

Country



HONORED WRITERS—Songwriters Larry Henley and Jeff Silbar hold their songwriter of the year awards at the 17th annual Nashville Songwriter Assn. International awards banquet. Looking on are NSAI executive director Maggie Cavender and outgoing NSAI president Tom Long.

ANNUAL NSAI AWARDS

The Song Of The Year: 'Holding Her'

By KIP KIRBY

NASHVILLE—"Holding Her And Loving You" was voted song of the year at the 17th annual Nashville Songwriters Assn. International awards banquet, March 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. Larry Henley and Jeff Silbar were named songwriters of the year.

"Holding Her And Loving You" was written by the Muscle Shoals team of Walt Aldridge and Tommy Brasfield and recorded by Earl Thomas Conley. Henley and Silbar are responsible for such hits as Gary Morris' "The Wind Beneath My Wings" and Janie Fricke's "He's A Heartache (Looking For A Place To Happen)." A total of 14 songs were named as finalists this year.

Approximately 650 guests—including artists, songwriters, NSAI seminar registrants and industry executives—attended this year's awards banquet, which capped the weekend seminar activities. The awards presented by NSAI are considered especially prestigious because they are voted on by the organization's 2,300 writer members.

With registration pegged at 240, the sixth annual NSAI Songwriters Seminar was the largest yet, according to executive director Maggie Cavender. The event began Friday evening with a Super Songwriters Showcase, featuring performances by John D. Loudermilk, Alex Harvey, David Loggins, Rick & Janis Carnes, Peter McCann, Pam Rose & Mary Ann Kennedy, Ronnie Rogers, Grammy winner Mike Reid, Becky Hobbs, Freddy Weller, George David Weiss of the Songwriters Guild and legendary rock songwriter Otis Blackwell, among others. Blackwell's humor at the piano had the audience of nearly 800 in stitches, between renditions of his own classics, including "Don't Be Cruel," "All Shook Up" and "Return To Sender."

On Saturday, following a morning keynote address by Tandy Rice of

Top Billing International, seminar registrants attended three panel sessions: "Captains Of Video," "The Write Stuff" and "Wave Links." Later in the day, they watched an hour-long demonstration of the synclavier.

Don Wayne ("Country Bumpkin") was named president. He succeeds outgoing NSAI president Tom Long of ASCAP.

Finalists in the 1984 songwriter of the year category were Rory Bourke, Townes Van Zandt, Randy Owen, Larry Henley, Jeff Silbar and Kerry Chater.

Finalists for song of the year and their respective writers were: "A Little Good News," written by Charlie Black, Tommy Rocco and Rory Bourke; "Baby I Lied," Deborah Allen, Rory Bourke and Rafe Van-

Hoy; "I.O.U.," Kerry Chater and Austin Roberts; "If You're Gonna Do Me Wrong (Do It Right)," Vern Gosdin and Max D. Barnes; "Islands In The Stream," Barry, Robin and Maurice Gibb; "Lady Down On Love," Randy Owen; "Stranger In My House," Mike Reid; "Swingin'," Lionel Delmore and John Anderson; "The Love She Found In Me," Dennis Linde and Bob Morrison; "The Rose," Amanda McBroom; "Whatever Happened To Old Fashioned Love," Lewis Anderson; "You Look So Good In Love," Rory Bourke, Glenn Ballard and Kerry Chater; and "He's A Heartache (Looking For A Place To Happen)" and "The Wind Beneath My Wings," both written by Jeff Silbar and Larry Henley.

Artists Cautioned To Seek Careful Financial Guidance

By EDWARD MORRIS

NASHVILLE—The more money country music makes for its songwriters and performers, the greater their need for precise financial planning. That's the conclusion of Kerry P. O'Neil, newly appointed manager of the entertainment services department of Kraft Brothers, Esstman, Patton & Harrell here.

O'Neil stresses that many performers progress through a series of reasonably well-defined career steps that dictate certain financial responses. Because successful songwriters have far less overhead than successful performers, O'Neil says the chief concerns here are advising on prudent investments and developing long-range financial plans.

"Generally," he explains, "a writer who makes \$100,000 a year is making the equivalent of an artist who is grossing \$500,000 a year." Nashville songwriters who have a "good catalog, major cuts and some crossover" may bring in \$200,000 to \$300,000 annually, he notes.

While financial planning may not be essential for the beginning artist, O'Neil asserts that it is necessary for anyone who is "making enough money to have problems." He continues, "When an artist starts out with us, we try to work with the team that is in place to set up a business plan that matches his career goals."

By the time an artist begins having top 10 records, has the backing of a record label and the services of a manager and a good booking agency, he or she should be seeking profes-

sional financial planning, O'Neil believes.

At this level, the artist will need to mount a road show—a step that calls for hiring a band and securing the most economical kind of transportation. According to O'Neil, a financial advisor will "back plan" to determine how large a band the performer can afford, how often it should be paid, whether to travel by bus or van and what sort of insurance must be carried.

Currently, a bus rents for \$350 to \$400 a day. An artist who works continually is better off buying than renting. "By purchasing the right bus," O'Neil says, "you get something that's tailor-made. If you outgrow the bus, you still have some equity in it." Moreover, he points out, there is an investment tax credit of 10% of the purchase price when the bus is bought and put into use.

Insurance for band members is expensive, but worthwhile, particularly for those who are crucial to the show, O'Neil says. AFTRA offers a "very generous medical and disability plan" for artists who make \$1,000 a year or more, but the program cannot be extended to the performer's employees, he notes.

After the artist has worked the road for two or three years with success, he or she reaches another level of special financial consideration, says O'Neil. "As you have more income," he notes, "you have more options." At this stage, he says, the performer needs to be building a good

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NSAI BANQUET SPEECH

History, Gerry House's Way

The following are excerpts from the Nashville Songwriters Assn. International banquet address by Gerry House, program director of WSIX Nashville:

"Songwriting actually began as an industry in ancient Rome, when BMIus the lute picker joined forces with ASCAPius and SESACus to sign the first hit songwriter there . . . I believe that was Curlius Putmanus who wrote the big hit, 'Greek Greek Grass Of Rome' . . .

"Then songwriting fell into the dark ages for several centuries, until it was picked up again after a decree went out from St. Frances of Preston. It said all men should put their hearts into song. It was also at this time, around the 12th century, that Chet Atkins began producing records . . .

"In the 16th century, songwriting took off when a man named Boudleaux Bryant invented royalties. In the 17th century, songwriters fell on hard times, and Welk Music was formed . . .

"The 18th century brought us the Civil War. Whole cities were burned, plundered . . . families were destroyed as brother fought against brother . . . Jimmy Bowen really got started around this time with Warner Bros., I think . . .

"Even though I'm in radio, I get asked a lot in this town: How do you get to be a songwriter? I always ask them the three important questions:

"One, can you drive a bus? Two, are you related to anyone in the group Alabama or the Statler Brothers? Three, can your sister drive a bus?"

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Nashville Scene

Grammys: Who Snubbed Whom?

By KIP KIRBY

There's been a lot of talk in Nashville since the Grammys about a supposed "snub" of country music on the show. Critics point out that during the three-hour telecast, only one country award was presented on-camera, and only one country act performed.

In the interest of fairness, we'd like to offer the following considerations. First of all, out of 67 Grammys awarded annually, only five are country. Thus, country represents only 13.4% of the total Grammys, though it's always given one on-camera award plus one performance.

Second, during last year's 25th Anniversary Grammy telecast, country was prominently featured: there was a "country heritage tribute" production number with Ricky Skaggs, Bill Monroe, Crystal Gayle and the Masters Five. Also, Jerry Lee Lewis opened the show, in addition to the regular on-camera award presentation in the country category.

And third, NARAS has the tough job of trying to be fair to every musi-

cal interest the organization represents. This includes not only the more "glamorous" genres of rock, pop, r&b and country—which tend to dominate the lion's share of media—but also jazz, gospel, classical

and Broadway. In the past, NARAS has had a hard time working these diverse elements into one telecast; this year, everything came together, with all four musical categories getting

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'84 COMPETITION OPENS

Time To Reach For The Stars

NASHVILLE—Entries are now being accepted for the 1984 Philip Morris/Miller High Life Reach For The Stars Competition. The event will be held April 30 at East Hall, Kentucky Fair & Exposition Center in Louisville.

The contest is open to all country music acts in Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee that do not have a major recording contract and have not had a Billboard-charted release within the past year. Audition cassettes must be no longer than 15 minutes and must be accompanied by a photo of the act and an entry form. Original music is not required.

The forms are available at country radio stations, record shops, music

stores and in newspapers in the tri-state area. Or they can be secured by writing Star Drive Promotions, P.O. Box 24413, Louisville, Ky. 40224. Entries must be postmarked by March 31.

Seven finalists will be chosen to perform at the Reach For The Stars contest before an audience.

Grand prize is \$1,000 cash and individual one-year memberships to the Country Music Assn. Second prize is \$500 cash. The two top bands will also be awarded the right to perform at the Philip Morris/Miller High Life Reach For The Stars Country Music Showcase on May 3, prior to the Philip Morris Festival of Stars.



HOLDING ON—Muscle Shoals songwriters Tommy Brasfield, left, and Walt Aldridge, right, proudly acknowledge their awards from the Nashville Songwriters Assn. for writing "Holding Her And Loving You," the organization's song of the year.