

'Underrated' Axton to give benefit shows

By ERIC MALONEY

In 1971, Hoyt Axton released an album on Capitol called *Joy to the World*. Two of the songs reached the Billboard charts, and two others have become rock standards. But the album, now out of print, was never a big seller, because the songs were all distinguished by other performers — "Joy to the World" and "Never Been to Spain" by Three Dog Night, "The Pusher" by Steppenwolf, and "Lightnin' Bar Blues" by Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen.

Seven years later, the three groups are only a memory. The songs, however, have survived, and their writer has become a recording and concert star in his own right. Some half-dozen more albums and a string of hit songs have made Axton one of the most popular underrated performers in the country.

Axton, with special guest Vassar Clements, will bring his show to the Lane County Fairgrounds Friday night to present two benefit concerts for Oregonians for Nuclear Safeguards.

While Axton has made a name

for himself only in the last three years, he has been around for a while. He was raised in a musical environment — his mother co-wrote Elvis Presley's first hit, "Heartbreak Hotel" — and began playing in the San Francisco Bay area in 1958. He penned his first hit in 1962, co-writing "Greenback Dollar," made famous by the Kingston Trio.

In those days, Axton led a rough-and-tumble life. He was a boxer in the Navy, and went to Oklahoma State on a football scholarship. He took his big frame with him into the bars and alleys of the South, ending up with a somewhat altered face.

"I guess I was pretty much of a redneck for the first half of my life," he said in an interview a couple of years ago. "I'd always been an outlaw, both in music and outlook, so hell, I loved to drink and fight."

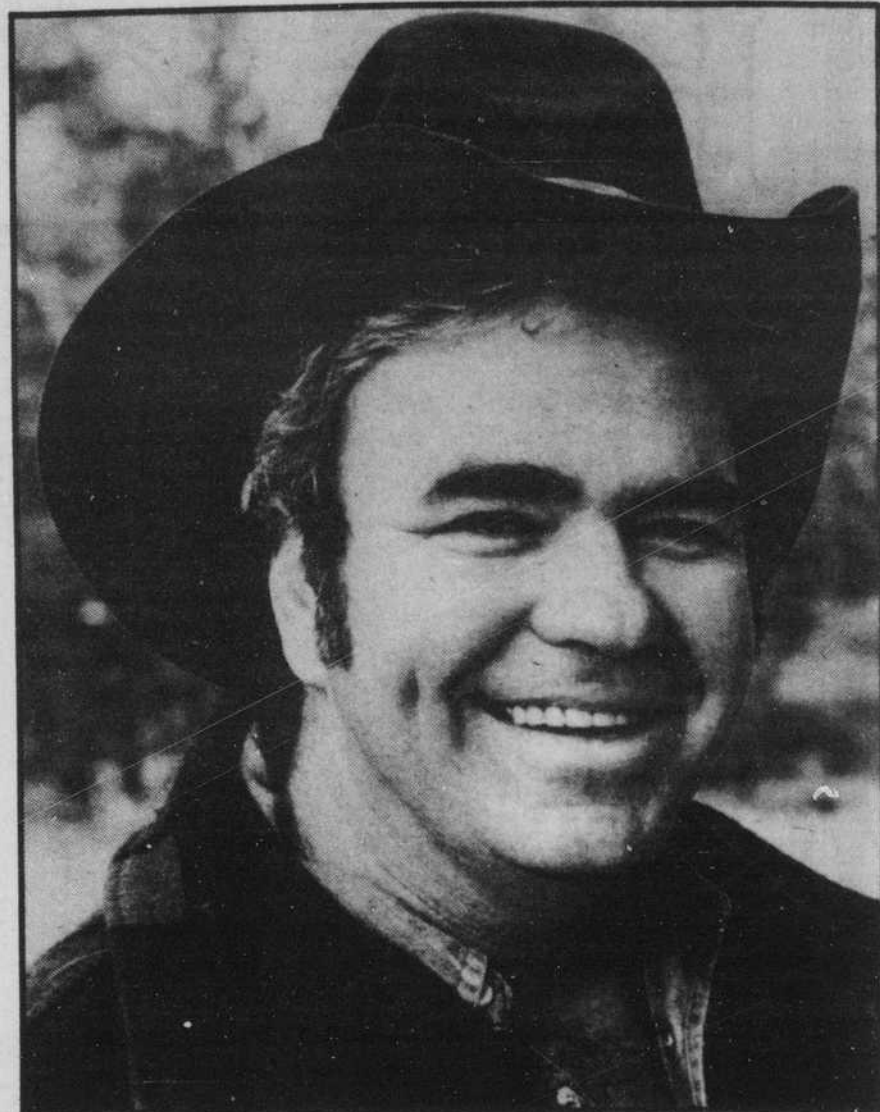
Eventually, Axton settled down and launched his own music career in earnest. He was the opening act for Three Dog Night in 1969-70, and recorded *Joy to the World*. In 1974 he recorded *Life Machine*, his first major album.

With a cast of dozens, including Linda Ronstadt, Bob Lind, Merry Clayton, Doug Dillard, Red Rhodes, and Ronee Blakley, the album received much critical praise. It included a classic version of Chuck Berry's "Maybelline," and Axton's own "Boney Fingers."

In 1975, Axton released *Southbound*, which included the "No No Song," "Nashville," and "Roll Your Own." He followed it a year later with *Fearless*, highlighted by "Flash of Fire" and "Idol of the Band."

His latest albums, on MCA, are *Snowblind Friend* and *Free Sallin'*.

Axton is one of those musicians whose work must remain unclassified. He ranges from straight folk ("Greenback Dollar") to country ("When the Morning Comes") to rock and roll ("Maybelline," "That's All Right"). Whatever the genre, his lyrics are almost always



Hoyt Axton

optimistic, talking about the happy, carefree side of life.

"I'm just looking to make people feel better," he says. "I grew up around people into music for the joy they got out of sharing. It may sound corny, but it's true. Everything else that I've gotten from it is frosting."

Vassar Clements is considered to be one of the premier fiddlers in the world.

Like Axton, he has been around for a number of years, first performing at the Grand Ole Opry with Bill Monroe in 1949. And like Axton, he has attained popularity only recently, after playing on the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band album, *Will the Circle be Unbroken*.

Since then, he has performed

with the Grateful Dead, Hot Tuna, Elvin Bishop, and the Marshall Tucker Band.

Clement's music is rooted in bluegrass and country. But he has branched out into the areas of jazz, blues, and rock.

"I can't stop my music from changing," he says. "I can't be satisfied, it's no fun if you're not learnin' anything. If you love something, you're gonna keep diggin' into it. I still look at myself as a beginner. No one has ever scratched the surface of music. It keeps on goin'."

The shows begin at 7 and 10 p.m. Tickets are \$6.50 and \$7.50 at the door, and can be purchased at the EMU main desk, the Sun Shop, Budget Tapes and Records, and Everybody's.

Kimball's House Of Strings
A FINE SELECTION OF NEW & RARE VINTAGE FRETTED INSTRUMENTS
MARTIN • VEGA • OVATION • TAKAMINE
537 WILLAMETTE
SERVICE & REPAIR
687-0814

CHINA BLUE RESTAURANT
featuring for dinner:
Kuy Poa Shrimp
Shrimp sauteed with black mushrooms, vegetables, cashewnuts and special spices.
\$4.85

Hours:
Mon. Thurs. 10 to 10
Fri. 10 to 11
Sat. 5 to 11
Sun. 5 to 10

China Blue
879 E. 13th Ave.
343-2832

The Vida Barn Co. presents the

WIL BARNES
BAND

in a
ROMPIN' & STOMPIN'

Dance and Show
Saturday, February 18
Lane County Fairgrounds

Beer garden opens 8p.m.
Over 21 only

Tickets \$3.50, in advance; \$4, at the door,
available at Chrystalship, EMU, Everybody's,
and the Sun Shop.



SCIENCE FICTION
and
METAPHYSICAL
BOOKS

HEALTH: THE NATURAL WAY

- *Handbook of Alternatives to Chemical Medicine*
reg. 4.95 Sale 3.95
 - *Grieve's Modern Herbal Vols. I & II*
reg. 5.00 ea. Sale 4.00 ea.
 - *Healing Herbs of the Zodiac*
reg. 1.00 Sale .75
 - *From Eden to Aquarius*
reg. 1.95 Sale 1.50
 - *The Healing Mind*
reg. 4.95 Sale 3.95
 - *Barefoot Doctor's Manual*
reg. 5.95 Sale 4.50
- and others...

Limited supplies.
Sale Feb. 3 - 18

790 E. 11th
485-4848

Hear and Now is edited by Eric Maloney and Jerril Nilson. We welcome all contributions, comments, and suggestions, but request that material be in one week before projected day of publication. Out and About items should be submitted by the Friday before publication.

Erratum

Last week's review of High Anxiety was incorrectly by-lined — it was actually written by Kevin Harden.



BETTER DAYS



BETWEEN WILLAMETTE & M. JACOBS FACING 7th

Thursday, February 16, 1978