Frizzell, Lefty (1928-1975) Encyclopedia Article

Frizzell, Lefty (1928-1975)

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One of country music's greatest vocal stylists, Lefty Frizzell's syllable-stretching, note bending style has influenced singers like Merle Haggard, George Jones, Willie Nelson, George Strait, and Randy Travis. Frizzell's meteoric rise to fame in country music may be unparalleled. Both sides of his first single ("If You've Got the Money I've Got the Time" b/w "I Love You a Thousand Ways") for Columbia Records in 1950 hit number one on the country charts, and at one point in 1951, he had four singles in the top ten. Largely because of his alcoholism and brushes with the law, Frizzell's career suffered ups and downs. From 1953 to 1958, though he continued to tour and record, he had no hits. In 1959 he staged a comeback with "Long Black Veil," followed a couple of years later by the number one hit "Saginaw Michigan." Lefty continued to work until his death from a stroke in 1975.

Further Reading:

Cooper, Daniel. *Lefty Frizzell: The Honky-Tonk Life of Country Music's Greatest Singer.* Boston, Little Brown, 1995.