

From Austin to Nashville and beyond

COUNTRY MUSIC

PEOPLE

May 2005

35 years of CMP 1970 - 2005

£2.95

CD reviews of Dwight Yoakam, Miranda Lambert, Shooter Jennings, Cornell Hurd Band, Leona Williams, Jamie O'Neal, Lucinda Williams, John Prine, Craig Morgan and dozens more ...

Crystal Gayle

Kasey Chambers

Hacienda Brothers

Shelby Singleton

Carolyn Dawn Johnson

Jerry Reed
Guitar man!!!

Charts
Tour Guide
DVD Reviews
Gig Reviews
Country News
Book Reviews



The No.1 Award Winning Country Music Magazine



CRYSTAL GAYLE

"I would have been a big band singer if I'd have come along earlier ..."

Walt Trott talks to the country diva prior to her UK visit this month.

ONLY A HANDFUL OF COUNTRY DIVAS can carry it off, and certainly Crystal Gayle's silky vocal style lends itself well to caressing pop standards. *All My Tomorrows*, her most recent CD, takes us back in time to songs that found success recorded by such yesteryear stars as Ruth Etting, Benny Goodman, Dick Haymes, Jo Stafford, Doris Day, Betty Hutton, Kitty Kallen, Julie London, Frank Sinatra, Marlene Dietrich and the Hal Kemp Orchestra.

Some of her own greatest hits have not been far off the same stylistic mark, as witness *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue* and *Talking In Your Sleep*.

Crystal is certainly not the first country female to cross over, following in the footsteps of Patsy Cline, Jeannie C. Riley, Anne Murray and Lynn Anderson. She was, however, the first country artist to tour China (with legendary Bob Hope), the first country female to have her own (CBS) network TV special, and the first country diva to score back-to-back platinum albums.

The lady's first foray into the pop vaults occurred when she dusted off classic Hoagy Carmichael compositions five years ago for the album, *Crystal Gayle Sings The Heart & Soul Of Hoagy Carmichael*. She resurrected such stylish material as *Two Sleepy People*, *I Get Along Without You Very Well* and *The Nearness Of You*, and held her own with the band vocalists of Sammy Kaye, Jimmy Dorsey and Glenn Miller who helped popularise those songs.

"It came out and was received real good, and then something happened with the company that it was with (Compendia Distribution), and I think they went bankrupt," explains Crystal. "But we got it back last year, so that we could get it back out there for the fans."

But her country fans need not worry. Crystal's scratched her itch to do pop and plans to record something, as she calls it: "more rootsy" next: "I'm going to try and focus on doing an acoustic album this time ... I grew up singing folk music."

Crystal's last single, *You Don't Even Know My Name*, is more the patriotic song of a type performed by Charlie Daniels, Toby Keith or Darryl Worley. How did she decide on it?

"It was written by Sally Mudd McLaughlin, a housewife whose husband is guitarist-singer Pat McLaughlin. I recorded the song because the lyrics spoke to me. It's a thank you, a tribute tune to our troops.

"No matter what you think politically, I think we should be supportive of our forces," insists Gayle. "They're over there protecting us and serving their country. We have to be there for them as well. My neighbour's son was over in Iraq and he came back wounded, but he was lucky in the sense that he survived. Even though I hate that they have to be there, I want them to know we care."

As most fans know, Crystal Gayle is the younger sister of Loretta Lynn, who married at 13 and left home several years before Crystal, née Brenda Gail Webb, was born in Kentucky. By the time she was 10 and living in Indiana, big sister had been whisked off to Nashville under the wing of The Wilburn Brothers.

In 1962, Lynn had her first Top 10 success and was on her way to a distinguished vocal and songwriting career that saw her voted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1988. Brenda Gail learned to mimic all of her sister's songs, but was cautioned by Loretta to find her own niche. Nonetheless, by the time she was sweet 16, in 1967, she was touring with Lynn's troupe and learning the fundamentals of showbusiness.

It was Loretta who suggested part of her stage name: "I was on Decca, which was also her label, and they thought



I'd be confused with Brenda Lee. I guess they just didn't want two Brendas on the same label. Loretta saw the Krystal (hamburger chain) sign and that's where we got that name." Of course, Crystal also altered her given middle name as her surname for the marquee.

Her first three charted songs released on Decca were



definite downers: *I've Cried (The Blue Right Out Of My Eyes)*, written for her by Loretta, *Everybody Oughta Cry* and the wryly-titled *I Hope You're Havin' Better Luck Than Me*. None of these did particularly well on the chart, only the first making the Top 20.

She didn't fare much better in 1974 at United Artists with her first charting for that label, *Restless* – which we're sure she literally was by this time, career-wise. Finally, on February 15, 1975, nearly five years after her first release on Decca, Gayle's medium-paced ballad, *Wrong Road Again*, proved she was actually moving in the right direction. Mainly thanks to the song's writer, Allen Reynolds, who was also her new producer, she got her first Top 10 single.

Another excellent followup, *This Is My Year For Mexico*, did not fare so well (Top 20 only) but it hung in there 15 weeks and boasted an equally well-crafted song on its B side, Sandy Mason's *When I Dream*, which, when re-released in 1979, proved its true worth by climbing to number 3 on the charts.

CRYSTAL'S FIRST CHARTTOPPER came with the soulful Richard Leigh ballad, *I'll Get Over You*, in June 1976, making her and Loretta Lynn the first sisters in country music to score number one songs individually. Leigh wrote another winner for Gayle which not only became her biggest seller but also her signature song, *Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue*, which spent four weeks in the top position in 1977. It also earned Gayle a Grammy for Best Female Vocal Performance and was CMA Song of

the Year in 1978.

"It was named one of ASCAP's Top 10 most-played country songs of the 20th century," beams Crystal.

In turn, Gayle moved from United Artists to Columbia, Elektra and Warner Bros, enjoying number one success at all three labels including *It's Like We Never Said Goodbye*, *Too Many Lovers, Til I Gain Control Again*, *Turning Away*, *Cry* and two duets, *You And I* (with Eddie Rabbitt) and *Makin' Up For Lost Time* (with Gary Morris).

Crystal has also won her fair share of awards including the now-defunct Music City News' Best New Artist (1978)

Early Crystal: "Loretta saw the Krystal (hamburger chain) sign and that's where we got that name."

and a similar accolade from the ACM (1975). She won that latter organisation's Best Female Singer trophies in 1976, 1977 and 1979. The CMA voted her Female Vocalist in 1977 and '78. She also took home the American Music Awards' Favourite Female Artist statuette in 1979, 1980 and 1986.

But she's equally thrilled by the Medal of Honour she has received from the Cherokee Honor Society of Tahlequah, Oklahoma. "I'm very proud of my heritage," notes Crystal. "Actually, I just did the Nammies (nickname for the Native American Indian music awards show) as a presenter. I like being part of their show. I performed *Sacred Ground* with my sister Peggy this year. It's a song she wrote, a very touching number about Indian history."

On February 9, 2005, Crystal joined Lee Greenwood and US Postmaster General John E. Potter to help dedicate a commemorative stamp for the late Ronald Reagan, America's 40th President, at the Reagan Building & International Trade Center in Washington, D.C.

"That was a big honour. I actually performed for his second Inauguration (1985) ... I think they did another unveiling of his stamp out in California, which the family attended."

Incidentally, Gayle and Greenwood will be touring together this summer, starting July 9 in Nevada. "I think Lee is so professional and such a great guy. You know, I met him originally in Las Vegas. He opened for me when he first started. That's where he worked a long time. Lee was a blackjack dealer during the day and performed in a lounge at night."

So who's the opening act on their upcoming concert gigs?

Smiling coyly, she says, "We're working out the show structure and we might close together. I have no problem opening and letting Lee close. I don't have that status thing a lot of artists do, although I find sometimes people in the background cause more problems than the artists. It might even be that we'll flip-flop – that is, he'll open one show and I'll open another. We'll definitely do songs together. He'll come down to my level (laughs) ... that's what I told him!"

On the subject of touring, Crystal was more excited about her upcoming travels in the British Isles: "It's been a few years since I toured over there and I'd go back every year if I could because I really enjoy the people and the countryside.

"For a long time after I had my children (Catherine and Chris) I didn't want to tour," she reveals. "I really didn't want to leave the babies, so I missed the part of touring over there that I really wish I hadn't. I suppose I could have taken the kids, but there was that mother instinct, 'I don't want to take them out of the country,' (quoting herself in falsetto).

"Finally, we said, let's do it! I'm very fortunate that I've had music through the years that's gone beyond boundaries, and crossed the water. I believe songs like *Brown Eyes* and *Talking In Your Sleep*, they were like number one songs in the main pop charts there. I guess my music's played overseas a lot.

"I think the audiences over there are really into the music," adds Crystal. "They get into not just the singer on the record, but they know who's playing on the record and know things about the music that I had probably forgot. I feel they really enjoy it and that makes me feel good. I love performing for them because they are so appreciative. That's probably because a lot of US artists don't go over there."

So who helped Crystal line up her showdates?

"It was set up by my husband (Bill Gatzimos) with a guy who manages Don Williams and who's from Scotland. He told Bill, 'I'd love to bring Crystal back over.' He arranged my last tour and I worked with Rita Coolidge. Oh, she was at the Nammies, too. She has a great Indian CD out. We're sisters in that we're both of Indian descent."

SPEAKING OF SISTERS, we again queried her regarding the long-awaited trio album she was to do with Peggy Sue and Loretta.

"I would really love to do it. It's not me that's holdin' it back. Sometimes Loretta really wants to do it, and other times I wonder ... Oh yes, Peggy's still singing and she travels on the road with me. Her husband Sonny (Wright) has a new CD out. Some people get him mixed up with Bobby Wright (son of Kitty Wells and Johnny Wright)."

Does Crystal feel the CMA snubbed Loretta's 2004 comeback album, *Van Lear Rose*, which won a best album Grammy this year?

"I am so proud of my sister, and it was good she won," replies Gayle. "To me, Grammys are artistic in certain ways. But I don't know why it wasn't acknowledged by the CMA. It shoulda been ... maybe they'll do it this year, who knows."

What did she think of the collaboration between Lynn and wild rocker Jack White (who together won this year's best collaboration Grammy as well)?

"I loved it," answers Crystal. "What thrilled me was that she was so excited about him doing it, 'He really wants to record with me!' (mimicking Loretta's voice) ... And then being in the studio with Jack, she had fun. It was like a garage band with a great singer. She just carried on so about it, and said, 'We just did this and that, and we didn't retake it.'"

"Loretta was used to more discipline in the studio, like with producers saying, 'OK, we're going to do another take.' To me, it was Loretta just singing at her best and not over-produced. Those were live takes. It's honest music."

Would Gayle be receptive to such a project?

"Oh, it wouldn't be the same. This was different. He wanted to do this with her, and he was a fan. It was like a young kid who grew up with her music ... and that respect showed through. I am happy she got the awards."

How did Crystal recall her own collaboration project with rocker Tom Waits doing the soundtrack for Francis Ford Coppola's Vegas-themed film, *One From The Heart*, in 1982?

"Oh, he did all the music for that movie. I heard he was on a train for Los Angeles and heard my version of *Cry Me A River* and thought I might be a good choice. I think the director wanted Bette Midler ... but Tom thought I could pull it off.

"When they called me, I just loved the idea. Tom was still writing songs as we recorded. And the way he wrote was so easy for me to get into it, right then and there. It was very interesting. Tom would be writing songs in the night as we recorded. I would run into him there in the morning, and we'd put it down. We also had wonderful musicians, a trio really (Greg Cohen, bass; Eddy Edwards, sax; Jack Sheldon, trumpet, produced by Bones Howe)."

Waits was generous with Crystal, giving her solo status on the bluesy *Is There Any Way Out Of This Dream*, *Old Boyfriends* and *Take Me Home*, while adding his raspy stylings to their duets, *Picking Up After You*, *This One's*





Sisters Peggy Sue, Loretta and Crystal.

From The Heart and Presents. The surprise pairing drew upbeat reviews, and the music itself was nominated for a best original score Oscar, coming off better than the movie.

Since she's earned kudos singing with Waits, Rabbitt and Morris, would she like to try more duets? "Actually, I have been thinking about it for several years. I'd love to do that."

How about inviting some of the younger players this time out? "That depends. When I look back on time, I recall doing certain things as a new act and seeing some of the older acts then, and the respect accorded them. That was so neat. Now I see the scene changing and I'm the one who gets respect now. That's OK, I like it."

Still on the subject of age, Crystal almost whispers, "Do you know I'm a grandmother?"

When asked about the newcomer, her blue eyes twinkle: "Elijah's 14 months old, and he's so sweet. It's my son's baby. Chris is just turning 19, a young father, to be sure – and a young mother. But they're doing good. My son's going to Belmont University now."



We told Crystal not to fret as she didn't look like any grandmothers we knew, telling the raven-haired star she could be known like Marlene Dietrich once was – *the world's most glamorous grandmother*.

"Oh, that's funny you said that. I do one of her most famous songs on the latest CD, *Falling In Love Again* (from Dietrich's 1930 breakthrough movie, *Blue Angel*). When I was getting ready to record it I wanted to sing it her way (adopting Dietrich's trademark throaty, but provocative, sing-song style): '*Falling in love again, never wanted to, what am I to do, I can't help it ...*'"

She stops, breaking out in a fit of laughter.

Were there any songs on the CD personally special?

"Definitely. *Smile* and *What'll I Do*. They're more up my alley," she says, singing a few lines of the former Charlie Chaplin ballad which the great comedian wrote for his 1952 British film, *Limelight*.

Gayle says the CD title tune, *All My Tomorrows* (co-written by Sammy Cahn and Jimmy van Heusen), was prompted by producer Jay Patten: "I know Frank Sinatra did it. Jay's my saxophone player and he helped me to produce that album. Well, one of his father's favourite songs was *All My Tomorrows*. He kept asking me to sing that song. So that's dedicated to Jay's father, who has passed away."

Other songs included are Isham Jones-Gus Kahn's 1924 tune, *It Had To Be You*, which won wide acclaim for Betty Hutton in the 1944 film, *Incendiary Blonde*; Ruth Etting's 1929 release, *More Than You Know*; Benny Goodman's 1936 uptempo hit, *Goody Goody*; the Pee Wee King-Redd Stewart-Chilton Price song, *You Belong To Me*, a 1952 smash for Jo Stafford; the 1945 Doris Day-Les Brown success, *Sentimental Journey*; and Crystal's own re-do of *Cry Me A River*, a 1955 pop hit for Julie London. Ray Charles' composition, *Hallelujah, I Love (Her) Him So*, is probably the newest number chosen.

Patten coordinates with music director-pianist Charles Cochran, and the lush arrangements are superbly suited to Gayle's smooth-as-silk vocals. Deserving of credit, too, are the musicians, among them Kenny Malone, Jim White, Roger Spencer, Jim Ferguson and George Tidwell.

We goodnaturedly ask, does torch singer wannabe Crystal Gayle feel she was born decades too late in life?

"Absolutely! I would have been a big band singer if I'd have come along earlier. And I've always thought maybe in another life I was ..." (She chuckles at her own quip.)

On a more serious note, the singer adds, "Now in my life, I can do special projects which include singing songs I love. Going back and being able to sing these wonderful songs that are standards – and you know they don't write them like that anymore – and I want to put my stamp on a few of 'em." CMP

present in embarking on such a project is that an artist or producer will select a song very strongly identifiable with another singer, and you know what they say about comparisons.

Some items on the album do come a little close to the definitive versions: Jo Stafford will forever be associated with *You Belong To Me*, Julie London's ethereal *Cry Me A River* is really the last word on this song. Doris Day always comes to mind on *Sentimental Journey*, and it's nigh on impossible not to hear – and see – Marlene Dietrich whenever *Falling In Love Again* is played.

However, it must be said that Gayle puts up a pretty good case for her versions. She is, for example, nicely sultry on *You Belong To Me* while still being appropriately admonishingly proprietorial, while *Sentimental Journey* swings gently and pleasantly in a good arrangement.

For the most part she delivers the material in an ice cool, almost detached way with very little in the way of adlibbing or jazz phrasing and it is almost a shock when she bluesily embellishes the melody line on the very bright, crisp *I'm Beginning To See The Light*. However, vocal dynamics and even scat singing, heaven forbid, are not Gayle's style – it would be as inappropriate as the Queen linedancing – and her pure, beautiful unembellished vocals are enough for me.

The song selection is pretty good – one could argue that *Hallelujah I Love Him So* is not quite a standard in the way the other material is, but, again, Gayle turns in a pretty lively finger poppin' performance.

Strangely, the least known of the songs presented, *All My Tomorrows*, is used as the album title. It is, however, a little undiscovered gem, a yearning Sammy Cahn/Jimmy Van Heusen ballad filled with hope and enduring love beseechingly rendered by Gayle. (If anyone's interested it was sung by Frank Sinatra behind the credits of the 1959 pic, *Hole In The Head*, and was the B-side of the Sinatra-Eddie Hodges hit from that film, *High Hopes*.)

The arrangements fall broadly into two camps, small group

combos and lush string laden outings for the ballads. Long term Gayle pianist Charles Cochran is responsible for the string arrangements while her MD Jay Patten has co-produced the album with Gayle.

Not much to add, other than to ponder on the huge musical gulf between this album and her sister's recent hard rock dalliances with Jack White! (www.crystalgayle.com)

Jon Philibert



CRYSTAL GAYLE
All My Tomorrows

You Belong To Me / Cry Me A River / You Made Me Love You / Falling In Love Again / All My Tomorrows / Goody, Goody / What'll I Do / Sentimental Journey / I'm Beginning To See The Light / It Had To Be You / More Than You Know / Smile / Hallelujah I Love Him So / For All We Know

Producers: Crystal Gayle & Jay Patten

Southpaw 1535 (Compendia) (38:24)

★★★★

Hardly a month goes by these days when there isn't a new album on the market by some country singer or another tackling pop standards. Even some of the unlikeliest kind of country acts have not been immune from the contagion, and none other than Merle Haggard was the last notable act to cut a standards album – though I gather it was a pretty fantastic piece of work.

The latest to give the evergreens a workout is the perennially wonderful Crystal Gayle, perhaps an artist one might have expected to have recorded a standards collection already. Gayle has always had a distinctly pop attitude – no bad thing in her case – and she did once record a Hoagy Carmichael tribute on 1999's *Sings The Heart And Soul Of Hoagy Carmichael*. After all, wasn't the standard, *Cry*, one of her biggest ever singles?

One of the beartraps ever

CHIMES INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS

CRYSTAL GAYLE

PLUS
SPECIAL GUEST

MAY 2005

8 GLASGOW ROYAL CONCERT HALL	0141 353 8000
10 KING'S LYNN CORN EXCHANGE	01553 764864
11 CROYDON FAIRFIELD HALLS	020 8688 9291
13 CARDIFF ST. DAVID'S HALL	029 2087 8444
14 CAMBERLEY LAKESIDE COUNTRY CLUB	01252 836464
15 DERBY ASSEMBLY ROOMS	01332 255800
16 LONDON PALLADIUM With Special Guest	020 7494 5055

DOMINIC KIRWAN

JOE FISH COUNTRY TOURS

10 Axholme Court, Horwich, Bolton, Lancashire BL6 5HQ

Tel: 01204 468290 Web: joefishcountry.com E Mail: joe@joefishcountry.com

We are FULLY BONDED with the Civil Aviation Authority ATOL Number: 5535



In Association With COUNTRY MUSIC PEOPLE

CMA MUSIC FESTIVAL TOUR "SOLD OUT"

For the *3rd Year In-A-Row* our CMA Music Festival is "Sold Out"
Don't miss out in June 2006 -Bookings now being taken!

ARTISTS SCHEDULED TO APPEAR IN JUNE 2005 INCLUDE:



TRACE ADKINS - BILLY CURRINGTON
DIERKS BENTLEY - BIG & RICH
MARK WILLS - LeANN RIMES
JULIE ROBERTS - KEITH URBAN
PHIL VASSER - JEFF BATES
JESSICA ANDREWS - CHELY WRIGHT
BILLY YATES - LEE ANN WOMACK
JOE DIFFIE - THE BELLAMY BROTHERS
DARRYL WORLEY - GRECHEN WILSON
JOHN BERRY - TRACY BYRD
SARA EVANS - TRACY LAWRENCE



TRAVIS TRITT - PAM TILLIS - TANYA TUCKER
AaRON TIPPIN - NEAL McCOY plus MANY more...

LAS VEGAS - GRAND CANYON & TOMBSTONE
(Few Seats Left!) 29th May to 6th June 2005

**GREAT TOURS COMING
JUNE 2006 - BOOK NOW!**

"Quality, Knowledge & Experience"



Listen to Joe Fish Country on BBC Radio Lancashire Saturday 12 Noon to 2pm
95.5 - 103.9 & 104.5fm - **NOW YOU CAN LISTEN TO "JOE FISH COUNTRY"**
ON THE INTERNET: www.bbc.co.uk/lancashire **Anywhere In The World!!**