I WRITE THE SONGS

Musicians, artists and producers all say the creative process begins with songwriters. The way songwriters see the world is put to music and then sung for generations. That's why the CMA Board of Directors created the Song of the Year Award decades ago to honor aspiring tunesmiths. Any Country Music song with original words and music is eligible for Song of the Year based upon the song's Country singles chart activity during the eligibility period which spans from July 1 of the previous year through June 30 of the current year.

Dallas Frazier's all-time classic “There Goes My Everything” was the first Song of the Year in 1967. Since then such legendary tunes as Freddie Hart's “Easy Loving”, Richard Leigh's “Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue” and Bobby Braddock and Curley Putnam's “He Stopped Loving Her Today” have been selected for the honor.

The songwriters nominated for the 1988 Song of the Year are: K. T. Oslin, Randy Travis, Gene and Paul Nelson and Harlan Howard.

K. T. Oslin — “Do Ya” — “80's Ladies”

In just a few short years, K. T. Oslin has climbed from forgettable parts in soap commercials to national fame. Her "overnight success" took 20 years. But when Oslin hit the big time, she hit it big.

For instance, this year is her first time up for a CMA Award, yet she garnered more nominations than anyone else — five. Two of those are for her songwriting. She's won a Grammy and two Academy of Country Music awards and her debut LP 80'S LADIES went gold. She also wrote or co-wrote all the songs on her new album THIS WOMAN.

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**K.T. OSLIN LOST 40 LBS. — and found fame at 40-plus**

> By Norma Langley

K.T. Oslin was fat, fed up and well over 40, so she put on her bathing suit and went to Nashville to lose weight. She hired a doctor, followed a strict diet and exercised every day. In six months, she lost 40 pounds. She then went on a country music tour and became one of the biggest stars in the industry. Her weight loss was also a turning point in her career, as it helped her to get noticed by record producers and talent scouts. She was able to land her first record deal and eventually became one of the most successful country music performers of all time.
These days young men give her flowers and she's the newest star in Nashville, with a string of awards to her credit. It's difficult to believe getting to the top was tough, she's so much in demand. K.T. has just bought her first house, saying: "People have comebacks at this age, but they don't start at this age. I'd rather be starting now than ending."

The late bloomer had a brush with success five years ago when she won a recording contract and released a album, "Younger Men." However, her outlook on life and her cutting humor proved too salty for country radio stations. She was told her songs couldn't be played because they might offend male listeners.

Then the recording company dropped her. "I hung up the phone, put on my bathrobe, and practically stayed in for six months," she says.

Food became her best friend as she munched her way from one lonely day to the next, until she convinced herself she was seriously ill because of an ugly lump on her neck. As she anxiously awaited the diagnosis, the physician told her it was "excess fleshiness."

"I said, 'Wait a minute. Are you saying it's excess fleshiness?'"

Shed, obligingly lied to a record boss about her age — and a star was born. He said, "I told him you were pushing 40. I just didn't tell him from which side."

Joe Galante of RCA records was captivated by her talent. He says: "Her lyrics were unique. They were like a poem. I could remember entire verses."

"The second thing was the phrasing — I felt like I was hearing someone I had grown up with but had never met."

K.T.'s single, "80s Ladies," which celebrates life after 40, became a No. 1 country hit and won her a Grammy, even though some radio stations refused to play it because they saw it as feminist nonsense.

She followed that song with something completely different — and which appealed more to men — called "Do Ya?" which again took her to the top of the charts.

Love has never led K.T. to the altar and she says: "I always dated musicians and actors. They are wonderful guys, but you don't marry them — and they don't marry you. I was either too smart or too dumb to get married. I wanted to do this business."

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**K.T.'s Seven-Day Diet Plan**

This seven-day menu was designed by Dr. Alice Keeler, a nutritionist. It averages 2,000 calories and should give a significant weight loss of up to 1 lb. a day.

**Day 1**

Breakfast: 4 oz. egg white, 1 cup spinach, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup tuna salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 2**

Breakfast: 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup grapefruit, 1 cup apple juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 3**

Breakfast: 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup grapefruit, 1 cup apple juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 4**

Breakfast: 4 oz. tomato juice, 1 cup banana, 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 5**

Breakfast: 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup grapefruit, 1 cup apple juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 6**

Breakfast: 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup grapefruit, 1 cup apple juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

**Day 7**

Breakfast: 1 cup orange juice, 1 cup grapefruit, 1 cup apple juice, 1 cup milk. Lunch: 1 cup chicken salad, 1 cup green beans, 1 oz. bread. Dinner: 1 cup mashed potatoes, 1 cup green beans, 1 cup milk.

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**Guidelines:**
1. Consult your physician before starting your diet. 2. Do not skip meals. 3. Drink 3-4 glasses of water daily. 4. All breads included here are reduced calorie (40 calories per slice). 5. Diet salad dressing is about 20 calories per tbsp. 6. Non-calorie beverages are allowed at all, but in between meals if desired.
K.T. Oslin wins over country

By David Zimmerman
USA TODAY

NASHVILLE — Late-blooming newcomer K.T. Oslin won female vocalist and songwriting for '80s Ladies Monday at the Country Music Association Awards.

Said Oslin, no overnight success at 46: "I'm dumbfounded." She said she'd been asked a lot lately, "Have you found any trouble being accepted by the country music community?" for her worldly-wise style.

Her reply, to cheers from the all-country crowd: "No baby, none at all.

Other winners from the 22nd awards show, on CBS from the Grand Ole Opry House:

- Album. Born to Boogie, Bank, Williams Jr., '87
- Horizon award. Ricky Van Shelton.
- Vocal event. Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris and Linda Ronstadt, a new category.
- Vocal duo. Naomi and Wynonna Judd, a mother-daughter team.
- Single. Kathy Mattea, Eighteen Wheels and a Dozen Roses.

Hot performances:
- Country legends Kitty Wells, Loretta Lynn and Brenda Lee bridged the generation gap with country new-waver K.D. Lang to sing Honky Tonk Angels' Medley from Lang's Shadowland LP.
- Reba McIntyre demanded Respect in black leather pants covering Aretha Franklin's hit.

Billboard

'80s Lady K.T. Oslin Captures SESAC's Top Songwriter Prize

NASHVILLE In its annual awards celebration at the Hyatt Regency Hotel here Oct. 13, SESAC named K.T. Oslin its writer of the year. Veteran DJ and TV talk show host Ralph Emery received the organization's ambassador-of-country-music-prize.

Copping the international award was the Planet Earth Project for its theme song, "Come In Planet Earth (Are You Listening?)." Released on record by Karen Taylor-Good and co-written by Kent MacDonald, the song also earned SESAC recognition for its publishers, Bil-Kar and Giraffe Tracks.

Honored for national performance activity (classical) was Jerzy Sapieyevski; honored for national performance activity (television) were writers Jimmy R. Hart and John J. Maguire and publisher Piledriver Music.

The individual songs cited for their national performance activity are as follows:

- Do Ya' written by K.T. Oslin, published by Wooden Wonder, recorded by K.T. Oslin, RCA Records.
- 'Til I Always Come Back, Oslin, Wooden Wonder, Oslin, RCA Records.
- "Tell It To Your Teddy Bear," Susan Langacre, Songs On Hold, the Shooters, Epic Records.

It was a special night for K.T. Oslin. The question of why or how the talented singer/songwriter could be absent from the CMA nominations after winning several awards the previous year had stunned industry observers and been on everyone's lips in recent weeks. "It's been an easy week for me," K.T. stated as she accepted the SESAC Writer of the Year Award for the second consecutive time. "I haven't been near as many functions as you." Then talking about her long time supporter and friend, SESAC leader Dianne Petty, K.T.'s voice broke as she said, "She's a writer's best friend and my best friend too. Thank you SESAC you've been a good friend too." It was a truly emotional moment.

Even without CMA support the outspoken '80s lady still has a career in high gear and rising. She recently returned from N.Y. where she appeared on several major TV talk shows and headlined her sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall. Both of her albums have gone platinum! It was also announced that K.T. will do a benefit concert in Nashville on behalf of the Nashville Songwriters Association International on November 29.
K. T. OSLIN leads with five nominations for the Country Music Association Awards in the CMA Awards show to be aired by CBS on Monday, October 10, from the Grand Ole Opry house in Nashville.

K. T. OSLIN, "This Woman," (RCA) The quality of this LP is undeniable and is sure to spread Oslin's appeal further beyond country music. The sound is unique and her performance utterly mesmerizing. From "This Woman," the title cut, to "Money," her current single, Oslin has found material that is both exciting and relevant. She is infectious with the upbeat "Round The Clock Lovin'." Music fans of all stripes will enjoy the indefinable style she unleashes on "Where Is A Woman To Go," "Hold Me," and "Truly Blue."

Extraordinary feeling is transmitted on "Hey, Bobby," and "Didn't Expect It To Go Down This Way." Oslin's first album, which went gold, was marked by great songs. This one also has great songs, all written or co-written by the artist, and the power of emotion. Oslin has established herself as a versatile, creative and dynamic artist.

— Jim Lewis, UPI Country Writer

K. T. OSLIN

3 El Paso, TX
5 Odessa, TX
7 Dallas, TX
11 Austin, TX
29 Bloomsburg, PA

Talent buyers size up new artists

THOMAS GOLDSMITH
Staff Writer

Live, up-to-date country music and lots of information about selling it were the chief attractions for the 400 registrants at this weekend's Talent Buyers Entertainment Marketplace.

The showcase, sponsored annually by the Country Music Association, drew both up-and-coming artists and the people who can get their music before live audiences. Promoters, talent agents, managers, media and artists all mingled Friday, Saturday — and yesterday at the Hyatt Regency Hotel event.

"It's what it's called — an entertainment marketplace," said Joe Sullivan, president of Nashville's Sound Seventy Corp. and TBEM chairman. "Every year we showcase 15 developing artists — people the Showcase Committee decides the talent buyers will be interested in seeing. Eventually a lot of dates are booked" as a result of TBEM performances.

During Saturday afternoon's showcase, Sullivan listed some of the established artists who had gotten important early exposure at past TBEM events; they include Alan Jackson, George Strait, Ricky Skaggs, Gary Morris, the Judds, Earl Thomas Conley, Lee Greenwood, Lyle Lovett, Kathy Mattea, Steve Earle and K.T. Oslin.

Music got under way Friday night with a showcase kicked off by Cajun-country-rock star Jo-El Sonnier. Despite muddled though Sonnier performed with the soulful intensity that sparked his 1988 chart hit his No More One More Time and Tear-Stained Letter.

The country-pop sounds of the Shooters and Randy VanWarmer's balladic folk style were next on the agenda. Two Texas singer-songwriters, Darrell Smith and Rodney Crowell, provided a reas-soning ending to the showcase, Smith with his own tunes plus a sinuous remake of Johnny B. Goode and Crowell with a road-honed show that rocked with a vengeance.

Saturday's show led off with a crisp, accomplished set by the songwriter trio of Thom Schuyler,
K.T. OSLIN

- Her debut album, "80's Ladies," sold 500,000 copies, making her the first female on RCA Records to reach that mark since Anne Murray's "Snowbird" album.
- Self-written hits include 80's Ladies, Do Ya, I'll Always Come Back and Money.
- Co-wrote Round The Clock Lovin', a hit for Gail Davies.
- A former commercial actress, she has appeared in spots for denture cream, hemorrhoid ointment, soft drinks and coffee.
- Sang in a folk trio in the 1960s with songwriter Guy Clark.
- New LP is "This Woman," on RCA Records.

SESAC which is always the smallest and most personal of the performing rights award dinners chose to honor the Planet Earth Project with an award and based the evening's theme around international peace. The menu consisted of a lavish mile-long buffet of eebtes from around the world. Some of the dishes included: Prime Rib, Blackened Fish, Sautéed Alligator, Duck Tortellini, Lobster Ravioli, Mussels in a Calapiana, Veal Saltimbocca, etc., etc. My plate was so full as I walked back to my table that I trembled fearing that Catherine Darnell might notice and make an example of me in her Tennessean gossip column.

K.T. Oslin summed up her feelings as she received the SESAC Writer of the Year Award. She quipped "I wish everyone could feel the way I do this week. I'm a positive queen."

The Nashville Songwriters Association International Banquet featured a moving address by organization president Bob Dipiero. He summed up what it takes to make a great songwriter in three points: Strength, Education, and the Magic of Creativity. Dipiero pointed to a source of personal inspiration when he made mention of the John Lennon Strawberry Fields park in New York City. In the park there is a stone with only one word chiseled on it — Imagine.

Flora 10/88

COUNTRY MUSIC NEWS

K.T. OSLIN: "This Woman"..............BMG (RCA)
This Woman has guts / This Woman has style / This Woman has rhythm / This Woman is a wonder...and This Album is a scorcher!

The '80s Lady is back again with a collection of her songs that cut to the bone - she holds nothing back, lyrically or vocally.

The current smash hit "Money" is here as well as her own version of "Round The Clock Lovin'" which Gail Davies made into a hit in the early '80s, but watch for great things to happen with "Hold Me," "Truly Blue," "Jealous" and the title track.

Shelton: An Insider Now

During his onstage appearance at the 18th annual Southwest Virginia Music Festival in Russell County, Va., Ricky Van Shelton noted that he'd been there before.

In 1985, before he hit as a new singing sensation, he attended the event as a spectator. "I was right up there on the hill in a camper," he told the thousands of fans. "I guess you could say that I was on the outside looking in, and now I'm on the inside looking out."

Other acts appearing at this year's festival included K.T. Oslin, Restless Heart and Dwight Yoakam.

Very Vocal. K.T. Oslin, nominated for five CMA Awards, carried away two of them: female vocalist of the year and song of the year (for her '80s Ladies'). Oslin was later named SESAC's songwriter of the year. (Photo: Beth Gwinn)
She has—as they used to say in her youth—both “a few miles on her” and “a mouth,” but nobody since Mae West has gotten better mileage out of such erstwhile handicaps than K.T. Oslin.

Born 46 years ago in Crossitt, Ark., Kay Toinette Oslin was reborn in the summer of 1987 as a recording star when her 80’s Ladies became the highest-placing debut album by a woman in country music. That the “deb” was a riper-than-ripe show-biz veteran with a New York apartment and a list of credits that includes Broadway choruses, TV commercials for hemorrhoids, dentures and floor wax—in addition to several seasons writing hit songs for other people to sing—only made the sweet success sweeter. Now she has five nominations at the Country Music Awards, to be held October 10.

“I was getting to an age where for most people it is definitely over,” is how Oslin puts it, “and it wasn’t happening. So I said, ‘O.K., I’ll go around a different way.’” Borrowing $7,000 from her stockbroker aunt Reba, K.T. dyed her brown hair red, rented a club in Nashville and put on a one-night show. The place was packed, but it took months to get signed. Nine years after writing her first song—inspired by ladies’ room graffiti in a Dye West, S.C., café—Oslin finally had the contract with RCA.

The refrain on her golden album’s No. 1 title song was sweeping generation of former girls like a subliminal anthem:

*We were the girls of the 50’s*
*Stone rock & rollers of the 60’s*
*And more than our names got changed*
*As the 70’s slipped on by*
*Now we’re 80’s ladies*
*There ain’t been much these ladies ain’t tried.*

K.T. has other laments for girlhood, bleats of woe and wrenching love, but the voice and the point of view are distinctive and anything but forlorn. She may be a hurtin’ woman, but she still knows how to have fun, as all those former boys driving pick-ups find out when she sings “Younger Men,” written in 1982 and delivered like a good-natured wink:

*Women peak at 40, men at 19…*
*That’s why younger men are starting to catch my eye…*
*And the very next opportunity, I’m gonna give a younger man a try.*

“What’s the point of being like somebody?” asks Oslin (at Ohio’s state fairgrounds).

“The point is to be individual.”
As if to make her point, she is backed on tour by four male musicians handpicked "because of their cuteness" and christened Little Lads. "I spend a lot of time on the bus," she tells audiences, "and I ain't gonna look at no ugly boys."

Offstage her explanation is more practical. "Quite honestly," she says, "I didn't want a woman on the stage to steal the focus from me. For business reasons, not ego, I decided to keep it all male."

As Osin is not the first to notice, the music business is "especially hard on women. I admire anybody who gets married and has children," she says that it's going to be exactly like it's supposed to be. I think they're very brave." Her own substantial salary, nurtured after her father died when she was eight by "a working mother and a working grandmother," did not include such domestic dreams. "I don't think I would have been a good mother," says Osin, who has never married. "I'm too self-involved."

But for the most part, Osin thinks, "Katharine Hepburn had it right when she said it's best just to live next door to one." Next door these days would be near a three-bedroom house in Nashville, which Osin shares with a cat, Gladys, and a dog, Vinny Boo Boo. In the garage is a K.T. Orlin's Jeep, an automatic, but I like it. Guys look at you in a Jeep. Well, they mostly look at the Jeep."

With This Woman, her second album, just released, more people will be looking at K.T. as she cruises toward 47 in a deservedly philosophical mood about her delayed success. "I don't think there is a forty-year-old in the country who turns forty and says, 'Yeah, this is just exactly what I thought I was going to be doing.' Hell, I was forty years old before I had a color television. But I'm at the happiest point in my life now. I feel smarter, more in control of things. I was always waiting for my life to start. Well, it's started."
Country is a changin’. The record-breaking number of new acts which have found their way onto the charts over the last several years have finally gained a piece of the ‘Row’ and are becoming established. Those who viewed the CMA Award Show got a large and healthy dose of ‘new country’ or ‘country’s new breed’ indicating that even the venerable CMA has embraced the new music makers.

A quick look at the list of CMA Award winners proves without question that artists such as K.T. Oslin, Kathy Mattea, Ricky Van Shelton, Highway 101, and their leader, Randy Travis, have landed in force. They’re taking most of the awards, getting strong national press coverage, and selling an increasingly larger share of the records.

Warner Bros. had the most to celebrate, winning five of the crystal bullets. RCA took home three to display on the mantle and CBS gained two. PolyGram’s deserving Kathy Mattea finally got on the scoreboard after countless unsuccessful nominations. MCA and Capitol were shut out this year.

Most agreed that the show’s host Dolly Parton was a strong asset to her ad-libbing unexpectedly and creating excitement. Just before Randy Travis won the male vocalist award, Dolly sat on his lap and flirted with him prompting the handsome but shy singer to make perhaps his funniest ever on-camera remark while accepting the award. “After all that,” he stammered “I found myself trying to remember what award it was I was coming up to receive.”

24th Annual SESAC Awards
Writer of Year: K.T. Oslin
Aubamander of Country Music: Ralph Emory
International Award: Planet Earth
Project “Come In Planet Earth (Are You Listening).” Writer: Kent MacDonald; Artist: Karen Taylor-Good; Publisher: Bill-Kar Music, Giraffe Tracks.
National Performance Activity: Jerzy Sapieyevski
Winners of Two Performance Citations: Mieke Appel, K.T. Oslin, Susan Longacre

“I’m more proud of writing songs than anything I’ve ever done,” stated K.T. Oslin as she accepted SESAC’s Writer of the Year Award. Earlier in the week she commented “Being recognized as a writer means I’ve got a brain and people recognize it.” K.T. is the first woman to ever win the CMA Song of the Year award.

CMA Awards 1988
Entertainer: Hank Williams Jr.
Female Vocalist: K.T. Oslin
Male Vocalist: Randy Travis
Vocal Group: Highway 101
Single: “18 Wheels & A Dozen Roses”, Kathy Mattea
Vocal Event: Trio—Dolly Parton, Linda Ronstadt, Emmylou Harris
Song: “80’s Ladies” by K.T. Oslin
Album: Born To Boogie, Hank Williams Jr.
Musician: Chet Atkins
Horizon: Ricky Van Shelton
Vocal Duo: The Judds
Hall Of Fame: Open Category—Loretta Lynn; Performer Active 30 years ago—Roy Rogers
Producer of Year: single—Allen Reynolds; album—Hank Williams Jr./Jim Ed Norman/Barry Beckett
Media Achievement: Robert K. Oermann
Founding President’s Award: Ron Huntman
Marketing Committee Award: James Carlson
Radio Stations of Year: KNIX-Phoenix, Ariz.; KASE-Austin, TX; WAXX-Eau Claire, WI.

K.T. OSLIN
This Woman
This Woman / Money / Round The Clock Lovin’ / Where Is A Woman To Go / Hold Me / Hey Bobby / She Don’t Talk Like Us No More (CD only) / Jealous / Didn’t Expect It To Go Down This Way / Truly Blue
RCA 8399-1-R*** (Album)
RCA 8369-2-R**** (CD)

After the high set by her last tremendous ‘80s Ladies’ outing, I suppose it was asking a great deal for her follow-up album to reach the same dizzy heights of excellence. What we have here is a good album but one whose material, with certain exceptions, doesn’t quite match that of its predecessor.

Best cuts are ‘Round The Clock Lovin’ which was, of course, a K.T. Oslin-penned hit for Gail Davies in 1982 although the writer’s version is a bit more laid back than the original and could do with a little more punch. Things pick up with the sparely-backed and tight-driven ‘Where Is A Woman To Go’ as K.T. searches out a place to hide and drown her sorrows. ‘Hold Me’ is back to the standard set by ‘80s Ladies’ and tells of a husband and wife who had each thought of leaving the other but couldn’t make the wrench. Spoken introduction reveals that the husband calls his spouse ‘Wife’ to her face which can hardly warm the cockles of a liberationist’s heart. Laid back into develops into an emotional chorus leading to the plea. ‘Don’t kiss me like we’re married, kiss me like we’re lovers’. ‘Hey Bobby’ is a real treat. The insistent fuzz guitar riff sets the mood for this half time winner before K.T. sneaks in with her cheeky, dryly humorous vocal lines full of implication. The high continues with another pulsater, ‘She Don’t Talk Like Us Anymore’, which is only on the CD version. ‘Didn’t Expect It To Go Down This Way’ is a slowmoving piece with effective guitar punch and telling the sad tale of a middle aged woman who has never found a man to settle down with. The uptempo closer ‘Truly Blue’ has a nice feel but, again, has a sad story to tell, this time of a rejected lover whose phone never rings.

I should mention that ‘Money’ is her latest chart riding single. It has a nice stopped-string guitar effect but, apart for the moody backing, doesn’t seem to go anywhere as far as I’m concerned.

Throughout, K.T. Oslin sings her heart out and phrases her vocal lines like the master she is and there is fine production from Harold Shedd. A little more care about the quality of a few of the songs (all written or co-written by K.T.) and this would have been up there with ’80s Ladies.

Craig Baguley