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OWEPAR ENTERTAINMENT LAUNCHES SMOKY MOUNTAIN DNA MASTERS SERIES TO HIGHLIGHT THE RICH MUSICAL LEGACY OF THE OWENS-PARTON FAMILY

REISSUES OF THREE ALBUMS BY FAMILY MEMBERS AND THE FIRST EVER RELEASE OF AVIE LEE PARTON'S *MAMA SINGS* ARE OUT TODAY

Nashville, TN — Following the November release of the critically acclaimed, historical project *Dolly Parton & Family: Smoky Mountain DNA – Family, Faith & Fables*—which debuted at #1 on *Billboard's* Bluegrass Albums chart—Owepar Entertainment has launched the Smoky Mountain DNA Masters Series. Across eight decades, the Owens-Parton family has been creating and recording great American music rooted in the family traditions of their East Tennessee mountain home. The Owepar Masters Series of legacy recording brings to light some of the best of these rare and significant recordings of an iconic American musical family.

Today, Owepar Entertainment has announced the digital-only reissue of three albums – *The Parton Family Sings "In The Garden,"* Bill Owens and the Kinfolk's *Songs Of The Smokie Mountains,* Dorothy Jo Owens' *I Can Only Be Me* – and for the first time ever, has released *Mama Sings* from Dolly's mother Avie Lee Parton.

Dolly serves as Executive Producer on all four albums, while her cousin Richie Owens, the multi-talented producer of *Dolly Parton & Family: Smoky Mountain DNA*, is the Reissues Producer.

Avie Lee Parton – Mama Sings

In March 1973, Dolly's mother, Avie Lee Parton, recorded her personal arrangements of several traditional mountain tunes. The result was an outstanding showcase of Avie Lee's striking, strong, and expressive voice filled with traditional Appalachian phrasing. Released for the first time ever, *Mama Sings* is a fascinating record of a unique American voice.

"Many people know of my mama, Avie Lee Owens Parton, from my song, 'Coat of Many Colors,' but my mama gave me a gift that was far more valuable than a colorful coat. She gave me the gift of music," says Dolly. "If you've ever wondered where my music came from, this album tells the story, and I am so proud, happy, and honored to share this music and my mama's voice with you."

Listen to *Mama Sings* at your preferred DSPs [HERE](#).

The Parton Family Sings In "The Garden"

In 1968, Avie Lee Parton formed a gospel quartet with three of her daughters – Willadeene, Stella, and Cassie. It was a continuation of a family legacy that began with her father, the Reverend Jake Owens, who had organized his own children into a singing group that performed at church, social functions and few appearances on Knoxville radio station WNOX in the 1940s.

Encouraged to record by a local newspaper editor, Avie Lee made a call to her brothers, Bill and Louis Owens, who had recently launched the Circle B record label and the Parton Family was soon on their way to Nashville. They recorded a dozen songs including traditional hymns, contemporary gospel songs, one original from Avie Lee, and two originals written by Avie Lee's sister, Dorothy Jo Owens Hope.

Originally released on the Circle B subsidiary Inspiration Records in 1968, the album features all four singers taking turns carrying the lead, but the most arresting moments are when they blended their vocals in close harmony.

Listen to *The Parton Family Sings In "The Garden"* at your preferred DSPs [HERE](#).

Dorothy Jo Owens - *I Can Only Be Me*

Dorothy Jo Owens was playing guitar by the age of five and mastered her favorite instrument, the banjo, by the age of 11. She continued to perform through her teen years, but after marrying in 1946, she set her musical pursuits aside. Within a few years, she began to forge a career as an evangelist and gospel performer. As a woman making her own way in a male-dominated field, she became an inspiration for her young niece, Dolly Parton.

Dorothy Jo began to focus on her songwriting in the late 1960s and co-wrote several songs with Dolly including "Daddy Come and Get Me," "J.J. Sneed," and "Daddy Was An Old Time Preacher Man." In the mid 1970s, she became a featured performer on the live country music radio show, *The Wheeling Jamboree*, and recorded gospel albums with the Pell Brothers and the Walter Bailes Singers — while continuing to write secular country songs. In 1983, she recorded three of her country compositions at The Refuge, a small Nashville studio built and operated by Louis' son, Richie Owens. A few months later, she recorded five more songs at Pollyfox Studio and the result was the album *I Can Only Be Me*. The album was originally released 1983 by the Nashville-based independent label, Express Records.

I Can Only Be Me is rare glimpse into the artistry and talent of the woman Dolly Parton has called her "hero."

Listen to *I Can Only Be Me* at your preferred DSPs [HERE](#).

Bill Owens and the Kinfolk – *Songs Of The Smokie Mountains*

By the 1960s, several members of the Owens extended family were pursuing careers in music including Dorothy Jo (b.1929), John Henry (b. 1931), Louis (b. 1933), and Bill (b. 1935), along with their niece, Dolly Parton (b. 1946). In 1964, Bill moved to Nashville and Dolly soon followed him. By the end of the year Dolly was recording pop songs for Monument Records, and both Dolly and Bill were staff songwriters for Monument's publishing company, Combine Music.

In early 1966, Bill persuaded his older brother Louis to move his family to Nashville, and the Owens brothers were soon booking live appearances as "The Kinfolks" along with producing and recording a number of singles which they self-released or sold to various independent labels including REM Records.

In 1967, Bill Owens' songwriting career was on the rise, and his niece Dolly was on the edge of stardom. Although Bill was making it in Nashville, his desire to honor his roots and family musical traditions led to *Songs of the Smokie Mountains*. The album features 16 recordings of traditional mountain songs and hymns with Bill on guitar and vocals, his sister, Dorothy Jo Owens on banjo and vocals, and their father, the Rev. Jake Owens on fiddle and vocals. The result was the same type of family musical jam session Dolly and her siblings grew up hearing on the front porch of their

Tennessee mountain home. Originally released on REM Records in 1967, the album became a sought-after collectible by traditional folk music fans and is now available in this new edition. **Listen *Songs Of The Smokie Mountains* at your preferred DSPs [HERE](#).**

Click [HERE](#) for more information about the Owepar Master Series of legacy recordings and to order available titles

About Owepar Entertainment

Owepar Music was founded in 1967 by Dolly Parton and her uncles Bill Owens and Louis Owens to administer their songwriting business. Over the years Owepar has published songs recorded by artists including Porter Wagoner, Linda Ronstadt, Olivia Newton-John, Emmylou Harris and many more. In 1972, Owepar purchased two properties on Music Row and moved their offices into a larger building and began construction on a state-of-the-art recording facility. Fireside Studios opened in March 1973 and immediately began cutting hits for Merle Haggard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Emmylou Harris, Marty Robbins, Bill Monroe, and many other artists. Active as a publishing company until 1981, and relaunched in 2019, Owepar Entertainment handles a vast collection of legacy recordings and publishes songs by contemporary artists including Jada Star and Richie Owens.

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