



Julia Mikolajcik/DN

Ride 'em, cowboy

Kelly Melvin of Golden, Colo., rides Double Trouble in the Great Plains Bull Riding and Barrel Racing bull rodeo Friday night at the State Fairgrounds. Participants in the bull-riding event competed for a \$4,500 estimated purse. Contestants from across the United States as well as spectators were invited to a dance afterwards.

Country music not all twang

By Rebecca S. Kruse
Staff Reporter

The words "country music" conjure up images of the lone, cattle-herding cowboy sleeping under the stars with his saddle for a pillow. He sings "Get Along Little Dogies" or laments his woes of hard days and long, lonely nights.

Country artists today offer styles for nearly every musical taste. Garth Brooks, one of the hottest country musicians, offers country with a touch of rock.

Reba McEntire sings sad and slow love ballads. And Bonnie Raitt, who originated in the country music field, has crossed over to the popular music charts with her latest hits.

Country music got its start in the rural South, Southwest and the southeastern states. It is a mixture of music traditions that were influenced by the blues and by black rural dance music.

Since then, country music has evolved into a variety of styles, and many country artists have drawn in much wider audiences.

It's been said that a cowboy attitude is not in your clothes, it's in your state of mind. And listeners

don't have to feel out of place if they don't feel comfortable in cowboy boots and 10-gallon hats. Although country music has remained a constant on the music scene, it doesn't belong solely to the cowboy anymore.

It has branched out to several categories, including country rock.

Randy Travis and Ricky Skaggs belong to yet another group of musicians, known as traditionalists, who turn back to the slow, subtle style of Williams. And Williams own son, Hank Williams, Jr., has drawn from contemporary rock and blues sounds to create his wild, boot-kickin' tunes.

Since country music has become more popular with more people, it might seem that it has changed in order to keep up with other popular music styles.

But the music has stayed relatively the same over the years. Because, behind the strong beat of rap and the high-pitched squeals of heavy metal, if I listen closely, I can hear the twang of country music's steel guitar and the heartbeat of a cowboy.

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