



TIME
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CONTEMPORARY
COUNTRY

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CONTEMPORARY
COUNTRY
THE LATE '70s

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

CCD-02
TCD-140

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

1. Family Tradition 2. Heaven's Just a Sin Away 3. It's a Cheating Situation 4. Mamma
Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys 5. It Was Almost Like a Song 6. Ramblin'
fever 7. Here You Come Again 8. If I Said You Had a Beautiful Body Would You
Hold It Against Me 9. Near You 10. Happy Birthday Darlin' 11. Blue Skies
12. Two More Bottles of Wine 13. Take This Job and Shove It 14. Rose
Colored Glasses 15. Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue 16. Moody
Blue 17. Tulsa Time 18. Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the
Basics of Love) 19. Southern Nights 20. Bartender's
Blues 21. Sleeping Single in a Double Bed
22. The Devil Went Down to Georgia

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CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY

THE LATE '70s

By the late 1970s, country music was chasing after Willie and Waylon and the boys, as they were dubbed in **Luckenbach, Texas**. The so-called "outlaw" movement, headed up mainly by Texas renegades who wanted to work outside the rigid Nashville hierarchy, had developed commercial viability to go along with its exotic image.

For years, Luckenbach itself was just a dot on the map of the Texas hill country outside of Austin. But in 1971, a local character named Hondo Crouch got himself a couple of partners and bought the town. Luckenbach had a population of three and consisted of a general store, a dance hall, some outhouses and a parking area. Hondo immediately installed himself as mayor and began establishing the premises as an anything goes hangout for kindred spirits such as Jerry Jeff Walker. When Walker cut his ragged, infectious *Viva Terlingua* album there in 1973, the "town" became a symbol of the outlaw life. Producer Chips Moman and Bobby

Emmons wrote Luckenbach, Texas (Back to the Basics of Love) for Waylon Jennings without ever having seen the place. Jennings got Willie Nelson to sing the final verse.

Willie, of course, was doing even better. Since his 1975 breakthrough with the *Red Headed Stranger* LP and the *Blue Eyes Crying in the Rain* single, he had become an icon, and CBS Records let him record pretty much anything he wanted. For a long time Willie had wanted to cut an album of jazzy pop standards from Tin Pan Alley's glory days. Booker T. Jones, former leader of the soulful Stax-Volt house band, Booker T. and the MGs, produced Willie's *Stardust* LP, a collection of vintage pop material. Irving Berlin's 1927 song **Blue Skies** was one of the two chart-topping country singles from this multimillion seller.

Waylon and Willie also managed to work out a few duets. **Mammas Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up to Be Cowboys** reached No. 15 when it was recorded by its composer, Ed Bruce, in

1975. Disgusted while stuck in a Nashville traffic jam, Bruce had initially written the song as "Mamas don't let your babies grow up to be guitar pickers." That didn't sound right, but after making some minor revisions he created one of the outlaw movement's theme songs.

Johnny Paycheck had mastered honky-tonk in the '60s and the Billy Sherrill sound in the '70s before going outlaw in 1976 to revive a flagging career. He was still barely getting by when his label decided to try him on David Allan Coe's **Take This Job and Shove It**. Coe, a menacing figure who took the outlaw movement seriously, was re-evaluating his image. So he passed this somewhat controversial song to Paycheck via Billy Sherrill, who produced both singers. Paycheck's version soared to No. 1, and became the anthem of stymied blue-collar workers.

The late '70s was an era of unprecedented diversity on the Nashville music scene. Dolly Parton's **Here You Come Again** was her attempt at a straightforward country-pop record. Glen Campbell's **Southern Nights** had been the title song from a 1975 concept album by Allen Toussaint, the brilliant R&B pianist-writer-producer from New Orleans. Crystal Gayle's **Don't It Make My Brown**

Eyes Blue managed to keep the soul in what was essentially a pop record. The song's writer, Richard Leigh, had arrived in Nashville in 1976 with *I'll Get Over You*, which proved to be Gayle's first No. 1 record. Her producer, Allen Reynolds, befriended Leigh and helped him get a dog for his kids, a mongrel named Amanda with big brown eyes. One day, hearing that Leigh was down in the dumps, Reynolds went by the songwriter's house to cheer him up. Leigh played *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue*, swearing that the idea had come to him as he moped around the house storing at Amanda. His publisher wanted the song for Shirley Bassey, but Reynolds fought to get it for Crystal Gayle, Loretta Lynn's younger sister.

Producer Tom Collins was pivotal in two of the year's biggest mainstream country hits. Ronnie Milsap's **It Was Almost Like a Song** originated with Archie Jordan, who had just come to Nashville. Jordan's publisher had managed to hook him up with Hal David, best known for his co-writing and production work with Burt Bacharach on Dionne Warwick's records. Jordan came up with the melody at the piano and sent it to David in New York, who phoned a few days later with lyrics. The subsequent voice-and-piano demo

was sparse—only Roy Clark liked the song enough to cut it, although he didn't release it. Collins took the song to Milsap, who worked up his own arrangement.

Kye Fleming and Dennis Morgan of Collins' publishing company were responsible for **Sleeping Single in a Double Bed**. On a visit to his wife's grandparents, Collins noticed that the couple slept double in a single bed. When he returned to Music City, he told his two staff writers he thought there was a song in there somewhere—only they wound up reversing the concept. Collins produced Barbara Mandrell's single, which was her first No. 1 hit and the start of her peak years as a recording artist.

Don Williams' **Tulsa Time** was written by Danny Flowers, his guitarist and harmonica player, in reference to the laid-back style of both the singer and the Oklahoma city. Hank Williams Jr. penned **Family Tradition** as yet another of his angry denunciations of those who insisted he was doing things all wrong and would be better off if he went along with the Nashville establishment. But Hank Jr. knew the truth: that his father was the original Nashville rebel. Charlie Daniels had pursued a country-rock, boogie style heavy on Southern chauvinism after his 1973 story-song, **Uneasy Rider**. With **The Devil**

Went Down to Georgia, Daniels and his band shelved the boasting about the South and followed in the tradition of the Southern story-song.

Merle Haggard recorded **Ramblin' Fever** during a two-year period when he was living, for the only time in his life, in Nashville. Haggard said later that it was a reflective time for him, and that he recorded too much because of his accessibility—his label, MCA, was constantly talking him into the studio. **Near You**, a *Hit Parade* standard remade by George Jones and Tammy Wynette, had been the first million-seller cut in Nashville. It was a pop hit for Francis Craig and His Orchestra back in 1947. The song was the first major hit on an independent label, and became Milton Berle's theme song. In 1975, Texan Delbert McClinton wrote and recorded **Two More Bottles of Wine**, inspired by his early-'70s attempts to join the ranks of the L.A. country-rockers. The song languished on his *Victim of Life's Circumstances*—a landmark country-soul album that earned dazzling reviews (but few sales)—until Emmylou Harris gave it her straight country treatment.

The Kendalls and John Conlee were among the most unlikely newcomers to country music. St. Louis barber Royce

Kendall and his daughter, Jeannie, a beautician, had been recording in Nashville since 1969 with little to show for their efforts but a few minor hits. They moved to a new label, Ovation, and were preparing their debut album when writer Jerry Gillespie, a Mercury Records A&R man, brought them **Heaven's Just a Sin Away**, which he'd been unable to sell to any of his own artists. The song, originally released as the B side of the second single from their debut album, was played all over country radio. When John Conlee went into the top 10 with his **Rose Colored Glasses** debut, he had been a Nashville DJ for seven years. But there was one catch: Conlee had been working all that time on rock radio. To him, as to many others during this fertile period, country music was a whole new ball game.

—John Mortland

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard country chart position

1. Family Tradition Hank Williams Jr. • Music and lyrics by Hank Williams Jr. *Electra* 44044.

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2. Heaven's Just a Sin Away The Kendalls • Music and lyrics by Jerry Gillespie. *Ovation* 1103. © 1977. Courtesy of G.M.L., Inc. No. 7*

3. It's a Cheating Situation Moe Bandy • Music and lyrics by Curly Putman and Soney Throckmorton. *Columbia* 10889. © 1978 Sony Music Entertainment Inc. Courtesy of Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. No. 2*

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6. Ramblin' Fever Merle Haggard • Music and lyrics by Merle Haggard. *MCA* 40743. © 1977. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 2*

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21. Sleeping Single in a Double Bed Barbara Mandrell • Music and lyrics by Kyle Fleming and Dennis W. Morgan. ABC 12403. © 1978. Courtesy of MCA Records, Inc. No. 1*

22. The Devil Went Down to Georgia The Charlie Daniels Band • Music and lyrics by Charlie Daniels, Fred Edwards, Jim Marshall, Charles Hayward, Jimmy Crain and Tex DeGregoria. Epic 50700. © 1979 Sony Music Entertainment Inc. Courtesy of Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc. No. 1*



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The Late '70s was produced by Time-Life Music in cooperation with BMG Music. Digitally remastered at Hit and Run Studios, Rockville, Md.

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Time-Life Music wishes to thank Ken Johnson of WYRK in Buffalo, New York, for providing valuable reference material.

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Merle Haggard

