talent and facilities located in Nashville pointed to a prosperous future.

Once the bulk of the country recording industry settled in Nashville, industry leaders set out to change country music's backwoods, manure-on-the-boots image. In 1958 business leaders formed the Country Music Association to promote country music. CMA set out to increase the number of country radio stations, to increase the availability of country music on television, and to interest advertising executives in using country music for national campaigns. CMA unified diverse corporate interests for the betterment of the entire country industry, and its role in the country boom of the 1960s can scarcely be overemphasized.

Between 1960 and 1970 Nashville created a musical establishment that did much to standardize the sound of country music. In this period Chet Atkins produced Hank Snow, Eddy Arnold, and Jim Reeves for RCA, Owen Bradley produced Kitty Wells and Ernest Tubb for Decca, and Don Law produced Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, and Ray Price for Columbia. With three men recording most major artists, and fifteen or twenty sidemen handling all the studio backup work, a Nashville sound emerged. The Nashville sound was part public relations: the notion that Nashville-cut records possessed a unique sound obviously served the interests of Nashville men. But it was also true that their approach to record-making was unlike that of other recording centers. In Nashville few musicians read music but instead improvise from chord changes. In Nashville recording the rhythm section emphasizes acoustic guitar, and lead lines played behind a vocalist tend to be sparse— only one instrument backs a sung melody or fills at the ends of phrases at any one time. This restrained approach contrasts with the orchestral wall-of-sound frequent in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles recording sessions. From its folk-music roots to the present day, country performance has placed great emphasis on textual content. Sophisticated melodic lines and complex harmonic structures have been either ignored or avoided as detrimental to the proper presentation of a song's lyric. It is the relaxed simplicity of Nashville recording that attracted so many pop performers to the city in the 1960s.

Emphasis on the storytelling aspects of song is one of the elements linking contemporary country music with the more folk like performances of the twenties and thirties. Businessmen solidified Nashville's position as the center for country recording, but songwriters produced major artistic changes in country performance. Hank Williams added intensely personal songs to the country repertory: songs of loneliness, of love gone bad, of drinking and sorrow, of wild living. These set the stage for the 1950's. Writers like Roger Miller, Marty Robbins, Dolly Parton, and Loretta Lynn set the fashion of the 1960's. As the 1970's began, bearded Kris Kristofferson emerged from the Nashville underground to write some of the simplest and most moving country songs of the past decades, and to legitimatize the role of rebellious youth in country music.

In the first decade following World War II, country music distilled its content and style in Nashville. In more recent times the Nashville sound has emerged in new geographic and artistic settings. Two Bakersfield, California, songwriter-performers-Buck Owens and Merle Haggard-proved that the prevailing sound of country music could be produced outside Nashville. In the middle 1960's Bob Dylan recorded in Nashville, and the popular acceptance of country style performance style was virtually complete. Now, in the mid-seventies, the American middle class is comfortable with the sound of country instruments, more radio stations that ever

program country music, and pop stars like John Denver and Olivia Newton-John routinely achieve national success with records that sound very country. The process of change initiated when the country audience became urban in the wake of World War II had first found a center, Nashville, and Nashville had carried the music of the rural South into the mainstream of American popular culture.

Bouquet of Roses
(S.Nelson and B. Hilliard)
Eddy Arnold.
Recorded May 18, 1947. Originally released on RCA Victor 20-2806.

Eddy Arnold's long career has steadily produced hits. He first enjoyed success as a country singer in the early forties when he joined Grand Ole Opry as a featured vocalist with Pee Wee King's Golden West Cowboys. By the end of the decade he was a major solo star, having cut such hits as "Cattle Call," "Anytime," and "Bouquet of Roses."

In his early career Arnold projected a country image, billing himself as "The Tennessee Plowboy." Crooning replaced his yodel, however, and by the middle 1960s he was in the front line of artists performing country material for a pop audience He played the Copacabana, performed in a tuxedo, and all but disavowed his country heritage. In recent years, following his election to the Country Music Hall of Fame, Eddy Arnold has begun again to sing country-style vocals.

I'm sending you a big bouquet of
roses,
One for ev'ry time you broke my
heart,
And as the door of love between
us closes,
Tears will fall like petals when we
part.
I begged you to be different
But you'll always be untrue,
I'm tired of forgiving,
Now there's nothing left to do.
So I'm sending you a big bouquet
of roses,
One for ev'ry time you broke my
heart.
You made our lover's lane a road
of sorrow,
Till at last we had to say goodbye.
You're leaving me to face each
new tomorrow
With a broken heart you taught to
cry.
I know that I should hate you
After all you've put me through,
But how can I be bitter,
When I'm still in love with you.
So I'm sending you a big bouquet
of roses,
One for ev'ry time you broke my
heart.

Band 2
Never No More Blues
(E.McWilliams and J. Rodgers)
Lefty Frizzell.
Recorded February 7, 1953. Originally released on Columbia 21101.

Lefty Frizzell was born in Corsicana, Texas, in 1928. His father was an oil-well man, and Lefty traveled throughout the Southwest, where he was exposed to a wide range of musical styles. Lefty was discovered in a talent contest by a Columbia executive, and his 1950 record "If You've Got the Money I've Got the Time" became a smash hit. Lefty's performance style, like that of Hank Williams, influenced many country artists, particularly Merle Haggard.

The Frizzell recording here harkens back to an earlier era of country music. "Never No More Blues" was written by Jimmie Rodgers, the great country singer of the twenties and thirties. Frizzell's sensitive rendering of the song and his excellent performance of the "blue yodel," a Rodgers trademark, helps link the modern age of country music with the music's formative years.

I'm just as blue as I can be
Since Suzette said goodbye to me
My life is a failure I see
And you won't be my gal no more,
no more, no more.
I packed my things in a grip
Take a long ocean trip
Out on a great big steam ship
And she'll never see her daddy no
more, no more, ooooo.
Well, I hate to say fare-thee-well
To my mammy and my sister Nell
They sure gonna cry when I tell
That I ain't comin' home no more,
no more, ooooo [yodel].
Perhaps I'll be sorry some day
That I leave here and go away
But you need not ask me to stay
'Cause I'll never change my mind
no more, no more, ooooo.
Now whether I'm right or wrong
I'm gonna be gone before long
And I'll hush this crazy song
That I never will sing no more, no
more, ooooo [yodel].

Band 3
Much Too Young to Die
(Rusty Gabbard)
Ray Price. Originally released May, 1954, on Columbia 21249.

Ray Price, born in 1926, became known as "The Cherokee Cowboy" in the middle 1950s. He first emulated Hank Williams, and the selection included here illustrates the intense, rough-edged vocal style that defined honky-tonk music in the fifties. In more recent years Price has shifted toward a mellow, pop-oriented style. In the early 1970s he cut a Kris Kristofferson song, "For the Good Times," and had a hit on both pop and country charts. Price's career has been similar in direction to Eddy Arnold's. Both have had what might be thought of as two careers, so great has been the variation in approach each has taken.

Oh, love me now, will you,
honey?
Time won't wait for love nor
money
Love gets colder, colder,
Colder as time goes by
Take my heart, don't abuse it,
Be my death if you refuse it
Love me now 'cause I'm much too
young to die.
If you search the universe
I'm sure you'll never find
Another someone who could love
you
Like this heart of mine
Take my love, don't abuse it,
Be my death if you refuse it
Love me now cause I'm much too
young to die.
Oh, losin' you would surely kill me
Love me now and darlin' thrill me
Time is passin', passin',
Passin' us on the fly
If you leave my heart neglected,
It cannot be resurrected
Love me now 'cause I'm much too
young to die.
If you search the universe
I'm sure you'll never find
Another someone who could love
you
Like this heart of mine
Take my love, don't abuse it,
Be my death if you refuse it
Love me now 'cause I'm much too
young to die.

Band 4
Squid Jiggin' Ground
(A.R. Scammel)
Hank Snow.
Originally released October, 1957, on RCA 47-7060.

Hank Snow, born in the Canadian Maritime Provinces in 1914, became one of the great country singers of the fifties and sixties. Though he recorded many types of country song, Snow is best known for train songs like "Golden Rocket" and "I'm Movin On." "Squid Jiggin' Ground" helps reinforce our understanding of the continuing ties between commercial country music and the folk balladry that forms its historical underpinnings. The song was composed in traditional style by a Newfoundland ballad maker in the late 1920s. It takes its title from the special cluster of hooks (squid jig) used in catching squid, and is rich in the language and lore of the Atlantic fisherman. Country music moved steadily away from its folk roots after the mid-1940s, but without deserting tradition.

Oh this is the place where they're
fishin' and gatherin',
Oil skins and boots and the Cape
hands batten down;
All sizes of figures with squid
lines and jiggers,
They congregate here on the squid
jiggin' ground.
Some are workin' their jiggers,
while others are yarnin',
There's some standin' up and
there's more lyin' down;
While all kinds of fun, jokes and
drinks are begun,
As they wait for the squid on the
squid jiggin' ground.
There's men of all ages and boys
in the bargain,
There's old Billy Cave and there's
young Raymond Brown;
There's Rip, Red and Gory out
here in the dory,
A-runnin' down squires on the
squid jiggin' ground.
There's men from the harbor,
there's men from the tickle,
And all kinds of motorboats,
green, gray and brown;
Right yonder is Bobby and with
him is Nobby,
He's chewin' hard tack on the
squid jiggin' ground.
God bless my soul, list to, there's
Skipper John Champy,
He's the best hand at squid jiggin'
here, I'll be bound;
Hello, what's the row? Why he's
jiggin' one now,
The very first squid on the squid
jiggin' ground.
The man with the whiskers is old
Jacob Steele,
He's gettin' well on, but he's still
pretty sound;
While Uncle Bob Hockins wears six
pairs of stockin's,
Whenever he's out on the squid
jiggin' ground.

Holy Smoke! What a scuffle! All
hands are excited,
It's a wonder to me that there's
nobody drowned;
There's a bustle, confusion, the
wonderful hustle,
They're all jiggin' squid on the
squid jiggin' ground.
Says Bobby, "The squids are on
top of the water,
I just got me riggers 'bout one
fathom down";
But a squid in the boat scuddered
right down his throat,
And he swam like mad on the squid
jiggin' ground.
There's poor Uncle Louie, his
whiskers are spattered
With spots of the squid juice
that's flyin' around;
One poor little boy got it right in
the eye,
But they don't give a darn on the
squid jiggin' ground.
Now, if ever you feel inclined to
go squiddin',
Leave your white clothes behind in
the town;
And if you get cranky without
your silk hanky,
You'd better steer clear of the
squid jiggin' ground.

Band 5
There's Poison in Your Heart
(Zeke Clements)
Kitty Wells.
Recorded April 4, 1955. Originally released on Decca (MCA) 9-29577.

Hank Williams and Kitty Wells (Muriel Deason) were the premier country singers of the 1950s. Born in eastern Tennessee in 1919, Kitty Wells first performed on radio on Knoxville's WNOX. She later joined "Louisiana Hayride," and she became a member of WSM's "Grand Ole Opry" in 1952. Her great hits include "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-tonk Angels" and "Making Believe."

Despite the success of such groups as the Carter Family, which included two women, country music before the fifties had little place for the female soloist. Kitty Wells was the first star female country artist, and it can be argued that such singers as Loretta Lynn and Dolly Parton have followed a path she blazed.

Once I loved you, darling,
And you thrilled me through and
through
I must admit I wanted only you
Your kisses left me breathless
When you said we'd never part
Your lips are sweet as honey
But there's poison in your heart.
The way that you two-timed me
Is a sin and it's a shame
You even said you'd like to change
my name

You vowed that you'd be faithful
But you lied right from the start
Your lips are sweet as honey
But there's poison in your heart.
Maybe I'll find that fate is kind
And lets me love again
Then I'll forget my fickle dreams
of you
It's just too bad we never
Had an even-steven start
Your lips are sweet as honey
But there's poison in your heart.

Band 6
Try Me One More Time
(E.Tubb)
Ernest Tubb.
Recorded July, 1942. Originally released on Decca (MCA) DL-5301.

Both Hank Snow and Ernest Tubb were born in 1914, and both became stars in the same period. In his early career Tubb emulated Jimmie Rodgers' vocal style. By the 1940s Tubb was setting the style that would dominate the next decade—gritty singing about the real problems of real lives. "Try Me One More Time," one of Tubb's biggest hits, is an all-time country classic. The subject—unfaithfulness in love—was rare in country music's early days but would become nearly dominant in the 1950s.

Yes, I know I've been untrue
And I have hurt you through and
through
But please have mercy on this
heart of mine
Take me back and try me one
more time.
If, my darling, you could see
Just what your leaving's done to
m e
Then you would know that love is
still a tie that binds
Take me back and try me one
more time.
In my dreams I see your face
It seems there's someone in my
place
But does he know that you were
once just mine?
Take me back and try me one
more time.
If you'll just forgive me now
I'll make it up to you somehow
I promise ne’er again to be unkind
Take me back and try me one
more time.

Band 7
Love Letters in the Sand
(J.Fred Coots and Charles and Nick Kenny)
Patsy Cline.
Recorded February 4, 1963. Originally released on Decca (MCA) 31616.

Like Jim Reeves and Eddy Arnold, Patsy Cline possessed both pop and country appeal. Her performance style, as heard here and in her hit recordings of "I Fall to Pieces" and "Walkin' After Midnight," sounds more pop than country. Modern listeners can only speculate on how Patsy Cline's style would have changed over the years. She died at the age of thirty-one in an airplane crash just one month after recording the selection included here. Her performing style would undoubtedly have evolved as she gained musical maturity.

On a day like today
We passed the time away
Writing love letters in the sand
How you laughed when I cried
Each time I saw the tide
Take our love letters in the sand.

Chorus
You made a vow that you would
always be true
But somehow that vow meant
nothing to you
Now my poor heart just aches
With ev'ry wave that breaks
Over love letters in the sand.

(Chorus)

You made a vow that you would
always be true
But somehow that vow meant
nothing to you
Now my poor heart just aches
With ev'ry wave that breaks
Over love letters in the sand.

Band 8
Jean's Song
(Marguerite Monnot)
Chet Atkins.
Originally released December, 1955, on RCA 47-6366.

Chet Atkins (born 1924) was influenced by such early country instrumentalists as Merle Travis. His finger-style guitar, in which the right thumb sounds a bass string while the other fingers of the right hand pick out a melody, is well illustrated in this recording (of a tune also known as "The Poor People of Paris"). As head of RCA's country operation Atkins was a leader in Nashville's development as a recording center.

Band 9
Mystery Train
(Herman Parker and S a m Phillips)
Elvis Presley.
Recorded February, 1955. Originally released on Sun 223 and later on RCA APMI-1675.

Elvis Presley was born in 1935 in East Tupelo, Mississippi. He first performed as a country singer, and made several appearances on "Grand Ole Opry." Elvis hit big with a combination black and white vocal style that characterized rockabilly and much rock 'n' roll. "Mystery Train" could easily have been performed in straight country style. Presley brings something of the drive and intensity of rock 'n' roll to the tune, however, and the performance reveals both the similarities and differences between country music and early rock 'n' roll.

Train I ride, sixteen coaches long
Train I ride, sixteen coaches long
Well, that long black train got my
baby and gone.
Train, train, comin' 'round the
bend
Train, train, comin' 'round the
bend
Well, it took my baby, but it
never will again.
Train, train, comin' down the line
Train, train, comin' down the line
Well, it's bringin' my baby cause
she's mine, all mine.
Train, train, comin' 'round the
bend
Train, train, comin' 'round the
bend
Well, it took my baby, never will
again.

Side Two, Band 1

Little Ole You
(Dave Burgess and Ji m Reeves)
Jim Reeves.
Recorded June 14, 1962. Originally released on RCA 47-8193.

Jim Reeves, born in 1924, was forty years old when he was killed while piloting his own airplane near Nashville. At the time of his death Reeves was the premier country pop recording star. Hits like "He'll Have to Go" and "Four Walls" were so successful in the pop field that many fans never identified him as country. Unlike Eddy Arnold and Ray Price, other practitioners of the crooning country vocal, Reeves was consistent in vocal approach from the earliest days of his professional career. His style and its success reveal one of the constant tensions in modern country music: between traditional country and popular urban approaches to performance.

It's a great big world full of little
surprises
There's a lot of pretty girls in all
kinds of shapes and sizes
And lucky me, although my
chances were few
In this great big world I found little
ole you.

Chorus

Little ole you, no bigger than a
minute
It's hard to believe this big world
had you in it.
It's a fast life and everybody's
lookin' so busy
There's so much to do it almost
makes me dizzy
In the middle of it all you appeared
right out of the blue
In this great big world I found little
ole you.
(Chorus; second stanza repeated)

Band 2
Jimmy Martinez
(M.Robbins)
Marty Robbins.
Originally released May, 1961, on Columbia 42008.

If any element has limited Marty Robbins' success, it is his versatility. Robbins, born in 1925, first gained fame in the late 1950s. He had a rock- 'n'-roll hit with "A White Sport Coat," followed by a string of country hits—like "El Paso," "Big Iron," and "Jimmy Martinez"—in what can be termed a "Western-Mexican" mariachi-influenced style. The ease with which Robbins moved from one musical style to another prevented the development of a clear-cut identity among country fans; he became a star, not a superstar.

The story begins in Renoza, a village
in Old Mexico
A girl and a Mexican soldier were
sweethearts a long time ago
They made big plans for the wedding,
the town of Renoza would
go
And they would see Jimmy
Martinez married to Sara
Sarose.
Oh, oh, oh.
One day there came a letter, it
said that Jimmy must go
That Jimmy was leaving Renoza
to fight at the Alamo
He never returned to Renoza, the
story's been told and retold
How Jimmy the Mexican soldier
died at the Alamo.
Oh, oh, oh.
Jimmy's last letter to Sara began
with a message like this,
"Oh dear one, how sweet is the
mem'ry, the mem'ry of our
parting kiss,
I send my heart in this letter, I
pray to the one up above
Oh Sara, don't ever forget me,
stay just as pure as the dove.
Oh, oh, oh.
I'm like the dove in your window,
it's chosen just one mate for
life

And you are the one I have chosen,
the one that I want for my
wife."
He never returned to Renoza, the
story's been told and retold
How Jimmy the Mexican soldier
died at the Alamo.
Oh, oh, oh.
Sara refused to believe them, she
prayed for Jimmy's return
And there every night in her window,
a small little candle
would burn.
The years turned her dark hair to
silver, she prayed for Jimmy
so long,
Then one night the village was
saddened, the light in her window
was gone.

Band 3
I'm a Honky-Tonk Girl
(L.Lynn)
Loretta Lynn.
Originally released 1960 on Zero 107.

Loretta Lynn is unquestionably the best-known contemporary female country vocalist. She was born in 1935 and was a mother at fourteen, a grandmother at twenty-eight. Her recent autobiography (Coal Miner's Daughter) has nearly achieved best-seller status. Loretta came to stardom following the 1960 success of the recording included here, originally on the tiny Zero label, of her own song. It earned her a Decca contract and launched a long career. Loretta Lynn sings in an emotional voice with a somewhat nasal quality, and despite her contemporary success is part of the vocal tradition stretching to the late 1940s and Kitty Wells. Loretta's skill as a songwriter and vocalist and her ability to project a warm, innocent personality have enabled her to conquer television talk shows and skeptical pop-music audiences. She was the first female vocalist voted Entertainer of the Year by the Country Music Association.

Ever since you left me I've done
nothing but wrong
Many nights I've laid awake and
cried
We once were happy, my heart
was in a whirl
But now I'm a honky-tonk girl
So turn that juke box way up high
And fill my glass up while I cry
I've lost everything in this world
And now I'm a honky-tonk girl
I just can't make a right with all
of my wrongs
Every evening of my life seems so
long
I'm sorry and ashamed for all
these things you see
But loam' him has made a fool of
m e
So fill my glass up to the brim
To lose my memory of him
I've lost everything in this world
And now I'm a honky-tonk girl

Band 4
Lorena
(arr. C. Williams)
Johnny Cash.
Recorded August 8, 1959. Originally released on Columbia B-2155.

For many, the Folsom Prison album fixed Johnny Cash (born 1932) with the image of tough ex-con, and his craggy appearance, dramatic vocal style, and man-in-black costuming have made the image believable. In fact, Cash spent virtually no time in jail (other than when giving concerts). But being the son of an Arkansas sharecropper was tough enough.

Cash gained early fame as one of Sun Records' rockabilly stars. His hits cover both pop and country and include "Ballad of a Teenage Queen," "Folsom Prison Blues," "I Walk the Line," "A Boy Named Sue," and "Daddy Sang Bass." In the late 1960s Cash was the number-one country singer, and the success of his network television show was a major factor in widening the mass audience for country music. Cash received a nomination to the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1976.

The years creep slowly by,
Lorena
Snow is on the grass again
The sun is sinkin' low, Lorena
'Cross where the flowers have
been.
The music's sad and low, Lorena
Happy sounds have left the day
The banjos softly play, Lorena
Where once they rang so loud and
gay.
I hardly feel the cold, Lorena
I know the darkness soon will pass
We'll sing our songs again, Lorena
You'll be in my arms at last.

Band 5
Don't Let Her Know
(Buck Owens, Don Rich, and Bonnie Owens)
Buck Owens.
Recorded July 8, 1964. Originally released on Capitol 5240.

Bakersfield, California, has been compared to Nashville as a center for recording country music. Much of that reputation derives from the work of Buck Owens (born 1929). He had a string of hits in the early and middle 1960s: "Tiger by the Tail," "Together Again," "Act Naturally," and "Crying Time" were among the finest and most successful country songs of the decade. Owens did it without recourse to the pop musical vocabulary. His records are among the simplest cut in the Nashville-sound era, and his band, the Buckaroos, is among the best in country electric string groups.

Lips, make a smile on my face
Eyes, don't let her see you shed a
tear
Heart, don't let her hear you skip
a beat
And pride, don't let her know how
much I care.
Don't let her know Don't let her
know How much I care.
Laugh, dance, and sing so she
won't notice
The hurt that's still burning deep
inside
And don't let her see the way I
tremble
Don't let her know how much I've
cried.

Don't let her know Don't let her
know
How much I've cried.

Band 6
All I Love Is You
(R.Miller)
Roger Miller.
Originally released 1975 on Columbia KC-33472.

Roger Miller was born in 1936. When his two early hits "Chug-a-Lug" and "King of the Road" were released in the early 1960's, a unique and significant country talent was revealed. Miller combined words and music in a special way, and his songs became hits in both pop and country. He came from a country-music background (he was once a fiddler with comedienne Minnie Pearl). His success as a crossover artist (one who works in different musical fields) brought Roger his own prime-time network television show in 1962. The popularity of his songs and his singing was one of the major factors in the national interest in country music and Nashville that began in the 1960s, and he has influenced such country artists of the 1970s as Jerry Reed.

I like to stay up late and sleep late in the morning
I like to do things and I like the things I do
I like the feeling knowing you know how I feel about you
I like a lot but all I love is you

I got a puppy that I like a lot and think about
I like a summer morning wet with morning dew
I like to spend my Sundays and my nights right here beside you
I like a lot but all I love is you

I like to tell a joke and make somebody happy
I like to get my head messed up and sometimes do
Yes I like it when it's quiet in the night and I hear crickets
I like a lot but all I love is you
I like a lot but all I love is you

Band 7
Sing a Sad Song
(W. Stewart)
Merle Haggard.
Originally released March 1963, on Tally 155.

Merle Haggard is the great country poet of our age, with songs like "Mama Tried," "Today I Started Loving You Again," "If We Make It Through December," and "Okie from Muskogee" standing alongside all-time country classics.

In a sense he is the Hank Williams of the seventies. Haggard's background is also in the classic country mold. Born in Bakersfield, California, in 1937, he grew up mad and always in trouble, and spent three years in prison for robbery. Unlike Hank Williams, however, Merle Haggard shows no sign of burning himself out. He is a shrewd businessman and manages his own career. He is an excellent songwriter and the decade's finest singer, drawing consciously on the vocal styles of greats like Lefty Frizzell and Jimmie Rodgers.

This recording is one of Haggard's earliest, made before he signed with a major label. Listeners familiar with his work will be surprised by the youthful quality of his voice.

Sing me a song, sadness
And sing it as blue as I feel
If a tear should appear
It's not because she's not here
Sing a sad song, and sing it for me

She's unhappy with me, she told me so
I'm unhappy without her, and I still love her so
Oh, sing me a song of sadness
Pretend it's the end of the world
Sing it sweet and sing it low
And then I'll have to go
Sing a sad song, and sing it for me

Sing it sweet and sing it low
And then I'll have to go
Sing a sad song, and sing it for me

Band 8
Coat of Many Colors
(D. Parton)
Dolly Parton.
Recorded April 27, 1971. Originally released on RCA LSP-4603.

Dolly Parton is a paradox to many observers of the country scene. She is in many ways a cliché of the female country vocalist. Here piled bleached hair, wasp waist, and voluptuous figure suggest the "dumb blonde," the truckdriver's delight. But her songwriting ("Jolene" and "Coat of Many Colors") is among the best in country music, her musicianship is impeccable, and her singing-that high, tense voice fraught with emotion-hearkens back to the earliest mountain style.

Born in 1946 in the mountains of eastern Tennessee, Dolly Parton grew up in the kind of grinding rural poverty that has spawned many other great country singers and writers. "Coat of Many Colors" is a true song. In both content and performance it links country music of the seventies with the heartfelt, personal writing of Hank Williams in the forties.

Back through the years I go wandering once again
Back to the seasons of my youth
I recall a box of rags that someone gave us
And how my mama put the rags to use.

There were rags of many colors but every piece was small
And I didn't have a coat and it was away down in the fall
Mama sewed the rags together, sewing every piece with love
She made my coat of many colors that I was so proud of. (Repeat line)

And as she sewed she told a story from the Bible
She had read
About a coat of many colors Joseph wore
And then she said perhaps this coat, will bring you good luck and happiness
And I just couldn't wait to wear it and Mama blessed it with a kiss.

My coat of many colors that my mama made for me
Made only from rags but I wore it so proudly
Although we had no money I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors my mama made for me.

So with patches on my britches and holes in both my shoes
In my coat of many colors I hurried off to school
Just to find the others laughing and making fun of me
In my coat of many colors my mama made for me.

And, oh, I didn't understand it for I felt I was rich
And I told them of the love my mama sewed in every stitch
And I told them all the story mama told me while she sewed
And how my coat of many colors was worth more than all their clothes.

But they didn't understand it and I tried to make them see
That one is only poor only if they choose be
Now I know we had no money but I was rich as I could be
In my coat of many colors my mama just made for me.

Band 9

Help Me Make It Through the Night
(Kris Kristofferson)
Kris Kristofferson.
Recorded October 20, 1969. Originally released on Monument 30817.

"Help Me Make It Through the Night," by former Rhodes scholar Kris Kristofferson (born 1936), was an international hit for Sammy Smith in 1971. No other song better illustrates the contemporary condition of country music. Kristofferson was once part of the Nashville underground, a group of writers and performers opposed to the Nashville establishment. Though in education, background, and life style Kristofferson is unlike earlier country performers, his simple, eloquent songs represent the finest in country writing and have been widely recorded and universally admired. Kristofferson's lyrics are candid and realistic and have influenced other writers. His work also reveals on of the great strengths of country song-its ability to deal simply and honestly with powerful emotions.

Take the ribbon from your hair
Shake it loose and let it fall
Layin' soft across my skin
Like the shadows on the wall.

Come and lay down by my side
Till the early mornin' light
All I'm takin' is your time
Help me make it through the night.

I don't care who's right or wrong
I don't try to understand
Let the devil take tomorrow
Lord, tonight I need a friend.

Yesterday is dead and gone
And tomorrow's out of sight
And it's sad to be alone
Help me make it through the night

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Side One Total time 23:05

1 BOUQUET OF ROSES (S. Nelson and B. Hilliard) 2:32
(publ. Unichappell Music, Inc.)
Eddy Arnold

2 NEVER NO MORE BLUES (E. McWilliams and J. Rodgers) 3:03
(publ. Peer international Corp.)
Lefty Frizzell

3 MUCH TOO YOUNG TO DIE (Rusty Gabbard) 2:04
(publ. Acuff-Rose Publications, Inc.)
Ray Price

4 SQUID JIGGIN' GROUND (A. R. Scammel) 3:06
(publ. unknown)
Hank Snow

5 THERE'S POISON IN YOUR HEART (Zeke Clements) 2:32
(publ. Unichappell Music, Inc.)
Kitty Wells

6 TRY ME ONE MORE TIME (E. Tubb) 2:19
(publ. Unichappell Music, Inc.)
Ernest Tubb

7 LOVE LETTERS IN THE SAND (J. Fred Coots and Charles and Nick Kenny) 2:22
(publ. Bourne Co.)
Patsy Cline

8 JEAN'S SONG (Marguerite Monnot) 2:13
(publ. Chappell & Co., Inc.)
Chet Atkins
9 MYSTERY TRAIN (Herman Parker and Sam Phillips) 2:25
(publ. Hi Lo Music)
Elvis Presley

Side Two Total time 23:52

1 LITTLE OLE YOU (Dave Burgess and Jim Reeves) 2:22
(publ. Singletree Music Company)
Jim Reeves

2 JIMMY MARTINEZ (M. Robbins) 2:27
(publ. Unichappell Music, Inc.)
Marty Robbins

3 I'M A HONKY-TONK GIRL (L. Lynn) 2:15
(publ. Sure Fire Music Company, Inc.)
Loretta Lynn

4 LORENA (arr. C. Williams) 1:53
(publ. unknown)
Johnny Cash

5 DON'T LET HER KNOW (Buck Owens, Don Rich, and Bonnie Owens) .2:32
(publ. Central Songs. A Division of Beechwood Music Corporation)
Buck Owens

6 ALL I LOVE IS YOU (R. Miller) 2:12
(publ. Alrhond Publishing Company)
Roger Miller (In Stereo)

7 SING A SAD SONG (W. Stewart) 2:31
(publ. Owen Publications)
Merle Haggard

8 COAT OF MANY COLORS (D. Parton) 3:01
(publ. Owepar Publishing Company)
Dolly Parton (In Stereo)

9 HELP ME MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT (Kris Kristofferson) 2:23
(publ. Combine Music Corp.)
Kris Kristofferson (In Stereo)

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