3rd COAST MUSIC

WILLIE NILE

#197/286 JUNE 2013

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ISSUE OF 3rd COAST MUSIC

FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #166

ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS

REVIEWS ✻✻✻✻✻ (or not)

MARTÍ BROM • PAUL FLAATA

BILL KIRCHEN • DAYNA KURTZ

SHANNON McNALLY

CHIP TAYLOR • ERIC TAYLOR

TOWNES VAN ZANDT

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DURING MAY 2013

#1 Slaid Cleaves: Still Fighting The War

(Music Road) *GM/*GS/*JM/*LMG/*RF/*TF/*TR/*WR

2 **Yvette Landry: No Man's Land** (Soko) *BH/*BL/*KF/*RC
3 **Eric Brace & Peter Cooper: The Comeback Album** (Red Beet) *EW/*JW/*RA/*RH
4 **Jerry Miller: New Road Under My Wheels** (Signature Sounds) *PGS/*RS/*SC
5 **Patty Griffin: American Kid** (New West) *JB/*MB
6 **The Carper Family: Old Fashioned Gal** (self) *CP/*TB
7= **HalleyAnna** (Cheatham Street) *DA
Luke Winslow-King: The Coming Tide (Bloodshot) *DF/*DG
8 **Wayne Hancock: Ride** (Bloodshot)
9= **Hot Club Of Cowtown: Rendezvous In Rhythm** (Gold Strike) *AH/*KR
Hot Texas Swing Band: 'Bout Time (self) *ATC/*LB
10= **Lisa Biales: Singing In My Soul** (Big Song Music) *MF
Willie Nelson & Family: Let's Face The Music And Dance (Legacy)
11= **Shannon McNally: Small Town Talk** (Sacred Sumac) *OO/*TJ
Shinyribs: Gulf Coast Museum (Nine Mile) *MM
VA: Let Us In Americana; Songs By Paul McCartney... For Linda (Reviver) *AG/*FS
12 **David Olney: Predicting The Past** (Rootsy.Nu [Sweden]) *AOM
13 **The Boxcar Lilies: Sugar Shack** (self) *AA/*MN
14 **Deadstring Brothers: Cannery Row** (Bloodshot) *BB
15= **Little Faith: Shelter** (self) *DC/*KP
VA: Joel Savoy's Honky Tonk Merry-Go-Round (Valcour) *JF/*KC
16= **Steve Earle & The Dukes: The Low Highway** (New West) *MW
John Fogerty: Wrote A Song For Everyone (Vanguard) *N&T
Ruth Moody: These Wilder Things (True North)
Eric Taylor: Studio 10 (Blue Ruby) *RJ
17 **Della Mae: This World Oft Can Be** (Rounder)
18= **Ashley Monroe: Like A Rose** (WB) *DS
The Steel Wheels: No More Rain (self)
19= **The Del Lords: Elvis Club** (self)
Jason Isbell: Southeastern (Thirty Tigers) *TL
20 **Howlin' Brothers: Howl** (Ready Made) *SG
21= **Dawes: Stories Don't End** (Preminum) *GRR
David Francey: So Say We All (Laker/Red House)
The Good Family: The Good Family Album (Latent) *BS
I See Hawks In LA: Mystery Drug (Blue Rose)
Massy Ferguson: Victory & Ruins (Spark & Shine) *CF
Don Rigsby: Doctor's Orders (Rebel) *RW
Leroy Stagger: Truth Be Sold (Gold Lake) *JR

*XX = DJ's Album of the Month, see chart IDs at tcmnradio.com/far

TOWNES VAN ZANDT
High, Low And In Between
The Late, Great Townes Van Zandt

(Omnivore ✲✲✲✲✲)

First thing I did after hearing **Live At The Old Quarter, Houston** in 1977, was to make a personal odyssey of tracking down every other album Townes Van Zandt had ever recorded. Which, appropriately, took almost ten years of scouring record stores to complete, mainly because two LPs proved to be truly elusive, even in the US, let alone the UK. They were, as you may have surmised, **High, Low And In Between** (Tomato, 1972) and **The Late, Great Townes Van Zandt** (Tomato, 1972). I finally found a copy of the latter in 1986, for 25¢, in Pittsburg. Life might have been somewhat easier if I'd been hunting for them as CDs, starting in the late 80s and through the 90s, indeed both albums were once on a single CD (Capitol, 1996), while Tomato and Charly [UK] have periodically reissued them, though it's been a good ten years since the last time for either label. So, in case you are a newish convert on a quest similar to the one I, and I'm sure many others, once undertook, or a Zandtanista who needs to replace a copy of either or both, or, which is not altogether unlikely, one who needs, needs I tell you, every version of every Van Zandt album ever released, here again are the two that eluded me for so long. While both are routinely described as "classic," even "perfect," **High, Low & In Between**, with *To Live Is To Fly* as its Greatest Hit, suffers by comparison with **The Late, Great Townes Van Zandt** as the latter includes *No Lonesome Tune*, *Pancho & Lefty* and *If I Needed You*, though against that, the former is pure Van Zandt while the latter has three covers, Guy Clark's *Don't Let the Sunshine Fool Ya*, Hank Williams' *Honky Tonkin'* and Lawton Williams' *Fraulein*, plus *Heavenly Houseboat Blues*, Van Zandt's only cowrite, with Susanna Clark. However **The Late Great** also has *Silver Ships Of Andilar*, perhaps the best example of what Van Zandt meant when, in **Heartworn Highways**, he remarked about his songs, "nobody knows what they mean, not even me." **JC**

BILL KIRCHEN • Seeds And Stems

(Proper ✲✲✲✲)

Not billed as such, but this is pretty much the Greatest Hits Revisited, new versions of numbers that go back to Kirchen's first recordings with Commander Cody & The Lost Planet Airmen, Cody/Billy Farlow's *Down To Seeds And Stems Again*, perhaps the saddest country song ever written, and Kirchen's signature number, *Hot Rod Lincoln*, in a version only 22 seconds shorter than that on **Hot Rod Lincoln Live!** (1997), from **Lost In The Ozone** (1971) with Kirchen/Farlow's *Semi-Truck* and Kirchen/Blackie Farrell's *Mama Hated Diesels* from **Hot Licks, Cold Steel** (1972) and Farlow/Kirchen's *Too Much Fun* from **Live From Deep In The Heart Of Texas** (1974). There are also a couple, Farrell's *Rockabilly Funeral* and Kirchen/Cody's *Truck Stop At The End Of The World*, from a post-Airmen Cody album, **Let's Rock** (1986). Moving on to Kirchen's solo career, we get *Tell Me The Reason* from **Tombstone Every Mile** (1994), *Womb To The Tomb* and *Swing Fever* from **Have Love, Will Travel** (1996) and *Flip Flop* from **Raise A Ruckus** (1999), which leaves Dylan's *It Takes A Lot To Laugh, It Takes A Train To Cry* and Bill & Louise's *Talkin' About Chicken*. Recorded during a UK tour, with Jack O'Dell drums and Maurice Cridlin bass, plus pianist Austin DeLeone, formerly of Pub Rock pioneers Eggs Over Easy, who brings Fats Domino, Professor Longhair and Count Basie into *Hot Rod Lincoln*'s "pulled over and let us by" lineup, and others, with bass player Johnny Castle, reuniting, with O'Dell, Kirchen's long time DC area group Too Much Fun, augmented by Jorma Kaukonen acoustic guitar on *Talkin' About Chicken*. Are you with me so far? At an age when most people are thinking of retirement, Kirchen maintains a full touring schedule, and with a set list like this, it's pretty damned easy to see why he's still in high demand. Forty years after I first heard *Hot Rod Lincoln*, he played it at NotSXSW 2013, after God knows how many previous renditions, as enthusiastically as if he'd never played it before and, like every other number, allegro con brio. Kirchen remarked that he could have titled this album 'I Love My Job,' and that would seem to be the case. **JC**

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FIVE HEAD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

MY DARLING CLEMENTINE

HOW DO YOU PLEAD?

Hey John - "Go on baby, drive south" -

Good luck with relocating and welcome to the digital age. Thanks for all your support and coverage of my solo work and My Darling Clementine in 3rd Coast over the years. From one English Texan to another. Yours, Michael

DAYNA KURTZ • Secret Canon Vol II

(MC ✽✽✽✽)

My problem with Dayna Kurtz, other than that she doesn't come by often enough, is that from the very first time I was knocked out by her as an opening act, whenever I've seen her, she's almost invariably been solo (an exception was when über-violinist Todd Reynolds join her at a NotSXSW 2012 show), and I love her that way. So it's always a bit of a shock to hear her with a band, or, in this case, two bands. With this album, Kurtz is celebrating her recent move to New Orleans, where half of it was recorded, with piano, B3, sax, trombone, trumpet, bass and drums. The other half was cut in her native New Jersey with a small jazz combo, piano, B3, trumpet on only two tracks, bass and drums (John Cowherd, piano/B3, plays in both lineups) and I have to say that the latter are the more successful, capturing Kurtz's lethal combination of depth and intimacy on *Reconsider Me*, a 1969 R&B hit for Johnny Adams and a 1975 country hit for Narvel Felts, Johnny 'Guitar' Watson's *One More Kiss*, Isaac Hayes' *Same Time, Same Place*, a minor 1967 Stax hit for Mable John, *I'll Be A Liar*, the B-side of Betty Harris' deep soul classic *Cry To Me* and *I've Had My Moments*, a Django Reinhardt and Sinatra standard, though this version seems to owe more to Peggy Lee's. Fronting the funky NOLA ensemble, Kurtz goes big on Eddie Bo's *So Glad*, Helen Humes' *All I Ask Is Your Love*, John Wimber's *Go Ahead On* and two originals, *I Look Good In Bad* and *If You Won't Dance With Me*, but the horn arrangements, which are, presumably, trying to evoke an appropriate retro New Orleans blues/R&B sound, all too often stray into cliché. So a split decision, half the album works magnificently, I'm just not altogether comfortable with the other half. **JC**

ERIC TAYLOR • Studio 10

(Blue Ruby ✽✽✽✽)

Some singer-songwriters get to you first with their lyrics, Butch Hancock or David Rodriguez say, some with their vocals, Dayna Kurtz or Kimberley M'Carver say (this group tends to be female), but with Eric Taylor it's not so much his voice as his delivery that's instantly mesmerizing. The obvious word that comes to mind is intensity, but Taylor goes beyond that, his intensity is that of someone sitting opposite you and patiently trying to explain some abstruse and complex philosophical thesis in the simplest possible words. To put it another way, he's having an individual conversation, albeit one-sided, with everyone in the audience or listening to any of his albums—this is the eighth since **Shameless Love** (Featherbed, 1981), not counting the unauthorized **Kerrville Tapes**, and they're all cut from the same cloth, except that the theses have become progressively more abstruse and complex. Of the nine originals, three are tributes to friends who have recently passed, *Bill* is about Bill Morrissey, *Francestown* is in the style of Dave Van Ronk while *String Of Pearls* (solo, acoustic) is more generally about grief for the departed. *Tully* and *Tully's Titles* were written for a documentary about 'American writer, Irish rover, Hollywood brawler' Jim Tully. Taylor doesn't often have room for covers, and when he does it's usually a Townes Van Zandt song, but this time he includes Tim Grimm's *Cover These Bones*. The minimalist support is by variations of David Webb piano, James Gilmer percussion, Susan Lindfors Taylor backing vocals and Rock Romano electric bass/backing vocals. The title is a bit of a puzzle as the album, like all of Taylor's since 1998, was recorded at Romano's Red Shack, Houston, which I'm pretty sure doesn't have ten studios, though that's not to say that Romano doesn't ban girlfriends, boyfriends and non-essential musicians. **JC**

MARTÍ BROM • *Love & Kisses/Cracker Jack*
MARTÍ BROM w/BARRANCE WHITFIELD • *Goof Ball/Macumba Love*

(Squarebird/Goofin' [Finland])

Normally, I don't even mention singles, but this is Martí Brom we're talking about here, so these are *real* singles, seven inch 45s the like of which I don't see too often. The first, covers of two Janis Martin classics, from 1957 and 1958, was recorded, with Brom's Northwest touring band, in order to have a thematic product to help support a Janis Martin tribute tour with Rosie Flores. Of *Goof Ball*, written by Willie Mitchell and recorded in the early 60s by The '5' Royales, Bob Brom tells me, "Martí has been enamored of Barrence Whitfield's voice and wild man stage act since she saw him up close at a shared festival appearance in Italy. Fast forward a few years, she made a connection with Barrence via Jim Haggerty, the bass player for Rocky Velvet, the band that backs Martí on her Northeast shows, who also plays bass on occasion for Barrence. Long story short, when Martí discovered the chestnut *Goof Ball* she knew it was the excuse she needed to record a duet with Barrence. Also, Martí says her own attempt to do the "Goofin' Goofin' Goofin" chorus just didn't sound right. We released it on Goofin' records because, well, how could we not? For the flip-side she had Jim help finish the music for an original 'jungle' tune so that Barrence could offer up his inimitable wild African native noises for the background." **JC**

CHIP TAYLOR
block out the sirens of this lonely world
PAAL FLAATA • Wait By The Fire

(Train Wreck, 2 CDs ✽✽✽✽/Rootsy [Sweden] ✽)

Rather mysteriously, Chip Taylor's latest was featured in an Austin record store ad for forthcoming "Texas Music" releases. As he makes no secret of being from Yonkers, lives in a 15th floor apartment in NYC and recorded this album in Norway, I'd say that designation is a bit of a stretch. Taylor was in Norway for a 2011 festival that was cancelled following Breivik's rampage and understatedly remarks "This is more reflective than some other albums." That chilling context is important to understanding, say, the people watching of *God Bless Norwegians* and, more generally, the overall somber mood of the main album's 12 tracks, though Taylor lightens up on the second CD, "The Last Minute Fun Stuff," four extempore tracks, including *Ukrainian Girls* which sounds rather like an update of *Fraulein*, and a more polished radio edit of one of them. Though the great John Platania plays guitar, superbly as always, Taylor, who's produced all his own records since **Gasoline** (Buddah, 1971), not only enlisted Goran Grini, keyboard player of The New Ukrainians (actually Norwegians) with whom he recorded **Fuck All The Perfect People** (Train Wreck, 2012), but had him produce this album. Taylor is quoted as saying of his songwriting, "For me, I just want to get some sort of a chill from a song," and chills are what you can expect from a man who, at 73, can almost casually show the youngsters a thing or two about songwriting.

• Grini also produced Flaata's CD, sub-titled "Songs Of Chip Taylor." It's a **3CM** article of faith that the songwriter's version is invariably the best and most authentic, and I certainly don't hold it against Flaata, former lead singer of Midnight Choir, that he's Norwegian. However, he does something I can't forgive—he sings *Angel Of The Morning*. You can find any number of versions on YouTube, and they all have one thing in common—the singers are women, including, I may say a Norwegian woman, Ellen Nikolaysen (my favorite, after Evie Sands' original cut, is Billie Davis' 1967 version). Many, if not most, songs can be gender-reversed, some simply can't and Flaata has no more business singing *Angel Of The Morning* than Sammi Smith or Joan Baez had singing *Long Black Veil*, neither one makes any sense whatsoever, though, to be fair, you may well ask since when did songs have to make any sense? In his supportive liner notes, Chip Taylor says Flaata got a standing ovation for *Angel Of The Morning* at Mountain Stage, but it kills this album for me. **JC**

SHANNON McNALLY • Small Town Talk

(Sacred Sumac ✽✽✽.5)

Being a self-appointed evangelist for Robert Charles Guidry aka Bobby Charles, I both welcome anything that raises awareness of him while also being wary of albums consisting entirely of covers of his songs, and when I say "albums," this is the second one that's crossed my desk. However, while Beth McKee, formerly of the wonderful New Orleans-based, all-female Evangeline, put out **I'm That Way** (SwampGirl, 2009) before Charles' death in January 2010, McNally, who seems to have worked much more closely with Charles than did McKee, has waited three years, so while her one sheet claims she has "the blessings of the Charles estate," this carries rather less weight with me than Charles' own enthusiastic endorsement of **I'm That Way** (he also invited McKee to sing on what turned out to be his last album). McNally started out with the rather scary idea of "reinterpreting" **Bobby Charles** (Bearsville, 1972), apparently winning over Charles and Dr John to the concept, but while the end result has five songs from that classic album, *Street People*, *Long Face*, the title track, *Save Me Jesus* and *I Must Be In A Good Place Now*, it also has nine other songs ranging from 1961 to 2008, including the never released *Smile (So Glad)* lifted from an obscure Joe Cocker demo recording. It's a tribute to the depth of Charles' catalog that the two women only overlap on four songs, *I Spent All My Money*, *Small Town Talk*, *I Don't Want To Know* (frankly, both of them might ought to have deferred to Johnny Adams' version) and *(I Don't Know Why I Love You) But I Do*, with McKee leaning heavier on early songs, McNally going all the way to Charles' last album. McNally has some obvious talking points, her coproducer was Dr John, the musicians were his veteran Lower 911 Band (since fired en masse), her guests were Vince Gill, Derek Trucks, Will Sexton and Luther Dickinson and she recorded at Charles' home base, Dockside Studios, Maurice, LA. At the end of the day, however, I prefer McKee's album, even though it was recorded in Florida, with local musos. It just has a more righteous vibe to it. This may be simplistic, and is in no way intended as a denigration of either woman's talents, but McNally is from Long Island, McKee from Jackson, MS, and I can't help feeling that, in the words of the great British farmer-philosopher Arthur Fallowfield, "the answer lies in the soil." **JC**

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Austin's Music Explosion

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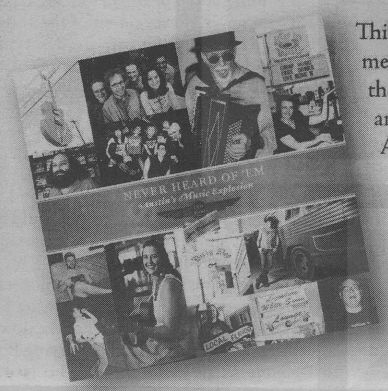

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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Got a lot of comments about the move to Houston as I started spreading the word to subscribers, advertisers, FAR reporters and NotSXSW musicians. Many seemed to think that DL and I are trading one traffic nightmare for an even worse one, but, while I can't speak to this myself, DL says getting around Houston is much easier than getting around Austin, and singer-songwriter **Jeff Talmadge** seems to agree, "if you live on the north side of Houston, you should still be able to get to Evangeline's in about the same amount of time as it takes to get to the Cactus Cafe for an early show from where you live now."

• Making me feel a little nervous about the move, a Houston-based record label sent me a press release about an album called **Keep It Country,** which it claims is "A tribute to the keepers of the traditional country sound," then goes on to say, "this new recording features the songwriting talents of Larry Bastian, Garth Brooks, Craig Wiseman, Matt Nolen, Jamey Johnson, Aaron Tippin, Kevin Fowler, and even one from the mighty Merle Haggard. With the honest and real vocal delivery that Cassidy is praised for, this collection of songs is a true blend of old-school sensibility and the sound of today's contemporary standards." The problem, of course, is that "old-school sensibility and the sound of today's contemporary standards" are totally incompatible.

• Listening to **Small Town Talk**, Shannon McNally's tribute to **Bobby Charles** (see reviews), I was once again reminded of the first time I met the late great British music writer and DJ **Charlie Gillett**. When the conversation turned to Charles' eponymous debut album (Bearsville, 1972), which I acquired after hearing him play it on *Honky Tonk* (Radio London, 1972-78), Gillett claimed he'd now met every one of the 600-odd people in Britain who'd bought a copy of an album that he'd tirelessly talked up in national music magazines and on the air. I later found that my *Fauxcabulary* definition of 'critical acclaim' ('= sold 12 copies'), applied equally to the album's fate in America—it's hard to find any mention of Charles that doesn't include the word 'obscure.' In fact his Wikipedia page is largely taken up with a watch-carefully-and-you-may-spot-him in the background during Dylan's clusterfuck towards the end of the film of **The Last Waltz**.

• Charles and **The Band** had some history. In 1972, along with Dr John, Amos Garrett and David Sanborn, every member except Robbie Robertson played on his first album, which Rick Danko produced. I once heard that Danko, Helm, Hudson and Manuel wanted Charles to join The Band as lead vocalist, but Robertson nixed the idea, which, for me, rather confirmed the widespread opinion that he's a royal prick, though, to be fair, Charles didn't care much for touring. Anyway, with an ensemble like that, you'd think that even an 'obscure' singer-songwriter's debut album would attract some attention, if only piggybacking on The Band's success. However, the first time I interviewed Bobby Charles, he told me that, with the album ready for roll out, he and Dylan's manager, Albert Grossman, who owned Bearsville Records, had a huge fight, "We just didn't get along and then I found a mistake in my contract and he hit the roof." Grossman retaliated by not supplying Warner Bros, his label's distributor, which made the LP really hard to find, and by pulling the promotion budget, which denied it ink, airplay and advertising. Charles retreated to Louisiana and spent most of the next 38 years as a cult favorite, mainly among other musicians as far as I can make out.

• My remarks last month about **George Jones**' crappy material struck a chord with **Arty Hill**, who asked me "why do you think Nashville never embraced the idea of making good albums?" An excellent question, but when I took a stab at answering it, I realized this was editorial size, at least, so more on this next month. However, you might get a kick out of a YouTube clip Arty pointed me at. It's an episode of Jones' TV show featuring Trace Adkins and Lorrie Morgan bitching about the shitty songs their labels make them record.

• This month's cover guy, **Willie Nile,** went to PledgeMusic to finance **American Ride** and ended up oversubscribed to the tune of 331%. However, after his own label had the album pressed, he was signed to classic rock specialists Loud And Proud. This happened so fast that promo copies of the River House version, since replaced with Loud & Proud artwork, had already been sent out (maybe the original will be rare and valuable some day. Or not). OK, **American Ride** is a first rate finished product that's already been paid for, while Nile is an established (at least in NYC) artist whose fan-sourcing success proves he has a dedicated following. From this no-brainer scenario, I deduce that **Tom Lipsky** gets up much earlier in the morning than other label execs. I've been thinking about all the Kickstarter etc campaigns I keep hearing about, but, again, that's another issue for another day.

• You may have seen the **Americana Music Association**'s 2013 Honors & Awards nominees, but did you notice that, leaving aside the Instrumentalist category, the remaining 21 slots in five categories were filled by only 10 artists or acts? Getting multiple nods are Shovels & Rope (four), Buddy Miller and Emmylou Harris (three each), Jim Lauderdale, Kelly Willis & Bruce Robison, John Fullbright, Rodney Crowell, Richard Thompson and JD McPherson (two each), trailed by The Lumineers, Dwight Yoakam and Milk Carton Kids with mere singletons. If you make this 13 names, it's because I've counted three duos, Miller & Lauderdale, Harris & Crowell and Willis & Robison as acts rather than individuals as they'd have to share any awards they get. I've had issues with the AMA in the past, but, while they don't make me want to projectile vomit like the CMA, ACM and CMT shows, seeing the same 'Inner Circle' names year after year, its awards seem ever more irrelevant. The AMA claims to be "a professional trade organization whose mission is to advocate for the authentic voice of American Roots Music around the world," but I'm not seeing how giving out what Emmylou Harris jokingly referred to as '**the Buddys**' (Miller has been nominated for 18 awards, winning 13) to a select few does anything much for a genre that seems to do just fine without any help from the AMA.

• Thinking of **The Lumineers**, I recently witnessed three DJs almost get into a fist fight over who loathed them, and Mumford & Sons, the most, with a side order of 'hopefully they're gonr' for The Civil Wars.

• While trying to thin out the tons of crap we've managed to accumulate, I came across a box of 78s, God knows where they came from, that included some from the mid to late 40s issued by '**Capitol Americana,**' a usage that predates Rob Bleetstein's Americana chart in *The Gavin Report* by a full 50 years. One extremely odd thing about this is that Googling 'Capitol Americana' gets just one hit, 78discography.com. I mean, when did you last get less than 1,258,722 hits on *any* search?

• I know 'perfect storm' is a horrible cliché, and I'm not even sure this qualifies as perfect, or a storm, but after I decided to go with Willie Nile as the cover story, the mailman delivered CDs by a succession of **3CM** core artists, Townes Van Zandt, Chip Taylor, Bill Kirchen, Dayna Kurtz and Eric Taylor, plus singles by Marti Brom and a tribute to Bobby Charles, all of whom got top priority,, though, come to think, I've already run cover stories on all of the above mentioned. Hopefully, I'll catch up later with the deserving people who got squeezed out by these house favorites.

• I wouldn't exactly say I was ever a big fan of **Michael Corcoran** when he was writing about music for the *Austin American-Statesman*, there are, after all, certain limitations inherent in the job—another music writer for a city daily told me that there was about a 50-50 split between what he actually wanted to write about and what he was required to write about whether he liked it or not. Still, Corky could be entertaining and turn a good line ("if blues guitar solos are so difficult, how come 16-year olds can play them?"), but I can't think the latest feature on his post-retirement blog will do his reputation much good. It's a basically a blow job for **Bob Schneider**, and it's already attracted an epic take down on **cantstopthebleeding.com**. Under the title 'Burying Bob Schneider: With Defenders/Fans Like These, Who Needs Haters?,' it opens "Veteran Austin music scribe Michael Corcoran tackled the subject of local snooze-rock fixture Bob Schneider this weekend, and while the former might've intended to praise the latter for his improvisational skills, transition to adulthood or career tenacity, the end result comes off like an indictment that even Schneider's biggest detractors would struggle to match." It makes such salient points as "many of those who'd sooner guzzle draino than listen to his horrible music" aren't necessarily hipsters, "Couldn't it be as simple as hip-or-not, some people just think he sucks?"; that while Schneider didn't "sleep his way to the middle… it's kind of grim that someone trying to make a case for him can't do so without bringing [Sandra Bullock's name plus picture] up"; that showing up five minutes before a gig and barely saying a word to your bandmates before taking the stage isn't "like a boxer who abstains from sex before a big fight to conserve his savage energy," it's just being an asshole. Disclaimer: I have never had any use for Bob Schneider, in case you hadn't guessed.

• Last thoughts about my time on Austin. I've been privileged with many treasured friendships, some of which, sadly, were cut short by death. Among those I will always miss are Townes Van Zandt, Don Walser, Blaze Foley, Jimmy Day, Paul Sessums, Keith Ferguson, Jesse Taylor, Champ Hood, Gary Primich, Robin Shivers, Danny Roy Young, Calvin Russell, Glenda Cox and James Henry. As for the living, I surprised myself recently by only being able to suggest two Austin musicians for a colleague's proposed feature on 'Texas Music Tools,' one of whom may have grown out of being a prick, but, apparently, neither of them can compete in awfulness with the 'Texas Music/Red Dirt' shitheads. In other words, in 24 years, I only met two Austin musicians I really disliked, which ain't too shabby.

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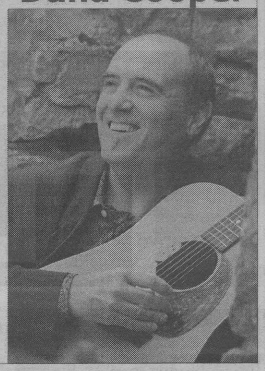

This song poet engages and inspires audiences with his quick wit, insightful stories and commanding presence. He has performed on Austin City Limits, Mountain Stage and the Kerrville Folk Festival where he was nominated for their Hall of Fame, and his songs have been recorded by top-notch artists. Cooper's mixture of flat-picking, finger-picking and percussive strumming style is legend among other guitarists. An expressive singer his voice is ageless evoking a rich lifetime of experience.

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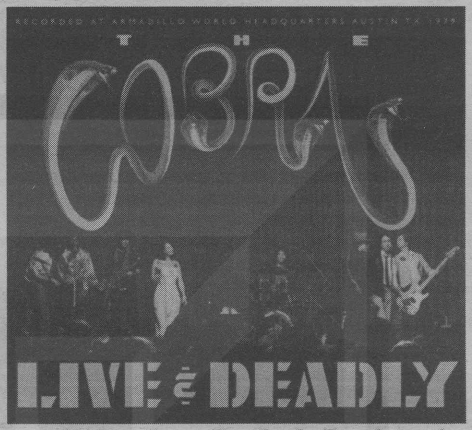

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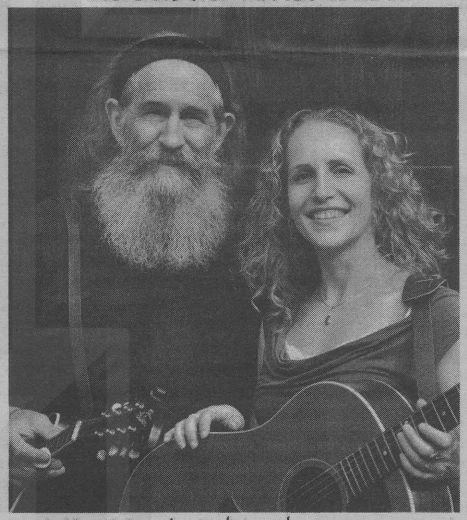

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THIRD 3RD COAST MUSIC CITY CITY

My ambition was to outlast every other printed music magazine, and my hope was at least to get to #300, which would have been August 2014. However, life has got in the way of both. Quick version is that DL's parents, both in their 80s, her son and his fianceé and her sister all live in or north of Houston and she feels the need to be much closer. As I'm still amazed that she agreed to marry my sorry ass, I'm going with the flow.

So the bad news (though some might call it good news) is that, as of July, you will no longer be able to pick up a copy of 3rd Coast Music and get ink on your fingers. However, the name you know and trust will continue to exist, but only electronically. In my experience, and I can give you chapter and verse on this, websites are where music magazines go to die—for a truly depressing experience, find the website of the once revered *Journal Of Country Music* and click on 'Current Articles.' As I don't want to dig my own grave, and, to tell you the truth, after almost 40 years, am used to, in fact need, the discipline of a deadline, the magazine will continue, though in a slightly different format (US Letter), emailed as PDFs, a popular option I've offered subscribers for several years.

There are several advantages to this set up. For me, I'll no longer have to schlep around Central Texas distributing magazines or spend happy hours stuffing envelopes, and, of course, I'll shed my two biggest expenses, printing and postage. Which means that my subscription rate will only be $10 for twelve issues worth of tough love for roots music while my advertising rates—shameless plug—will barely qualify as petty cash.

For you, that $10 will guarantee that you never miss an issue, plus there will be color and links. Well, to be honest, I'm still not really up to speed on the whole links thing yet, but I know several experts to whom I can turn for advice, better yet, step by step instructions. Also, there will, I hope, be more content as I'll no longer have to balance the editorial side against paid advertising, an exercise which has always dictated the eventual size of the physical mag. Thinking of which, an amazing number of advertisers are sticking with me, for which I am grateful and humbled.

Two questions came up repeatedly when I advised existing subscribers about the upcoming changes. One was 'What about NotSXSW?' Fear not, my young friends. The annual extravaganza of roots talent will continue as long as I can totter up to the stage. It's all organized by email anyway, so I just have to show up in Austin for the event itself.

The other question was 'So, are you over Austin?' To which the answer is pretty much yes. No matter when you arrive, people will tell you Austin's not as cool as it used to be—I'm sure you've heard the joke about how great the dead lightbulb was in the old days—but I very much doubt that anyone, at least anyone involved in any way with the music scene, will seriously argue that Austin, now the 11th largest city in the US, to which I moved because I wanted to live in a small town, has improved since 1989, which is when I moved here. During my first visit, I told Freddie Krc, "This is where I need to be," and I just don't have that feeling anymore. That said, I've heard a lifetime's worth of great music in Austin, even though, between getting married and having a day job, I haven't been getting out as much as I did when it was just me, my Mac , the Harley and *Music City Texas*.

Anyway, if you've been reading **3CM**, in its various incarnations, regularly or intermittently, I thank you for your time and attention, and, of course, I hope you'll want to sign up for the emag. Onward through the fog! **JC**

WILLIE NILE
AMERICAN RIDE

(Loud & Proud ✲✲✲✲)

So, last month I remarked that the rave reviews in Kimberley M'Carver's press kit might lead you to think that she's a star you've somehow overlooked, and that the fact that she isn't shows how little influence even a reinforced regiment of music writers has on the real world. Making this same point even more strongly is Willie Nile. When **3CM** subscriber Rick Miller included in his NotSXSW 2013 feedback "Best NYC Band: Willie Nile and Band (not debatable)," the name rang a faint bell, but, thanks to Spotlight, I figured out it was because another subscriber had noted Nile as a NotSXSW highlight in 2009. In other words, I knew jack about Willie Nile except that a couple of **3CM** readers, both fellow New Yorkers, think well of him. However, when I asked a good number of Austin DJs, musicians and music lovers about Nile, the closest anyone got was "Wasn't he kind of a big deal in the 80s?" Admittedly, my sample was at a South Austin garden party featuring Zoe Muth & The Lost High Rollers, possibly not the ideal demographic for this impromptu survey.

However, while folks in these parts, at least in my circles, may be more than a little hazy about Willie Nile, he has a press kit, that would make most musicians drool with envy, which opens with a 1978 Robert Palmer piece in *The New York Times* ("Every once in awhile the times seems to produce an artist who is at once an iconoclast and near-perfect expression of contemporary currents. He is one of the best singer-songwriters to emerge from the New York scene in a long time"). That feature launched a 35 year career that got off to a major label start with two albums on Arista in 1980 and 1981 and another on Columbia in 1991, then went quiet, apart from the release of a 1980 live recording (he played Austin that same year, opening for The Who), until Nile reemerged as an indie artist in 1998, putting out the first of six albums on his own River House label. This, the product of a PledgeMusic campaign, would have been the seventh, but with the album ready to go, Loud & Proud Records, distributed by Sony/RED, stepped in and signed Nile. So he now has national distribution for the first time in 22 years, not to mention the services of one of Americana's top publicists.

That last sentence begs three entirely different questions. Let's start with 'national distribution,' which you might think it isn't too important now that a few clicks will fetch you almost any music you want, whether as downloads or CDs delivered to your mailbox. However, apart from servicing people who still shop at record stores, the cold, hard fact is that at many papers, magazines and, especially, radio stations, self-released and indie albums that don't have national distribution are DOA, with almost zero chance of coverage or airplay, though local and hometown media may give them a shot, for instance, papers in Buffalo, where Nile was born and raised, have loyally followed his career.

So what's the big deal about having a publicist? Well, you're looking at it. From having basically never heard of Nile, I am now, thanks to Cary Baker's Conqueroo, an admirer (this might have been speeded up if I'd been able to get to one of Baker's annual and unofficial Guitartown showcases, but, sadly, that would mean going north of the river which against my religion). Good publicists, and offhand I can only think of six of them I'd recommend to a friend, make a huge difference, if only because they instantly validate a project. An envelope with Baker or Lisa Shively's return address commands instant respect even before it's been opened, because they only take on projects in which they believe.

Finally, we come to 'Americana.' Really? Nile's reputation is as a rock & roller, a true believer in urgency, vigor, black jeans and four chords, comparable in some ways to Bruce Springsteen, only without the sanctimony and grandiosity, which is all to the good, but he's also, as Palmer pointed out so long ago, an exceptional songwriter. Many fellow rockers, Springsteen, Bono, Lou Reed, etc, have praised Nile, but so also has Lucinda Williams, who says "If there was any justice in this world, I'd be opening for him instead of him for me." Though he has songs among his eleven originals (there's also a cover of Jim Carroll's *People Who Died*) that are pure Americana, most obviously *The Crossing*, about Irish immigrants (his real name is Noonan) and *There's No Place Like Home*, his approach often reminds me of Troy Campbell's proto-Americana Austin rockers The Highwaymen (aka Loose Diamonds), which similarly blasted out songs written by an outstanding songwriter. Co-produced (superbly) by Nile and Stewart Lerman, **American Ride** is a '79 Mercury Cougar with four carburetors and two straight exhausts, burnin' aviation fuel no matter what the cost. For some reason, Loud & Proud substituted a vintage Chevy truck, but, for my money, River House had the perfect metaphor. **JC**

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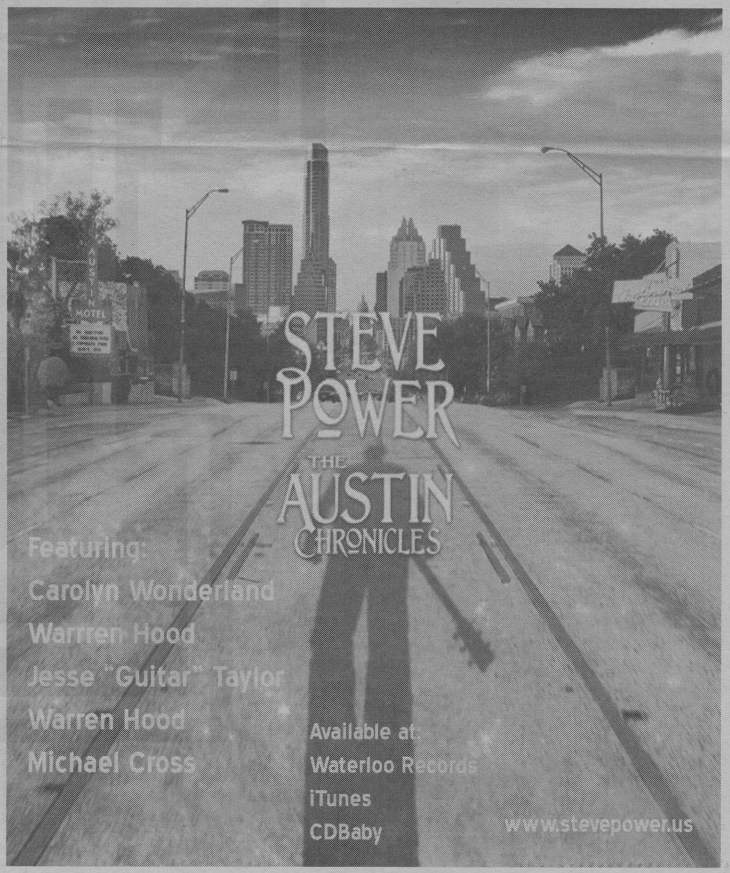

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