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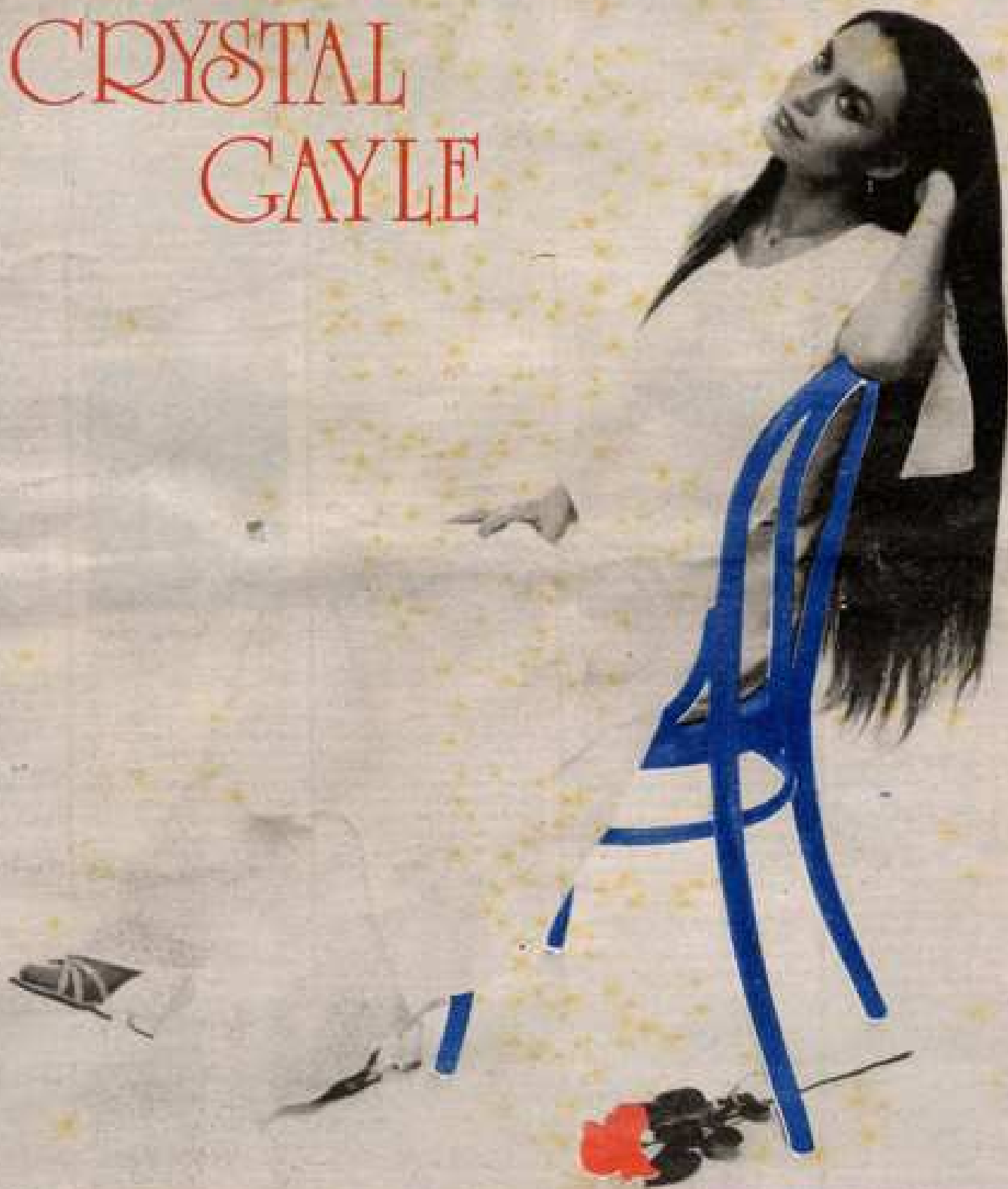
# COUNTRY MUSIC ROUND UP

JANUARY 1978. Vol. 2 No. 2

20p

NEWS •• COMMENTS •• REVIEWS •• FEATURES •• CLUBS •• RECORDS •• LETTERS ••

CRYSTAL  
GAYLE



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Included in this month— Don Ford interviews with Crystal Gayle &  
Top Nashville record producer Allen Reynolds/Spencer Leigh interviews  
'New Faces' winners Poacher

Plus the usual extensive coverage of the British Country Music Scene,  
Regional Reports and Interviews etc.

# CRYSTAL GAYLE — first lady of Country Music

Crystal Gayle is one of those people who have had the unenviable task of making their mark in their chosen career in the shadow of an illustrious elder, in this case her sister Loretta Lynn. Ms. Gayle has, however, well and truly made her mark and can walk in the sunshine. Last October she became the Country Music Association's 'First Lady' when she was awarded the title 'Female Vocalist of the Year'.

Crystal Gayle's formative years did not see the hard times that one associates with Loretta. "We moved from Kentucky when I was rather young and my life in growing up was a lot different from that of my sister." When the family moved to Wabash, Indiana, she was four years old, during her school years she proved her prowess as a songstress by performing at various functions along with other members of her family. Her senior year at High School brought a recording contract with Decca Records and her first single release, "I Cried (The Blue Right Out Of My Eyes)" was issued in 1970 and scored a big success, reaching the Top 20 in the country charts and led to regular appearances on the Jim Ed Brown TV Show.

Easter 1971 saw her at the International Festival of Country Music here in England as part of Loretta Lynn's show. "I was sick at the time," she recalls. "I had a terrible cold." When talking to Crystal more recently I suggested that she was sixteen at the time of that 1971 visit. There was a slight hesitation then, with a beautiful smile, she replied, "You can think it, you can think anything you want." What we did establish was that soon after returning to the States she was married.

More record releases followed from Decca but none enjoyed the success of her first one and what proved to be the last release on that label had rather an ironical title, "I Hope You're Having Better Luck Than Me". Crystal Gayle's luck was to change for the better, in 1973 she signed a recording contract with United Artists Records and came under the guiding hand of producer Allen Reynolds. The partnership tasted success from the beginning, her first album on U.A., "Crystal Gayle", produced three chart makers in "Restless", "Wrong Road Again" and "This Is My Year For Mexico". The subtle changes in style were there for all to see, from an original country background at the start of her career Ms. Gayle appeared to be walking the very thin line of MOR. Her second album continued the successful start, titled "Somebody Loves You" it produced the hit single of the same name and the US No. 1 "I'll Get Over You". In the US Crystal Gayle was very much on her way and here in the UK she was getting established. Her hit singles were getting a considerable amount of airplay.

1976 saw yet another successful album release, this one, called very simply, "Crystal" contained yet more chart hits in the shape of "One More Time" and "You Never Miss A Real Good Thing (Until He Says Goodbye)".

Easter of that year saw her back at the International Festival of Country Music, this time in her own right, where she brought her classy, easy to listen to, laid back style to Monday's so called 'contemporary day'. Talking to her in the Press Room (where she nearly fell out of one of the uncomfortable chairs and instead of threatening to sue someone, she politely blamed it on jet lag!) I told her that I had read in an American magazine that she did not wish to be considered a country artist. "I read everything about me, and I wonder did I say that, I don't remember. No, if you read it then it was out of someone else's mouth, because I am definitely a country artiste. I've even read that I didn't even want to be considered Loretta's sister and I think it's great to have a sister as famous as Loretta, you know to me, she's the best country artiste that has ever been. So you really can't believe all you read, I'm definitely country and if my records cross over that's fine, I like it all, but I'm definitely in country and I'm never going to do anything to put it down, because that's just not me."

Talking to her at some length during her November '77 tour I found that she laughs a lot and plays with that beautiful hair, dragging it over one shoulder, seemingly nervous of what I might ask her, belying the fact that this young lady is the confident boss of a five piece band. She is shortly to make 'Peace & Quiet' a six piece outfit and describes how important it is for them not only to play well, but to get along well together. "These guys are just super." That's all very well I thought, "But are you really the boss?" Crystal hesitated and with another of those big smiles she said, "I'm little, but I'm loud". One of the things always interests me when I see these lovely ladies on tour and a few thousand miles away from home is what do their husbands think about it all? In Ms. Gayle's case it's this. "My husband used to travel with me before I got my own group, we waited until I could afford the musicians and then he went back to school, he is going to get a graduate school at Vanderbilt University, that's a Law school. He is one hundred per cent for my career and we both believe



that being married, for it to be successful, you have to be able to do your own thing, both of you, to be happy in what you are doing. So if singing and touring make me happy, then it makes him happy. Then him going on and having his own totally different career than I have makes me really glad, because I am not going to be singing all my life."

The lady finds that life on the road can be very taxing, as we spoke she was very much looking forward to taking the rest of November, December and January off and doing things like joining a health club, getting back into her song writing and some of the many things that other people take for granted. "Did it ever become a chore for her?" I asked. "Sometimes, when you want to be able to do everything but...timewise...you have to get your sleep, there are the early starts...it is not as though you don't want to do it, but I have found that I have to pace my schedule a lot more than...now Kenny (Rogers), he could go from day to dark, he is a big person and I'm sure that his physical being lets him do it. But I have been sick twice this summer and I have had to cancel dates because I had totally lost my voice."

Congratulating Crystal on her CMA Award, I asked her to tell me about the evening of the Awards Show. "Did you have any idea that you had won prior to the announcement?" "No, a couple of people had come up to me and said, "you're gonna win", it was making me upset because I said, "don't say that, whoever wins, wins." Then when I did win, it was really super. I really wasn't expecting to hear my name, I wanted to hear it and I thought, Oh well, better luck next time or something like that. It was just super, I loved it." Winning such an honour can only bring further fame. "What," I asked her, "does it mean for you career wise?"

"It means a lot more than I realised, in the sense of people. It was something like the 11th rated TV show that day and after that, everywhere I went, people would come up and congratulate me. I had to leave Nashville the next day, I was going to Los Angeles to film the Dean Martin Christmas Special, and people there, that you wouldn't really expect to know country music, knew that I had won and they were just really nice about it. You know, I can remember being in the audience at the Awards Show, when I wasn't even in the running and thinking how neat it would be to be up there one of these days, and never dreaming that it would happen."

When Crystal Gayle first started in country music with her sister, it was Loretta who paid the CMA dues for her, "because it cost quite a bit at the time." What was Loretta's reaction to her win? "Loretta was rooting for me, she said that she thought that I was the only one that should get it. After the show I had some interviewers that came up to me and I had a couple that I would have loved to have taken a brick and hit them over the head with it. They were coming up to me and saying, "you showed your sister didn't you," you know, things like that, they really bother me because I love my sister and she's so proud that I won the Award." Thankful that I had posed the question in such a way as to avoid a possible brick bashing my thoughts turned to money. With a string of hits behind her and, predictably, more to come. With the lucrative side effects of her CMA honour yet to materialise, it occurred to me that I might be speaking to a very rich girl. "Would it be impertinent of me to suggest such a thing? What is your attitude to the dollar?"

A huge giggle accompanied her immediate reaction. "That is not true! No, it's not been since the last couple of years that my records have done enough where I could say that I wasn't having trouble financially, in the sense of making ends meet every year. Now with the band we've got twice as much outgoings. Really, as long as I have got enough money to have what I need...you can bet I'll always find something I don't need! Money is nice to have, you can't do much without it and having more money means that I can do things that I like doing, in the sense that I can buy things for people, especially at Christmas time, without worrying too much about the price ticket. Nothing outrageous, but I can remember the times when I had to set a limit to find a gift for that particular person. But money is not the reason that I'm into singing, I love singing."

Both on and off stage Crystal Gayle is a delight. No doubt arguments will rage as to whether or not she is country. No doubt there will be those who will wonder how she was voted Country Music Association 'Female Vocalist of the Year'. Regardless of all that, Allen Reynolds and his protege have shown remarkable astuteness in their choice of material for the albums that have so far been released on United Artists, and this is more than emphasised on her latest LP, "We Must Believe In Magic" and in particular in that lovely song, "Don't It Make Your Brown Eyes Blue", which is surely the song that will establish the long haired beauty solidly here in the U.K.

## TALKS TO DON FORD



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