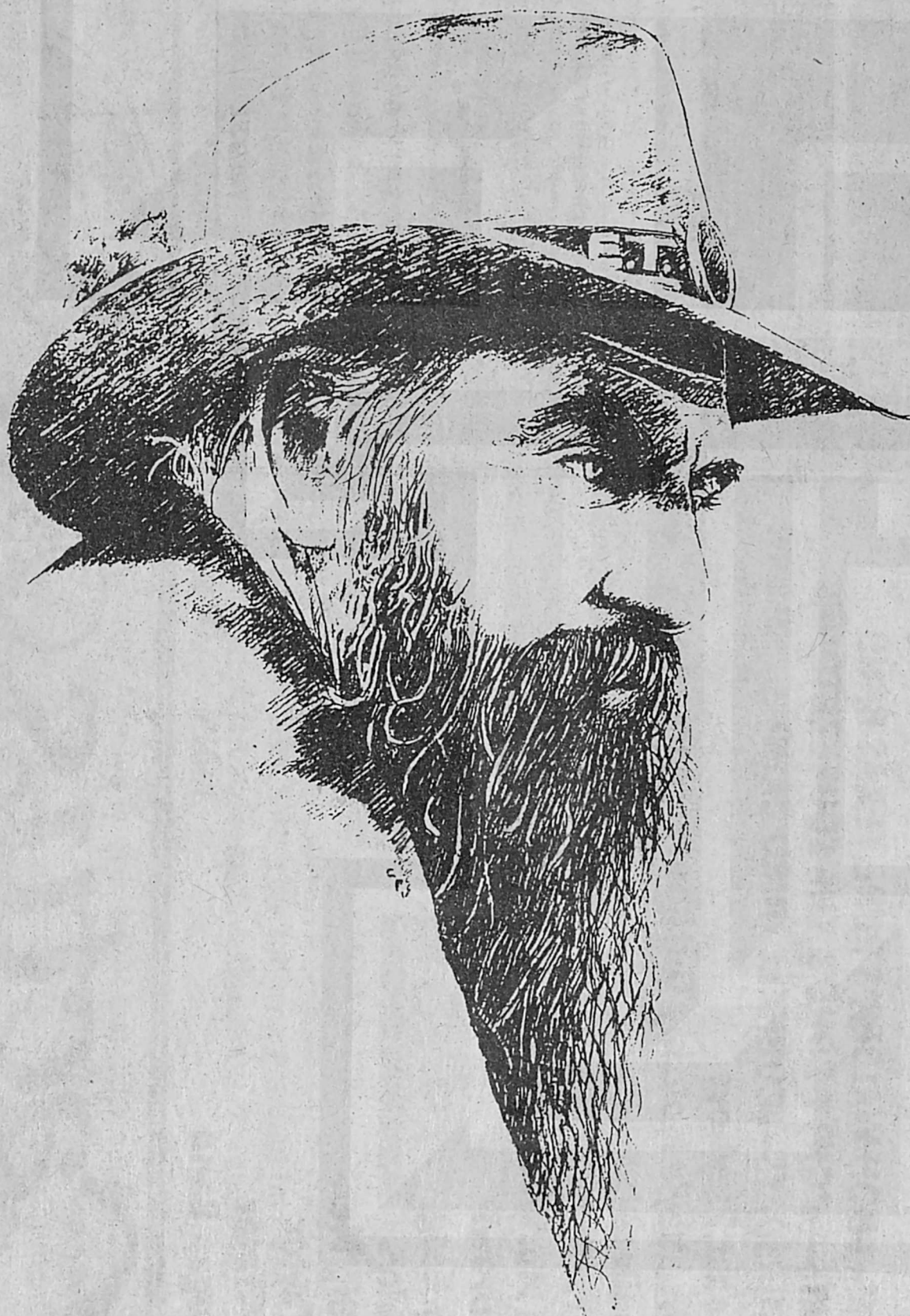


3rd COAST MUSIC

BLAZE FOLEY

#24/113 JANUARY 1999



REVIEWS

******* (or not)**

**LEEANN
ATHERTON**

•

CHRIS BUHALIS

•

RAY CHARLES

•

KEVIN DEAL

•

**BLAZE FOLEY
TRIBUTE**

•

JESSE TAYLOR

•

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HONKY TONK
TEXAS, USA**

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ACCORDION SHOWS IN JANUARY

SUNDAYS

Texana Dames Guero's, 3pm

TUESDAYS

RC Banks & New Cotton Kings + Gulf Coast Playboys Hole In The Wall, 7.30pm

WEDNESDAYS

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Jovita's, 8pm
Rubinchik's Orkestyr Flipnotics, 8.30pm

THURSDAYS

Gulf Coast Playboys Antone's, 6pm

FRIDAY 8th

Gulf Coast Playboys Jovita's, 8pm

SUNDAY 10th

Los Cadillos Curra's, 11am

SATURDAY 16th

Miss Neesie & Ear Food Cibolo Creek Country Club, San Antonio, 9pm

SATURDAY 16th

Los Pinkys Feista, San Antonio, 8.30pm

SUNDAY 17th

Los Cadillos Curra's, 11am

WEDNESDAY 20th

Gulf Coast Playboys Broken Spoke, 8pm

SATURDAY 23rd

Los Pinkys Jovita's, 8pm

SUNDAY 24th

Los Cadillos Curra's, 11am

TUESDAY 26th

Zydecowgirl Broken Spoke, 8pm

FRIDAY 29th

Gulf Coast Playboys Club 21, Uhland, 8pm

SATURDAY 30th

Gulf Coast Playboys Threadgill's Saloon, 9.30pm

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Hilltop Bar, 8pm

SUNDAY 31st

Santiago Jimenez y Su Conjunto Royal Palace, San Antonio, 2pm

3RD COAST NEEDLETIME

After looking over the 250+ adds to the *Third Coast Music Network* library this year, here's the releases for 1998 that I think gave us the biggest bang for the buck, with lots of spins and requests.

Joe Horn, TCMN

JANUARY

The Hollisters -
Land Of Rhythm And Pleasure
The Hangdogs - East Of Yesterday
Paul Burch - Pan-American Flash

FEBRUARY

The Apostle (Soundtrack)
Kevin Gordon -
Cadillac Jack's #1 Son

MARCH

Redd Volkaert - Telewacker

APRIL

Johnny Bush - Listen To My Heart

MAY

Don Walser -
Down At The Sky-Vue Drive-In
Joe Ely - Twistin' In The Wind
Dave Alvin - Blackjack David

JUNE

Johnny Cash & Willie Nelson -
VH1 Storytellers

JULY

Dwight Yoakam -
A Long Way Home
Shaver - Victory
Jeremy Wallace - My Lucky Day
Various Artists - Will Sing For Food;
Songs Of Dwight Yoakam
Junior Brown - Long Walk Back

James McMurtry -

Walk Between The Raindrops

Emmylou Harris - Spyboy

Hot Club Of Cowtown -

Swingin' Stampede

David Childers - Time Machine

Dale Watson -

The Truckin' Sessions

Two Dollar Pistols - Step Right Up!

SEPTEMBER

Charlie Robison - Life Of The Party

OCTOBER

Pine Valley Cosmonauts

Salute The Majesty Of Bob Wills

Connie Smith - Connie Smith

NOVEMBER

Honky Tonk Confidential -

Honky Tonk Confidential

The Complete Hank Williams
(Sampler)

Geoff Muldaur -

The Secret Handshake

DECEMBER

Ray Wylie Hubbard -

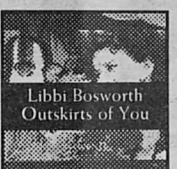
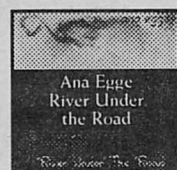
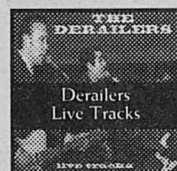
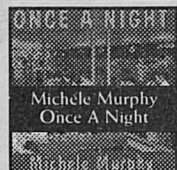
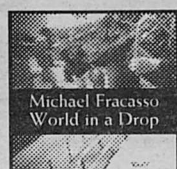
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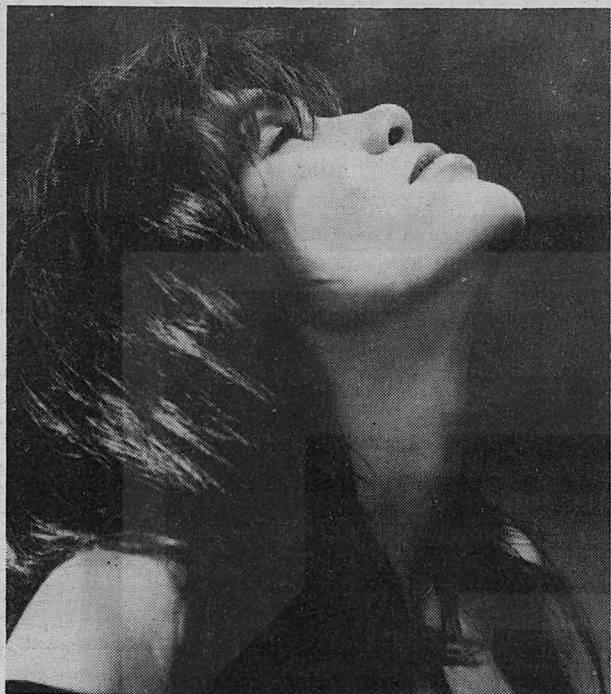
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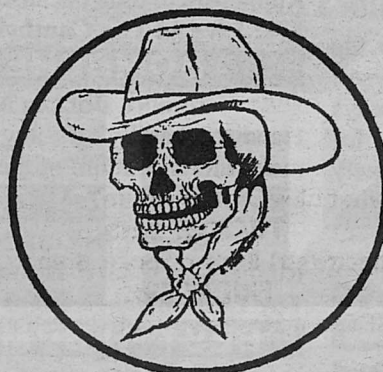
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JC's ART & GRIT AWARDS FOR 1998

My call for 1998 Keepers, the albums you thought had lasting value, turned out to be hopelessly vague. Thanks to all of you who responded, with always well considered and often fascinating list and comments, but I couldn't figure out any way of organizing them into something halfway coherent in the space available.

◆ Hold the thought though, because next year we may take another run at it, with clearer parameters. I'm thinking of jumping on the millennium bandwagon, along with everyone else, something like, if you could only carry ten albums with you across the bridge into the 21st century, which would they be? I'm throwing the idea out now because I think there's a good year's worth of headscratching involved. And yes, I know the millennium isn't till the year after next, but that seems a lost cause.

◆ Meantime, as I got talked out of a poll and the Keepers thing needs more work, I'm indulging myself in a totally personal roundup of 1998. I didn't always agree with the results of the polls I ran, so this, for what it's worth, is something of a first, a completely internal statement of 3CM's musical positions. Mind you, if I'd known how much fun it is to invent categories to suit yourself as you go along, I'd have done this years ago. **JC**

BEST ALBUM

BUTCH HANCOCK *Firewater... Seeks Its Own Level* OK, it's 18 years old, so what? It was one of my alltime favorites on vinyl and it's still one of my alltime favorites now it's on CD. By the same token, runner-up is **LUCINDA WILLIAMS**: *Lucinda Williams*, the reissue of a ten year old LP. So, let's try...

BEST NEW ALBUM

LUCINDA WILLIAMS *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road* I agonized a bit over this one, before realizing that **Blackjack David** belongs in a different category...

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

DAVE ALVIN • BUTCH HANCOCK

Joint award, one for the latest in a series of consistently remarkable albums, the other for reminding us, with a burst of reissues of his back catalog, how few, how very few, songwriters have his ability to knock us out year after year, decade after decade.

BEST AMERICANA ALBUM

PAUL BURCH *Pan-American Flash*

I'm beginning to think Burch is a one trick pony, a Pan-American flash in the pan, but it's one hell of a good trick. Runner-up; **Freakwater**: *Springtime*, perhaps not as good as *Old Paint*, but Catherine Irwin is one of the most vital presences in American music, if one of the most obscure.

BEST FEMALE VOCALIST

NEKO CASE

Flawed album but great singer. Runners-up; **Ruth Ann Logsdon** (Ruthie & The Wranglers), **Terri Hendrix**, **Denice Franke**, **Kim Doctor** (Moonshine Willy)

BEST COUNTRY ALBUM

JAMES HAND *Shadows Where the Magic Was* Hardcore runaway, but Hand and his label have fallen out, so easier to find runners-up; **Two Dollar Pistols**: *Step Right Up!*, **Ruthie & The Wranglers**: *Life's Savings*

BEST ACCORDION ALBUM

GENO DELAFOSE *La Chanson Perdue*

Not a vintage year, too much pissing about. You're playing accordion for fuck's sake, the dummies are going to hate it no matter how hard you try to please.

BEST MALE VOCALIST

JOHN HOWIE (Two Dollar Pistols)

Runners-up; **Ray Wylie Hubbard**, **Charles Mann**, **Gene Vincent**, **Dale Watson**

BEST DEBUT ALBUMS

BUKKA ALLEN *Sweet Valentine*
BEAVER NELSON *The Last Hurrah*
SHERI FRUSHAY *Scarlet Song*

BEST FOLLOW UP ALBUM

TERRI HENDRIX *Wilory Farm*

BEST LIVE ALBUM

TWO DOLLAR PISTOLS *Step Right Up!*

Runner-up; **Ray Wylie Hubbard**: *Live At Cibolo Creek Country Club*

BEST LIVE SOLO ALBUM

JOE ELY *Live At The Cambridge Folk Festival*

BEST IMPORT ALBUM

WES MCGHEE *Border Guitars*

Runner-up, if only because it's too damned short; **Joe Ely**: *Live At The Cambridge Folk Festival*

BOMBSHELL ALBUM

JOHNNY DOLLAR *Mr Action Packed*

Handy rockabilly tip—any specialist mag that doesn't make this the album of the year is full of shit.

BEST ROCKABILLY ALBUM

JOHNNY DOLLAR *Mr Action Packed*

Runners-up; **Marti Brom**: *Mean!*, **Gene Vincent**: *The Lost Dallas Sessions*

BEST ALBUM PACKAGING

RITCHIE VALENS *Come On, Let's Go!*

Runner-up; **Marti Brom**: *Mean!*

BEST COMEBACK ALBUM

ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO *More Miles Than Money*

With big budgets he made mediocre albums, with no budget he made a terrific one. A lesson to us all. Runner-up; **Do You Feel It Baby?** *The Captivating Sounds Of ? & The Mysterians*

BEST DIGGING FOR COVERS

TONY MASERATI

Runners-up; **Ruthie & the Wranglers**, **Git Gone**

BEST TRIBUTE ALBUM

THE PINE VALLEY COSMONAUTS
Salute The Majesty Of Bob Wills

BEST ETHNIC ALBUM

RUBINCHIK'S ORKESTYR *Flipnotics Freilachs*

OUTSTANDING TRACKS

DAVE ALVIN *1968* (from *Blackjack David*)

BIG SANDY *Pretty Girls Everywhere*
(from *Dedicated To You*)

PAUL BURCH *Downhill And Shady*
(from *Pan-American Flash*)

CADILLAC ANGELS *Dance A Little Bit*
(from *Rest Stop Dance Party!*)

NEKO CASE *Karoline* (from *The Virginian*)

JOHNNY DOLLAR *Action Packed/ Rockin' Bones*
(from *Mr Action Packed*)

JOE ELY *It's A Little Like Love*
(from *Twistin' In The Wind*)

FREAKWATER *Lorraine* (from *Springtime*)

JAMES HAND *I Heard Mama Callin'*
(from *Shadows Where The Magic Was*)

GOSPEL PLAYBOYS *Were You There?*

(from *Known On The Underground*)

THE HOLLISTERS *Good For The Blues*
(from *Land Of Rhythm And Pleasure*)

KIM LENZ *Havin' A Ball*

(from *Kim Lenz & Her Jaguars*)

CHARLES MANN *Red Red Wine/The Walk Of Life*
(from *The Essential Collection*)

WES MCGHEE *Monterrey* (from *Border Guitars*)
MOONSHINE WILLY *Turn The Lights Down Low*
(from *Bastard Child*)

? & THE MYSTERIANS *96 Tears*

(1997 version, from *Do You Feel It Baby?*)

WARNING

NO SCIENTIFIC VALIDITY

RITCHIE VALENS *Cry, Cry, Cry*
(from *Come On, Let's Go!*)

LUCINDA WILLIAMS *Big Red Sun Blues*
(from *Lucinda Williams*)

BEST PICKERS

ELANA FREMERMAN (fiddle, *Hot Club Of Cowtown*)

DON KEELING (bass, *Pure Texas Band*)

WES MCGHEE (too many instruments to list)

FRANK RODRIGUEZ (Vox organ, ? & The Mysterians)

RITCHIE VALENS (electric guitar)

ANTI VAN KLEWITZ (fiddle, *Csokolom*)

BEST LIVE PERFORMANCES

RAY WYLIE HUBBARD • CARY SWINNEY

Runners-up; **Fred Eaglesmith**, **Paula Nelson** (shame about her album)

BEST SHOW

JIMMY LAFAYE'S

American Indian College Fund benefit

BEST VENUES

Austin: **Jovita's**

Runner-up; **Cactus Cafe**

San Antonio: **CIBOLO CREEK COUNTY CLUB**

Runner-up; **Carlsbad Tavern**

Not getting out to live music all that much, we've come to prize ambience. Basically, we wait until people we want to see are playing places we actually feel good about going to, and these are they.

BEST SOUND ENGINEER

TIM HOLT (James McMurtry/Cibolo Creek)

BEST CLUB BOOKING

GYPSY TEA ROOM (Dallas)

I've never made it up to this newish joint, but Mike Snider sends me his calendars, and they kick ass.

BEST MUSIC BOOK

DAVID GOODMAN *Modern Twang*

The most valuable music resource in my bookcase. Runners-up; **Billy Poore**: *Rockabilly; A Forty Year Journey*, **Michael Tisserand**: *Kingdom Of Zydeco*

WORST MUSIC BOOK

RICK KOSTER *Texas Music*

Got to give Koster credit for one thing, trashing his piece of shit was a whole bunch of fun.

BEST MUSIC WRITER IN TEXAS APART FROM ME

JIM BEAL JR (*San Antonio Express-News*)

How someone almost as unashamedly out of touch with kid music as I am manages to hang on to a daily newspaper job beats the hell out of me, but I'm sure glad he pulls it off. Grey Power!

BEST TEXAS RADIO SHOW

THIRD COAST MUSIC NETWORK

(KSYM, San Antonio)

I'd say that even if I didn't have a shift on it, in fact I accepted their offer precisely because it is the best and I feel honored to be involved in it. Runners-up; **Rod Moag's** *Country Swing & Rockabilly Jamboree* and **John Hauser's** *Country Roots*, both KOOP, Austin, except their timeslots are so godawful I usually remember them in time to catch the last five minutes.

DL'S MIND OF HER OWN AWARDS

PATTY GRIFFIN *Flaming Red*

LUCINDA WILLIAMS *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road*

HIGHLIGHTS OF 1998

BUTCH HANCOCK's *Rainlight* CD Reissues

LLOYD MAINES *Moves To Austin*

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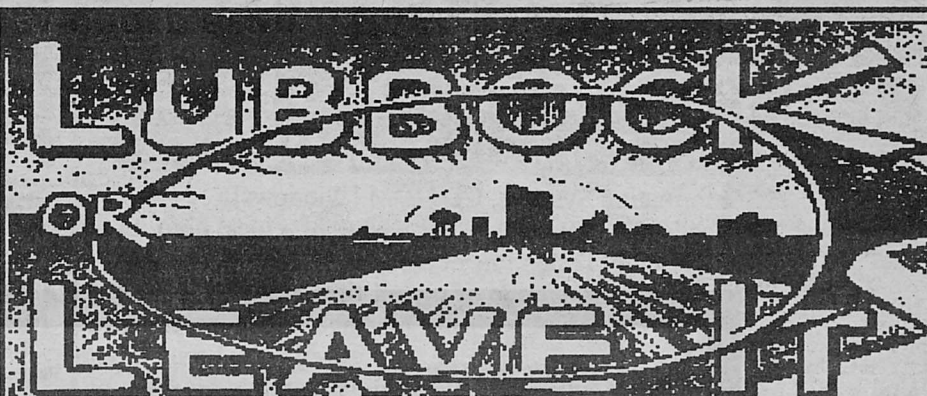
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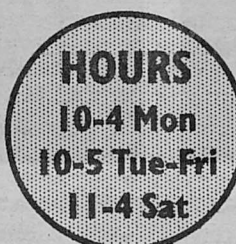


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3CM REVIEWS

GERONIMO TREVIÑO III's HONKY TONKY TEXAS, USA

(3B Information Systems, CD-ROM [Windows])

Country bandleader Treviño may be somewhat of a local hero, little known outside South Texas, but he sure has a flair for ancillary product. A while ago, he put out one of my all-time favorite T-shirts, a picture of the original Geronimo with the message "My Heroes Have Always Killed Cowboys," now, with some very expert help, he steps out with a fascinating CD-ROM. Its heart is a guide, accessible via a list of names or by clicking on a map, of historic Texas dance halls in an area bounded by London Hall in the west, Cherry Spring Dance Hall in the northwest, Coupland Dance Hall in the northeast, Club 21 (Uhland) in the east and Quihi Gun Club (Castroville) in the south. Lavishly illustrated with photographs, drawings and reproductions of related historical documents, I'm here to tell you that after a few minutes browsing, wherever you are, you'll want to jump in your motor and go check some of these places out, particularly those founded in the last century by German immigrants, some of which are just wonderfully appealing. However, there's lots more, photographs, biographies and sound clips of 22 'Legends' (Milton Brown, Cliff Bruner, Johnny Bush, Hank Cochran, Ted Daffan, etc etc) and 18 'Future Legends' (including Ponty Bone, Alvin Crow, Joe Ely, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Cornell Hurd, Loose Diamonds, Sisters Morales, Chris Wall and Don Walser), an oddball section devoted to Texas honky tonk 'characters' and an entire Geronimo Treviño III CD, appropriately **Live From Kendalia Halle**. Moving around, either using the main buttons or via the frequent internal links (there are also Internet links to related web sites), is smooth and fast, the sound clips, accessed via little microphone icons, play really well and the whole thing has a polished, professional feel and look. I can't help wondering how they're going to market this sucker, but if you're a PC owner planning a visit to Texas, or know anyone who is, it's a very cool resource. **JC**

CHRIS BUHALIS • KENIA DREAMS

(One Man Clapping)

Ran into this singer-songwriter at Jimmy LaFave's American Indian College Fund benefit who put a CD in my hand which I promptly mislaid but launched a full-scale search for because of a nagging memory there was a Blaze Foley connection. Buhalis' album was cut in Ann Arbor, mastered in Evanston and put out by a Chicago label, so we can reasonably infer he's from Up North, and certainly the militant unionism of *Employee 1209* is decidedly non-Texan. However, his other eight songs reflect a strong affinity with the writers of his only two covers, Townes Van Zandt (*Where I Lead Me*) and Blaze Foley (*Clay Pigeons*). If these proclaim Buhalis as a proud disciple of Van Zandt, the presence of the man himself, singing, or at least croaking, backup vocals on the title track, can be taken as an endorsement by the master, for Buhalis is definitely a very apt pupil, framing his own striking thoughts and images in Van Zandt's minimalist make every word count style. Warmly recommended to Zandtianistas. **JC**

JESSE 'GUITAR' TAYLOR LAST NIGHT

(Tornado Alley)

Have to offer a disclaimer on this one. When I first arrived in Austin, I was under orders from a friend who ran a label in England to let him know if I came across anything worth releasing and almost my first aid package was a cassette Jesse Taylor had been able to make thanks to a windfall inheritance. Released, on LP and CD, by Bedrock in 1989, it was never easy to find in the States and has been unavailable for years, a state of affairs that led a Taylor fan to finance this first official US release on Taylor's own label. Recorded at Caldwell Studios in Lubbock, and co-produced by Taylor and Don Caldwell, it's pretty much a West Texas affair, featuring Dave Heath on bass, Steve Meador drums, Bill Gamill keyboards, Don Caldwell sax and coproduction (with Taylor), Grady Albert trumpet and Lloyd Maines steel guitar, and leans heavily on Taylor's bar blues persona. Like so many bar blues albums, the vocals are pretty rough and ready (Taylor eventually handed over Tornado Alley's microphone to the late great Junior Medlow), but, of course, what we're here for is the guitar work. Tell you the truth, I've gotten real bored by the all sizzle, no steak evolution of blues guitar since about 1969 († Magic Sam), but when Jesse Taylor cranks up one of those Newmans, well, it just don't get much better than this. **JC**

RAY CHARLES THE COMPLETE COUNTRY & WESTERN RECORDINGS 1959-1986

(Rhino, 4 CD box set)

Many of you, I'm sure, grew up on country music, even if you had to come back round to it later in life, but in early 60s Britain it wasn't an easy taste to acquire in the first place, then to nourish or even admit to, and I make absolutely no bones about the fact that I came to it through **Modern Sounds In Country & Western Music**. Which means my personal experience directly contradicts the assertion by Daniel Cooper, whose liner notes are part of something that, hardbound, is more book than booklet, that Charles won many new white fans from country, but didn't bring many new people to country. I think he's full of shit, and that Charles was an even more effective missionary than Gram Parsons a generation later, but be that as it may, all I know is that at least one 19-year old Briton sat in front of his Dansette Major thinking, "Blimey, this Hank Williams chappie isn't half bad." Up to then, I had no idea there was a blues music for white people and the two volumes of **Modern Sounds**, both released in 1962, were my initial guidebook to a whole new world, leading me direct to Eddy Arnold, Patsy Cline, Ray Price, Don Gibson, Hank Snow, Red Foley, Kitty Wells, and, most devastatingly, Hank Williams and Faron Young. To be brutally honest, I had no idea Charles subsequently put out another three CDs worth of country (the set totals 92 tracks), because by then I was off and running in a completely new direction and had, not to put too fine a point on it, outgrown his pop version of country. While **Modern Sounds** will always have a special place in my affections, and I'll always keep my mono LPs, I hadn't actually listened to them, as such, in best part of 30 years, so it was odd to be reminded how much Charles was inclined to a version of the Nashville OTT choirs and strings excesses I later came to loathe and despise. At the same time, Charles knew, better than most country stars then, let alone now, great country songs when he heard them and, even under layers of schmaltz, could breathe so much life and passion into them, it was as if no one had ever recorded them before. It's worth noting that Charles actually started out in a Florida country band in the 40s (he attributes his acceptance to the fact that he was blind, so couldn't be looking at the white women). When it comes down to it, I'm real conflicted about this box set. On the one hand, it has enormous personal significance to me, and documents both an important chapter in country music history and a fascinating aspect of Charles' multifaceted career. However, working on the not, I think, unreasonable assumption that 3CM readers are already tuned in to Hank Williams, Faron Young et al, it has to be said that simply as music it's become rather marginal, unless, of course, it still has the power to convert. **JC**

LEEANN ATHERTON • LADY LIBERTY THE SONGS OF MIKE STEVENSON

(Steppin' Stone)

Up to 1962, music had a pretty clear division of labor, singers sang, writers wrote and players played, and they didn't overlap that much into each others' territory. Then John Hammond changed the rules by making a star out of a guy who couldn't sing, played remedial guitar and was the world's worst accordion blower but could write a bit. Since then, Dylan has been the paradigm, but Mike Stevenson is a throwback, a songwriter who prefers to have his material showcased by someone who can actually sing. That used to be Felicia Ford, but when Stevenson Ford broke up, Local Flavor put him together with Atherton, herself no mean songwriter, whose warmth and dexterity make a splendid match for his pensive, subtle lyrics. Plus she brought her upmarket connections to the partnership. Produced by Rich Brotherton, who also plays guitars, mandolin, National and sings harmony on the title track, recorded live, the album features Scrappy Jud Newcomb, Champ Hood, Darcie Deaville, Stan Smith, Dave Heath and Frosty, with Stevenson himself playing harmonica on one track. Most of the songs kinda sneak up on you, so if you're checking the album in a record store, go straight to the Big Hit, *Drift On*, which could be about romance but in the hands of Atherton and Toni Price becomes a moving ode to friendship. A sleeper that grows on one a little more each time round. **JC**

KEVIN DEAL LOVIN' SHOOTIN' CRYIN' AND DYIN'

(Blind Nello)

Couldn't squeeze this in last month but forgot to take it off the list on the cover, sorry Kevin. Deal occupies the same kind of space as Ray Wylie Hubbard, who makes a guest appearance, where neither country nor singer-songwriter, let alone country singer-songwriter, are adequate descriptions. However, while one can hardly fault him for lacking Hubbard's spiritual intensity, Deal has a marked penchant for the concrete, with detailed backdrops (The Civil War, the Wild West, Death Row, his grandfather) for simple messages, though *Sleep At Night* gains depth from Hubbard's somber reading of the role of aging gunfighter steering a starstruck boy onto the straight and narrow. When he deals in abstracts, most notably in the moody and powerful *Dark Side Of The Blues*, he's considerably more effective and thought-provoking. Produced by Lloyd Maines, who also plays acoustic guitar, acoustic slide guitar, dobro, steel guitar, mandolin and bass, and featuring Paul Percy drums/percussion, Rich Brotherton mandolin, Joel Guzman and Bukka Allen accordion and Mambo John washboard with a guest appearance by Terri Hendrix, the musical quality complements the best songs and largely offsets the more erratic. **JC**

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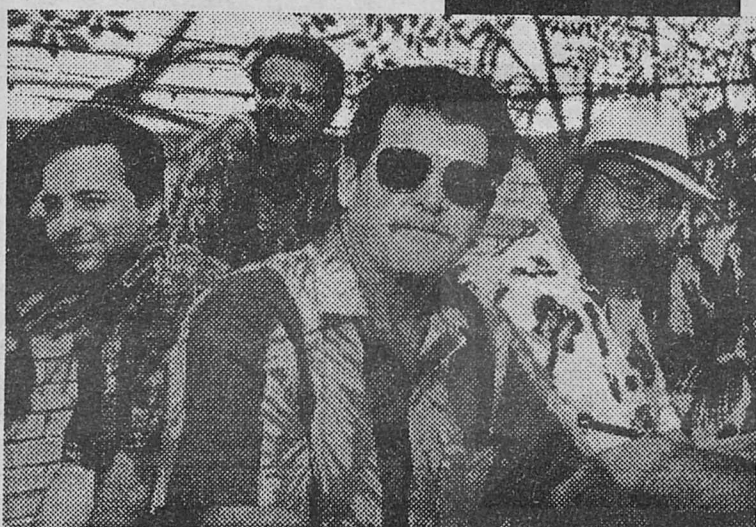
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JOHN 'STEELBAR' CONQUEST

THE MAN THEY COULD BEND, BUT NOT BREAK

Not a new layout last month, just a technical snafu at my printers. As usual, I grabbed the little buggers and started running and was about halfway through the Austin delivery before I actually opened a copy. God love em, they offered to reprint the mag but I figured fuck it and took the discount instead. If you keep back issues—believe it or not there people who do—and want to rearrange it, what purports to be page 3 should be page 13.

◆ Having cited Jim Ellinger as a good reason right there to support the Austin Music Network, I discovered, too late, that the equally great and good Nancy Coplin is also part of the new setup. Coplin was the closest thing the Austin Music Commission ever had to an effective chairperson, which means she was totally ineffective, because that's the nature of the position, but by God she tried.

◆ My mention of his attempting to organize a boycott of the new regime at Austin Music Network drew a flat denial from the *Chronicle's* Andy Langer, along with a stern reprimand for believing anything a publicist, specifically AMN's Jim Ellinger, tells me. Leaving aside the yawning credibility gap between Langer and Ellinger, the putative boycott has been confirmed by other (non-publicist) sources, so either Langer had nothing to do with it, in which case I owe him an apology, or he's now trying to bury the body, in which case I don't. Take your pick.

◆ Both the *Austin American Statesman* and the *Austin Chronicle* ran mentions of a wee altercation during Lucinda Williams' set at the KGSR Xmas party, the former describing it as a shoving match, the latter upgrading it to a fistfight, but, perhaps because both papers were represented in the fracas, they were equally coy about the identities of the two local journalists involved. Naturally, inquiring minds cry out for details of what could have been an Austin legend, and who am I am to deny them? The challenger, none other than *Chronicle* editor Louis Black, defending, *Statesman* radio columnist (and onetime *Chronicle* music editor) Rob Patterson. For some obscure reason I don't get invited to KGeezer functions but I have testimony from an eyewitness, so I can tell you that of the two versions being bruited about who instigated the shoving, one is strictly accurate. The other is the *Chronicle's*.

◆ Last month, I mentioned Patterson's radio column as the best source should you want to follow the ongoing KOOP saga, which has now moved to the courts, an underwriter financing a legal challenge to the board of trustees' electoral chicanery. Unfortunately, Patterson won't be covering this, or any further developments, as he's quit, the *Statesman's* pusillanimous failure to support a colleague being the last straw. So, though he's still working on various national mags, for the first time in many years he won't have a local pulpit. Some years ago, while he was undergoing surgery for removal of knives from his back, I remarked that, even though we frequently pounded each other positions while he was *Chronicle* music editor, once he was gone, I really missed his passionate commitment and depth of knowledge. Those words just get truer and truer.

◆ Have to come back on this one as I completely misunderstood, and misrepresented, Peg Miller last month. Will T Massey spent some time living in the barn behind her house but couldn't be Chicago House 'security' because it was, after all, a bar, and he was underage, and I apologize for suggesting otherwise. At the same time. Peg accuses me, with particular reference to my recent Beaver Nelson review, of gratuitous Massey-bashing. In point of fact, I check in with Will T periodically to see if there's any prospect of his rising from the ashes, because I still believe in the guy. As for the Nelson review, the

parallels are too striking to overlook; two teenage singer-songwriter prodigies who, in direct succession, launched promising careers at Chicago House, then went on to embrace major label scripts and lucked out. The difference is that Nelson made a series of wrong turns, any one of which was arguably reasonable at the time, but the cumulative effect was pretty much the same as Massey's single, egregious blunder. One point on which Peg and I are in perfect harmony is in wishing we'd been in Lubbock to persuade Massey not to dump Lloyd Maines and Caldwell Studio in favor of going to LA with shitterbrains—the E Street Band wannabe producer whose name I always block out.

◆ Last month's mention of 3CM's lares et penates, the protective spirits which watch over me as I lash this sucker together, excited, if that's not too strong a word, some idle curiosity, so for the record, the others, apart from Terry Allen, are (in alphabetical order): Troy Campbell, Betty & Gene Elders, Joe Ely, Keith Ferguson, Michael Fracasso, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Butch Hancock, James & Gayle Henry, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Cornell Hurd, Steve Jordan, Jimmy LaFave, Lloyd Maines, Lydia Mendoza, Jo Carol Pierce, Mingo Saldivar, Jesse Taylor, Townes Van Zandt, Gene Vincent, Don Walser, Lucinda Williams and Danny Roy Young, with Terry, Joe, Jimmie and Butch getting a second go-round in a group photo from Chippie.

◆ Recently I mentioned, as my favorite mass emailing musician, Buddy Seigel, aka **Buddy Blue**, and I return to him now with excerpts from the awards he lashed out with in his end of the year *Bluemail*. Most of them are somewhat esoteric, relating to the swing clubs and audiences of Orange County, CA, but these we can all relate to.

◆ **All-Time Worst Fucking Band Ever In History And If You Bought Their Album I Hate You Award** Korn

◆ **Burn In Hell Award** Every asshole in a zoot suit
◆ **Rock Stars Who Don't Act Like Arrogant Douchebags Award** Lee Rocker, Dave Alvin, Billy Zoom, Billy Bacon, Eddie Hill, Chris Gaffney, Big Sandy, Kid Ramos, Kim Lenz

On the last, I have to take his word on some of the non-douchebags, but happily endorse him as far as Alvin, Bacon, Gaffney, Big Sandy and Kim Lenz are concerned, though 'rock stars' is pushing it a bit.

◆ Not realizing until he got there that his show was Cibolo Creek Country Club's formal Christmas party, Ray Wylie Hubbard confessed to being somewhat ill-prepared. He claimed the closest thing he knew to a seasonal song was Townes Van Zandt's *Snowing In Raton*!

◆ Which reminds me, *Snowing In Raton* being one of the tracks on Jimmy LaFave's next album, due out from Bohemia Beat in February, that LaFave is a bit miffed at Michael Corcoran for suggesting, in his poor man's Herb Coen *Statesman* column, that LaFave was jumping on the Ricky Williams bandwagon with *Run, Ricky, Run*. For the record, when he was gearing up for his American Indian College Fund benefit, a fan with a radio sports show invited him to come in and talk about it, and LaFave, who rolls out his version of Chuck Berry's *Run, Rudolph, Run* every Christmas, hit on the idea of rewriting it as a way of justifying being on a sports program, LaFave and athletics being two words that rarely, if ever, appear in the same sentence. Far as he was concerned, the sole object of the exercise was to help promote the benefit.

◆ Also reminds me that guitarist Terry 'Buffalo' Ware hasn't really left Hubbard to join LaFave, as I implied in last month's Hubbard review. In theory, he's playing with both of them, though which of them

gets priority when there's a conflict seems to depend on which of them you're talking to, Ware himself being diplomatically equivocal on the subject.

◆ So, do you know who did the "Tequila!" shouts on The Champs' *Tequila*? That was the question posed by Jim Stringer during a Threadgill's show, and, naturally assuming it was Chuck Rio, I blew it. Turns out it was session guitarist Glen Campbell. Boy, music trivia doesn't get much more trivial than that.

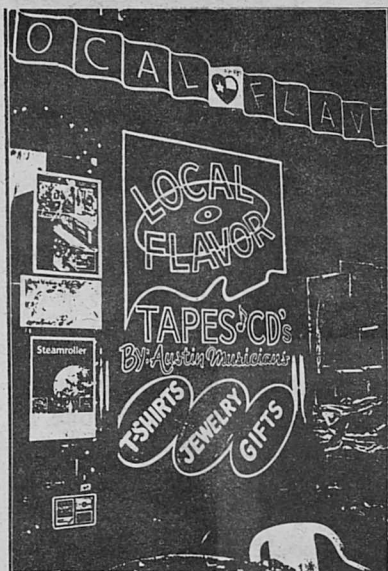
◆ More Ludicrous Country Numbers: in November, I mentioned how an HNC mag was folding because, with a mere 900,000 readers, it couldn't earn enough to survive. As a follow-up, *The Blue Chip Radio Report* recently remarked that the only new act to reach #1 in 1998, The Wilkinsons, have sold "a mere 116,571 units so far—not enough for Giant Records to break even." This is remarkable for two very different reasons, one, of course, being that most, virtually all, 3CM artists and labels would be at least starting to make money if they sold 1,165 units, in fact, that's pretty close to Soundscan's average sales for indie releases. At 116,571, they'd be lighting cigars with \$100 bills. The other is that for commercial music, 116,571 really is pitiful, and the fact that you can score a #1 hit with numbers that would make mainstream artists and major labels suicidal tells you how much trouble HNC is in. Ha, ha.

◆ By the way, *The Blue Chip Radio Report*, which you can contact at DelanoBoy@aol.com, though pretty much plugged into the mainstream, has a maverick streak and usually comes up with at least one good story a week. The latest emailing, for instance, relates how LeAnn Rimes, apparently a fan of Smash Mouth, which is pretty revealing right there, was at one of their shows and went up to the lead singer to see if she could join them on stage. He called security and had her thrown out!

◆ Also through the miracle of modern technology, I learn from an interview in a recent issue of Miles Of Music's *MoMzine* (www.milesmusic.com) that Dave & Phil Alvin are not the only musical siblings to hail from Downey, CA. However, I'm not altogether sure if it's a good idea, credibility-wise, to go around telling people they share their roots with The Carpenters.

◆ By rather uncanny coincidence, the day after the last issue, with my first reference to Huey P Meaux in a long time, came out, I got a note from Meaux saying how much he'd enjoyed the copy of the previous issue a friend had sent him. So I mailed him the December issue and got a long letter back. My disapproval of Joe Nick Patoski's notorious *Texas Monthly* article on Meaux drew some pretty strong responses, but, while I understand people's revulsion at the child pornography charges Meaux was jailed for, I still think there was something very fishy about the whole deal, and in this I am far from alone. Be that as it may, regardless of Meaux's guilt or innocence, I view Patoski's article, which resulted in Meaux being severely abused in the prison system, as an act of betrayal and I'm now fairly sure the person who told me Meaux knew in advance what Patoski was going to write has been misinformed.

◆ On a lighter note, Meaux sent me a copy of a prison paper interview in which he tells about the problems he had with his first big payday. In 1961, when he was still a barber in Winnie, TX, Barbara Lynn's *You'll Lose A Good Thing* hit #1 and Meaux got a check, as producer, for \$48,000. First, his bank flat refused to accept it, reluctantly honoring it after it had been verified. Then everyone in town assumed he had to be a bigtime drug smuggler because they knew you couldn't possibly make that much money from a record, so he had to move to Houston.



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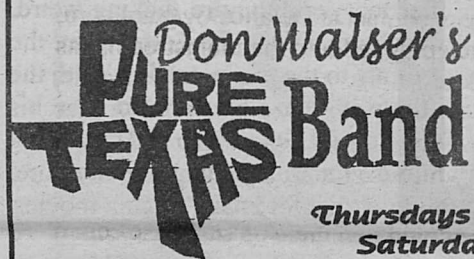
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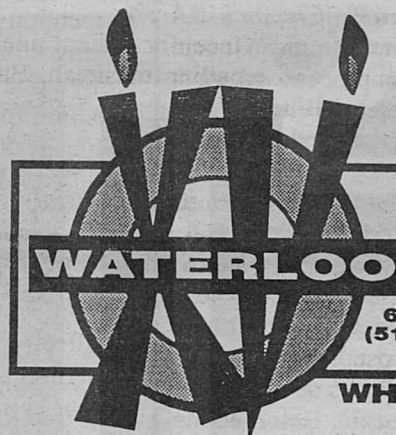
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THE BRIGHT SIDE

My holiday greeting last month should, for true multi-cultural coverage, have been Merry Hannukwanzaadan, but whichever bit of it applies, hope you had a good one. If you did, chances are you don't work for, or aren't signed to, any of the Universal Music Group or Polygram labels, because those folks are having a very twitchy time of it these days, not knowing if they'll still have jobs or careers in 1999. I don't want to bore you with trade paper nuts and bolts, but what it boils down to is that last December 10th, Seagram's bought Polygram from Phillips, for \$10.4 billion, giving them control of 25% of the US and European music market. Where it gets sticky is the consolidation process, the most drastic the music business has ever seen, in which Seagram's will be looking to save \$300 million a year by, among other things, trimming payrolls and artist rosters.

◆ The prospect of 3000 odd major label weasels and reptiles reduced to begging for hookers and blow on streetcorners isn't something I'm going to lose any sleep over (though, come to think, I imagine it's very unwelcome news at SXSW), nor, apart from the very occasional act, such as Lucinda Williams on Mercury or Robbie Fulks on Geffen, do I give much of a shit about most of the musicians who are waiting to see if they're among the 200 acts on which the consolidation axe will fall. What does interest me is something that's barely rated the odd throwaway remark in most trade news stories—the effect all this will have on indie labels.

◆ Recycling a bit here, I've noted elsewhere that whereas a major label—at least according to its accountants—loses money on sales in the low six figures, most indies start turning a profit on sales in four figures. If they even got to five, they wouldn't be able to move round the office for the piles of cash. Six is an impossible dream because all those acts are on majors. Or at least used to be, but 200 of them are about to be dumped on to the open market. Of course, some are rubbish, A&R mistakes from the getgo, but most had enough of a following and enough perceived commercial potential to get signed in the first place. Few of them are of much conceivable interest to you and me, though Fulks, cut adrift by Geffen even before the merger, is talking of his major label days as a thing of the past, and frankly I wouldn't give much for Lucinda's chances, but even so they could radically change the dynamics of the indie label business.

◆ Course, there'd be some adjustments to make. Ex-major acts would have to lower their sales, contractual and lifestyle expectations—try asking Nan Warshaw to lay on a limo and see where it gets you—while the indies would have the far more difficult task, tackling a distribution and promotion nightmare, of filling the vacuum between the modest sales they're currently geared up for and the relatively enormous figures that have become major label minimums without overextending themselves.

◆ There are other implications, high dollar studios, for instance, must be bracing themselves to take a serious beating, but for us, all this corporate bullshit holds out the hope that the labels we rely on for good music will be able to land, and in the longer term, hold onto, acts that will make them financially viable. Then all we have to do is pray they still remember why they got into the indie business in the first place.

JC

BLAZE FOLEY

IN TRIBUTE AND LOVING MEMORY, Vol 1

(Deep South)

Next February 1st will mark the 10th anniversary of the murder of Michael Fuller, aka Blaze Foley. After a decade of silence, this tribute, released on what would have been his 49th birthday, brings back, albeit indirectly, the voice of one of Austin's most remarkable singer-songwriters, best known or, more accurately, most easily referenced, as the author of the Willie & Merle hit *If I Could Only Fly*.

◆ Perhaps overcynical, I tend to regard many, if not most, tribute albums as pointless distractions from the genuine item, naked displays of artistic and intellectual bankruptcy, tainted by mercenary calculation. There are, of course, exceptions, but few, if any, are quite as clearcut as this one. In the first place, the artists who contributed to it, with no expectation of making any money or furthering their own careers, actually knew and loved Blaze Foley, moreover—surely a first in tribute albums—it can neither detract from nor promote sales of Foley's own recordings because there aren't any. Zero, zip, nada. If you know the right people, you could wangle a dub of the cassette-only *Live At The Outhouse But Not There*, otherwise it's down to tracking down the eponymous mid 80s Vital LP, the even rarer single from it (*Oval Room/Girl Scout Cookies*) or the equally scarce 45 (*If I Could Only Fly/Let Me Ride In Your Big Cadillac*) put out by a long defunct Houston label.

◆ However, specialist record dealer Jurgen Koop tells me that if you do locate any of these, they won't cost you much because so few people ever knew, and even fewer remember, who Blaze Foley was, which means there ain't much demand. The obvious question is—why? Why, after ten years, is Foley's only monument a compilation of covers of his songs put together by his friends and admirers? Why hasn't his LP been reissued on CD? Why was the British label Heartland prevented from releasing his last, Cedar Creek, recordings? Why, in short, isn't there an available Blaze Foley album?

◆ Since his death, Foley's lawyer has thrown up insurmountable legal barriers to releasing any of his original material. Another lawyer might understand her tactics, but to the layperson, not to mention Foley fan, they're more than just baffling, after ten years they're fucking weird. During those years, there have been rumors of possible developments on the Foley front, the current one has Merle Haggard negotiating for publishing rights to the entire catalog, with the intention of rerecording *If I Could Only Fly*, very much the way Blaze himself did it on his single, as the title track of his next album, and possibly cutting *Small Town Hero* and *Our Little Town* as well. Money, not something Haggard can throw around with princely largesse anymore, is supposedly a stumbling block, though one can't help thinking that for Blaze's aging mother, anything would be better than the nothing much she's getting right now. However, what there has been little talk of is a Blaze Foley album, though John Casner has recently started looking for someone (else) to put out a remastered version of his Outhouse tape.

◆ Effectively gagged, Foley has been all but forgotten, even in Austin. However, he lives on in the memories of a faithful few, through the power of his talent among those who had the chance to hear him, through the force of his personality among those who knew him. I feel privileged, introduced to him by Kimmie Rhodes and Joe Gracey, to have been among both groups, if only for a few short months. Fortuitously, I last saw him at Henry's in late January 1989, when he got up and sang a few songs, which, tragically, turned out to be his final public appearance.

◆ Among those who knew Foley far longer and more intimately, the tribute project got rolling several years ago—Townes van Zandt and Timbuk3 date it pretty good—when it became clear that Blaze himself might not be heard from again in our lifetimes, though it could have come out much earlier but for a fixation on the predictably chimerical prospect that Willie Nelson might participate. Essentially, the organizers passed the Foley songlist around and let his friends pick the ones they wanted to do. Very oddly, nobody bagged *Girl Scout Cookies* or *Clay Pigeons*, but Kimmie Rhodes took *If I Could Only Fly*, Cody Hubach *Oooh Love*, Texana Dames *Picture Cards Can't Picture You*, Tom Smith *Lovin You*, Mandy Mercier *My Reasons Why*, Pat Mears *Darlin'*, Calvin Russell *I Should Have Been Home With You* (a different version from that on *Crack In Time*), Timbuk3 *Small Town Hero*, Townes Van Zandt *Wouldn't That Be Nice* and, much to everyone's surprise, *Springtime In Uganda*, and the late Jubal Clark, who kicks off the album with a rather soupy poem, Blaze Foley's *113th Wet Dream*. There are also an ensemble, The Blaze Foley Hillbilly Band, featuring Rhodes, Mercier, Clark, George Ensle, Ponty Bone and many others, doing *Big Cheeseburgers* and, from the Outhouse tape with an overdubbed, not to say over the top, 39 strong choir, Foley himself singing *Our Little Town*.

◆ An unlisted 17th track provides snippets of some of the material that will appear on Volume 2, which is about 80% complete, and will feature, among many others, David Waddell (*Let Me Ride In Your Big Cadillac*), Sheri Frushay (*Election Day*), Ponty Bone and George Ensle. Volume 3 is in the planning stages—and still nobody's volunteered to do *Girl Scout Cookies*!

◆ On something of an insider note, an encouraging thing about this project is that has enthusiastic support from one of Blaze's sisters. Ever the optimist, I take this as a promising sign that the Fuller family is getting a little impatient with the strategy of silencing Blaze's voice. However, as those involved would be the first to acknowledge, it's an expedient, a stopgap substitute for more preferable, but nonexistent, authentic Blaze Foley albums. For all the love that went into it, the first volume, at least, is artistically uneven and occasional ragged edges are reminders of its low budget. That having been said, if you want to hear the songs of the late, great Blaze Foley, you don't have a whole hell of a lot of options, so one can only thank those who made this tribute possible.

JC

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- 1st _ David Rodriguez • 1952 • Houston, TX
 _ Hank Williams † 1953
 _ Townes Van Zandt † 1997
- 2nd _ Roger Miller • 1936 • Fort Worth, TX
 _ Speckled Red † 1973
 _ Tex Ritter † 1974
- 3rd _ Leon McAuliffe • 1917 • Houston, TX
 _ Gene Summers • 1939 • Dallas, TX
 _ Amos Milburn † 1980
- 5th _ Little Alfred • 1944 • Lake Charles, LA
 _ David Halley • 1950 • Oklahoma City, OK
- 6th _ Earl Scruggs • 1924 • Cleveland Co, NC
 _ Sandy Denny • 1941 • London, UK
 _ Johnny Moore † 1969
- 7th _ Jack Greene • 1930 • Maryville, TX
 _ Gene Terry • 1940 • Lafayette, LA
 _ Carl White † 1980
 _ Larry Williams † 1980
- 9th _ Jimmy Day • 1934 • Tuscaloosa, AL
 _ Buck Ramsey • 1938 • Lubbock Co, TX
 _ Katie Webster • 1939 • Houston, TX
 _ Roy Head • 1943 • Three Rivers, TX
- 10th _ Ronnie Hawkins • 1935 • Huntsville, AR
 _ Cyril Neville • 1948 • New Orleans, LA
 _ Alejandro Escovedo
 _ 1951 • San Antonio, TX
 _ Howlin' Wolf † 1976
- 11th _ Tommy Duncan • 1911 • Hillsboro, TX
 _ Slim Harpo • 1924 • Baton Rouge, LA
 _ Robert Earl Keen • 1956 • Houston, TX
- 12th _ Fred McDowell • 1904 • Rossville, TN
 _ Tex Ritter • 1905 • Murvaul, TX
 _ Ray Price • 1926 • Perryville, TX
- 13th _ Rick Broussard • 1962 • Seguin, TX
- 14th _ Billy Walker • 1929 • Ralls, TX
 _ Allen Toussaint
 _ 1938 • New Orleans, LA
 _ T-Bone Burnett • 1948 • St Louis, MO
- 15th _ Queen Ida • 1930 • Lake Charles, LA
 _ Earl Hooker • 1930 • Clarksdale, MS
 _ Don Van Vliet • 1941 • Glendale, CA
- 16th _ Mac Curtis • 1939 • Fort Worth, TX
 _ Barbara Lynn • 1942 • Beaumont, TX
- 17th _ Steve Earle • 1955 • Fort Monroe, VA
- 18th _ Chris Holzhaus • 1950 • San Antonio, TX
- 19th _ Leo Soileau • 1904 • Ville Platte, LA
 _ Sleepy Hoffpauir • 1931 • Crowley, LA
 _ Charlie Waller
 _ 1935 • Hendersonville, TX
 _ Phil Everly • 1939 • Brownie, KY
 _ Janis Joplin • 1943 • Port Arthur, TX
- 20th _ Leadbelly • 1889 • Mooringsport, LA
 _ Whistling Alex Moore † 198
 _ Buster Benton † 1996

- 21st _ Smith Ballew • 1902 • Palestine, TX
 _ Jackie Wilson † 1984
- 22nd _ Sam Cooke • 1935 • Chicago, IL
 _ Shawn Young • 1968 • CO
- 23rd _ Django Reinhardt
 _ 1910 • Liverchies, Belgium
 _ Lisa Pankratz • 1968 • Austin, TX
 _ Paul Robeson † 1976
- 24th _ Tuts Washington • 1907 • New Orleans, LA
 _ Doug Kershaw • 1936 • Tiel Ridge, LA
 _ Jack Scott • 1936 • Windsor, Canada
 _ Aaron Neville • 1941 • New Orleans, LA
 _ Tex Thomas • 1951 • Littlefield, TX
- 25th _ Jimmy Wyble • 1922 • Port Arthur, TX
 _ Claude Gray • 1932 • Henderson, TX
 _ Etta James • 1938 • Los Angeles, CA
 _ Laura Lee McBride † 1989
- 26th _ Dennis McGee • 1893 • Bayou Marron, LA
 _ Huey 'Piano' Smith
 _ 1934 • New Orleans, LA
 _ Lucinda Williams • 1953 • Lake Charles, LA
 _ D'Jalma Garnier • 1954 • St Paul, MN
- 27th _ Joe Shelton • 1911 • Hopkins Co, TX
 _ Elmore James • 1918 • Richland, MS
 _ Moon Mullican † 1967
 _ Mahalia Jackson † 1972
- 28th _ Carl White • 1932 • Dallas, TX
 _ Carolyn Hester • 1938 • Waco, TX
 _ Mary Cutrufello • 1970 • Meriden, CT
 _ Al Dexter † 1984
- 29th _ Al Stricklin • 1908 • Antioch, TX
- 30th _ Ruth Brown • 1928 • Portsmouth, VA
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