

American Cowboy

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Western Music's New Vitality

Montana's Ken Overcast, who hails from the aptly named Paradise Valley, is helping make sure that never happens. "This is the best year we've ever had with our music," he said from his 2,500-acre ranch in June. "For me, the Western lifestyle is my passion, and music is a reflection of that. I grew up in this country. It was a wonderful, idyllic life, but we worked like dogs. I grew up in the same place as my parents and grandparents. I've been married to the same gal for 40 years, and I live within 15 miles of where three generations of my family has lived.

"Some people," Overcast continues, "can't fathom that. I went to a country school with two rooms and just three classmates."

A champion yodeler, Overcast combines cowboy songs with Western swing in concert and on his records. And what of today's country radio? "I hate it," he says. "Mainstream country all sounds the same, and to me it's a vain attempt at regurgitated 1970s rock'n'roll."



Above: Overcast's music reflects his connection to his Montana home and the Western lifestyle he's lived there.