

John Inmon – Bio

John Inmon was born on 11th June 1949 on a U.S. Army base in San Antonio, Texas. His father's career in the forces subsequently took the Inmon family to numerous locations in North America and Europe. Like most teenagers across Europe/U.K. who grew up during the 1950/60's, John clearly recalls listening to the pop music on Radio Luxembourg and, inspired, he picked up the guitar for the first time when his father was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany. As the mid-nineteen sixties approached the Inmon's eventually returned to the States and settled in a little town north of Austin - Temple, Texas. It didn't take John very long to discover the music scene in Austin which virtually exploded with activity early the following decade as related in Jan Reid's 1974 book "**The Improbable Rise Of Redneck Rock**" [ISBN Revised 200].

One of the chapters in that tome "The Ballad of Evelyn Goose And Donna Dumbass" focuses on the musical career of Rusty Wier. Wier had been the drummer in Austin's The Wig, a band that played covers but mainly rhythm and blues numbers and featured a great exponent of that genre in guitarist Johnny Richardson. Circa 1967 when that band fragmented Rusty and band bass guitarist Jess Yaryan, teamed up with Layton DePenning [rhythm guitar] and Leonard Arnold [lead guitar] from The Baby Cakes, plus Johnny Schwertner [keyboard] from The Reason Why - a band that also included John Inmon - to form the Lavender Hill Express. Gary P. Nunn, late of The Sparkles and The Wig, subsequently replaced Schwertner. Named after the archetypal Ealing Studios [U.K.] comedy film "**Lavender Hill Mob**" [1951], the Express cut three singles for the Austin label Sonobeat. The band broke up during 1968. During the late sixties John Inmon was lead guitarist in the Austin bands South Canadian Overflow and Plymouth Rock both of which recorded singles for Sonobeat. When the second incarnation of the Austin band Genesee surfaced during the early 1970's, it featured Inmon alongside founding members DePenning, Nunn [bass/keyboard] and Chuck Rogers [drums]. In 1971 influenced by the West Coast sound of Buffalo Springfield and Poco, plus Crosby, Stills and Nash, Wier, DePenning and Inmon formed Rusty, Layton and John, and this folk style acoustic guitar/vocal harmony trio worked together for a year and toured throughout the southern states.

The Lost Gonzo Band grew out of the Austin Interchangeable Band – a loose aggregation of the city's session players – who, at various times during the early/mid 1970's, performed and recorded with Jerry Jeff Walker, Michael Martin Murphey and others. The line-up that recorded the Gonzo's Michael Brovsky produced, 1975 self-titled, debut album for MCA Records consisted of Gary P. Nunn [bass, piano, guitar, vocals], Bob Livingston [bass, piano, guitar, vocals], Tomas Ramirez [saxophonist], Kelly Dunn [keyboards], John Inmon [lead guitar, vocals] and Donny Dolan [drums, percussion] – Dolan had been a member of South Canadian Overflow and Plymouth Rock. Inmon appeared on a quartet of Jerry Jeff Walker's studio albums "**Walker's Collectibles**" [1974] through "**A Man Must Carry On**" [1977], and the first single taken from Walker's 1975 album "**Ridin' High**" was John's composition "Goodbye Easy Street." The Gonzo's sophomore album for MCA was titled "**Thrills**" [1976] and at the end of that year the band members struck out on their own leaving Walker's employment. The Gonzo's toured North America relentlessly for a couple of years and in the process cut a third album "**Signs Of Life**" [1978], released by Capitol Records. The Lost Gonzo Band broke up the following year, and as luck would have it, within days Messrs. Livingston and Inmon augmented by Austin bred Paul Percy [drums] found themselves in the employment of Ray Wylie Hubbard. That trio helped Ray Wylie cut the album "**Something About The Night**" for Renegade Records, and for the ensuing four years the foursome toured together.

When not on the road with Hubbard, during the early '80's, billing themselves as the Gonzo Survivors, John, Paul and Bob occasionally performed as a trio in Austin clubs. John and Bob rejoined Jerry Jeff midway through the 1980's, and with Freddie Krc occupying the drum stool were billed as the Gonzo Compadres. During the period early 1987 through 1990 John left the Compadres and went on to tour and record with Jimmy Dale Gilmore, Delbert McClinton, Marcia Ball and Omar And The Howlers. During this period Inmon also contributed to sixty tracks of the, still, only partially released Townes Van Zandt recording project Texas Hill Country Recordings. To date only the twelve song disc "**Texas Rain**" [2001] has been released. John rejoined Jerry Jeff's band in 1990 and remained there till 2001, during which time he contributed to numerous albums by the Austin based New Yorker. An in-demand session player and record producer – he helmed folkie Caroline Herring's debut album "**Twilight**" [2001], John joined Jimmy LaFave's band a few years ago and appeared on "**Cimarron Manifesto**" [2007]. More needs to be said about the Gonzo's recording career, so let's backtrack a little.....

Reinforced by Reese Wynans [keyboards], Davis McLarty [drums] and album producer Lloyd Maines [pedal steel, dobro, mandolin, lap steel] – and others – John, Bob and Gary celebrated the Gonzo's twentieth anniversary with "**Rendezvous**" [1991]. Maines was also credited as producer, when, four years later, 'the band' cut the sixteen song "**Hands Of Time.**" On the latter occasion Inmon, Percy, Livingston, Ramirez, Maines and Riley Osbourn [keyboards] were supported by sundry 'guest Gonzo's.' During 1996 U.K. based Demon/Edsel Records issued "**Dead Armadillos**" a compilation of the Gonzo's two MCA albums, although restricted by disc length, Nunn's "Gimme Some Money" and Inmon/Smith's "Love Drops" from the band's debut album were dropped. The Gonzo's reunited for a 35th anniversary concert – albeit a year later – during the 2008 Kerrville Folk Festival [\[read about the show and the full Lost Gonzo Band history, link to my summer 2008 Gonzo's feature\].](#)

Apart from the musicians already mentioned, Inmon's credits spread across some five decades include recording sessions and/or gigs/tours with Bobby Bridger, Steven Fromholz, Robert Earl Keen, Townes Van Zandt, Willie Nelson, Joe Ely, B.W. Stevenson [posthumously], Bruce Robison, Eliza Gilkyson, Darden Smith and numerous more. Amazing as it may seem, there was even a session with some Welsh crooner called Tom Jones. In 2001 Inmon self-released his ten song, debut solo album "**Goodbye Easy Street**" on Blue Sugar Records, and it featured contributions from Merel Bregante, Freddie Steady Krc, Richard Bowden, Lloyd Maines and Sara Pierce. Seven years on the eight track instrumental music collection "**Songs For Heavy Traffic**" was released by LaFave's new Austin based label, Music Road Records. Definitely one of the finest roots music guitarists on planet Earth – *the man is a legend* - did I mention that during his teens John played in a San Francisco based surf band? Maybe I shouldn't go there.....

Discography : "**Goodbye Easy Street**" [2001] ; "**Songs For Heavy Traffic**" [2008] :

Arthur Wood

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