

Festival season over, groups retire to studio

Summertime is past and gone, so bluegrass musicians everywhere repair to the studio to prepare new album releases for the next festival season.

The Osborne Brothers have been in the studio rerecording many of the tunes they waxed for MGM and Decca during the '50s and '60s.

"We've cut about 25 songs, and we might do that many more. A lot of that stuff is out of print, and what we're cutting now is better than the original," Sonny reported. "We understand more of what we're doing now, and we have such a good band."

The Osbornes recorded another first on September 21 when they performed at a bluegrass festival in Owensboro, Ky., with the Owensboro Symphony Orchestra. Such couplings, usually with the Osborne Brothers or the McClain Family, had previously occurred on the orchestra's home turf.

Wes Golding and Sure Fire, fronted by the outstanding young bluegrass songwriter who worked with Ricky Skaggs in the Boone Creek band, will record their debut album this fall.

The Shady Grove Band from North Carolina returns to the studio with producer Jack Herrick of the Red Clay Ramblers to wax a follow-up to their well-received debut, *Shine On Me*.

Leftwich and Higginbotham, the dynamic old-time duo from Bloomington, Ind., have a new guitarist in Kenny Jackson. Linda Higginbotham, the group's banjo picker, reported that Jackson's tenor blends right in with fiddler Brad Leftwich's lead, giving the band a vocal trio for the first time. As Leftwich, Higginbotham & Jackson, they're touring in support of the critically acclaimed country release *No One To Bring Home Tonight*.

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Mark Hembree, the former Blue Grass Boy now slapping bass for the Rounder artists, recently played bass for a Neil Young session.

Rounder artist Hazel Dickens toured Japan and Hong Kong during early August on her first Oriental swing.

Pennsylvania-based Whetstone Run will take new guitarist Chris Jones with them on the band's first European junket in October. They will perform in Germany, Switzerland and Holland.

Representatives of all facets of the bluegrass music industry met at Nashville's BMI headquarters during June and August to discuss the establishment of a professional organization to promote the music and its public image.

Charles Crutchfield, long-time announcer on Charlotte, N.C.'s WBT and later a broadcast executive, has been instrumental in organizing a reunion of old-time country performers who broadcast and recorded in Charlotte before World War Two. Workshops and concerts featuring the WBT Briarhoppers, Bill Monroe, Arthur Smith and Joe & Janette Carter will take place at the Queen City's Spirit Square on October 25-27.

At the Winterhawk bluegrass festival in upstate New York: Don Brown and the Ozark Mountain Trio, a group formed by Brown and



The Osborne Brothers

John Hartford in 1958, making their initial northeastern appearance. Proud father C.W. Brook watching his children/bandmembers jam with Tony Tischka offstage, and 13-year-old J.D. Brock join the Lewis Family on stage. Wonder of wonders, Hot Rize and Red Knuckles and the Trailblazers on stage at the same time. Red and the boys just keep getting pushier since their Fench album came out in May. Host Dry Branch Fire Squad's new Rounder release, *Good Neighbors And Friends*, arrived Saturday evening following a nervous wait by Ron Thomason and Rounder's Ken Irwin.

The Eastern North Carolina Bluegrass Association, which meets every second Saturday at the Lenoir County (North Carolina) Livestock Arena, held a special monthly concert in August featuring the Bass Mountain Boys and the New Quicksilver — newlywed Terry

country music, for the past three summers. They're currently producing TV and radio series in cooperation with SDC.

PBS' *Capitol Journal* series profiled the fiddling of country recording artist Sen. Robert Byrd with bluegrass concert footage on its August 11 edition.

CBC Radio, Canada's national network, recorded the John Herald Band at the Winnipeg Folk Festival for autumn broadcast on the *Simply Folk* program.

Mike Cross, whose *Solo At Midnight* album just appeared on Sugar Hill, became a father with the June 28 birth of Benjamin James Patrick Cross.

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Don't send money to have songs recorded!

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The Bass Mountain Boys, of course, promote the Original Bluegrass Festival in Camp Springs, N.C. The 21st annual Labor Day event marked the 20th birthday of bluegrass festivals with a reunion of Foggy Mountain Boys Curly Seckler, Jake Tullock, Josh Graves, Jim Shumate, and Jody Rainwater.

The new Rutabaga Records is a subsidiary of Michigan's Old Homestead label geared toward current bluegrass. Releases so far are *Don't Let Me Cross Over* by Emma Smith and Dave Evans, Red Taylor's *Country Fiddle Soft And Sweet, Dobro* by Jim Heffernan with help from Tony Tischka and Kenny Kosek, and the Jimmy Martin produced *Glimpse Of Home* from Mel Besher.

Bluegrass vets Harold Morrison and Smoking Bluegrass have completed a busy summer at Silver Dollar City, the popular theme park in Branson, Mo. The Dillards have worked SDC, which always features lots of traditional

Bluegrass.

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Country music pioneer Lily May Leford passed away in early July at age 68. She appeared on the WLS National Barn Dance during the mid-'30s, when John Lair approached her with the idea of forming an all-female string band. The resulting Coon Creek Girls became the centerpiece of Lair's Renfro Valley Barn Dance.

They performed hard-edged mountain music in the style of the 1920s, rather than the sweet ballads then deemed appropriate for women. The band broke up in 1957, but often returned during the folk and string band revivals of the 1960s.

Please send all correspondence for "Another Country" to Art Menius, Rt.1, Box 710, Pittsboro, NC 27312.

Art Menius is a consultant to The Linear Group and a former staff historian for the North Carolina Dept. of Cultural Resources. He is a contributing editor and columnist for Carolina Bluegrass Review.