

VOTE for Country's Most Beautiful Woman

COUNTRY WEEKLY

THE INSIDE STORIES ON COUNTRY MUSIC'S HOTTEST STARS
SEPTEMBER 13, 2010

FREE
POSTER OF
George Strait
INSIDE

TOBY KEITH
Heading back to the wrestling ring

REBA McENTIRE
Behind the scenes of her new video

JERRY LEE LEWIS
The Killer returns with a new album

KING GEORGE RETURNS!

GEORGE STRAIT is back with his highly anticipated tour—and we reveal a few of his favorite things

COUNTRYWEEKLY.COM



\$2.99/\$3.99 CANADA

At Home
JEFF COOK
in his very own cast

THE

Jerry Lee Lewis performs with some superstar company on his new album, *Mean Old Man*.



STORY BY BOB PAXMAN

Jerry Lee Lewis is about to mark birthday number 75. But that doesn't mean that the man who gave us "Whole Lot of Shakin' Going On" and "Great Balls of Fire" has stopped rocking. The iconic singer, piano player, rock 'n' roll hero and legendary firebrand, often referred to as "The Killer," proves that notion on his new album, *Mean Old Man*, set for release on Sept. 7.

The album serves up plenty of rock standards, including "Roll Over Beethoven" and "Bad Moon Rising," while acknowledging Jerry Lee's country and Southern roots with "Sunday Morning Coming Down," "Whiskey River" and others. And Jerry Lee has some good company on hand, with guest performances by Tim McGraw, Rolling Stones Mick Jagger and Keith Richards, Sheryl Crow, Eric Clapton, Merle Haggard and many others. *Mean Old Man* comes in two versions—a standard 10-song set and the 18-track deluxe edition. Both will be available through Jerry Lee's website, jerryleewis.com, as well as other national outlets.

From his home in Memphis, where most of the album was recorded, Jerry Lee gave his own unique take on the record and recalled some

of the superstar sessions. "It was a lot of fun to do—it sounds like it, doesn't it?" he says with a rollicking laugh. "I loved being in there playing and singing and doing my bit. It's great to have so many of my friends come and cut songs with me."

One of those amiable amigos was Tim McGraw, a longtime admirer of Jerry Lee's hip-shaking, piano-pounding brand of rock 'n' roll. Tim joins the legendary singer on "Middle Age Crazy," a tune that Jerry Lee took to the Top 5 on the country charts in 1978. "That one came off real good,

didn't it?" Jerry Lee says in his flavorful Southern brogue. "I had met Tim before and he wanted to come in and do this with me. We had fun singing it."

That track is also a favorite of the album's co-producer Jim Keltner, the much-heralded

session drummer who has contributed to albums by ex-Beatle George Harrison, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and Neil Young. "I love how Tim and Jerry Lee sound on it," Jim says. "Tim came down to Memphis to do his part and he really gets into it."

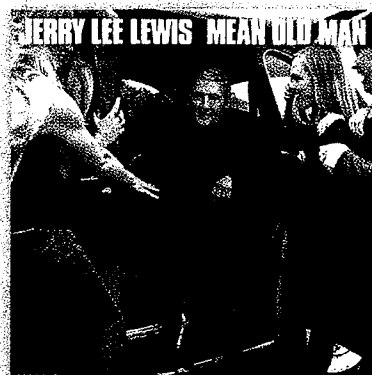
Jim was also featured on Jerry Lee's previous album, *Last Man Standing*, released in 2006. He was asked to come aboard for this new effort by Steve Bing, who co-

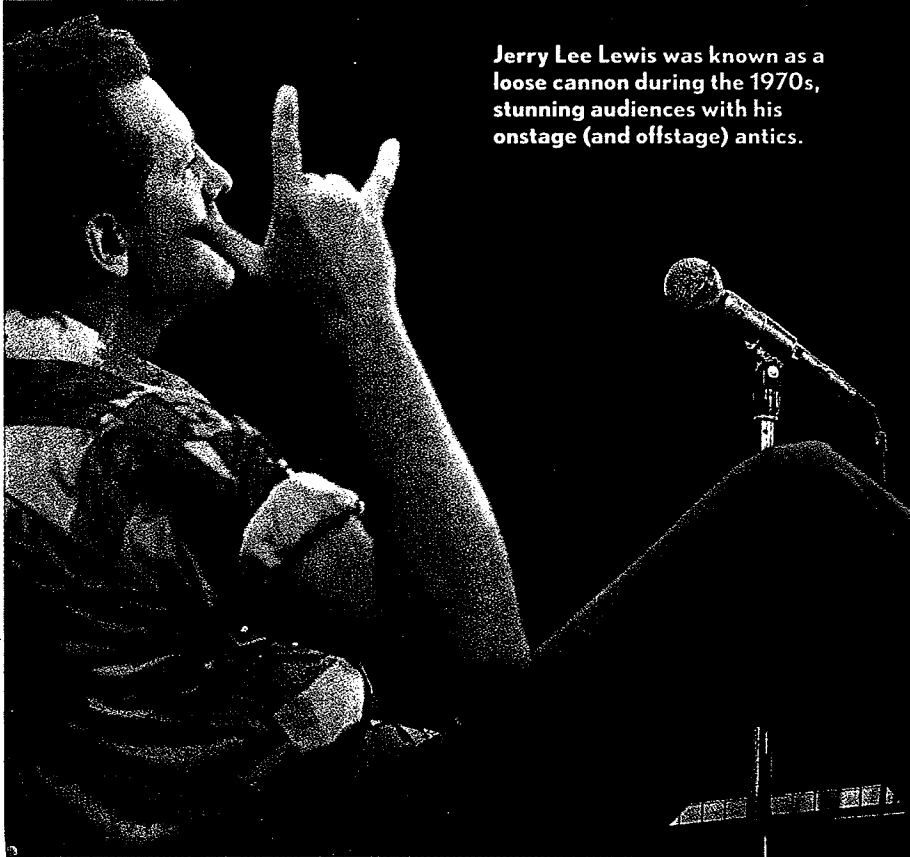
produces *Mean Old Man* and also produced *Last Man Standing*.

"Steve made most of the song choices and he was right on every one of his calls," Jim notes. "We cut almost 50 songs. As I got into it, I ended up really loving the whole process. I really believe that is a great little album. And I can say that every one of the contributions was sterling. For the most part, they were all friends of Jerry Lee's and mine."

Two close friends, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones, turned in guest vocals on a pair of Stones numbers, "Dead Flowers," featuring Mick, and "Sweet Virginia," with backing vocal by Keith. "I loved having the Stones on there," raves Jerry Lee. "They have always liked my style of music and we just hammered away on those songs." A third Stones member, guitarist Ron Wood, plays on the title track, which was written by Kris Kristofferson. "That is a great song," says Jerry Lee. "When Kris played it for us, we all knew right away that I had to cut it. It turned out even better than I expected."

And speaking of *Mean Old Man*, there are many who would be of the opinion that those three words accurately describe Jerry Lee himself. He has been known to have his cantankerous moments and does not, as they say, suffer fools gladly. He gives interviews only on rare occasion (this being one of those) and has reportedly cut several interviewers short. All this was not lost on Jim Keltner.





Jerry Lee Lewis was known as a loose cannon during the 1970s, stunning audiences with his onstage (and offstage) antics.

MEAN OLD MAN DELUXE

Check out the list of songs and guest performers on the 18-track deluxe edition of Jerry Lee Lewis' *Mean Old Man*. There is also an alternate 10-track version.

1. "Mean Old Man"
Ron Wood
2. "You Can Have Her"
Eric Clapton, James Burton
3. "Dead Flowers"
Mick Jagger
4. "Middle Age Crazy"
Tim McGraw, Jon Brion
5. "Rockin' My Life Away"
Kid Rock, Slash
6. "You Are My Sunshine"
Sheryl Crow, Jon Brion
7. "Swinging Doors"
Merle Haggard, James Burton
8. "Hold You in My Heart"
Shelby Lynne
9. "I Really Don't Want to Know"
Gillian Welch
10. "Railroad to Heaven"
Solomon Burke
11. "Sweet Virginia"
Keith Richards
12. "Roll Over Beethoven"
Ringo Starr, John Mayer, Jon Brion
13. "Bad Moon Rising"
John Fogerty
14. "Please Release Me"
Gillian Welch
15. "Whiskey River"
Willie Nelson
16. "Sunday Morning Coming Down"
Mavis Staples, Robbie Robertson, Nils Lofgren
17. "Will the Circle Be Unbroken"
Mavis Staples, Robbie Robertson, Nils Lofgren
18. "Miss the Mississippi and You"

JERRY LEE LEWIS CONTINUED

"The myth of Jerry Lee and his crankiness is legendary," Jim concedes with a laugh, "and I understand that there is something to it. But I have always gotten along with him. When Jerry Lee's in a room with other musicians, there is a connection that happens. Everybody is kind of quietly in awe, I guess you would say. And what you get is his brilliance, because he's not being anchored or tied down."


Over the years, Jerry Lee has endured some health problems, partly

due to his raucous lifestyle in his hellion days. And though his speech often shows signs of weariness, Jerry Lee insists that his health is OK. "I just did some shows in Europe and I felt fine," he says. "We intend to do some more touring this year."

And given his enjoyment of *Mean Old Man*, he may yet cut more albums. "I really like being in the studio," Jerry Lee says. "We try some things and they don't work so we go back and do something else and that magic just happens. This is just a good old Jerry Lee Lewis record!" **CW**

Partners in rhyme: (from left) Merle Haggard, Keith Richards, Willie Nelson, Jerry Lee Lewis and Kid Rock





"WHEN JERRY
LEE'S IN A ROOM
WITH OTHER
MUSICIANS, THERE
IS A CONNECTION
THAT HAPPENS.
EVERYBODY IS
KIND OF QUIETLY
IN AWE."
— JIM KELTNER