

City, suburban slickers go country and western

By CATHIE BRIDENBACH

Country and western is a frame of mind. Country people choose not to be sophisticated, intellectual urbanites. Weekdays they may be TV executives, liberated college coeds, or middle-aged women who sell ladies lingerie. Weekend nights they crave country and its simple pleasures.

because country is a frame of mind. Thinking country has nothing to do with life on the farm or with "fleece" corn. Most Detroit-area country folk don't live in the country and never did. Most hail from somewhere miles north of the Mason-Dixon line and they know more about carburetors than about coyotes.

IN THE AMERICAN myth, the cowboy rides off among the cacti and leaves behind in town the traps of civilization.

ized city life. People who like country and western lead cluttered, encumbered lives like other Americans. The cowboy myth liberates them. When they put on boots and jeans, the dream lives. They feel like tough individualists who lead unassured lives and hold to simple pleasures.

Getting back to simple pleasures is part of the charm of country and western music. A light heart, a cold beer among friends and some dancing music are almost heaven for country folks.

ternate for continuous dancing music. Counting pick-up trucks in the parking lot is a way to tell how many of the folks inside really live country all week. At Almost Heaven, there are lots of trucks and there's lots of action to watch, if watching is your preference.

AS THE BAND warms up and the evening grows young, folks clap and stomp with raucous abandon. The only trick to country dancing is keeping your hat on and keeping your belt buckle from permanently locking with

your partner's. Otherwise, anything goes. At Uncle Deano's on Highland Road in White Lake, the dance floor is small, the atmosphere intimate and the regulars come for a friendly good time. At AW Country, the recently renovated Old Mill Restaurant on Dixie Highway in Waterford, you can gawk like a tourist at hearty souls who ride the mechanical bull. AW has valet parking, not a country touch, and western curries are on sale in the entry. The bull is good, but the atmosphere is definitely not down home.

boy, Larry Lee Adrin's band plays good dancing music and another mechanical bull writes and bucks adventurous riders. Metropolitan Detroit is a good area for country and western. You don't have to drive a pick-up and be a red-neck to be an urban cowboy, and you don't need a fancy hat or boots to go honky-tonking. Country's been around since Roy Rogers fell in love with Trigger. Now John Travolta is riding the country revival in his movie "Urban Cowboy." Country and western is so old that it's new, and it's a simple pleasure.

Country-western night gets Oscar's into the act

WCXI's Bob Burchett will add to the festivities Thursday at Oscar's in Southfield, where Thursdays are country-western nights.

charge. Mike McKellar's Band provides live entertainment. Oscar's opens at 8 p.m., and the country sound continues to 2 a.m.

• McKellar has played at "Grand Ole Opry" and on "Hee Haw" and "Ernest Tubbs' Record Shop."

Laura, McKellar's wife, plays rhythm guitar and harmonizes along with Mike and Wendell Asplin, who also plays rhythm guitar. McKellar and Asplin have a radio show from Labor Day to Dec. 23, live from Asplin Farms in Lennon, Mich. Nephew Chris Wilkins of Goodrich, Mich., plays drums and Bruce Agabahn rounds out the group on bass.

Bands play sweet to jazz

(Continued from Page 1D) trumpet man, Wayne Reed, who had been with Rich only three days.

Rich, who is a thorough-going professional as a drummer and band leader, seemed brusque and short-tempered. He didn't make any comments until the end of his set, when he gave a short typical Rich bit of patter ending with, "And if you didn't have a good time, that's OK." Rich keyed his band through drum code and ripped through a half dozen tunes.

AS ALWAYS, Rich was phenomenal. The man is a joy to watch, as he sits on a platform above most of his musicians

and provides the driving force behind his well-oiled and brassy orchestra. "Channel 1 Suite" was his tour de force, closing a driving program with one of the few songs in the Rich repertoire that allows the drummer to take an extended solo. When he does, of course, he displays the technique he has acquired in 42 years powering some of the best bands around.

Rich gets more rhythmic mileage out of rim shots and clicking his drum sticks together than some drummers do with their whole set of traps. This was the kind of Friday evening we've come to expect during the summer at Meadow Brook on the Oakland University campus near Rochester. There was no disappointment here, except for anyone who expected Larry Elgart to match the jazz feel of Woody Herman and Buddy Rich.

Group offers theater night

The Cultural Council of Pontiac will host a performance of "Side by Side by Sondheim," musical revue starring Peggy Lee, at 8 p.m. Sunday at the Birmingham Theatre.

is \$15; proceeds go to the Cultural Council of Pontiac. Reservations are limited to the first 100 persons. For further information or reservations, call Gretchen Beiser at 332-2787, or Portia Fields at 857-7780.

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