

Billboard's Best Bets

TOP SINGLES

1. YOU'RE THE ONE THAT I WANT... John Travolta, Olivia Newton-John, RSO.
2. SHADOW DANCING..... Andy Gibb, RSO.
3. TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE Johnny Mathis, Deniece Williams, Columbia.
4. FEELS SO GOOD..... Chuck Mangione, AM.
5. BAKER STREET..... Gerry Rafferty, United Artists.
6. IT'S A HEARTACHE..... Bonnie Tyler, RCA.
7. ON BROADWAY..... George Benson, Warner Bros.
8. TAKE A CHANCE ON ME..... Abba, Atlantic.
9. WITH A LITTLE LUCK..... Wings, Capitol.
10. THIS TIME I'M IN IT FOR LOVE..... Player, RSO.

TOP ALBUMS

1. SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER SOUNDTRACK..... RSO.
2. LONDON TOWN..... Wings, Capitol.
3. FEELS SO GOOD..... Chuck Mangione, AM.
4. SHOWDOWN..... Isley Brothers, T-Neck.
5. JEFFERSON STARSHIP EARTH..... Jefferson Starship, Grunt.
6. SLOWHAND..... Eric Clapton, RSO.
7. CHAMPAGNE JAM..... Atlanta Rhythm Section, Polydora.
8. FM SOUNDTRACK..... MCA.
9. YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE..... Johnny Mathis, Columbia.
10. CENTRAL HEATING..... Heatwave, Epic.

COUNTRY SINGLES

1. GEORGIA ON MY MIND..... Willie Nelson, Columbia.
2. NIGHT TIME MAGIC..... Larry Gatlin, Monument.
3. TWO MORE BOTTLES OF WINE..... Emmylou Harris, Warner Bros.
4. GOTTA' QUIT LOOKIN' AT YOU BABY..... Dave and Sugar, RCA.
5. I'LL BE TRUE TO YOU..... Oak Ridge Boys, ABC.
6. IT ONLY HURTS FOR A LITTLE WHILE..... Margo Smith, Warner Bros.
7. I CAN'T WAIT ANY LONGER..... Bill Anderson, MCA.
8. PUTTIN' IN OVERTIME AT HOME..... Charlie Rich, United Artists.
9. I BELIEVE IN YOU..... Mel Tillis, MCA.
10. I'M GONNA LOVE YOU ANYWAY..... Cristy Lane, LS.

COUNTRY ALBUMS

1. STARDUST..... Willie Nelson, Columbia.
2. EVERYTIME TWO FOOLS COLLIDE Kenny Rogers, Dottie West, United Artists.
3. WAYLON .. WILLIE..... Waylon Jennings .. Willie Nelson, RCA.
4. TEN YEARS OF GOLD..... Kenny Rogers, United Artists.
5. HERE YOU COME AGAIN..... Dolly Parton, RCA.
6. THE BEST OF THE STATLER BROTHERS, Mercury.
7. ENTERTAINERS .. ON AND OFF THE RECORD The Statler Brothers, Mercury.
8. TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT..... Johnny Paycheck, Epic.
9. SON OF A SON OF A SAILOR..... Jimmy Buffett, ABC.
10. QUARTER MOON IN A TEN CENT TOWN..... Emmylou Harris, Warner Bros.

SOUL SINGLES

1. USE TA BE MY GIRL..... The O'Jays, Philadelphia International.
2. TAKE ME TO THE NEXT PHASE..... Isley Brothers, Columbia.
3. THE GROOVELINE..... Heatwave, Epic.
4. STAY..... Rufus-Chaka Khan, ABC.
5. DUKEY STICK..... George Duke, Epic.
6. TOO MUCH, TOO LITTLE, TOO LATE Johnny Mathis, Deniece Williams, Columbia.
7. ON BROADWAY..... George Benson, Warner Bros.
8. DANCE ACROSS THE FLOOR..... Jimmy "Bo" Horne, Sunshine Sound.
9. DAYLIGHT AND DARKNESS..... Smokey Robinson, Tamla.
10. ANNIE MAE..... Natalie Cole, Capitol.

SOUL ALBUMS

1. SO FULL OF LOVE..... O'Jays, Philadelphia International.
2. SHOWDOWN..... Isley Bros., T-Neck.
3. CENTRAL HEATING..... Heatwave, Epic.
4. YOU LIGHT UP MY LIFE..... Johnny Mathis, Columbia.
5. NATURAL HIGH..... Commodores, Motown.
6. DO WHAT YOU WANNA DO..... Dramatics, ABC.
7. WEEKEND IN L.A..... George Benson, Warner Bros.
8. SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER..... Various Artists, RSO.
9. DON'T LET GO..... George Duke, Epic.
10. STREET PLAYER..... Rufus-Chaka Khan, ABC.

Knight News Service

An Experience With Billy Joe



Dawn was breaking outside and it wasn't the only one. Townes Van Zandt, the legendary semifamous self-destructive songwriter, had been up all night rolling dice and drinking straight vodka with a Diet Dr. Pepper chaser.

In keeping with his image as a celebrated loser, Townes had succeeded in redistributing all of his income.

Now he was demanding that he be allowed to bet the bottle of vodka against a book of Dylan Thomas poetry. Since both the vodka and the book belonged to me, there seemed to be something not quite right about that. I just couldn't quite put my finger on it.

Earlier in the evening (morning?), Townes' fiddle player had talked about how much better it was to play for someone as stable as Townes. He had previously played for Billy Joe Shaver.

An experience with Billy Joe. This one involved one of my more discriminating and intelligent correspondents. (Meaning she doesn't write me hate notes on the back of Sugar Daddy wrappers.)

Barbara, of Muskego, Wis., had written Billy Joe a fan letter. In return she received air mail special delivery a package of six 8-by-10s of Billy Joe. Two were standard publicity photos. Others showed him with assorted friends like Kris Kristofferson, Willie Nelson and Bobby Bare. And one showed him staring down a hippie at Willie's 4th of July picnic.

All the photographs were autographed ("Everyone said Hi!") and several had writing all over the front and back. They were signed with profuse endearments like "Your friend always," "Love you forever" and "God Bless."

"He somehow managed to misspell God — and every third or fourth word," Barbara wrote. "He invited my husband (the hard-core John Denver fan) and I to visit him in Nashville and also wrote 'I'll be seeing bought (sic) of you REAL SOON.' That sort of worries us. Should we move? Not answer the door?"

Townes and Billy Joe have more in common than just a fiddle player and certain irrepressible flair for excess. Both have underground reputations for writing brilliant songs that belong above ground.

And both have new albums and reissues of old albums out showing what kind of music creative — if vulnerable — genius is capable of producing. Townes Van Zandt's new album is "Flyin' Shoes" (Tomato) and Billy Joe Shaver's is "Gypsy Boy" (Capricorn).

When Townes sings a song about puttin' on his flyin' shoes, don't expect some happy little Len Savers ditty.

On "Flyin' Shoes," "fall is a feelin' that I just can't lose." On another song, "Pueblo Waltz," "Sunrise comes and I don't know why."



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