

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

A woman with voluminous blonde hair, wearing a wide-brimmed pink hat and a long-sleeved, sequined pink top, is smiling and singing into a silver microphone. Her right hand is raised to the brim of her hat. The background is dark with some blurred lights.

CONTEMPORARY
COUNTRY

CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY

The Mid-'70s • Hot Hits

- 1. As Soon as I Hang Up the Phone**
Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn
- 2. Out of Hand** Gary Stewart
- 3. I'm a Ramblin' Man** Waylon Jennings
- 4. Stranger** Johnny Duncan
- 5. Once You've Had the Best**
George Jones
- 6. Devil in the Bottle** T.G. Sheppard
- 7. Blood Red and Goin' Down**
Tanya Tucker
- 8. It's Time to Pay the Fiddler** Cal Smith
- 9. The Bargain Store** Dolly Parton
- 10. Love in the Hot Afternoon**
Gene Watson
- 11. Somebody Somewhere (Don't Know
What He's Missin' Tonight)**
Loretta Lynn
- 12. Rub It In** Billy "Crash" Craddock
- 13. Daydreams about Night Things**
Ronnie Milsap
- 14. After All the Good Is Gone**
Conway Twitty
- 15. Golden Ring**
George Jones and Tammy Wynette
- 16. I Wouldn't Want to Live If You
Didn't Love Me** Don Williams
- 17. 9,999,999 Tears** Dickey Lee
- 18. You'll Lose a Good Thing**
Freddy Fender
- 19. Country Sunshine** Dottie West
- 20. Blanket on the Ground** Billie Jo Spears
- 21. I Just Can't Get Her out of
My Mind** Johnny Rodriguez
- 22. Teddy Bear** Red Sovine

SEE PROGRAM NOTES INSIDE

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MSD-35386

CONTEMPORARY
COUNTRY
THE MID-'70s • HOT HITS

COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO

CCD-16
MSD-35386

TIME
LIFE
MUSIC

1. As Soon as I Hang Up the Phone 2. Out of Hand 3. I'm a Ramblin' Man 4. Stranger
5. Once You've Had the Best 6. Devil in the Bottle 7. Blood Red and Goin' Down
8. It's Time to Pay the Fiddler 9. The Bargain Store 10. Love in the Hot
Afternoon 11. Somebody Somewhere 12. Rub It In 13. Daydreams
about Night Things 14. After All the Good Is Gone
15. Golden Ring 16. I Wouldn't Want to Live If You
Didn't Love Me 17. 9,999,999 Tears
18. You'll Lose a Good Thing 19. Country Sunshine
20. Blanket on the Ground
21. I Just Can't Get Her out of My Mind
22. Teddy Bear

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CONTEMPORARY COUNTRY

THE MID-'70s • HOT HITS

As the George Jones and Tammy Wynette story was being played out, the duets of Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn were starting to chart. Unlike Jones and Wynette, Twitty and Lynn were not married to each other—though the intimacy of their duets left many fans believing otherwise.

As Soon as I Hang Up the

Phone, written by Twitty, thus prompted a barrage of misguided fan mail charging him with deserting Lynn. Even Lynn supposedly lost her cool temporarily. Twitty actually recorded his part over a telephone in the control room of the studio, and the story goes that when he put down the phone after the first take, Lynn hustled into the booth and dressed him down for hanging up on her. Because Twitty and Lynn did not want their duets to compete with their solo records, this one stayed in the can for a full year after it was recorded—but became their fourth No. 1 in a row upon release.

Meanwhile, their solo careers flourished. For Twitty, **After All the Good Is Gone** was a throwback to the bluesy country that had helped make him a late-'50s rock 'n' roll star. Lynn's **Somebody Somewhere (Don't Know What He's Missin' Tonight)** was written by Lola Jean Dillon, a staffer at Lynn's Coal Miners Music who had originally been brought to Nashville by ace writer Harlan Howard. While working answering phones in Howard's office, Dillon called the secretary of Lynn's producer, Owen Bradley, for advice on how to get songs to Lynn; she was put on hold and Lynn herself inadvertently picked up the phone. After listening to her plea, Lynn told Dillon to bring over a tape, and promptly signed the writer to Coal Miners Music and recorded *When the Tingle Becomes a Chill* herself. After another modest hit, Lynn went with *Somebody Somewhere* and got her first No. 1 in two years.

George Jones and Tammy Wynette

had been divorced for a year when they resumed recording duets with **Golden Ring**. Bobby Braddock got the idea for the song after watching a television documentary about a handgun that passed through several owners. Braddock substituted a ring for the gun, and set the song to the country-gospel sound of the Chuck Wagon Gang. When he could not get the lyrics quite right, he enlisted the help of co-writer Rafe Van Hoy, whose mother worked in a wholesale jewelry store. At the session, which lasted 15 minutes, none of the Gatlin Brothers (who were singing backup) could hit the final bass note, so Jones returned to the mike and overdubbed it. Jones cut **Once You've Had the Best**, written by former Jones bassist and harmony singer Johnny Paycheck, when he and Wynette were still in the early stages of their marriage.

Though Larry Gatlin was getting plenty of work singing backups with his brothers, he was not yet hitting consistently as an artist when he wrote **I Just Can't Get Her out of My Mind** in his hotel room in Terre Haute, Indiana, after performing at a CBS Christmas party. Having just completed his own

album, he could not use the song, so he passed it along to Johnny Rodriguez. The young Chicano took it to the top of the charts, and by the end of the same year Gatlin (with Family and Friends) had also clicked with the No. 5 single *Broken Lady*. Freddy Fender, Rodriguez's Texas compadre, was also in his prime, and took Barbara Lynn's 1962 swamp-pop hit **You'll Lose a Good Thing** all the way to the top in 1975. Both Lynn's original and Fender's remake were produced by Huey P. Meaux.

Though the "outlaw" movement was firming up as a potent commercial force in the mid-'70s, the charts remained diverse. Outlaw figurehead Waylon Jennings used the term "bubblegum country" to describe his **I'm a Ramblin' Man**, written in the mid-'50s by Ray Pennington as a Jimmy Reed-type blues. The writer enjoyed a modest country hit with the tune in 1967, and Jennings spent the next eight years promising to cut it before finally making good. When he did, he had Pennington coproduce. A couple years into his career as country smoothy, Ronnie Milsap announced he wanted to record only positive love songs as an antidote to the honky-tonk blues, and writer

John Schweers had just the ticket in **Daydreams about Night Things**. Schweers used one of his grandfather's favorite phrases in this song written in honor of the woman who was about to become his wife. Johnny Duncan boosted his up-and-down career by cutting Kris Kristofferson's **Stranger**, and was able to stay in the top 10 for the next three years and eight singles.

Cal Smith, who made his name initially as Ernest Tubb's bandleader from 1962 to 1968, had his third and final No. 1 with **It's Time to Pay the Fiddler**. Red Sovine, best known for the '60s trucker recitations *Giddyup Go* and *Phantom 309*, took advantage of the CB radio craze to earn one last biggie in **Teddy Bear**. This recitation was written by trucker Dale Royal, whose own CB handle was The Storyteller. Royal had never had a composition recorded before, and *Teddy Bear* took on three more co-writers by the time it hit the airwaves.

T.G. Sheppard was a Memphis promotions man when **Devil in the Bottle** came across his desk. He recorded a demo of it for his publishing affiliate, and saw it rejected 13 times before hitting pay dirt the hard way. Though At-

lantic Records executives turned thumbs down, people at Atlantic's neighbor, Melodyland, the new country wing of black music powerhouse Motown, heard the song through the walls of their adjoining building. Melodyland snapped up artist and song, and *Devil in the Bottle* rose to No. 1. In another unlikely story, Don Williams, who would prove to be one of the biggest artists of the era, first made it to No. 1 (after a couple years of modest success) with **I Wouldn't Want to Live If You Didn't Love Me**. That was written by Al Turney, a gas station attendant who talked Williams into listening to a tape of his songs after he recognized the singer from his credit card following a fill-up. Gary Stewart did not go quite so high with **Out of Hand**, but it became the apt title song of the young singer's debut album.

Others played off country's new frankness. Gene Watson's **Love in the Hot Afternoon** had a controversial title, while Billy "Crash" Craddock's **Rub It In** and Billie Jo Spears's **Blanket on the Ground** were cleverly exploited misunderstandings. Craddock was the fourth artist to cut *Rub It In*.

When he learned radio stations were backing off from playing the record because its title was suggestive, he called around to point out that he was singing about suntan lotion; his effort worked well enough to give him his first No. 1. Spears was reluctant to even record *Blanket on the Ground* because of its line about a married couple "slipping around." Then she listened closer and realized they were doing so with each other.

There was nothing controversial about Dottie West's sing-along **Country Sunshine** (it would become a jingle in a soft drink commercial), but precocious Tanya Tucker's **Blood Red and Goin' Down** raised eyebrows for its title alone. Writer Curly Putman, who was influenced by the poor-white-Southern fiction of Erskine Caldwell, first thought up the title. Though he was merely describing a Georgia sunset, the phrase established the mood for this grisly tale of a father who takes his daughter with him to track down a cheating wife. Putman pitched the song to male artists, but producer Billy Sherrill felt it would better continue the string of risqué songs by 15-year-old Tucker, who could sing it from the daughter's point of view.

Dolly Parton has often cited **The Bar-**

gain Store as a personal favorite among her own compositions. Her intent was to convey the idea that although she felt used, she still had plenty more of herself in reserve, and was ready for anything. Since Parton was at the time making a bitter break from her former business and singing mentor, Porter Wagoner, there was no mistaking her target. Nor was there any doubt about who came out on top—*The Bargain Store* became the fourth straight No. 1 for Parton during the crucial period when she was starting her move from country to pop.

—John Morthland

DISCOGRAPHY

*Indicates highest Billboard country chart position

1. As Soon as I Hang Up the Phone Conway Twitty and Loretta Lynn • Music and lyrics by Conway Twitty. Sony Tree Publishing Co., Inc. BMI. MCA 40251 (1974). © 1974 MCA Records, Inc. No. 1*

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6. Devil in the Bottle T.G. Sheppard • Music and lyrics by Bobby David. World Songs Publishing, Inc. ASCAP. Melodyland 6002 (1974). © 1985 Warner Bros. Records Inc. Produced under license from Warner Bros. Records Inc. No. 1*

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The Author: John Morthland is the author of *The Best of Country Music* and is a contributing editor to *Country Music* magazine.

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