



Coryell (right) & Catherine in a pure context

Mendelssohn: Symphonies #4 and #5
English Chamber Orchestra; Raymond
Leppard, conductor (RCA)

Mendelssohn suffers much from overblown performances of his music, obscuring the restraint to be found in even his largest works. Leppard restores some balance with brisk readings that rival Toscanini's old. **E.C.**

Motion Picture Soundtrack:
Blue Collar (MCA)

This album may be of more interest to rock and blues fans than to film score buffs. Musical director Jack Nitzsche has assembled a

topnotch band including Ry Cooder, Jesse Ed Davis and (for the tough "Hard Workin' Man") Captain Beefheart, and added some steamy old records including Jeanne Pruett's "Satin Sheets," Howlin' Wolf's "Wang Dang Doodle," Ike and Tina Turner's "Goodbye, So Long," and Lynyrd Skynyrd's "Saturday Night Special." **D.P.**

Martin Mull: Sex and Violins (ABC)

The cover is important because it contains diagrammed instructions of how to get the record from its jacket to the turntable. The instructions are in Polish.

Really, all that you need to know about

this album are some of the song titles ("Birds Gotta Swim," "I Haven't the Vegas Idea," "A Half Hour of Heaven [and Eight Hours of Sleep]"; that Harry Shearer of the Credibility Gap guests; and that "Westward Ho!" was written by the team of M. Mull and S. Martin.

(For those of you who do not automatically buy/attend anything that even hints of Steve Martin, that is not the only reason to obtain *Sex and Violins*. Another reason might be that Mull's voice is almost as pretty as his face. Or, there might even be other reasons.) **Becky Sue Epstein**

Willie Nelson:

Stardust (Columbia)

Amazingly fine, subtle albums are expected of Nelson; he hasn't failed to deliver in years. *Stardust* is among his very best collections ever. Nelson's a top-notch writer of country songs: each selection here is a pop standard, dating back as many as forty years; the tasteful producer is rhythm and blues organist Booker T. Jones; arrangements are elegant and subdued in contrast to the "outlaw" image often pressed on the singer; and the record exists without a single compromise to what's supposed to be "commercial." Hot damn, it's a hit! I can't imagine anybody not liking this collection, which works as background music *and* is worthy of close aural scrutiny. There isn't a musician around who couldn't use some restraint lessons from Nelson, and maybe the business's bandwagon boys will attempt to emulate what's here. **D.P.**

David Fathead Newman:

Concrete Jungle (Prestige)

The title track alone is worth the price of the album, even though Newman plays flute on it, and flute is not his best instrument —

tenor is, still. But William Fischer's arrangement of what was, after all, just another Bob Marley tune, is a small masterpiece. It's one of those songs that surrounds you, and then gets under your skin. Think I'll go put it on again . . . Oh, yeah. Newman's two tenor parts on "Sun Seeds" are pretty fine, too, and his soprano on the lovely Buddy Johnson tune, "Save Your Love for Me," is surprisingly elegant. **C.A.**

Dolly Parton: In the Beginning (Monument)

This reissue of some of the singer's earliest recordings doesn't feature her sitting on the porch picking the banjo. Nor is it anything like today's Dolly Parton, who sings of "sexy lovin' lies." Parton wrote or collaborated on nine of these songs, which are an attempt at commercial country, Sixties style — background doo-dahs. These selections, like the nutty "Dumb Blonde" and "Something Fishy" will satisfy your curiosity, but that's about it. Dolly was at her best under Porter Wagoner's production for RCA during the years before she aimed at the Great Crossover. **B.O.**

Stella Parton: Stella Parton (Electra)

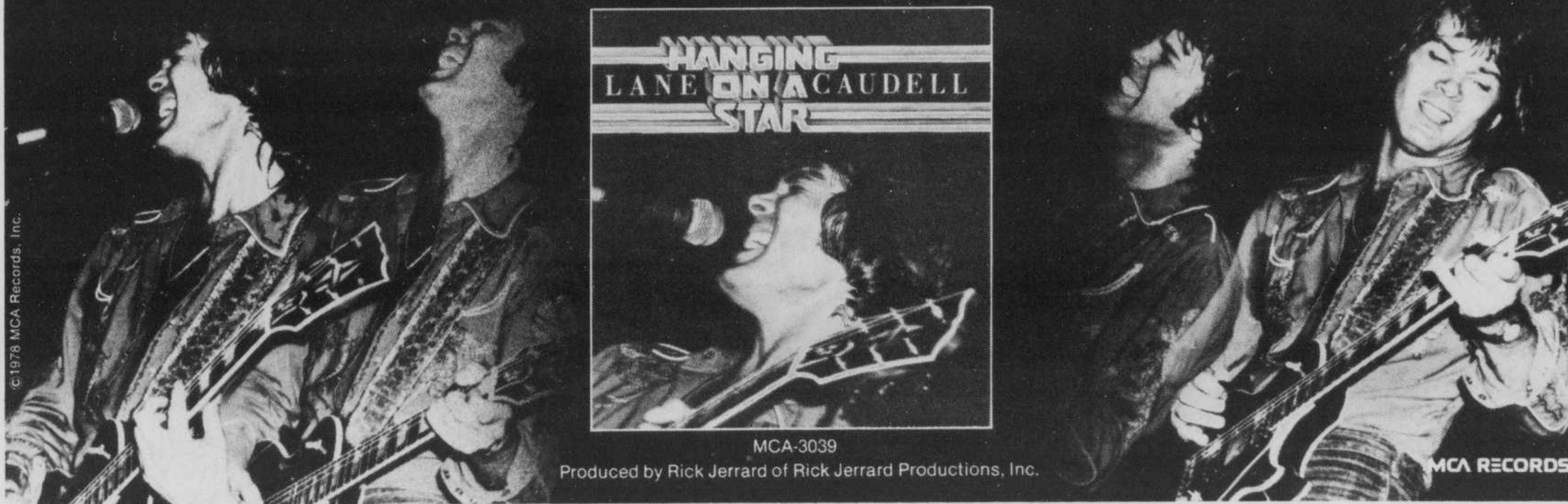
Stella stands a good chance of making it in country. She keeps everything clear and simple. Her little, sometimes whispery voice would seem too sweet, were it not for the variety of material on this album. A standout is "The Late Late Late Show," written by Shel Silverstein, which rivals Bob Luman's "The Pay Phone" for best country music soap opera of the year. The hit single, "Four Little Letters" is included, along with a Parton Family collaboration called "Down to Earth." **B.O.**

(Continued on page 21)

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