

arts/entertainment

Country-pop singer delights in fruits of success

By Pat Higgins

"When I was starting out in the 50s this music was called rock and roll," recalled genial country-pop star Mickey Gilley last Saturday night. Gilley flew in from the American Music Awards in Los Angeles where he debuted his new single release, "Headache Tomorrow, Heartache Tonight," to Omaha's Music Hall for two shows.

Performing with Gilley were Johnny Lee and the Urban Cowboy Band. Providing the impetus for Gilley and Lee's enormous commercial success this year were last summer's popular film "Urban Cowboy," which was set at Gilley's club in Pasadena, Texas, and the accompanying soundtrack album, which provided several top 10 hits for both Gilley and Lee.

profile

"I never dreamed this would happen," Gilley continued. "It all started with an article in *Esquire* magazine called 'The Ballad of the Urban Cowboy' and then the movie people became interested. I really think the producers did a good job in showing how things really are at Gilley's."

"That lifestyle has been going on in Texas for years. It was really a pleasure working with the movie folks. John Travolta was a hell of a nice guy. I even took him flying in my Cessna 818."

Johnny Lee, who has his own club down the block from Gilley's, added, "It's fun for people who wear a suit and tie all week to put on their jeans and relax. I knew that after the disco groove died out, something new would take over and fortunately, it turned out to be country music. In these times, people have to work hard for their money and they need a release."

Holds 6000

Gilley's club opened in 1971 with a capacity of 750 and has since expanded until it now holds 6,000. But even when the club began making money, Gilley was less than completely happy.

"The club was doing well but I felt I was missing something in my life without musical success. I'd felt I'd been cheated," Gilley said.

Gilley deserves his long overdue acclaim. He has been recording since 1956 and finally became an "overnight" sensation in 1980 on the pop charts.

His first country hit was "Roomful of Roses," released in 1973 on Playboy Records. Since then Gilley has signed with CBS records and has become a fixture in the country field, mixing existential drinking pathos in songs like "The More I Turn the Bottle Up, the Farther Down I Go" to rave-up rockabilly numbers including "The Girls Always Get Prettier at Closing Time."

"I never understood why a rock band never covered that song," Gilley said. "It would be a natural."

Gilley knows a little bit about rock and roll. He was brought up together with his cousin, the legendary rock icon Jerry Lee Lewis, in Ferriday, La.

"Jerry developed his style on the piano when he was 8 or 9 years old. We were playing 'Roomful of Roses' and 'Drinking Wine Spode-ode' when we were just kids."

Fancy keyboard work

Gilley shows some similarity to Jerry Lee's style, including some fancy work on the keyboards, and he's quick to acknowledge the Killer's influence.

"I'll never accomplish what Jerry Lee has done," Gilley said, "but Jerry has had a lot of tragedy with his family and he has lost control to a certain degree. Jerry Lee has used drugs to ease his pain. I've tried to help him, but he has to want to help himself. I don't allow any illegal drugs in my band. Of course, it's a good thing beer and whiskey are legal."

Gilley's current smash, "Stand By Me," was originally a soul hit written by Ben E. King. "I've been doing that song since 1959, but back then we had a different arrangement that was closer to the original. I also do 'Bring It On Home To Me' by Sam Cooke," he said.

Johnny Lee also has an eclectic musical taste, as he professed a fondness for rockers Rod Stewart and Bob Seger and added, "One of the greatest experiences in my life was playing the Charlie Daniels Volunteer Jam last summer. I was onstage with Ted Nugent, Billy Joel and Daniels. It was really enjoyable."

"It doesn't matter what style anybody is as long as they are good," he said.

Lee indicated a certain change in style for his upcoming recordings.

"Real get-down stuff"

"I'm not experienced with New Wave but on my new album I plan on doing more rock songs, some real get-down stuff," Lee showed a certain amount of



teen appeal and mentioned hopes for TV or movie offers.

"My chief inspirations were Buddy Holly and Ricky Nelson. I'm lucky enough to have Elvis Presley's old guitar player, James Burton, play on my own records," Lee said.

Lee has been performing with Gilley since 1968 and Gilley is pleased with Lee's success. "I've always had faith in Johnny Lee's talent. It's really rewarding to see someone you have faith in make it."

There is a good deal of comic horseplay between Gilley and Lee onstage that adds considerably to the show. "We paid a writer \$8,000 to write a show for us," Gilley laughed. "We ended up writing it all ourselves."

Lee has not allowed the pressure of stardom to alter his style.

"I consider myself quite fortunate. This is really rewarding. It's something I've wanted all my life. I just have to keep working hard," he said.

Career opportunities for Gilley and Co. continue to improve. Gilley has just done a commercial for Schlitz beer and the two are performing so frequently that they will play Gilley's this year only on the 4th of July and New Year's Eve.

"I think the whole country scene is going to continue to grow, particularly in the Northeast. We just got done with four shows in New York," Gilley said. "I couldn't believe a country boy from Louisiana was onstage at the Copacabana."

Environment helps snare 'person of dreams'

By T. Marni Vos

If you are about to tell (for the first time ever) the person of your dreams that:

You love their lips when they're wet with wine and red with wild desire. And you love their eyes where the love light lies . . . lit with a passionate fire . . .

humor

You shouldn't be standing in the laundromat, sitting in the bathroom or kneeling in a confessional.

According to Masters and Johnson, the workable and ideal environment would be an informal blue living space at approximately 72 degrees anytime between 7:30 p.m. and 12:30-5 a.m.

Blue recommended

Blue tends to make for a more relaxed and comfortable setting. Now I'm not recommending you sit in a tub of ice for two hours or wear a mermaid's outfit, but a little latex could make a big difference in your life. If you are like me and latex is too expensive, hand him a pair of blue shades at the door or sit in a tub of ice for two hours.

Now I know some of you are saying this very moment, "What about that color blind person in my life?" I suggest

warm shades of gray. Try to avoid nurses outfits, solid white rooms and Alaska, all of which could result in discomfort and even pain.

Moving on to 72 degrees. In this time, known as the energy crunch, no one; not even people with passion, not even people in Paris, Bangkok or Moscow should move their thermostat past 68 degrees. Hand him or her a sweat shirt at the door along with the blue shades . . . perfect.

Now for that ugly word, TERMINATION.

First of all I'd like to thank all of my suicidal friends, my one-sided love affairs and Eric Segal for making this next section possible.

Termination according to Webster is:

A. Termination is the act of terminating.
B. "I love you but I'm not in love with you."
C. No more I.D. bracelets, no more rings, no more tarnish marks.

D. Termination can cause displaced anger: stealing your roommates' letters from home, holding out on your plants, taking your fish out of the tank, etc.

Termination . . . not alot of fun.

Meat locker preferred

Again, according to Masters and Johnson, termination should take place between 10:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. in a cold, sterile, formal environment: an emergency room,

Alaska or a nearby meat locker.

"Timothy, what's at 827 So. 27th? A meat locker? *Tiiiiim* . . . page 63 of what? Masters and Johnson. . . how am I going to find and read that 'ol book and still meet you in a half hour? Should I wear my parka? Honey, are you sure? It's 10:30 a.m. Well, OK, do you want me to bring any tenderizer . . . OK, OK, I was just kidding."

If you want to discourage something before it gets started write your admirer a poem:

*I was alone, walking in the park.
You were sitting in a tree,
Our eyes met,
You smiled,
I ran away.*

If your admirer is not easily discouraged and arrives at your front door ask him or her if they would like to have some coffee or tea in the garage—maybe watch the electric door. These places tend to project little or no romance.

After successfully breaking up with someone, it will always be awkward to run into this person either in classes, at work or maybe at a party.

"Tim, all those months and you never told me you had a sister . . . well I know she's not your mother . . . Oh, a friend. It's so nice to meet you Nancy. I haven't heard a lot about you but I'm a friend of Tim's too, and any friend of Tim is a friend of mine. As your new friend I feel it's my duty to tell you, getting involved with Tim is like marrying one of the Cartwright's. It'll kill ya."