

WESTERN HORSEMAN

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FEBRUARY 2008

Cowboy Culture >> on the scene

Oklahoma!

BY JENNIFER DENISON

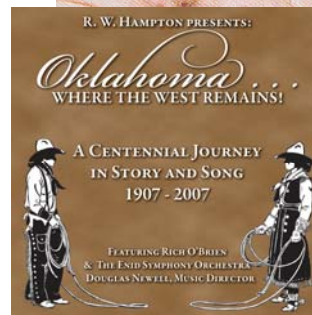
Acclaimed Western recording artist R.W. Hampton's deep, velvety vocals, idyllic lyrics and cowboy authenticity have captivated audiences worldwide.

On his latest musical CD, *Oklahoma ... Where the West Remains!*, Hampton chronicles the history, people and places that have shaped the Sooner State. The brainchild of Oklahoma native Edna Mae Holden and produced by Rich O'Brien, the CD was released in the fall to commemorate Oklahoma's centennial. Sold-out crowds enjoyed live performances of the music in September 2006 and on Centennial Sunday this past November.

At the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, where this photo was taken, Hampton's rich vocals blended smoothly with the accompaniment of the Enid, Oklahoma, Symphony Orchestra, directed by Douglas Newell.

According to Hampton, *Oklahoma ... Where the West Remains!* is the story of Oklahoma, but it's also the story of America. The singer and songwriter contributed to four numbers on the CD, including the patriotic waltz he wrote, titled "For the Freedom." However, the project was a three-year collaborative effort between Hampton, Holden, O'Brien, and the musicians and directors involved in composing and playing the scores.

Holden researched and penned the historical narrative Hampton recites, and wrote or co-wrote with O'Brien several songs on the album, including the title track, "Where the West Remains." In addition to producing the album, O'Brien also performs on it and in the live performances with his Chisholm Trail String Band.



This musical venture marks Hampton's first time performing with a full orchestra, which has been an emotional and exhilarating experience for him.

"Walking out on stage and hearing that big music puts a lump in my throat," he says. "The only thing I can compare it to is riding a great horse."

Hampton was raised in Texas and presently resides on his ranch in New Mexico, but he considers Oklahoma a special state. In the 1980s, he served as the "poster boy" for an Oklahoma tourism campaign. He also recalls listening to old-timers' stories of living in Oklahoma in the early 1900s, when it was still Indian Territory.

"Not that long ago, Oklahoma was still a place for buffalo hunters, outlaws, cowboys and trail drovers," he explains. "The state has and always will embody the mythical West."

To order the CD, call Cimarron Sounds at (800) 392-0822, or purchase on-line at rwhampton.com or wherethewestremains.com.

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