

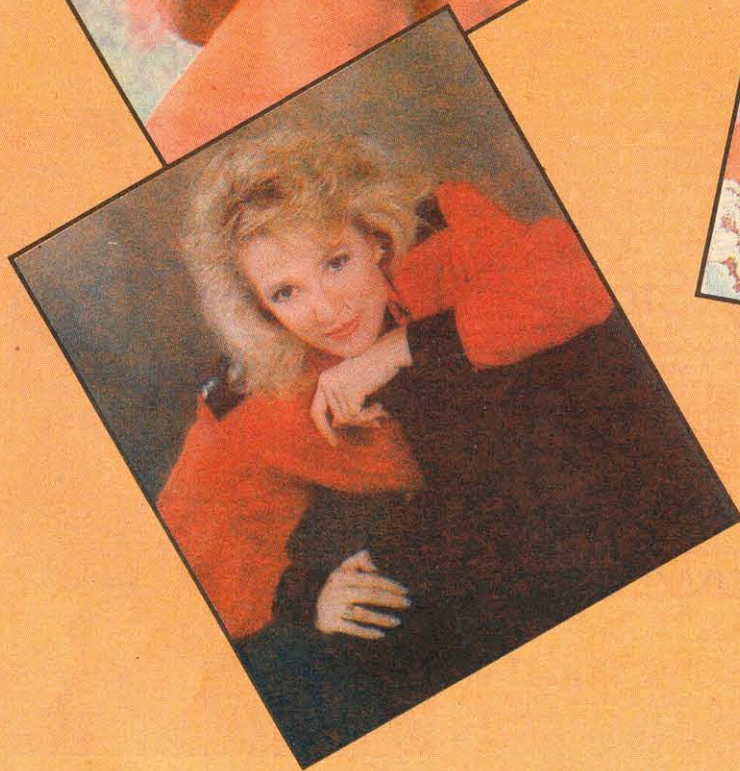
# SHOWCASE

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## Our Fair Ladies



Mother and daughter duet The Judds, top, Crystal Gayle, right, and Tanya Tucker will appear this week at the Antelope Valley Fair. The first week will also include the Association, Charlie Daniels (with Tucker Sept. 1), John Schneider (with Gayle Sept. 2), Ricky Skaggs (with The Judds Sept. 4) as well as Wolfman Jack, Bo Diddley and other 1950s stars. In addition, the True Value Showdown's state finals will be held August 29, with the Janie Fox Band representing the Antelope Valley. Jim Stafford will host. Many of these fair visitors talked about their past, and their upcoming performances, with Showcase, inside.

# Judds always sang together, even when they couldn't talk

By KARLA TIPTON  
Assistant Showcase Editor  
The Judds are obsessed with their music.  
But their gratification comes from people.

"I've always been plugged into people," said Naomi Judd, the maternal half of the mother-daughter country music team, in a phone interview. "I'm a people lover. And when (fans) walk up and stick out their hand and they say, 'I bought your tape,' that's the ultimate compliment. When they buy that ticket to come see us, that's what keeps Wynonna and I going."

Some tickets are still available for Thursday's Antelope Valley Fair performance of the Judds, who are on the bill with Ricky Skaggs.

The Judd family — including Naomi's youngest daughter, Ashley — place importance not so much on money, but on their relationship with one another.

"Nothing is more important than my kids," said Naomi. "Wynonna, Ashley and I, we've been comrades in the trenches all our lives."

By the time she was 21, Naomi was divorced with two children and living in Hollywood, far from her Kentucky home. For a while, she worked as a model in Los Angeles. "I hated it. It's such

a vacuous profession."

And although times were hard, Naomi now views them in a positive light.

"I'm really thankful that we come from a blue-collar family,

that I've had to work all my life. And I'm glad we lived in genteel poverty," she said. "We never starved. But we ate soup beans and cornbread for days, and fried

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WYNONNA and Naomi Judd (mom's on the right) have seen rough times together, and occasionally were not on speaking terms, but singing helped keep the relationship alive.

## The Judds...

bologna sandwiches.

"I really think that bonded us together."

The family moved around the country, back to Kentucky, back to California, then finally to a suburb of Nashville, Tenn., where Naomi worked as a registered nurse, Wynonna reluctantly went to school — and both practiced their music in the evenings.

Their mother-daughter relationship was rocky, to say the least.

"There were literally days where we would not talk to each other, but we could sing together," she said.

Yet while the music enabled them to communicate, it was also causing the problems.

"The music was making me peel the wallpaper off the walls," said Naomi. "Wynonna didn't give a hoot about school. She almost flunked out. When she discovered music, that was it."

It was through one of Naomi's nursing jobs that the pair made the connection with RCA Records. One of her patients was the daughter of producer Brent Maher, who proceeded to work with Judds to help them develop their vocal style.

From there, they gave a rare live audition before RCA's executives in the record company boardroom.

"We walked in in our little \$20 dresses, sat down with that old guitar, and said, this is what we are," Naomi recalled. "We sang them a bunch of songs I had written and we talked about ourselves, what our beliefs in life were. We pretty much laid it on the line.

"And I said, 'This is us. If you like us, we'd love to work. But you can't mess with us.'

"Wynonna and I believe so

strongly in that precious word, integrity," she said.

That's why the Judds so far have turned down the script for their proposed sit-com pilot. "Here NBC is offering us a primetime weekly TV spot. I mean, you'd think we'd be goo-goo ga-ga for it. And here we're going uh-uh," she said.

Since they signed with RCA three years ago, the Judds have released 11 singles, nine of which have gone to No. 1 on Billboard's country chart. These include "Love is Alive," "Why Not Me," "Grandpa" and "Rockin' with the Rhythm."

As for their music, Naomi cites inspiration from such diverse acts as Joni Mitchell, Ella Fitzgerald, Steely Dan, bluegrass and southern gospel.

"(Our style) is a crazy quilt of musical influences," said Naomi.

One of the first songs the

mother and daughter practiced together was "Cow Cow Boogie," which Naomi had to "whine and pout and sulk" to get included on their current album, *Heartland*.

"We learned it from an old Ella Fitzgerald double album, where she has the Ink Spots backing her up. That's why the kids never asked Wynonna to bring her records to the slumber party," she said with a laugh.

"It's pretty camp. Pretty darned camp."

Naomi and Wynonna Judd are making some major career decisions this year, some of which may lead up to tours in Cuba and China.

Depending on the pressure, the pair go through stages of being best friends, or else "getting on each other's nerves," said Naomi.

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