

Bud Country Music QUARTERLY

COUNTRY BULLETIN

By Kerry Doole

The most exciting recent news on the Canadian country scene involves the signing of one of its most valuable resources to a major recording contract. As you read this, **Prairie Oyster** should finally have been signed — to RCA Nashville in a reported pearl of a deal.

"It is a 12-year overnight success story," joked manager **Alan Kates**, who admitted that he'd started to find it "most frustrating when you see the other people being signed. It's like 'What am I doing wrong?'"

The turning point came when **Los Lobos'** **Steve Berlin** was recruited to produce a dynamite demo tape. Seems BMG New York fell in love with it and sent it on to RCA Nashville. Heavyweight exec **Joe Galante** (the man behind the signing of acts like **K.T. Oslin** and **Alabama**) heard it and flew north with his heads of sales and marketing.

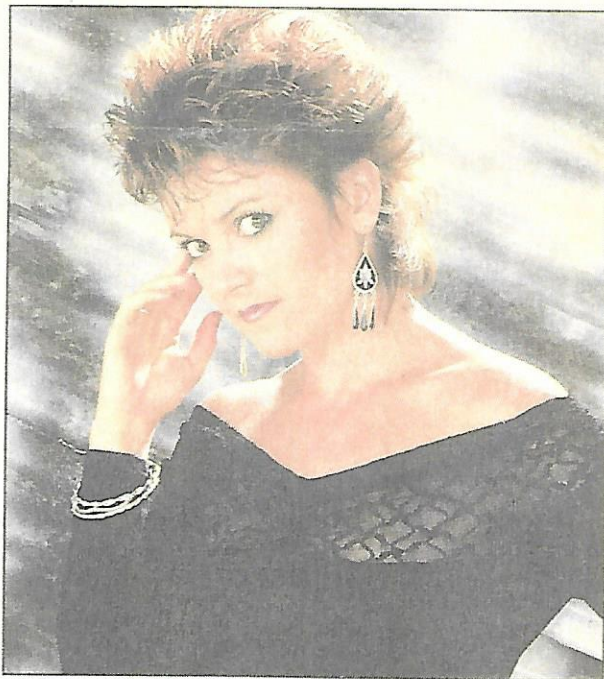
"I have to come to Toronto to hear *%& talent like this?!" is Kates' favorite Galante quote. Berlin has been retained as producer when **Prairie Oyster** heads into the studio in April for an anticipated September album release.

The RCA deal and the signing to the powerful **Jim Halsey Agency** should mean pay-off time for the band's perseverance. Congrats all around.

Savannah Records' **Brian Ferriman** is confident that 1989 will be the best year yet for all the acts on his roster.

Matt Minglewood is receiving strong attention in the Benelux countries, boosted by his recent promotional visit there. He's still getting strong support on country radio here, and will play Calgary and Edmonton dates early in March.

Michelle Wright's album is out to good reviews in the U.K. **Gary Fjellgaard** is being hailed as 'a star in the making' there. His new record, *Heart Of A Dream*, is out



KELITA RECENTLY COMPLETED A FIVE-WEEK TOUR OF EUROPE AND THE MID-EAST. DENISE GRANT

now, and it is described as "country from folk roots." It will be released in Europe in the spring, and Gary is expected to tour there.

Anita Perras is launching her solo career with new album *Touch My Heart*, expected shortly. Expect a "very traditional country sound." Former partner **Tim Taylor** is currently concentrating on songwriting.

Terry Carisse has an as-yet-untitled LP finished and ready for April release. Produced by **Randall Prescott** (Family

Brown), it features collaborations with Nashville writers and contributions from session greats like **Mark O'Connor**, **Vince Gill** and **Brent Rowan**.

Join the Forces. See the World: Country-pop thrush **Kelita** has found a new way to play around the world — sign up with a Canadian Armed Forces tour.

"I've just come back from a five-week tour of the Middle East and Europe: an amazing experience," she told *ME* recently. The travelling variety show caravan (28 bodies) entertained Canadian and U.N. forces in Israel, Egypt, Cyprus and Germany.

"It did get tense a few times," she said of the visit to hot (politically and climatically) spots. "We arrived in Cyprus the same day a Turkish soldier was shot by the Greeks and had to cancel that night's show. We were right in the barbed wire buffer zone, fascinating."

Back in our cold climes, Kelita's returning to the studio to beef up some of her new songs. "We may do a video as well; we'll come up with a package a label can't refuse!"

CanContenders: CBS Nashville is hoping for big things in '89 from its new Canadian connection **Lori Yates'** highly anticipated debut. *Can't Stop The Girl*, should be out as you read this, with *Promises Promises* its second single. Toronto fans can catch her in action alongside **Prairie Oyster** in a dream honky-tonk double bill at Harbourfront, March 18th.

Premier Toronto country station **CFGM** is winning friends by promoting its own shows in city clubs, pairing local acts (**Prairie Oyster**, **Lori Yates**, **Kelita**) with worthy imports (**Wagoneers**, **Asleep At The Wheel**, **David Lynn Jones**, **Rodney Crowell**). Good concept.

Prestigious roots label **Stony Plain** kicked off '89 by severing links with **BMG/RCA** and signing a distribution deal with **WEA Canada**. The new **Ian Tyson** album, *I Outgrew The Wagon*, is one of the first to appear under the arrangement. **me**