

Premier Issue INSIDE

*Pleh Productions
Brings Alternative
Bands to Lubbock*

*The Great
West Texas
Honky Tonk Tour*

*Local Live
Music Calendar*



VOLUME 1 • NUMBER 1 • MAY 1990 • FREE

TOMMY'S PLACE

Local establishment combines fun, flavor, spirit of area

By SHANE WEST

It wasn't all that long ago that fans of live music in Lubbock must have thought the art form had all but disappeared. In recent months, however, as a number of nightclubs either eliminated the live format or closed down altogether, a rather unusual type of club has managed to make its way into both the hearts and minds of those craving the magic of music captured in its most moving form.

Tommy's Place is a humble enough live music venue which grew out of very humble beginnings. A six-year overnight success story, the neatly-tucked-away club located just east of the Tahoka highway on East 83rd street is as close to a live music paradise as Lubbock is ever likely to see. And, as partners Tommy Thompson and Mike Burk tell it, its story is as special as its Austin City Limits-like setting.

"Well, it started out that I was just gonna have me a little party house," Thompson said. "Then we started cookin' barbeque and sellin' it but that didn't work out too good. So we closed it down and started doing private parties."

For roughly four years, private bookings were the only offerings featured by the soft-spoken Tommy Thompson until a chance meeting with Mike Burk at one such New Year's Eve party.



Club manager Mike Burk onstage with two "fans" during a break at Tommy's

Photo by Chester Marston

"Mike Pritchard, Eddie Beethoven and a bunch of musicians got together out here and basically everybody just had a good time. The people that I tend to be around are mostly musicians and die hard music fans," Burk said. "For the past four years, we've done a December 25th party and it's just sorta grown outta that."

And grown it has. Thompson, who owns the land where the club is located, recalled with some amusement how he ventured into the idea of establishing his "party house" where he could sell barbeque "on the side". Looking around the small wood-sided room where this interview took place, he noted its storied past.

"It started right here in a boxcar. This room is a boxcar. There's autographs on these walls of hobos from back around 1949. The way it really got started was from Charlie Ray. He owned Mesquite's. We ran around together some and since he built him a barbeque place, well, I figured I had to have one, too."

That was six years ago. "My brother drew me a sketch. I've got a lot of carpenter friends so I said 'here we go'. I go buy a bunch of wood and they put the main frame together. Then I ran out of money and I couldn't pay them so we had to kinda do it ourselves," he said.

SEE "WEST TEXAS" pg. 6

EDITORIAL

The President Speaks

Our one big event of the year, the Family Music Festival, has become harder and harder to put on and has produced smaller and smaller crowds each year. It seems some changes are long in coming. So here are two of the changes. A new newsletter format, with regular publication and a monthly mixer, combining business and pleasure. The mixers will be held the first Wednesday of each month, hopefully in a different club or hall each time. They start with a short business meeting, open to all members, and end with a one or two set performance by an invited guest artist. These mixers hopefully will give the current and prospective new members something to look forward to every month. Perhaps by not concentrating all our hopes and efforts on one big, yearly event and by staging a regular monthly event we can give the Association greater visibility and give the members more of a chance to be active in the Association.

This leads us to the minus side of this new plan. There does not seem to be a lack of places to stage these monthly meetings nor a lack of talent to perform. The problem is getting the two together on a regular basis. What is needed is for club managers and musicians (singles, duets, etc.) to check their schedules and contact one of the Board members if they would like to participate in one of the mixers. The clubs get the benefit of potential customers on a slow night, and the musicians get the chance to showcase new

material, new sound, or even a new band. The two mixers that we've already had were a good start and we hope to continue the trend. Both were held at Gesture Cafe on Main Street. Strange Attractors played in February and Cary Swinney was featured in March. Nothing happened on April, and May is looking slim. Hopefully this newsletter will generate interest in this type of event and will get some calls from interested parties.

Speaking of newsletters, some of our newer members have probably never seen a WTMA newsletter. That's something that definitely has to change. Published once a month, the WEST TEXAS SOUND should provide something for everyone. Feature articles, lots of photographs, a calendar of events, and large, high visibility ads will form the structure of the publication. Future additions include music crossword puzzles, trivia questions, cartoons, and a classified section. This publication must be self-supporting and advertisers would be helping themselves, the WTMA, and musicians in general.

Once again, I emphasize the point that member participation is essential to the survival of these changes and to the WTMA as a whole. A phone call of encouragement or a contribution to the newsletter via a photograph, an article, or an ad would be most helpful.

Thank you,
Chester Marston III
President, WTMA

LETTERS

As the official publication of the West Texas Music Association, this premier issue of WEST TEXAS SOUND extends to all readers an invitation to respond with letters of suggestion, complaint, or question. Remember, this is your space... Write to:

WEST TEXAS SOUND, P.O. BOX 65081, LUBBOCK, TX 79464

"Hub-Bub"

MUSIC MUSINGS & ASSORTED WHAT-NOTS

One of the area's newest college bands expects to have three singles released by the first week of May in hopes of gaining airplay on KTXB (88.1 FM). The group is called **Barbed Choir**. You've heard of post-modern music? They call their brand "fencepost-modern". **Trent Hunt** (vocalist) and **Mark Fallas** (drums), formerly of the local band **The Intentions**, formed the group along with guitarist **John Fillipone** and bassist **Hal Nelson**, the latter of whom played most recently with **The Rude Boys**. Barbed Choir's three singles are entitled "**Firewater**", "**Libido**", and "**Smokin' Bob**". Nelson noted that "Firewater" is the likely candidate for "being radio worthy" adding that the reggae-style "Bob" is perhaps least likely for the rotation because of its somewhat quirky lyric arrangement.

Nelson describes Barbed Choir's sound as "very collegy with a lot of **Buddy Holly** in the writing" and admits comparisons to such cutting-edge groups as **R.E.M.** and **The Replacements** would not be entirely out of line.

Look for Fallas, Hunt, and Nelson to play as a three-piece unit for most of this spring and early summer with Hunt handling guitar chores. Fillipone attends the **U of Texas** and finds Austin a bit far to commute from on a regular basis...

Bugs Henderson, legendary Texas guitarist, played to an estimated crowd of 230 on April 13 said management of the Texas Cafe and Bar (can we still call it "**The Spoon**"?). Henderson and his band the Shuffle Kings (bassist **Robert Chitwood** and drummer **John Hoff**) are busy promoting their third album, **American Music**. The three were recently named **Best R & B Act of 1989** by the highly respected Dallas Observer...

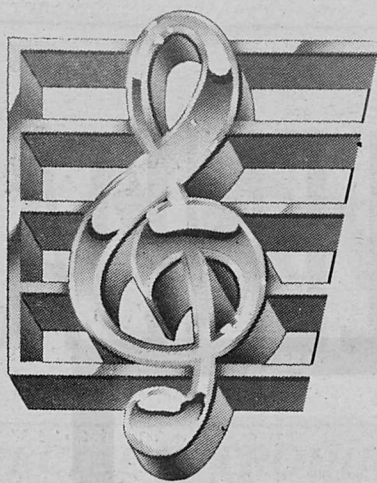
Insiders in Nashville say that perennial country favorite **Reba McEntire**, who gave birth to a daughter this past February, is set to resume touring as early as May 3rd. The tour is slated to kick off in Louisiana and roll into East Texas by month's end...

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MUSIC NEWS

You, Music, & The Law

By CHARLES S. CHAMBERS

The United States Copyright Office offers the following description of the meaning of copyright:

"Copyright" literally means the right to copy. The term has come to mean that body of exclusive rights granted by statute to authors for protection of their writings. It includes, the exclusive right to make and publish copies of the copyrighted work, to make other versions of the work, and, with certain limitations, to make recordings of the work and to perform the work in public.

Protection afforded to work under the provisions of the copyright statute is provided for any song or recording once fixed in any tangible medium of expression. For example, a lead sheet or recording of the composition on a demo tape constituted a "tangible medium of expression".

A work does not have to be "published" to be afforded copyright protection. For example, a demo tape is not "published" as defined by the copyright office but can be copyrighted.

The copyright statute defines "published" as, "the distribution of copies or phono records of a work to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease or lending".

As said earlier, copyright attaches to a work once it is fixed in a "tangible medium of expression". Actual registration of the work is not necessary but actual registration with the copyright office is the absolute highest protection available for a work. In addition, you get a nice certificate suitable for framing.

The actual registration of a work is very easy. It consists of a two page application the copyright applicant sends in along with a copy of the work and \$10.00. About four months later, you receive your copyright notice, barring any problems with the application. Free applications can be obtained by writing the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., 20559. The duration of a copy copyright is the life of the author plus 50 years.

A number of persons have asked me about "poor boy" copyrights i.e., mailing the work to yourself by registered mail. This is acceptable since copyright attaches without actual registration but for \$10.00 and the small amount of time requiring to fill out the application, I advise actual registration. If you do go the "poor boy" route under no circumstances open the certified mail envelope, for obvious reasons.

The above has covered only the bare basics of copyright law. Should any readers have any questions, I will be happy to try and answer them. I can be reached at (806) 763-1944 between 8:30 and 5:00. Next month, this article will deal with ASCAP and BMI their respective functions within the music industry.

*Charles S. Chambers is a practicing attorney in Lubbock, Texas with offices at 2012 Broadway.

Texas Recording Scene Improving

By LLOYD MAINES

The music business and recording scene in Texas seems to be improving. Many Texas artists are being signed by major labels. Over the last couple of years we've seen Clint Black, Tish Hynihosa, Will Massey, Terry McBride, and Jimmie Gilmore, just to name a few. European labels are also signing Texas artists such as the Texana Dames, Butch Hancock, Ponty Bone, Doug Sahrn, Alvin Crow, and Sonny Curtis. Here is one example of how it can still be done.

Will Massey is a 21 year old singer and songwriter from San Angelo, now living in Austin. He cut an album at Caldwell Studios in Lubbock in February of 1989. He released the album himself to sell around Texas. During the summer a publisher from Los Angeles, Peter Phillin, heard Will's tape and signed him to a publishing agreement. Phillin pitched Will to MCA in Los Angeles and in February of 1990, Will signed a contract for eight albums with MCA. This proves it can still be done. It takes talent, some good people working with you, and a lot of LUCK.

Oh, by the way, Will has started recording his MCA album right here in Lubbock. He insisted to MCA that he had written the music in Texas so why not record it in Texas. (I like a guy who stays true to his roots.)

This brings me to another very exciting bit of news for music in Texas. The Texas Department of Commerce has created a music office to promote the music business in Texas. This job went to Casey Monahan. Monahan was the music critic for the Austin American Statesman for many years and a long time Texas music advocate.

The purpose of this new department is to try to keep the Texas music industry in Texas. The artists develop the music in Texas and should be recording it in Texas. I wish Monahan the best of luck with his new job.

If anyone would like to write to him with words of encouragement or ideas, you may do so at:

Texas Department
of Commerce
c/o Casey Monahan
410 East Fifth Street
Austin, Tx. 78711



Gary Swinney (right) and Matthew McLarty jam onstage during the March WTMA mixer. Photo by Chester Marston

Swinney Serves 'Em Up at Gesture Cafe

By DAN CADDELL

Wednesday, March 7, 1990, kicked in a new decade of music, West Texas style, at the Gesture Cafe. This was the first WTMA "Monthly Mixer". A brief business meeting began at 5:30, with discussion about the newsletter and other association business. Following a short break, Cary Swinney, the month's featured singer and songwriter, plugged in his guitar and gave a powerful performance.

It's one thing to keep the attention of an audience with a full band behind you; but I know from experience it takes a special character, good melodies, and lyrics that draw mental pictures, plus a lot of guts to get on a stage and carry a show off by yourself.

Cary managed to do all of the above very well considering that a group of musicians makes a tough audience. Swinney says he prefers to perform his own songs, but he

doesn't mind throwing in an occasional Lowden Wainwright III song and a couple by the venerable John Prine.

Due to the abundant number of willing and able musicians in the crowd, Cary called on a few to sing harmony or play fiddle or guitar. Larry Taylor took over at the break with some nice vocals and good guitar picking.

Later in the evening, Richard Bowden, of Maines Brothers fame, joined Matthew McLarty as resident fiddle players. McLarty showed his versatility by adding harmonica licks, while Richard fiddled. Graham Warwick and Taylor filled in harmonies to Swinney's forceful lead vocals and guitar playing.

Cary Swinney's music leans strongly towards ballads, most of which express very strong opinions, thoughts, and memories. A talented performer, not quite country, not quite rock, just straight ahead musical expression.

MAY LIVE MUSIC CALENDAR

OLD TOWN CAFE

- 4 YELLOWHOUSE
- 11 ANDY WILKINSON
- 18 YELLOWHOUSE
- 25 LES CADJINS DEPLACES/BAYOU BOEUF RHYTHM ACES

ORLANDO'S (Ave Q)

- 1 CLASS ACT
- 8 SUSAN GRISANTI
- 14 MARY HELEN SNOW
- 15 CLASS ACT
- 21 SUSAN GRISANTI

TACO VILLAGE

- 4 BILL & BONNIE HEARNE
- 5 YELLOWHOUSE BAND
- 12 BOBBY SHADE & MATTHEW McLARTY
- 19 YELLOWHOUSE w/ LES CADJIN DEPLACES
- 26 ANDY WILKINSON

THE PHOENIX

- 18 ROBIN LEE

TOMMY'S PLACE

- 3 WEST TEXAS TAPING
- 4 JESSE TAYLOR/JR. MEDLOW/TORNADO ALLEY
- 5 RAJUN CAJUN SPECIAL OLYMPICS BENEFIT
- 10 MUSIC JAM
- 11-12 DOUG SMITH/CARY SWINNEY & FRIENDS
- 18 DENNIS BARNES BAND
- 19 STRANGE ATTRACTORS
- 24 WEST TEXAS FILMING
- 25 PONTY BONE & THE SQUEEZE TONES

TEXAS CAFE

- 4-5 FRENZY
- 11-12 DENNIS ROSS & THE AXBERG BROS

TOWN DRAW

- 5 GANGSTERS
- 12 ROJO NEGRO
- 19 BAND CALLED BOB
- 26 ENVOYE EXPRESS

LUBBOCK MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER

- 14 RAVI SHANKHAR

LUBBOCK MUNICIPAL COLISEUM

- 4 KISS, SLAUGHTER, & FASTER PUSSYCAT

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BY

SUSAN GRISANTI

Susan Grisanti has been performing concerts throughout the U.S. and teaching Guitar since 1974. She was a semi-finalist in the 1986 Guitar Foundation of America International Competition, and was included in the 1983 edition of 'The Most Prominent Educators of Texas.' Ms. Grisanti has studied Guitar with Pepe Romero, James Bogle, Alice Artzt and others. Her teaching includes individualized instruction using the most advanced methods. She is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Guitar at Texas Tech University.

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- *Name added to WTMA newsletter mailing list*
- *Invitation to all WTMA Monthly Mixers*

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New Membership

"West Texas" Sets Success Standard for Channel 13

continued from pg. 1

Together with the help of the ever-present Mike Burk, Thompson set about to complete the project. Slowly the dream formed into reality, and with it, new ideas for Tommy's Club took shape. Last fall, the news broke that this unique "private club" would be selling individual memberships. Burk explains the reason for that arrangement is directly linked to legalities surrounding county laws and regulations dictated in Lubbock's liquor-by-the-drink laws. Until this past March 26th, a BYOB policy was the order of the day but now the policy has been dropped and a full-scale bar set-up is in place. As for the private club status, anyone may become a member by simply buying a one-year pass for \$10. That once-a-year cost is often discounted when a customer comes to catch a live show which carries a cover charge as well. And, for special get-togethers or parties, Burk said that any and all persons are invited to come out with a paid "member". Groups of twenty-five or more are often booked to come out for afternoon get-togethers which feature full fare menu service with such entrees as steak and barbeque offered.

"As the law states it, at least one member of a group must be a member of Tommy's. Money has to change hands between us and our members. We simply run a tab for a group and work with our members," Burk noted.

As many music fans know by now, in addition to the business of running the club, Burk took on the rather monumental task of putting together a local television package which features acts filmed on location at Tommy's. Entitled "West Texas", the music program is admittedly based on the success of the nationally syndicated "Austin City Limits" and is, in its own right, becoming a local success of its own.

"I'll tell you, it was a pretty bold move trying to do it," Burk laughed. "It kinda came about last year when I saw an old friend, Jimmy Blakely at the fair the night Joe Ely was playing. I knew a guy he worked with named Rick Lipps at KLBK. Rick and I had become friends a while back and he's just a live music nut. He knew that there was something really special about the Lubbock music scene. Rick and I talked about doing something and he said if I'd do it, he'd do it. I contacted Don Caldwell, and the moment he heard the idea he said, 'It's time, let's do it.' He put support behind it from the word go."

In addition to the audio expertise of Caldwell, Burk then contacted several other music professionals including Pat McCutcheon from South Plains College, Bill Bland from KLBK, Electric Ear, Tarpley Music, and Jungle Studios among others. A plan of attack was



During a recent taping of "West Texas", Jimmy Mason (seated in front) assists Don Caldwell. Photo by Chester Marston

then formulated regarding everything from production down to booking which acts would appear on each show. Along with the planning, an unexpected magic was somehow injected into the project.

"There's been so many people (involved). You just gotta say there's something strange going on here. Maybe this could only happen in Lubbock, I dunno. It's kinda like the old farmer/neighbor deal. You know, let me borrow your plow and I'll let you use my horse. Maybe this is one of the last frontiers; where that breed of artist and 'art mob' lives."

A testament to the show's success on the South Plains is the ratings generated during its Sunday night time slot.

We are the first show to ever break into Channel 13's Top 20 list, that is, other than regular network programming," said Burk. "Everybody's participated and given their time. No money has really changed hands on this. You know, I don't think money buys these things. They happen outta people wanting something to happen. If there is a magic in the music business, maybe that's where it comes from; people carrying their talent out there and giving their time and effort."

He related that a lot of what is happening today at Tommy's Place is merely a reflection of the spirit which once surrounded some of Lubbock's more legendary clubs, notably Stubb's Bar-B-Q and The Cotton Club.

"From what I've seen, it's like, well, it's gotta work. Let's make it happen, it's gotta happen. There's a lot of people out there who sincerely want it. They're mainly musicians who sit around and play their guitars for endless hours and would like a place to showcase it," Burk said. He added, "You know, Stubb's did a great tribute to Lubbock. He was a humble man. He probably

broke himself doin' it...I can understand it. I don't know that any bar owner who puts on live music does not assume the risk. The main thing is that the music comes from West Texas and it's a shame that more people don't go out and support it in its live setting."

For those who haven't been inside the club in recent weeks, a few interesting changes should be welcomed news. As capacity crowds at such gatherings as the taping of Joe Ely a couple of months ago attested, the need for more roominess was clear. The intimate closeness is still widely evident but some measures have been taken to create a more spacious setting.

Burk laughed, "There's been no blueprints on this thing from the beginning. It has haphazardly turned out to be a sort of amphitheater. What's happened is unconsciously we've built a club that you can come in, sit down and see a band as well as dance. This place changes everytime a person comes in; maybe that's some of the charm about Tommy's Place."

No doubt about it, "charm" is a fitting description. With its combination of old wooden beams, wrought iron and antique signage displayed throughout the surroundings, Tommy Thompson chuckled at the thought of perhaps needing to knock out yet another wall to accommodate the growing influx of customers.

"Hey that'd be great," he nodded. "Now if they don't run out of telephone poles, we'll be alright."

To that, Mike Burk concluded, "Let's just hope that everybody can stay in business and do well. We've got about 1,000 memberships right now. We'd like to see that keep going up. It's a fun place and it's hard to describe. We've put out a lot of effort and we've got a lot at risk, but if you're a live music fan, it's got to be a good deal."

THE GREAT WEST TEXAS HONKY TONK TOUR

"The Jerk"

By RON RILEY

There was a jerk at the jam tonight. Oh, he meant well, but overall I would say he wasn't appreciated.

He just walked up to the stage in the middle of a song and stepped up to the mike as if he owned it. He didn't know the words to any of the songs, but he sang along anyway. Yelled was more like it! Every time the band would come to a repeated line, he would join in with some unintelligible garble. It was so much louder than the other vocals that the real lyrics began to sound like garble as well. The band didn't like it either.

They were making faces at him behind his back and the crowd was amused by that, but not by his singing. He would grab the mike off the stand and do his best Mick Jagger, gyrating and bending forward at the waist. Lips pooched out and arms flailing. Sometimes marching back and forth as if strutting his stuff.

After all it was a jam.

When it was time for the guitarist to sing his part, the jerk would crowd him out and yell over the intended harmonies.

He was living up to his name...

At one point, after the guitarist had firmly established his territory in front of his mike, the jerk stood back behind pretending to have a guitar and weaving and gyrating as if he were the one making the music really happen.

The crowd was amused.

He kept running into the mike with his body. A loud "whump" could be heard over the P.A. The bassist began to take an attitude and said some obviously very nasty things to his face that the crowd couldn't hear, but the jerk thought it was all a joke.

He was amused.

Several times the jerk bumped into the drums and nearly toppled a cymbal, but the drummer was too quick. Once, as the drummer reached to catch the cymbal, he took a healthy swipe at the intruder, just catching a swatch of hair as the stick whizzed by his ear. The jerk just thought the drummer was being friendly. Sometimes it's really hard to insult a jerk.

The drummer was not amused.

The band was playing its collective heart out and sounding killer. It was hard to believe that they could have concentrated enough to have kept it together, but they did. At big concerts they have monstrous bouncers with tatoos close by to take care of such trouble, no matter how harmless. I've seen it a hundred times.

Some jerk will hop up on the stage and just be getting into the feeling, when the gorillas rush up to him from both sides and take him in hand or by the collar, leading him backstage or helping him down in

SEE "JERK" pg. 8

PLEH PRODUCTIONS: Bringing Musical Diversity to City

By ERIK CARLSON

Most histories of the American West characterize the frontier with both individuality and entrepreneurship. Keeping with the pioneer spirit of West Texas, three Texas Tech University students: Derek Milner, Sean Bailey, and Brad Perry formed their own music promotion company, called Pleh Productions, to cure the lack of musical diversity in Lubbock, Texas.

The idea of Pleh Productions was originally conceived by the duo of Milner and Bailey while watching a hard-core show in Amarillo. Inspired by the show and the fact that they had to drive 120 miles to see a punk band prompted them to ask the band's road manager how to bring an underground band to Lubbock. The "roadie" gave the guys several phone numbers, and Pleh Productions became a reality.

Pleh Productions put together its first show in the spring of 1989 by bringing five Dallas hard-core bands to Lubbock for a flatlands free for all. Pleh's, help spelled backwards, purpose is to bring great alternative bands to Lubbock; which range in sounds from punk, thrash, and hard-core, to grunge garage rock. For the three, Pleh Productions is a business venture, with hopefully, the least amount of business involved. "It's a hobby," says Milner, "when the fun of bringing bands to Lubbock stops, we'll quit!"

The company is a non-profit organization. All the money that is collected goes to the band, for the sound system, and the club owner. "All we do," remarked Bailey, "is call up a band, and they give us a date, and then we find a place for them to play."

Convincing club and bar owners of their seriousness is Pleh Productions' biggest problem. All three, who are under twenty-three, admit that credibility is a problem, but say some of the club owners have allowed them to book some of their out-of-town bands. Pleh bands have played at Main Street Saloon, The Gesture Cafe, Dallas Nights, and even the Wesley Foundation. Even though Pleh bands have made money for each club, Pleh has been forced to look elsewhere for a stage. Club owners claim that since most of the bands' supporters are minors, insurance becomes the main factor. The Pleh guys state that no minors have been caught drinking in any of the clubs during one of their shows. Because of this, Pleh has no stage to place its bands, and all the April shows have been pushed back until a new place can be located. For Pleh Productions to continue their great work in Lubbock, an establishment with a congenial managerial attitude must be found.

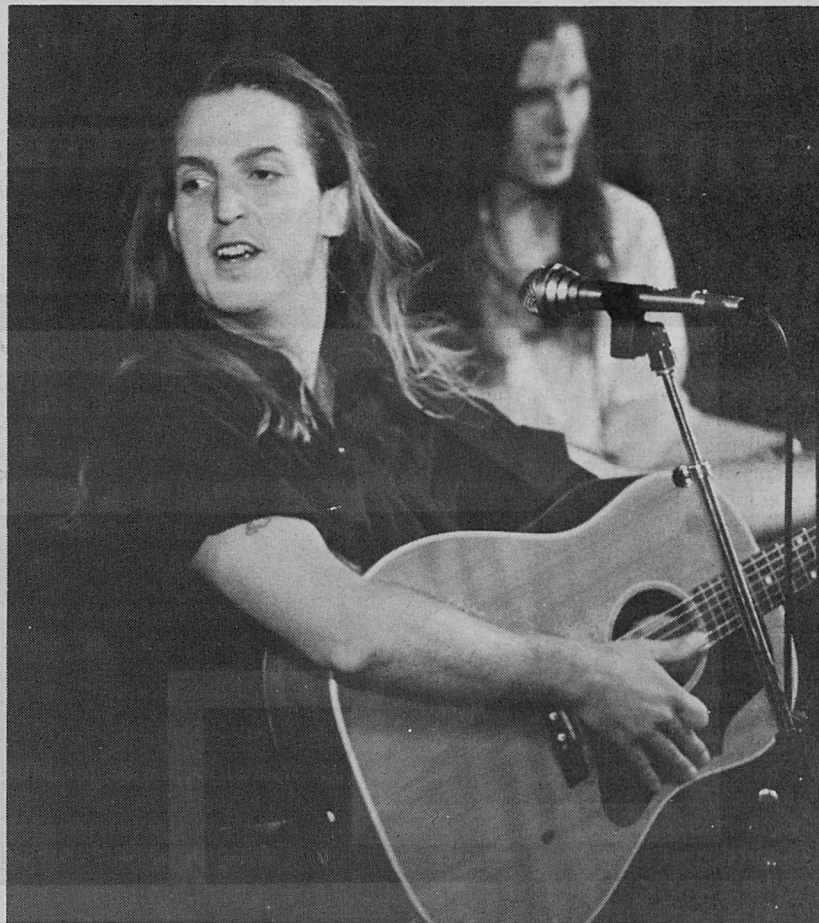
Regardless of their problems, Pleh Productions has accomplished much. They have brought a diversity of underground sounds from across the nation to the Hub City. Bands that have swept into Lubbock include: The Fluid(Denver), The Jesus Lizard(Chicago), Coffin Break(Seattle), L 7(Los Angeles), and the Dead Beats(Dallas).

Convinced that punk rock is alive and well in the 1990's and even in Lubbock, the Pleh Production guys are trying to hurdle both financial and operational obstacles, and reach the day when Pleh is taken seriously by the businesses of Lubbock. They admit that Lubbock's punk rock scene is small, but say it has great growth potential. Most of Pleh's supporters are of high school age, but they are looking forward to the time when Texas Tech students who like hard-core music will come out and support their shows.

Support for the shows has been great at times, but unfortunately, slim at others. Pleh Productions needs a consistent following who will support each show. Without a good turnout Pleh will not be able to bring in great bands at reasonable rates.

Besides booking bands, Pleh Productions is expanding into new areas of creative marketing and promotion. Pleh has a line of self-designed stickers and t-shirts. Also, Brad Perry, Pleh's newest member, has designed a punkoid fanzine called "Gawdoffell" for the Lubbock kids. "Gawdoffell," says Perry, "is a collection of information on new hard-core bands and their releases, and assorted other punk stuff." Pleh's newest adventure is even boulder. They are attempting to put out a seven inch of one of the local hard-core bands, The Tragic Machine. The guys will try to press several hundred copies of the band's recordings and promote their activities. Pleh Productions wants to produce more local and regional talent, but the guys realize that they must succeed with the Tragic Machine deal before going on to bigger production projects. Though the record projects are tentative at this time, their ventures are indicative of Pleh Productions' entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to bring a diversity of music to the South Plains.

**THIS MUSIC
MAGAZINE IS
FOR YOU...
LET US HEAR
FROM YOU!**



Donnie Allison performs at the Friends of the Homeless Home Aid benefit.
Photo by Chester Marston

Trips With Uncle Bob

By JOHN NOBLES

Think back folks.

How many of you all remember the story about the head on collision that unfortunately took the life (and lives) of that moderately up and coming blues accordion player, Big Don Ho and his Big Hoer Band?

Remember? Middle of the night, raining like crazy and Big Don was heading to the Lake Havahit Lounge on the east end of Lake Havahit, Louisiana when BUFFO, up pops that Gandma Taters potater truck, coming down the wrong side of old FM 94.

Big Don never had a chance. Anyway, that's not what I wanted to talk to you all about. It was the headlines in the paper the next day that got me riled. Here was a five piece, down and dirty, whole lot of hot licks band completely wiped out by a spuds truck and the paper says, "FOUR MUSICIANS AND A DRUMMER KILLED".

What the heck do they mean!? Are they insinuating something here? I'd like the guy who wrote that article to try playing drums sometime. Heck he was probably a guitar player, maybe even a left handed guitar player, CLOWN.

Have you ever seen somebody who's never played drums sit down at a set and pick up the sticks? They kind of sneak up on em with this real funny look on their face, like, "I'm gonna play the heck out of these things". HA HA HA.

First thing they realize is that it's loud, real loud, real loud and intimidating. Heck, even the cym-

bals are loud. They just tap on everything, you know, little tap here, little tap there.

Anyway, they always ask you to show them how to play something. OK, you says, take your right hand and tap on this hi hat with that little stick and remember, don't hit the end of your little nose. Hoaky doaky, got that going, that's it, just tap tap tap, one two three four. Got it? OK, now stomp your foot on that bass drum pedal down there. Right here is where they stop. One hit and they quit. "What?" "How the heck am I supposed to tap this thing and stomp that thing at the same time?" "Next I suppose you'll want me to chew gum."

I always like that part.

Anyway, they always jump up and go play something a lot easier, like a guitar. HA HA HA.

Now personally speaking, I have attempted to play drums for 24 years and have still not figured it out. I have hundreds of witnesses to back up my horrendous reputation as a drummer. I have beat myself about the head and shoulders, and every other part of my body for years, with those confounded sticks. I will never be any good, never was, never will. I do not personally use the term musician in reference to myself, but in regards to the other fine players in and around this town; they are musician. Darn good ones, too.

Anyway, think about Big Don Hoe and his Band. They were all musicians, even the drummer, you clown.

RHYTHM, RHYMES, & ROYALTIES

By CARY C. BANKS

How important is the "TITLE" of a song? The Nashville Songwriter's Association has a slogan that says - "It All Begins With A Song". We songwriters have known all along that the music industry is fueled by the original song and that we writers spark the initial fire that eventually leads to the music that the public hears on the radio, T V and purchases at music sellers. If we take that thought one step farther we might say, "It All Begins With A Title". A good title is a songwriter's greatest asset. The song title is the first thing a publisher looks for when he opens your package and one of the first things a radio station programmer sees when he receives the product. With the multitude of tapes and CD's being produced these days, you can begin to see how important a unique and provocative title is to your chances of getting heard. Burt Bacharach and Hal David enhanced their chances of having a hit song

about heartache with their wonderfully inventive title - "You'll Never Get To Heaven If You Break My Heart".

Finding such original titles as "Rock and Roll I Gave You All The Best Years Of My Life" or "I'm the Only Hell My Momma Ever Raised" will not only fire the imagination of the listener but may also virtually write the song for you. Country music writers have always known the importance of the title in songwriting. Country music has given us such wonderful musical offerings as "Livin' Here, Lovin' There, and Lyin' In Between" or "The Last Thing I Needed the First Thing This Mornin'". The importance (and rarity) of great song titles is held in such esteem in major music markets, that some major publishers hire "idea" or "title" people to their staff. Some of these "Title" people neither sing nor play an instrument, yet their value is immeasurable.

With just a few well chosen words, your title can state your point of view, your character and even your style of music. "Pinball Wizard" lets you know right away, the setting is, more than likely, adolescence and the genre has to be rock & roll. "A Boy Named Sue" conjures up all sorts of hilarious possibilities for someone who's never heard the song. And on and on the list goes.

Where do these wonderful titles come from, you ask? From everywhere, if you know where to look... That's to say— if you are open to them. Mary Ann Kennedy and Pam Rose got their hit song title, "Ring On Her Finger and Time on Her Hands" from a line in a song written by Kris Kristofferson. (I heard that same song, so how come I didn't get that line and turn it into a Hit?) "Tie A Yellow Ribbon 'Round the Old Oak Tree" supposedly came from a story in Reader's Digest. Most great writers keep a "Title Book" (sort of

like a songwriter's inventory warehouse). Some other great writers just try to keep themselves attuned to their environment (in touch with "the street") at all times and simply act as a conduit for ideas. Whatever path you choose, the important thing to remember is that your title is your introduction, your promo man, your foot in the door. It may be the only chance you have to be heard...

Remember, whether your song is political, "The Times They Are A Changin'", philosophical, "What The World Needs Now", emotional, "Feelings", or spiritual, "You Gave Me Love, When Nobody Gave Me A Prayer", your title speaks first- so make it speak volumes.

P.S. Remember to tune to KLLL Fm 96.3 every Sunday at 8:00 pm for the West Texas Music Hour, and KLBK-TV channel 13 each Sunday at 10:30 pm for WEST TEXAS. Oh yeah, check out Doug Smith's new cassette! Great Stuff! C.C.B.

Jerk Lives Up To Name In 'Tonk Masquerade

continued from pg. 6

front; no violence, usually. I heard the bouncers got out of hand at a Stones concert one time and killed someone, but that's going too far.

I could see blood in the drummer's eyes. He was obviously contemplating murder.

The club was a fairly small one full of people having a great time and dancing, and not really noticing what the jerk was doing to disrupt the show.

The band played anyway.

Suddenly, the jerk got himself a full pitcher of beer and began drinking without first pouring it into a mug. He was weaving around splashing and splishing it on everything and everyone on stage every time he took a swig from the pitcher. Some of the folks on the dance floor began to get wet.

They were not amused.

He then got it in his mind that he wanted to sing a song. He started telling the band to play it, singing a

few bars at a time over the microphone yelling out "you know it, play it....I'll sing it, come on, let's Rock-n-Roll". They had no earthly idea what song was being requested and didn't care. All they wanted was to get rid of this jerk and get on with the evening. The obvious choice to bounce this guy would have been the bartender, but a quick glance at him showed me he was too small to handle the job.

Besides, he was obviously amused.

It seems that everyone is entertained on different levels.

The jerk was using the mike stand to lean on now. He had moved in permanently and was becoming frustrated that the band wouldn't play his request. After all this was a jam, right? He just knew they were holding out on him, so he tried another title. The band either didn't know it or weren't about to play it, and the jerk was getting miffed.

He said something derogatory to the guitar man and turned, cursing the drummer, all the while weaving around holding the mike stand. Then he yelled over the system something about how big of jerks the band was being. In fact, to him, all musicians were, if the truth were known. He used the Lord's name in vain and extolled the lack of virtue of each of the players' mothers.

The drummer jumped up.

When he did, the house became tense and quiet.

The jerk turned toward his challenger and stepped back a bit, bumping the microphone.

"Whump".

Then the screech of feedback.

The drummer lunged at him, but his instruments kept him from getting any piece of the jerk. It did cause him to take one step back, and there was no more stage to step back onto. The jerk fell back and down a couple of feet onto the dance

floor, beer in the air along with his feet.

No one rushed over to him to render aid or to see if he was alright. There was just this great "Ohhhhh!!" when he hit the floor. A few chairs were scooted around amid a low, fairly concerned murmur.....

Then relative silence.

Beer everywhere.

The jerk, seemingly unscathed, picked himself up and cursed the band again, then the crowd. He pretended to drink the last of the brew from his now empty pitcher. He swallowed his make believe brew, put his sleeve to his face, and wiped his lips for effect. Stumbling toward the door, he waved his middle finger at the crowd and the band respectively, again yelling several unintelligible obscenities as he made his exit.

I was not amused.

There was an jerk at the jam last night. But he had to leave early.

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