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**INGRIED KAITER**



**#52 DECEMBER 1993**

**HONEST JOHN**

•  
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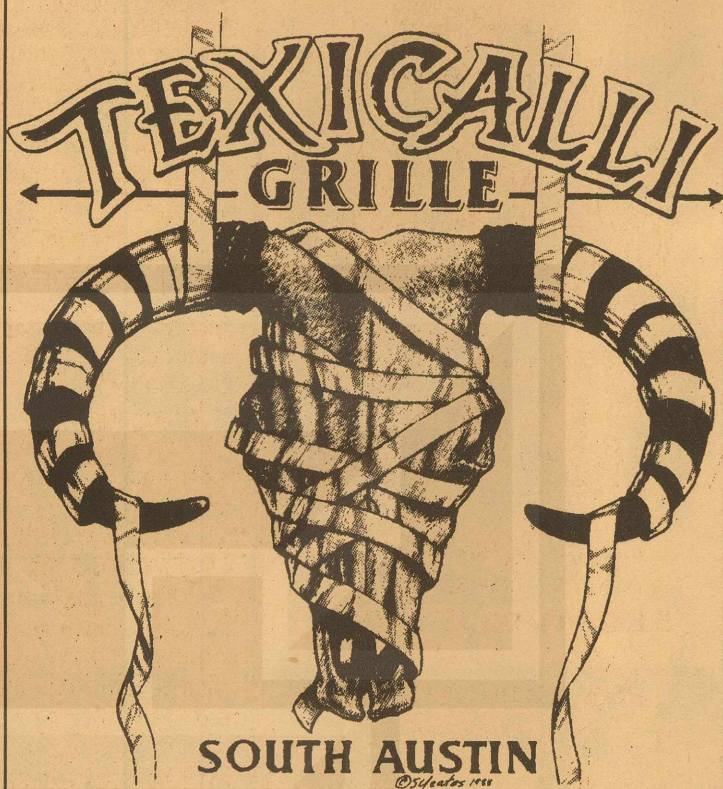
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**Where Every Month Is  
Texas Music Month**

## DAYS UNNUMBERED

Some aspects of the print media coverage of Austin music have improved since MCT opened its doors during the low water days of 1989, but one hasn't; despite their resources, the live music calendars in the *Statesman* and *Chronicle* are still pitifully inept. One of the items on our agenda was to show how it ought to be done, with a format lifted straight from my old employers, the London entertainment guide *Time Out*, who've been in the business 25 years and know everything there is about consumer-friendly presentation of information.

- Putting the calendar together has always been a major pain in the butt. Gathering the raw data is like getting blood out of turnip with many venues (in this context, I must commend BBA's professionalism). Even MCT's friends, filling gaps and confirming bookings, like to leave it to the last possible minute, so three stages of computer work have to be done up against the deadline, usually involving a sleepless night. In Austin music, the information highway is a good forty hours of bad road.

- About four times in the last 52 issues, there simply hasn't been any space for the calendar, or, more to the point, enough money to support the extra pages. When this happens, as with the last issue, the relief is indescribable, but I pay for it by catching shit from people who use the calendar as a month planner (this time the bitching came not just from Austinites

and weekenders from San Antonio, Houston and Dallas, which is usual, but from Austin-bound subscribers as far away as California and Minnesota). So, up to now, it's always been reinstated. Not this time, though. I'm tired of beating my head against this particular wall.

- The weird thing is that, unless they're all lying in their teeth when they poormouth you, there isn't a venue in town that doesn't need all the help it can get. Obviously, my favorites are the ones that support MCT, but I listed anyone I could communicate with. The problem is that most of them not only don't support the magazine, but give me a hard time as well. You'd think some places positively don't want anyone to know who's playing there, but, mind you, when you do see their calendars, you figure they may have a point. I'm damned if I can see why I should go on spending time, energy and money on promoting these places. I've been doing this for over four years, longer than many of these clubs have been going, and if they haven't got the idea yet, fuck 'em.

- What may survive, depending on space, is kind of a cross-reference calendar limited to clubs, events and artists that either advertise in MCT or can be bothered to provide information without being prompted. It was a good calendar, conceptually the best in town, but the bastards have ground me down. **JC**

## INGRIED KAITER

The place is Lubbock, the time a few weeks ago. A voice comes over the stereo that's so wonderful I feel certain I ought to recognise whose it is, but I don't and I have to know, so I ask, expecting to be embarrassed by funny looks and "Why, that's internationally famous so-and-so, where you been hiding?" Instead I get, "Oh, that's Ingried, she's with a band here in town." I'm not abandoning Austin, let alone entertaining all-Texas fantasies, but for the second month running the Big Thrill of the month comes from out of town. I didn't get to hear Ingried Kaiter play live that time, in fact I've yet to lay eyes on her, but just two tracks on a CD by PJ Belly & His Texas Blues Revue (see Reviews) have made me a believer. This woman is devastating.

- That Kaiter's mother is the sister of Charles Hardin Holley is mildly interesting and does actually have some relevance. Three years ago, Kaiter, now 27, had never sung in her life, but one evening PJ Belly learned she was in the audience and, purely and simply because she's the niece of Lubbock's most famous son, persuaded her on to the stage to have a go at *Slipping And Sliding*. This became a regular gimmick, but, much to her own surprise, Kaiter discovered that she actually could do pretty good up there and eventually became a featured singer with Belly's band, modelling herself on Denise Brisse, one time singer with Panhandle legends The Planets. "I stole all my vamps and growls from her" (for the full Brisse eulogy, corner that band's drummer, Davis McClarty).

- Frankly, if I'd been in Belly's shoes and a godsend like Kaiter came along, I'd have scrapped the whole deal and rebuilt it round her. This, I gather, is a sentiment shared by many Lubbockites, who regard Kaiter's set as the high point, and redeeming feature, of Belly's show, among them most of the Texas Blues Revue sidemen. With the imminent closure of Belly's own club making the band's future somewhat uncertain, two-thirds of its members, obviously nobody's fools, are rallying round Kaiter's banner. They're writing and finding material for an Ingried Kaiter solo album to be released in the Spring and, though they haven't even thought up a band name yet, plan to be playing and touring behind her as soon as possible, with Austin dates firmly on the agenda. Two consummations devoutly to be wished, and you'll hear all about them from me when they happen, I tell you what.

- Voices are curious things; what seduces one person utterly may leave another absolutely cold, Jimmie Dale Gilmore's is a classic example. Minute variations in tone, timbre, control, pitch, range and projection can make a tremendous subjective difference, with stylistic considerations, mannerisms, phrasing and choice of material, as added complexities. An expert might hear technical flaws and shortcomings, but all I can say is that Ingried Kaiter gets me right where I live and if I were a songwriter, like Gwil Owen with Toni Price, I'd dedicate my life to writing for her sensational voice. Whether or not she's the "best" female singer I've ever heard, as of now she's certainly my favorite. **JC**



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# HONEST JOHN'S WORDS & MUSIC

Debbie Davies, Davies, D-A-V-I-E-S, *Davies*. OK, I got it now. Sheesh, all I had to do was turn round and check the CD rack, but no, I had to trust my memory. One footnote from last month's reviews, I might ought to have mentioned that *Heartworn Highways* was filmed in 1975. Re the engagement of **Lisa Morales** and the Sisters Morales' guitarist **David Spencer**, I forgot to add that they have a wedding present list at Rockin' Robin Guitars & Music in Houston.

- Following representations from The Friends of **Kevin Connor**, I'll willingly concede that, given the flimsiest of material, the KGSR DJ's cape work in presenting Will Sexton's Texas Music Association "Achievement" award was masterly and probably did dazzle most of the audience. I still think there must be some better way of marking Texas Music Month than an evening of self-congratulatory, incestuous and highly political award giving (one of the "outstanding" Austin record labels, Core, issued its first release the day before the ceremonies, while another, Spindletop, went belly up almost the following day). Still, I must admit that the San Antonio TMA chapter went Austin's one better—they sponsored a concert featuring Blind Faith, Steppenwolf and Iron Butterfly. You think this a sick joke, don't you?

- "Have those children gone? Good, I hate to say fuck in front of K-I-D-S." When **Kinky Friedman** appeared on KGSR to plug his appearance at the Celebration of Jewish Arts & Culture, the Texas Jewboy didn't think to warn them about the intro to the song they picked to play, so the dreaded F-word went out on Austin's pristine airwaves. The phone lines were instantly besieged, not, however, by an outraged citizenry but by fans singing rude snatches of Friedman's bawdiest songs until the station sidestepped into a commercial break and cut them off.

- I once heard Karen Kuykendall ask, "Are there any of my ex-husbands in the audience?" If **Jo Carol Pierce**, who'll marry longtime sweetie Guy Juke later this month, had done this when the Songwriter: Austin On The Road tour opened for Jimmie Dale Gilmore in Massachusetts, two hands would have gone up. "Jimmie and I are good friends and keep in touch, but the other one was a real surprise. We were married for about three months twenty years ago. He's a real nice guy, but I don't know him too well. Actually, I never did," says Jo Carol, pointing out that she rented her keyboards from yet another ex, "so he was there in spirit, too."

- It started out as a flip remark when a cowgirl from Amarillo was telling me her life story, but Joe Ely and Jo Carol say I've come up with a pretty good definition—A true **West Texan** knows the make, model, year and color of the vehicle he or she was conceived in.

- In a move that's infuriated many Austin scene veterans, the new management at **Antone's Nightclub** has fired **Don Ebeling**, cleaner and sometime MC, who's a fixture with the building, having worked there during its last three incarnations. Antone's Records & Tapes have taken him under their wing, but he's still devastated by this peremptory severance with a place that's been his life for so many years. A former Antone's employee observed with a certain satisfaction "What they don't realize is that Don used to run all the winos and derelicts off, and now they'll have to do it themselves." The reason being given out is that Ebeling didn't fit the club's new image, which is being generally seen as a grim omen of Yuppification.

- I got myself into trouble with veteran **Ray Wylie Hubbard** fans at the Cowboy Twinkies' 20th anniversary gig by giving Hubbard a cue for the second verse of *Long Black Veil*. "No, no!" said Jim Beal of the *San Antonio Express*, "You mustn't give him any help. That's the whole point. He has to get out of it on his own." Though judging the intro to bassman Jimmy 'Six Pack' Herbst's legendary *Truck Driving Man* ("I'm a truck driving man. I'm a truck driving man. I drive a big truck. I'm a truck driving man") a bit abrupt by heyday standards, Beal et al agreed that otherwise it was an absolutely authentic recreation. Those, by the way, are the complete lyrics.

- A San Antonio tip, courtesy of Jim Beal, about the newish venue **Tacoland**. "I don't think you'd like it much," says Jim. "Let me put it this way, the most popular song on the jukebox is *My Wife Ran Off With A Nigger*." I haven't thought or heard of that horrible piece of shit in maybe ten years but, in a classic example of Jungian synchronicity, the very next day someone told me about the time her husband played a pick-up gig with a country band in Arkansas and, when an African-American couple walked in, the rest of the band immediately switched into . . .

- While he hasn't exactly set the world on fire as a performer, I've always rather liked **Walt Lewis**, and he certainly gets a Good Attitude award for his wry comment on his wedding reception. "Jimmy LaFave's going to be playing. We figured we'd better get someone with a draw."

- Well, shit. Just a few months ago, **Junior Brown** was still one of the two or three hundred Best Kept Secrets In Austin, and already he's sold out. Yes, Lee, you heard that right, Junior Brown has gone Nash Vegas. A new CD entitled **Superstar Country Dance Hits**, featuring "Hot Club Mixes and Extended Versions of the Big Hits," includes Junior's *Sugarfoot Rag*. I tried to reach him for comment but he wouldn't stop talking about the forthcoming video of a specially choreographed Sugarfoot Line Dance.

- During the last four years, **MCT** has gathered some very nice compliments in other magazines. The latest addition to this heart-warming peer group support comes from the national folk/acoustic journal **Dirty Linen**, under the heading **Vital Natural Resources**. "There have been several local publications devoted to Texas music over the years (*Austin Chronicle*, *Buddy*) but *Music City Texas* is the best . . . impeccable taste in recommending a wide variety of artists." Well, alright. I mention this mainly because I know it'll seriously piss some people off. Letters of rebuke and rebuttal can be sent to *Dirty Linen* at, screw it, they can find the address for themselves.

- Closer to home, I have to thank **Don McLeese** of the *American-Statesman* for including MCT in his Thanksgiving list of nine "underappreciated Austin assets" to be thankful for, though his compare and contrast approach isn't likely to endear either one of us to the *Chronicle*. One point bothers me though, what's this "Even when Conquest is wrong" stuff? While one MCT/*Statesman* reader called to say "As far as I'm concerned, you *are* the Pope," I don't claim to infallible, but even if I'm not always right, I'm never wrong. You may disagree with me, Don, but that ain't the same thing. Thanks anyway, especially for that "essential reading for anyone who cares about Austin music." From your lips to God's ear. OK if I use it wearing my advertising solicitor hat?

- Rallying round at ultra short notice to fill an Acoustic Music Festival slot left empty by Julie Burrell's last minute cancellation, singer-songwriter **Karen Tyler**'s reward was not simply in heaven, but on Channels 24 and 36, prime time. Bad call, Julie.

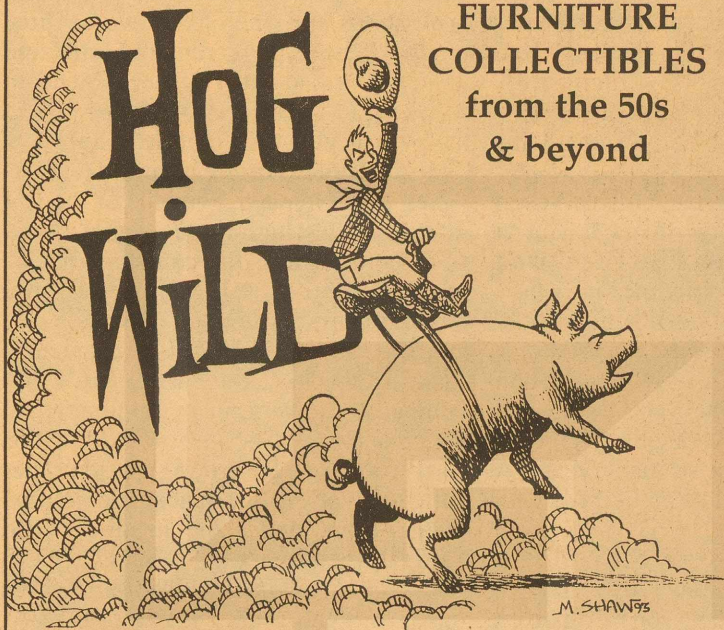
- When the members of Finnish folk superstars **Värttinä** were introduced, the biggest hand from a packed La Zona Rosa went to Riita Potinoja—the accordion player. Makes me proud to call Austin home.

- Hey, pollsters! Fill in your ballots and get them back to me. Please. Pretty please.

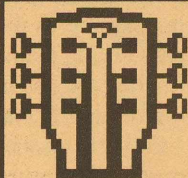


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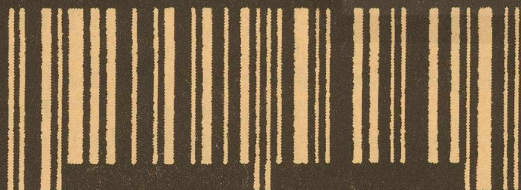


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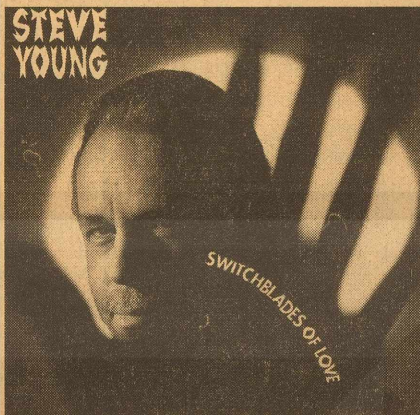
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# CHRISTMAS OTRA VEZ

## SISTERS MORALES

### I'M COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS/VUELVO A CASA PARA NAVIDAD

(independent cassette)

### A TEX-MEX CONJUNTO CHRISTMAS

(Hacienda, cassette)

### A TEJANO CHRISTMAS

(Hacienda, cassette)

Apart from a two year old cassette that's not really representative anymore (though well worth having, if only for Lisa Morales' *Overnight She Vanished* and a lovely duet version of *Lo Siento Me Vida*), this cassage—horrid word, but what you can do?—is the Houston hermanas only recording. Also two years old, but at least timelessly seasonal, it's the same song, written by Lisa, in both English and Spanish, and it's very pretty, sentimental without being sugary and, of course, beautifully sung by Lisa and Roberta Morales, with Shake Russell cohort Jack Saunders on guitars and bass. God, I love those girls' voices. Probably the only way to get a copy is by going to their Dec 18th show at Jovita's.

• Whether you look at Hacienda's two tapes as oddball compilations or Christmas kitsch doesn't really matter much, because one of them, at least, wins out both ways. There's a sly sense of straight-faced humor running through the conjunto tape as ten of Hacienda's top accordion acts adapt and quote from Christmas classics. Opening with Los Dos Gilbertos' bravura *Noche De Paz* (Silent Night) and Agapito Zuniga's *En Navidad*, the fun starts with Albert Zamora y Talento's cheeky *Christmas With Talento*, a quick-fire medley leading up to *Walking In A Winter Wonderland*. Conjunto Madrigal de June

P Garcia put their hearts into *Navidad, Navidad, Navidad* and *Mensaje Navideño*, Mingo Saldivar is predictably sensational with *Arbol De Navidad* and a witty *Jingle Bells Rock*, Los Cadetes stomp with *Fiesta Navideña*, Mando Lopez y Los Muchachos go for big time sincerity on *La Navidad*, Cornelio Reyna's *Tres Navidades* is clearly a dig at over the top Anglo seasonal muzak, Los Campeones de Raul Ruiz contribute the rather dull *Navidad*, Henry Zimmerle and Trio San Antonio close out magnificently with *Rudolph The Red Nose Reindeer*. A must for conjunto fans and, presented as a jokey stocking filler, maybe a way of stirring interest among the unconverted, because there's some great playing here, Zamora, particularly, showing off like crazy.

• By comparison, the Tejano companion tape just doesn't make, though I must admit that, as a general thing, I'm less in sympathy with the music itself, which always seems too eager to please. Even so, most all of the acts just take the whole thing too seriously. With the exception of Janie C (Ramirez) & Cactus Country (*Cactus Christmas*), nobody seems to be having any fun. The rest come across as glum and grimly sincere, and hardly any of them are a patch on the conjunto players simply as musicians. **JC**

## ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL

### TRIBUTE TO THE MEMORY OF BOB WILLS

(Liberty, CD/cassette)

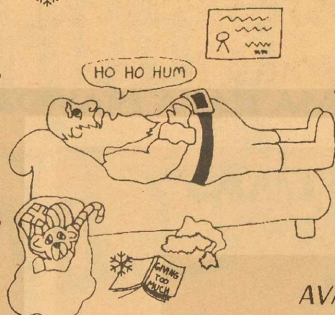
If you handicap the Famous Guests who join the Sleeps on various of the 18 tracks by the form book, you probably won't be far off. The dark horse, much as I hate to admit it, is Garth Brooks, who, for a change, does an honest day's work on *Deep Waters*. The people who failed the crash course in Willsology are so predictable that you can't help wondering what the hell Ray Benson was thinking of when he roped them in—Huey Lewis (*Hubbin' It*), Suzy Boggus (*Old Fashioned Love*) and Brooks & Dunn (*Corine, Corina*) confuse the mannerisms with the essence and just sound all wrong. However the younger generation is amply redeemed by Lyle Lovett (*Blues For Dixie*), George Strait, singing "Everyone is smiling, you won't see a frown, girls are all happy 'cause big ball's in town" with unexpected glee (*Big Ball's In Cowtown*, by Hoyle Nix, whose son Jody appears on *Ida Red*), Vince Gill (*Yearning (Just For You)*), Marty Stuart (*Misery*), Riders In The Sky (*Dusty Skies*) and Asleep At The Wheel themselves (*Bring It Down To My House, Got A Letter From My Kid Today*). Some of them, notably Lovett, are so good at Western Swing that they almost rival the veterans, but, of course, that's where the album really kicks in, starting with the fabulous opening instrumental *Redwing*, featuring Texas Playboys Eldon Shamblin, who joined

Wills as electric rhythm guitarist in 1937, and Johnny Gimble, along with Chet Atkins and Lucky Oceans. Dolly Parton shows she can still be a great country singer with *Billy Dale*, Johnny Rodriguez goes home for *Across The Alley From The Alamo*, Merle Haggard, whose own 1970 *A Tribute To The Best Damn Fiddle Player In The World (Or My Salute To Bob Wills)* is one of the greatest, and most influential, country albums ever made, shines on *I Wonder If You Feel The Way I Do*, Willie Nelson does more than justice to perhaps the best song on the album, Jesse Ashlock's *Still Water Runs The Deepest*, and another Texas Playboy, Leon Rausch, brings the authentic touch to *All Night Long*. If the album has some vocal soft spots, AATW and a plethora of guests including Dave Sanger, Floyd Domino, John Ely and Herb Remington, swing magnificently throughout. Even so, I have to wonder what exactly is the point. Thanks to the miracle of recording technology, Bob Wills himself is still the king. For all its virtues, this tribute is a pale substitute for the originals, particularly those made when Tommy Duncan was the Texas Playboys vocalist. If you can find any of the sensational **Tiffany Transcriptions** CDs of Wills' live radio show, put out by the now defunct Kaleidoscope, give them priority. **JC**



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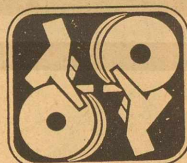
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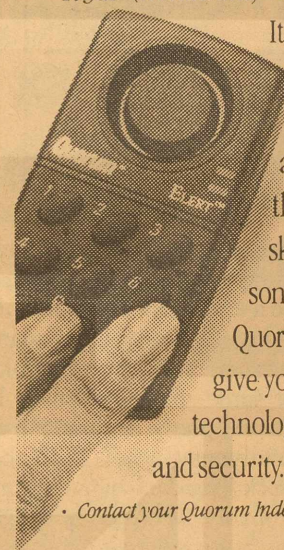


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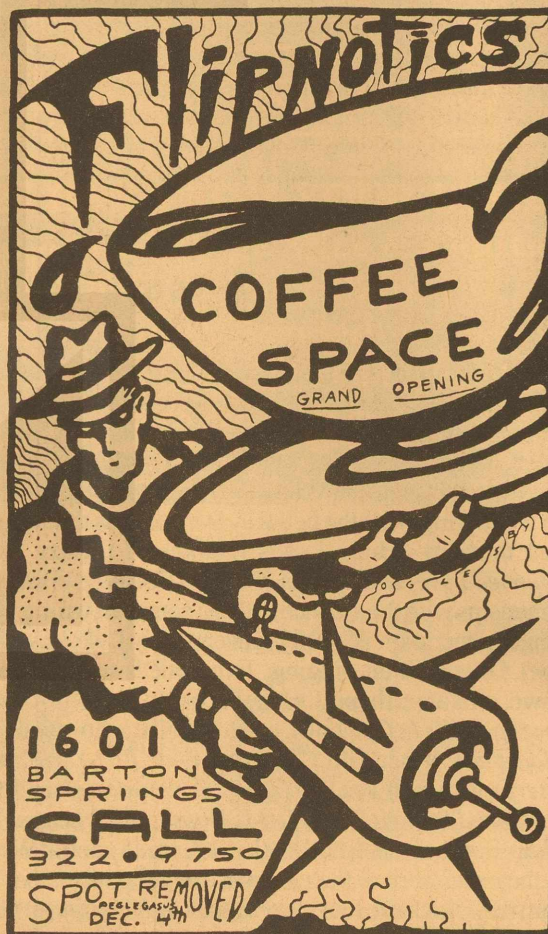
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OF WOODY GUTHRIE**

(Dejadisc, CD/cassette)

North of the Sabine, some folk refer to Texas as Baja Oklahoma, and the initial celebration of Guthrie's birthday in 1991 had a certain element of "let's teach those snotty Texas upstarts a thing or two about songwriting" red dirt chauvinism. Quickly tempered by the alacrity with which Austin artists embraced the opportunity to pay tribute to the great activist singer-songwriter—as one participant put it, "I'd like to thank Woody Guthrie for inventing my job"—overflow crowds at the Cactus Cafe prompted follow-ups in the following years and a move to a bigger venue. This album, recorded live at the third event at La Zona Rosa, has well over an hour's worth of some of Guthrie's greatest songs performed by some of Austin's greatest performers. There's a touch of Johnny Come Lately in a line-up that's rather less than representative of the actual evening, with many artists, including veterans of the first show, omitted completely while four, Jimmy LaFave, Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, Michael Fracasso and David Halley, get two cuts each. Having said that, for sheer power and interpretative brilliance, Fracasso (*1913 Massacre/Dead Or Alive*) and Halley (*Pretty Boy Floyd/I Ain't Got No Home*) are surpassed only by Ray Wylie Hubbard, spiritually the closest of all the performers to Guthrie (and himself an Okie), with a fusion of *Jesus Christ* and *Vigilante Man*. Lisa Mednick's reggaefied version of *Hard Travellin'* works a great deal better on record than it did on the night, and Campbell's painstaking set-up, incredibly tedious to live through, pays off in luminous renditions of *Ramblin' Round* and Goebel Reeves' *Hobo's Lullaby* (Guthrie's favorite song). Personally, I'd've cut *This Land Is Your Land* (too obvious) and the scrappy Grand Finale *Goodnight Irene* but the 15 tracks that lead up to them are well worth the price of admission. **JC**

**AUSTIN ACOUSTIC  
MUSIC FESTIVAL  
A WORLD INSIDE . . .**

(Chocolate, CD)

Your mission, should you choose to accept it, is to discuss this album without using the word "diversity." I don't have a copy of the schedule for the second (1992) Festival, when this was recorded, to hand, and anyway my maths probably wouldn't be up to calculating exactly how many different ways you could cut 13 slices out of it. Producer Russ C Smith, who did a quite remarkable job of recording direct to DAT, goes for the broad spectrum, bit of everything, approach, that includes the best and most representative along with the merely esoteric. On the plus side, the best single cut is Johnny Degollado y Su Conjunto's powerhouse *Muchacha Hermosa*, followed by Betty Elder's spell-binding *The Quiet*, Susan Colton's quirky jazz-folk-pop *Real, Real, Slow*, Michele Solberg's vocal pyrotechnics on *Frozen Lullabies*, East Side legend Snuff Johnson's *Lonesome Blues*, Jazz Pharaohs' *St James Infirmary/Summertime*, D'Jalma Garnier's Creole *Valse De Parks*, Champ Hood's lively *Keep It Clean* and Eric Blakely's effective *First Night In Paris*. Down side are the Middle Eastern music of Kamran Hooshman & !001 Nights, featuring Festival sweetheart Erin Foster on tablas, which leaves me cold, Fungaru's Afro-Cuban percussion, which I find unconvincing, and two pseudo-British acts. Silver Thistle Pipe & Drums' bagpipe medley regrettably includes *Amazing Grace*, allowing an all too easy, and for them unfortunate, comparison with the Royal Scots Guards' #1 hit, and I'm sorry, I'm simply not prepared to tolerate Heather's saccharine Renaissance Fair bullshit version of a 17th century Celtic ballad. **JC**

**SHAVER  
TRAMP ON YOUR STREET**

(Zoo/Praxis, CD/cassette)

The label, God love 'em, ran an ad in October for Billy Joe & Eddie Shaver's spectacular father and son collaboration, but, for some reason, didn't actually send me a copy. By the time we got this straightened out, it came with a wodge of rave reviews, leaving me in the unusual situation of having to say "Me, too!" and try to find some new approach to convince any waverers. The essential thing is that while Billy Joe's vocals are still endearingly rough and ready, Eddie's guitar work, from delicate minor key arpeggios on the ballads to full-tilt power chord boogie on the rockers, makes this very different from Shaver's earlier songwriter showcase albums. Their versions of such Shaver classics as *Georgia On A Fast Train*, *Oklahoma Wind* and *Old Chunk Of Coal* are simply definitive. To illustrate the reasons for Shaver's longtime cult status, one need only point at the quite brilliant way he handles such problematic themes as Texas (*Heart Of Texas*), patriotism (*Good Ol' USA*), sexuality (*The Hottest Thing In Town*) but, most particularly, religion. *If I Give My Soul* is such a great song that I want to quote the lyrics in full. Funny old business; not that long ago, a handful of us would show up at Grizwald's on no cover Sunday afternoons to hear Billy Joe Shaver and Jesse Taylor, now he's being hailed coast to coast. As longtime supporter Waylon Jennings, who once cut a whole album of Shaver's songs, remarks, "If anybody still gave a shit, this'd be a hit." **JC**

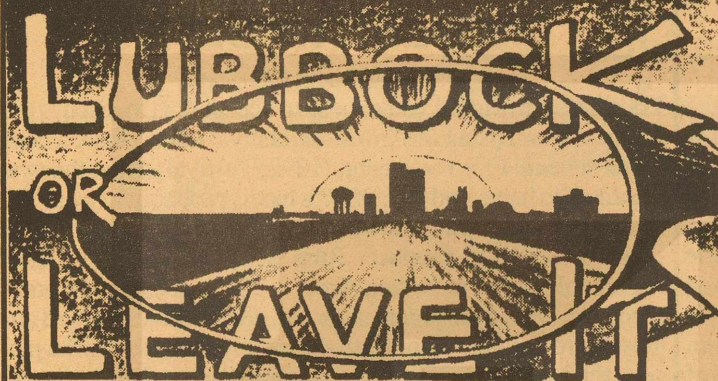
**P.J. BELLY & HIS TEXAS  
BLUES REVUE  
COME TO PAPA**

(Monkey Man, CD)

The fact that the CD visuals and accompanying press kit emphasise the Lubbock band's residencies in Las Vegas tells one a good deal. This, notwithstanding three Belly originals, is basically a white boy blues show band, about which the most interesting thing is that the knock off is of Chester Burnett, which is, at least, unusual and thus makes it rather more acceptable than most of its predictable kind. However, there are some oddities that would seem to indicate considerable internal tension. In among Belly's competent enough and well-supported takes on Howlin' Wolf style sexual bragging and innuendo, guitarist Jeffrey Duke Patterson sneaks in Dylan's *Knockin' On Heaven's Door*, and the album ends with a very smooth *Sleepwalk*, but strangest of all is the abrupt interpolation halfway through of two tracks featuring Ingried Kaiter (see cover feature) on vocals. Sam Cooke's *Bring It On Home To Me* and John Prine's *Angel From Montgomery*, with Austinite Paul Culver on Hammond B-3, sound like outtakes from a completely different, and far better, album. I hesitate to recommend a CD just for two cuts, but Kaiter is fantastic and, who knows, 20 years from now owning an original copy of her first, obscure, local recording may be a major source of pride and/or profit. **JC**



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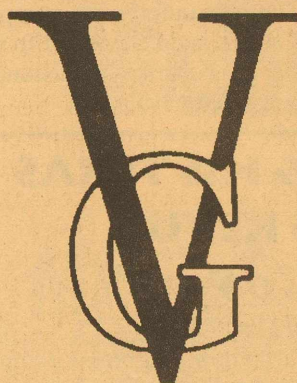
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## MUSIC CITY TEXAS

# RECORD REVIEWS

### LYDIA MENDOZA LA GLORIA DE TEJAS

(Arhoolie, CD/cassette)

At various times in a career that's spanned six decades, she's been known as La Alondra de la Frontera (The Lark of the Border) and La Cancionera de los Pobres (The Poor People's Songstress), but one night in Houston, in the mid-70s, an MC, divinely inspired, introduced her as The Glory of Texas, the title by which Lydia Mendoza will now always be remembered. Born in Houston in 1916, and now retired from performing due to ill health, she is, beyond argument, the greatest singer and most popular and enduring star Texas has ever produced. Since her first session as a 12-year old in 1928, cutting a 78 with her parents and a sister as Cuarteto Carta Blanca, Mendoza has recorded well over 1000 songs in a dazzling range of styles, accompanied by orquestas, mariachis and conjuntos, making it well-nigh impossible to compile a single representative album, but this one has a particular charm and purity. Recorded in 1979 at her daughter's home in San Antonio on Chris Strachwitz's classy field recording rig, Mendoza, warmed up from an afternoon concert, accompanies herself on 12-string guitar, and sounds like she's in your own sitting room. The 19 songs include rancheras, corridos, a tango, a bolero, Don Santiago Jimenez' *Margarita, Margarita*, a paso doble, her own *Amor Bonito* (Beautiful Love) and a version of one of her biggest hits, *Besando La Cruz* (Kissing The Cross). The feeling and emotion Mendoza can convey in song, are so intense that ignorance of Spanish is simply not a problem, her power and passion transcend language. As 1993 draws to a close, one can count many good, even great, Texas albums, but only this one is essential. **JC**

### THE THERAPY SISTERS ADULT CHILD OF CODEPENDENT CHRISTMAS

(independent cassette)

An upgrade of last year's tape, dropping the unenthusiastically received Gothic Fable and adding seven new songs to the title track, *Listless Christmas* and *Santa's Got The Blue*. Featuring Sisters Past (Primal Sing Specialist Gail Lewis returning to sing her own evocative *Grandma*), Present (Lyrical Analyst Maurine McLean, Spiritual Nutritionist Lisa Rogers and Sax Therapist Marilyn Rucker) and well, not quite Future, but Mary Reynolds (Hitnotherapist) has only recently become a full member, the result is some quite wonderful harmony work on a slightly patchy selection, a consequence of sticking to a theme. Rogers & McLean's *It Must Be Christmas* is very witty and clever, stopping at every holiday in the calendar en route to "It must be Christmas because I can't wait to give myself to you," but my favorites, as on their last CD, are Rucker's acerbic ironies. *The 12 Days Of Analysis* is rather in-jokey, but her "politically correct" carol *Happy Whatever You're Having* and ultimately dysfunctional family Christmas parody *Pachelbel's Tantrum* are nothing short of brilliant. Four Bahs and a Humbug. **JC**

### GRETCHEN McMAHON

#### ACOUSTIC AWAKENING

(independent cassette)

In Jacksonville, Florida, heavy metal has not one but two flourishing glossy, full-color local magazines, but if you want to belong to a true Austin sub-culture, guaranteed to get no press coverage at all, that's the way to go. Personally, I accept no responsibility whatsoever, heavy metal is so far outside MCT's parameters it isn't even funny, and if it weren't for admiring her guitar work in her stint with soul band Bon Terra (six women, two musicians), I wouldn't know of a recent metal guitar battle in which McMahon put a serious crimp in a lot of male egos by stomping their asses in that most macho of genres. In a remarkable display of versatility and virtuosity, McMahon has gone to the opposite end of the spectrum on a tape that showcases her abilities on acoustic guitar with six solo original instrumentals in the John Williams vein. Her technical proficiency is attested by the fact that it was recorded not in a studio but direct to DAT on Terra Nova's post-production board. Her pieces are very pretty, sort of Mood Elevator music, and intricate enough, without being flashy, to evoke constant admiration. **JC**

### SLAID CLEAVES FOR THE BRAVE AND FREE

(independent cassette)

There are plenty of reasons here to think about Woody Guthrie. His spirit's sort of in the air because of the tribute album (see elsewhere), and the only cover on a 12 song tape that opens with one called *Ramblers* is Guthrie's *This Morning I Am Born Again*. There's a strong populist streak in Cleaves that's a far cry from typical (and tedious) folkie left/liberalism; when he sings about modern day Okies searching for crumbs from the American pie (*The Ballad Of Nick And Betty*), he relates rather than patronizes, *Another Man's Wealth* and *Ramblers* are personal statements about wage slavery, *For The Brave* is an all-American anthem of optimism. The most powerful and effective social comment here is *Something To Lose*, the story of a young criminal, who tells the judge "give me something to lose, give me something to live for. I've done the time and I'll do the crime until you give me something to lose." On the more personal side, there's the charming honky tonk *Careful* ("If I'm not careful, I'm going to end up with a wife") and *The Dad Song*, a musician's autobiography ("I guess I must have got it from my Dad"). Helped out by some fine musicians, including Mark Viator slide guitar, Champ Hood fiddle, Ron Erwin drums, Boomer Norman electric guitar, and newcomer Laura Nadeau for two harmony vocals, Cleaves comes across more like Guthrie's son than Guthrie's son does. **JC**

### ISIDRO SAMILPA Y SU CONJUNTO

(El Chipo, cassette)

Despite its large Tex-Mex community and many clubs, Austin has never been a town in which conjunto musicians flourished. Johnny Degollado, the music's most conspicuous representative, once told me that the man he considers Austin's best accordionist, Marcello Gauna, had to fold his group because he couldn't support his family. Following last month's Los Pinkys release, El Chipo 002 begins a project to put some of the best local conjunto on tape, starting with Samilpa, a long time stalwart of the East Side clubs. Recently, Samilpa has been splitting bills with Los Pinkys, which makes a lot of sense as, apart from Bradley Williams, that group and his conjunto are identical, John Aguilar bajo sexto, Augie Arreola drums and Manuel Herrera bass. While none of the ten tracks are originals, and, in authentic South Texas style, are uncredited, Samilpa draws on long experience with audiences to construct a stimulating set that makes one wonder what might have happened to him if he'd worked in one of the big centers rather than a backwater like Austin, **JC**



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# COMING YOUR WAY Music City Texas Previews

**Thurs 2nd/9th/16th/23rd/30th • SAWDUST BOOGERS** (Waterloo Ice House, 38th, 9.30pm). You might ought to check first as the relaxed, acoustic sit-down three piece is, once again, locked in litigation with the Bad Livers. You'd think there'd be room for two banjo/fiddle & accordion/upright bass trios in this town, even if they play a similar brings-a-new-meaning-to-the-word-eclectic range of material, from bluegrass to gospel to metal to originals, but apparently not.

**Fri 3rd/Sat 18th • BETTY ELDERS** (Chicago House, 10pm/Waterloo Ice House, 6th/Lamar, 9.30pm). Her CD *Peaceful Existence* has been getting rave reviews all round the country ("Four stars aren't enough," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*) and earlier this year, following people like Guy Clark, Elders set a new attendance record at La Casa, America's premier house concert series. Accompanied by Gene Elders on violin and/or Mitch Watkins on guitar, she's consistently been putting on immaculate performances showcasing her equally impressive talents as both a singer and a songwriter. See also 16th.

**Sat 4th • CÉSAR CHÁVEZ STREET FIESTA** (Franklin Federal Bank Gallery, Chávez & Brazos, 7pm). When 1st St residents and businesses were pissing and moaning about the street being renamed after the great Chicano labor leader, there was talk at Jovita's about telling the City Council that *South First* would be happy to accept the honor. One thing for sure, we'd have done a better job on a Fiesta which features conjunto from Los Tres Amigos and classical guitar by Carlos Sedillo and Lourdes Perez. Let's think, how about Johnny D, Los Pinkys, David Rodriguez, Tish if she's in town—hell, you could put on a great show simply using musicians who live on or just off South First.

**Sat 4th • MRS FUN + DAYNA KURTZ** (Chances, 10pm). Kathy Korniloff's first venture as a promoter has me reworking AE Van Vogt's concept of A and Null-A, where A stands for Austin rather than Aristotle. Listening to tapes of Mrs Fun and Kurtz, it's very clear that they ain't from around these parts. The irresistible Mrs Fun are a Milwaukee based keyboards (Connie Grauer, one of the most charismatic performers I've ever seen) and drums duo playing something Korniloff suggests calling "hard-core alternative jazz-funk," but they're a lot more, well, fun, than that suggests. Kurtz, from Northampton, MA, plays intricate, moody electric jazz guitar and has an incredible, almost surreal voice. Korniloff describes her as "Tuck & Patti-meets-Indigo Girls," but then Kurtz remarks "They play these songs that are like 'I love you, I love everything,



DAYNA  
KURTZ

you're beautiful,' and my songs are more like 'You lied to me, you hurt me, fuck you,'" ie my kind of singer-songwriter. Null-A perhaps, but this should be rather amazing.

**Sun 5th • MARYANN PRICE** (Chicago House Upstage, 8pm). Following last month's songwriters birthday show, Price and her superb musicians plan to showcase different ones each month, tied to their birthdays. This time, the former Lickette concentrates on the songs of her old boss, Dan Hicks.

**Tue 7th • THE GREY GHOST** (Continental Club, 8pm). Blues piano master Roosevelt Williams has been cutting back a bit on performing lately, but then this is his 90th birthday. With the Governor and Mayor proclaiming Grey Ghost Day, it'll be a major blues gathering, so expect an augmented version of the always remarkable Orchestra.

**Sun 12th • PIANORAMA** (La Zona Rosa, 9pm). What Marcia Ball, Johnny Nicholas, Floyd Domino, Nick Connolly and their special guests Erbie Bowser, Riley Osbourne, Beto Skiles and David Webb need is one of those Busby Berkeley movie effects, a piano 100 feet long, they can sit at side by side The return of Ms Ball's popular boogie woogie, blues, swing, jazz etc black & white show.

**Thu 16th • DAVID RODRIGUEZ PRESENTS AUGUSTIN RAMIREZ, JOHNNY HERNANDEZ & BETTY ELDERS** (Chicago House, 10pm). Instead of his annual Family Xmas show, master songwriter Rodriguez presents his three favorite Austin songwriters.

**Fri 17th • AUSTIN LOUNGE LIZARDS + THERAPY SISTERS** (La Zona Rosa, 9pm). Showing up a lot of Austin no-talent-of-any-kind, the Lizards and Sissies (see Reviews) manage to be terrific musicians and incredibly funny at the same time. Pickin' and grinnin' indeed.

**Sat 18th • SISTERS MORALES** (Jovita's, 8pm). After I voiced some reservations about their cover material, November's covergirls (see Reviews) proceeded to play for three hours with just four non-originals, only one of which I have a problem with, which brings my estimate of songs I wish they'd lose down from a third to less than a thirtieth, so my apologies to las hermanas.

**Sat 18th • JIMMY LAFAVE'S NIGHT TRIBE + MICHAEL FRACASSO BAND + BRECK ALAN** (La Zona Rosa, 9.30pm). They think well of Breck Alan in Colorado, and his CD features some really fine guitar playing, a voice that conveys vulnerability and acutely honest songs, but I wonder if he knows what he's got himself into, sharing a stage with two of Austin's most dynamic singer-songwriters in full band mode.

**Thu 23rd • ROY HEINRICH & THE PICKUPS** (Broken Spoke, 9.30pm). The honky-tonk man with the big BIG voice celebrates a full year of playing at a venue that suits him to a T for Texas.

**Sat 25th • BAD LIVERS** (La Zona Rosa, 9pm). Not a lot of choices today for us waifs and strays, but Danny Barnes, Mark Rubin and Ralph White come jingling to the rescue with their *Lonely Hearts* special.

**Weds 29th • JOE ELY** (La Zona Rosa, 10pm). If you want to get New Year's over with early, this is the way to do it. Ely still kicks butt harder than any kid band and, as a bonus, you can get to congratulate newlyweds Jo Carol Pierce and Guy Juke, who'll be holding their wedding party at the show.

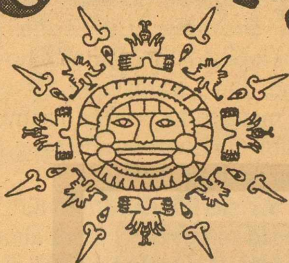
**Fri 31st • WOMEN THRU THE DOOR INTO '94** (Chicago House, 8.30pm). Only Gretchen McMahon would be ballsy enough to have a tape release (see Reviews) on this of all nights. Joining her will be Karen Tyler, Lauren Dillon, Lara Lynette and 'The Best of the Women's Jam.'

**Fri 31st • MARCIA BALL** (La Zona Rosa, 10pm). For \$25 a head you get a reserved table, a bottle of champagne, a breakfast buffet, party favors and, of course, party music from the Queen of the Crawfish Circuit her very own self. That's enough class for me.

**Fri 31st • HIGH NOON** (Opera House, Bartlett, 9pm). Only an hour away, up by Georgetown, great rockabilly in a classic Texas old style dance hall setting. But then an hour back. Can I be the designated drunk?



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+ Doak Short & The Dirty Dogs  
28th Guy Forsyth + Lee Persons Band  
29th 2 Hoots & A Holler  
+ Wayne Hancock  
30th High Noon + Snake Boy Johnson  
31st Solid Senders + Joanna Howerton

# LA ZONA ROSA

## MUSIC IN DECEMBER

Weds 1st • FLOATING MAN + TRINITY BOX  
Thurs 2nd • DIXIE CHICKS  
Fri 3rd • JIM MOONEY & BLUESIANA  
Sat 4th • SUSANNA SHARPE & SAMBA POLICE  
Sun 5th Bummer Brunch with  
SARAH ELIZABETH CAMPBELL (noon)  
• TEXANA DAMES (4pm)  
Mon 6th • CORREO AEREO  
Tues 7th • BUMMER NIGHT  
with SARAH ELIZABETH CAMPBELL  
Weds 8th • FLOYD MOORE  
Thurs 9th • JEFF HUGHES BAND  
Fri 10th FLACO JIMENEZ  
Sat 11th • TROUT FISHING IN AMERICA  
+ LITTLE JACK MELODY & HIS YOUNG TURKS  
Sun 12th Brunch with RILEY OSBOURNE (noon)  
• TEXANA DAMES (5pm) • PIANORAMA:  
MARCIA BALL, JOHNNY NICHOLAS, FLOYD  
DOMINO & NICK CONNOLLY with special guests  
ERBIE BOWSER, RILEY OSBOURNE  
ROBERT 'BETO' SKILES & DAVID WEBB  
Mon 13th • ROXANNE HALE  
Tues 14th • BUMMER NIGHT with SARAH  
ELIZABETH CAMPBELL  
Weds 15th • TEDDY & THE TALLTOPS  
Thurs 16th • RASBERRY JAM  
Fri 17th • AUSTIN LOUNGE LIZARDS  
+ THERAPY SISTERS  
Sat 18th • JIMMY LaFAVE'S NIGHT TRIBE +  
MICHAEL FRACASSO BAND + BRECK ALAN  
Sun 19th Brunch with RILEY OSBOURNE (noon)  
• TEXANA DAMES Xmas Party (4pm)  
Mon 20th • Christmas Songwriters: DAMON  
BRAMLETT + SLAID CLEAVES + TBA  
Tues 21st • BUMMER NIGHT with SARAH  
ELIZABETH CAMPBELL  
Weds 22nd • MANDY MERCIER BAND  
Thurs 23rd • BETTER THAN EZRA  
Sat 25th • BAD LIVERS  
Sun 26th • TEXANA DAMES (4pm)  
Tues 28th • BUMMER NIGHT with SARAH  
ELIZABETH CAMPBELL  
Weds 29th • JOE ELY + SUE FOLEY  
Thurs 30th • JIMMY LaFAVE'S NIGHT TRIBE  
Fri 31st MARCIA BALL

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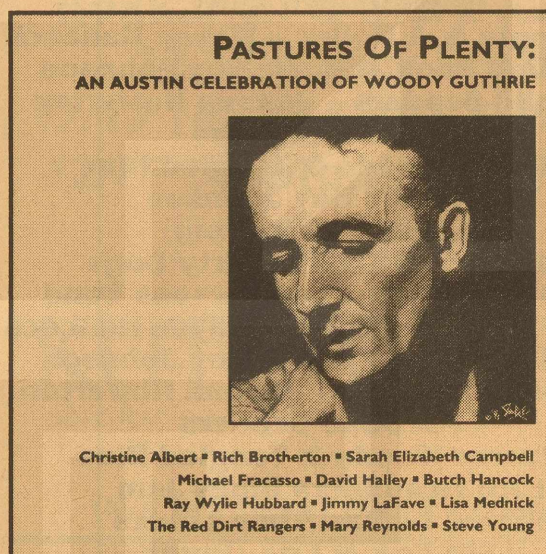
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