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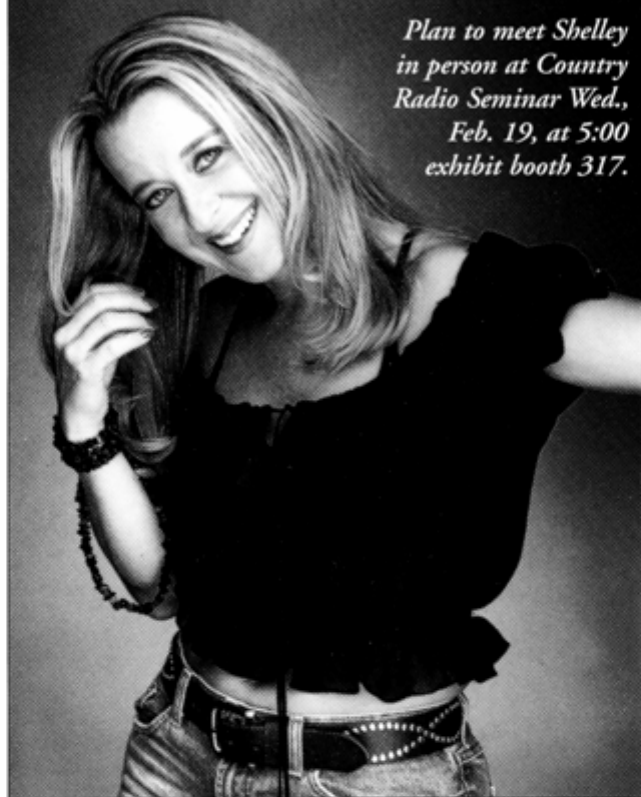
SHELLEY LAINE

BY LORIE HOLLABAUGH

The title of Shelley Laine's latest single, "Live A Little," is apropos for the talented, young go-getter from Texas. After all, she has already achieved success in both the worlds of athletics, as a soccer star, and in business, as the owner of a consulting company. Laine is now turning her talents toward her biggest dream of all—becoming a singing sensation. If sheer drive and determination count for anything, she'll have that accomplishment under her cowboy belt in no time.

"I don't stop," admits Laine, looking back at all her accomplishments thus far and her will to succeed at anything she tries. "All of the things I shoot for, once I accomplish them, it feels like a fresh drink of water at the end of a long, hot day — you know, when you've been running and you get to cross the finish line — it's just complete gratification knowing you can accomplish the goal." Laine admits that when she looks back, this upcoming challenge will probably be the biggest she has ever faced. "People ask me if I'm enjoying it. 'Without a doubt,' I say!" Laine compares this challenge to her favorite activity, mountain climbing saying, "You have to stop and take in the beauty along the way."

Laine should have plenty of moments for reflection in the coming years as she continues her ascent toward her ultimate goal as a country star. She certainly has a solid start with her latest album, *Back To Austin*, produced by renowned engineer Eric Paul, a longtime friend and engineer for Willie



Plan to meet Shelley in person at Country Radio Seminar Wed., Feb. 19, at 5:00 exhibit booth 317.

Nelson, and Texas music scene mainstay Ed Spacek, brother of actress Sissy Spacek. Paul and Spacek's dynamics in the studio resulted in Laine conquering the independent charts with several successful singles.

Working hard is equivalent to breathing for Laine, who took her cues growing up from her musical mom and her dad, a bodybuilder who taught his kids the value of a healthy life. Laine worked her way up to the varsity level in soccer, qualifying for the trials for the Olympic women's team. That dream was dashed, unfortunately, when a tear was found in her Achilles tendon, and she soon redirected her energies toward music. It was during this time that she began playing and singing at every opportunity. "Music was the perfect opportunity for me to express

myself," she recalls, "and every weekend I would front bands and duets— anything to perform!" The magical world of country music has captivated Laine ever since.

Working her way through school, Laine found a career within a career by training her fellow employees, and was soon leading a corporate training program. The job helped her performing career by teaching her communication skills and how to stand before large groups of people. "As a result, I was able to manage my stage fright," says Laine. She would get really nervous before instructing a class and instead of walking straight in, she would sit down as if she were a student and talk to the participants to break the ice before class. Today as a performer she does something similar. "I mingle with the crowd before I perform. I get to

meet people and shake hands, creating a rapport and connection with fans."

While still in school, she was introduced to Ed Spacek, who has worked with Lyle Lovett, Olivia Newton John and many others. That relationship has grown and now includes renowned pedal steel player, Lloyd Maines and Eric Paul. "Shelley is an absolute joy to work with" says Spacek, "She works relentlessly, is charming, beautiful and has an exceptional talent to write, sing and perform. We will all be seeing more of this emerging artist."

The open road is a familiar place for this Texas spitfire, who is itching to get back out on the radio-tour that last year took her 4,000 miles in four days. "I love visiting radio people," exclaims Laine. "It's one of my favorite things to do! I'm really missing the road, but we're in the process of scheduling another tour right now, so I'm ready!"

As if performing several times a day for programmers isn't enough, Laine is also climbing the highest point in every state as she travels, combining her love of climbing with her love of music. "I plan on climbing to the top of the charts and the top of 20 or 30 mountains this year," explains Shelley. Dallas is home to the largest indoor climbing gym, so when Laine is back in Texas, that is where she can be found if she is not in the studio. With a successful music career set firmly in sight, Shelley will no doubt be climbing to new heights in the music arena soon. Recently, DJs for the New Music Weekly chart nominated Laine for Female Artist of the year along with Martina McBride, Faith Hill and Lec Ann Womack.



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New Heights

While Shelley Laine's single climbed the Texas Music Chart this summer, Shelley was climbing, too—scaling Guadalupe Peak on the Texas-New Mexico border.

Mountain climbing became a hobby when soccer injuries took their toll on Shelley. She made the Texas state soccer team, then the regionals. A torn Achilles tendon prevented her from joining the U.S. Olympic team.

After two other injuries, Shelley decided to "save what I have left" and get exercise elsewhere. A Dallas church group planned to climb Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest peak in the western hemisphere; and she fell in love with the idea.

But she didn't make the climb. The music Shelley had been making since age four pre-empted her career in banking and consulting (as a course writer for financial seminars). Climbing was relegated to hobby status.

The turning point was 1998. "I was doing music on the side," she said, working with various bands, finally settling in with a songwriter friend as a duet. "A conflict came up," Shelley recalled, and her partner was going to cancel a gig at the last minute. "It killed me," Shelley said. "I told her, 'You can't cancel!'"

The partner confided that music was not important to her. "This is less than a hobby for me,"



Shelley Laine

the partner said, a moment pivotal for Shelley: "I realized that this was my way of life. It was what I wanted to do for a living."

Through a college course, she met entrepreneur Michael Gorton, now her manager. Gorton introduced Shelley to music people like Ed Spacek, veteran marketing executive who worked with the Dixie Chicks, Tanya Tucker, LeeAnn Rimes, and Willie Nelson. Spacek teamed with producer Eric Paul for Shelley's first CD, *Skippping Stones*, and, now, *Back to Austin*.

"The new album screams Texas," Shelley says. It should. It was recorded at Bismeaux Studios in Austin. Jason Roberts' *Asleep at the Wheel* fiddle and Lloyd Maines' *Lonesome West Texas* pedal steel back Shelley's smooth, confident vocals.

"That Girl Doesn't Live Here Anymore," has gotten the most attention. It was chosen for the CD because, "I felt like someone had stolen my diary," Shelley said.

Shelley embarked on a promotion tour with a goal of visiting 300 radio stations to introduce *Back to Austin*. She decided to combine vocation with avocation and renew her mountain climbing. In addition to making music, she intends to climb the highest point of elevation in each state she visits.

Texas is taken care of, but what happens in Florida? "I'll just go and climb the stairs of the tallest building," she laughed. ✨

By Ed Shane



