

3rd COAST MUSIC

AUDREY AULD

#58/147
NOVEMBER 2001

REVIEWS (***** or not)

AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC

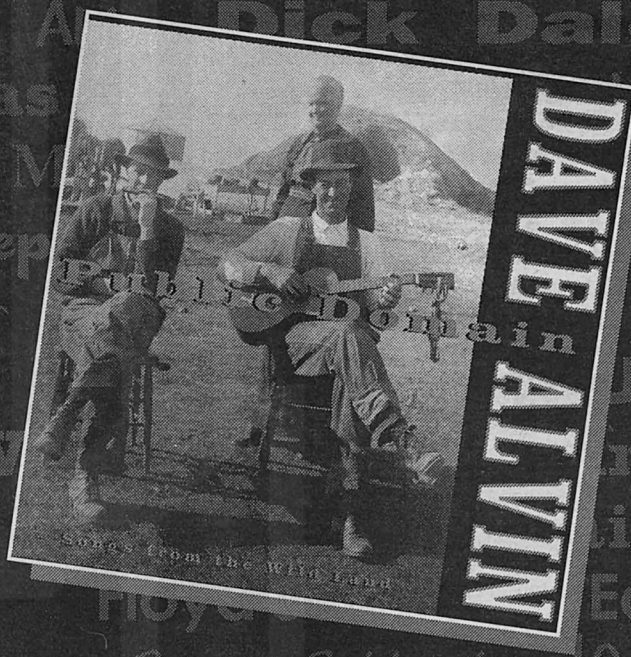
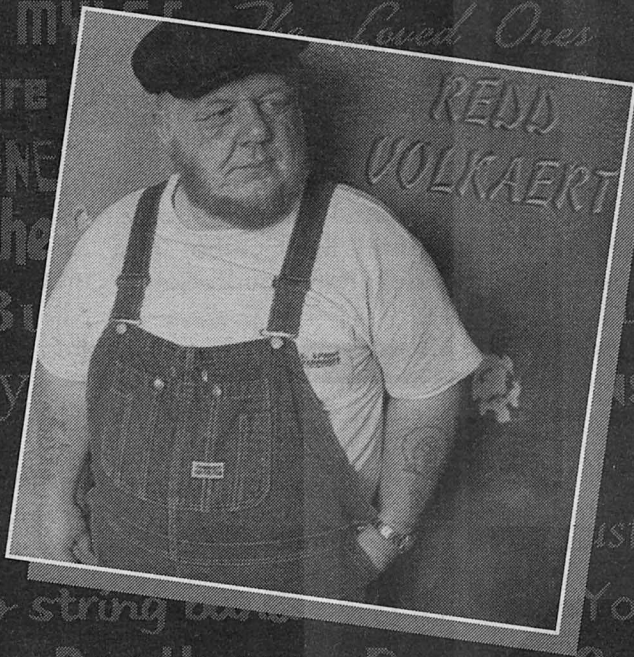
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- 2 Wayne Hancock: A-Town Blues (Bloodshot) *BR/*DC/*NA
- 3 Jesse Dayton: Hey Nashvegas! (Stag) *JZ/*PD/*SH
- 4 Kelly Hogan: Because It Feel Good (Bloodshot) *CW/*CZ/*DY/*ST
- 5 VA: Hank Williams; Timeless (Lost Highway) *KR/*RH
- 6 Bob Dylan: Love And Theft (Columbia) *BiW/*ChL/*JBe
- 7 VA: Poet; A Tribute To Townes Van Zandt (FreeFalls) *JHo
- 8 Buddy & Julie Miller (Hightone) *SS&DD
- 9 Libbi Bosworth: Libbville (Ramble) *RT/*SJa
- 10 Steve Earle, Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clarke:
Together At The Bluebird Cafe (American Originals) *RJ
- 11 Merle Haggard: Roots Vol 1 (Anti-Epithaph) *KC
- 12 Bill Kirchen: Tied To The Wheel (Hightone) *TS
- Bruce Robison: Country Sunshine (Boar's Nest) *BF
- 13 Kimberly M'Carver: Cross The Danger Line (Prime) *R&HL
- 14 Drive-By Truckers: Southern Rock Opera (Soul Dump) *SG/*TW
- Enzendo: In The Middle Of Nowhere (Dusty) *JSp/*MP
- 15 Dallas Wayne: Here I Am In Dallas (Hightone) *KD
- 16 Michael Fracasso: Back To Oklahoma (India) *DJ/*GJ
- 17 Chris Knight: A Pretty Good Guy (Dualtone)
- 18 The Wayfaring Strangers: Shiftings Sands Of Time (Rounder) *JW
- 19 Thad Cockrell & The Starlite Country Band: Stack Of Dreams
(Miles Of Music) *DF
- The Flying Burrito Brothers: California Jukebox (Icehouse) *DA
- Allison Krauss & Union Station: New Favorite (Rounder) *JBa
- Doc Watson: Live At Gerdes Folk City (Sugar Hill) *GW
- 20 The Coal Porters: Chris Hillman Tribute Concerts (Prima)
- The Gourds: Shinebox (Sugar Hill)
- 21 The Bellfuries: Just Plain Lonesome (ASP) *KL
- The Ignitors: Speedway Sounds (Hayden's Ferry) *SB
- 22 Sons Of The Pioneers: Symphonies Of The Sage (Bloodshot/Soundies)
- The Stumbleweeds Pickin' & Sinnin' (Rawk)
- Wylie & The Wild West: Paradise (Rounder)
- 23 Pat Haney: Ghost Of Things To Come (Freefalls) *RC
- Ralph Stanley & Friends: Clinch Mountain Sweethearts (Rebel) *MA
- Dale Watson: Preachin' To The Choir (CRS) *EW

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- 26 Ryan Adams: Gold (Lost Highway)
- Greezy Wheels: Millenium Greezy (Tana)
- Katy Moffatt: Cowboy Girl (Western Jubilee)
- Gillian Welch: Time (The Revelator) (Acony)
- 27 Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem: Cocktail Swing (Signature Sounds) *TA
- Dr John: Creole Moon (Blue Note) *DwT
- Wayne Hancock: South Austin Sessions (Bloodshot) *MT
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- Caroline Herring: Twilight (Blue Corn) *CD
- Chip Taylor: Black And Blue America (Train Wreck) *TO
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- 28 Demolition String Band: Pulling Up Atlantis (Okra-Tone)
- 29 Sean Ardoin & Zydekool: Pullin' (Tomorrow) *PR
- Mike Benjamin: Never Too Late (Self) *RP
- Boozoo Chavis: Down Home On Dog Hill (Rounder) *DN
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- VA: Daddy O Daddy; Rare Family Songs Of Woody Guthrie
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- VA: Old Time Music From Southwest Virginia (County) *CrL
- VA: Labour Of Love; the Music Of Nick Lowe (Telarc) *LH
- *xx = that DJ's Album of the Month

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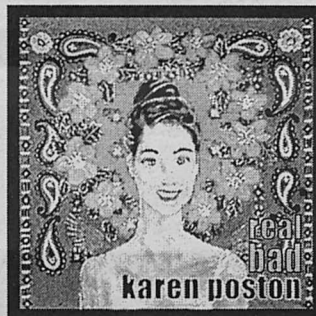
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karen poston -- "Real Bad"



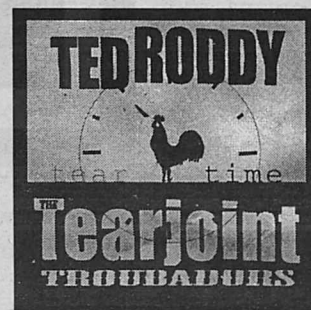
Karen Poston's songs move people to tears. She weaves intimate details and subtly revealing story lines with distinctive melodies to make songs that draw you into a place and time and haunt the imagination.

--Slaid Cleaves

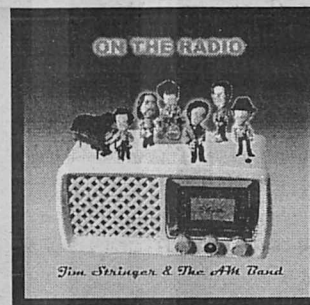
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KATY MOFFATT • COWBOY GIRL JANN BROWNE • MISSED ME BY A MILE

(Western Jubilee ***1/2/Plan B ***)

Nashville, 1975; Columbia signs the lovely and talented Katy Moffatt, releases two critically acclaimed albums, then drops her. Nashville, 1990; Curb signs the lovely and talented Jann Browne, releases two critically acclaimed albums, then drops her. So much for the critics, who were unable to protect either woman from label politics. Cut adrift with nothing but their distinctive talents, some name recognition, small but loyal fanbases and the residual partiality of the music press, the two went down very different paths. Moffatt, who tours constantly, has gone from indie to indie, Browne, who rarely leaves Southern California, made a 1995 European album, but now has her own sharply named label. Their latest albums, by my count Moffatt's twelfth, Browne's fourth, which, by odd coincidence, arrived in the same mail, are equally divergent.

♦ Striking out in a new direction, Moffatt, whose regrettable tendency to cowrite has debilitated several of her albums, showcases that marvellous, warm voice on an album of traditional and contemporary western songs, only two of which are originals, one cowritten with Cowboy Celtic's David Wilkie. With spare, low-key backing by producer Wilkie on guitar and mandolin, Rich O'Brien guitars and Mary Stribling upright bass, Moffatt doesn't always surmount the genre's slapdash approach to rhyme, and I'm not sure the world really needed yet another version of *John Hardy* or *The Wayward Wind*, but given something like Joe Ely's *Indian Cowboy* or David Halley's *Further*, she really shines. She even manages to breathe new life into John Phillips' Dead standard *Me And My Uncle*. Not the perfect album one's been expecting since *Walkin' On The Moon*, but a refreshing contribution to an all too often hokey and maudlin sub-genre.

♦ One of the more credible of the so-called 'neo-traditionalists,' Browne's forte used to be superb taste in material, from the Davis Sisters and Ray Price to Jim Lauderdale and John Hiatt. However, this time round, she wrote all ten songs, or, to be more accurate, cowrote all but one of them. It may just be my bias but *Cold Here In London* seems honest and personal, while the other songs have that detachment that so often characterizes cowrites, especially West Coast cowrites. Though still selfconfident and challenging, Browne has, rather unusually, managed to make a self-released album that's more generic than those she recorded under the auspices of a braindead major label. **JC**

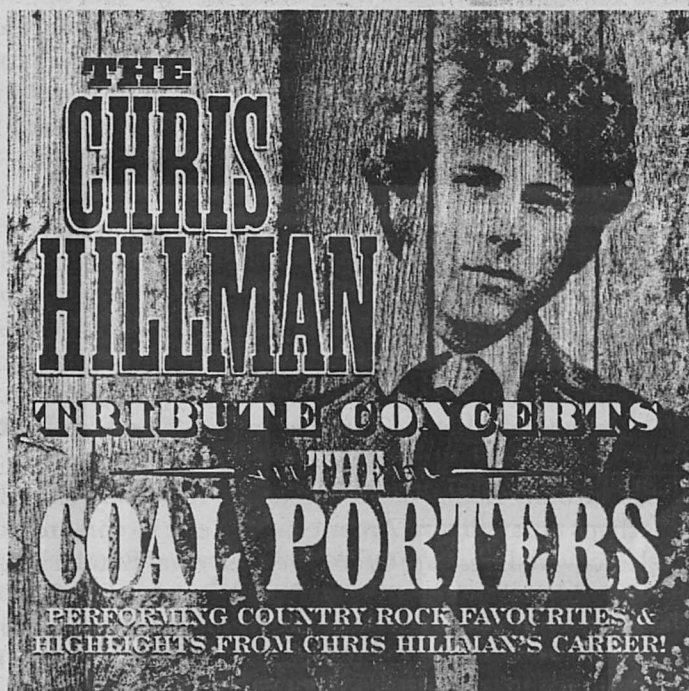
AMERICAN ROOTS MUSIC

(PBS documentary; Palm CD/4-CD box set/DVD/VHS box set;
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Ken Burns' documentary on *Jazz* lasted ten hours, Jim Brown has four to cover, well, pretty much everything else that's constituted roots music in the last 100 years and more—Blues, Country, Folk, Gospel, Western Swing (which should have been in *Jazz*), Cajun, Zydeco, Tejano, Bluegrass and Native American. As you might expect, things get somewhat compressed, oversimplified and elided, indeed sometimes downright distorted. For instance, Western Swing is reduced to Bob Wills who gets the credit for introducing amplification, which is, shall we say, not entirely accurate. Later, we go into rock & roll with zero mention of rockabilly, a roots genre with far greater staying power. At the same time, the documentary occasionally slows down and goes into inordinate detail, as with the rise and fall of The Weavers and Dylan's electric 'treason,' while the fourth episode, mainly covering Cajun, Tejano and Native American musics, seems to belong to a different, more leisurely series. A deal like this would, of course, not be complete without its annoying complement of talking heads such as Bonnie Raitt, Keith Richard, Ray Benson and Keb' Mo' (you'd think they'd've reshot his fumble of Freddie King's name), but one might resent them less if they weren't taking up time that could be devoted to more archive footage, or at least people like Hubert Sumlin or Sam Phillips, who might actually tell us something worth knowing. Time is very much the crux of the problem; even ten hours, or an hour per genre, wouldn't really be adequate. Well, that's giving Native American the benefit of the doubt, if Robert Mirabel (Wild West Show meets arena rock) really is as good as it gets. Picking Mirabel, rather than John Trudell, is one of Brown's few real lapses in taste, another is filming Valerio Longoria, Mingo Saldivar and Little Joe at Gruene Hall, even if it is more photogenic than the nearby Capricorn Ballroom where they actually get booked.

♦ It might be an exaggeration to say that any well-rounded roots record library will already have every track on the four CD box set, let alone the sampler, but not much of one. If you have any interest at all in a genre, you'll certainly know, and probably own, the numbers chosen to represent it. I only got a quick look at the accompanying book, so maybe it, and the DVD which I haven't seen at all, help raise the level of this project above 101. I'm not sure who this package is aimed at. People who are already into any of the roots musics it covers will enjoy the archive footage but be irritated by the brevity and superficiality, and I don't quite see how they intend to lure anybody else into watching it. **JC**

The Chris Hillman Tribute Concerts is ex-Long Ryder frontman Sid Griffin and friends performing acoustic bluegrass versions of songs from the Byrds, Flying Burrito Bros., the Desert Rose Band and more.



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STEVE EARLE • TOWNES VAN ZANDT • GUY CLARK

TOGETHER AT THE BLUEBIRD CAFE POET: A TRIBUTE TO TOWNES VAN ZANDT

(American Originals *****/FreeFalls Entertainment *****)

How would you bill this lineup if you'd managed to pull it together, as Susanna Clark did for a 1995 Interfaith Dental Clinic benefit? This does actually matter because in nine out ten stores that even stock this, it'll be filed under Earle, which is vaguely ironic because though Earle's contributions, *My Old Friend The Blues*, *Valentine's Day*, *Tom Ames' Prayer*, *I Ain't Ever Satisfied*, *Mercenary Song* and *Copperhead Road*, are well done, and his Sirocco's Pizza story is hilarious, the main attraction here is the two grandmasters swapping songs. Townes is in rare good form, singing *Katie Belle*, with great intro, *Ain't Leavin' Your Love*, *A Song For, Pancho And Lefty* and *Tecumseh Valley*, while Clark is magisterial as ever with *Baby Took A Limo To Memphis*, *The Cape*, *Randall Knife*, *Dublin Blues* and *Immigrant Eyes*. I don't really buy the 'magical chemistry' promotion but this is next best to being at a show that can never be replicated.

♦ Starting from the premise, which I regard as inarguable and if you don't like it, tough shit, that Townes' own version (or versions) can never be excelled, the question, as, I guess, with any tribute album, is whether these covers bring some fresh insights to the songs or your time would have been better spent putting lard on the cat's boil. As usual, of course, this is a mixed bag, both extremes and plenty of grey area inbetween. The winners are Nanci Griffith's *Tower Song*, Cowboy Junkies' *Highway Kind*, Emmylou Harris' somewhat overwrought *Snake Song* and The Flatlanders' standout *Blue Wind Blew*. The losers are Ray Benson's indescribably painful *If I Needed You* and Robert Earl Keen's plodding *Mr Mudd & Mr Gold*. The rest of the 15 tracks can be divided into varying degrees of pointless, 'Not Altogether' (John Prine's *Loretta*, Pat Haney's *Waitin' Around To Die*), 'Fairly' (Guy Clark's *To Live's To Fly*, Billy Joe Shaver's *White Freightliner Blues* and Lucinda Williams' *Nothin'* which doesn't hold a candle to Calvin Russell's version) and 'Utterly' (Willie Nelson's *Marie*, Steve Earle & The Dukes' *Two Girls* and Delbert McClinton's *Pancho & Lefty*). This leaves JT Van Zandt's *My Proud Mountains* which is, shall we say, a special case. Actually, for a tribute album, that spread really isn't too bad. JC

PHIL LEE YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN ME THEN

(Shanachie *****)

How truly autobiographical it is, if at all, I have no idea, but in the title track, looking back on a life of running drugs and guns, beating his wife and children, living with a stripper, stealing women and being a bum, Lee laments, "You should have known me when I had all of my teeth." Putting out your first album (**The Mighty King Of Love**, reviewed #40/129) when you're a 49 year old truckdriver is unusual enough, especially when you're a resident of Nashville where performers are either dinosaurs or long washed up by that age. Another song on his second album, *Daddy's Jail* (his father actually was a North Carolina lawman), introduced him to the world on Eric Babcock's seminal 1996 Bloodshot compilation **Nashville; The Other Side Of The Alley** and, while you might not have picked him out back then, in a lineup that included Paul Burch, Tom House, Lonesome Bob, Tim Carroll and RB Morris, Lee, grey hairs notwithstanding, has turned out to be just about the strongest, most consistent and among the most bent and uncompromising of them all. Though House is even edgier, Lee's lyrics are always out there, while his settings make them rather more accessible. With a solid core band and guests that include members of Wilco, Alison Moorer, Billy Joe Royal and Gillian Welch and David Rawlings, Lee can lay down a terrific oldtime rock & roll groove, while the title track demonstrates his power as an acoustic soloist. Lee, who refers to this as "same old shit, different flies," may not have all of his teeth, but he can still bite. Horrible cover art. JC

THE PALADINS • PALVINE No 7

(Ruf *****)

First off, I owe The Paladins and y'all a big apology. For some reason I thought their previous six albums were all on Alligator, so naturally, after hearing a couple of them, I didn't bother with the rest, but I'm embarrassed to discover very late in the day that only those two were on that label. The San Diego based rockabilly/blues/country trio's great strength in live shows has always been that, unlike so many roots bands, they don't overthink the music but go on pure pedal to the metal let's see what this sucker can do instinct. Guitarist David Gonzales and drummer Brian Fahey with Thomas Yearsley back on bass, plus guest pianist Micah Hulsher of The Dusty 45s and steel guitarist Chris Lawrence, emphasis their country side on 12 songs, in near mono, including The Wood Brothers' *Alcohol of Fame*, Wynn Stewart's *She Tears Me Up* and Jerry Reed's *You Make It, They Take It*, with some originals taken from Gonzales' projected post-divorce solo album, and he's in very good voice on these melancholy numbers, and, of course, play guitar like nobody's business. JC

TERRY CLARKE • THE SHELLY RIVER

(Catfish *****)

Don't know who copped *Music City Texas*' original review copy, but it could have been any one of the old Gang of Three, because this, released in 1991 by a small label that promptly went toes up, was one of the rare albums on which we were unanimous. Even at their corniest and most sentimental, the 'take me back' songs of the Irish Diaspora can evoke loss and longing even in people who don't have a drop of Irish blood in them; in the hands of a singer-songwriter of Clarke's strength and intelligence, the effect is desolating and thought-provoking. Intensity has always been one of Clarke's trademarks, but on this solo album he grips the listener relentlessly as he explores his Irish heritage, drawing on stories told him by his father, who immigrated to England from County Sligo, his own experiences and his imagination. At the same time, his guitar stylings, influenced by Stephen Stills and Don Everly, give his words a universal setting, making them accessible to those who haven't, or can't, acquire a taste for Irish music styles. The result will make you rethink your instinctive mistrust of 'concept' albums. The strength of **The Shelly River** can be measured in the fact that, despite it's original now you see it, now you don't release, Ronny Elliott has covered *Irish Rockabilly Blues*, Ron Kavana, a name perhaps unfamiliar to Americans but one to conjure with in British roots circles, covered *The Edge Of Shamrock City* and Butch Hancock features *American Lipstick* in his repertoire. Clarke's name is, in fact, often linked with those of the Lubbock singer-songwriters; even though it's the West Coast of Ireland rather than the High Plains of West Texas, his ability to convey a sense of place is very similar. Clarke has made some fine albums, but this, by any standards is a masterpiece. JC

CHIP TAYLOR BLACK AND BLUE AMERICA BILLY BOB THORNTON PRIVATE RADIO

(Trainwreck *****/Lost Highway *****)

Now I have some idea how book reviewers felt in 1922 when **Ulysses** thumped on their desks. Where do you start with something this dense, powerful, intelligent, far-reaching and terminally unclassifiable? You could easily write a book about this album, but for the practical purposes of a monthly music magazine, it's all but unreviewable. When Taylor, who you may know of as a songwriter, most notably of *Wild Thing* and *Angel Of The Morning*, thanks Dwight Eisenhower, Alan Freed, John F Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Joe DiMaggio, Cassius Clay, an anonymous Vietnam vet and Sigmund Freud, he's not being pretentious. They make cameo appearances on various of the 16 tracks (which are numbered 2, 4, 6, 8, etc—hey, take it up with Taylor), and provide him with check points in an epic journey across recent American history, the personal not so much meeting the political as fusing with it. With duet contributions by John Prine, Lucinda Williams, Brian Kennedy and PP Arnold (there's a name I haven't seen or heard in decades), this is not an easy album, in fact I don't even know how to rate it, but Taylor has really pushed the CD envelope to the point where, all evidence so far to the contrary, DVD begins to look like it might actually be a worthwhile music medium. At least in the hands of articulate people like Taylor.

♦ From the sublime to the ridiculous? Actually, not. Celebrity albums are almost guaranteed to be dreadful but Billy Bob Thornton did, after all, start out as a musician, playing drums in various no-name Southern Rock and R&B bands, including a ZZ Top tribute trio. Though he may owe his record deal to his fame as an actor, he's made *Lost Highway*'s best, certainly most enjoyable, album, though, admittedly, this isn't saying much. Thornton brings his famed eccentricity to bear on an album, produced by Marty Stuart, with Don Helms and Barry Beckett among the musicians, that's part country, part Southern Gothic, part beat poetry. He has occasional lapses ("Angelina what's come between us? Could it be the magic and mystery of love?"), but most of his songs, notably the powerful sequence of *Walk Of Shame*, *Smoking In Bed* and *Your Blue Shadow*, plus a solid cover of Hank Williams' *Lost Highway*, make this one of the best Americana releases of the year.

♦ I put these two together because of the family connection (Thornton is married to Taylor's niece). However, I can't help but think that, even if their makers are somewhat insulated from the realities of the market, both these albums seem so totally uncalculated that making them was its own reward. I have to wonder if either Taylor or Thornton really gives much of a shit whether anyone gets, likes or buys his album. JC

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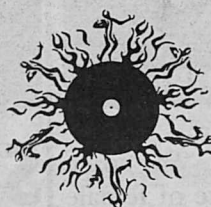
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CATHERINE BRITT DUSTY SMILES AND HEARTBREAK CURES

(self-released *****)

Ken Date observes, in his cover story on Audrey (Auld), "For some reason, Australia seems to be blessed with an imbalance of female artists: they outnumber the males by a noticeable margin and are generally much better value." So far, I've only heard three of them, but both Audrey and Britt are generally much better value than their American, let alone Australian, male counterparts. Were the 16-year old making music for her own age group, I would, of course, not be wasting my time on her—as Charles Earle succinctly remarked, if it's country it won't appeal to teenagers, and if appeals to teenagers, it won't be country—but Britt has a lot of Tanya Tucker in her, or, as Australia's maybe breakout international country star Kasey Chambers put it, "she sounds like she's 40 and gone through three marriage breakdowns." Schooled in the weekly Hillbilly Jam run by Audrey and Bill Chambers (who produced her album), Britt is a precociously talented songwriter, with six very respectable originals, notably *That Don't Bother Me*, cowritten with Kasey Chambers, but it's her voice that'll really tear you up. Britt's mature confidence, and good taste, are showcased on The Louvin Brothers' *In The Pines*, a duet with Bill Chambers of Hank Cochran's *It's Not Love (But It's Not Bad)*, Hank Williams' *Move It On Over* and Fred Eaglesmith's *Drive-In Movie* (there's also a 'hidden' version of *Big Rock Candy Mountain*). Will an Australian woman save country music? I've expressed my reservations about Chambers, but Britt is a very credible candidate (did I mention she has a serious case of the cutes?). **JC**

COWBOY COPAS • COPASETIC THE KING & STARDAY RECORDINGS 1944-60

(West Side *****)

Even more perhaps in 1937, when Bill Cox first recorded it for Vocalion, Lloyd Copas' monster 1943 King smash *Filipino Baby* has to be one of the oddest hits ever, considering that, confronted with an actual Filipino daughter-in-law, virtually the entire country audience of the time wouldn't have known whether to shit or go blind. From Blue Ridge, Ohio—he never contradicted publicists' claims that he was part Native American from Muskogee, OK, which is still given as his birthplace in most reference books—Copas, like many of early signing to Syd Nathan's Cincinnati based label, such as Grandpa Jones, the Delmore and Carlisle Brothers and Hank Penny, was on WLW's Mid-Western Hayride, but overtook better known colleagues to become King's most prolific hitmaker, scoring with *Tragic Romance*, *Breeze*, *Signed Sealed And Delivered*, *Tennessee Waltz*, *Hangman's Boogie* (featuring Merle Travis and Speedy West) and others. After a 50s slump, Copas signed with Starday in 1959 and had his biggest ever hit with *Alabam*, followed by several more successes that featured his fine guitar playing. Copas, of course, died in the same 1963 plane crash as Patsy Cline and Hawkshaw Hawkins. A recent shakeup at this Demon subsidiary may mean that this is the last in its marvellous King reissue series, and, while the music is wonderful, this one is marred by slipshod artwork that obscures almost half the track list. **JC**

JOHNNY EDSON • A SPREAD MISÈRE

(Ragweed *****)

Most of the time, however much their makers may resent being pigeonholed, albums are pretty easy to categorize, but when you get one that opens with a rockabilly version of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Prologue To The Canterbury Tales* and ends with Robert W Service's *The Shooting Of Dan McGrew*, well, in which rack would you put it, or look for it? Veteran Austin musicmaker Edson, who played the opening night at Waterloo Ice House waaay back in the day, and who fronted Dad Gum Swing long before the dreadful martini and cigar bar swing fad, provides an accurate and revealing thumbnail, "Rhythm and jive in a swing groove." Whether or not he sees it as a problem is another matter, but it seems to me that Edson is a big city musician trapped in a town too small to provide a niche for his witty, inventive, literate and idiosyncratic approach to swing, simultaneously more relaxed and more sophisticated than any of the earnest students of the idiom who jumped on the shortlived bandwagon. Nine of the 14 tracks are solo with guitar, the rest feature an eclectic variety of Jazz and Western Swing musicians such as John Mills, Floyd Domino, Dave Sanger, Cindy Cashdollar and Rich Harney, plus the unclassifiable Ponty Bone. I said it about Dad Gum Swing, and I'll say it again, Edson is cool, he's hip, he know what 'Diddie wah diddie' means, and you can tell that just from his album title, which means "a game in which all the cards are played face up." **JC**

JOE BARRY • I'M A FOOL TO CARE ROY HEAD • HEAD ON!

(Music Club *****/****)

Should one need to pick a definitive Swamp Pop ballad, there are other candidates, Rod Bernard's *This Should Go Forever* or Jivin' Gene's *Breaking Up Is Hard To Do*, but Joe Barry's version of Ted Daffan's *I'm A Fool To Care* is a true classic of the style. Barry's plaintive, Cajun accented voice (he was born Joseph Barrios) and The Vikings' archetypal piano triplets and stacked horns backing transformed Gene Autry's 40s hit into what many people initially thought was a Fats Domino record. After Smash picked it up from Floyd Soileau's Jin in 1961, *Fool* became one of the few national Swamp Pop hits, though only reaching #24 because Barry also recorded a Cajun version, *Je Suis Bêt Pour T'Aimer*, which did well regionally, undercutting the original, and though he was very consistent, on labels like Jin and Huey Meaux's Princess, he never cracked the Top 30 again. Illustrating Swamp Pop's genius for translating material from other genres into the distinctive idiom, the 15 tracks include poignant ballad versions of Lloyd Price's *Just Because*, Jimmie Rodgers' *Any Old Time*, Francis Craig Orchestra's *Beg Your Pardon*, Ernest Tubb's *You Don't Have To Be A Baby To Cry* and *Till The End Of The World*, Sonny James' *Is It Wrong (For Loving You)*, Hank Snow's *A Fool Such As I* and, of course, the title track, plus Mac Rebennack's *The Loneliest Boy In Town*, Allen Toussaint's *Come What May* and some originals.

♦ Formed in San Marcos in 1958, Roy Head & The Traits will live on as long as Texas bar bands crank out their 1965 rabblouser *Treat Her Right*, which, produced by Huey Meaux and released on Don Robey's Back Beat, made #2 in both the Pop and, as no one realized Head was white, R&B charts (the #1s were, respectively, *Yesterday* and *Papa's Got A Brand New Bag!*). Head's versatile hybrids of soul, R&B, blues, funk and country proved hard to market, but his regional stardom enabled Meaux to put out singles until the mid 70s, when Head packed it in to become a straight country artist. The 15 tracks, which include *Soul Train*, Bo Diddley's *Bring It To Jerome* and *Before You Accuse Me*, Roosevelt Sykes' *Driving Wheel*, TK Hulin's *I'm Not A Fool Any More*, Jimmy Hughes' *Neighbor, Neighbor*, BB King's *Three O'Clock Blues*, Soul Sisters' *I Can't Stand It*, Johnny Ace's *Pledging My Love*, Doug Sahm's *She's About A Mover*, Dyke & The Blazers' *Let A Woman Be A Woman*, *Let A Man Be A Man*, and a "country version" of *Treat Her Right*, suggest why Head's stage show is so legendary, and though I'm not real big on blue-eyed soul, this is about as good as it gets. **JC**

JO MILLER & HER BURLY ROUGHNECKS LIVE AND THEN SOME!

(Ranch Hand *****)

Western Swing fans will remember with affection Seattle's 'all-star cowgirl revue' Ranch Romance, featuring fiddler Barbara Lamb, sensational yodeler Lisa Theo and singer/rhythm guitarist/principal songwriter Jo Miller, which shut up shop in 1995. Well, Miller's back in business, along with Romance veterans piano accordionist Nova Karina Devonie and electric guitarist David Miles Keenan. Her so-called 'regressive country'—Miller's a dab hand at the writing and delivery of songs that sound like forgotten period gems—has evolved into hillbilly swing, complete with slap bass and minimalist (snare and hat) drums, with all Ranch Romance's style and aplomb. Though it rarely becomes apparent, nine of the 15 tracks were recorded at Seattle's Tractor Tavern (the rest at the Klingon Science Reading Room, which I only mention because I love the name), demonstrating that, like Ranch Romance, The Burly Roughnecks are a terrific live act. A truly delightful album, though I do have one quibble; the rather odd song credits, which list things like "*You Ain't Ready* (from the Flamingos)" and "*Skull & Crossbones* (from Sparkle Moore)", whatever that's supposed to mean, give the unfortunate impression that *A Lover's Question* is an original, which might irritate those who remember the great Clyde McPhatter. **JC**

THE STUMBLEWEEDS • PICKIN' & SINNIN'

(Rawk *****)

Freshness was the word I was looking for as I groped with the rather fanciful (inasmuch as I obviously have no direct experience) concept of this Massachusetts honkytonk/rockabilly five piece sounding like a band that's just about to win 1st Prize in a 50s radio barndance talent contest. Freshness isn't a quality all bands necessarily exhibit even during their first flush, but The Stumbleweeds seem to sparkle with sheer delight in finding that this thing actually works, and people really like it. Fronted by Lynette Lenker (whose brother Roy leads The Spurs), the band really captures the 50s sound, Lenker herself often reminiscent of Jean Shepard, but, apart from Fuzzy Owens' *Slowly But Surely*, done, like Merle Haggard & Bonnie Owens, as a duet, Patsy Cline's *Honky Tonk Merry Go Round* and Wanda Jackson's *Wasted*, most of the songs are the work of guitarist Tom Umberger, pedal steel player Chris DeBarge or dog house bass man Mike Feudale, though you might well think, for instance, that you'd heard Buck Owens & Rose Maddox sing Umberger's *The Marriage Song*. Combining a retro sound with original material in the classic style is not a recipe that always works, but when it does—well, treating everything that's happened in Nashville since about 1958 as irrelevant is a sure way to my heart. **JC**

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CHARLES EARLE'S B-Sides

THE CMA ADMITS IT

(SORT OF)...

SLOGAN WAS A BUST

You most likely heard about the advertising campaign that was to be launched this fall by the County Music Association. In an attempt to revitalize a genre that's seemingly losing fans faster these days than heavy metal's Anthrax, the CMA hired out of town spin doctors to bring fans back to the fold. At the heart of the campaign was a slogan that has been lampooned heavily—not least in this column—in recent months. It is as follows:

COUNTRY MUSIC. ADMIT IT. YOU LOVE IT

♦ For a while there, everyone who covers music was taking a shot at this inane tag line. Some of the interpretations were absolutely hilarious, and most ultimately poked fun at how awful Nashville's main export is these days.

♦ This was certainly embarrassing for the folks at the CMA. The slogan was the centerpiece of a \$2.25 million ad campaign, and all the beatings this simple little turn of phrase took in the press made the whole thing seem exponentially worse every week. Most of us assumed that once the billboards went up, they would be the butt of every joke in town. Nobody with any musical savvy would take the CMA seriously. And then the world changed on September 11, and things like trying to round up more listeners for country music suddenly seemed extremely trivial. As it turns out, the CMA benefited from being under the radar for a while. With the press ignoring them completely, they regrouped and decided to avert a huge marketing glitch. Thus, when you see ads from the CMA over the next few months, they will reportedly carry the following slogan:

AMERICA LOVES ITS COUNTRY

♦ It appears that the folks at the CMA looked at their awful slogan and opted for the easy way out in troubled times: they wrapped themselves in the flag. This slogan is safe and easy, and it gets the egg off the CMA's face for the 'admit it' debacle.

♦ But the thing most people wonder is why the slogan existed in the first place. It's as if the CMA thought there were millions of closet shitkickers out there who liked Toby Keith, but were too embarrassed to admit it to their friends. This is obviously absurd—America has no shame whatsoever when it comes to popular culture, and I can offer up a thousand examples. If the dumbed-down general populous wanted to love the swill coming off of Music Row, they would wallow in it publicly. Absolutely nothing and nobody would stop them.

♦ So, the moronic slogan was wisely abandoned. The CMA issued a statement saying that the campaign had been put off. Then the new patriotic version was trotted out. But while saying that America loves its country music seems like a hard sentiment pick on, it really isn't. All you have to do is look at the numbers over the last eight years to see that a lot fewer Americans love their country these days, and then the new slogan even seems pretty dumb. When will these people wake up and realize that it's about good records rather than slogans and marketing?

HUDDLED MASSES?

Speaking of country music in the era of terrorism, here's an interesting fact for you. While most of us saw the enormously successful pop/rock concert for New York last month, few bothered to pay attention to the country version. Boasting a roster of talent plucked right from the top of the country charts, the Nashville show had plenty of empty seats. And that's sad considering that thousands of tickets were given away to the local fire department and police department employees. In 1993, a similar show would have sold out in two or three days. This year it was no more than a modest success. Go figure.

CHANGING FACE OF NASHVILLE JOURNALISM

Over the years, I've poked a lot of fun at my music critic colleagues here in Nashville, mainly because most of them forgot that critic is the root word of criticism. Country music writers during the 90s turned a blind eye to a business in rapid financial and artistic decline, and I think they deserve a portion of the blame.

♦ In recent years, however, our local daily paper hired a couple of guys who come pretty close to telling the whole truth. Craig Havigurst and Peter Cooper have stepped up talled bullshit on Music Row more often than their predecessors at the paper ever did.

♦ I was reminded of this when *The Tennessean* ran a piece by former staff writer Tom Roland, now an LA freelancer. In it, Roland, who was often far too kind to The Row, examined the careers of several country artists who all began to achieve success in 1991. His initial point was that in a very significant year in the rise of country music, a number of artists broke big, but only a few have hung around. This was certainly a valid assertion, though not terribly insightful considering that a similar statement could be made about most any given year for many genres of music. But Roland went on to offer the following possible explanations for why some of the artists ultimately failed:

♦ "Some were difficult to work with. Some were unwilling to do all of the work required of an artist. Some piled up too much debt and made bad decision trying to pay it off. Some were involved with associates who were not suited for the job. Some did not survive shifts in public tastes."

♦ Nowhere in that long list of excuses is there anything about record labels that bailed out on artists too early. Nowhere is there anything about labels that abandoned talented performers due to bad decisions that involved following trends. Everything is put on the artists. When we're talking about The Remingtons, Little Texas and Billy Dean, I'd say Roland was probably right. But considering that some of the folks on the list were Pam Tillis, Hal Ketchum, Sammy Kershaw and Ray Kennedy, I'd say that the labels deserved a little more credit for screwing the pooch.

♦ Oh well, at least the new guys in town don't glad hand The Row like Roland is guilty of doing. I guess Nashville really has improved in a few small ways.

AND THE WINNER IS...

The CMA Awards are scheduled for November 7 on CBS. Here are my fearless predictions:

Entertainer of the Year

As much as it pains me to say this, and I mean it really actually hurts, I think Tim McGraw will romp home with the victory. He's had a big year, and voters always seem to judge this category by sales and exposure.

Male Vocalist of the Year

This seems like a dead heat between McGraw and Toby Keith, which seems like choosing between a hernia or a prostate exam to me. But I'm going to say that Keith picks up the win here.

Female Vocalist of the Year

I suspect that the breakthrough year by Sara Evans is enough to get voters to go her way. Faith, Trisha, Martina and Lee Ann have all won their share of awards before and Evans has been at it for a long time.

Horizon Award (best new artist)

Jamie O'Neal had a big year. Keith Urban is a great talent forced to do country-pop in order to eat and pay bills, but he did have a couple of huge hits in 2001. However, I'm picking bluegrass newcomers Nickel Creek. It may be going out on a limb to think CMA voters have a conscience, but they just might.

Vocal Group of the Year

Once again, I'm stepping pretty far out there to take Nickel Creek over dinosaurs like Alabama and Diamond Rio.

Vocal Duo of the Year

Brooks and Dung return to the winner's circle after yielding to Montgomery Gentry last year. And the crowd goes mild...

Single of the Year

I'm in a gambling mood, so why not? I'll take *I Am a Man of Constant Sorrow* from the **Oh Brother, Where Art Thou?** soundtrack. If this song wins and Nickel Creek picks up two awards, we'll have sleazy record execs hanging out at bluegrass clubs within the week.

Album of the Year

I fear that the success of Sara Evans and her sell-out pop album may push her to victory. However, I am optimistically going to take the **Oh Brother Where Art Thou?** soundtrack here. It sold a ton of copies and was the surprise success of the year.

Song of the Year

My pick is Evans' *Born To Fly*. It has the feel of the type of crap that usually wins this award. It sounds important, even though it really isn't. However, I'm cheering for *Murder on Music Row*.

Vocal Event of the Year

My best guess is the Alison Krauss/Gillian Welch/Emmylou Harris collaboration from **Oh Brother**. That's a lot of hip star power. However, this one could go to just about any of the nominated songs.

Musician of the Year

I'm going to guess Dann Huff, though I can't figure out why we give awards to people who make all of the records sound the same.

Video of the Year

I think *Born To Fly* by Evans is a lock here. But maybe that's because it's the only one of the five I actually remember seeing. God, CMT sucks these days.

Charles Earle can be reached at koufax65@home.com until Excite is shut down

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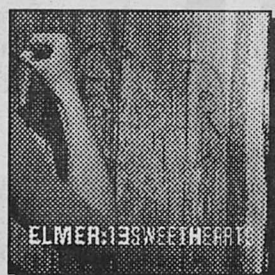
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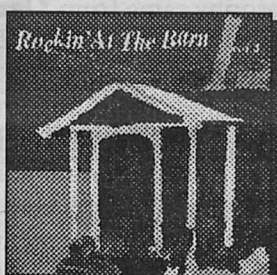
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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Making lists can be a moderately entertaining parlor game or time killer on road trips, but putting them into print rarely pays off, fraught with possibilities to, as Joe Horn summarized it, "Forget and regret." I'm sure the *Austin American-Statesman's* **Michael Corcoran** put a good deal of time and thought into his 'The Texas Top 40; The Greatest Lone Star Recordings Of All Time,' but all he did was mildly irritate just about everybody who read it and spark a few discussions. Of course, this may have been his intent, in which case, fair enough.

♦ I'm not about to counter with an alternate Texas Top 40—though if anybody's willing to pay for one, I can have it ready by noon tomorrow—but I do have a few specific bones to pick with Corcoran. The main one is that neither **Terry Allen** nor **Butch Hancock** made his cut, not even in 'Regrettable Omissions,' which included Destiny's fucking Child, for God's sake. Allen's *Wolfman Of Del Rio* would be my #1, closely followed by a Hancock song. Which one? Ah, that's not so easy. Guess I'll just go for the obvious, *If You Were A Bluebird*. Corcoran finesses **Jimmie Dale Gilmore** by including **Joe Ely's** version of *Dallas*, but I'd give it back to Gilmore and, still killing two birds with one stone, have Ely with David Halley's *Hard Livin'*.

♦ With only 40 slots, I guess I might, reluctantly, have to let go of **Blaze Foley's** *If I Could Only Fly* (anyway, I prefer *Faded Loves And Memories*) and any number of other classic Texas recordings, but any and all lacunae aside, Corcoran's choices can still use finetuning; for Bob Wills' *New San Antonio Rose* substitute *Faded Love*, for Buddy Holly's ghastly *True Love Ways*, just about anything else he ever recorded, use Jimmy Heap & The Melody Masters' original *Wild Side Of Life* rather than Hank Thompson's cover, move Freddie King's *Going Down* up from #36 to #16, dropping Marty Robbins' *El Paso* from #16 to, well, let's just drop it and put in Don Walser doing Hoyle Nix's tad more authentic *Big Ball In Cowtown*.

♦ When I say people would be mildly irritated by Corcoran's list, one exception might be **Jimmy LaFave**, who's in the 'Regrettable Omissions' for his version of *Walk Away Renee*, which could well be interpreted as an egregious slam. If he's not going to make the Top 40, I guess it might as well be not for one of his own songs, but he'd make my Top 40 with, um, *Desperate Men Do Desperate Things*.

♦ Now here's the kind of thing you won't find in just any old music magazine. Roy Head's version of *Neighbor, Neighbor* (see Reviews) stirred a somewhat dubious sounding memory, but sure enough, it really was recorded by **Maya Angelou**, on a 1957 album called **Miss Calypso**, which had a wonderfully cheesy cover featuring the then 27-year old in a minuscule red dress gyrating in a patently artificial jungle. For some reason, the distinguished poet rarely mentions this episode in her career.

♦ I didn't get a review copy of London/Sire's **Good Rockin' Tonight: The Legacy Of Sun Records** but alert subscriber Joe Specht of Abeline is curious to see if other writers pick up on a few problems. The most obvious is Bryan Ferry's *Don't Be Cruel*, which Elvis recorded for RCA. More subtle are Chris Isaak's version of Jimmy Wakely's *It Wouldn't Be The Same Without You*, which Elvis custom cut in 1954 as a present for his mother before signing with Sun, and Bob Dylan's of Bob Luman's Imperial hit *Red Cadillac & A Black Mustache*. Warren Smith did cut it for Sun in 1957, but his cover wasn't released until 1973, on the British **Put Your Cat Clothes On** compilation.

♦ To promote their first album in 25 years (reviewed last month), and making their first live appearance in almost as long, **Greezy Wheels** performed at Waterloo Records, which, as it has for countless such in-stores, hung out a banner announcing the event. However, for the first time in the store's long history, the banner was stolen. A tribute of sorts, but I can't help feeling that every group that's ever played a Waterloo in-store will now be wondering why nobody stole *their* banner.

♦ When *God Bless America* became popular, **Woody Guthrie** responded by writing *God Blessed America For Me*. Later on, he came up with a better chorus and title, and, 'doing their bit,' just about every folksinger, singer-songwriter and Americana artist seems to be putting *This Land Is Your Land* into the set, often with newly written 'topical' (Gawd help us) verses. However, as more and more corporations seize a heaven sent opportunity to lay off workers, and unemployment climbs into the hundreds of thousands, I wonder how many of those artists would have the balls to sing Guthrie's last verse:

"One sunny morning in the shadow of the steeple
By the Relief Office I saw my people
As they stood hungry, I stood there wondering
If this land was made for you and me."

♦ I lost track of the number of riled-up people who forwarded a story in the *Austin American-Statesman* about **Maggie Mae's** plan to make bands put up a deposit in order to get booked, getting it back only if they draw well enough. Scott Hartzog says he was told his band Dr Zog would have to put up a \$500 deposit in order to play the 6th Street club. "I was in LA when clubs started that 'pay for play' policy, and it was one of the most sickening things I've ever seen. Basically, it turns musicians into salesmen, and they'd stop strangers on the street trying to sell tickets... all it does is give gigs to rich kids who can afford to pay the clubs." And you wonder why we left Austin?

♦ To be honest, I've never actually heard **Prairie Home Companion**, but reader Hank Jones passed on a remark which seems to show that Garrison Keilor is on the same page as us. Interviewing singer/songwriter **Stephanie Davis**, who'd been a staff songwriter at a Music Row publishing company, he mentioned that she lived in Nashville for a while, but went back to Montana because "she couldn't stand that factory job."

♦ Which grizzled country veteran do you think told *Billboard*, "It's weird how quick you can feel old-fashioned. But my statement is this: I am not being bitter. I'm taking my place as an older artist that has to know that the dance has a beginning and the dance has an end, and I'm very proud of the mark that I have been fortunate enough to make. I will now go to whatever God has planned for me next." Well, actually, that chunk of philosophy came from **Garth Brooks**. He's 38. Kinda nice to know that New/Hot/Young Country's revolving door spares no one.

♦ That one came from Bill Miller's *Blue Chip Report* (www.clubnashville.com) as did the following fascinating piece of Nashville background. I've left it pretty much the way Miller ran it, but, for the sake of those of you fortunate enough to live outside the reach of its baleful influence, I should point out that the key words are "Southern Baptist." The difference between these would-be theocrats and the Taliban is that Southern Baptists haven't yet been able to gain control of anything except school boards. On the other hand, try teaching evolution in a Texas school and see where it gets you.

♦ If you're sitting behind the board at a radio station, the name of **Belmont University** may not ring a bell, but Belmont is one of the big reasons you're playing country music. For the rest of the world, it may be the single biggest reason why this isn't your daddy's country music. The Southern Baptist supported university created a music business school a couple of decades or so ago. Now called **The Mike Curb School of Music Business**, the program has grown enormously over the past ten years, supplying a constant source of free labor for the industry through its internship program. It's no coincidence that the drinkin' and cheatin' side of country music faded as Belmont's influence rose, and that country simultaneously took a pop edge and more youthful focus. Other major factors came into play, but the Belmont mindset has been a catalyst in the makeover.

♦ Belmont's interns often wind up with paying gigs on music row as a result of the connections they make. A large number of today's top artists, including Trisha Yearwood, Brad Paisley and Lee Ann Womack, are products of the program. More importantly, Belmont alumni pull the power strings in the background of Nashville's star making machinery, serving in the executive offices of record labels and management and publishing companies.

♦ If Miller's right, Belmont's influence might explain the hideous line dancing phenomenon—Southern Baptists have a real problem with contact dancing. As the joke goes, "Why don't Southern Baptists have sex standing up? Because they're afraid people might see them and think they're dancing."

♦ Thinking of "not your daddy's country," I got a press release about **SHARE** (Songs of Hope, Awareness & Recovery) telling me that, "Nashville music industry and drug and alcohol treatment professionals are coming together to produce an album of Nashville music programmed to bring attention to the problems of alcohol and drug abuse." I like the way it specifies "Nashville music" rather than country, which, of course, lends itself rather more readily to the opposite theme. Hightone's **An Empty Glass** was a good start, but you could put together a truly epic box set of country drinking songs. My first instinct would be to call it **Wine Me Up**, but, in the interest of pissing off the Higher Power crowd, I kinda like **Milk Of Mercy** or **The One True Friend**.

♦ More new FARsters, bringing the grand total up to 95: **Mark Taylor**, *Roots*, WVUD, Newark, DE; **Steve Jarrett**, *Sunday Morning Coffeehouse*, KOPN, Columbia, MO; **Theo Oldenburg**, *Country Cooking*, Radio Winschoten, Holland; **Mia Karnatz**, *A Show Named Joe*, KCSN, Northridge, CA. I'm wondering whether to call it a day when it hits 100.

+ SMOKEY DACUS

For all that he was Bob Wills & The Texas Playboys' original drummer, joining in Tulsa in 1935, playing on such classic recordings as *Maiden's Prayer*, *San Antonio Rose* and *Steel Guitar Rag*, leaving in 1940 when Wills moved to Hollywood, it's hard to find out much more about William Eschol Dacus, who died on October 9th, age 90. Though not the first drummer in country music, Dacus was a pioneer who, as Charles Townsend said in his biography of Wills, played an important role in western swing and country music history, "the first time drums were successfully used in a string band." Dacus helped create the solid dance beat Wills was after, and his drumming "moved the band further from traditional fiddle or string band music and even closer to jazz." Later in life, Dacus was General Manager of KAMO, a radio station owned by Playboys steel guitarist Leon McAuliffe, in his hometown, Rogers, Arkansas.



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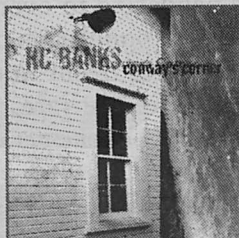
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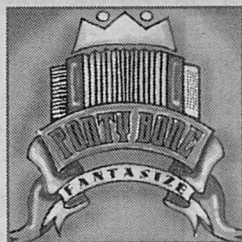
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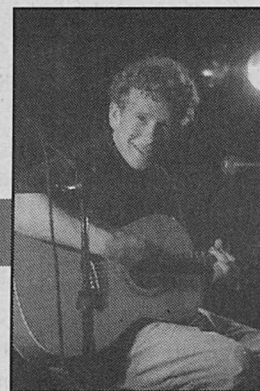
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THE LEFT SIDE OF THE DIAL

So, last month I was going to devote this space to providing a context to the cover story on Roz & Howard Larman. The crux was that, having clocked in more than 30 unpaid years on-air, they stand out even among those dedicated people, many of whom, I'm proud to say, are FAR reporters, who still practice the all but lost art of freeform radio, real DJs playing real music for real people. The Larman's insist it's not about them but about the music, but, tying in with the release of **FolkScene Vol III**, I wanted to acknowledge their activism in making the music available. Roz & Howard may prefer to downplay their role, but, to paraphrase the venerable conundrum, if an album is recorded in the forest and nobody hears it, does it really make a sound?

◆ However, I ran into two problems. The purely practical one was that I ran out of space and really wanted to get Friends Of American Roots Music and the Cool Indie Record Store guide up and running. Incidentally, thanks to the web magic of AustinAmericana's Bill Groll, FARM is now accepting members at www.friendsofamericanrootsmusic.org. It doesn't cost a dime to join and there are already a bunch of labels, etc offering benefits. What have you got to lose?

◆ The other snag with my encomium to the selfless dedication of the Larman's and their like was that halfway through, it suddenly occurred to me that they'd all jump at the chance to become highly paid and respected professionals, as long as they could go on playing the same music the same way. Well, there has to be a catch. In real life, freeform DJs are almost always unpaid volunteers and, for the sake of the music, they all too often have to put up with an incredible amount of bullshit. Many, if not most, public, college and community stations regard their volunteers as utterly expendable, regardless of how popular their shows may be (even as measured in cold cash at pledge drive time), and, without generalizing from my own experience, junior colleges are notoriously the worst. As one experienced jock told me, "Junior college radio has all public radio's disadvantages with none of commercial radio's advantages—and vice versa."

◆ That the Larman's, who now have no less than five outlets, from Boston to New Zealand, could be unceremoniously dumped after 30 years (you can find the whole story at www.acousticmusic.net/folkscene, KPFA would doubtless tell it differently, but fuck 'em), graphically illustrates how fragile freeform roots radio is. Your favorite program or DJ could go off the air at any moment and, even if you happen to know the DJ personally, you may never find out why.

◆ Mind you, the Larman's were on a Pacifica station. Though the media has paid little heed to the goings on within the 'community' network, you may still have caught wind of union busting, lockouts, mass firings, censorship, demonstrations and the like. Here in Texas, the Houston affiliate, KPFT, has gone head-to-head with Houston's commercial country schlock stations, under the slogan 'The Sound of Texas' (ie all Pat Green, all the time). Which reminds me, I really need to look at how 'Texas Music' somehow got to mean Green et al. I'll get back to you next month on that one.

JO

AUDREY

For all that she goes by her first name, an affectation that always makes me nervous, Ms Auld has knocked me out twice, once with **Bill & Audrey: Looking Back To See** (reviewed #29/188), on which she and Bill Chambers demonstrated that, all evidence to the contrary, country duets are not a lost art, at least not in their native Australia, and again with her solo debut **The Fallen** (#44/133), both available on Reckless Records and highly recommended. So I wanted to mark her first visit to the US, on which she'll mainly be playing guest and opening sets, though she does have her own happy hour show at Jovita's on the 9th.

◆ Problem is, I don't know jack about Audrey's context, but, thanks to FAR I have a worldwide network of 'assets,' so I called on the Oz contingent for help. Eddie White (*The Cosmic Cowboy Cafe*, 2RRR, Sydney, Australia) sent me what I was hoping for, a quotable quote: "Australian country music is basically fucked. It's either slavish impersonation of the worst of Trashville or really hokey bush ballads pandering to overt sentimentality for a rural lifestyle that only about 0.01% of the population or their ancestors ever experienced. Whilst we have a great wealth of talent in the form of players, great singers/interpreters in the country genre are rare. Audrey is an exception. She has a great love and understanding of the genre from Hank Williams to Fred Eaglesmith. I reckon she sings a bit flat at times but as she's a good sort I'll forgive her."

◆ However, Ken Date (*The Cool Country Lounge*, 2RRR) came back with an answer so detailed that rather than try and draw on it, I'll just pass the microphone to him. Take it away Ken:

◆ "The Australian country music scene has developed over the last few decades almost in parallel with that of the US. However the prevailing tradition here has been the 'bush ballad,' which is still highly regarded as the 'purest' form of country music. There have been ongoing debates about American influence, with very strong resistance in some quarters, and this has manifested itself in a style of country music that, generally speaking, has steered well clear of honky tonk, with its concentration on drinking and cheating, in favour of something that can be identified as uniquely Australian through songs with bush themes and/or that honour local customs and traditions. An interesting sidelight to this is that relatively few bands actually use a pedal steel (even fewer use a piano). It's no accident that one of the biggest selling songs of all-time, and Australian music's first true overseas hit, *A Pub With No Beer*, enjoyed its success because it embraced one of our finest traditions. When drinking is mentioned in an Australian country song, it is generally not from the wowserish aversion to addiction point of view so common in the American form.

◆ As in the US, the last ten years or so have seen a resurgence in country music's fortunes followed by a gradual but steady decline in the latter half of the 90s, although perhaps not as markedly as in the US. There is a small group of mainstream artists, selling comparatively large numbers of CDs, who rely very much on a pop-ish style of country. However, even the worst of them hasn't really plumbed the depths that some of their American counterparts have reached, although one or two have come perilously close.

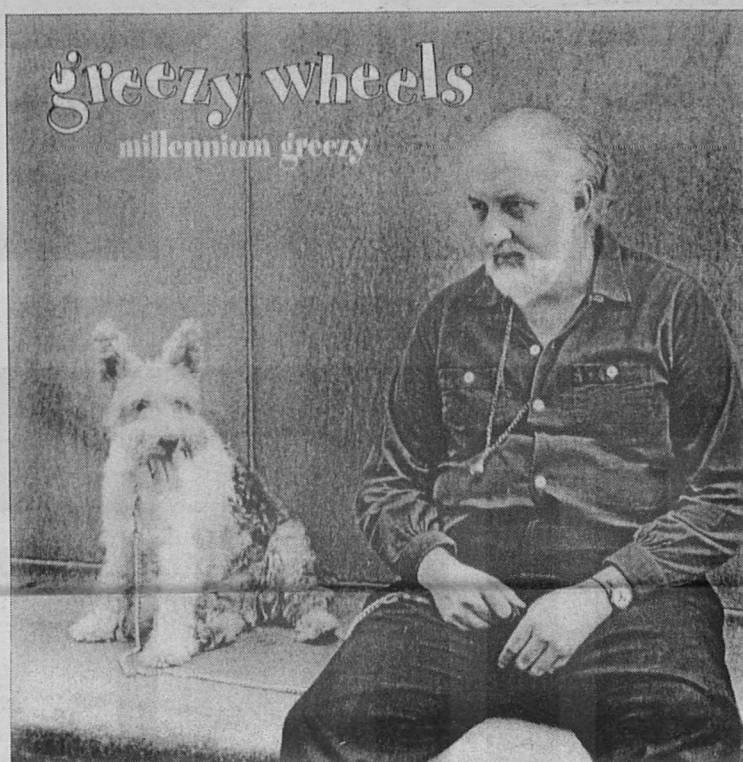
◆ For some reason, Australia seems to be blessed with an imbalance of female artists: they outnumber the males by a noticeable margin and are generally much better value. Audrey fits into the scene as an independent artist who is simply 'too country' for the mainstream set. She describes herself as a modern woman singing country songs, which is a lot more honest and perceptive than some of the others, with major label contracts, who don't seem to have any idea what they're doing. Although she has sometimes struggled a bit on the fringes, she has worked extremely hard in the last few years to establish herself as an artist who knows what she wants to do and how to go about doing it. I don't think I have ever struck an artist who is more committed to their craft and has such a clear idea about the direction they wish to take. She has a sassy, cheeky and sometimes coarse on-stage manner that is endearing, entertaining and entirely natural. Like all good artists, she surrounds herself with good players and she imbues her songs with the honesty and heart-on-the-sleeve openness that is such a part of the country tradition.

◆ Her work has started to pay off in that she was one of the performers at this year's country music awards in Tamworth (and virtually the only one who sang a real country song) and **The Fallen** was nominated for Best Country Album at this year's Australian Recording Industry Awards (our equivalent of the Grammys), which is almost unheard of for an independent release. Also, **The Fallen** attracted very favourable comment from non-country music reviewers in the press (which I always take as a good sign). She has started working on an album of duets and the first single, Hank Williams' *I'm So Lonesome I Could Cry*, which she sings with a New Zealand singer, Camille Te Nahu, has got rave reviews from everyone who's heard it.

◆ Audrey may not be our biggest selling artist but she is one of our best. Don't miss the chance to see her if she comes anywhere near you."

Ken Date

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 ----- Sippie Wallace † 1986
 2nd - Charlie Walker • 1926 • Collin Co, TX
 ----- JD Souther • 1945 • Detroit, MI
 3rd - Sonny Rhodes • 1940 • Smithville, TX
 ----- Hugh Moffatt • 1948 • Fort Worth, TX
 4th - Delbert McClinton • 1940 • Lubbock, TX
 5th - Etta Moten • 1901 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Roy Rogers • 1911 • Cincinnati, OH
 ----- Ike Turner • 1931 • Clarksdale, MS
 ----- Gram Parsons • 1946 • Winterhaven FL
 ----- Johnny Horton † 1960
 6th - Stonewall Jackson • 1932 • Tabor City, NC
 ----- Frenchie Burke • 1933 • Kaplan, LA
 ----- Guy Clark • 1941 • Monahans, TX
 ----- Doug Sahm • 1941 • San Antonio, TX
 7th - AP Carter † 1960
 ----- Black Ace † 1972
 8th - Ivory Joe Hunter † 1974
 11th Sippie Wallace • 1898 • Houston, TX
 ----- Mose Allison • 1927 • Tippecanoe, MS
 ----- LaVern Baker • 1929 • Chicago, IL
 ----- Hank Garland • 1930 • Cowpens, NC
 ----- Dave Alvin • 1955 • Los Angeles, CA
 ----- Beau Jocque • 1957 • Basile, LA
 12th Bukka White • 1906 • Houston, MS
 ----- Booker T Jones • 1944 • Memphis, TN
 ----- Neil Young • 1945 • Toronto, Canada
 ----- James Intveld • 1959 • Los Angeles, CA
 13th Ray Wylie Hubbard • 1946 • Hugo, OK
 14th Buckwheat • 1947 • Lafayette, LA
 ----- Joe Gracey • 1951 • Fort Worth, TX
 ----- Tex Edwards • 1954 • Dallas, TX
 15th Wes Reeves • 1933 • La Mesa, TX
 ----- Clyde McPhatter • 1933 • Durham, NC
 16th Bois-Sec Ardoin • 1916 • Duralde, LA
 ----- Earl Bollick • 1919 • Hickory, NC
 ----- Shirley Bergeron • 1933 • Church Point, LA
 ----- WC Clark • 1939 • Austin, TX
 ----- Albert Collins † 1993
 17th Gene Clark • 1941 • Tipton, MO
 ----- Black Ardoin • 1946 • Duralde, LA
 18th Hank Ballard • 1936 • Detroit, MI
 ----- Leeann Atherton • 1955 • Birmingham, AL
 ----- Doug Sahm † 1999
 19th Katy Moffatt • 1950 • Fort Worth, TX

20th Eck Robertson • 1887 • Amarillo, TX
 ----- Duane Allman • 1946 • Nashville, TN
 21st Lloyd Glenn • 1909 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Jean Shepard • 1933 • Paul's Valley, OK
 ----- Dr John • 1941 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Cecil Brower † 1965
 22nd Hoagy Carmichael
 ----- • 1899 • Bloomington, IN
 ----- Whistling Alex Moore • 1899 • Dallas, TX
 ----- Ernie Cacaes • 1911 • Rockport, TX
 ----- Angela Strehli • 1945 • Lubbock, TX
 ----- Charles Mann • 1945 • Welsh, LA
 23rd Scott Joplin • 1868 • Bowie Co, TX
 ----- Tyree Glenn • 1919 • Corsicana, TX
 ----- Tommy Allsup • 1931 • Tulsa, OK
 ----- Johnny Degollado • 1935 • Austin, TX
 ----- Spade Cooley † 1969
 ----- Big Joe Turner † 1985
 ----- Roy Acuff † 1992
 24th Buster Pickens † 1964
 26th Curley Mays • 1938 • Maxie, LA
 27th Werly Fairburn • 1924 • Folsom, LA
 ----- Jimi Hendrix • 1942 • Seattle, WA
 ----- Charline Arthur † 1987
 ----- Lotte Lenya † 1981
 28th Cecil Brower • 1914 • Bellevue, TX
 ----- Bruce Channel • 1940 • Jacksonville, TX
 ----- Libbi Bosworth • 1964 • Galveston, TX
 ----- Wanna Coffman † 1991
 29th Merle Travis • 1917 • Rosewood, KY
 ----- Joe Falcon † 1965
 ----- Ray Smith † 1979
 30th Fred 'Papa' Calhoun • 1904 • Chico, TX
 ----- Walter Mouton • 1938 • Scott, LA
 ----- Jim Patton • 1950 • Alton, IL
 ----- Jeannie Kendall • 1954 • St Louis, MO

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**Thursdays, 10pm-midnight
FRONT YARD SESSIONS**