

Produced by Billy Sherrill
Background Vocals: The Jordanaires
*Background Vocals: The Nashville Edition

E 30213



TAMMY WYNETTE / THE FIRST LADY

Side 1

RUN, WOMAN, RUN (2:25)
I WISH I HAD A MOMMY LIKE YOU (3:05)
TRUE AND LASTING LOVE (2:55)
I NEVER ONCE STOPPED LOVING YOU (2:55)
SAFE IN THESE LOVIN' ARMS OF MINE (2:55)

Side 2

SALLY TRASH (2:25)
MY DADDY BOYL (2:25)
THE LOVIN' KIND (2:55)
HE'S STILL MY MAN (2:55)
BUY ME A DADDY (2:25)
PLAYIN' AROUND WITH LOVE* (2:55)

The album was first

Engineered by Charlie Hodge and Les Satcher

Country and western fans need no introduction to Tammy Wynette. They already know her and love her. They need no further help from me. But rock people are another story. So far they have been pretty staidish about country music, even though it makes up half the route of rock.

Well, cousin, rock has felt the influence of C&W over the years, most directly through the presence of country (or country-based) artists on the pop charts: besides Elvis, the list has included Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, Johnny Horton, Jim Reeves, Janis C. Riley, Brenda Lee, Carl Perkins, Ferlin Husky, Sonny James, George Hamilton IV, Jimmy Dean, Roy Orbison, Don Gibson, Jerry Lee Lewis, Heper Miller, the Everly Brothers, Buddy Holly and Glen Campbell, to name only the ones that come immediately to mind. But think about that list: almost all of the names mentioned were big in the 50s or early 60s and many had only one big hit on the pop charts despite a string of triumphs on the C&W hitings. And some were more popular with grown-ups than with rock-and-rollers. Essentially, the same thing happened to country artists that happened to rhythm and blues performers: they were allowed a few hits in pre-Beatle days, then their ideas were stolen and they were relegated to the remainder bins so far as pop fans were concerned.

The only other way that most rock fans are aware of C&W is all through performers who have felt the music's strength and have respectfully tried to avoid themselves of it. The Beatles and belatedly the Rolling Stones; the late and lamented Levin' Spooner, Buffalo Springfield and Moby Grape; the Byrds and their offspring the Flying Burrito Brothers; the Quickilver Messenger Service and the First Edition are among the many groups that have incorporated elements of C&W into their styles, often in performances that remarkably approximate the originals. In general, though, rock people have been far more willing to acknowledge their indebtedness to black music (except financially) than they have to C&W, which is all the more surprising when you realize that country and soul songs mostly deal in similar subjects—love, sex, death and poverty—from strikingly similar points of view. And, more surprising still, when you begin to dig into it and find out how much "real" country music really has.

There is a lot happening in country music that should interest pop fans. For my money there are two important strains: one that emphasizes traditional country performing and one that is trying to make C&W into a more relevant medium of expression. Somewhere in South has commented that there is now a generation that has grown up with the sound of country music but without its values. He himself has written and performed songs like *Genes*, *People Play* and *Hell or Mile in My Shoes*, that would have been impossible only a few years ago. The best of the singers trying to accomplish this new consciousness are John Stewart (a former member of the Kingston Trio who is writing and performing some fantastic country-based material), Waylon Jennings (a deep-throated, soulful country performer who regularly includes Bob Dylan, Gordon Lightfoot and Jim Webb on his programs), Shiri Miletic (who writes conventional country songs about unconventional subjects like draft-dodging in Canada) and Mickey Newbury (a weird, Dylanesque singer-songwriter who is head of Nashville's underground). And of course there are still Johnny Cash and John D. Loudermilk whose careers have proven that being commercial can just mean being honest. It isn't all that simple, of course, and there are great performers, like Nat Stuckey, who are still trying to find the

proper way to relate to the contemporary scene.

But as with R&B or jazz or folk music, there are artists who refuse to compromise their form. Instead, they develop country music into a sophisticated instrument of communication; in its purest form, C&W is a remarkable means of expression. Cash and Loudermilk fall into this category as well as they do into the other. Earlier in their careers as did Jennings and Stuckey, Porter Wagoner is another good example of this country classicism and, perhaps surprisingly, perhaps not, the greatest male proponent of it at the moment is former rock-and-roller Jerry Lee Lewis. By far the best female vocalist is Tammy Wynette.

Even rock fans are probably aware of Tammy Wynette's great country single D-I-V-O-R-C-E. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. Building on the simplest of arrangements, using the usual Nashville foundation of steel and rhythm guitar backed by bass and drums, she wields one of the strongest and most dramatic voices in any contemporary music. And her songs are as basic as her singing: sometimes longing, sometimes demanding, always openly a woman but with her strength and irony undercutting the supplicant's role that C&W tries to thrust on women (and that the best female C&W singers all resist). Tammy Wynette's records are classics of their genre. The only time she goes outside the format of the traditional country song is to transform tunes like *Elva*, *Wanna*, *Elva* into her own property.

In its way, this album is also the tip of an iceberg. It is one of her best albums on Epic and if you dig her as much as I do after you hear these cuts you may want to go and dig up some of her other LPs.

I noticed the following line in a review of somebody else's album in *Karl Klosser's* column in the rock magazine *PISTON*: "It might work if she had the character of, say, Tammy Wynette, but not many do." So maybe rock folks are starting to catch on. I hope so, because otherwise we are going to miss a lot of great sounds.

—John Gabree
Contributor, *Wish Fidelity*

Cover photo: Columbia Records Photo Studio. Manufactured by Epic Records/CBS, Inc. (1) 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100. Printed in U.S.A. These album covers can be placed on labels of some record albums with suitable results. They will last at least as long as some records placed on the same surfaces, but will wear out some much when placed on other record albums.

Tammy Wynette - The First Lady

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