



Tree International

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Tree International was originally "planted" by Jack Stapp in the early 50's. At the time he was program director at WSM and manager of the Grand Ole Opry. Stapp believed very strongly in the importance of the songwriter.

In 1953 Buddy Killen became part of the fledgling Tree family as a song plugger at \$35.00 per week. After two years of work, he literally hit-the-jackpot by discovering "Heartbreak Hotel" and a newcomer named Elvis Presley.

Tree International went on to blossom with such hits as "Green Green Grass Of Home", "King Of The Road", "Crazy", "Make The World Go Away", "I Fall To Pieces", "Mama Don't Let Your Babies Grow Up To Be Cowboys" and the list goes on.

At one point in 1960, Tree had seven of the Top Ten Country hits in one week and in 1965 they enjoyed their first million dollar year. It is interesting to note that although Killen signed Roger Miller to Tree in 1958, it wasn't until 1964 that Miller hit with "Dang Me" and won six Grammy Awards in 1965.

In 1960 Killen himself wrote and produced "Forever" for the Little Dippers, which was a Top Ten Pop hit and launched his production career. As a direct result of Killen's constant production work thereafter, Tree expanded its operation to include a 24 track, state-of-the-art recording studio called The Sound Shop.

In 1981, largely through the efforts of Donna Hilley, a Gospel branch known as Meadowgreen Music was added to the Tree organization. Meadowgreen songs have constantly recorded, and awarded, with such artists as Amy Grant, Debbie Boone, Michael W. Smith and Sandy Pattl. Hilley, who now serves as Executive V.P. of Tree, has been instrumental in helping Buddy Killen with catalogue acquisitions as well.

Since 1980, when Killen became sole owner of Tree, the company has quadrupled in size with the purchase of major catalogues including such songs as "I've Got A Tiger By The Tail", "Okie From Muskogee", "Act Naturally", "Today I Started Loving You Again" and numerous other hits by Buck Owens, Jim Reeves, Ed Bruce and Nat Stuckey.

Through its agreement with EMI Music Publishing Ltd. in London, Tree is now represented in 66 countries. Tree proudly employs one of the largest rosters of songwriters in the music business and has been the Number One Country music publisher for fourteen consecutive years. Buddy Killen comments "We have earned a reputation as the number one music publisher, but I think that one day, we'll be number one, period...We haven't even scratched the surface yet."

BUDDY KILLEN, President & CEO



Born in Alabama, Buddy moved to Nashville after high school to work as a musician. After some work as a road musician, front man and session player, Jack Stapp hired him as a song plugger in 1953. In 1956 Buddy's belief in a new Memphis singer named Elvis Presley paid off with the song "Heartbreak Hotel".

In 1960 Killen wrote and produced the Top Ten Pop single "Forever" by The Little Dippers. This was the beginning of what turned out to be an amazingly successful production career. Buddy has since produced such artists as Joe Tex, Roger Miller, Jack Palance, Dinah Shore, Burt Reynolds, Buck Owens, Bill Anderson, Rex Allen, Jr., Louise Mandrell, T. G. Sheppard and numerous others. Recently he is working with such up-and-coming acts as Exile, Ronnie McDowell and Ronny

Robbins. Buddy notes "It keeps me current...leading the market instead of following it... after all, success is a journey, not a destination."

In addition to his work as a publisher, executive and producer, Killen serves on the boards of a number of corporations and music industry organizations; owns, runs and occasionally performs at the popular Nashville nightspot, The Stockyard; owns a string of "Po' Folks" restaurants with Burt Reynolds; oversees his Soundshop Recording Studios; and even had a feature role in the film "Alamo Bay".

Along with all this Buddy strongly believes "You need to share your life with other people. Otherwise, any success you have will only be an empty victory." On this basis he is involved in numerous civic and charitable projects. He has chaired the Nashville Easter Seal fund drive and co-hosted its annual telethon for the past five years and is chairman of the Nashville Public Radio Foundation and of the O. W. Smith Nashville Community Music School.

A recipient of numerous awards and citations, Killen is especially proud of his 1985 induction as the first non-performing member of the Alabama Music Hall Of Fame.

DONNA HILLEY - Executive V.P.



Originally from Birmingham, Alabama, Donna married Rayford Hilley after graduating high school. She then took some business courses before they moved to Nashville. There she accepted a job from Jack Stapp at WKDA Radio. Nine years later she moved into advertising and public relations as Assistant To The President of Bill Hudson & Assocs. Ironically, it was another nine years later when she changed careers again. This time it was to join Tree Music Publishing where she once again worked for Jack Stapp.

In 1976 she was named vice president and today, along with Buddy Killen, Donna is involved in every major decision made at Tree. She is totally responsible for the day-to-day administration of the company...including everything from budgets, to contract negotiations with their writers, as well as being the driving force behind numerous catalogue acquisitions.

One of her most impressive contributions was the concept she put together for the Gospel arm of their publishing business, now known as Meadowgreen Music. Donna was also largely responsible for opening Tree's activities in Hollywood as well as their print deal with Hal Leonard Publishing. She has been active in the video area and was also credited with arranging Tree's world rights agreement with EMI.

Outside of the Tree organization, she is O. W. Smith School and serves on the Board Of Directors for the Gospel Music Association and NARAS. In 1979 Donna was named "Women Of The Year" of the Business and Professional Womens Club and 1984 honored as "Lady Executive" of the year by the National Women Executives.

BOB MONTGOMERY - Director of Creative Services



Bob began his musical career in Lubbock, Texas as half of "Buddy & Bob", consisting of himself and Buddy Holly. With Holly he wrote "Loves Made A Fool Of You" and for Holly he composed "Heartbeat". Montgomery moved to Nashville in 1960 for a songwriter for Acuff-Rose. In 1966 he co-founded his first publishing firm, Talmonte Music.

Among Montgomery's numerous successful compositions are Sue Thompson's 1962 Pop hit "After Awhile"; "Back In Baby's Arms" recorded by Patsy Cline and Connie Smith; and "Misty Blue" (which has been a hit five times in two decades) recorded by Wilma Burgess (1966), Eddie Arnold (1967), Joe Simon (1967), Billy Jo Spears (1976) and Dorothy Moore (1976).

In late 1967 Bob was hired to head United Artists Records in Nashville and in 1968 he produced Bobby Goldboro's "Honey". This lead to a series of Montgomery produced hits for Goldsboro including "Watching Scotty Grow". The two soon became business partners, forming House Of Gold Music in 1969. Their first major hit came in 1973 with the Charlie Pride recording of "Behind Closed Doors". Other Country hits included "Rose Colored Glasses", "Till I Get It Right", "The Cowgirl and The Dandy" and "Lizzie and the Rainman". House of Gold also became Nashville's leading Pop publisher with such records as "Love's Been A Little Bit Hard On Me" for Juice Newton, "Bobby Sue" by Oaks Ridge Boys, "This Time I'm In It For Love" by Player, "Better Love Next Time" by Dr. Hook, as well as recordings by Sheena Easton, Millie Jackson, The Pointer Sisters and Kenny Rogers.

Montgomery also continued to produce records for such artists as Razy Bailey, Jim Stafford, Johnny Rodriquez, Freddie Weller, Merle Haggard and Mark Gray on the Country charts as well as Austin Robert's "Rocky" in 1976 and Lobo's "Where Were You When I Was Falling In Love" in 1979 on the Pop charts. Bob was the last to produce Marty Robbins. He was also responsible for the records that made Janie Fricke a two-time Country Music Association Female Vocalist of the Year with such records as "It Ain't Easy Bein' Easy", "He's A Heartache" and "Tell Me".

When House Of Gold was sold to Warner Bros. Music, Montgomery accompanied his catalogue and songwriters to Warner Bros. in 1983. Last year Bob joined the Tree family taking the place that Roger Sovine vacated with his appointment to V.P. at BMI. Bob is a board member of CMA and founding member of the Nashville Entertainment Association.

TREE INTERNATIONAL STAFF

- DAN WILSON - Professional Manager
- WALTER CAMPBELL - Professional Manager
- HARRIANN CONDRA - Director Of Copyright Administration
- BETTY FOWLER - Director of Royalty Administration
- GLEN FRIEDMAN - West Coast Representative



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