

3rd COAST MUSIC



**HANK & SHAIDRI
ALRICH**

#157/246 February 2010



**JOHN THE REVEALATOR
FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS**

#126

ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS

† MICK GREEN

† BOBBY CHARLES

REVIEWS * * * * * (or not)

FAT MAN & LITTLE BOY

JOHN LILLY • RECKLESS KELLY

'NONE OF THE HITS, ALL OF THE TIME'

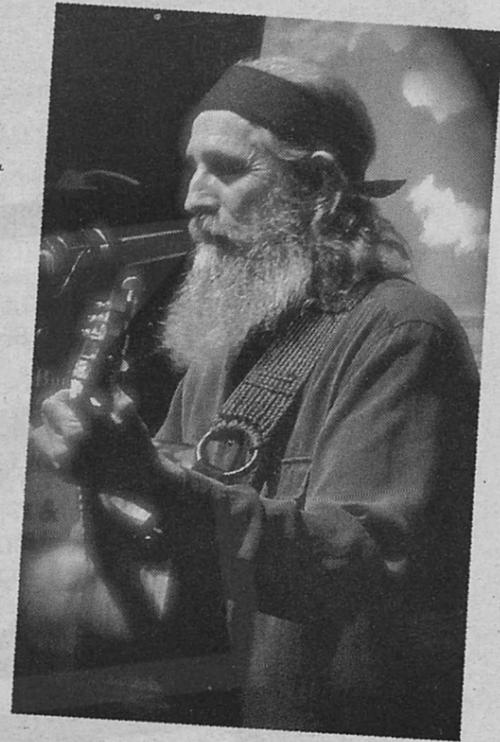
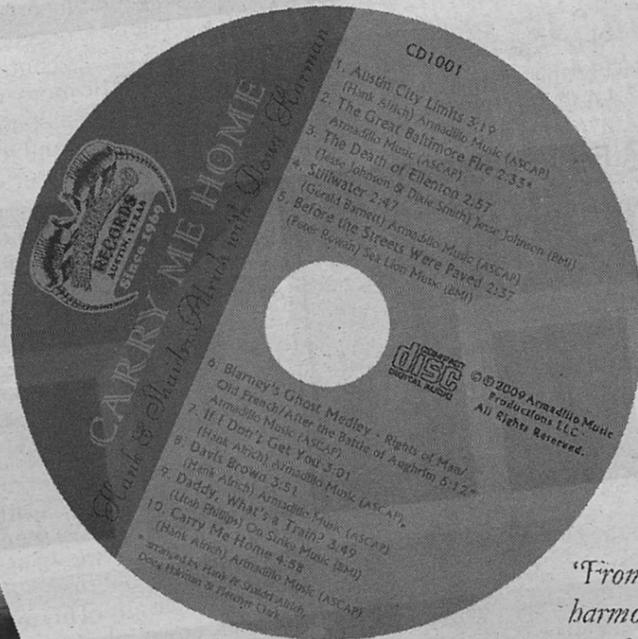
music on their own terms - music for music's sake... Joe Nick Patoski

"Gorgeous, egoless singing and subtle tuneful musicianship. This is something to prize from many angles."



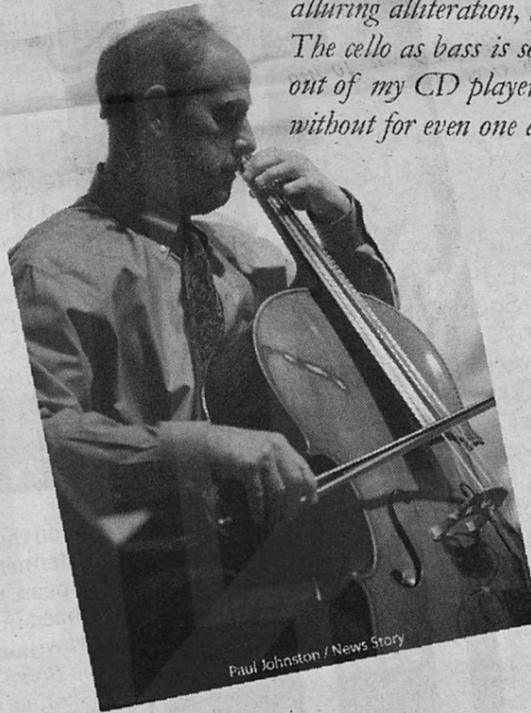
Paul Johnston / News Story

"I needed the space of the instrumental medley that followed to find a handkerchief and clean up."



"From the first draw of the bow on the cello to the last sweet harmony, it is delightfully engaging. Fabulously written and wonderfully performed songs - specific yet simple vocabulary, alluring alliteration, lovely melodies and gracious harmonies. The cello as bass is soothing and vivid at once. I cannot take it out of my CD player. I cannot bear the thought of being without for even one drive."

"My favorite songs on the CD, by a lot, are If I Don't Get You and title cut Carry Me Home -- both written by Hank Alrich. And -- far from being a 'front-loaded' CD -- Carry Me Home is the last song! There are so many good ones they could afford to put one of the best at the end. The pickin's are THICK here!"



Paul Johnston / News Story



"The clarity of these recordings is remarkable. The high resolution will be ear candy for any true audiophile."



"Carry Me Home, indeed. I believe the brain is only able to think it knows, and that true knowing and oneness can only occur in the heart. Mine knows that I heard beautiful, tremendously meaningful music for the past half hour or so. The songs themselves are undentable. The sound of father and daughter's voices together here is as rich as any vocal pairing I've heard. The mix is exquisite."

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FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #126

REAL MUSIC PLAYED FOR REAL PEOPLE BY REAL DJs

DURING JANUARY 2010

#1 RAY WYLIE HUBBARD:

A. ENLIGHTENMENT B. ENDARKENMENT

(Bordello) *AN/*BB/*BR/*CP/*JF/*JP/*LN/
*MDT/*NA/*RS/*RV/*SC/*TH/*TPR/*TR

- 2 Nancy Apple: Shine (Ringo)
*DA/*GS/*HA/*KD/*RH/*RMT/*RT/*TF/*XE
- 3 I See Hawks In LA: Shoulda Been Gold (American Beat)
*AA/*JH/*JM/*JT/*R78
- 4 VA: Crazy Heart (New West) *DS/*KW/*LB/*LMG/*MW
- 5 Dave Rawlings Machine: A Friend Of A Friend (Acony)
*3RC/*AB/*GC
- 6 Reckless Kelly: Somewhere In Time (Yep Roc) *KR
- 7 Kevin Deal: Seven (Blind Nello) *HP/*MF/*MM
- 8 Tony Denikos: Already Gone (TMC) *JD
- 9 Beautiful Loser Society: The Long Slow Decline
(Pearl Palace) *MN
- 10= Paul Burch: Still Your Man (Ramseur) *BP/*DD/*OO
Amber Digby: Another Way To Live
(Heart Of Texas) *RA/*TS
- 11 Patty Griffin: Downtown Church (Credential) *BF/*N&T
- 12 Arty Hill & The Long Gone Daddys: Montgomery On My Mind
(Cow Island) *CS
- 13 Chip Taylor: Yonkers, NY (Train Wreck) *GG/*TJ
- 14= The Starline Rhythm Boys: Masquerade For Heartache
(Cow Island) *JZ
Doug & Telisha Williams: Ghost Of The Knoxville Girl
(No Evil) *EB/*FS
- 15 Houston Jones: Jericho Road (Summerhill) *BW/*GF
- 16 Mountain Laurel: Another Sunny Day In California (FMG)
*WR/*WW
- 17= Asylum Street Spankers: God's Favorite Band
(Spanks-A-Lot) *AG
Electric Rag Band: If You Got Some (ERB) *RMP
- 18 Jon Dee Graham: It's Not As Bad As It Looks (Freedom) *SR
- 19 Rosie Flores & The Pine Valley Cosmonauts: Girl Of The Century
(Bloodshot) *LG
- 20 John Lilly: Live On Red Barn Radio (self) *TG
- 21= Tim Grimm: Farm Songs (Vault) *DJ
VA: Fire In My Bones (Tompkins Square) *DF
- 22= The Coal Porters: Durango (Prima) *MB
James Hand: Shadow On The Ground (Rounder) *DT
Kevin Higgins: Find Your Shine (Little Train) *EW
Caroline Mark & NQ Arbuckle: Let's Just Stay Here (Mint)
- 23 Sam Bush: Circles Around Me (Sugar Hill) *JW
- 24= Karan Casey & John Doyle: Exiles Return (Compass) *CJ
Jill Jack: Songwriter Sessions (UpHill) *JMB
Rebecca Rippy: Telling Stories (Shut Eye) *RF
Tokyo Rosenthal: Ghosts (Rock & Sock)
James Talley: Heartsongs (Cimarron) *RJ
Gordie Tentrees: Mercy Or Sin (self) *SG



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*XX = DJ's ALBUM OF THE MONTH

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More information can be found at <http://tcmradio.com/far/>

JOHN LILLY

LIVE ON RED BARN RADIO

(self ☼☼☼.5)

Even though he's long been a Freeform American Roots favorite, Lilly asked me if I thought the DJs would play his latest album, and his obvious concern also applies to non-DJs. Taken individually, the 16 tracks, recorded at Arts Place, Lexington, Kentucky, last May, are no problem, Lilly is a wonderful live performer, but there generally aren't clear, discreet, musical tracks, instead the introductions and interviews are segued with the songs. As Lilly says, "It's an unusual arrangement for a CD—I had no control over that aspect of the production. Up to me, there would have been a little more 'white space.'" I doubt most FARsters would object to airing snippets of another station's interview, as such, but the underlying difficulty is that interviews, stories and joke, however informative or funny, and Lilly is both, don't have the staying power of the actual music, once you've heard them a couple of times, they become superfluous (for some reason, I'm reminded of the classic British mothers' advice to daughters, 'Kissing don't last, cooking do'). With this caveat, Lilly is in fine form, with great songs, old and new, like *Broken Moon*, *This Old Knife*, *A Little Yodel Goes A Long Way*, *Roadkill*, *Bohemian Boys* and *Last Chance To Dance*, along with covers of Jimmie Rodgers' *No Hard Times* and Rod Stewart & Ron Wood's *Gasoline Alley*. **JC**

FAT MAN & LITTLE BOY

THE ATOMIC DUO

(Rubinchik ☼☼☼☼)

Countless people in Austin call themselves musicians, then there's Mark Rubin. Over the years, I've seen Rubin play hillbilly, rockabilly, psychobilly, conjunto, klezmer, western swing, blues, old timey, string band, polka, bluegrass, chamber rock, vaudeville, jazz, old timey, hokum, Latin, tango and probably more I'm forgetting (never did catch any of his reggae bands). One of his 18+ current gigs is a partnership with Silas Lowe, playing music that somewhat predates the bombs dropped on Nagasaki ('Fat Man') and Hiroshima ('Little Boy'). Rubin vocals, guitar and fiddle, Lowe vocals, banjo and mandolin {"Although National Resonator instruments are featured throughout this recording, they as a company in no way endorse the manner in which their fine instruments have been misused"}, with George Carver, who also produced, harmonicas, cut these 15 tracks in three hours, which is probably less time that it would take any but a dedicated fan of many forms of 20s and 30s music to track down their sources. Some names, Jimmie Rodgers (*Mississippi Delta Blues*), The Mississippi Sheiks (*Sittin' On Top Of The World*), The Stanley Brothers (*The Memory Of Your Smile* and *Mother's Not Dead*), The Skillet Lickers (*Tanner's Rag*) and Charlie Poole (*Milwaukee Blues*), perhaps Gus Cannon's Jug Stompers (*Going To Germany*), may be (more or less) familiar, but The Blues Boys (*Easy Winner*), Coot Grant or Pigmeat Pete & Catjuice Charlie (*Turpentine Farm*), Blind Blake (*Rope Stretchin' Blues*), The East Texas Serenaders (*Mineola Blues*), The Dixon Brothers (*After The Ball*) and Jimmy Revard & His Oklahoma Playboys (*Blues In The Bottle*) can, I think, be reasonably described as obscure. As with any Rubin project, you get the authentic sound—even if it was broke, he'd leave it that way. **JC**

RECKLESS KELLY

SOMEWHERE IN TIME

(Yep Roc ☼☼☼)

Even though they're from Boise, Idaho, the chances that you've ever heard of Pinto Bennett & The Famous Motel Cowboys are more than somewhat higher if you're European rather than American. In the mid-80s, Bennett and his kickass group exploded into a scene that valued authenticity above all else and quickly latched on to this raw-boned proto-Americana honky tonk. Of course, as Larry Conklin commented in the *Boise Weekly* some years ago, "when Bennett returned home, it was business as usual, as if nothing had happened," and not long after Bennett suffered a heart attack that made him scale back to small, local gigs. I have mixed emotions about Reckless Kelly's tribute to Bennett, featuring not only 12 of his distinctive songs but Bennett and FMCs Sergio Webb and Bob Matson themselves. I don't question the honorable intentions of the band, originally from Bend, Oregon, just down the road, and longtime Bennett fans, but, leaving aside the question of why Yep Roc couldn't just put their clout behind one of Bennett's own self-released albums, like **Big In Winnemucca**, featuring the crowd-pleaser *Honky Tonk Asshole*, there are a couple of problems with it. One is that it's overloaded, the lineup also including Willy & Cody Braun's brother Micky, of Micky & The Motorcars, fiddler Teddy Ray Jones, Joe Ely, Lloyd Maines, cellist Brian Standifer, Bukka Allan organ and accordion and Mickey Raphael harmonica, so the words of Bennett's songs tend to get lost in, or at least come in second place to, overbusy arrangements. The other is, admittedly, rather subjective. Back in the 80s, Pinto Bennett & The Famous Motel Cowboys conjured up images, perhaps misleading, but that's not the point, of chicken wire, fist fights and broken glass in Western buckets of blood, while Reckless Kelly conjure up images of, well, Gruene Hall. It just ain't the same. **JC**

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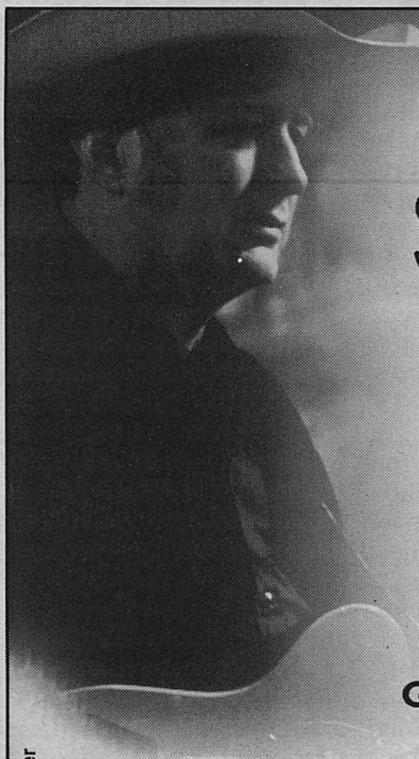
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Fri 5th • First Friday: The In & Outlaws
Sat 6th • Rex Foster (CD release featuring Peter Rowan)
Tue 9th • Bett Butler & Joel Dilley
Thu 11th • Claud Morgan, Walt Wilkins & Danny Everret
Fri 12th • V-Day Event
Sat 13th • The Neveryly Brothers (6.30)
Los Fabulocos featuring Kid Ramos (9pm)
Sun 14th • Valentine's Day Champagne Jazz Brunch w/Bett Butler & Joel Dilley (11am-2pm)
Tue 16th • Fat Tuesday w/The Earfood Orchestra
Wed 17th • The New World Quartet featuring Bett Butler
Thu 18th • John Cowan
Fri 19th • Steve James
Tue 23rd • Ruben V
Wed 24th • Earfood Hootenanny
Thu 25th • Richie Havens
Fri 26th • Switchback
Sun 27th • The In & Outlaws
Sun 28th • Gospel Brunch with Earfood Gospel Orchestra (noon-3pm)



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February 2010

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photos by Dana Lynne Stringer

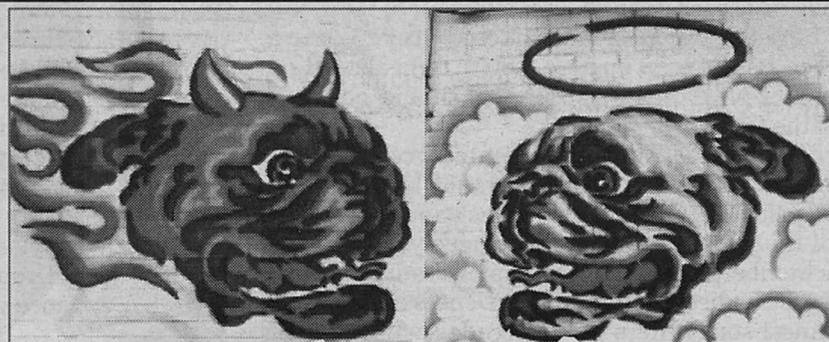


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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Going from memory, I misquoted **Damon Runyon** last month, as alert reader Hal Davis pointed out. The quote, playing off Ecclesiastes 9:11, should have read: "The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, but that's the way to bet." 'Smart money' was a Runyoneque concept, but I should have checked. Still, you got the general idea.

- Rather horrified to learn, just as I was going to press, that **3CM** and *Best In Texas* had the same cover story, then, while delivering the January issue, I came across the latest issue of *InSite*, an Austin lifestyle mag, also with a **Ray Wylie Hubbard** cover story (there may well be others that I missed). Still, while I'll leave judgement on the competing features to others, I do think I had the coolest, kinda seasonal, cover picture, *BIT* went with one that had Ray looking like an unmade bed, *InSite* with a very staged and stage-y one with way too many signifiers.

- Recently, I noted that a musician friend with perfect pitch told me that **Taylor Swift** is *always* out of tune, but when I mentioned this to **Geoff Himes**, organizer of *Nashville Scene's* annual Country Music Critics poll, his response was, "As someone whose favorite singers include Bob Dylan, Rosanne Cash, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Sam Baker, I care more about emotional impact than classical notions of pitch." I actually agree with Geoff on this basic premise, though Cash wouldn't make my list, the problem being that as Swift makes absolutely no emotional impact on me, all I hear is the dreadful voice. Of course, I'm way outside Swift's core demographic, Very Young Girls, but Himes is no spring chicken either, so I find it rather disturbing that she apparently does have an emotional impact on him.

- In response to my comments re the Texas Music Office's Grammy nominations list last month, Casey Monahan says, "Each year I have second thoughts about including **Lucinda Williams** in the Texas Talent Register, and those doubts get stronger with each successive year. She moved to Texas in the early 70s (first Houston, then Austin) until about 1986 when she moved to LA. She also moved back for a year or two in the 90s. What area is she most associated with, Nashville or Texas? Even so, I took her out of the Texas Talent Register. I've always considered **Steve Earle** a Texan because he grew up here. You're right about **Los Tigres Del Norte**—they absolutely should not have been in the Grammy list."

- Driving around Austin, desperately trying to find something worth listening to on the radio, I happened to hit KUT just as Jay Trachtenberg was announcing 'The Song of the Day,' which sounded vaguely interesting. So Trachtenberg launches into a spiel about how **Will Johnson** has been hailed by *No Depression* as "one of the finest songwriters of the decade," which set me back a bit as I'd never heard of him, or his indie rock band, Centro-matic. Turns out the *ND* quote was a tad misleading, it came from a British blogger on *ND's* website, so it's not exactly an editorial endorsement. Mind you, the website recently had **Bob Schneider** live in Pittsburgh as its 'news' lead, of which **Jeff Smith** of Saustex Records commented, "Do we need any more proof that the music has indeed died? Blame the major labels all you want, but this can't be helpful. Egad."

- Seems I exaggerated in my review of **Teri Joyce's** debut album when I said she's about as tall as a shotgun. Teri recently inherited an actual shotgun from a relative and tells me she's at least a head taller.

- In a feature marking what would have been Elvis' 75th birthday, **Ken Burke**, coauthor of the brilliant **The Blue Moon Boys; The Story Of Elvis Presley's Band** (Chicago Review Press, 2006, reviewed **3CM** #116/215), which argues, convincingly enough for me, that Elvis wouldn't have made it out of Memphis without

Scotty Moore and Bill Black, he notes "In 2007, I spoke with one of the disc jockeys who ran the Graceland-based all-Elvis radio station and blithely asked, 'So, do you like Elvis' music?' Bored, the jock candidly responded, 'Well, let's just say that I'm getting used to it.'"

- Saying 'maybe it's just me' rather invites a response from Joe Paredes, "It's just you," but while I enjoyed **Crazy Heart**, and thought *The Weary Kind* deserves the awards it's getting, because it is much better than the songs in the competing films, which isn't saying much, it kind of left a hole in the movie. Supposedly, it was a career-changer, but, to me, it was OK but not exactly an immortal classic. Still, I can't fault writers Ryan Bingham & T-Bone Burnett, I mean, how would you like you to have to write a country classic to order?

- Last month, I mentioned that could amuse oneself thinking up names to describe the music of Taylor Swift et al, offering Suburban & Mid-Western. In his *Lonesome Ormry & Mean* blog, William Michael Smith elicited another candidate from **Steve Young**, from whose song, of course, he took the blog's title. Young told him, "So-called modern country music simply sucks. No ifs, ands or buts about it. Why? Because it has no roots, no soul. Without soul and roots, music is nada. Dead. I call the current crop **yuppa-billys**."

- Think the *Austin Chronicle* needs to get new phonebooks. Recently, Eddie Wilson, who's owned Threadgill's since 1980, was a tad surprised to get a call from the paper's Austin Powell asking to speak to **Mr Threadgill**. Not so easy, as Kenneth died in 1987.

- This gem came in an email from James Akenson, organizer of the International Country Music Conference, and made me laugh so much I had to share it: "A series of four sessions presided over by Dr. Linda J. Daniel will focus on the cutting edge of contemporary country music. Dr. Dana Wiggins of North Georgia Perimeter College will deal with 'Honky Tonk Angel or Devil?: k.d. lang's Country Music Rebellions, 1984-1990.'"

- Confirmed for **3rd Coast Music Presents** at this year's NotSXSW so far are: Leeann Atherton, Sam Baker, Mary Battiata, Border Blasters, Sarah Borges, Rick Broussard, Troy Campbell, DeSoto Rust, Ethyl & The Regulars, James Hand, Erin Harpe, Roy Heinrich, Arty Hill, Dave Insley, Teri Joyce, Bill Kirchen, Fred Krc, Larry Lange, Phil Lee, Will T Massey, Massy Ferguson, Romi Mayes, Linda McRae, Miss Tess, Gurf Morlix, David Olney, Monica Passin, Jim Patton & Sherry Brokus, Rod Picott, Jo Carol Pierce, The Rizdales, Ruthie & The Wranglers, Amanda Shires, Betty Soo, Sally Spring, Mike Stinson, Stone River Boys, Jim Stringer, Chip Taylor & Kendel Carson, Mitch Webb and Janine Wilson. Drop me a line if you'd like to be on the NotSXSW advance info email group.

† MICK GREEN

† LARRY WEIR

† BOBBY CHARLES

† JIMMY WYBLE

Before January was half over, and in the space of four days, I lost an esteemed colleague, FAR reporter Larry Weir, Operations Manager and host of *Songwriters Showcase*, KDHX, St Louis, and two of my very few heroes, Mick Green and Bobby Charles.

- Larry, a champion of such left of center songwriters as Terry Allen and James McMurtry, was one of FAR's most consistent reporters and I'll miss his always informed choices. I don't always see eye to eye with every FARster every month, but if Larry listed an album I didn't know among his monthly picks, I'd make a

point of checking it out. Of course, the real loss is to radio listeners in St Louis, where he'd been an on air favorite since 1985. Only 57, Larry suffered traumatic brain injuries in a fall on New Year's Eve and was taken off life support on January 13th.

- Last November, I ran a cover story on one of my all-time favorite bands, The Pirates, to mark the release of **Live In America** (Goofin' [Finland]) and last month named it #1 Best Live Album of 2009, with Mick Green as #1 Instrumentalist. There's a certain irony in all this as Green was, shall we say, not exactly a household name in America, but, to repeat myself, he was far and away the most influential of British electric guitarists, and I say this without fear of being contradicted by anyone who knows anything whatsoever about the subject. Rather annoyingly, most Internet stories led with references to Green playing on Paul McCartney or Van Morrison albums, but while he hired out as a sideman, touring with Engelbert Humperdinck and Bryan Ferry among others, his true legacy is his ferocious playing with The Pirates, both the original early 60s lineup led by Johnny Kidd and the early 70s and onward version with Kidd's bassplayer and drummer, which inspired generations of pub and punk rockers. He was also one of the nicest guys you could ever hope to meet, rather like, as Terry Clarke mentioned in an email, Jesse Taylor, coincidentally another great guitarist overshadowed, even in his home town, by lesser players. This is where I wish you could click on a link and hear what Green does to the theme from *Peter Gunn*. Born February 22nd, 1944, Green died of heart failure on January 11th.

- In the second of the two cover stories I've done on Bobby Charles (*Music City Texas* #71 and **3CM** #228), I said that he was one of only two musicians who brought out my inner evangelist, the other being Arthur Alexander. I vividly remember hearing Charlie Gillett playing Charles' eponymous Bearsville LP on his radio show in 1972, but Charlie told me later that, despite playing it constantly on *Honky Tonkin'* and writing about it in every publication that would give him space, he knew personally everyone in England who'd actually bought a copy (I still have mine). This rather illustrates the Bobby Charles dichotomy, revered in certain limited circles, unknown outside them. This, to be fair, is partly due to the fact that, apart from a brief period after leaving high school, he never toured. However, his sporadic albums were always remarkable. Most of the coverage of his death focussed on his being the writer of *See You Later, Alligator, Walkin' To New Orleans* and *(I Don't Know Why I Love You) But I Do*, but his catalog is far deeper and richer than such superficial references indicate. He was also a marvellous singer whose own versions of such songs as *The Jealous Kind*, covered by Ray Charles, Joe Cocker, Rita Coolidge, Etta James and Delbert McClinton, are always the best. This is where I wish you could click on a link to *Tennessee Blues*. Robert Charles Guidry died on January 14th, age 71 just after approving the cover art of an album to be released in late February.

- Many Western Swing musicians considered themselves to be jazz players, far superior to mere hillbillies, but guitar master Jimmy Wyble went from Bob Wills' Texas Playboys to combos led by Red Norvo and Benny Goodman (who despised country music but, reputedly, almost swallowed his glass when he heard Wyble's version of a Charlie Christian solo) from backing Spade Cooley to touring with Frank Sinatra. Though he only put out a couple three albums under his own name, after moving to California he played on hundreds of sessions and can be heard in the soundtracks of movies like **The Wild Bunch** and **Ocean's Eleven**. Born in Port Arthur, TX, Jan 25th 1922, Wyble died on January 16th.



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FEBRUARY MUSIC

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2nd/9th/15th/23rd, Brennen Leigh, 6pm; Kevin Gallagher, 8pm	13th, Jeff & The Jump Tones, 10pm
3rd, Malford Milligan, 7pm	16th, Matt & Funky Gras, 6pm Charles Thibodeaux, 8pm Ponty Bone, 10pm
4th, Liz Morphis, 7pm	17th, Mark Viator & Susan Maxey, 7pm
5th, Larry Lange's Lonely Knights, 10pm	18th, Cleve & Sweet Mary, 7pm
6th, Sunset Valley Boys, 3pm Mason Ruffner, 10pm	19th, Teri Joyce, 10pm
10th, Tim Henderson, 7pm	20th, David Holt, Tommy Shannon & Frosty, 10pm
11th, Amanda Percy, 6.30pm	24th, Leeann Atherton, 7pm
	25th, Craig Toungate, 7pm
	26th, Wendy Colonna, 10pm
	27th, Jim Patton & Sherry Brokus, 10pm

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Out of the Past

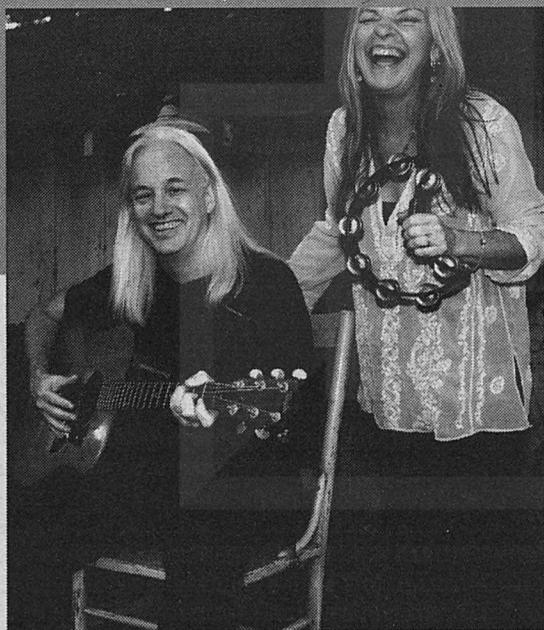
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REVIEWS CODE

***** Killer

***** What's not to like?

***** Can do better

***** Why did they bother?

***** Piss on this noise

? I don't get it

% Fraction of what you pay for

I GOTTA BE ME (WHOEVER THAT IS)

How glad I am I didn't participate in *Nashville Scene's* 2009 Country Music Critics Poll, the results of which were headlined "The Mount Rushmore of country music's future—Brad Paisley, Miranda Lambert, Taylor Swift and Jamey Johnson." Mount Rushmore? You mean alongside Hank, Johnny, Patsy, Buck, George, Waylon and Merle? God's teeth.

I sympathize with poll compiler Geoff Himes, who has the thankless task of making a pig's asshole look something like a silk purse, but his spin on the results was that Paisley and Lambert "bet their reputations on edgier songwriting and edgier performances, trying to fix something that wasn't even broken. They gambled and won" (though he does slip into his commentary that he didn't actually vote for them himself). Himes' rationalization is that instead of using their clout to get a better deal while leaving the formula alone (the Garth Brooks model), Paisley and Lambert went the Willie Nelson route, using that clout to pursue artistic dreams.

My esteemed colleague William Michael Smith also refrained from voting but that didn't mean he was about to refrain from comment, and, in fact, he devoted most of his January 'Lonesome Onry & Mean' blogs at the *Houston Press* website to lambasting the poll, including posting my January editorial. Among those blogs was a commentary on Himes' cloying praise of Paisley and Lambert for showing such "courage" in stepping outside their comfort zone and "challenging" their audiences by an anonymous Nashville veteran, who signed himself 'The Nashville Phantom,' on which it would be hard to improve,

"Oddly enough, over the past 15 years there seems to have been more decent, important, soul-searching country-music writers than there have been important stories to write about. When there is nothing to write about (and personal drug or alcohol abuse is not an option), the stories have had a tendency to be about sales, lack of sales, mega-sales, artist prayers for increased airplay, boring blabber about video shoots or, most sadly, commentaries by many major label artists that joyously declare, 'I'm finally doing a record that is really me!'"

"When you hear an artist say that, you just sort of sadly hang your head and quietly surmise, 'Well, what in the hell have you been doing for the past three albums, putting us on?' It's a legitimate question. It's also one of those questions that never gets asked and, if it did, would never be answered.

Many artists try 'the major label way' thinking they will get the chance to 'be real' down the line. That's what many Nashville personal managers tell new clients to ease their guilt for recording songs they hate. Problem is, it doesn't work like that. What you stick on your music ledger stays there. You are responsible for its existence."

"Few if any artists have ever righted themselves who knowingly made that compromising choice in the beginning. You can't get a little bit pregnant, but even more difficult is trying to get un-pregnant late in your second or third creative trimester. The wagon is already in motion and everybody wants that next release to turn that Top 10 corner no matter what the damn thing sounds like. Announcing that an artist is stepping out on a limb usually means they've been playing it pretty safe around the trunk of the tree for quite some time."

Or to put it in a nutshell, you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas. **JC**

HANK & SHAI DRI ALRICH WITH DOUG HARMAN CARRY ME HOME

(Armadillo ****)

Ever read a music feature and wonder, what's the point? Of course you have, and that's because it didn't have what we ink-stained wretches call a hook, something solid on which to hang the story. With Hank & Shaidri Alrich, I have a different problem, too many hooks and too little space.

Let's start with an Austin-centric one—the CD artwork was turned in by Bill Narum, one of the city's legendary graphic artists, just two days before his sudden death last November. Apart from being extraordinarily talented, Narum was a really great guy. I used to think he was the only one of the breed who was also a regular Joe, but I have it on good authority that he was as crazy as the rest of them, just much less obvious. He's probably best known, if not by name, for the iconic covers of ZZ Top's LPs, but you can find many images of his distinctive work on the Internet.

Moving on, we have a long dormant label's first release since 1981. Armadillo Records put out LPs and 45s by acts like Shiva's Headband and Balcones Fault, scoring a runaway success with Bugs Henderson's *At Last*, but crashed and burned with Kenneth Threadgill's *Long-Haired Daddy*. "We pressed 10,000 copies and sold about eleven. A major fuckup." Recently, Fletcher Clark of Balcones Fault approached Alrich, who has no interest whatsoever in ever running a record label again, about reviving Armadillo and its sister publishing house for a project of his own, but along the line *Carry Me Home* emerged as the relaunch title.

Then there's Hank Alrich, a Californian with a permanent place in Texas music history. While serving as an Army X-Ray technician at Fort Sam Houston, Alrich lucked into a posting that gave him every Friday, Saturday and Sunday off, "musician's hours," enabling him to establish his band, Tiger Balm ('music to sooth the savage beast'), which played everything from jug music to "hippy space shit." This did not always go over well, but, starting with being the opening act for three nights over New Year's Eve, 1970-71, the group found a home at Armadillo World Headquarters, in which Alrich became heavily involved, investing money in it and eventually taking the debt-ridden joint over when Eddie Wilson burned out in 1976. With the help of corporate dropout Randy McCall, Alrich got it back on an even keel only to have the property sold from under him in 1980. The wrecking ball, in early 1981, is still a painful memory, and with the Armadillo gone, Hank and his family, including his daughter Shaidri, who was born in Austin, moved back to California.

There's a lot more to Alrich's Austin involvement, playing with various long-gone outfits, including being guitarist in both Shiva's Headband and Balcones Fault, back in the day, more recently, visiting regularly to see his daughters Shaidri and Mylie, and help Eddie Wilson work on a history of Armadillo World Headquarters. If you want a quick fix while you wait for that book to come out, there was a long and detailed feature on Alrich and the Armadillo in the *Austin American-Statesman* (January 24th). Having rather less space available, I'm moving on to Shaidri, a child prodigy, winning open fiddle contests at six and able to perfectly mimic singers like Emmylou Harris, leading her mother to wonder "What would you sound like if you sang like Shaidri Alrich?" Ambivalent about her talent, Shaidri kept it secret for many years, which Hank regretted but didn't press her, "my wife and I agreed, don't say a word." However, one day, out of the blue, she called Hank with a question about chord progressions, coming to terms with music just as her father finally figured out that his decades of depression were due to not playing it anymore.

This combination of circumstances led to the father and daughter performing and recording together, which brings us to the always fascinating subject of blood harmonies. Once a staple of popular music, especially country, family groups with their very special magic (think Carter, Andrews, Boswell, Isley, Maddox, Louvin, Everly) are now, sadly, extremely thin on the ground. While it may sound rather obvious, father/daughter duos being much rarer than brothers and sisters, the Alrichs really do remind me of Royce & Jeannie Kendall, if less patently radio-friendly.

Which, finally, brings us to the album itself, ten timeless tracks, of which Alrich's four originals sit comfortably alongside arrangements of Charlie Poole's version of *The Great Baltimore Fire*, Jesse Johnson & Dixie Smith's *The Death of Ellenton*, *Stillwater* by Gerry Barnett, former Shiva's Headband drummer (Alrich tells me his groove was the key to the band's success), Peter Rowan's *Before The Streets Were Paved*, Utah Phillips' *Daddy, What's A Train?* and, reviving a long ago side project, *Blarney's Ghost Medley* ("Shaidri loves to play Celtic fiddle tunes"). Alrich, singing and playing guitar and mandolin provides the solid core, Harman gorgeous cello swirls while Shaidri, what can I say that adequately conveys the beauty of her leads and harmonies? She glows in the dark.

Many years ago, Hank told a reluctant Shaidri, "You don't have to be a star," and that advice is perhaps the key to their album's special magic. This is music for music's sake. There's no agenda—though if anyone wants to exploit the closest thing to a weak track, the opening *Austin City Limits*, Hank's open to offers. **JC**

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THE CACTUS CAFE

**You probably know this already, but,
just in case, the University of Texas
Student Union has announced that the
Cactus Cafe will close in August.
As this issue was going to press, 7,315
people had already joined the Save The
Cactus Cafe Facebook group.
Please join us.**



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+ GINN SISTERS

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Tue 9th some say leyland + In Heritage

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Thu 18th MATTHEW RYAN

Sat 20th AUSTIN LOUNGE LIZARDS

Thu 25th & Fri 26th GEEN WEEN

Sat 27th SARAH BETTENS

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JANUARY ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

- 1st Don Everly • 1937 Brownie, KY
Cyprien Landreneaux † 1981
Blaze Foley † 1989
- 2nd CB Stubblefield • 1927 Navasota, TX
Glenn Barber • 1935 Hollis, OK
Rusty Kershaw • 1940 Tiel Ridge, LA
Jenks Carman † 1968
- 3rd Johnny Guitar Watson
• 1935 Houston, TX
Buddy Holly † 1959
Ritchie Valens † 1959
Big Bopper † 1959
- 4th Paul Burlison • 1929 Brownsville, TN
Louis Jordan † 1975
- 5th Bob Dunn • 1908 Braggs, OK
Link Davis Sr † 1972
- 6th Jesse Belvin † 1960
Geno Delafosse • 1971 Eunice, LA
- 7th Dock Boggs • 1898 West Norton, VA
Warren Smith
• 1933 Humphreys County, MS
King Curtis • 1934 Fort Worth, TX
Earl King • 1934 New Orleans, LA
Gene Elders • 1951 Chicago, IL
Dock Boggs † 1971
Roxy Gordon † 2000
Dale Evans † 2001
- 8th Ray Sharpe • 1938 Fort Worth, TX
Tom Russell • 1950 Los Angeles, CA
- 9th Ernest Tubb • 1914 Crisp, TX
Jivin' Gene • 1940 Port Arthur, TX
Joe Ely • 1946 Amarillo, TX
Bill Haley † 1981
- 10th Aldus Roger • 1916 Carencero, LA
Rockin' Dopsie • 1932 Lafayette, LA
Michael Fracasso
• 1952 Steubenville, OH
Mike Ireland • 1961 Kansas City, MO
Ruthie Foster • 1964 Mineola, TX
- 11th Gene Vincent • 1935 Norfolk, VA
Slim Richey • 1938 Atlanta, TX
Jimmy Ray Harrell • 1953 Austin, TX
- 12th Tex Beneke • 1914 Fort Worth, TX
- 13th Tennessee Ernie Ford • 1919 Bristol, TN
- GA Boudleaux Bryant • 1920 Shellman,
Fred Zimmerle • 1931 San
Antonio, TX
Terri Hendrix • 1968 San Antonio, TX
Waylon Jennings † 2002
- 14th Valerio Longoria • 1924 Kenedy, TX
Magic Sam • 1937 Grenada,
- MS
Tim Buckley • 1947 Washington, DC
Michael Doucet • 1951 Scott, LA
Buddy Knox † 1999
- 15th Hank Locklin • 1918 McLellan, FL
Little Walter † 1968
- 16th Jimmy Wakely • 1914 Mineola, AR
Bill Doggett • 1916 Philadelphia, PA

- Charlie Ryan † 2008
- 17th Johnny Bush • 1935 Houston, TX
Eck Robertson † 1975
- 18th Pee Wee King • 1914 Abrams, WI
Warren Storm • 1937 Abbeville, LA
Irma Thomas • 1941 Ponchatoula, LA
Johnny Carroll † 1995
- 19th Smokey Robinson • 1940 Detroit, MI
- 21st Bobby Charles • 1938 Abbeville, LA
Carl T Sprague † 1979
- 22nd Jesse Ashlock • 1915 Walker Co, TX
Ernie K-Doe • 1936 New Orleans, LA
Mick Green • 1944 Wimbledon, UK
Josh Alan • 1956 New York City, NY
- 23rd Austin Pitre • 1918 Ville Platte, LA
Steve Jordan • 1939 Elsa, TX
Erik Hokkanen • 1963 Clearwater, FL
- 24th David Fathead Newman
• 1933 Dallas, TX
Michelle Shocked • 1962 Dallas, TX
Tom Shaw † 1977
- 25th Ralph Stanley
• 1927 Big Spraddle Creek, VA
Faron Young • 1932 Shreveport, LA
- 26th Fats Domino • 1928 New Orleans, LA
Johnny Cash • 1932 Kingsland, AR
Mitch Ryder • 1945 Hamtramck, MI
Chris Wall • 1952 Hollywood, CA
- 27th Hardrock Gunter
• 1925 Birmingham, AL
Bobby Balderama
• 1950 O'Donnell, TX
Jane Gillman • 1958 Washington, DC
Little Joe Carson † 1964
- 28th Don Helms • 1927 Brockton, AL
Sam The Sham • 1937 Dallas, TX
Jon Dee Graham • 1951 Dallas, TX
Stuart Hamblen † 1989

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7th, Danny Santos y Los Bluegrass Vatos, 11am

21st, Precious Blood

w/Ralph White & Amy Anneile, 11am

28th, Billy Bright & Chojo Jacquet, 11am

see website for more music & details

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