



NOVEMBER 1980

THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES

THE WRITER—PAUL KENNERLEY

A total unknown to the general public, Paul Kennerley has already become an acknowledged master-songwriter in the music world by creating a new genre of album almost single-handedly—the biographical album. He received tremendous critical acclaim for *White Mansions*, (released in 1978), a story in song about the American Civil War (1861-1865). Paul's research for *White Mansions* led him to a more detailed investigation of the notorious Jesse James. And so, a second biographical album has been created by Paul—one that charts the life of outlaw Jesse James, America's first bank-robber. Major U.S. music stars Johnny Cash, Levon Helm, Emmylou Harris and Charlie Daniels play the central characters in this unique concept.

Paul Kennerley was born near Liverpool and spent his early career in advertising, marketing, and pop management, keeping his guitar-playing as a hobby. Songwriting had never moved beyond an intermittent desire in Paul's mind until he became inspired by the idea of writing an album of songs about the American Civil War. The result was *White Mansions*, an album produced by Glyn Johns. Even as *White Mansions* was being released, Paul was already researching the individual life of Jesse James.

Now two years down the road comes the finished recording. It is unlikely that there will be another such album from Paul in the near future. He is now concentrating his efforts on individual songs for various artists.

Not bad for an unknown with two albums to his credit.

THE PLAYERS

Levon Helm (Jesse James) A musician of awesome reputation developed from his seat at the drum-kit of The Band, Levon has already made a startling film debut, co-starring in *The Coalminer's Daughter*. On hearing about Paul's project, Levon, like so many others, decided that he wanted to become an integral part: he contributed Jesse's songs, including "Quantrill's Guerillas", "High Walls", and "One More Shot", and is the drummer throughout the album.

Johnny Cash (Frank James) Son of an Arkansas cotton farmer, Johnny Cash is that rare entity, a legend in his life-time. For more than 25 years he has been the biggest star of country music, crossing over to draw huge audiences for his appearances on film, starring with Kirk Douglas in *A Gunfight*, and on television, notably the classic documentary *Ridin' the Rails*. "Ring of Fire", "Folsom Prison Blues", and "A Boy Named Sue", are just three highlights of a massive recording career stretching from the early days of Sun Records in Memphis in the mid-1950's to tomorrow. As Frank James, Johnny Cash contributes "Six Gun Shooting", "Help Him Jesus", and "The Death of Me."

Emmylou Harris (Zerelda James) Alabama-born Emmylou Harris is one of the few top lady country singers who is genuinely accepted as an international rock star. Songs like "Two More Bottles of Wine", "Together Again", and "Making Believe" have established the very beautiful Ms. Harris as a top-flight recording star. With songs like the lovely ballad "Wish We Were Back in Missouri", and "Heaven Ain't Ready For You Yet", she is a natural choice to portray Jesse's wife. Emmylou also contributed much of the acoustic guitar work on the album.

Charlie Daniels (Cole Younger) Charlie Daniels grew up in North Carolina and made his first impact on the record world by playing guitar on Bob Dylan's *Nashville Skyline* album. Developing into a most-wanted session player, he worked with such diverse artists as Al Kooper, Leonard Cohen, Ringo Starr, and Flatt and Scruggs and again with Dylan for two more albums. In 1971 he formed the Charlie Daniels Band at a time when southern music was rising to prominence. Charlie is now firmly established as a unique talent whose fiddle and guitar playing draw fans from rock, country, boogie, and jazz. He sings on this album of "Riding With Jesse James", "Northfield: The Disaster", and "The Old Clay Country."

(over please)



Albert Lee (Jim Younger) Englishman Albert Lee has established himself in American rock and country music. Apart from having been a sometime regular in Emmylou's hot band, Albert has toured and recorded with Eric Clapton, Joe Cocker, Jackson Browne, Carl Palmer and Herbie Mann. In 1979, he released his first solo album for A & M Records. As literally, the younger Younger, he asks: "Have You Heard the News?", and "Hunt Them Down" on this album.

Other singers taking part on the opening track "Ride of the Redlegs", are noted songwriter Rodney Crowell (The Officer), husband of Roseanne Cash (Ma Samuel, Jesse's mother), and Jody Payne (Doc Samuel, Jesse's stepfather). Jody Payne is lead guitarist in Willie Nelson's band. Author Paul Kennerley contributes the brief song "The Plot." In the final track, "One More Shot", Donivan Cowart (Bob Ford) and Martin Cowart (Charley Ford), the assassins, pay Jesse a deadly visit.

Principal Instrumentalists on JESSE JAMES are:

Levon Helm	Drums
Emory Gordy	Bass
Tim Gorman	Piano
Albert Lee	Acoustic/Electric Guitar
Paul Kennerley	Acoustic/Electric Guitar
Emmylou Harris	Acoustic Guitar
Bernie Leadon	Acoustic Guitar/Mandolin
Jesse Ed Davis	Slide/Electric Guitar
Charlie Daniels	Fiddle

The album was produced by Glynn Johns.

PAUL KENNERLEY TALKS ABOUT THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES

Q How did you manage to write these epics about American history?

A "I have always been turned on by American music, especially country music. You really can't write country music without country lyrics. When I was seven or eight I had a brother who was fanatical about Elvis Presley and that started my interest. Five years ago when I heard Waylon Jennings on the radio in England it was a complete revelation. I loved it . . . it was like the Rolling Stones playing country. For me, country music is like hymns—religious music."

Q What was your point of view on Jesse James?

A "I have tried to make it a realistic account. His supporters may have seen him as Robin Hood, but he wasn't. He was a morphine addict, committed the first peacetime bank robbery in America, and popularized the robbing of trains. He also had a pretty wife, loved his children and did certain noble deeds, but basically he was a psychotic. He killed people. I tried to keep it historical. It is all accurate."

Q What did the cast bring to the piece?

A "They gave it character. You believe Levon Helm is Jesse. These people are the modern-day equivalent of the people whose roles they sing and we were incredibly lucky because we got all the people we went for. We made the connection with Johnny Cash through Emmylou Harris' husband, Brian Ahern. I had to fly to Cheyenne, Wyoming to play Cash the demos. We made the album in three weeks.

"Levon and Emmylou participated tremendously. Levon even played drums on all the sessions. It sounds very rural and rough around the edges, exactly what it should be. You get the flavor of the time."

Q Can you compare it to *White Mansions*?

A "It is a better record; the songs are better. *White Mansions* was a bit too documentary. This was an easier story to tell and also I played on it. Although I am not a great player, it is easier to get the feel when the songwriter is in the studio. What was remarkable was the involvement of the people in the project. We have been incredibly superindulgent in one way: We wanted to make this record with these people and everyone helped us along."

