



BOBBY BRADDOCK: A LIFETIME OF HITS

Songwriters who want long careers must keep up with changes in musical taste. It's a difficult thing to do, but few have done it better than Bobby Braddock. The Country Music Hall of Fame member has written #1 songs in five different decades.

“When you’ve been around as long as I have, I think people expect you to burn out or get too old to do it,” Braddock says of his more than sixty years in music.

His success has more to do with discipline than with inspiration. “You can make yourself write stuff,” he says. “You keep doing it and keep doing it, and eventually, the good stuff will come, and you will become inspired.”

Braddock was born in 1940 in Lakeland, Florida, and grew up in nearby Auburndale. He started taking piano lessons at age seven and endured “six years of little old ladies trying to teach me to read music.” He finally discovered, “I could learn more piano listening carefully to our records than from teachers and books.” Braddock enjoyed a wide range of music but became more interested in country and rock & roll.

Braddock spent his late teens and early twenties playing keyboards in local rock bands, then he moved to Nashville in 1964. After finding work as the piano player in Marty Robbins’s touring band, Braddock began pitching songs to Robbins, who was a country star. Robbins recorded some of the songs, and within two



years, Braddock signed a contract to write songs for Tree Publishing Company.

Over the years, Braddock has turned out both funny and heartbreaking songs. His most famous song is “He Stopped Loving Her Today.” Released in 1980

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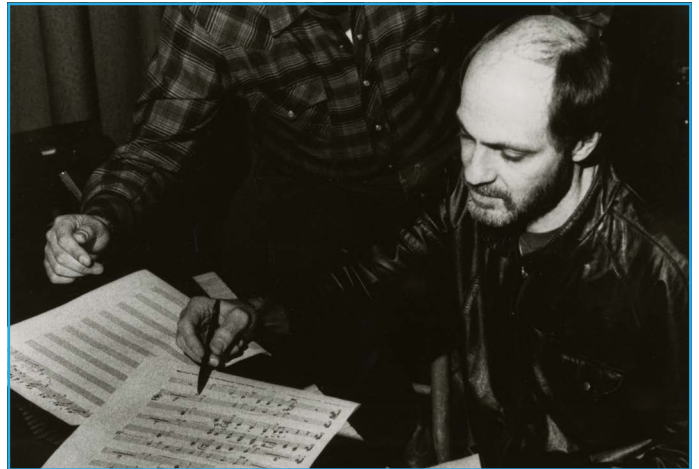
“He Stopped Loving Her Today” (recorded by George Jones), “Golden Ring” (recorded by George Jones & Tammy Wynette), “Something to Brag About” (recorded by Charlie Louvin & Melba Montgomery), “Ruthless” (recorded by the Statler Brothers)



BOBBY BRADDOCK: A LIFETIME OF HITS (CONTINUED)

by George Jones, it is considered by many to be the greatest country song of all time.

Braddock has kept his country sound fresh by paying attention to new music in all popular genres, including hard rock and rap. “I think staying hip to what everybody’s doing helps you in country music,” he says, “since country music is not always all that country anyway.”



CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. How did Braddock learn to play piano?

2. Why does Braddock say it’s important to pay attention to all sorts of music?

3. Circle the phrase “pitching songs” in the fifth paragraph. Underline the clue words and phrases that help you understand its meaning. Then, define the phrase in your own words.
