

Country singers shouldn't 'Americanize' themselves, singer says



Bob Spence
Entertainment
Thomson News Service

Six years ago, a 23-year-old cattle rancher in Cochrane, Alta., started singing at weddings in his home town. These days, George Fox is a little too busy to fit weddings into his schedule.

His self-titled debut album in 1988 spawned four top 10 singles, launching his rapid climb to prominence in Canadian country music.

This year, he won an unprecedented four RPM Big Country music awards, including Canadian Country Artist of the Year. He also won the Canadian Country Music Association's Vista Rising Star award.

Fox recently returned from performances in Egypt where he was part of the Veronica Beliveau 1989 Canadian Peacekeeping Tour, performing for Canadian soldiers on peacekeeping duty for the UN. He headed straight for the family ranch.

"If I had to move from this ranch, I'm sure I'd lose track of who I was, musically and personally," he says.

His second album, *With All My Might*, was released this fall.

In a telephone interview from Calgary, Fox hesitated when asked how easy it is for Canadians to progress in the country music field today.

"A few years ago, there was really no Canadian star system. Now there is. Country music is really at the point where the rock industry was in Canada 10 to 15 years ago.

"Now, when you have a large jamboree, the headliners are not all American."

The most important thing for performers to remember is to try to be themselves, he says.

"Don't try to Americanize yourself. Sing it the way you feel it. Be what you are - if it is a little bit different, maybe that is what you need."

The twists and turns of this turbulent decade are being put under a microscope by Peter Ustinov.

Ustinov takes us on a visual exploration of the decade in *Voyage Across the Eighties*, which airs Jan. 1 on CTV.

"How," questions Ustinov, "are

we to make sense of a decade in which merely keeping up became a full-time occupation, a decade in which so much happened so fast that the days of our lives went by like somebody else's movie?" He tries to answer his own question by reviewing many of the decade's more significant developments - from the spread of AIDS to the battle to reduce environmental damage.

Frequently offering a touch of humor, he also looks at the trends that had an impact on lifestyles, from microwaves to fax machines to satellite dishes.

Filming is under way on a TV-movie that depicts the private war of a Canadian officer during the Second World War.

Firing Squad, based on Canadian author Colin McDougall's award-winning 1958 novel *Execution*, is set in France. Lt. John Adam (Stephen Ouimette) struggles with his conscience when he is ordered to execute another Canadian soldier by firing squad.

The story of Adam's personal moral battle is set against the larger drama of a world at war.

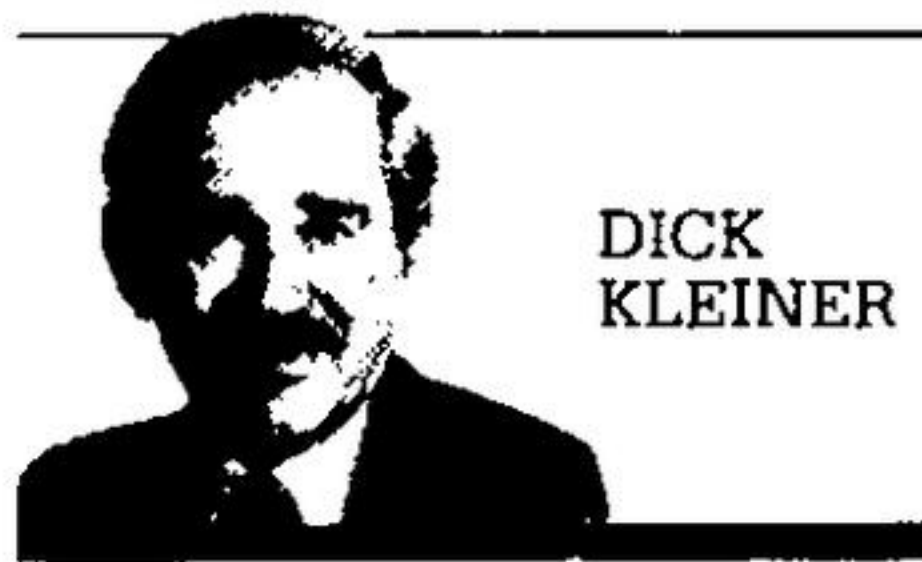
Filming, by Atlantis Films, began recently in Kleinburg, Ont., where a Second World War Canadian army camp has been constructed.

Firing Squad will be telecast by CTV, but no date has been set. It could air as early as April, which is when Atlantis will be turning the completed film over to the network, said Jeremy Katz of Atlantis.

Did Judy and Mickey ever marry?

Entertainment

ASK DICK KLEINER



DICK KLEINER

Q. My sister and her friend have a bet on whether Mickey Rooney ever married Judy Garland. My sister says they were. Who's right? — C.C., Joplin, Mo.

A. Your friend-in-law is right. Mickey's wives have been (at last count) Ava, Betty Jane, Martha, Elaine, Barbara, Margie, Carolyn and Jan — but no Judy.

Q. I recently saw two movies — older ones but still interesting — "The Swarm" and "Killer Bees." How did they get the bees to do what they wanted? What kept the actors from serious problems? — L.J.F., Gallon, Ohio.

A. Hollywood's animal trainers (and bird trainers and insect trainers) are skillful individuals. Their work is augmented by the special-effects artists. Together, they can make it all seem frightening. But, in reality, it is done with a minimum of danger to the actors. Usually, the real bees (or other insects) are shot separately and what you see covering the actors are fakes.

Q. When Peggy Ann Garner first started performing, she did a song-and-dance number at our post theater in Fort DuPont, Del., where her father, a first lieutenant, was stationed during World War II. She later went on to movies. What happened to her career in Hollywood? — C.C., Coudersport, Pa.

A. Peggy Ann Garner had a fine career as a child and teen-ager in the 1940s. Among other movies, she was in "Jane Eyre," "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn," and "Daisy Kenyon." But she never made it as an adult actress. She died in 1984, when she was only 53.

Q. There are a group of us ladies who have been watching "General Hospital" for a very long time. We would like to know — now that Frisco has come back into the picture, is he the real Frisco? Also, the lady that plays Anna and the little girl that plays Robin — are they mother and daughter in real life? — L., Grand Rapids, Mich.

A. Yes, it's the same old Frisco — Jack P. Wagner is his actual name. No, they are two unrelated actresses.

Q. Was Andy Griffith ever married? If so, to whom, and has he any children? Was Don Knotts ever married? If so, to whom, and has he any children? — M.E., Lancaster, Ohio.

A. Andy Griffith and his first wife, Barbara, had two children: Andy and Dixie. He is now married to the former Cindi Knight. Don Knotts and his first wife, Kathryn, also had two children: Karen and Thomas. Don is now married to former Loralee Czuchna.

Q. My stepsister and I have been arguing about when "Amen" first aired. I say it was in the fall of '86, but she says it was sometime in '87. Please settle our argument. — A.P., Benton, Ark.

A. Your stepsister is on the money. This is the show's fourth season, so its first season was in '86.



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