

Introducing Jim Chesnut—Again!

Jim Chesnut was born in Midland, Texas, on December 1, 1944. He graduated from high school in 1963, left home and attended McMurry College in Abilene, Texas, Odessa College in Odessa, Texas, and the University of Texas in Austin.

He began his singing career in San Angelo, Texas, performing part time locally and was eventually noticed by Benny Bellamy, manager of a local country radio station. Bellamy introduced him to Mike Harrell, an innkeeper from Dallas, who gave Chesnut his first job as a full time professional singer at the Holiday Inn in Carrollton, Texas, in 1970.

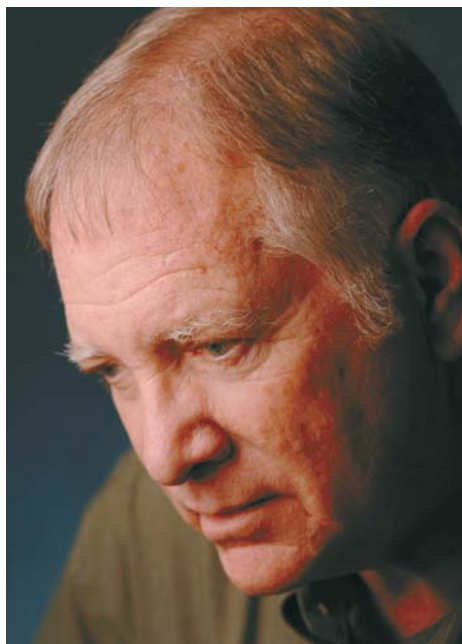
For the next six years, Chesnut performed first as a single and then as a duo, teaming with Rodney Crowell in Nacogdoches, Texas. Crowell taught Jim's first wife, Linda, to play drums, and the three played as a trio for several months in East Texas until Rodney moved to Nashville to expand his horizons.

After playing in Dallas and East Texas for a couple more years, Chesnut followed Crowell to Nashville after signing writing and recording contracts. Wesley Rose, President of Acuff-Rose Music, Inc., signed him in part because Roy Acuff was willing to allow Jim to take his place on the full roster at Hickory Records (distributed at the time by MGM).

When Charley Pride endorsed Chesnut's first album (*Let Me Love You Now* on ABC/Hickory Records) he said, "He has a tremendous talent for writing, and as you can see from this album for delivering a good country song, also."

Pride was the first major artist to record and release a Chesnut song (*Oklahoma Morning*) shortly before Jim was signed as an exclusive writer for Acuff-Rose, the firm that produced such songwriting greats as Hank Williams, Mickey Newbury, Eddy Raven, Don Gibson, Roy Orbison and The Everly Brothers.

From that point, Chesnut, in what proved to be an unwise career decision, reserved all of his material for his own use as a recording artist. He wrote most



Singer/Songwriter Jim Chesnut

of the songs for the 13 top-100 singles and two albums he released in the late 1970s. One of those songs, *Show Me a Sign*, was nominated for a Grammy in 1979.

Chesnut, represented by Bob Neal (Elvis Presley's first manager) and the venerable William Morris Agency, performed in nightclubs and concerts, appearing with such folks as Willie Nelson, Charley Pride, Rodney Crowell, Mickey Newbury, Tom T. Hall, Bobby Bare, Con Hunley, Danny Davis & the Nashville Brass, Sammi Smith, Don Williams, Ed Bruce, Gene Watson, Moe Bandy, Don Everly, Eddie Raven, Larry Gatlin, Dottie West, Reba McEntire, Janie Fricke, Lorrie Morgan, B.J. Thomas, Pat and Debby Boone, Ernest Tubb, Ed Bruce, Grandpa Jones, Jan Howard, Helen Cornelius and a number of other Grand Ole Opry stars.

Chesnut's emerging career was muted in the early 1980s, when he returned to Texas. Battered emotionally by divorce and a changing landscape in Nashville and country music, he began a new career in marketing communications apart from the music industry.

In 2007, we released two CDs that

include songs Jim recorded in the late 1970s in Nashville. *The Nashville Years: Volume One* and *The Nashville Years: Volume Two* are now available for purchase through his website at www.jimchesnut.com. There are a total of 23 songs, most of which were written by Chesnut.

The project started in early 2007 when Nashville songwriter Steve Collom called Jim to let him know that *Get Back to Loving Me*, a song from Jim's second Nashville album, was to be included on the soundtrack of Ashley Judd's movie *Come Early Morning*. Now in rental distribution, the DVD is available at Blockbuster Video throughout the U.S. It is a gripping story about a young woman struggling with alcohol and one night stands in an attempt to find meaning in her life through relationships.

After hearing the remastered version used in the film, Jim decided to digitally remaster all of his early material, and with a special license from Sony/ATV Music, they have been released in the two volumes mentioned above.

Then he began performing again in a variety of house concerts throughout Texas. Encouraged by the response Chesnut wrote and recorded 12 new songs for the 2008 release of his new CD *Reflections*.

The first single to be promoted from the album is *If Waylon Ain't in Heaven*. It celebrates the music of Waylon Jennings, a country music giant whose work has touched millions of people.

Many of the songs contain glimpses of Jim's sense of humor. For example, *Cheatin' Heart Attack* is a story about a married middle-aged man who yields to temptation, dances with a younger woman in a crowded bar, and has a heart attack.

What's Come Over Me is the first song on the CD and deals with the effects of aging. "I might as well enjoy the fact that I'm in my 60s now and will be for the next 20 years or so.

Reflections—life lived, experienced or imagined by a very talented guy. 🎸