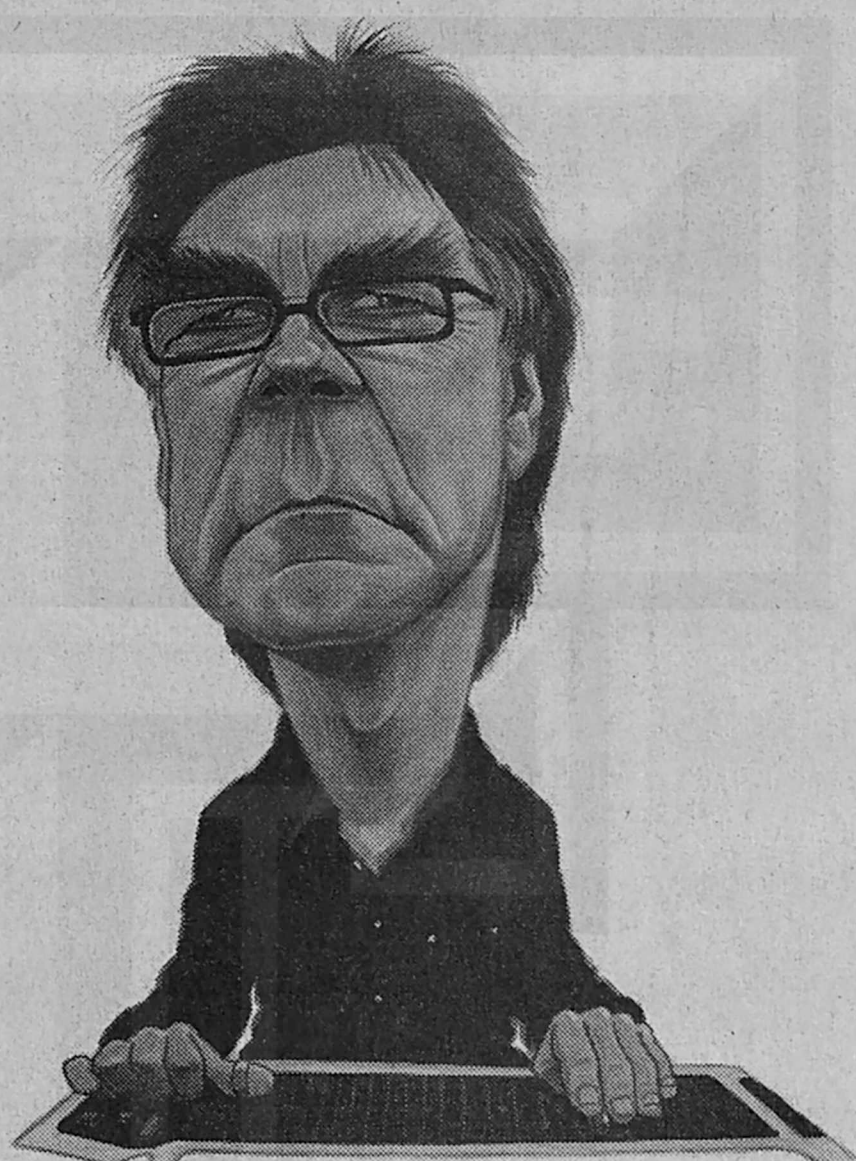
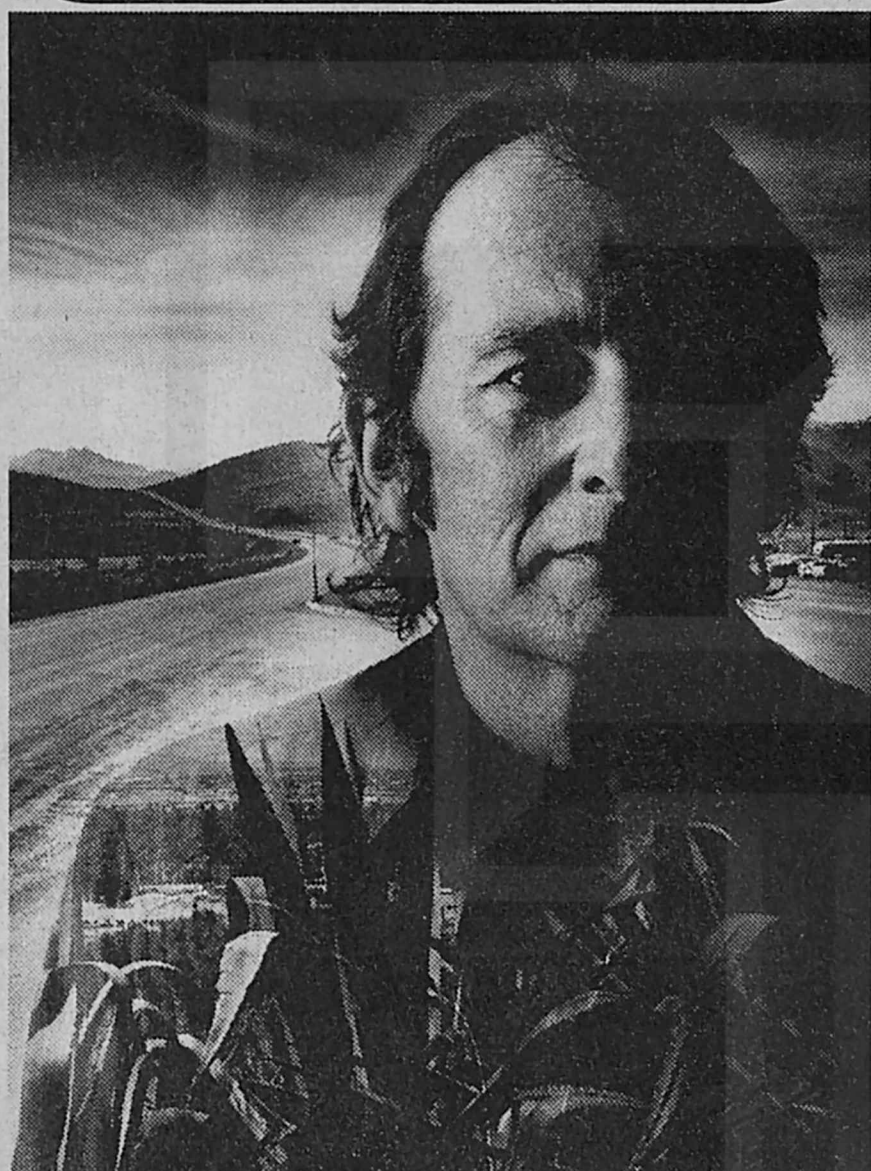


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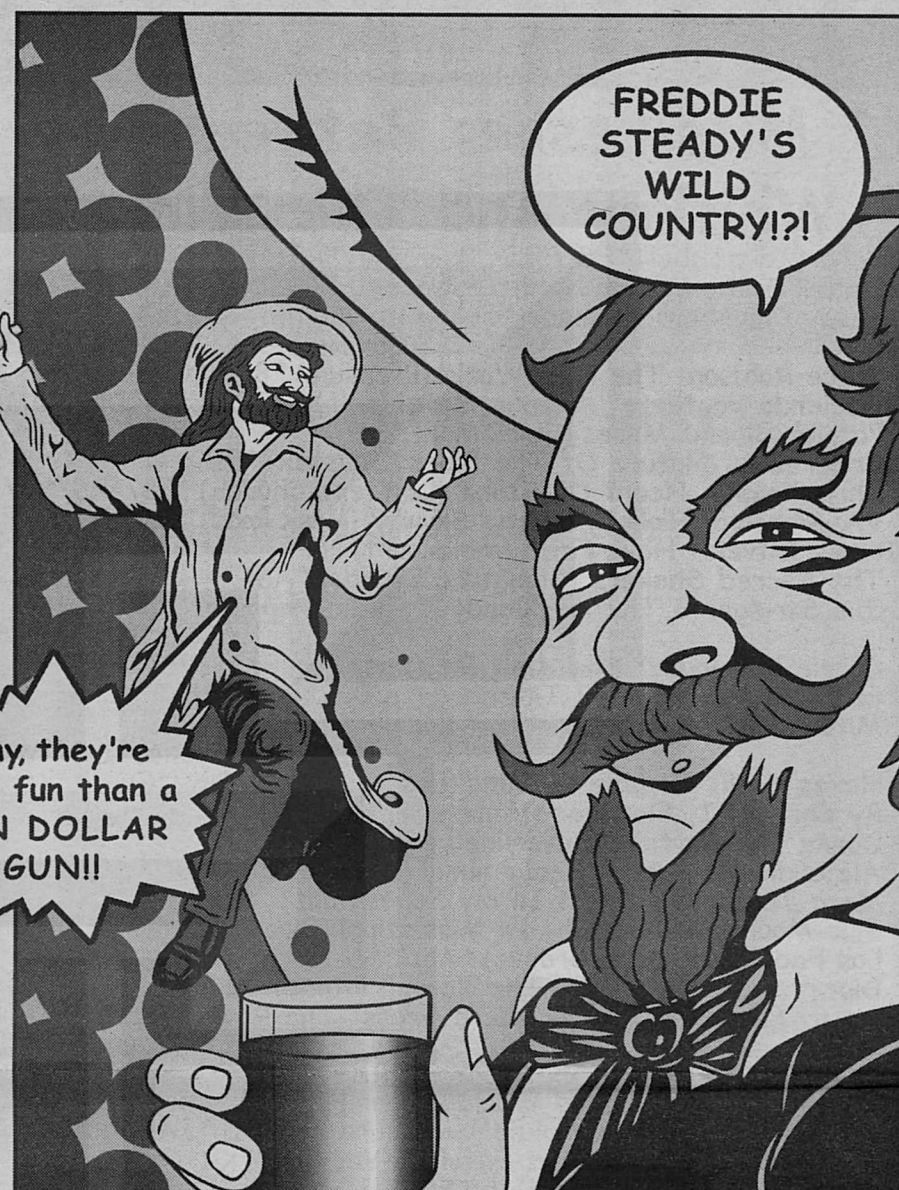
**WES MCGHEE
& BJ COLE**

#140/229 SEPTEMBER 2008



**ADVENTURES
IN BRITISH COUNTRY MUSIC
† DANNY ROY YOUNG
† JAMES HENRY
JOHN THE REVEALATOR
FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #109
ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS
REVIEWS * * * * * (or not)
EVE & THE EXILES • DENICE FRANKE
SHAWN HAWKINS & THE OFFENDERS
FREDDY STEADY'S WILD COUNTRY
GURF MORLIX • CARRIE RODRIGUEZ
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#1 Miss Leslie: Between The Whiskey And The Wine

- (Zero Label) *EW/*KD/*LG/*MJ/*RF/*RH/*RW
- 2 Darrell Scott, Modern Hymns (Appleseed) *BF/*DA/*HA/*JH/*RJ
 - 3 Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson: Rattlin' Bones
(Sugar Hill) *AA/*KB/*MDT/*TF
 - 4 Bruce Robison: The New World (Premium) *BP/*DD/*LMG
 - 5 Hacienda Brothers: Arizona Motel (self) *3RC/*BW/*DG/*MM
 - 6 Patrick Bloom: Moses (Small Man) *FS
 - 7 Eric Hisaw: Nature Of The Blues (Saustex) *BB
 - 8 Chris Knight: Heart Of Stone (Drifter's Church) *EB/*RC/*RV
 - 9 VA: Ribbon of Highway Endless Skyway (Music Road) *BS/*JP/*RMP
 - 10= James Intveld: Have Faith (Molenaar) *CP
The Sacred Shakers (Signature Sounds) *AG
Jim Stringer & The AM Band: Triskaidekaphilia
(Music Room) *TS
 - 11 Carrie Rodriguez: She Ain't Me (Back Porch) *JF/*TR
 - 12 Emmylou Harris: All I Intended To Be (Nonesuch)
 - 13 Mitch Webb & The Swindles: Lonely Kind
(Supreme Music) *DS/*WR
 - 14 Hayes Carll: Trouble In Mind (Lost Highway) *DN/*GG
 - 15= Ry Cooder: I, Flathead (Nonesuch) *AB/*BR
Donna The Buffalo: Silverlined (Sugar Hill) *BK
Alejandro Escovedo: Real Animal (Back Porch) *JS
 - 16 Marc Jeffares : Ghost In My Bones (self) *GS
 - 17= Blue Mountain: Midnight In Mississippi (Blue Rose) *DF/*JB
Los Fabulocos (Delta Groove) *AN/*SC
 - 18 Digney Fignus: Talk Of The Town (Figtone) *OO
 - 19 Danny Paisley & The Southern Grass: The Room Over Mine
(Rounder) *CL
 - 20= NQ Arbuckle: XOK (Six Shooter) *RA
The Duhks: Fast Paced World (Sugar Hill) *RL
 - 21 Crooked Still: Still Crooked (Signature Sounds) *JA
 - 22= Rodney Crowell: Sex And Gasoline (Yep Roc) *KR
Meet Glen Campbell (Capitol) *SB
Reckless Kelly: Bulletproof (Yep Roc)
Andre Williams: Can You Deal With It? (Bloodshot) *TPR
 - 23 The Refugees: Unbound (Wabuho)
 - 24 Redd Volkaert: Reddhead (Telehog) *MT
 - 25= Rachel Harrington: City Of Refuge (Skinny Dennis) *HP
Donal Hinely: Blue State Boy (Atom) *CF
Dave Sutherland: On The Waiting List (Red Kite) *AOK
 - 26= Band Of Heathens (BOH) *MF
The Beautiful Loser Society: Aim Low (self) *TM
The Bonedrake Syncopators: That Da Da Strain (BS) *SH
Jonatha Brooke: The Works (Bad Dog) *JMB
Fred Eaglesmith: Tinderbox (A Major Label) *NA
Mark Erelli: Delivered (Signature Sounds) *KM
Denice Franke: Gulf Coast Blue (Certain) *DJ
Ruby Dee & The Snakehandlers: Miles from Home (Dionysus)
Rebekah Pulley & The Reluctant Prophets: Back To Boogaloo
(Lucky Bird)

† JAMES HENRY

One Monday I didn't make it to Don Walser's residency and next morning got a call, "Henry here, I just wanted to make sure you're OK." Between Walser, Junior Brown, High Noon, Wayne Hancock, Cornell Hurd Band and others, any night between October 1990, when Jimmy Day told me about his new gig at Henry's Bar & Grill, and Halloween, 1992, when The Cornell Hurd Band played the Demolition Party, you were far more likely to find me at 6317 Burnet than at home.

James Henry was extraordinary and exemplary because, superficially, Henry's was just another cedar chopper bar, the kind of place where the regulars don't like each other much and really hate anyone who looks different, but, as word about the exceptional music started drawing a more and more diverse crowd, James welcomed everyone and, by sheer force of personality kept the peace. Even the most rabid redneck, who, on the last night, when Lee Nicholas (who once claimed "I get my mail delivered to Henry's") asked him where he'd be drinking in future, said, "Anywhere you fucking freaks don't go," took care never to cross the line, however shitfaced. When it came to bar owners, it just didn't get any better than James Henry.

After Henry's lost its lease, James & Gayle regrouped in Liberty Hill, but, while I felt guilty about not getting out there more often, it just wasn't the same, the vibe was gone. I feel even guiltier about slowly losing touch with James & Gayle, whom I featured on the cover of *MCT* #35 to celebrate their 36th wedding anniversary, but even though it'd been far too long since I last saw him, it was a terrible blow to hear that James Henry died, after a long illness, on July 24th, age 71.

Jimmie Dale Gilmore once said, "This is the best place in Austin to play country music. This may be the best place in the world to play country music!" If you could have figured out how James (and Gayle) made Henry's work the way it did, you could have franchised the formula and made a fortune, but there was no rational way to quantify quite what it was that made Henry's, to this day, 16 years after it closed its doors, the best, and, as Ed Miller has always said, the last honky tonk in Austin, because James Henry was a natural born Zen Master who brought everything around him into harmony.

Discovering Henry's Bar & Grill was one of the formative moments of my life. I loved country music, but didn't exactly fit the redneck mold. James didn't care. He welcomed me and all my oddball friends like we were family, and indeed, it became my second home. The world is a better place because James Henry lived in it.

Lee Nichols (former editor/publisher of *The Feedlot*). I am so sorry to learn of James' passing. My song *Call Of The Honky Tonk* is about Henry's! I remember leaving my (then) wife, and new born son on Monday nights to go hear Don W, Howard, Skinny Don & Jimmy Day, and have a cold beer with James, Gayle, and everyone there... I just feel blessed to have been able to experience that much, well, love is what it was!!! Love of music, and of carving out a moment in this crazy life to listen to such musical geniuses, and I do mean geniuses. WOW!!! James Henry allowed us all to have that opportunity!!! Brilliant. I could go on and on, and on... Muchos Gracias, James Henry!

Sean Mencher (guitarist [High Noon] and record producer) Among the many memorable nights I spent at Henry's, an indelible experience is the Monday night when members of the Butthole Surfers brought former Led Zeppelin bassist John Paul Jones to hear Don Walser. What was special was that nobody treated the Austin rock dadaists and their big-name British producer as a big deal. The big deal was the big-voiced, big-hearted (and, yes, big) Walser, who had yet to earn national attention as 'the Pavarotti of the plains,' but whose diverse Austin fan base didn't need any outsider's seal of approval. This was like a semi-secret society, in a nondescript bar along an unfashionable stretch of north Austin, where the cost of a couple of cold Shiners would buy you a priceless experience with Walser or Junior Brown, with James Henry playing host and having as much fun as anyone. When friends came to visit, I'd always take them to Henry's for a taste of the real Austin. Now that I haven't lived there in almost a decade, there's a whole lot that I still miss about Austin, but too much of what I miss most isn't there anymore.

Don McLeese (former *Austin American-Statesman* music critic) Every musician and patron of Henry's Bar & Grill knew there was something extra special about that little beer joint on Burnet, but, of course, what made it special were the owners. James & Gayle Henry loved the music and the musicians. They wanted to hear real country music with fiddles and steel guitar and great melodies and touching lyrics. And when you were in the corner (there was no stage), swinging away, you could glance over at the King & Queen's table, right beside the band and you'd feel a great wave of appreciation emanating from them and their friends. And that infectious feeling would spread throughout the audience. They really let you know when they were enjoying themselves and it gave the musicians that much more inspiration. When I'm an old man and I look back on my musical career, such as it is, one thing I'll always recall with affection is that I got to be part of a scene, a musical scene that came about because of just the right confluence of musicians, bar, and, most importantly, club owners who loved the music and wanted to hear you play it as well as you could. Thank you, James and Gayle Henry, for providing such a place.

Howard Kalish (fiddler, The Pure Texas Band)



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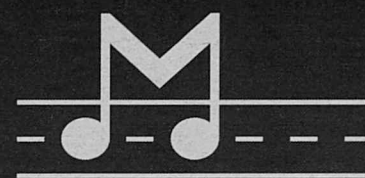


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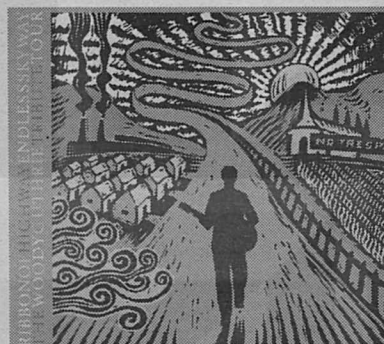
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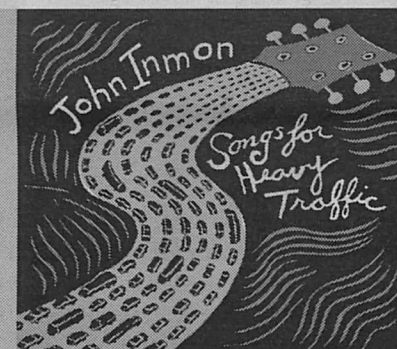
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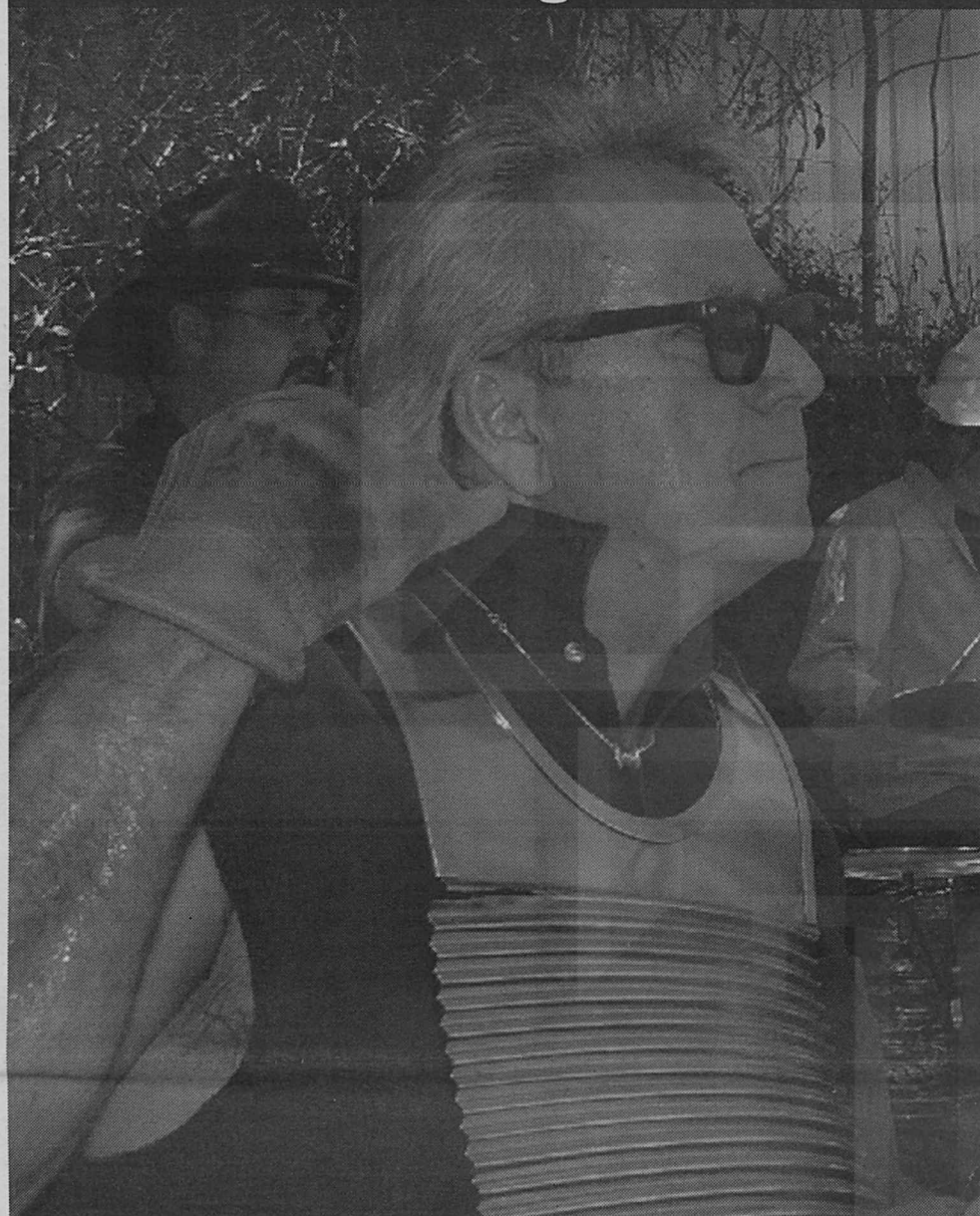
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† DANNY ROY YOUNG



To some extent, knowing that someone is getting on in years or is in bad shape, prepares one for the worst, but I don't think anything whatsoever could prepare anyone who knew and loved Danny Young (ie everyone he ever met) for the news of his death on August 20th. Danny embraced life so completely, seizing every moment of every day, that the very idea of never getting another Danny bearhug—as, thankfully, I did at the Evangeline Cafe a few weeks ago, my profound thanks to Little Jewford and Deborah Hansen for running late and giving me time to visit—is simply incomprehensible.

My favorite remark at the funeral service, attended by 1100 people, most of whom had absolutely nothing in common but Danny, was “All of us thought we were Danny's best friend, and all of us were right.” The service had more jokes and funny stories than a comedy show, better ones at that, and there was a lot of laughter, which would be the way Danny would have wanted it. My only quibble with Danny's sendoff was the reception after the service. It was generous of Antone's to offer the use of the club, but more than one person outside the church wondered why we weren't headed to some place in *south* Austin.

While sending out the first call for August FAR reports, I included a write up of the funeral service and heard back from DJs in Dallas, San Antonio, Memphis, Boston, California, Utah, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Canada and Australia, all with stories about how meeting with Danny was their fondest, most indelible memory of Austin, even, in some cases, from visits a decade or more ago. This, in its microcosm way, illustrates how he affected people's lives.

I thought of writing an obituary (incidentally, Michael Corcoran's in the *Austin American-Statesman* was outstanding), though I immediately discarded the idea of inviting input because where do you start with Danny? Come to that, where do you end? I have a 36 page limit. Then I reread the cover story of *3CM* #38/127 (March, 2000) and it struck me that it was a celebration of Danny's life, and I just makes me feel better to rerun it than to think about Danny being gone.

My thanks to Ted Smouse, *Rancho Del Rey*, KOOP, Austin, TX, for the photograph he took at Torchy's Tacos when The Cornell Hurd Band played there last NotSXSXSW. This is not exactly the context in which I intended to make this known, but DL and I

have our house on the market, fixing to move back to Austin. Consequently, everything I didn't think I had an immediate use for, such as a photo to honor Danny's passing (I have a really cool one of us leaning against Big LuLu, before she was restored), is in storage. So I had to scramble round, during a holiday weekend, to find a picture and Ted, even though he was in St Louis for the Steel Guitar Convention, came through for me, as did, Jim Beal Jr, Howard Kalish and Cornell Hurd, but Ted was first.

I no longer recall the thinking behind this cover feature, I'm just glad that I found an opportunity to talk up a very special person when he still walked among us.

Now which Danny Roy Young, the 78704 congoscenti among you may be asking, are we talking about here? Is it the unofficial Mayor of South Austin? Is it the owner of the Texacalli Grille and purveyor of the finest burgers and sandwiches in town? Is it the ‘The Lord of the Board,’ the man you see playing frottoir with The Cornell Hurd Band? Is it the tireless supporter of Austin Music? Or, given that this is the March issue, could it be the inventor of South By South Austin and host of the best party thrown during SXSW?

There are actually quite a few more Danny Roy Youngs than that. There's the one who stocks the only decent jukebox left in Austin. The one, on a more personal note, who's been a supporter of *Music City Texas/3CM* from the very beginning, and the one I'm proud to call my friend. Then there's the one he would consider the most important of all, the husband, father and grandfather.

And there's also the one who describes himself as “a charter member of the Lucky Fucks Club.” Danny's luck started with his father's aversion to cold; one day Roy Young decided he wasn't was to live through another goddamn Ohio winter and moved the family to Kingsville, Texas. In 1956, they went into the restaurant business with Young's Root Beer Drive-In, which became Young's Pizza. “James Dean ate pizza, so all the kids wanted to eat pizza. I don't think there was anywhere else in Texas you could buy pizza in 1958.”

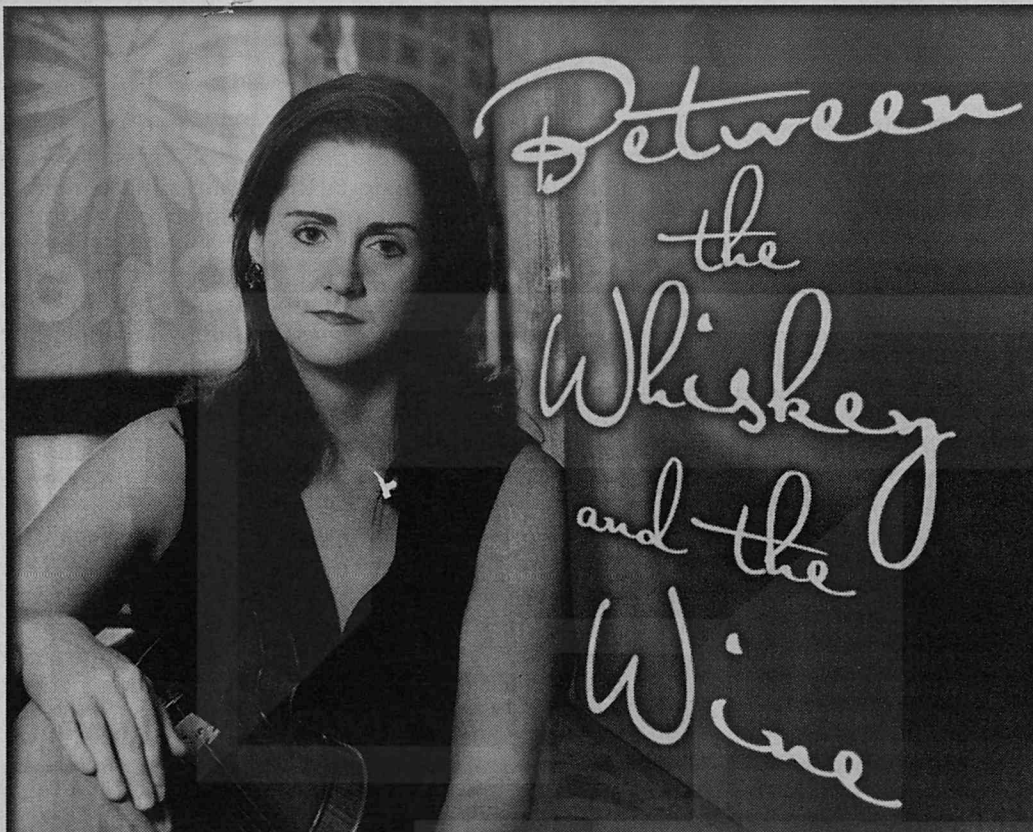
At school, Danny trained as a drummer—“not a percussionist. I learned the 26 rudiments of drumming but apart from that I don't know shit about music to this day.” By 1959, he was in a rock & roll cover band which learned its first number from The Traits and idolized Freddy Fender. I'll spare you a description of the band's outfits, suffice to say it would involve ruffles, but “we thought we were just cool as shit.” The Shades did pretty good, even opening for Conway Twitty on his last rock & roll tour before turning country, mainly because there were so few bands in the territory, “The Traits, The Moods, Sunny & The Sunliners, that was about it,” but fell apart when Columbia offered them an opening slot for a Fats Domino tour that would also be an audition. “Suddenly it wasn't fun anymore. It had become a fucking business. So my buddy and I quit.”

Skipping the shortlived Kingsmen, The Kings were somewhat different. Apart from anything else, the group was made up of three whites and two blacks. “Know how many places in Texas a mixed race band could play back then? Damn few. But we had a whole lot of fun, even though we could only slip in one BB King or Bobby Bland or Jimmy Reed number in for every nine rock & roll songs.” With the draft looming—“there were no deferments for rock & roll drummers”—Danny joined the Coast Guard, but when he got back, between raising a family and running a business, he quit music. “I had to. I'm a music junkie. If I started again, it wouldn't even be a matter of thinking ‘My wife'll be mad at me if I don't get back till four,’ I wouldn't think that far ahead.”

Selling Young's Pizza to a friend (it's still there, if you're ever in Kingsville), Danny & Lu moved to Austin in 1981 and opened Texicalli Grille, originally on South Lamar before moving to East Olton, and soon got to know many local musicians. Ponty Bone was the first to suggest Danny start playing again, but even though he still has his custom kit from the 50s, he wasn't about to be a drummer again, “Way too much trouble.” However, at a street party on his Bluebonnet block, he picked up Ponty's rubboard and, figuring that no one would see him in the dark, “screwed around.” The turning point was when Ponty called him to sit in with D'Jalma Garnier's French Band—Garnier, Bone, Dan Del Santo and Keith Ferguson! “I couldn't get out of it, so I thought, please God, don't let me fuck up in front of these guys, of all people. It was a magic moment. I didn't embarrass anyone and they were very gracious.”

Danny started playing casually with Ponty, and if the rubboard suited him (“I take it off, lay it down, and then I'm out of there having a good time, no packing anything up”), he seemed to suit the rubboard. One night, after he sat in with them to great effect at The Broken Spoke, Danny was invited to become a permanent member of the Cornell Hurd Band, and agreed, “As long as it's fun.” The rest, as they say, is history.

“I hang this piece of metal on my chest, and I get to be on stage with Johnny Gimble, Ray Sharpe, Doug Sahm, Bill Kirchen, Willie Nelson, record with Johnny Bush, be in a band with Paul Skelton. I love doing this. It really pisses off purist musicians, but I just feel I have a life in which I'm continuously blessed and smiled upon. All the money I make from this. I put it in my granddaughters' college funds, and one time their parents told me they were going to hang my rubboard and gloves up next to their girls' diplomas. So I said, ‘Well what am I supposed to use? It hasn't stopped being fun yet.’”



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5th, Sunset Valley Boys, 3pm
3th, Steve Doerr & Casper Rawls, 7pm
9th, TBA, 6pm
Kevin Gallagher, 8pm
10th, Paul Glasse & Mitch Watkins, 7pm
12th, Redd Valkaert, 10pm
13th, Jane Bond, 10pm
15th, 22nd & 29th Charles Thibodeaux, 6.30
16th, Brennen Leigh, 6pm
Kevin Gallagher, 8pm

17th, Charlie Irwin & Friends, 7pm
18th, George Ensle, 7pm
19th, Freddie Steady's Wild Country, 10pm
20th, Eric Hisaw Band, 10pm
23rd, Brennen Leigh, 6pm
Kevin Gallagher, 8pm
24th, Donna Frost, 7pm
25th, Craig Tountgate, 7pm
26th, Greezy Wheels, 10pm
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30th, Brennen Leigh, 6pm
Kevin Gallagher, 8pm

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CARRIE RODRIGUEZ • SHE AIN'T ME

(Manhattan/Back Porch ☼☼☼)

For the first time in years, 3CM Presents 2008 wasn't graced with the presence of Carrie Rodriguez because she was off promoting her solo career with official events. This meant that I didn't catch up with her, but a couple of subscribers did and included the experience in the negative column of their feedback; "Other Disappointments: realizing that the charming Carrie Rodriguez is probably not suited to fronting a 'rock band'" and "Biggest Disappointment: Carrie Rodriguez—come back to your roots Carrie, and mine." While it was inevitable, even healthy, that Rodriguez would eventually emerge from under Chip Taylor's shadow, it has to said that her second solo album is something of a shock to the system, whether mild or severe depends on how much one is invested in the special magic that was Chip & Carrie. Rodriguez physically relocated to New York some time ago, but now, she's made, as it were, the metaphorical move and the question, in the 3CM context at least, is whether she's relocated too far away for us to keep in touch. Put it another way, can she hold on to her Chip & Carrie devotees while reaching for a wider audience? There's evidence here that this is doable, but, assuming, of course, that it was a real consideration, the goal was not pursued consistently by producer Malcolm Burn. Too often, too much production and too many notes get in the way of the music, especially on the first six tracks, but when Burn doesn't crowd Rodriguez's voice (incidentally, she only plays fiddle on three of the eleven cuts, which is rather odd) and gives a song some breathing space, *The Big Mistake*, cowritten with Leslie Nail, Rodriguez's *Let Me In*, the only non-cowrite on the album, and the closing *Can't Cry Enough*, one of three songs cowritten with Greg Louris (Jayhawks), suggest an album that might have made everyone happy. To be fair, they're also the three best songs, which may be why Burn felt no need to smother them. *Seven Angels On A Bicycle* was a natural progression, but *She Ain't Me* is very ambiguous. Maybe her live shows will clarify what direction she's moving.

JC

GURF MORLIX • BIRTH TO BONEYARD

(self ☼☼☼☼)

Morlix lays it right out on the back cover of an album he says escaped rather than being released: "This may sound a little familiar at first. That's right. These are the songs from *Diamonds To Dust* [Blue Corn, 2007]. But this is an instrumental album. The interesting and evocative textures create a unique aural landscape. Open up you mind and let this music fill some space." Stripping out the vocals, he replaced them with "samples of monks chanting, odd swirly ambiences, slide guitar, weird keyboards, etc." Coming from almost anyone but Morlix, this would sound more than a tad pretentious, and the album would seem pretty self-indulgent and superfluous. Few people, however, have racked up as much credibility as Morlix, whose three decades in the trenches, as a sideman (though that's a totally inadequate job description) with Blaze Foley, Lucinda Williams, Ray Wylie Hubbard, et al, record producer (Lucinda Williams' best album, Mary Gauthier, Ray Wylie Hubbard, et al) and singer-songwriter in his own right, almost uniquely qualify him to conceive and carry off a project like this. As usual, he plays all the instruments himself (he once told me the only thing he could never get to grips with is the accordion), except drums and harmonica, for which he brought in Rick Richards and Ray Bonneville, and, of course, he produced, engineered, mixed and mastered. Not that he really needs one at this stage, but the results, if nothing else, could be his calling card, a demonstration of his extraordinary multiple talents in the studio. Following so soon after John Inmon's bravura guitar showcase, *Songs For Heavy Traffic* (Music Road, 2008), maybe we're seeing a trend here, a revival of what has long been a virtually extinct species outside classical and jazz, the instrumental album.

JC

EVE & THE EXILES • BLOW YOUR MIND

(Serpent ☼☼☼☼)

Monsees' Texas garage rock & roll band has changed a bit since its eponymous 2004 debut, guitarist Grady Pinkerton replaced by the equally formidable Homer Henderson, bassman Speedy Sparks by Pat Collins (LeRoi Brothers), with Donna Pearl (Naughty Ones) added on percussion, vocals and organ, but her mainstay, drummer Mike Buck (early T-Birds, LeRoi, etc) is still with her and it's not hard to see his fine hand in the song selection. Hell, you're probably from Fort Worth too if you've even heard of Jerry Williams & The Epics (*Whatever You Do*), Larry & The Blue Notes (*Night Of The Phantom*, sung by Henderson) and The Elite (*I'll Come To You*), though it may be mere coincidence that the only other woman I know to have gender-switched Arthur Alexander's *You'd Better Move On* was Fort Worth-born Katy Moffatt. Other covers are Doug Sahm's *I Don't Want*, The Pretty Things' *Honey I Need*, *Starvation* by Golden Dawn ('the other' Texas psychedelic band), Lulu & The Lovers' *I'll Come Running* and 60s Dutch garage band Peter & The Blizzards' *All I Want*. However, Monsees is not wholly reliant on Buck's legendary record collection, coming up with five originals, one, the outstanding *Key To My Door*, cowritten with Buck and Henderson, and, as with her three originals on the earlier album, they hold up just fine in this company. Mitch Webb & The Swindles have been at it a lot longer, but I'd say Eve & The Exiles are ready for a San Antonio/Austin garage smackdown. Watch this space.

JC

THE STARLINE RHYTHM BOYS

LIVE AT CHARLIE-O'S WORLD FAMOUS

(Cow Island ☼☼☼☼)

Their three previous albums were as much about slap bass player Billy Bratchter's remarkable country songwriting as the Burlington, Vermont, trio's mastery of the idiom, but this time they downplay the original material they've already recorded in favor of covers that demonstrate their abilities as a rowdy fire 'em up on a Saturday night bar band, tearing up a joint in Montpelier, VT. Between The Ventures' *Yellow Jacket* and Carl Perkins' *Drink Up And Go Home*, we get Del Reeves' *A Dime At A Time* and, rather neatly, from his 1969 LP *Down At Good Time Charlie's, On The Back Row*, Johnny Paycheck's *Heartbreak, Tennessee*, Bobby Milano's *Life Begins At 4 O'Clock*, Faron Young's *Wine Me Up* (which connoisseurs of such things can compare and contrast to the Two Dollar Pistol's live version), Steve Young's *Lonesome, On'ry And Mean*, Moon Mullican's *Pipeliners Blues*, George Jones' *You're Still On My Mind*, Mike Henderson's *One Foot In The Honky Tonk*, Jimmy Skinner's *Dark Hollow*, Carl Smith's *Live And Let Live*, Bill Kirchen's *Get A Little Goner* and *Too Much Fun*, Wynn Stewart's *Playboy*, Chuck Berry's *You Can't Catch Me*, Liz Anderson's *I'm A Lonesome Fugitive* and Bill Monroe's *Gotta Travel On*. Oh, did I mention that there are 23 tracks? Superbly produced by Sean Mencher, who took six CDs worth of material recorded over two nights and trimmed it down to 73 minutes 59.26 seconds of virtually nonstop music, Bratchter, Danny Coane (acoustic rhythm guitar, lead and harmony vocals) and Al Lemery (electric lead guitar, lead and harmony vocals) are the kind of band that, in an ideal world, would be playing in the good saloon in every single town, but in the real world are very hard to find, even in Texas.

JC

SHAWN HAWKINS & THE OFFENDERS

TIMES WILL CHANGE

(self ☼☼☼☼)

You don't even have to crack the cellophane—when one of the songs is titled *Waylon Come Save Us*, you already have a pretty good idea what to expect. Portland (Oregon) based Hawkins, who says, "I was born into a country song" (grew up in a trailer, stepfather a logger, mother a truck dispatcher, father a drifter), made some musical detours before finding his true calling, Outlaw Country, which, of course, was long out of fashion by 1998. Fronting a loose whoever's-available group, playing five hours of covers, Hawkins burned out a few years ago, "it stopped being fun for any of us," but reunited The Offenders ("half my band had been in prison, or should have been") to open for some local Dale Watson dates. Then they won a Battle of the Country Bands and were back in business, with a reenergized Hawkins cranking out new material. Backed by Marilee Hord, who seems to be Portland's hot fiddle go-to girl, Chad Lanning bass, James Mason acoustic, electric and 12-string guitars, Ben Yates harmonica (doing the Mickey Raphael fills) and Nick Zorich drums, Hawkins does the original Outlaws proud, both with his very fine vocals and his songwriting. The Jennings influence is very strong, and you can easily pick out echoes of other outlaws in both Hawkins' singing and songwriting, along with, as he says "blues, Indie, Rockabilly and even at times Heavy Metal" (maybe it's a Portland thing, The Derailers started out there as a Ted Nugent hair to the waist cover band—you won't find that in the bio). Perhaps because it's now so unusual, Outlaw Country sounds more than usually retro, but when you tune back into 1976, Hawkins excels at it.

JC

DENICE FRANKE • GULF COAST BLUE

(Certain ☼☼☼☼)

Putting Franke in context involves invoking Texas singer-songwriters, most obviously Eric Taylor, who are, to put it mildly, rather better known, but that seemed to be OK with Franke, who, after making the contraflow move from Austin to Houston, wrote, "No one here knows me, it's nice to be alone" (*Lowlands*). Originally from Dallas, Franke entered the Texas music scene while a student in San Marcos, joining the Beacon City Band in 1981, then had something of a boom period with bandmate Doug Hudson as Hudson & Franke, playing Saturday nights at Cactus Cafe and Anderson Fair, which was pretty much as good as it got for Texas folkies. When the duo broke up in the early 90s, she made the move to Houston, working as a singing bartender, or bartending singer, until Taylor persuaded her to cut *You Don't Know Me* (DénICE gIRL, 1997), followed by *Comfort* (Certain, 2001), both of which he produced. However, Franke seems to have decided that it's time to make her presence rather better known, going to producer Mark Hallman, who also plays bass, B3, electric and nylon string guitar, bouzouki, piano, but keeps it simple and sympathetic. There are never more than three other musicians on any of Franke's eleven "portraits and postcards" of her latest home, Galveston. The emphasis is firmly on some remarkable songwriting, peaking with the quite extraordinary *Tara Lee*, Franke's rich, smoky contralto and her acoustic guitar. As she's also hired a good publicist, I find myself in the unusual position of not only reviewing an album that's been praised in *Billboard* (I'm not saying that's a disqualifier, it just doesn't happen very often), but being on the same page.

JC

THE WORST GIG I EVER PLAYED

Sometime in the mid-80s, Wes McGhee and I happened to be in Nashville at the same time and had been cruising around in his Caddy (at one point, Wes owned the largest standard model cars ever produced in both Britain and America, a 1972 Ford Zodiac Mark VI and a 1971 four door Cadillac). Anyway, he was dropping me off at the Shoney's Inn on Demonbreun when the heavens opened, I mean hellacious rain that swept the streets clean not just of pedestrians but vehicles. So, we sat in the car, shooting the shit, waiting for the storm to ease up enough for me to make a run for it, when we noticed a guy across the street playing a guitar and singing in a kind of sentry box affair outside one of the ghastly tourist traps that used to line Demonbreun (I think it was The Hank Williams Jr Gift Shop, but no matter). We contemplated this rather tragic figure for a moment, then Wes said, "So what's the worst gig you ever played?"

I turned this question around on Wes, BJ and Freddie, though, to be honest, I already knew Wes and Freddie's answers involved a Country Music Club, and I was certain BJ's would too, because, with any British country musician, the answer to that particular question will *always* involve a Country Music Club.

How to explain Country Music Clubs? Let's start with the dressing rooms—not for the performers, for the audience. Seemingly normal looking people would go in, and emerge as gunfighters, cowboys, cowgirls, saloon tramps, sheriffs, riverboat gamblers, mountain men, every Western stereotype you can imagine, including Indians. Some of them spent a lot of money on these outfits, you'd see some very authentic looking gunbelts and replica revolvers in the quickdraw contests (this is *not* a joke). The music? You wouldn't believe how awful most of it was, though, of course, it wasn't really music, it was the soundtrack to the club members' fantasy lives. The best you can say for the CMCs is that they did provide steady work for many never quite made it American acts like Boxcar Willie and Billie Jo Spears, who were huge stars in this arcane society.

There was a British TV situation comedy, the title of which escapes me and I can't track it down on the Internet, set in a Country Music Club, but it didn't last very long. The problem was that you can't parody a parody, so, even for people who got the jokes, it came across like a documentary on a rather creepy sub-culture.

The CMCs are encapsulated for me by a fleeting moment at the one place where that world intersected mine, the Wembley Country Music Festival, which, while perfectly capable of billing Marie Osmond as the headliner, did feature genuine gotta-see country acts like Johnny Cash, Merle Haggard and Emmylou Harris. Wes and I were cruising around and came up on a 'gunfighter' with a miniature version, also in black from boots to Stetson, at his side, and as we passed them, he said to the kid, in a very thick and obvious Glasgow accent, "How's your lolly, Memphis?" Well, maybe you had to be there, but Wes and I about died laughing. **JC**

WES MCGHEE

The worst gig ever? Didn't even have to think about it!

HARTLEPOOL!

Your readers need to know two things here.

1. British people really hate country music, even if they've never heard any.
2. Hartlepool is the town on the north east coast where some time ago the townsfolk found washed up on the shore following a shipwreck.... a monkey! They concluded that as it had come from the ship it must be a Frenchman (you see where this is going, their knowledge of Frenchmen being equal to their knowledge of country music) so they put it on trial. The monkey's gibberings were taken to be the French language and the monkey was found guilty of spying and hung. Now, although this was all some time ago those who know Hartlepool suspect that should an ape happen to fetch up on Hartlepool beach in this day and age it would meet a similar fate.

Back in the 80s, I was playing with Kimmie Rhodes' band around the time of her **Man In The Moon** album. It was a biggish band, Joe Gracey, David Zetner, Danny Levin plus rhythm section. We'd done several pretty nice dates including the nationally televised country music festival in Wembley Arena.... then we were sent to Hartlepool. It wasn't just the gig that was terrible it was the whole Hartlepool experience.....

Being there were no proper hotels, we were put in a guest house that belonged in an old Peter Sellers movie. The carpet were so hideous that when Gracey threw up on one Kimmie swears she couldn't find it, there was nasty lace and chintz everywhere, even the toilet rolls had little curtains to hide them and throughout the place were dozens of pictures of the owners spooky kids.... blond and evil looking... like they'd stepped right off the set of **Village Of The Damned**.

Then we went to the gig!

It was in a very unpleasant municipal hall lit entirely by phosphorescent tubes which stayed on all evening!!! The front row really was like the old joke, 'What's got seven teeth and fifteen legs?' They were all in their finest 'Western' gear, although no-one in your part of the world would have recognised them as Western wear from *any* era. After the quickdraw competition with their toy shooters (yes really!), Kimmie was called upon to draw the raffle prizes—you really don't want to know any more

about that—and after a set by a local band which left us all feeling like we'd been taking psychedelics, it was our turn.

We came on stage to thunderous applause and left it to the sound of one-hand-clapping as they say.

The promoter stormed up to us as we left the stage, spitting venom and screamed at Kimmie... "That wasn't Country—that was Jazz." We began to understand how the monkey must have felt.

The restaurants after the gig were no better but on the up side they were all closed so we had to get a takeaway from a seafront fish and chip stand and even the woman serving the chips hated us!

The British country music scene has always had two factions, the one I've just described which was pretty much wiped out by the linedance craze of the 90s, and the country rock club scene which \$12 a gallon gas plus the London congestion charge has wiped out. Not to mention the fact that the audience is getting older and kinda thinning out, if you know what I mean.

Those of us who came up through the beat boom, went through the blues boom, space rock or whatever and finally came to the public's eye as we were going through our country rock phase were totally sidelined by the industry in the UK. We were British and the words 'British' and 'Country' appeared in the same sentence so many times that we all came to be associated in people's minds with scenes like Hartlepool.

A friend of mine called Errol Walsh a few years ago won the album of the year award from the British Country Music Ass. (I shorten it to 'ass' for good reason). I called him to ask if it had made any difference to his career. He said "Sure, all my gigs have been cancelled!"

For myself, I played a gig in a well known London club a couple of years ago, and got a really vitriolic vicious review in a London paper. Now we're all grown ups we can take it, but what really pissed me off was, due to some error of timing on somebody's part, the review appeared in the paper a week before the gig had happened.

BJ COLE

My worst gig has to be when Alvin Crow & The Pleasant Valley Boys took on the gun totin' cowboys of Basildon, Essex and lost. It was quite a while ago, back in the late 80s I think, because TJ McFarland was still playing drums in the band. Alvin asked me and fiddler Bob Loveday to sit in on the tour, and Johnny Reed was on guitar. The gig at the Basildon Country Music Club was the most memorable for many reasons. Although quite close to London, Basildon is extremely parochial. Attitudes are entrenched and the amateur cowboys of Essex are very opinionated about what they think is real Country Music. Of course linedancing, Jim Reeves, Don Williams and Boxcar Willie figured large. To make matters worse, on the night of our gig there, the club was holding a **Gone With The Wind** theme night; so crinolines, Clark Gables and Confederate flags abounded, plus a few cowboys for the shoot out competition. When we hit the stage with Alvin it was as if we had jolted them out of their little fantasies. The Pleasant Valley Boys of that time was one of the best Western Swing bands around, and we played a great gig, but to that crowd it weren't Country, and they said so. Of course, Alvin, as one of the keepers of the Bob Wills flame, was outraged and confused. Bob and I, of course, had seen it all before. It was one of those gigs that was surreal at the time but hilarious later.

FREDDIE 'STEADY' KRC

My worst country gig in the UK came on the first tour I did with McGhee. It was on August 11th, 1984, at a Country Music Club called The Last Chance in Aylesbury. My God, David Lynch or Fellini himself couldn't have written the script for this event Very surreal, trippy!

It was out in the country and the club members had built a set for an old western town, or what they thought an old western town looked like. They even had several hangman's ropes with nooses behind the house. Bassist John Gordon told me they used those on bands that didn't play what fell into their club's definition of what country music was.

The requests that came at poor Wes were for songs *nobody* did in Texas. They wanted what they thought was country, which was some crappy Kenny Rogers-style stuff.

I found out later from Wes that after our sound check, they were frantically calling around, trying to find another group to replace us and do some 'proper' country music. Wow, if I wanted to feel that unwanted, I'd have stayed with my first wife! The insult added to injury came from some foolish looking old guy wearing a cowboy shirt with more sequins than there are splinters on the dancefloor at the Broken Spoke. He sashayed up to the bandstand and requested *Crystal Chandeliers*!! I'd *never* heard that song requested back home in Texas. Before I could stop myself, I blurted out 'Why play *Crystal Chandeliers*, you're already wearing it!' OK, I didn't make a lifelong friend with that remark, but it was already pretty obvious Wes wouldn't get another gig out of that club.

JOHN THE REVEALATOR

While 'researching' (for want of a better word) this month's editorial rant, I discovered that **Joss Stone** has done a complete 180 on the one thing that gave her debut album a certain cachet, despite its hollow center. The party line in 2003 was that S-Curve/EMI wanted her to make a pop diva album, but, supposedly hooked on vintage Miami R&B and soul, she insisted on making **The Soul Sessions** instead, with Miami soul star Betty Wright producing (and, one imagines, helping bring Stone up to speed). Of course, there was a slight problem with this script, 16-year olds are rarely in a position to dictate terms to record labels, but it made for a pretty good, certainly much repeated, story. However, Stone's current version is that the label pressured her to make **The Soul Sessions** and its follow-up and, now on Virgin/EMI, she's written off both of them, and any audience they won her, by titling the pop diva album she's saying she wanted make all along, **Introducing Joss Stone**.

- Minneapolis reader Hal Davis sent in some reinforcement for my views on 'dancing about architecture.' **William Ham** opened a *CultureVulture.com* review of Jim DeRogatis' **Let It Blurt: The Life And Times Of Lester Bangs** (Main Street Books, 2000) with these words (my emphasis): "If writing about music is like dancing about architecture—a sentiment attributed to various *disgruntled musicians and smartasses*—then rock critic Lester Bangs was James Brown doing Frank Lloyd Wright."

- My intent in last month's review of Eric Hisaw's **Nature Of The Blues** was to emphasize that *The Austin Chronicle's* **Jim Caligiuri** is the only writer to have given Hisaw a negative review (for **The Crosses**), but any day I can seriously piss off the useless little prick is a day not completely wasted. However, I do feel kind of bad that Caligiuri demonstrated his professionalism by taking my joke out on Hisaw, even if his vicious attack, which said far about its author than its subject, was buried in a blog that hardly anybody could find, read or make sense of. My favorite moment in this episode was hearing from William Michael Smith that Caligiuri, desperately hoping that I'm even less professional, if that were possible, had contacted him to ask if I had permission to use his piece on *Best In Texas*. No, I take that back, my favorite moment was Smith telling me that Caligiuri first sent him a MySpace 'friend' request. Good luck with that, Jim.

- Recently, I mentioned another *Austin Chronicle* blogger whose attack on the *Austin American-Statesman's* John Kelso was based on his age, and this tactic was also used by Caligiuri, but, as I pointed out to Dunbar Wells, you're not getting any younger, and, sooner than you think, ageism will bite your ass.

- You may recall my note on the 'rescheduling' of the somewhat ambitious **Roots Music Association Music Festival & Conference**. I figured that was a euphemism for cancellation, but it really has been rescheduled, for mid-November in San Marcos. Or not. None of the acts I could contact that were listed as showcasing, knew anything about the deal. Confucius he say, don't buy non-refundable airline tickets.

- If you're the kind of person who reads credits, you may think I blundered in my review of Eve & The Exiles' **Blow Your Mind** by co-crediting *Key To My Door* to **Homer Henderson**. Not so, my young friends, Henderson's real name is Phil Bennison. I wouldn't swear to it, but I once heard that he got Homer and Henderson from a Dallas street intersection. Another trick credit on the same album is Lulu & The Lovers' *I'll Come Runnin'*, written by **Bert Berns** but copyrighted under the alias Bert Russell.

- Berns also used the Russell alias for *Twist & Shout*, which he cowrote with Bill Medley of The Righteous

Brothers. It was first recorded, as a B-side, for Atlantic Records by The Top Notes in 1961. **Jerry Wexler** recalled Berns "watching Phil [Spector] and I butcher this song. Phil changed the middle around, we had the wrong tempo, the wrong feel, but we didn't realize that Bert could've produced it. Did he say anything afterward? Yeah, he said, 'Man, you fucked it up.'" Berns then took it The Isley Brothers and produced their definitive version.

- I haven't thought of Marie Lawrie, aka **Lulu**, in donkey's years (or The Pretty Things, come to that), but, while you could pretty much predict her MOR career path, she really was interesting in the mid-60s, kind of a homegrown R&B version of Brenda Lee, and her cover of *Shout!* is still second only to The Isley Brothers' original. And she recorded Bert Bern's *Here Comes The Night* before Them. Not many people know that.

- Since 1991, when SoundScan started tracking sales, **Lyle Lovett** has moved 4.6 million units, but in July, he told *Billboard.com*, "I've never made a dime from a record sale in the history of my record deal. I've been very happy with my sales, and certainly my audience has been very supportive. I make a living going out and playing shows." While this is interesting enough, though pretty scary if you're a musician somewhat further down the ladder than Lovett, it's a little hard to see the point of the story. Lovett is making noises about what he'll do when his contract expires, "The possibilities are very exciting, I think," but he owes Curb two more albums, which puts those possibilities something like four, five years down the road. However, in the interview, he explicitly didn't rule out signing to another major label, so maybe he's sending smoke signals to Curb.

- Illustrating my remark last month about how errors proliferate and perpetuate on the Internet, in the Lovett story, *Billboard.com* made two mistakes in referring to "Curb/Universal, his home since 1985," and these, along with the rest of the piece, got picked up and reproduced in various sites. There was an entity called Curb/Universal, which appears, at the very least, to be dormant, if not stone dead, but Lovett originally signed to MCA/Curb in 1986 and is currently with Curb/Lost Highway. They're not particularly important errors, but they are errors nonetheless and are now all over the Internet waiting to be picked up and passed along.

- A Houstonite who once worked with **Glenna** 'better than Loretta Lynn' **Bell** on a local weekly paper tells me, "As a musician, she was a pretty good theater writer." Another Houstonite says, "Seriously, you should listen to a cut just for a laugh about the Loretta comparison." I'd forgotten until she reminded me in a note with a copy of her album, that I met Bell when she was on the road with FARster Nancy Apple, and she seemed like a very nice person. Shame about Dan Workman.

- On a different note, subscriber Luc Robin adds, "I had to laugh with your item in the last issue about Glenna Bell and 'the idiot on a Belgian website.' I had actually never heard of her, but I had a pretty good idea which website it was. I went to her site and yep, there it was: **Rootstime**. In Belgium we seem to have more Americana/Roots/Country sites than anywhere else in the world. I check them out, mostly for the concert calendars, but I think that some of those guys who put these things on the net are only interested in free CDs, concert tickets and backstage passes. I think that there are no more than 500 people in Belgium who are really interested in this kind of music, so who reads this stuff? Probably those of one site read the reviews of the other one. Of course, there are never, ever bad reviews of CDs or concerts, so I confirm: on these Flemish websites (the Walloons don't give a shit about 'Americana') CDs are never trashed. Everything is great, brilliant, etc... actually it's no better than *Best In Texas*."

- Thinking about the nights spent at **Henry's Bar & Grill** flushed out some long dormant memories, like the time **Mike Farmer** had to cancel because, earlier in the day, he'd got into it with his wife and, as the token male in any domestic dispute, got cuffed and hauled away. Next time he played Henry's, he made the mistake of asking if there were any requests. Oh, boy, the crowd, led by James Henry, really laid it on him; *I'm In the Jailhouse Now, Please Release Me, Behind Closed Doors, Shackles And Chains, Wanted Man, Columbus Stockade, Time Changes Everything, I Want To Be Free*. It was a hoot, with poor Mike standing there shaking his head and muttering "You bastards."

- One thing about Henry's on a Monday night was **Don Walser's** generosity, he'd let just about anyone get up and do a song with The Pure Texas Band, be they Jimmie Dale Gilmore or Cowboy, who, when drunk enough, would regale us with an almost unbelievably bad version of the only song he knew, *I Cain't He'p It (If I'm Still In Love With You)*. There was one problem, though. As Don would tell you, "I know the words to 500 songs but I can't remember someone's name from one minute to the next." Bearing in mind that between being introduced to, say, John Smith, and introducing him, Don could mangle the name beyond recognition, imagine what happened when I put him together with **Gurf Morlix**. Gurf sang Lefty's *Mom & Dad Waltz*, but if anyone who didn't already know it caught his name, they had to have been mindreaders.

† DON HELMS

Pedal steel master Helms, the last surviving member of The Drifting Cowboys, played on hit records by—deep breath—Charline Arthur, Carl Butler, Johnny Cash, Patsy Cline, The Davis Sisters, Little Jimmy Dickens, Red Foley, Lefty Frizzell, Ferlin Husky, Stonewall Jackson, Brenda Lee, Loretta Lynn, The Louvin Brothers, DL Menard, Webb Pierce, Ray Price, Jim Reeves, Marty Robbins, Cal Smith, Ernest Tubbs, Billy Walker, Real Hank Williams and Fake Hank Williams (he also toured with Jett Williams and performed with Hank Williams III). Make of it what you will, but Jimmy Day, who took over from him in The Drifting Cowboys, once told me that the rest of the band was convinced that Helms had been knocking off Audrey Williams and figured he was the biological father of Randall 'Hank Jr' Williams. Born in Brockton, AL, 2/28/1927, Helms died on August 11th, 2008.

† JERRY WEXLER

One of the best sections of Josh Alan Friedman's **Tell The Truth Until They Bleed** (reviewed #138/227) was *Adventures at the Bottom of the Music Trade*, about his experiences of working under Jerry Wexler. So I dropped him an email. His reply:

Getting a bunch of emails on Wex, so I figure I'll blog on Myspace [91979317]. I did pay him a goodbye visit a few weeks ago in Sarasota. Though sharp as a razor, his body was in bad shape and he was anxious to just die already. A great attitude about dying.

Wex sure loved Texas. Strong connection with Doug Sahm, produced two early Willie Nelson albums then released him graciously so he could break out, combined Fab T-Birds with Santana, signed Lou Ann Barton and co-produced her first album (had high hopes for her, but was disappointed by her attitude or something). Remained just as enthusiastic as a 20-year-old about music, new books, golf. Constantly sending out new CDs and books to everybody, making connections between writers and musicians, right to the end. He would buy 20 copies each time I had a book or album come out, then send them to people like Budd Schulberg. How could I not love him?

Josh Alan Friedman

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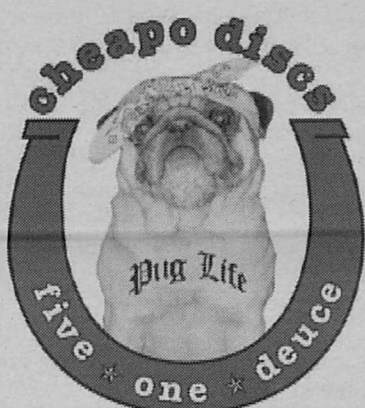
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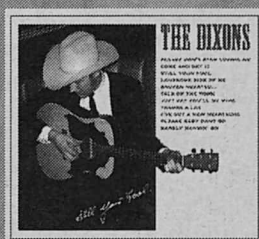
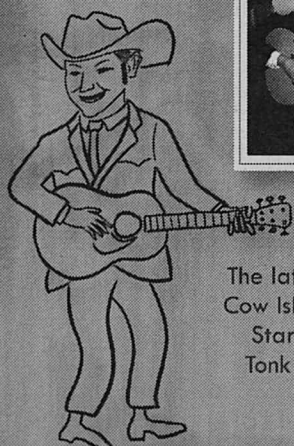
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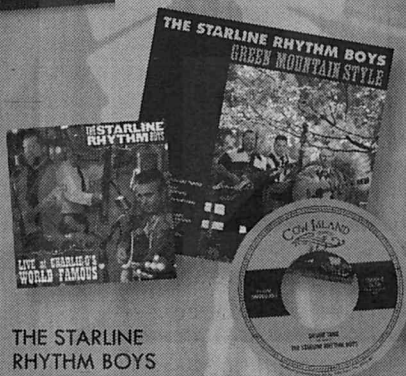
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REVIEWS CODE

***** Killer

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

***** Can do better

***** Why did they bother?

***** Piss on this noise

? I don't get it

% Fraction of what you pay for

VANILLA DREAMS

Perhaps the most famous quote in rock & roll history is Sam Phillips' supposed quip, "If I could find a white man who had the Negro sound and the Negro feel, I could make a million dollars," but Phillips denied ever saying any such thing, the attribution coming from Sun Records' studio manager Marion Keisker, originally quoted by Jerry Hopkins (*Elvis: A Biography*, 1971). An interesting thing about Greil Marcus' famous *Village Voice* assault on Albert Goldman's *Elvis* (1981) is that while he took Goldman to task for changing the quote to "If I could find a white boy who could sing like a nigger, I could make a million dollars"—Keisker, whom Goldman never interviewed (!), told Marcus that Phillips never used the N word—is that Marcus accepted the earlier version without question. Why not? It's certainly plausible and even if Phillips didn't make a million dollars out of him, Elvis was still a very nice little earner for Sun. Regardless, the quote resonated because it embodied an irrefutable truth—there was more money to be made from white musicians playing synthetic black music than from black musicians playing the real thing.

Of course, that was back in the 50s. And 60s. And 70s. Things are different now, aren't they? Well, maybe not. In the *Dallas Morning News* of 7/23/08, Mario Tarradell, extolling the talents and, more to the point, the commercial success of Duffy, Amy Winehouse and Joss Stone, welcomed us "to the new era of soul-singing white women," adding "In today's world... colour barriers as artistic parametres [sic] are all but erased... Soul is now all about the sound, not the look." You might think that this is like saying Charlie Rich, Stoney Edwards and OB McClinton introduced a new era of country-singing black men, the difference being that they didn't sell more records, win more awards or get far more media coverage and exposure than white country singers. Google Winehouse, for instance, and you get over 60 million hits, Erykah Badu, by comparison, racks up just over three million. Even if most of those hits are about Winehouse being a fuckup, that's a rather considerable difference.

There was a time when I was up on R&B and Soul, but I make no claim whatsoever to the slightest expertise in 'Contemporary R&B' or Neo Soul. Almost all of what I've heard was instantly forgettable, and Tarradell's 'new era' brings no relief. Bearing in mind that I've always thought *Dusty In Memphis* was overrated, I found Joss Stone's *The Soul Sessions* fairly impressive ersatz, if, by the same token, fairly pointless. However, until recently I hadn't, far as I was aware, actually heard any of Winehouse's stuff, and when I mentioned this to Mitch Webb of CD Exchange, he put on *Back To Black*. I was gobsmacked. "That's it? That's fucking it?" "Yep," said Mitch, "that's it." Holy Mother of God. I'd assumed there must *something* to her apart from drugs, tattoos and eyeshadow. So then I checked out Duffy, and she was, if anything, even more pitiful. Maybe this shit works better if you don't remember Aretha, Ruth Brown, Etta James, Martha & The Vandellas or *any* Tamla-Motown.

After referencing "the pioneering work" of Springfield, Lisa Stanfield, Teena Marie, Deborah Harry and Annie Lennox (though, oddly, not the real pioneer, Timi Yuro, who really was pretty good at blue-eyed soul and R&B), Tarradell concludes, "Ultimately, they all prove that skin colour doesn't matter one bit. It's all about the artistic essence." Well, not quite, Mario, it's all about making a million dollars. **JC**

WES MCGHEE & BJ COLE

For some reason, *Time Out In London* elected to have a country music editor on staff during the 80s, and as a consequence. between the magazine's clout and the fact that I know a thing or two, we both got to be major players in the field, the first, for instance, to be offered all expences paid pre-tour interviews (in 1986/87, I was in and out of Nashville like a fiddler's elbow). However, as even commercial country is noncommercial outside the US (an MCA British VP once confided to me that even minimal pressings of the Reba McEntire and George Strait LPs that corporate made him release ended up being sold off for pennies on the pound), what we tended to get were the breaking new acts that the majors, particularly MCA (Earle, Lovett, Griffith), hoped would attract the same kind of hipster audience that Joe Ely drew in the 70s, or minor stars whose careers were on life support. Between tours, there wasn't much to work with on the home front. Forget Sturgeon's Law, 99.9% of British country music was crap.

Bearing in mind that I'm talking about 20 years ago, see elsewhere for Wes McGhee's update, the basic division in Britain was between what could be called 'pub country' and Country Music Clubs. I only ever set foot in one Country Music Club, but heard many horror stories from musicians (see *The Worst Gig I Ever Played*). My world, of course, was London pub country, which embraced several elements, indie, grassroots or cult Americans on low key tours (Butch Hancock, Terry Allen, etc), a few British bands, mainly Wes McGhee's, that played it straight and others, notably Hank Wangford's, that played it tongue in cheek (Wangford's company was Sincere Product\$), but they had one common denominator, the omnipresent BJ Cole on pedal steel guitar.

Cole was originally drawn to his instrument rather than country music, but while you'd think he'd inevitably have to play country music, his resumé is stuffed with names you might not think would provide much work for a pedal steel guitarist, Shania Twain, Olivia Newton-John, Elton John, Sting, T Rex, Procul Harum, Depeche Mode, Björk, so many recording credits you wonder how he also found time to be in every real country band in England as well, let alone make his own albums with steel guitar arrangements of Debussy and Erik Satie, original orchestral works and, most recently, techno.

Though Wes McGhee plays more instruments than you can shake a stick at, the image most likely to come to the mind is of him wielding his doubleneck six and 12 string electric guitar, while fronting what was indisputably the best country band in Britain. There were other excellent British country pickers, most obviously Martin Belmont and Andy Roberts, but McGhee was also a superlative bandleader and arranger, could write a terrific song and deliver it effectively, if with an unmistakeable British accent. At one stage, McGhee spent a fair amount of time in Texas, recording much of his 'breakout' LP *Landing Lights* (TRP, 1983) and all of the live double LP *Thanks For The Chicken* (TRP, 1985) in Austin, but health issues have prevented him from flying for some years, and it was only a few weeks ago that his doctor gave him the OK to come over to support Freddie Krc's latest album.

FREDDIE STEADY'S WILD COUNTRY

TEN DOLLAR GUN

(SteadyBoy *****)

Between The Explosives and The Shakin' Apostles, Freddie Krc (pronounced 'Krc') fronted a roadhouse rock & roll country band, if you know what I mean, and I think you do. Though Wild Country was a working Texas band for a few years, the version heard on *Lucky 7* (Amazing/Heartland, 1987) was actually Wes McGhee's band in which Krc was then the drummer. Jumping forward to 2006, Krc got an offer he couldn't refuse, to play a festival at The Cavern, and booked some more shows for the trip. On stage with McGhee and BJ Cole, he figured that since they were all still around and in pretty good shape, they should reprise *Lucky 7*, and its entire cast, except Rory McLeod (harmonica), was reassembled, with McGhee (lead, rhythm, slide and baritone guitars and keyboards) producing, engineering and mixing at his Bishop's Stortford (it's an English thing) studio. The 12 tracks include remakes of three numbers from the never-released *Neon Dreams*, and I have to say that I wish Krc had included the original version of *South Carolina Blues*, with John Inmon's amazing double-track guitar solo, as a bonus, but it's great to hear *The Ballad Of Clovis Morose*, Krc's notorious alter ego, finally get recorded. *Wild Wild West* is a remake of a Shakin' Apostles number, *What's So Hard About Love*, *Pirate For Your Love* and *The Answer (Just Down The Road)* are countrified remakes of Freddie Steady 5 numbers, McGhee's (*They Used To Say*) *Train Time* comes from their first collaboration, *Landing Lights*, Powell St John's *You Gotta Take That Girl* was lifted from a fake 13th Floor Elevators 'live' album, *Roadhouse Rock* is a Krc original only ever released on a German compilation, *Black Cowboy Boots*, by Ray Wylie Hubbard & Jimmy Johnson, has never been recorded before, and Krc's *Dat Crawfish* has only been recorded by Ponty Bone and (twice) by a Berlin Zydeco band. Combining Krc's infectious joy in making music with McGhee's mastery of arrangement and his seasoned players, most of whom have been with him for 25 years, this album pretty defines the 'what's not to like' category. **JC**

carrie rodriguez

SHE AIN'T ME

"...for the first time, Rodriguez has her name on all but one of the eleven tunes, and her material is strong - lyrically intimate and full of loss. She proves she knows her way to a song's emotional core, even when she has to strip away a bit more gloss to get there."

- Jeff McCord/Texas Monthly
(August 2008)

"She Ain't Me renders songwriting gems from start to finish, a virtual textbook on the subject. And Rodriguez, as star pupil, gets an A+ for teamwork."

- Cindy Royal / Texas Music
(July 31, 2008)

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SEPTEMBER ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

1st	Conway Twitty • 1933 Friars Point, MS Archie Bell • 1944 Henderson, TX
2nd	Johnny Lee Wills • 1912 Limestone Co, TX Charline Arthur • 1929 Henrietta, TX Jimmy Clanton • 1938 Golden Meadow,
LA	
3rd	Americo Paredes • 1915 Brownsville, TX Lefty Perkins • 1917 Clarksville, TX Hank Thompson • 1925 Waco, TX Freddie King • 1934 Gilmer, TX
4th	Danny Gatton • 1945 Washington, DC Blackie White • 1951 San Angelo, TX
6th	Jimmy Reed • 1925 Dunleith, MS George Ensle • 1948 Houston, TX Ernest Tubb † 1984
7th	Buddy Holly • 1936 Lubbock, TX Warren Zevon † 2003
8th	Jimmie Rodgers • 1897 Meridian, MS Milton Brown • 1903 Stephenville, TX Harlan Howard • 1929 Lexington, KY Patsy Cline • 1932 Winchester, VA Guitar Shorty • 1939 Houston, TX Sunny Ozuna • 1943 San Antonio, TX Neko Case • 1970 Alexandria, VA Zachary Richard • 1950 Lafayette, LA
9th	Joe Clay • 1938 Harvey, LA Otis Redding • 1941 Dawson, GA Tex Owens † 1962
10th	Roy Brown • 1925 New Orleans, LA Rosie Flores • 1950 San Antonio, TX Cary Swinney • 1960 Lubbock, TX Clarence Gatemouth Brown † 2005
11th	Jimmie Davis • 1902 Beech Springs, LA Roger Wallace • 1971 Knoxville, TN Leon Payne † 1969
12th	Kenneth Threadgill • 1909 Baytown, TX Armando Marroquin • 1912 Alice, TX Ella Mae Morse • 1924 Mansfield, TX George Jones • 1931 Saratoga, TX Christine Albert • 1955 Rome, NY Johnny Cash † 2003
14th TN	Malcolm Yelvington • 1918 Covington,
	Don Walser • 1934 Brownfield, TX Elizabeth Cotten † 1998
15th	Roy Acuff • 1903 Maynardsville, TN Jimmy Gilmer • 1940 Chicago, IL Beaver Nelson • 1971 Norman, OK
16th	BB King • 1925 Itta Bena, MS Ralph Mooney • 1928 Duncan, OK Little Willie Littlefield • 1931 Houston, TX
17th	Hank Williams • 1923 Georgiana, AL Bill Black • 1926 Memphis, TN John Delafosse † 1994
18th	Lefty Perkins † 1984
19th	Bill Neely • 1916 McKinney, TX Red Foley † 1968 Gram Parsons † 1973
20th	Steve Goodman † 1984 Don Walser † 2006

21st	Ted Daffan • 1912 Beauregarde, LA Jesse Ed Davis • 1944 Norman, OK
22nd	Jimmy Bryant † 1980
23rd	Ray Charles • 1930 Albany, GA Roy Buchanan • 1939 Ozark, TN Jimmy Wakely † 1982 Gary Primich † 2007
24th	Helen Hall † 2006
25th	Joe Sun • 1943 Rochester, MN Eric Taylor • 1949 Atlanta, GA
26th	Merrill Moore • 1923 Algona, IA Marty Robbins • 1925 Glendale, AZ Bessie Smith † 1937 Dolores Keane • 1953 Caherlistrane,

Ireland

	Sahara Smith • 1988 Austin, TX
27th	Jackie Caillier • 1952 Orange, TX
28th	DP 'Dad' Carter • 1889 Columbia, KY Joe Falcon • 1900 Rayne, LA Jim Boyd • 1914 Fannin Co, TX Tommy Collins • 1930 Bethany, OK Willie 'Jitterbug' Webb • 1941 San Antonio,
TX	
29th	CJ Chenier • 1957 Port Arthur, TX Gene Autry • 1907 Tioga, TX Bill Boyd • 1910 Fannin Co, TX Jerry Lee Lewis • 1935 Ferriday, LA

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5th, Honeybrowne

6th, Belleville Outfit + Redd Volkaert

12th & 28th, The Gourds

13th, Jimmy LaFave + Lisa Mills

15th, Joe Ely & Joel Guzman

14th, Rabbit Reunion, 5pm

18th, Rhett Miller + Sarah Jaffe

19th, Mingo Fishtrap

20th, Bleu Edmondson

21st, Bruce Robison + Warren Hood

25th, Austin Lounge Lizards + Tish Hinojosa (6pm)

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9th & 23rd, James Hand

214th, Mo McMorrow, Carrie Elkin,

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