

3rd COAST MUSIC



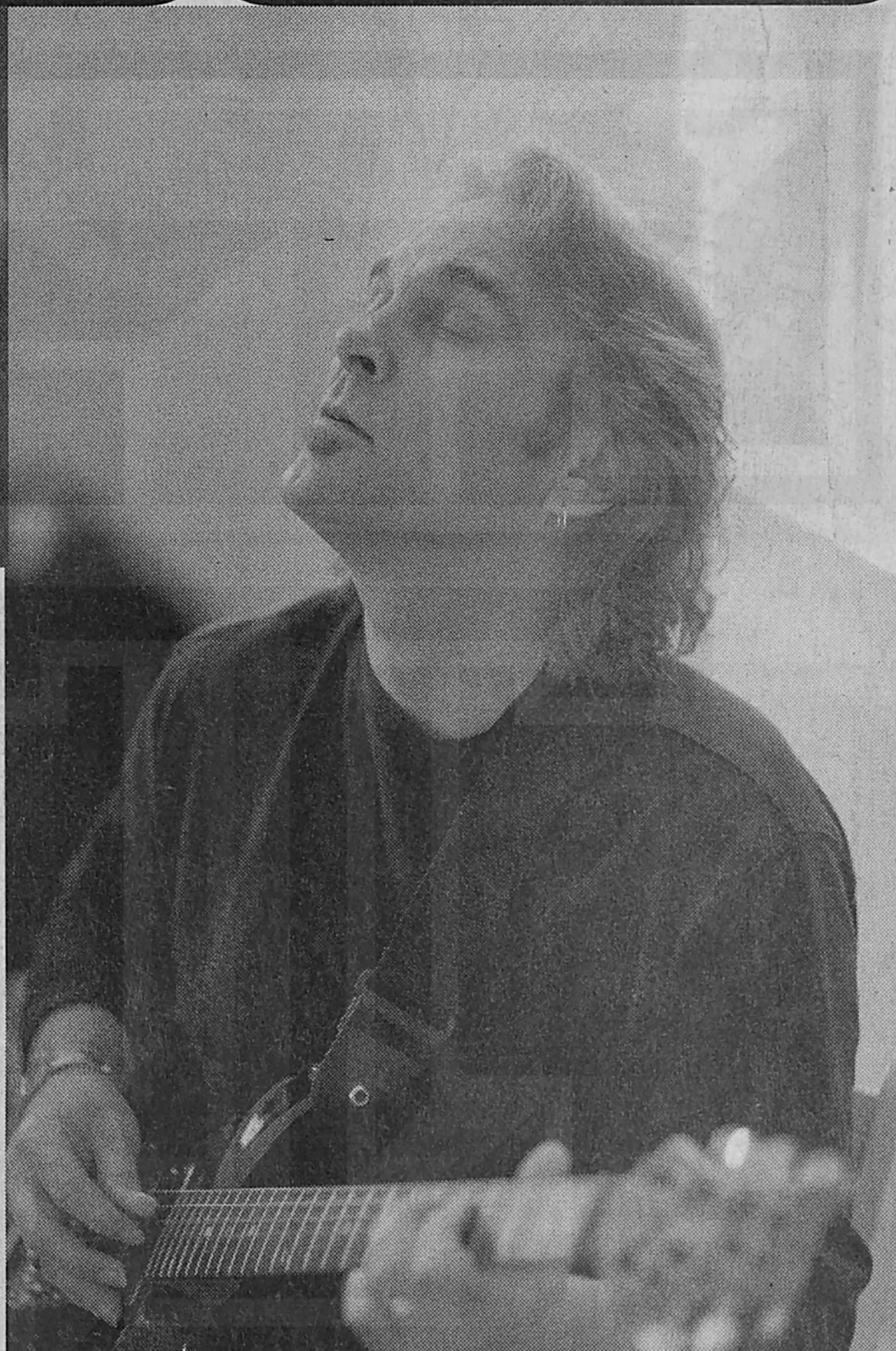
JOHN INMON

#137/226 JUNE 2008



**Remembering
CHELO SILVA**

**The Queen
of the Bolero**



JOHN THE REVEALATOR

FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #106

ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS

REVIEWS * * * * * (or not)

HEYBALE • JIM PATTON & SHERRY BROKUS

WALTER HYATT • MISS LESLIE • BECKY SCHLEGEL

THE SWINDLES • TREMOLOCO

VA: THE VERY BEST OF OUTLAW COUNTRY



WaterStreet Market
Music, Art & Surf Fest
300 block N. Water Street
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
June 6th—8th, 2008
Friday, June 6th

8pm Max Stalling headlines at the Executive Surf Club,
 The McKay Brothers open. \$10.

Saturday, June 7th

Art booths and music from 10am-8pm, all daytime activities are free.

10am Walk of Fame Ribbon Cutting

10:30 Museum Ribbon Cutting: Texas Women. Texas Waves

11am Tribute to Chelo Silva from Music Historian John Conquest

11:15-11:45 Max Stalling (Courtyard)

noon-1:30 Pat Grogan & Friends (Executive Surf Club)

12:30-2pm & 5-6pm Free Caricatures drawings (Courtyard)

1:30-5:30 Hot Rod Car Club (parking lot)

1:45-2:15 Ted Roddy (Courtyard)

2:30-3:15 Gina Haley Band (Courtyard)

3pm-6pm Downtown Music Video Contest, Viewing & Voting
 (Texas Surf Museum)

3:30-4:15 Aloha Dave (Executive Surf Club)

5pm Hula Hoop Contest w/ Johnny B Good (Courtyard)

6pm Phil Hurd & Non Essential Personnel

8pm Two Tons of Steel w/Matt Hole (doors, \$8)

Sunday, June 8th

Music and Art Booths from 10am-6pm. Daytime activities are free.

10am-10:45 Elysian Drum Group (Courtyard)

10:45-11am Bagpiper Dan Sheppard of the CC Fire Dept (Courtyard)

11:15-11:40 Kelly's Irish Set Dancers (Courtyard)

noon-12:45 TBA - Dance (Courtyard)

1pm-1:40 Joe Gallardo & The Texas Jazz Festival Legends
 (Executive Surf Club)

1:45-2pm Latin Talk (Executive Surf Club)

2pm-2:30 Mariachi Classico (Courtyard)

2:30-3:15 Dick Otis & Jazzoo (Courtyard)

3pm-6pm Downtown Music Video Contest -Viewing & Voting
 (Texas Surf Museum)

5pm-6pm Carl Lewis Blues Band (Courtyard)

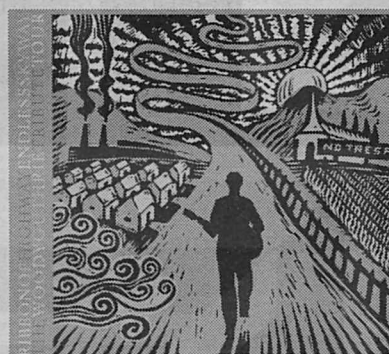
6:30 Downtown Music Video Contest-Award Ceremony (Fountain at Executive Surf Club)

7pm Jason McMaster w/ Reely Rotnz (doors, \$5)



**MUSIC ROAD
 RECORDS**

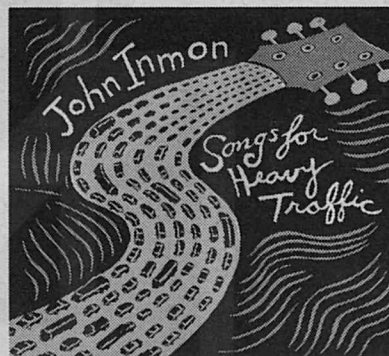
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FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #106

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DURING MAY 2008

#1 I SEE HAWKS IN LA: HALLOWED GROUND

- (Big Book) *BB/*CP/*DJ/*GC/*GS/*GV/*JH/*JM/*JT/*MF/*RJ/*TR
 2 Eliza Gilkyson: Beautiful World (Red House) *AB/*BR/*KD/*KM
 3 Hayes Carll: Trouble In Mind
 (Lost Highway) *AA/*DG/*HA/*KR/*RV
 4 Arty Hill & The Long Gone Daddys: Bar Of Gold
 (Cow Island) *BP/*DN/*HH/*TS
 5 The Wilders: Someone's Got To Pay (Free Dirt) *DR/*JP/*PP
 6 James McMurtry: Just Us Kids (Lightning Rod) *BF/*DF
 7 Eleven Hundred Strings: Country Jam (Palo Duro) *LB/*MA/*MM
 8 Joe Ely & Joel Guzman: Live Cactus! (Rack 'Em) *BL
 9 Randy Thompson: Further On (Jackpot) *EB/*EW
 10 Justin Townes Earle: The Good Life (Bloodshot) *CK/*CS
 11 Deke Dickerson: King Of The Whole Wide World
 (Major Label) *KF/*LG
 12 Old 97's: Blame It On Gravity (New West) *GM/*JB
 13= Angel Band: With Roots & Wings (Appleseed) *LMG/*XE
 Fred Eaglesmith: Tinderbox (A Major Label) *MP
 14 Band Of Heathens (BOH) *HT/*TG
 15= Stephen Clair: What Luck (self)
 Langhorne Slim & The War Eagles (Kemado) *JR/*SB
 Steppin' In It: Simple Tunes For Troubled Times
 (Earth Work) *JMB
 16 Peter Cooper: Mission Door (Red Beet) *JW
 17= Kathy Mattea: Coal (Captain Potato) *ST
 Chip Taylor: New Songs Of Freedom (Train Wreck) *TJ
 18= Sonny Landreth: From The Reach (Landfall) *HP
 Tremoloco: Dulcinea (Casa Julia) *TF
 19 Walter Hyatt: Some Unfinished Business (King Tears) *RJ
 20= Christine Albert: Paris, Texafrance (Moonhouse) *AG
 John Hiatt: Same Old Man (New West) *DT
 Brendon James Wright & The Wrongs (Barflight) *MB
 21= BandyLand: Share Croppers Whine (Pailhorse) *AOK
 Girls Guns & Glory: Inverted Valentine (Pilot Whale) *3RC
 Abigail Washburn & The Sparrow Quartet (Nettwerk) *MDT
 22= The Belleville Outfit: Wanderin' (self) *GF
 Laura Cantrell: Trains & Boats & Planes (Diesel Only)
 Kasey Chambers & Shane Nicholson: Rattlin' Bones (Liberation)
 Luke Doucet & the White Falcon: Blood's Too Rich
 (Six Shooter) *TH
 Guy Forsyth: Calico Girl (Small & Nimble) *SC
 Joe Fournier: Dirt Road Joyride (Dusty) *RA
 Loose Acoustic Trio: Sorrow Be Gone (Big Book)
 Shel Silverstein: Boy Named Sue and His Other Country Songs
 (Water) *RS
 Slim Cessna's Auto Club: Cipher (Alternative Tentacles) *TM



*XX = DJ's ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Freeform American Roots is compiled from reports provided by 140 freeform DJs. More information can be found at <http://tcmradio.com/far/>

JIM PATTON & SHERRY BROKUS

PLANS GANG AFT AGLY

(Edge City ☼☼☼☼)

Some Austin musicians, John Inmon for instance, are full-time professionals (though, as a graffito in the old Black Cat Lounge advised, 'It's a pretty useless musician who can't find his wife a decent paying job'), but there's a significant strata of semi-pros—and I mean this in no derogatory way—who know, or come to realize, that U-hauling to Austin is not a career move, au contraire, and they won't make a living from music, but want to be part of a community of people whose 'real' life is lived wherever you can plug in an amp or set up a microphone. Patton & Brokus, originally from Baltimore, are not exactly typical as they've taken it on themselves to create an opportunity for their peers with the nomadic Third Coast Singer Songwriter Series, currently at Austin Java Company. At the same time, hosting it seems to have been very beneficial to them, their third album being largely made up of noticeably more assured and finely nuanced versions of seven songs from **Keepers Of The Flame** (2006), two from **Mystery Ride** (2000), plus three new titles. Nobody's fools when it comes to musicians, they're backed by producer Ron Flynt bass/keyboards, Rich Brotherton acoustic guitar/mandolin/cittern, Scrappy Jud Newcombe acoustic guitar and Warren Hood fiddle —Mary Cutrufello is now their regular guitarist, where else but Austin? Still, if the paint is glossier and the detailing sharper, it's the duo's bedrock integrity that powers their music. **JC**

MITCH WEBB & THE SWINDLES

LONELY KIND

TREMOLOCO • DULCINEA

(Supreme Music ☼☼☼☼/Casa Julia ?)

San Antonio is the 9th largest American city but if, for instance, you owned a club like Casbeers, for practical purposes it is, as Joe Horn explained to me many years ago, about the size of Waco. However, it does at least have a musical patron saint and while Webb started out psychedelic in The Children, with his sister Cassell, he's long been a disciple of Doug Sahm, describing his band, currently guitarist Joe Reyes (Freddy Fender/Flaco Jimenez), drummer Lloyd Herman (Gatemouth Brown) and bassist Bart Nicholas (Los #3 Dinners) as "Slightly more progressive than garage rock." Though the band's repertoire leans heavily on Texas rock & roll covers, their fourth album largely showcases Webb's Sahm-esque songwriting and delivery, along with Fender's *A Man Can Cry*, *Blubberball* by fellow Casbeers regular Claude Morgan, which isn't the best fit, and arrangements of the traditional *10,000 Years Ago* and *Pig Song*.

Some people I take seriously have flipped over East LA singer-songwriter Tony Zamora's debut but I flat don't get it. Zamora—there is a band called Tremoloco that'll be touring Texas this month, but as he's the only common denominator on the 14 tracks, the CD is very much his show—seems to aspire to being a value added Doug Sahm, mixing Tex-Mex, Mexican, country, roots rock, Americana, Cajun, polkas, cumbias, two-steps, ballads and instrumentals into an ultimate Border melting pot. Trouble is, neither his songs nor his vocals do anything much for me, and while he has the slightly dubious distinction of being produced by Los Lobos' drummer Cougar Estrada, Zamora never integrates his disparate elements with anything like the same nonchalance as Sahm or Los Lobos, in fact there are some very jarring juxtapositions. On top of which, the words "additional recording" alone always give me a queasy foreboding. I'd give you plenty of six to five against that Cindy Cashdollar, Joel Guzman, Redd Volkaert, Max Baca, Stephen Bruton and Ian McLagan—there are more guests on this than you can shake a stick at—have actually met Zamora. **JC**

VA • THE VERY BEST OF OUTLAW COUNTRY

(Legacy ☼☼)

Sony has a well deserved reputation for being the only major label that takes its back catalog seriously, perhaps because, as a corporation, it understands the value of content, but this release has to make you wonder if Legacy is reaching the bottom of what one would have thought, given how many indies Columbia absorbed over the years, was virtually a bottomless barrel. It would, perhaps, be simplistic to say that this was released in 1976, only the title back then was **Wanted! The Outlaws**, but, while I'd give Johnny Cash, Johnny Paycheck, Billy Joe Shaver and Steve Earle a pass, it's hard to understand how anyone would lump together those original platinum sellers, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson, Jessi Colter and poor forgotten Tompall Glasser, who didn't even make the cut on this 20-track collection, with Charlie Daniels, Hank Williams Jr, Shooter Jennings, David Allan Coe, Gretchen Wilson, Tanya Tucker and Travis Tritt, let alone The Allman Brothers, Marshall Tucker Band, Lynard Skynard, The Georgia Satellites and Molly Hatchett, who, of course, aren't 'country' in any sense other than being openly acknowledged influences on contemporary Nashville stars. It's sad to see Diesel Only's Jeremy Tepper listed as a compilation producer. He used to be one the Good Guys. **JC**

photos by Dana Lynne Stringer

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Wed 11th **TOM RUSH & BILL STAINES** Wed 18th **RAY BONNEVILLE**

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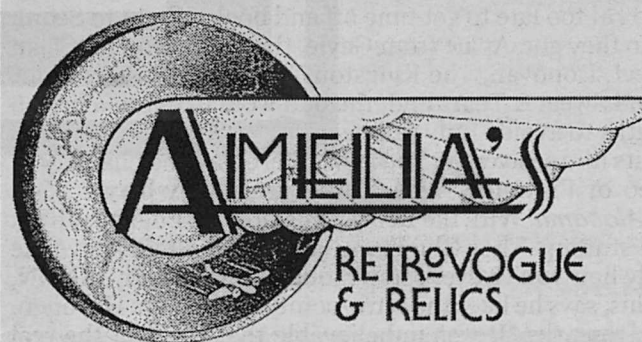
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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Upset two people last month by saying their babies were ugly. As *No Depression* copublisher/editor **Peter Blackstock's** had just died, I imagine he's a tad sensitive right now and needed to vent, but, unless he's had a radical change of heart about Don Walser, Butch Hancock, Townes Van Zandt and many others, I don't quite follow his reasoning. Responding to my crack about the Buddy Miller 'Artist of the Decade' cover story, Blackstock argues, "If that's your opinion of that issue, then by your own logic, every issue you've done in the past 20 years is garbage." Apart from anything else, **3CM** and *ND* have, though some years apart, both run cover stories on Bad Livers, Robbie Fulks, Alejandro Escovedo, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Dave Alvin and Mary Gauthier. This, incidentally, is the same Peter Blackstock who once quoted lines from **Jimmy LaFave's** cover of a Bob Dylan song as an example of LaFave's shoddy songwriting.

* Nova Scotia reader **Paul-Emile Comeau's** problem with the *ND* cover story isn't Miller, but "something else altogether. I understand the word 'decade' refers to any ten-year period, however, I still like to consider the word as meaning 'a period of ten years beginning with a year ending in 0.' In this context it seems rather odd to choose 'the artist of the decade' in 2008. Then again, it also irks me to see magazines publish their best of the year lists in November! I also have a problem with the very decision to choose an artist of the decade. It seems a little symptomatic of the American propensity to turn everything into a winner take all contest."

* **Gary Hartman** scored one excellent point in his email—after pointing out some misspelled names in his book, I got his name on the cover, whoops—and we had a much more reasonable exchange of views. Though Hartman does say in his preface that he was only attempting an outline, I reviewed to its overambitious title, **The History Of Texas Music**. Hypothetically, should anyone ask me to tackle that subject, I'd say 'I won't write it, but I will organize it,' or 'Get real and commission a series.' There may, though I seriously doubt it, be an individual with indepth knowledge of the musical history of the entire state from Fiddlin' Johnny Carson to Ruby Jane, more realistically, someone who knows a great deal about, let's say, Austin singer-songwriters in the 90s is likely to know little, and care less, about contemporary Houston hip hop and rap.

* Hartman defended inclusions in his 'Recommended Listening' to which I took exception on the grounds that they had "a meaningful influence," but I'm not buying it. In fact, if he'd left Beyoncé, Barry White, Barbara Mandrell and Norah Jones, not to mention The fucking Eagles, out completely, I doubt anyone would notice. Come to think, I wonder how Beyoncé and Jones feel about being history?

* How's this for honesty? "Have you noticed [the reviews we publish in **Best In Texas**] are all positive? Sometimes, they are even gushing syrupy confections from enthusiasts for the music and evangelists for the artists. OK. Tell me that's wrong." This quote from *BIT* editor Ed Shane is the centerpiece of an hilarious posting on *Houston Press* writer **William Michael Smith's** *Lonesome Onry & Mean* blog. Smith's reaction was "The idiocy of the whole thing is... well... the idiocy of the whole thing," citing James Boswell's immortal 1778 dictum, "He who praises everybody praises nobody." It's not often, indeed hardly ever, that I recommend another music writer, but you should check Brother Smith out. The *Press* has a really poxy IP setup, but Googling 'Houstoned Lonesome' will get you there.

* These days, I just regard SXSW as a necessary precondition for NotSXSW, but *Austin American-Statesman* columnist **John Kelso** does surely love to fuck with them. Last year, he gave out two good black eyes, provoking a particularly childish response from an *Austin Chronicle* blogger, whose reasoning was that Kelso is senile—I neither know nor care how old Dunbar Wells is, but I guarantee he's not getting any younger. He's also got a long way to go to be as funny as Kelso, whose latest salvo takes aim at SXSW (which, of course, is itself a riff on Hitchcock's **North By Northwest**) suing a new restaurant deep in South Austin's Bubbaland, charging trademark infringement. "I didn't think you could trademark directions... How you gonna mix up a music festival with a restaurant? On the other hand, with the quality of the music that SXSW attracts, some of the frontmen you see at the shows may end up waiting tables at the restaurant that was to be known as **South By South First**. And be sure to give them a big tip. After playing at SXSW, they'll need all the money they can get."

* Darn the luck, I got a press release, from Crystal Gayle's PR, about the May **Flower Power Peace Festival** too late to get time off and book a flight to Seoul, South Korea. I mean look who they got. Apart from Gayle, there was Don McClean [sic], The Alan Parsons Project, Donovan, The Kingston Trio, The Brothers Four, Dr Hook, Melanie Safka, Blood Sweat & Tears and, the odd woman out in a lineup I'd otherwise go to some lengths to avoid, Judy Collins.

* Judging by the million+ hits it's received on YouTube, there's a good chance you already know about a video of Finland's **The Leningrad Cowboys'** 1993 performance of *Sweet Home Alabama*. With the Red Army Choir. In English. Check it out, you couldn't make this stuff up. They (the Finns, not the Russians) have the most ludicrous faux rockabilly hair you've ever seen; though Mark Mundy, KNON, Dallas, who turned me on to this, says he likes the ultra-pointy shoes. Pete Hakonen, of Goofin' Records, Helsinki, remarks "It was unbelievable that they got the real Red Army Choir to do it, but then the Red Army was in crisis (like the whole of Russia) and they needed the green stuff."

MISS LESLIE

BETWEEN THE WHISKEY AND THE WINE

(Zero Label ****)

Ken Irwin the music lover is a big fan of Leslie Sloan, and, indeed, what's not to love? Already an outstanding real country singer, much admired by FAR DJs and the like, and with a growing regional following, her third album is not only a major leap forward in confidence and style—shaping each individual word to maximum effect, she really sounds like a star—it's entirely original material, and if someone told you some of her songs were actually covers of early 60s hits, you'd have to be supremely confident in your knowledge of the period to argue the toss. More likely, you'd think *I'm Done With Leaving*, *I Can Get Over You*, *In The Matter Of Me And You* and the sensational *You Left Me A Long Time Ago*, somehow slipped by you. For all these reasons, Ken Irwin the record label exec had to pass on signing Sloan to Rounder. Her appeal is also her problem, the star she sounds like is from some 50 years ago. Though she sails under the flag of convenience of honky tonk, she really sings and writes Hard Country, a subgenre, neatly summarized by the title of Barbara Ching's book **Wrong's What I Do Best**, that has all but fallen off the musical map, perhaps because it was so quickly coopted by countrypolitan. Splitting her time between bars, divorce courts and packing her bags, Sloan celebrates, if that's the word I want, the messy emotional lives of exactly the kind of people country music used to be for and about. **JC**

BECKY SCHLEGEL

FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE

(Lilly Ray ****)

North Dakota only appears once in my Roots B&D calendar (Peggy Lee), but was still ahead of South Dakota until Schlegel, born and raised in Kimball (pop 700), came along. She now lives in Minneapolis, where's she's racked up a mess of Bluegrass/Old Timey awards from the Minnesota Music Academy, and all I can say is that bluegrass/old timey fans up there must be exceptionally broadminded, because, as you may know, I have a very low tolerance for straight bluegrass, and not much more for old timey, but Schlegel blows me away. Listening to her album is like tasting a fine wine; initially you're struck by that gorgeous, ravishing voice, then you start noticing the precisely detailed and fluid production and arrangements, by Schlegel and Brian Fesler, then the musicianship, especially Fesler's guitar work and subtle banjo playing (ever seen 'subtle' and 'banjo' in the same sentence before?), lastly, almost as an afterthought, there's Schlegel's excellent songwriting. About all I can find to criticize here are the tiny fonts and crappy contrasts of the booklet. **JC**

WALTER HYATT

SOME UNFINISHED BUSINESS VOL 1

(King Tears ****)

Unfinished albums usually stay that way unless there's enormous demand for absolutely anything or a big payoff (which, of course, amount to the same thing), but anyone who knew Hyatt will easily understand why so many of his colleagues came to the rescue of what would have been his third solo album. Quite how far Hyatt had got before he died in the 1996 ValuJet crash is unclear, but, simply from the presence of Warren Hood and Carrie Rodriguez on fiddles and no less than seven credits for recording, producing and mixing, it's obvious there's been some overdubbing. Still, even if he hadn't got any further than the core (certainly not scratch) vocals and acoustic guitar tracks, and everything else was added later, this still sounds just like what you'd expect of a Walter Hyatt album. It was often said of Hyatt that his eclectic tastes, country, jazz, blues and oldfashioned pop, kept him from breaking out beyond a 'cocktail country' cult following, probably why MCA dropped him after **King Tears** (1990), but for those who knew and loved Hyatt, his legacy is only enhanced by this unexpected addition to his catalog. **JC**

HEYBALE • THE LAST COUNTRY ALBUM

(Shuffle 5 *)

Maybe they own a honkytonkatron or are trying to see just how many country clichés it takes to gag Continental Club scenesters, but even a band that includes piano great Earl Poole Ball, Kevin Smith bass and Tom Lewis drums, one of the best rhythm sections in existence, Redd Volkaert, who, even if I've never bought the Telecaster God thing, is an outstanding guitarist, and Gary Claxton vocals, plus guests like Cindy Cashdollar, Erik Hokkanen, Elana James, Casper Rawls, Bradley Jaye Williams and Raul Malo, can't overcome some really miserable covers and even worse original material. So terrible, in fact, that one has to question the wisdom of putting in a song that's any good because Tom T Hall's *That's How I Got To Memphis* stands out in such glaring contrast to the surrounding stuff. I may well be completely wrong, but I get the impression Heybale is a democracy, which, in my experience, is almost never a good way to run a band. **JC**



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Every Tuesday Brennen Leigh, 6pm	19th, George Ensle, 7pm
Kevin Gallagher, 8pm	20th, Freight Train Troubadors, 10pm
4rd, Cowboy Johnson, 6pm	21st, TBA, 10pm
5th, Liz Morphis, 7pm	25th, Freddie Steady Krc, 7pm
6th, Larry Lange's Lonely Knights	26th, Craig Toungeate, 7pm
7th, Sunset Valley Boys, 3pm	27th, Ted Roddy's Backwoods Hipsters, 10pm
11th, Debra Peters, 7pm	28th, Hans Frank, 10pm
13th, Eve & The Exiles, 10pm	
14th, Melancholy Ramblers, 3.30pm	

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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

A FICKLE FOOD—UPON A SHIFTING PLATE

Emily Dickenson's pithy comment on fame, equally her lines, "Fame is a bee/ It has a song/It has a sting/Ah, too, it has a wing," came to mind last month when FAR DJ Steve Hathaway bemoaned the fact that the death of the once popular country/rockabilly singer and songwriter Glenn Barber had gone virtually unnoticed. They will be almost as apposite this month when I go down to Corpus Christi to say a few words about **Chelo Silva** at her induction into the South Texas Music Walk of Fame.

When the Walk organizers first asked me for nominations, two names came immediately to mind, Armando Marroquin, of Alice, TX, and Silva, born in Brownsville, TX, both of whom they had to research. In the case of Marroquin, co-owner of Discos Ideal and, in my opinion, the greatest A&R man and record producer in the history of Texas music, this is not altogether surprising; apart from his family and Hacienda Records' Rick Garcia, I imagine few at last year's ceremony knew who he was or why he was being inducted.

However, Chelo Silva was a huge star, on a par with Lydia Mendoza or Lola Beltrán, in her day though, admittedly, that was by no means yesterday or even the day before. Born August 25th, 1922, she began performing in the late 30s and by the late 50s, touring the US, Mexico and South America, was the bestselling female Hispanic artist on either side of the Rio Grande. Her appeal, singing torrid, romantic and, for the time, very daring songs of love affairs gone wrong, betrayal and desire, was well summarized by Elijah Wald in a *Boston Globe* review of **La Reina Tejana Del Bolero** (Arhoolie, 1995), "Her dark, rich voice has a soulful depth that is worlds away from the sappiness of lesser bolero singers, and her songs are varied and lyrically powerful."

However, Wald must be one of very few other Anglos who'd think it's cool that I've met a man who was once married to Silva (the distinguished ethnomusicologist Americo Parades). She has not been utterly forgotten, Sony has long kept titles available, three volumes of **Super Exitos** (Greatest Hits) were released last year and there are several of her songs on YouTube, but, for instance, were you to Google her, many hits simply reproduce *All Music Guide's* brief bio and most, usually online record stores, have even less content than that. Compared to the wealth of detailed information about Mendoza and Beltrán, Silva is barely a blip on the Internet.

Many years ago, I read a pop-science analysis of fame, which concluded, something to do with people's ability to process information, that at any given time and in any given field, there can only be a finite number of stars, so in order for someone new to become one, someone else has to suffer the equivalent of banishment to Branson. I have to think there's something in this. Some people's fame survives long after death, while other former stars, like Silva, who died on April 2nd, 1988, or, as Hathaway noted last month, Glenn Barber, slip away in such obscurity that it's hard to even confirm their passing.

It's not much, I know, but I do take a certain amount of satisfaction in thinking that people might stop outside the Executive Surf Club and at least wonder who Chelo Silva was and why she has a star in the Walk of Fame.

JC

JOHN INMON SONGS FOR HEAVY TRAFFIC

(Music Road ****)

Back in the *Music City/Music City Texas* era, I ran annual Best of Austin polls, but they were somewhat different from the *Austin Chronicle's* as, rather than open ballots, I used a collegiate system, enlisting 100-odd selected people such as venue bookers and—the best informed and most acute sector of the electorate—door, bar and wait staff, which, from the very first (*Music City* #5, 1/90), produced rather different lineups than the *Chron's* popularity contest. In that poll, the top three electric guitarists were Jesse Taylor, John Reed and John Inmon. As Jesse is, sadly, no longer with us, were I to run another poll under the same multiple choice rules, for Austin alone, I personally would be torn between Gurf Morlix and Mary Cutrufello; for Texas add David Spenser of Sisters Morales; for the entire US, Duke Levine of The Dennis Brennan Band. Thing is, I can only pick one of them, because Reed and Inmon would *still* be two of my own three choices.

This has come to mind forcefully at Jimmy LaFave shows over the last couple of years. During the last two decades, I've seen Inmon in many contexts, even, if only once, with Jerry Jeff Walker, but, while he's always been one of my favorites, what he's doing with LaFave is, even by his standards, transcendently stunning. So when I heard that, prodded by LaFave and Eliza Gilkyson, with whom he's also been playing, to give them an answer to the FAQ "Does your guitar player have a CD?" Inmon had a solo instrumental album coming out on LaFave's new label, I took it as a sign that Inmon should, finally, join Taylor and Reed as a cover story.

Though he's lived in Bastrop for 30 years, Inmon bounced around the world as an Army brat, learning to play guitar in Germany, forming a surf band in San Francisco, and gravitating to Austin in the early 70s when his father was based in Temple. "It's hard for anyone who didn't live through it to imagine it, plenty of work, good money, big crowds." In 1973, he signed on with Jerry Jeff Walker, leaving for the first time when The Lost Gonzo Band quit en masse in 1976. Three major label albums later, the Gonzos disbanded the same week The Cowboy Twinkies abandoned Ray Wylie Hubbard and Inmon was playing for him that weekend. "Three years of some of the most fun I ever had working, best guy to work for."

In 1983, Walker, massively in debt and desperate to get his career moving again, rehired Inmon, but in 1986, shortly after making his last house payment, he quit again (if this tune is beginning to sound familiar, you may be thinking of my Freddie Krc cover story), but after bouncing around for a few years (Rusty Weir, Marcia Ball, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Delbert McClinton, Omar & The Howlers), he was back with Walker in 1990, staying until early 2001, when he left for the last time (very ugly story involving getting, or, rather, not getting, time off for his mother's funeral, as Inmon says, "Things rarely end well with Jerry Jeff").

I first came across Inmon's extraordinary talent when Krc played me a tape of *South Carolina Blues*, featuring a breathtaking double-tracked guitar solo, from the never-released Freddie Steady's Wild Country album **Neon Dreams**. I first heard him, and got to know him, when he was in the best version of Gilmore's Continental Drifters (which Gilmore pissed away, but that's another story). Inmon's trademark has always been his extraordinary fluidity. He moves under, through and over melodies and rhythms with a serpentine grace. If you ever saw Hubert Sumlin, nothing moved but his hands and fingers and Inmon, like Taylor and Reed, is, if not quite as steely, equally the quintessential unflashy sideman, leaving the showmanship to the star while serving him or her and, above all, the song the best he can. This approach won't get you a *Guitar Player* cover or win a *Chronicle* award, but I'll trade you any number of Joe Satrianis or Eric Johnsons for one John Inmon.

His album's title pretty much tells you Inmon's intentions with the album, soothing music for stressful situations. "I tried putting in some bluesier, more rocking numbers, but it was like lining up your kids and realizing one of them didn't look like you. They just didn't fit." So the eight instrumentals, Inmon's own *Mr Happy, Prelude, This Is My Lucky Day* and, with Gerry Burns, *The Blue Door*, plus Hashida Naramura Rokusuke's *Sukiyaki*, Vince Guaraldi's *Cast Your Fate To The Wind*, Gerry Burns' *The Road Less Traveled* and The Beatles' *In My Life*, backed by Paul Percy drums/percussion, Glen Fukunaga bass and Radoslav Lorkavic keyboards, are a subtle, unpretentious set of melodic inventions.

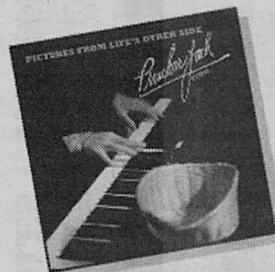
Steve Cropper, guitarist of Booker T & The MGs, claimed that DJs put every instrumental group in America out of business, and there's certainly no question that instro acts and albums have long been marginalized. For a perspective, I asked Duke Levine how his four albums had done; "I was lucky enough to have a small label put out my first three and get them out there to a certain extent. I think they all sold around 2-3 thousand each. I did this latest one myself, and I think I'm getting close to making back what I spent, probably reviews and pieces in mags accountable for getting the word out, maybe a little radio. There is the audience of guitar players that seem to keep track of this stuff, which is great, but I always hope there are 'regular' people who will just take my records as a piece of music that happens to be instrumental guitar." My feeling is that a lot of 'regular' people who gasped 'Holy shit' during the guitar solos at LaFave and Gilkyson's shows will be heading for the merch table at the end of the night.

JC

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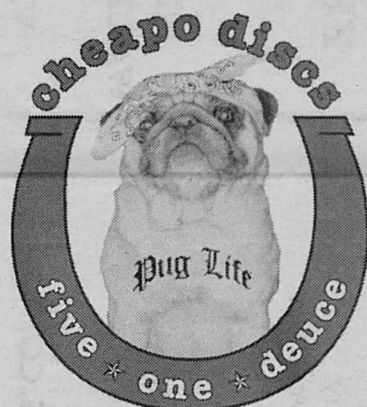
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JUNE ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

- 1st --- Johnny Bond • 1915 Enville, OK
 ----- Shelly Lee Alley † 1964
 2nd - Carl Butler • 1927 Knoxville, TN
 3rd -- Memphis Minnie • 1897 Algiers, LA
 ----- Buster Pickens • 1916 Hempstead, TX
 ----- Boots Randolph • 1927 Paducah, KY
 ----- Billie Joe McAllister † 1967
 ----- Deke Dickerson • 1968 St Louis, MO
 4th -- Texas Ruby • 1908 Wise Co, TX
 ----- Freddy Fender • 1936 San Benito, TX
 ----- Rabon Delmore † 1952
 ----- John Hartford † 2001
 5th -- Narciso Martinez † 1992
 ----- Conway Twitty † 1993
 6th -- Gary US Bonds • 1939 Jacksonville, FL
 ----- Joe Stampley • 1943 Springhill, LA
 ----- Clarence White • 1944 Lewiston, ME
 ----- Steve Riley • 1969 Mamou, LA
 ----- Adolph Hofner † 2000
 ----- Smokey Montgomery † 2001
 7th -- Wynn Stewart • 1934 Morrisville, MO
 8th -- Adolph Hofner • 1916 Moulton, TX
 ----- Alton Delmore † 1964
 9th -- Les Paul • 1915 Waukesha, WI
 ----- Herb Remington • 1926 Mishawaka, IN
 ----- Johnny Ace • 1929 Memphis, TN
 ----- Jackie Wilson • 1934 Detroit, MI
 ----- Slaid Cleaves • 1964 Washington, DC
 10th Howlin' Wolf • 1910 West Point, MS
 11th - John Inmon • 1949 San Antonio, TX
 ----- Bruce Robison • 1966 Houston, TX
 12th - Charlie Feathers • 1932 Holly Springs, MS
 ----- Bobby Earl Smith • 1943 San Angelo, TX
 ----- Junior Brown • 1952 Cottonwood, AZ
 ----- JE Mainer † 1971
 ----- Johnny Bond † 1978
 13th - Clyde McPhatter † 1972
 14th Wynonie Harris † 1969
 ----- Merrill Moore † 2000
 15th - Tex Owens • 1892 Kileen, TX
 ----- Leon Payne • 1917 Alba, TX
 ----- Waylon Jennings • 1937 Littlefield, TX
 16th Bob Nolan † 1980
 17th - Red Foley • 1910 Blue Lick, KY
 ----- Henry Zimmerle • 1940 San Antonio, TX
 ----- Mike Buck • 1952 Fort Worth, TX
 ----- Dewey Balfa † 1992
 18th Martí Brom • 1961 St Louis, MO
 ----- Bobby Flores • 1961 San Antonio, TX
 20th T Texas Tyler • 1916 Mena, AR
 ----- Brian Wilson • 1942 Hawthorne, CA
 ----- Ira Louvin † 1965
 ----- Louise Massey † 1983
 ----- Boudleaux Bryant † 1987

- 21st - Clifford Scott • 1928 San Antonio, TX
 ----- OC Smith • 1932 Mansfield, LA
 ----- Danny Brown • 1936 Warren, TX
 ----- Paulino Bernal • 1939 Raymondville, TX
 22nd Kris Kristofferson • 1936 Brownsville, TX
 23rd - Zeb Turner • 1915 Lynchburg, VA
 ----- June Carter • 1929 Maces Spring, VA
 ----- Elton Britt † 1972
 ----- Wade Fruge † 1992
 25th Clifton Chenier • 1925 Opelousas, LA
 ----- Eddie Floyd • 1935 Montgomery, AL
 ----- Link Davis Jr • 1947 Port Arthur, TX
 ----- Jody Nix • 1952 Big Spring, TX
 26th Big Bill Broonzy • 1893 Scott, MS
 ----- Chris Isaak • 1956 Stockton, CA
 27th Nathan Abshire • 1913 Gueydan, LA
 ----- Roy Wiggins • 1926 Nashville, TN
 28th Lester Flatt • 1914 Overton Co, TN
 ----- Groovy Joe Poovey • 1938 Dallas, TX
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 29th Bill Kirchen • 1948 Bridgeport, CT
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