

MUSIC CITY FREE TEXAS

DAVID RODRIGUEZ



#60 AUGUST 1994

**JOE BOB GOES TO
THE DRIVE-IN
HONEST JOHN
REVIEWS**

WC Clark

Guy Forsyth

Lil' Son Jackson

Miss Molly

Gary Primich

David Rodriguez

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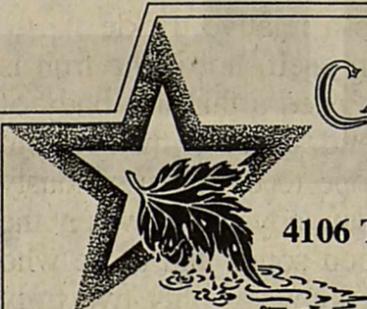
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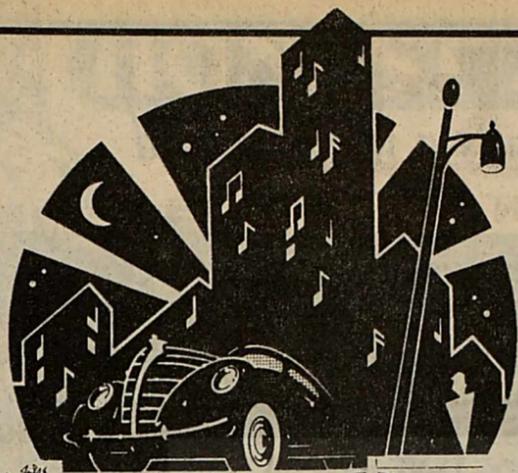


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THE WORLD WELL LOST

#60. Which, if you use your wits and if you're good at arithmetic, means likewise five solid years of getting into trouble on a monthly basis. When Eve McArthur, now a pillar of SXSW, and I fired this sucker up, we figured Texas music was important and somebody ought to be writing about it and, as nobody else was doing it, elected ourselves. The question, of course, was did anybody else want to read about it? After five years and 60 issues, I guess I can say that the numbers speak for themselves. I know some people seem to really hate the mag, but then others seem to really like it, so that's cool. ♦ For me, the real reward of moving here from the London mainstream isn't just the music but the people who make it. One reason I don't miss the Big Time is that far too often I wound up trying to get something usable out of people who had no discernible personality. If you want to know what it's like to interview Randy Travis, for instance, try talking to a 40w lightbulb, though friends still out there tell me the latest crop are even duller.

♦ By contrast, an extraordinary number of Austin musicians seem to belong to another, more highly evolved race, though the truth is that they're just better, brighter, more interesting and articulate human beings. I divide musicians into four basic categories; 1) those I like as people and

respect as artists, 2) those I don't like but respect, 3) those I like but don't respect and 4) those I neither like nor respect. That first category is a whole lot larger here than it was in London. You think personalities shouldn't come into it? Sorry, friend, there's too many good people to write about, I don't have time for jerks.

♦ And it's not just musicians, it's people in and around the business too. It's a given in the industry, easily observable at SXSW say, that anyone you're talking to will trample over your dead body if they spot somebody more important, but you don't get that in Austin, or anyway nothing like as much as the main centers.

♦ So, I'd like to thank all those people, on stage, back stage and in the audience, for making the last five years so, um, interesting, and, hell, that's all I ask of life. Particular thanks to all the people who actually paid for ads, the subscribers, whose checks are as much moral as financial support, and love and kisses to (alphabetically) Troy, Mike & Janet, Cash & Roger, Betty & Gene, Jimmie & Janet, James & Gayle, Joe & Brenda, Butch, Laura, Griff, Michael, Sean & Leslie, Mandy & Roy, Peg & Glynda, Toni, X, Jenna, David, Barbara, Mark, Jesse & Mary, Don, Rita, Eddie & Sandra, Louis, Danny & Lu. Oh, yes, and to you for picking this one up and reading it. JC

DAVID RODRIGUEZ

There is a tide, and all that. In any art form, even the greatest talents have creative peaks, whose origins and passing are part of the mystery. If you look at the discographies of almost any notable singer-songwriter, at least those not tied to record company vagaries, Butch Hancock or Townes Van Zandt for instance, you can see, as clearly as if carved into marble, the dates of their 'hot' period or periods, the fertile years when songs just poured out, or drifted in through the window as Van Zandt describes the creation of *Pancho & Lefty*. Then, for whatever reason, it stops happening. Maybe it's other interests, maybe it's an excess of drink, drugs or religion, maybe it's being endlessly on the road, maybe it's enough success to take them out of the real world, but the wellspring slows to a relative trickle.

♦ Fecundity, of course, isn't a virtue in itself, not if the fruit is horse apples, but singer-songwriters do need a fair size body of work to attain any significant stature, and, come to that, fill out the set list. I mean, you can't really hope to be taken seriously with three original songs and 30 Dylan covers. Between the people who've written a handful of good songs and those who churn out reams of dreck every day, I know of only two truly outstanding Texas singer-songwriters who are currently on a creative roll. One is William James IV of Corpus Christi, the other is David Rodriguez. Rather oddly, both are lawyers, though Rodriguez no longer admits to it.

♦ When Rodriguez emerged in 1990 from a 10 year hiatus as a lawyer and families man, he brought with him the material that

had made him a songwriting force back when. Most of the songs on the 1991 *Man Against Beast*, or *The True Cross* as it was retitled on CD, were written between 1975 and 1978, and, if he'd done nothing else, would have put him up there among the Texas songwriting greats. However, he followed up in 1992 with *Angels, Avatars & Ashes*, made up of songs written since his renaissance, including such exceptional work as *Constant War*, *She Hits You Like A Train* and *Five Smooth Stones*. Much of this album, combined with some of *Man Against Beast*, was released on a Swiss CD as *Landing 92*. This month, Rodriguez self-releases another solo album of new material, *Forgiveness* (see Reviews), in September, his Swiss label will release a completely different album, *The Friedens Angel*, featuring the wonderful Carrie Luz Rodriguez and Chris Searles, and a third, as yet untitled, of live recordings from various sources, with some overlaps but also yet more previously unrecorded songs, should be out in December. On top of all that, he has another album's worth of material in the can, recorded with Tex-Mex musicians.

♦ Clearly, this is not a pace that can be kept up indefinitely. In the meantime, Rodriguez finds himself in much the same situation as Van Zandt in 1973 or Hancock in 1981, with boxes of great albums hot off the presses but still making fans one at a time. Maybe that's why even great singer-songwriters dry up, because it takes so long for the world to catch up with them—even in 1987, Van Zandt titled his 9th album *Live & Obscure*. Be the first on your block to discover David Rodriguez. JC

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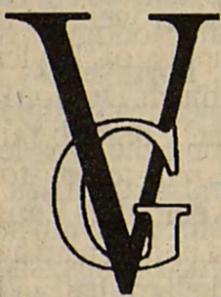
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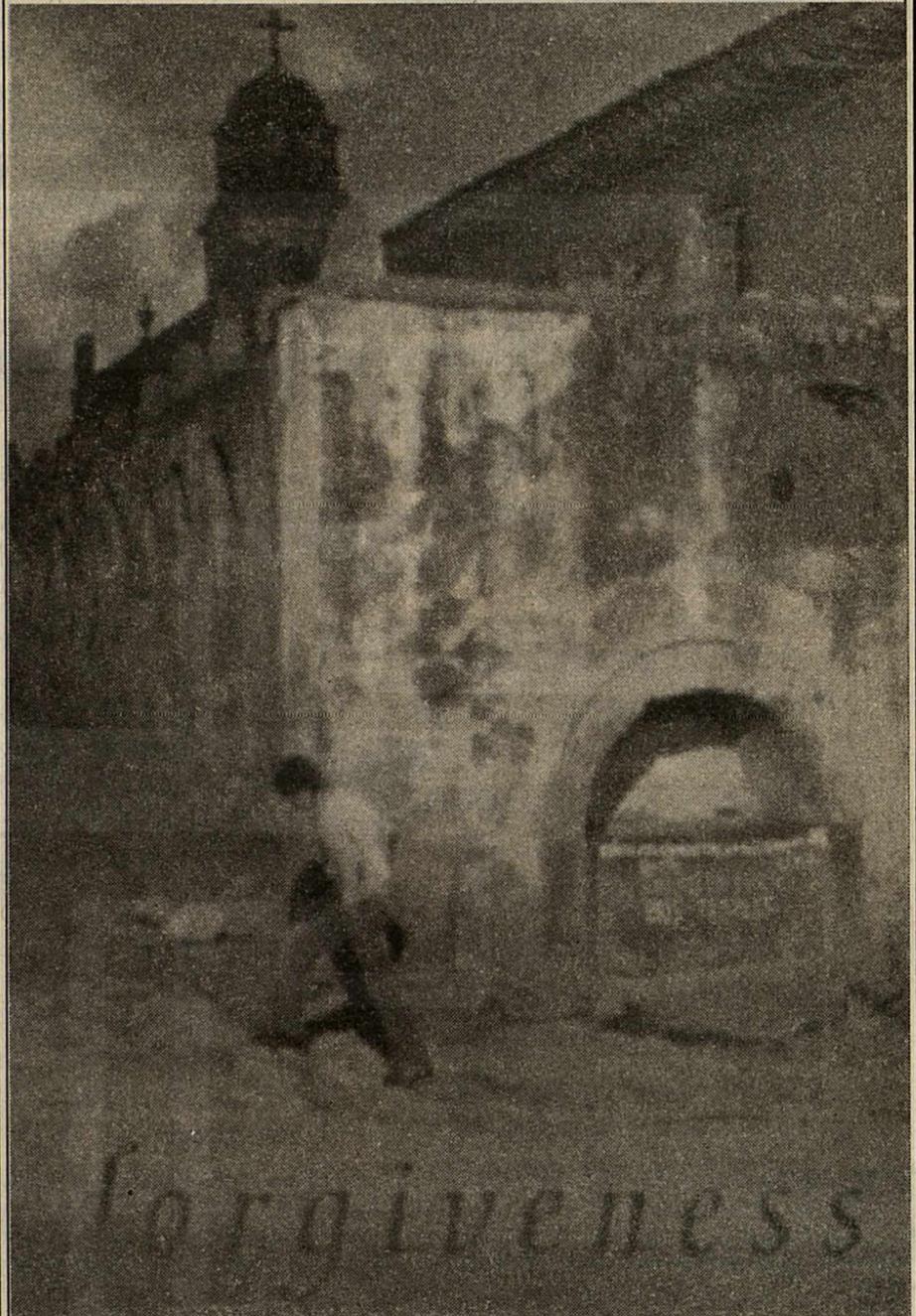
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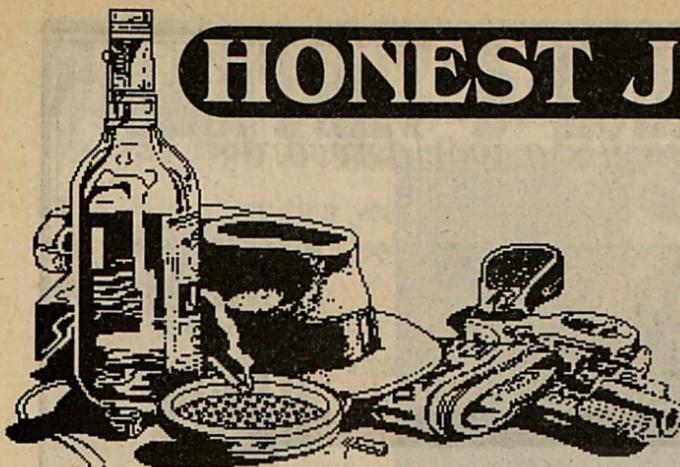
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Sept 11 - Cibolo Creek Country Club,
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HONEST JOHN'S SMOKING SECTION



Should I could try the old 'spot the deliberate mistake' routine on 'Moynihans'? Joe Nick Patoski rang in to see if he could claim a trivia prize, but the fact is I haven't the faintest idea where that one came from. I'd already spotted it before getting a call from a lady who, like Guy Clark, was born in **Monahans**, West Texas. "There aren't many of us and we're very sensitive about it," she told me, allowing that "nobody outside the oil business has ever heard of it."

◆ Last month's cover feature prompted a great story from **Keith Ferguson**, who recalled playing in a trio with **Erik Hokkanen** and **Junior Brown** at—wait for it—the State Hospital. Ferguson says it was "the strangest gig I ever played," which, given his history must be really going it some. All I can say is that it's a good thing they were carrying instruments.

◆ The feature on session players (Androids Or Zombies?) seemed to touch a raw nerve among Austin musicians, many of whom have been burned by the slimy practice. One story I'd heard but forgotten was about the **LeRoi Brothers** making an album for Warner. First the producer decided he couldn't work with Jackie Newhouse, the bass player, then the session bass player decided he couldn't work with drummer Mike Buck, so Don Leady, who quit the band immediately after, was the only member to actually play on the record, which the company then decided wasn't good enough. What a surprise.

◆ Re Jimmie Dale Gilmore's eponymous Hightone album, I remarked, in the long defunct, pre-MCT Austin mag *Oasis*, that I'd pay money to be there when someone tried to tell **Butch Hancock** that he'd be making his next album in Nashville with session musicians and that the material would be selected for him. Shortly after, I ran into Butch, who told me, "Hell, I'd pay money to be there!"

◆ Picking up on the cover feature, **Butch** once told me about going to a Dallas pressing plant in 1978 to pick up 1000 copies of his first album, **West Texas Waltzes**. He drove to the nearest record store and they very reluctantly accepted three on consignment. "I went back out to the pickup, looked at those 997 LPs and thought 'Oh God, what

have I done?'" He never did go back to that store, "They've probably still got them, waiting for me to come and take them away."

◆ I asked Butch the other day what became of his **World Tour of Texas** project, mentioned back in 30 Daze of February days. It's still in the notion stage, but now much grander, involving linked concerts first in the Texas namesake, then the original city, ie Paris, Texas, then Paris, France, kind of a Texas Tour of the World. Just to complicate his life, I lobbed a brand-new idea at him—Round The World In 80 Gigs—which he snapped up. I can't believe nobody's ever thought of that one.

◆ Having become a devotee of Ms **Rachel Rhodes** the singer, as heard on the Austin Klezmer's CD **East Of Odessa**, I've learned that describing the 17 year old as a wunderkind is hardly an exaggeration. **Emily Kaitz**, herself a mean hand with four flatwound strings, tells me she's also "a very good" electric bass player who played several gigs with her last year. As I used my favorite Roy Acuff quote in last month's issue ("let's get it right the first time . . ."), this seems a good opening for another great Acuff story. Seems a young hopeful went to him and said "Mr Acuff, sir, I really want to make it in country music. What do you suggest I do?" to which Acuff replied, "Learn to play bass guitar, son. There's always work for a good bass player."

◆ "What I like about Austin," said the Florida singer-songwriter, "is that when I tell people my name instead of saying 'What?' like they do everywhere else, here they say 'Any kin to Max?' It's like a perfectly ordinary name here." Actually though, **Marie Nofsinger** spells it wrong.

◆ First time I heard the expression "going to church" in a music context, it was used to state an intention of going to Hut's on a Sunday night to see Tex Thomas & The Danglin' Wranglers. After that gig was axed, it was adopted for Don Walser & The Pure Texas Band's Monday nights at Henry's. Recently, though, I heard a new use from the band Midnight Rain, applied to an actual location, designated as the cathedral of a brand new sect—**Jovita's Witnesses**.

◆ After he'd played Emo's, a strange crowd showed up at **Don Walser's** Jovita's Tuesday and Mark Rubin was very taken by the fact that two punkettes were two-stepping to a waltz, but I had to point out that this was real progress—a couple of years ago, they'd have been slamdancing to a waltz.

◆ I can't help but feel sorry for Christiane Bird—all over the country people must be picking up copies of the new, updated edition of her ambitious **Jazz & Blues Lover's**

Guide To The USA, turning straight to the section on their home town and going, Oh yeah? Under Austin we find some very interesting tidbits. The really fascinating revelation is that, according to Ms Bird, **Antone's Billy Blues** at 2nd and Colorado is "An enormous club, it features three music rooms with retractable walls, a patio and a restaurant." I don't pretend to be completely au fait with the ongoing saga, so I wouldn't offer more than 8 to 5 against Antone's Billy Blues ever actually opening its doors, but I'm sure you can get better odds if you shop around. Other gems are a reference, under Babe's, to "popular bluegrass-C&W slide guitarist Don Walser," and, under radio, the observation that KUT features "very occasional jazz," which may come as something of a surprise to DJs Paul Ray and Jay Trachtenberg. Still, I did like Bird's casual, throwaway line about Top Of The Marc, the Katz's of the club world, in an 'Also' roundup, "occasionally books contemporary jazz."

◆ Ever noticed that you don't see a lot of baldies in music? I'm not talking about trademark chrome domes like Julian Dawson's, but of dreaded Male Pattern Baldness. Just as men can never grasp the mystery of the Curse, those of us with a head of hair can never truly understand hair loss. We secretly figure we'd handle it better, just as men secretly think they could handle PMS. Perhaps because they don't want to be associated with Phil Collins (and who can blame them?), musicians, especially frontmen, hate having the stage lights bouncing off the tops of their heads, but unlike other entertainers they have a simple one-shot remedy—The Hat. Locally, one recalls Jimmy LaFave's Nazi beatnik leather beret, thankfully long discarded, but the most famous hat, concealing the worst kept secret in show biz, is Dwight Yoakam's. However, I've recently learned that **Stevie Ray Vaughan's** gaucho jobbie, well, let's just say that a lifetime supply of Brylcreem wouldn't have cost him much. Did you know that? I didn't know that. Come to think, I wonder if that was the *real* reason for the famous tension between the Vaughan brothers? I mean, it must be a bit hard having an *older* brother with the best hair in town when your own forehead's moving rapidly northwards.

◆ It's not often that one has to concede moral superiority to the Metroplex, but in the matter of **New Sincerity**, I have to hand it to them. A reader in Richardson rang to ask what the phrase implied and when I explained said, "Oh, yes, we had that up here too, only we called it Whiny White Kids from North Dallas."

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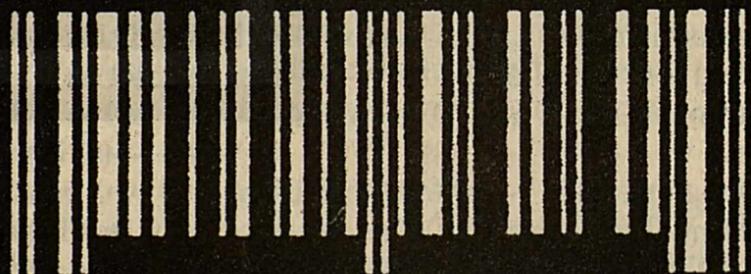
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JOE BOB GOES TO THE DRIVE-IN

by Joe Bob Briggs, Drive-In Movie Critic of Grapevine, Texas

We're about four years down the road since the term "politically correct" was invented.

At first I thought this was a good thing. We needed words to describe the kind of self-righteous Goody Two-Shoes jerkolas who slobber their slogans all over everybody else.

But a strange thing happened once the PC Wars started.

The Politically Correct people became even *more* retarded. I mean, in 1989 maybe they were just saying that all white male heterosexual authors should be banned from the library. By 1994, after being branded "PC" all this time, they were saying that lesbians and blacks invented everything that civilization is based on, but it was *stolen* by the aggressive destroying white male, who should now be transported to Papua New Guinea and kept in a cage.

In other words, you would think that somewhere, on some college campus, a bunch of Politically Correct diehards would get together and say, "You know, we're kinda getting a bad name here. People are laughin at us. And it's because of the really strange nutcases on the fringes of this movement. So let's kinda *distance* ourselves from these people and show everybody how good-hearted we are, and how all we're trying to do is bring about a better world."

But instead they reacted in the *other* direction. Anybody who accused them of *being* politically correct became a dingbat reactionary Jesse Helms-loving racist sexist Nazi. And they all turned into glazed-eye Bolshevik bomb throwers trying to relive 1917, certain that everything old must be destroyed forever.

But then *another* strange thing happened. All through the years 1983 to 1989, I made fun of all kinds of liberal organizations—feminists, ethnic-rights groups, gays, lesbos. I founded DAMM—Drunks Against Mad Mothers. I made fun of conservative groups, too, because I'll make fun of *anybody*, but during those years, 1983 to 1989, the liberals were the best targets, because they always *fought back*, because so many of them were in positions of power, and because they always got *mad* if you made fun of them.

So, during those years I was frequently attacked in the media. Columnists said I was "insensitive." Molly Ivens said on more than one occasion that I was picking on the poor and the helpless and the powerless, and that satire was to be used

only on the rich and powerful (thanks for the journalism lesson, Molly). And everybody *always* got upset if I picked on black politicians, even if they were from the loonie fringe and even if they were outright *liars*. And this was *relentless*—behind the scenes, publicly, everywhere—with people saying Joe Bob's racist, Joe Bob is sexist, Joe Bob is homophobic, Joe Bob is this or that.

And then, after this "political correctness" business started, all that stopped. And the *same* people who had *attacked* me between 1983 and 1989 were now writing columns about how *wrong* the Political Correctness movement is, and how silly it was when someone representing the poor of the helpless or the powerless uses that position to repress somebody else.

To which I say, please come and get both these groups—the PC flame-throwers, and the media types who only express an opinion when there's *no risk in expressing it*—and get em *real* jobs, like picking up trash on the interstate. You know what I mean?

Let's move on, okay?

Speaking of modern stuff that doesn't make any sense, **Test Tube Teens From The Year 2000** is the old familiar tale of high school students from the future who zap themselves back to 1994 so they can sneak into a girl's boarding school, dress up in drag, sleep with future Playboy Playmates, and convince Morgan Fairchild that she shouldn't carry out her plan to make all sex illegal.

Sure, we've seen it before, but have we seen it with a Terminator-style Arnold Schwarzenegger impersonator and a disco-till-you-puke party scene?

I think not.

Two dead bodies. Twenty-two breasts. Great extended shower scene. Goofball time-travel machine. Drive-In Academy Award nominations for Morgan Fairchild as the anti-sex school principal whose motto is "Make money, not love"; Brian Bremer, as the nerdy test tube teen; Christopher Wolf, as the jock test tube teen; Michelle Matheson, as the bookish boarding school girl who turns into a punk mama; and

Tamara Tohill, as the future nuclear physicist with two enormous talents.

Two and a half stars.

Joe Bob says check it out.



Tamara Tohill is the aspiring nuclear physicist at a girls boarding school run by Morgan Fairchild in the historically accurate docudrama **Test Tube Teens From The Year 2000**.

JOE BOB'S ADVICE TO THE HOPELESS

Victory Over Communism! The Mendon Drive-In in Mendon, Mass, still packs in 300 cars on the weekends, attracted by the 40-by-80-foot screen, radio sound, and a revamped concession stand featuring a vintage Wurlitzer jukebox. Paul R Blatchford of Newton, Gregg Walker of Cambridge, and Biff Dorsey of Portland, Ore, remind us that, with eternal vigilance, the drive-in will never die. To discuss the meaning of life with Joe Bob, or to get free junk in the mail and Joe Bob's world-famous newsletter, "The Joe Bob Report," write Joe Bob Briggs, PO Box 2002, Dallas, TX 75221. Joe Bob's Fax line is always open: 214-368-2310.

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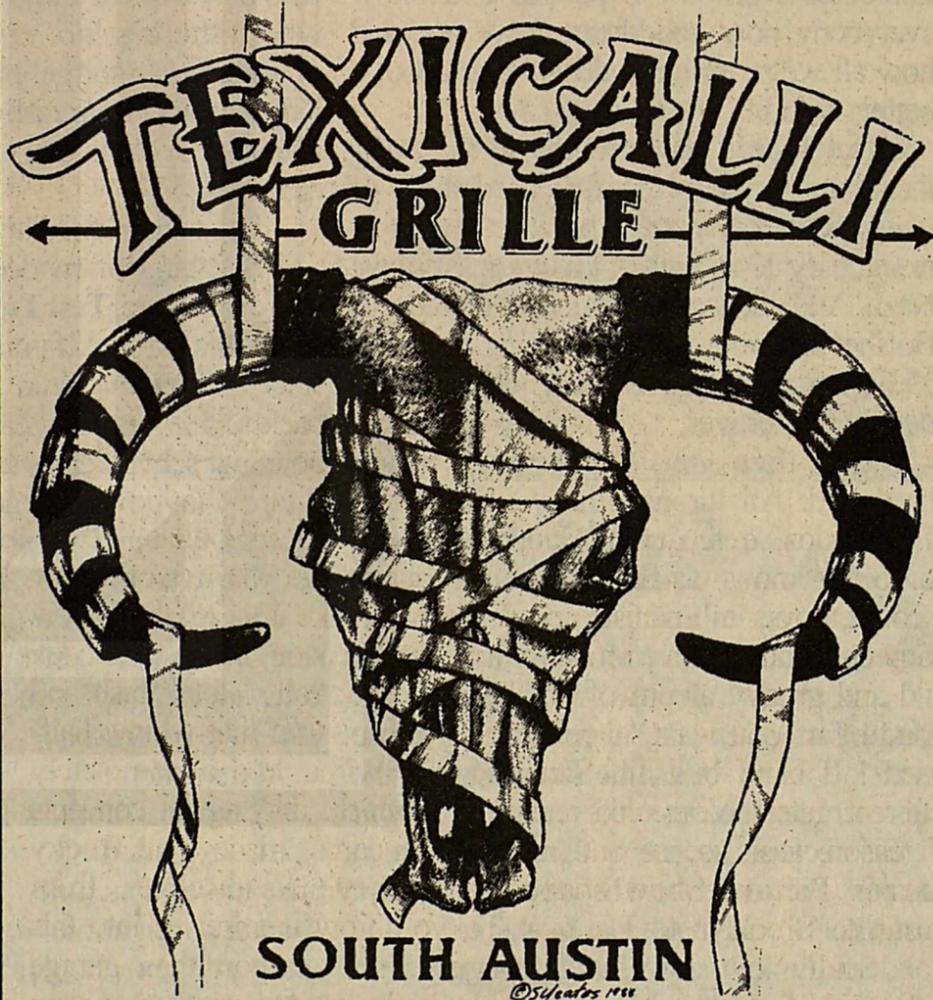
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DAVID RODRIGUEZ
FORGIVENESS

(World Records, CD/cassette)

The math is a bit complicated (see cover feature), but this is essentially Rodriguez's third album and another, very different, chapter in his unfolding personal odyssey. Where **Man Against Beast**, aka **The True Cross**, can, simplifying a good deal, be seen as a conscious assertion of Mexican-American identity, reacting to the Cosmic Cowboy glorification of aspects of Texas past and present that Hispanics experience as oppression, exploitation and brutality, and **Angels, Avatars & Ashes** came largely out of his experiences as an East Side Chicano activist, this time he begins to stand outside such frames of reference. The album's title can be seen as a clue, and it's noticeable that Rodriguez now seems considerably less urgent, intense and passionate in his singing and formidable guitar playing, more reflective and patient. Which is not to say that he's forgotten his political soul, *Sisto* is a highly charged commentary on legal inequity and *Amistad*, where aboriginal cave paintings were drowned in a reservoir, elliptically addresses the lot of a subordinate culture. At another extreme, however, *Hjalmar And Odd*, sort of a sequel to *Constant War*, continues Rodriguez's exploration of Norse symbolism, while other songs are autonomous observations of life and experience. A transitional album, perhaps, but, even though he's held back some the most immediately effective of his new material, such as *Lucky Old Me*, for his second Swiss release, **The Friedens Angel**, due out next month, one that further cements Rodriguez's position as an ascendant star among Texas singer-songwriters. **JC**

WAKE UP DEAD MAN

BLACK CONVICT WORKSONGS FROM TEXAS PRISONS

(Rounder, CD)

Music has been a commodity, a luxury one at that, for so long that it comes as a shock to listen to music with a purpose, a purpose as stark as the title of this collection



of 11 black convict worksongs. Bruce Jackson, who recorded them in 1965/66 at various Texas prisons, mainly the hardcore Ellis Unit, observes that "The work song is not a song about work or a song one happens to sing while work goes on, it is a song that helps a person or group of persons *do* work." Keeping to the meter prevented injuries in tree-felling and provided a tempo that helped avoid punishment for slow working and also, rather subtly, allowed a chain gang to slow down in unison so the guards didn't notice. Also, as on the slave plantations from which

Texas penitentiaries developed (which, in turn, were based on African models), black convicts could sing things they could never say. Recorded on site, as it were, with a leader singing often extemporized couplets, the rest of the gang chanting a refrain and axes and hoes providing a percussive beat, the songs have a harsh grandeur and beauty, some of the lyrics, fully reproduced in Jackson's massively informative booklet, tremendously powerful. The only example of their kind to survive in 20th century America, these songs have now disappeared as a living tradition, wiped out by the impact of prison reform, mechanization, desegregation and black consciousness (whites and young blacks wouldn't, or couldn't, join in them), and they're so contextual that it's hard to imagine anyone trying to reproduce them as entertainment, sparing them the sad fate of sea shanties, now sung by folkies who wouldn't have lasted five minutes in real life. Recommended as an antidote to millionaire entertainers moaning about the pressures of stardom, or kids with a guitar and an attitude airing their puny little problems. **JC**

TURBAN RENEWAL

A TRIBUTE TO SAM THE SHAM & THE PHARAOHS

(Norton, CD/double LP)

Uno, dos, tres, quatro! Domingo Samudio of Dallas, Texas, better known as Sam The Sham, taught the whole world how to count to four in Spanish, and if you can make it to 26, that's how many cuts you get (even more on the vinyl version) on an ultra-cool, wild and groovy album of undiluted rock & roll—total trash and proud of it. You want 'alternative'? Well, piss on that whiny, half-assed kid band bullshit, Samudio was wired into a completely different, utterly demented reality, one which, defying all concepts of reason, logic, sense and musical standards, made **The Rocky Horror Picture Show** sound like Disney. His disciples, from Austin to Brooklyn to Juarez to Tokyo, throw themselves into this wonderfully low, low budget project, more carport than garage rock, with feckless abandon—if anybody needed more than one take it was because they had to go back and fuck it up some more. Opening with a one man band version of *Wooly Bully* by Norton house lunatic Hasil Adkins and closing with Rudy 'Tutti' Grayzell y Los A-Bones' *Wooly Bully Español*, there are just so many great

tracks, notably The Lyres' brilliantly grungy *Ring Dang Doo*, The Original Ben Vaughan Combo's Fugs-like *Grasshopper* and *Deputy Dog* by Great Gaylord & The Friggs, including such true to the spirit covers of Samudio originals as The Brood's *Love Me Like Before*, Handsome Dick Manitoba's *Ju Ju Hand* and The Swingin' Neckbreakers *Struttin'*. Cut in Austin were Dallasite Homer Henderson's terrific *I Wish It Were Me*, featuring Casper Rawls, Speedy Sparks, Rocky Morales, Doug Sahm, Mike Buck and Joe Nick Patoski, The Fleshtones' *Medicine Man*, The Naughty Ones' *Sweet Talk*, the least bent track on the album, and Little Richard Elizondo Combo's *Jumonos (Let's Went)*, another Samudio song (sort of), with Sparks, John X Reed, Buck, Ted Roddy, Mark Korpi, Teisco Del Rey and killer sax by Michael Sweetman. Also, Roky Erickson contributed a "guest howl" to John Felice's *Lil' Red Riding Hood*. Though he makes occasional appearances in his historic persona, Samudio now suffers from bornagainitis, but, thanks to Billy Miller and Miriam Linna, editors of the brilliant and essential *Kicks* magazine, his legacy lives on. Irresistible. **JC**



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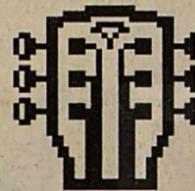
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**LAVELLE WHITE
MISS LAVELLE**

(Antone's, CD/cassette)

A veteran of Duke Records, Lavelle White is obviously a forgiving woman. Though Don Robey screwed her out of the songwriting credit for Bobby Bland's *Lead Me On*, putting his own name on it, she kicks off with a new version of her Duke hit single *Yes, I've Been Crying*, by 'Deadric Malone,' Robey's nom de ripoff. With Clarence Holliman on guitar and the massed Antone's all stars, producers Derek O'Brien and Sarah Brown bring out a full, rich, mellow sound that frames without crowding Miss Lavelle's dignified, gospel-flavored vocals. She has a mild tendency to be inspirational, but on the love songs, notably *Stop These Teardrops*, another remake of a Duke single, and *For You My Love*, she burns with a slow, passionate flame. Grit Factor: Medium

**MISS MOLLY
IN THE GARDEN**

(EFM, CD/cassette)

Pausing only to contemplate the tasteful, sensuous Gauguinesque nude cover shot, which seems to signal an end to her dominatrix days, we find that Ms Elswick, who's stomped the R&B and blues categories in Houston music polls these several years, has moved closer to R&B roots than on her eponymous, country and rock tinged debut. A riveting performer, with or without her bullwhip, she wisely elected to record in her natural habitat, live in a club, Houston's Satellite Lounge, and with some clever, unobtrusive tweaking, has come up with a bravura album. Elswick is a monster vocalist, and moves from boogie belting to slow, sultry, almost Broadway, balladry with a total confidence she didn't have in the studio. The material's stronger than on the first album, but she's so damned powerful that she could sell just about anything. The title track alone demonstrates that's she's a major force and, far as I can see, way the hottest female singer in Texas blues. Grit Factor: High

**LIL' SON JACKSON
BLUES COME TO TEXAS**

(Arhoolie, CD)

Recorded in 1960, when Melvin Jackson was working as a mechanic in Dallas, this has been out a few months, but I figured I'd throw it in as a reality check. In the late 40s, Jackson cut a 25¢ disc in an amusement arcade, one side of which was *Roberta Blues*, one of the cuts here, and sent it to Gold Star

in Houston, who not only picked him up but paid him \$200 a side and even royalties! Regional success led to signing with Imperial, for whom he made many singles that enjoyed immense popularity on black jukeboxes and radio across America. When Chris Strachwitz found him, he'd cut his ties with music and was persuaded to record again mainly by the notion that any album would be aimed at Europe, of which he had fond memories. Strachwitz, whose arresting idea of PR is tell the truth, remarks that Jackson, who died in 1976, "had a beautiful guitar style and a haunting voice but a very limited number of songs." 20 wonderful down-home Texas blues, authentic as it gets. Grit Factor: High

**WC CLARK
HEART OF GOLD**

(Black Top, CD)

By a neat coincidence, WC Clark was also a mechanic, until he joined Stevie Ray Vaughan's Triple Threat Revue as bass player. While he's probably sick of the 'Godfather of Austin Blues' tag, the amiable Clark was a bridge between the fading East Side black blues scene and the budding West Side white one, and when he left Vaughan to sing and play guitar with his own band, he found a solid niche in this new reality, being the only local black blues player to appear regularly at Antone's, for instance. The squeaky clean production showcases his range, understated singing, clean, crisp guitar work and songwriting, with six originals, including *Cold Shot*, co-written with Mike Kindred, though his name didn't appear on Vaughan's version. Grit Factor: Low

**GARY PRIMICH
TRAVELIN' MOOD**

(Flying Fish, CD)

The obvious thing about Primich's latest is that he is, as Juke Logan remarks in terrific liner notes, "a harmonica player's harmonica player," and his absolute mastery and versatility would shine through any recording process. The subtle thing is that he produced the album himself the old-fashioned way, live in the studio with vintage tube equipment. With Shorty Lenoir and Mark Korpi guitars and guests like Steve James acoustic guitar/mandolin, Floyd Domino piano, Riley Osborn B-3 and Mark Rubin acoustic bass, this very fine, with a lovely, warm sound. The title track alone redefines the harp, and the instrumentals, Duke Ellington's *Caravan* and Primich's *The Poodle Bites*, are virtuoso tours de force. One great moment

is the intro to *Ding Dong Daddy*, Jerry McCain reciting the lyrics into an answering machine. Primich's strong suit as a vocalist is charm, which doesn't really go with the raunchier numbers, but jeez, what a player. Grit Factor: Medium

**GUY FORSYTH BAND
HIGH TEMPERATURE**

(Lizard Discs, import CD)

What, compared to Primich, Forsyth lacks in artistry and technique he more than makes up for in attack and sheer panache. A consummate full court press showman, he and his band give a transcendental 150% every time they get on stage and never more so than on these 12 originals recorded live in Holland, the first of a 'Real Time' series. Forsyth once remarked (#38) "I'm a white boy from Kansas City. If you want authenticity, I can't help you," but he has an innate sense of the dangerous, desperate, jagged roots of the blues. No warm, fuzzy background music here, like Elswick, Forsyth is in your face like a broken bottle. Grit Factor: High

**SOLID SENDERS
EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE
ALLRIGHT**

(Tramp, import CD)

Keith Ferguson is the greatest electric bass player in the world, and if you want to discuss that proposition, I'll be out in the parking lot. I've been to see bands simply because he was in them, and the nice thing about the Senders is that there's more to it. Fronted by Spencer Thomas' big, no frills voice and the razor-edge guitar of Hector Watts, this is the Austin bar band par excellence, the standard to which all others should be held. Particularly effective are Jimmy McCracklin's *The Georgia Slop* (though they should have had Rhonda Lacy, who really murders it, as guest vocalist), Watts' Diddley-esque *Shake Em*, and Chuck Berry's *Beautiful Delilah*. If nothing else, there's always those great bass lines. Grit Factor: Medium

**JIMMIE VAUGHAN
STRANGE PLEASURE**

(Epic CD/cassette)

Some journalists want to be musicians, musicians want to be producers, guitarists want to be songwriters, songwriters want to be singers, sidemen want to be frontmen. I don't get it. Why can't people stick to doing what they're good at? Grit Factor: Low

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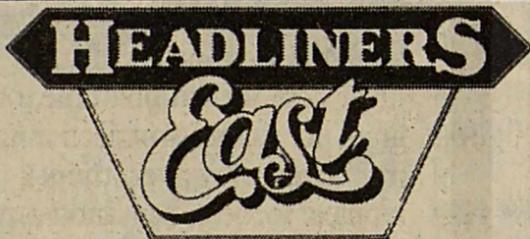
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Thu 4th-Sat 13th • AQUA FESTIVAL (Auditorium Shores). The good news is the revised price structure, \$4 a night or a mere \$2 with a Skipper Pin (\$1). The bad news is that most nights are barely worth \$2 worth of putting up with August dust and heat. The big exception is Friday 5th, with David Ball, Johnny Gimble & The Playboy Reunion and the return of Libbi Dwyer. Otherwise it's the usual deal of figuring if one guaranteed good act (Henry Zimmerle on the 6th, Lavelle White on the 7th, Santiago Jimenez and Valerio Longoria on the 10th, Joe Ely on the 11th, The Vrazels on the 12th) is worth the aggravation and uncertainty. Even so, it's way ahead of the fatuous 6th Street Music & Heritage Festival. I can't believe they'll actually get away with roping the area off and charging admission, but even if they do, count me among the multitude of people you'd have to *pay* to go to Sixth Street.

Fri 5th • MAD CAT TRIO (Jovita's). Danny Barnes, Erik Hokkanen and Mark Rubin—well, say no more. Three great players having the time of their lives.

Sat 6th/Sat 20th • DON WALSER'S PURE TEXAS BAND (Musicmania/La Zona Rosa). The 6th is a 3pm in-store performance to celebrate the release of **Rolling Stone From Texas** (reviewed last issue), and the 20th is a double bill with Wayne 'The Train' Hancock & The Honky Tonk Brakemen, a double dose of Real Country so natural and inspired that it's surprising it's never happened before, especially as Walser and Hancock share a manager.

Sat 6th • DAVID RODRIGUEZ (Lubbock Or Leave It). Release celebration for **Forgiveness** (see cover feature and Reviews). Runs from 7pm to 9pm, handily leaving time to drift over to . . .

Sat 6th • JIMMY LAFAVE'S NIGHT TRIBE (La Zona Rosa). With Oklahoma buddies The Red Dirt Rangers, kind a country version of The Band, opening, LaFave returns from several triumphant (or so reports from far flung MCT subscribers claim) weeks on the road promoting his new album.

Wed 17th • BUCK OWENS BIRTHDAY BASH (Continental). Tom Lewis and Casper Rawls' 3rd annual celebration, this time of the Tiger's 65th, with proceeds going to the Children's Advocacy Center. With Tom Clifford as MC, the line-up, which can be taken pretty much as definitive because, even with fairly tight organization, it's hard to see how they could fit any more in, is, in no particular order, Kelly Willis, Toni Price, Janet Lynn, Marti Brom, Amy Neuenschwander, Mary Cutrufello, Tony Villanueva & Brian Hofeldt of The Derailers, Ted Roddy, Dale Watson,

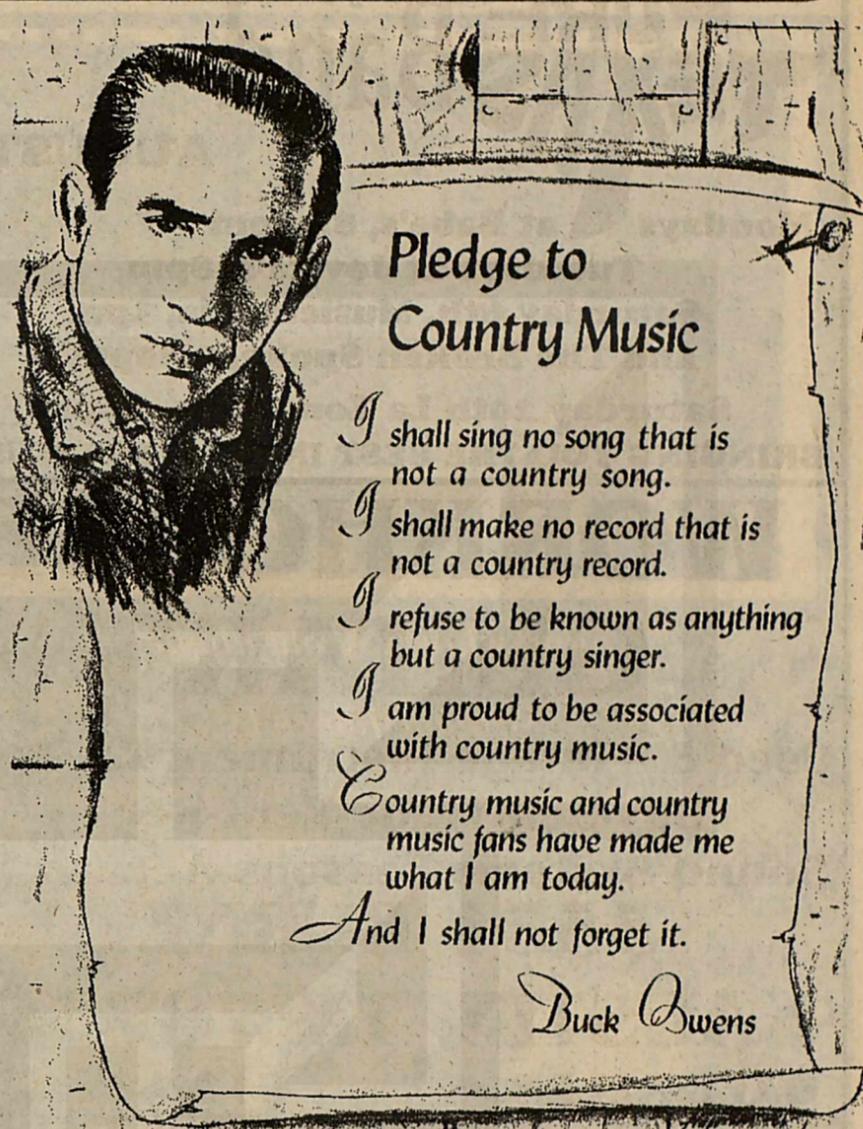
Jim Lauderdale, Nervous Purvis & The Jitters, Clay Blaker & The Texas Honky Tonk Band, the Cornell Hurd Band, Craig Marshall, Roy Heinrich, Brent Wilson, Lunchmeat, Charlie Robison, Bruce Robison, Jesse Deighton and Herman The German. For veterans of this event, I'm told that there'll be little if any repetition allowed (how many *Together Agains* did you hear?) and NO Lucinda Williams. There'll also be a souvenir T-shirt with a reproduction of a Fillmore West concert poster on the front and Owens' famous pledge (reproduced) on the back. Great sentiments but as empty as a politician's campaign promises—Owens recorded *Memphis* about a week later and went on to cut things like *Bridge Over Troubled Water*.

Fri 19th • GARY PRIMICH (Waterloo Records/Waterloo Ice House, 6th & Lamar). In store appearance (5pm) and performance to celebrate the release of **Travelin' Mood** (see Blues Reviews).

Fri 19th/Fri 26th • MARTI BROM & HER JET-TONE BOYS (Jovita's/Waterloo Ice House, 38th). A welcome dose of real rockabilly, which has been, and will go on being, thin on the ground this summer as High Noon spend more and more time out of town, out of state and out of the country. The trouble is that Brom can't fill the gap because her Jet-Tone Boys include two, and sometimes all three, members of the rockabilly trio, so when they're on the road, she's out of action too. Jovita's offers no cover and an early (8pm) show, Waterloo Ice House counters with AC, a longer show and a dance floor.

Fri 19th • MARCIA BALL (La Zona Rosa). The Queen of the Crawfish Circuit celebrates the release of her first album in too many years, copies of which should (perhaps, maybe) actually be available by then (review next issue). Watch for a Freda & The Firedogs reunion next month.

Tue 23rd • RHYTHM RATS WITH HENRY OJUTKANGAS (Hole In The Wall). A Laplander who plays great T-Bone Walker style Texas blues? Well, Finland already has the best surf band in the world, so why not a singer, guitarist and harmonica player to



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Buck Owens

rival the best native Texans have to offer? Over here for the first time, on a government grant to study American music (hey, that's my kind of government), Ojutkangas is reputed to be a sensational player.

Fri 26th • JESSE TAYLOR, JOHN X REED, PONTY BONE, BUKKA MICHEL & DAVID CARROLL (Jovita's). One of the best blues and rock combinations in town, but you'd think between them they could come up with a name instead of going on sounding like temporary lash-up.

Thu Sept 1 • AMARILLO HIGHWAY & OTHER ROADS (Paramount). Big stage reprise of the riveting thematic West Texas music and poetry show first presented at Lubbock Or Leave It, with Butch Hancock, Terry Allen, Michael Ventura, Charlene Hancock and Jesse Taylor.

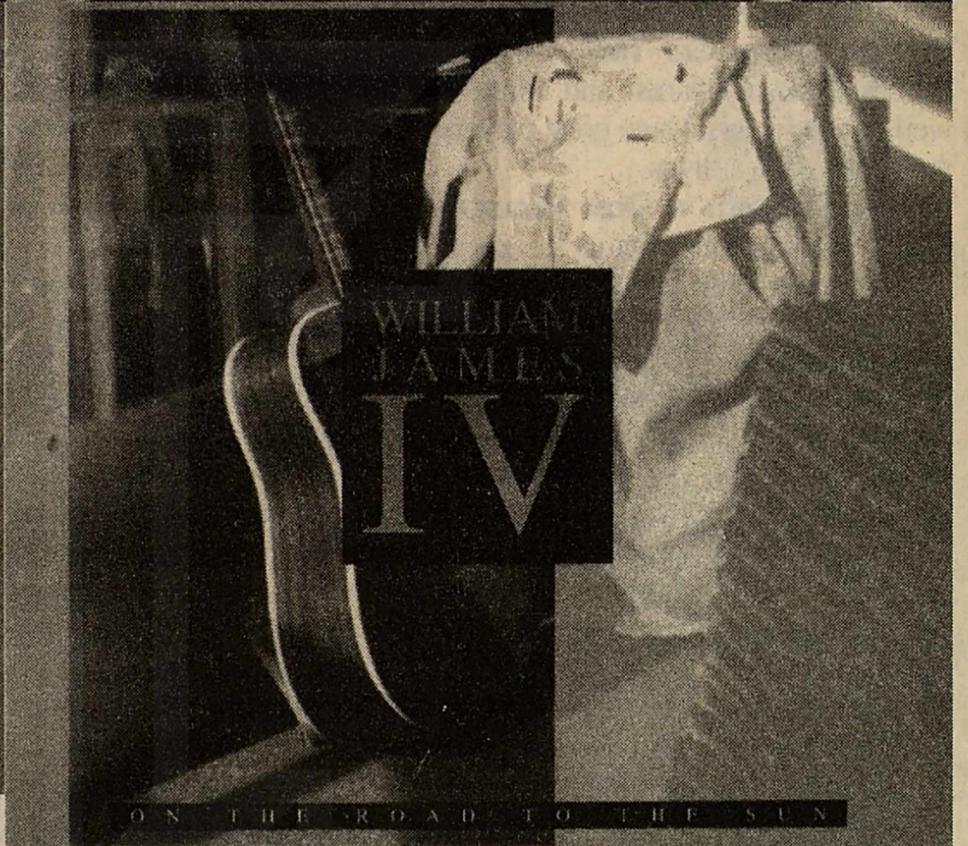
Fri Sept 2nd-Sun 4th • ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS HOMECOMING (City Coliseum/Auditorium Shores). Distant early warning of Eddie Wilson's mammoth celebration, featuring New Riders Of The Purple Sage, Butch Hancock, Joe Ely, Lou Ann Barton, Leon Russell (2nd); a Greasy Wheels reunion, Bill Kirchen & Too Much Fun, Augie Meyers, Tracy Nelson, Doyle Bramhall and Commander Cody & The Lost Planet Airmen (3rd); and a free picnic and ice cream social with more of the same (4th).

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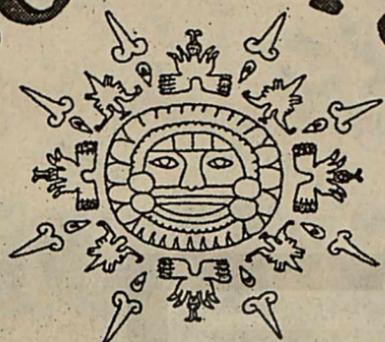
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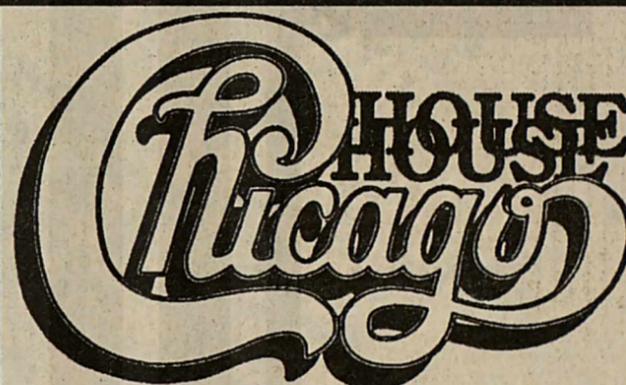
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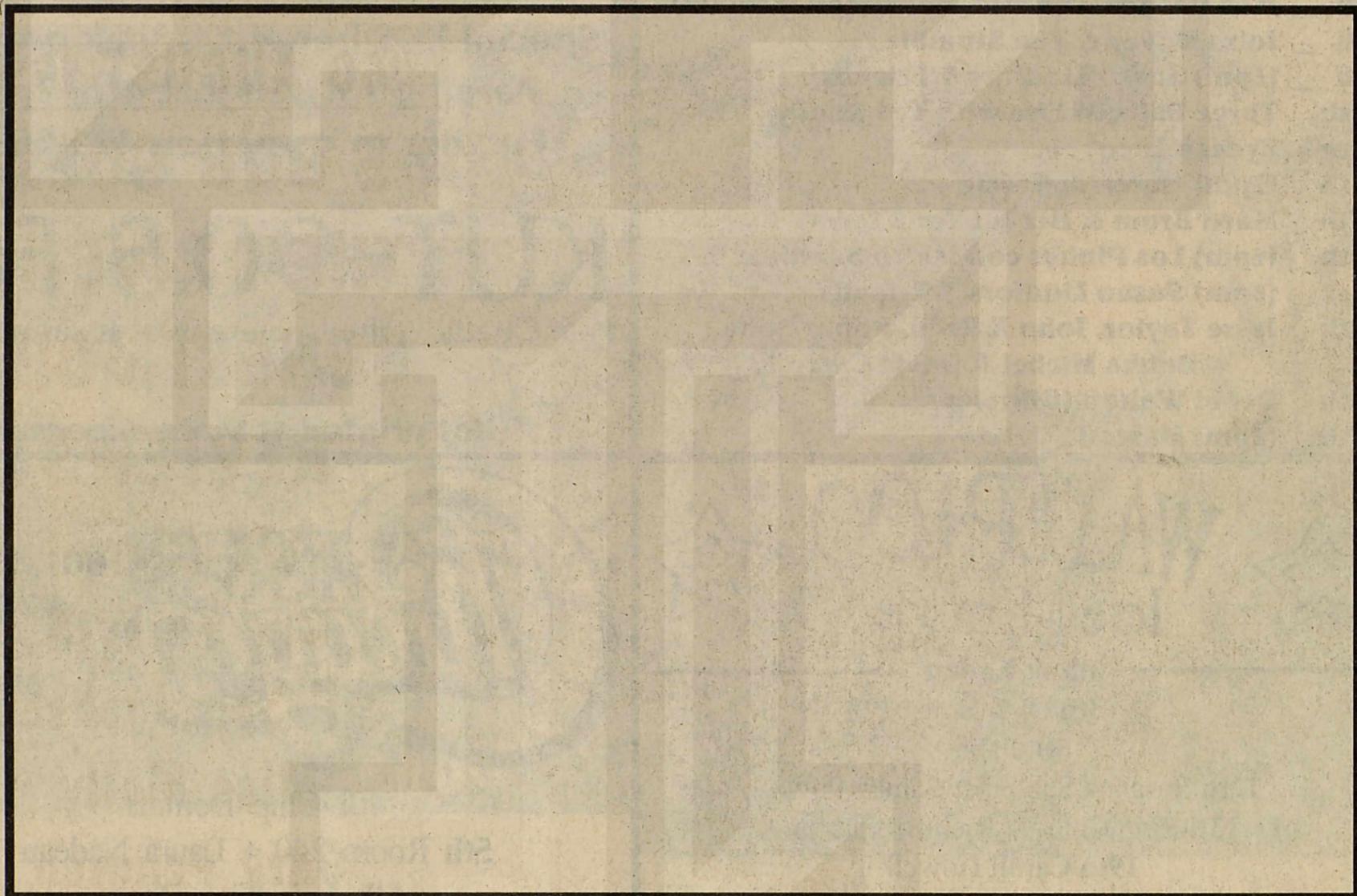
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