

## FACT SHEET

**TITLE:** **MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY (2<sup>nd</sup> Release)**  
[TV-G] [CC] [Mix]

**LENGTH:** 1/40 Pledge; 1/60 Base

**NOLA CODE:** MTYR

**CATEGORY:** Music & Entertainment

**OFFERED:** Summer 2009

**RELEASE DATE:** November 1, 2009

**CONTRACT TERMS:** Unlimited use until October 31, 2011.

**PROGRAM SUPPLIER:** Clear Cut Inc.

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:** **MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY** takes public television audiences back to a time of familiar music and nostalgic memories. The program features full performances of Robbins' most memorable and recognizable hits linked by host Robert K. Oermann who shares the story of his music, his career and his life. The featured performances include hits such as "El Paso," "A White Sport Coat," "Devil Woman," "This Time You Gave Me a Mountain," "Story of My Life," "Some Memories Just Won't Die" and "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife." The program also features interviews with son Ronny Robbins, and artists Merle Haggard and Barbara Mandrell.

**PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS:** Use the above program description for guide listing. A press kit, including fact sheet, press release, song list, biography and interview will be posted to PBS Connect and [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org). Color photos will be available via email and on [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

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**MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY / 2**

**FACT SHEET**

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**PRODUCTION CREDITS:** Producer/Director: Gregory Hall  
Executive Producer: Barbara Hall  
Writer/Host: Robert K. Oermann  
Associate Producer: Kristen Topping  
Technical Consultant: Ronny Robbins  
Editor: Eddie Hale

**BROADCAST HISTORY:** APT Premium Service 17, 6/1/06 – 6/30/09

**RELATED MERCHANDISE:** Individual viewer purchase:  
Recordings by Marty Robbins are available  
in retail outlets nationwide.

Pledge:  
Program DVD, related CDs. Consult APT  
pledge guide for details.

**VIEWER INQUIRIES:** American Public Television  
Viewer Services  
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Boston, MA 02110  
617-338-4455 ext. 202

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## PRESS RELEASE

### Country Crossover Artist Marty Robbins Shows His Versatility in **MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY**

*“There’s a great visual sense in this [program] and you can feel Marty’s charisma in the footage. You’ll really get a sense of what a masterful entertainer he was.”* – Robert K. Oermann, country music historian

Country Hall of Fame inductee Marty Robbins was more than just a country crooner. He was a singer-songwriter, gospel, country and pop recording artist, television star, teen idol, NASCAR driver and author. He charted 94 records, scored 16 No. 1 songs, hosted two television shows, won the first Grammy for a country song and received a star on Hollywood’s Walk of Fame. He broke the boundaries a typical country star would abide by, and in the process established himself as a modern-day renaissance man. The first television special to document his career, **MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY**, captures the charismatic, versatile style of this hall-of-famer and presents full performances of his most memorable and recognizable hits, including “El Paso,” “A White Sport Coat,” “This Time You Gave Me A Mountain” and “Devil Woman.” Presented by American Public Television, the program begins airing on public television stations nationwide on November 1, 2009 (check local listings).

Robert K. Oermann, a journalist, producer and noted country music historian, hosts the program and shares the story of Robbins’ music, career and life. “Marty Robbins’ genius was that he synthesized so many different styles of music,” says Oermann. “He sang Hawaiian music, he sang Hispanic music, he sang cowboy music, he sang rock ‘n’ roll, he sang blues. He just had a tremendous grasp of all of the uniquely American idioms.” In addition to Oermann’s insightful commentary, Marty’s son Ronny Robbins and current country music stars

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## **MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY / 2**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

Merle Haggard and Barbara Mandrell also provide interviews and discuss the impact Robbins had on their career.

Packed with showmanship, this program explores Robbins' diverse career by genre – cowboy, country, pop and rockabilly. Clips are pulled from several eras of his life, from the '50s through the '80s, and show Robbins in several of his over-the-top '70s costumes. The full musical performances capture Robbins' charisma and portray his broad musical abilities from piano and guitar playing to singing in every imaginable style from calypso to gospel.

Perhaps best known for his cowboy songs and his No. 1 hit "El Paso," Robbins' talent went far beyond the western song. His recognizable pop hits, acting career and song-writing prowess launched him past the confines of Nashville and helped make him one of the most memorable, enduring and well-rounded entertainers to emerge from the country scene.

**MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY** was acquired from Clear Cut Inc. by American Public Television for syndication to public television stations nationwide.

### **About American Public Television**

With more than 10,000 hours of programming in its library, American Public Television (APT) has been a prime source of programming for the nation's public television stations for 48 years, distributing more than 300 new program titles per year. In 2006, APT launched Create – the TV channel featuring the best of public television's lifestyle programming. Known for its leadership in identifying innovative, worthwhile and viewer-friendly programming, APT has established a tradition of providing public television stations with program choices that strengthen and customize their schedules, such as *Rick Steves' Europe*, *Worldfocus*, *Globe Trekker*, *Simply Ming*, *Sara's Weeknight Meals*, *America's Test Kitchen From Cook's Illustrated*, *Doc Martin*, *Lidia's Family Table*, *Rosemary and Thyme*, *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*, *The Big Comfy Couch*, *Johnny Cash at Folsom Prison*, *Smothered: The Censorship Struggles of the Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, *Monarchy With David Starkey*, *Spain...on the road Again*, and other prominent documentaries, dramatic series, how-to programs, children's series and classic movies. For more information about APT's programs and services, visit [APTonline.org](http://APTonline.org).

9/11/2009

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## SONG LIST

### MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY

#### 1/40 Pledge Version:

##### Segment # 1

“Singing the Blues”

“A White Sport Coat”

“Maybelline”

“Don’t Worry”

“Devil Woman”

“El Paso”

##### Segment # 2

“The Story of My Life”

“Ribbon of Darkness”

“You’ll Never Walk Alone”

“Among My Souvenirs”

“You Gave Me a Mountain”

“My Woman, My Woman, My Wife”

“Some Memories Just Won’t Die”

# # #

### MARTY ROBBINS

Born and raised in Glendale, Arizona, Robbins was exposed to music at an early age. His grandfather was "Texas" Bob Heckle, a former medicine show man who told his grandson cowboy stories. Robbins became enraptured by the cowboy tales and, once he became a teenager, worked on his older brother's ranch outside of Phoenix, concentrating more on his cowboy duties than his studies. In 1943, he joined the U.S. Navy to fight in World War II, and while in the service, he learned how to play guitar and developed a taste for Hawaiian music. Robbins left the Navy in 1947 and returned to Glendale, where he began to sing in local clubs and radio stations. Within three years, he had developed a strong reputation throughout Arizona and was appearing regularly on a Mesa radio station and had his own television show, *Western Caravan*, in Phoenix.

Robbins landed a recording contract with Columbia in 1951. Early in 1952, he released his first single, "Love Me or Leave Me Alone." It wasn't a success and neither was its follow-up, "Crying 'Cause I Love You," but "I'll Go On Alone" soared to No. 1 in 1953. Following its success, Robbins signed a publishing deal with Acuff-Rose and joined the Grand Ole Opry. "I Couldn't Keep From Crying" kept him in the Top 10 in 1953, but his two 1954 singles – "Pretty Words" and "Call Me Up (And I'll Come Calling on You)" – stalled on the charts. It wasn't until "Singing the Blues" shot to No. 1 in 1956 that Robbins' career was truly launched. Staying at No. 1 for a remarkable 13 weeks, "Singing the Blues" established Robbins as a star, but its progress on the pop charts was impeded by Guy Mitchell's cover. To head off such competition, Robbins recorded with easy-listening conductor Ray Conniff. It was a crafty move and one that kept him commercially viable during the peak of rock 'n' roll. The first of these collaborations, "A White Sport Coat (And a Pink Carnation)," became a hit, spending five weeks at the top of the country charts in 1957 and peaking at No. 2 on the pop charts, giving him his long-awaited breakthrough record.

After "A White Sport Coat," Robbins was a regular fixture on both the pop and country charts until the mid-'60s. The Burt Bacharach and Hal David composition "The Story of My Life" returned Robbins to the No. 1 country slot in early 1957 (No. 15 pop), while "Just Married," "Stairway of Love" and "She Was Only Seventeen (He Was One Year More)" kept him in teen-pop territory, as well as the upper reaches of the charts, throughout 1958. In addition to his pop records, Robbins recorded rockabilly singles and Hawaiian albums that earned their own audience. During that time, he began a couple of business ventures, including a booking agency and a record label called Robbins. He also ventured into movies, appearing in the Westerns *Raiders of Old California* (1957) and *Badge of Marshal Brennan* (1958). The films not only demonstrated Robbins' love for western myths and legends, but they signaled the shift in musical direction he

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was about to take. Over the course of 1958 and 1959, he recorded a number of western songs, and the first of these – “The Hanging Tree,” the theme to the Gary Cooper film of the same name – became a hit in 1959. However, the song just set the stage for Robbins’ signature song and biggest western hit, “El Paso.” Released in the summer, the single spent six months on the country charts, including seven weeks at No. 1, while also hitting the top of the pop charts. A full album of western songs, *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs*, became equally successful, reaching No. 6 on the pop charts and eventually going platinum.

“El Paso” began a successful decade for Robbins. “Big Iron,” another western song, followed its predecessor to the Top 10 of the country charts in 1960, but it wasn’t until 1961 that he had another huge hit, “Don’t Worry.” Fueled by a fuzz-toned guitar (the first country record to feature such an effect), “Don’t Worry” spent 10 weeks at No. 1 and crossed over to No. 3 on the pop charts. The following year, “Devil Woman” became nearly as successful, spending eight weeks at No. 1. For the rest of the decade, his biggest hits alternated with more moderate successes. With his career sailing along, Robbins began exploring racecar driving in 1962, eventually competing in NASCAR races. However, car racing was just a hobby, and he continued to have hits in 1963, including the No. 1 “Begging to You.” The following year, he starred in the film *Ballad of a Gunfighter*, which was based on songs from his classic album. Robbins’ chart success continued throughout 1964, before suddenly dipping after he took “Ribbons of Darkness” to No. 1 in 1965. For the remainder of the year and much of the next, his singles failed to crack the Top 10, and he concentrated on filming a television series called *The Drifter*, based on a character he had created. He also acted frequently, including the films *Country Music Caravan*, *The Nashville Story*, *Tennessee Jamboree* and *Hell on Wheels*. Though “The Shoe Goes on the Other Foot Tonight” reached No. 3 in 1966, it wasn’t until “Tonight Carmen” reached No. 1 on the country charts in 1967 that his singing career picked up again. Robbins suffered a heart attack in 1969. Despite his brush with death, he continued to record, tour and act. Early in 1970, “My Woman, My Woman, My Wife” became his last major cross-over hit, reaching No. 1 on the country charts and 42 on the pop charts, eventually earning a Grammy.

In March 1974, Robbins became the last performer to play at the Ryman Auditorium, the original location of the Grand Ole Opry; a week later, he was the first to play at the new Grand Ole Opry House. The honors and tributes to Robbins continued to roll out during the mid-’70s, as he was inducted into Nashville Songwriters International Hall of Fame in 1975. In October 1982, he was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. Two months later, he suffered his third major heart attack and died on Dec. 8, 1982. Robbins left behind an immense legacy, including no less than 94 charting country hits.

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## BIOGRAPHY

### ROBERT K. OERMANN (host)

During his 25 years in Music City, Robert K. Oermann has become one of Nashville's leading multi-media figures. He works as a journalist, TV personality, radio broadcaster, lecturer, photographer, archivist and author. There are few authorities who combine such a firm grasp of the contemporary music business, an intense passion for its artistry and a deep knowledge of its history.

Dubbed "the dean of Nashville's music writers" and "the walking encyclopedia of music," Oermann is seen regularly on the CMT series *Inside Fame* and on A&E's *Biography*. He is the Editor-at-Large of *Country Music* magazine, a weekly columnist for *Music Row* and has been published in more than 100 other national periodicals. His seven books to date include the award-winning *Finding Her Voice* (Crown, 1993/Henry Holt, 1995, Vanderbilt-CMF, 2003), *A Century of Country* (TV Books/Harper Collins, 1999) and *Little Miss Dynamite* (Hyperion, 2002). More than 75 record albums contain liner notes penned by Oermann, including the multi-million selling soundtrack to *O Brother Where Art Thou*. In addition, he has produced more than a dozen historical reissue recordings.

He is a writer/producer for television whose scripts include the six-hour *America's Music* documentary (TBS, 1996), *The Women of Country* (CBS, 1993), the *Video Session* series (TNN, 1993-95), the national "Country Rocks the Vote" PSA campaign (1996), *The 75th Anniversary of the Grand Ole Opry* (CBS, 2000) and specials for such stars as Vince Gill, Conway Twitty, Billy Ray Cyrus and Dolly Parton.

His artwork has been shown in galleries in New York, Vermont and Pennsylvania as well as Tennessee. He is also a published photographer and illustrator, a lecturer and the owner of one of the largest private record archives in the South.

Oermann was a 2000-2001 consultant to the National Endowment for the Arts. He serves on the boards of Leadership Music, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) and the Nashville Songwriters Foundation. He is the chairman of the country committee for the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles and serves on the Hall of Fame and awards committees for the Country Music Association (CMA).

His honors include the 2000 President's Award from the Recording Academy and the 1999 and 2001 *Nashville Scene* Reader's Poll as Music City's favorite feature writer. Oermann also won a 1996 Nashville Music Award, the 1994 ASCAP Deems Taylor Award and the 1988 CMA Media Achievement Award. In 2003, he graduated from the prestigious Leadership Nashville program that develops civic innovators throughout the community.

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**MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY**

***Recently, Robert K. Oermann, writer and host of APT's new special MARTY ROBBINS – SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY, shared his thoughts on Marty Robbins' versatile and enduring music career.***

**How important was Marty Robbins in forming the unique cultural identity of American Music?**

I think Marty Robbins' genius was that he synthesized so many different styles of music. He was a master at singing standards, American Songbook, Hawaiian music, Hispanic music, cowboy music, rock 'n' roll and blues. He just had a tremendous grasp of all the uniquely American idioms and that was why he was so incredibly important. He did them all well, he did them all incredibly well.

Marty from the get-go had not only country appeal but pop appeal. "Singing the Blues," "A White Sport Coat (and a Pink Carnation)," "The Story of My Life," "El Paso," "Don't Worry" – these were all major pop hits as recently as the late '60s. He was making the pop charts and his appeal crossed over to a wide segment of the population.

**What do you think drew his fans to him and what were the keys to his success?**

Speaking personally (and I've had Marty Robbins 45s since I was a child), I think it's that word that is so overused today – charisma. He had charisma; he looked like a star and he sang like a star. When you saw him and you were a singer you were like, "My God, what a voice!" He was a master showman and so entertaining, that's why they put him on last on the *Grand Ole Opry* whenever he performed. They couldn't get him off the stage once he started, so he always closed the show. He famously just took the clock off the wall and put it on the piano and just kept entertaining the folks because they wouldn't let him go and he didn't want to go. He was also an insomniac, and if you ever tuned into WSN radio late at night, there would be nights where he would show up out there at the radio station and sit and just sing song after song after song. Each one would be different than the one before. It was great radio. It was fascinating to hear him.

He was just so charismatic both visually and as a singer and he really knew how to entertain the people. And, in those days it was okay for a country star to just stand there in one position and just sing a song. But Marty didn't do that, he hammed it up, he told jokes, he played the guitar, he played the piano. He would be all over that stage and the people loved it.

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**How did Marty get started with his career? What was his life like – on and off the stage?**

Marty was a hard guy to know. He was a great entertainer, but offstage, he didn't go to parties, he didn't hang out with the music-world people. He was a fascinating character. Marty was born in the desert in Arizona in a very poor upbringing. His father was an abusive alcoholic. His mother took Marty and his twin sister to Glendale when he was 12, after she separated from his dad. As a teen, Marty was a petty criminal. He was kind of a no-good guy and he straightened up when he enlisted in the Navy during WWII and served in the Pacific. And, that was when music came into his life. He got out of the Navy after WWII and began entertaining in Arizona. The *Grand Ole Opry* star Little Jimmy Dickens came through [Glendale] and saw Marty on his little TV show. Jimmy was on Columbia Records and he alerted the talent scouts and Marty got signed. In the beginning, he sang what are called "weepers." You know, country, sad ballads. They called him "Mr. Teardrop." He hated that name, but, in the early days, that's how he was billed. He finally broke through on the charts in 1952 and from then it was no turning back.

When rock 'n' roll came along, he was one of the very first country stars to latch onto the sound and had Top 10 hits with "That's Alright" and "Maybelline." He's the first country star to cover a Chuck Berry song. When "Singing the Blues" became a big pop hit, he went to New York and took with him the greatest teenage prom song of all time, "White Sport Coat (and a Pink Carnation)" which became a major No. 1 pop and country hit.

That continued on until he turned a corner toward the end of the '50s and he recorded an album called *Gunfighter Ballads and Trail Songs* which is one of the most famous cowboy recordings of all time. On that record is a song called "El Paso" and it was very different. You realize at the end of the song that a dead guy is singing it. It was a really oddly constructed song – it was really long, like four minutes long (at a time when you didn't do that) and it still became a major success for him. And he followed it with "Big Iron" and some other cowboy songs.

In 1961, he became the first artist to use fuzz-tone guitar on a record, "Don't Worry," and that became a hallmark of psychedelic rock a few years later with Jefferson Airplane and San Francisco. But Marty's record was the first to use that guitar technique. Then there was "Devil Woman" and "Ruby Ann" – the bad woman songs from the '60s. He returns to these exotic beauties over-and-over again in his music and they also became big hits.

By this time, the '60s, Marty had one of the largest fan clubs of anybody in the United States. His fans were called "Marty's Army" and "Marty's Army" was dominantly female. For them, he wrote and recorded "My Woman, My Woman, My Wife" in 1970 which became yet another No. 1 hit. What often is emphasized

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about Marty is that he wrote hits for others as well. He was a very prolific composer. He wrote songs for Skeeter Davis and Jack Greene and other country stars. He wrote “You Gave Me a Mountain” for Frankie Laine and Elvis, one of his biggest songs that became a No. 1 for Laine. Later, Marty sang it in his own shows.

He drifted into the '70s and did fairly well, but had a really big comeback toward the end of the decade, when he finally wrote an answer song to “El Paso” called “El Paso City” that hit No. 1 in 1976. As I said, he always sang pop standards and he did a couple of albums of these. Then he had hits with “Among My Souvenirs” and with three Hawaiian albums in 1976 – he’s the only country star I know who did that. As he entered the '80s, he was not doing so well, until he came up with a tune called “Some Memories Just Won’t Die” which became a big hit in 1982 and brought him back into the Top 10. Ironically, that was to be the last hit he enjoyed while he was alive. He died suddenly of a heart condition at age 57 in 1982. Right after he died, Clint Eastwood’s movie *Honkytonk Man* came out in which Marty appeared and sang the title track, and that became a posthumous Top 10 hit.

The fans have never forgotten him and he’s still a big influence to many musicians. Every time you hear one of those records, if you’ve never heard Marty in your life and you hear him sing, you’ll pay attention. He had a gorgeous voice.

**Did you have a chance to meet him?**

The first time I ever met Marty was backstage at the Opry. He was coming off stage and I said, “You belong in the Country Music Hall of Fame” and he looked at me and said, “I know it.” It was very funny. I did interview him on a couple of occasions. He was not the kind of person who was real confessional or chatty about his private life. He was just a great showman who kept to himself, not a big schmoozer. But, maybe that’s what holds him in such mystique to this day – because he is so different than other stars. Other stars need you to love them.

The fans adored him, and he loved the fans. The classic country stars knew how to treat the fans right. He didn’t just come and do the show, he talked to them, signed autographs, threw fan parties. Marty’s (parties) were always a huge event, because “Marty’s Army” was always there with him.

**What do you think PTV viewers will like about this program?**

If you love great singing and if you’re into showmanship, you’re going to love this footage. It’s taken from all eras of Marty’s life, from the early '50s right up until the '80s. You’ll see Marty as a dashing young cowboy, as a tuxedoed pop singer and as a rockabilly. You’ll see him sing Hawaiian, you’ll see him sing cowboy. All the various facets and all the big hits will be in the show. Most people will know

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him because he did cross over to the pop charts so frequently. You'll see just a really multifaceted, talented singer.

It's not going to be chronological; it's going to be by style so you'll see a cowboy performance from the '50s followed by a pop performance from the '80s. You'll see Marty in all of his many incarnations and some of them are pretty hilarious costumes as well! There's a great visual sense in this (program) and you can feel Marty's charisma in this footage. You'll really get a sense of what a masterful entertainer he was.

**And you're the host?**

Yes, I'm the host. I am thrilled to be doing it (the show). He's been a hero of mine for my whole life. From as early as I can remember I've had Marty Robbins records. I've always loved him. I sang along with him, I harmonized with them, I wanted to be him. He was just so charismatic, so great.

**Have there been other specials about him?**

Not recently, there was one he did himself called "A Man of His Music" in the '70s, but to my knowledge there has never been a biography or a documentary about him. So this will be very groundbreaking and the first career overview television special.

**Why do you think it's taken so long for someone to do this?**

Because he died so young, he didn't endure into the modern media era. Nowadays, we have all of these magazines and all these television shows and this onslaught of celebrity-driven news. Marty died before all of that happened. He was one of those people whose legend lives in their music because there is no news about them. And he did so few interviews and wasn't a big press person so the media has not paid him his due, what he deserves. The fans have; they've never forgotten, the records still sell. But, the media just kind of went on to the next celebrity.

**What do you think he would have thought about the celebrity obsession in the current media?**

I think he would've held himself above it. Marty is the kind of singer whose voice doesn't get old. If he were alive today, he would still be singing. Some of those country singers can continue their careers well into their seventies, because their voices are strong. It never deteriorates. He could yodel right up 'till the end. I'd like to think he'd still be out there on the *Opry* stage and on the road singing. A lot of people who were fans here in town, they all say he's not really dead. They just imagine that he's out there on the road somewhere doing a show right now.

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