

TIME

THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE

**BOB
WILLS**



Strictly by Ear

A cold California fog hung over San Joaquin Valley. Inside Beardsley's dance hall, near Bakersfield, the air was steaming with the exertions of 1,358 oil workers and farmers as they jived, jumped, or just jogged to the music. The men were mostly tieless; the fruit-cannery girls they danced with were mostly in sweaters and slacks. On the platform, Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys tapped their pointed, hand-stitched boots, and plunked and blew their way through *Take Me Back to Tulsa*. On benches lining the walls, babies in blankets slept through it all.

The Bakersfield dance last week was something special: Bob Wills was celebrating his 30th anniversary as a cowboy fiddler. For the occasion, he played his 35th new tune, a fox trot called *G.I. Wish* ("G.I. . . . wish that I were free to roam, G.I. wish that I were home"). It had the same kind of whine, the same kind of maudlin lyrics that put his *Stars and Stripes on Two Jims* and *Smoke on the Water* among the nation's top-selling folk records last year.

Backwoods Lombardo. Bob Wills's music is called "folk" in the trade for want of a better name; there's a lot of fig in the folk. Wills is more a backwoods Guy Lombardo than a balladeer like Burl Ives. His trick is to bring ranch-home music nearer to the city. Says he: "Please don't anybody confuse us with none of them hillbilly outfits."

Swart, handsome Jim Rob ("Bob") Wills, 40, son of a Texas sharecropping fiddler, has fiddled since he was ten. At 17 he preached the gospel at rural revival meetings, then joined a gang of promising Texas badmen, two of whom were eventually sentenced to life terms. (One of his record best-sellers is *The Convict and the Rose*.) Wills and a group of pick-up musicians, calling themselves the "Lightcrust Doughboys," played on W. Lee (*Pass the Biscuits, Pappy*) O'Daniel's radio show. Wills set to music O'Daniel's *Beautiful Texas* and *Your Own Sweet Darling Wife*, with which O'Daniel sang his way into the Texas Governorship and the U.S. Senate.

Soon after splitting with Pappy, Wills took his boys to Tulsa, where they adopted their present name, the "Texas Playboys." He had just hit the big time, with film and recording contracts, when he enlisted in 1942. When he got out of the Army a year later, he moved to the San Joaquin Valley.

No Notes, No Showoffs. His bandmen, most of whom cannot read music, play strictly by ear. Bob explains: "People don't like to see no musician with his nose buried in a sheet of music when they're dancin'." The Playboys were picked for their "mixin' quality." Says Bob: "I can't stand for no showoffs." What show-offin' there is, Bob does himself.

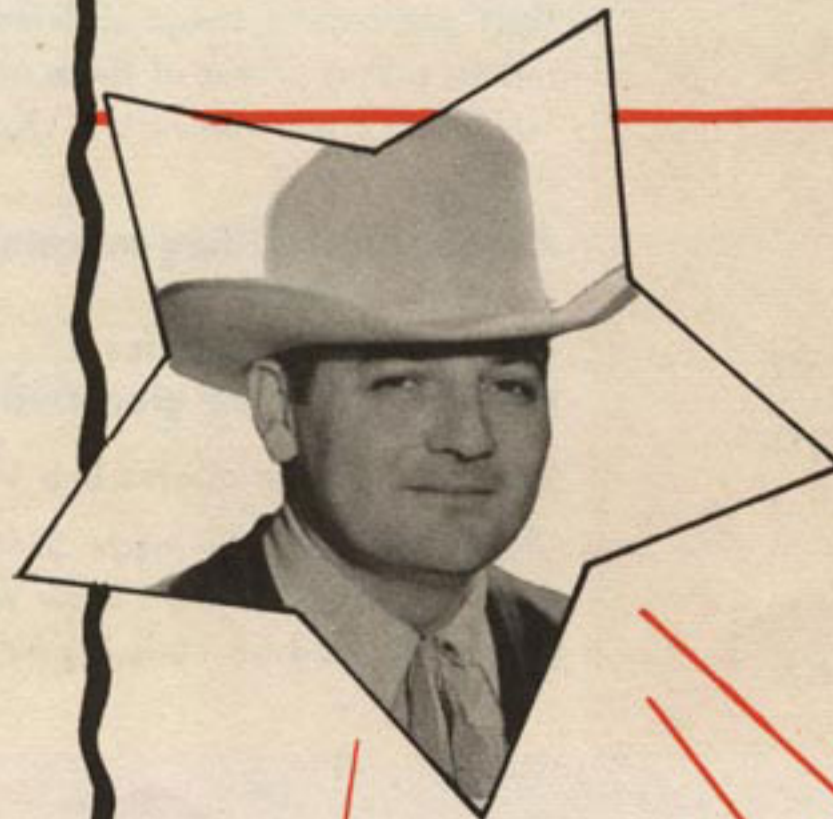
He is tired of being patronized by the swing kings. Says Bob: "They say, 'That guy made \$340,000 last year and don't know what he's doin'.' Hell, I know what I'm doin' all right—I'm just playin' the kind of music my kind of folks like to hear."

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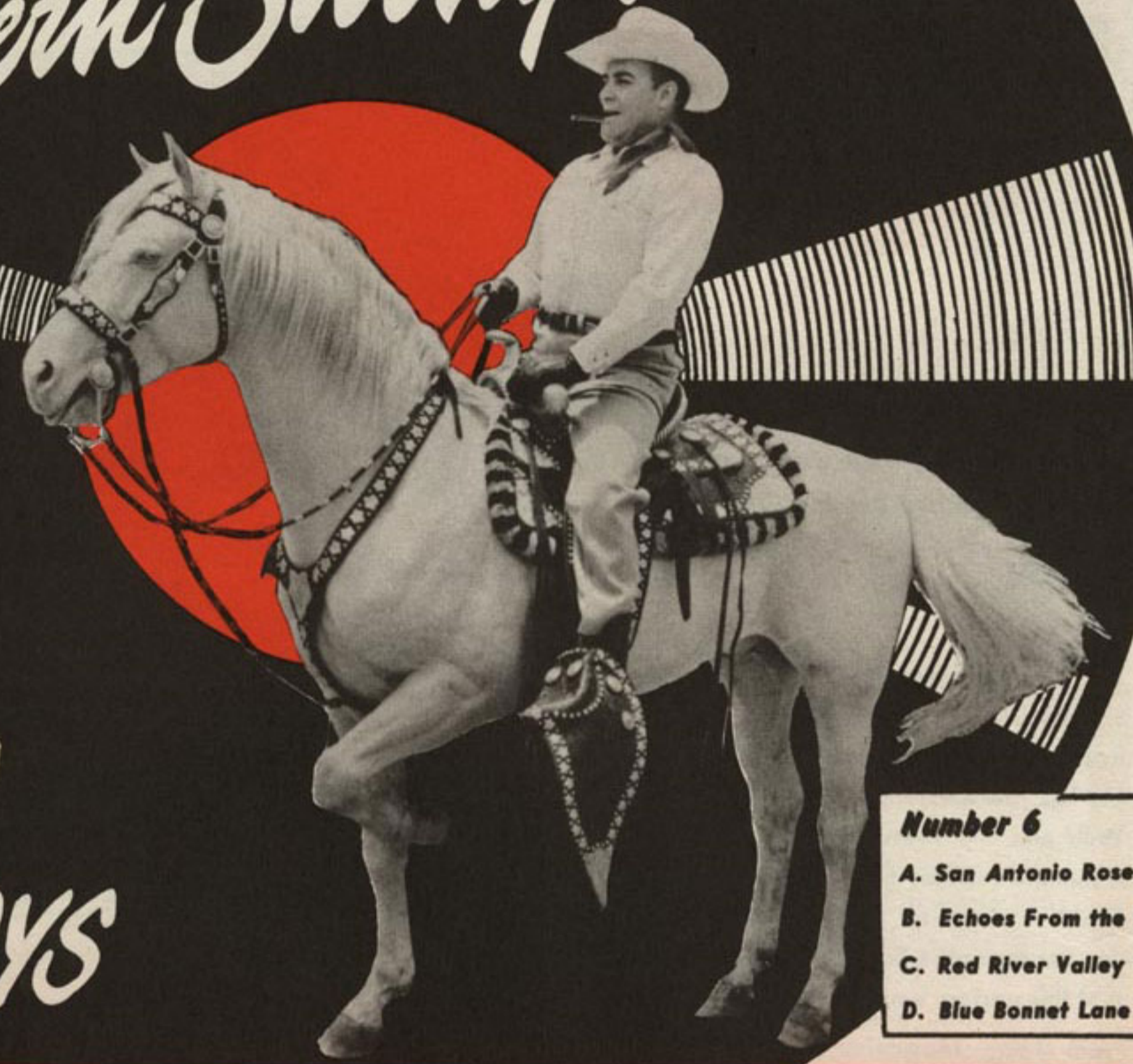
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Medicine Men TO CURE LISTENER'S DIAL-FIDGETS

*Proven
Popular
Appeal*



Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys keep dance engagements almost nightly throughout the west to more than 10,000 persons every week. They hold dance attendance records at Jantzen Beach, Portland; Santa Monica, California, and in the Oakland Auditorium, where they drew 19,000 people in two nights.

Bob Wills has made from three to four western movies a year. He is a top Columbia Recording Company artist. To date, Columbia has pressed 15,000,000 records of Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys. BUT, since Columbia releases only two tunes annually, ONLY on this new transcription series can you get the entire Bob Wills repertory which shot this western band to stardom.

From **Time Magazine** (Feb. 11, 1946): "Bob Wills' music is called 'folk' in the trade for want of a better name; there's a lot of fig in the folk. Wills is more a backwoods Guy Lombardo than a balladeer like Burl Ives. His trick is to bring ranch-house music nearer to the city. Says he: 'Please don't confuse us with none of them hillbilly outfits.'"

Bob Wills transcriptions are a sure cure for that dangerous listener malady—dial fidgets.

There's a bushel of sales for you in a bin of Bob Wills transcriptions.

Bob Wills Transcriptions provide all the Mountain, Valley, and other chosen American Range favorites on separate tracks with continuity service for

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Tested **SELLING POWER**

On Tulsa's KVOO in person, during two prewar years, the Texas Playboys sold Playboy Flour in Texas, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas, in amounts equalling brands on the market for 40 years. (Sponsor: Red Star Division—General Mills.)

. . . While Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys were transcribing their compelling songs and melodies between dance engagements, selling power of these transcriptions was being tested on California's non-network, KLX, Oakland. A few of the selling successes—

Pocket-type adding machines.....	10,086 in 10 months
Candid cameras	5,000 in 4 months
Plastic Easter bunnies.....	4,000 in 2 months
Bob Wills picture give-aways.....	11,265 in 18 days

Time Magazine quotes Bob Wills:

"They say that guy made \$340,000 last year and don't know what he's doin'. Hell, I know what I'm doin' all right—I'm just playin' the kind of music my kind of folks like to hear."

Write or Wire **BOB WILLS** TRANSCRIPTIONS
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