

Bob Livingston – Bio

Robert Livingston was born and raised in Lubbock, Texas. Bob's father was the Activities Director and his mother the General Secretary of Lubbock's First Methodist Church. Livingstone attended Lubbock's Mackenzie Junior High at the same time as David Halley and played guitar in church assemblies. He went on to attend Lubbock High School and graduated in 1967. In high school Bob was an American football player, and a "goodie-good kid" – his description. The latter apart, playing music became extremely important to him during his late teen years.

Soon after watching The Beatles perform on the Ed Sullivan Show [1964] – unknown to his parent's, on the set in the church basement - Bob joined his first band. Jug band music all the rage, and the New Grutchley Go-Fastees mainly played church functions. The line-up consisted of Livingstone, Rob Gamble [aka "Papa Jelly Belly"] and Johnny Tull. Graduating from high school Bob went on to enrol at Lubbock Tech. and during that period was instrumental in setting up a folk club, The Attic, where he also performed regularly. By this stage, Bob had begun writing songs. At one point, Joe Ely held down the Sunday night residency at The Attic. During college vacations, Bob would head for Red River, New Mexico, to play music in local bars. Apart from Bob's older brother, other bands/musicians who were working the New Mexico clubs at that time included Three Faces West featuring Ray Wylie Hubbard, Michael Martin Murphey, Steve Fromholz and the late B.W. Stephenson.

Having drawn a low number in the draft, Bob quit college in 1969 and, initially, moved to Colorado. Spotted playing in an Aspen club by L.A. agent Randy Fred, Livingston went on to sign a recording deal with Capitol Records. Having moved to California, nothing came of the deal, and, at a loose end, it was there that Bob ran into fellow Texan, Michael Martin Murphey. At the time Murphey was in a band called Tex, which included steel guitarist Herb Steiner. A couple of years earlier Murphey had been a member of the Lewis And Clark Expedition who cut one self-titled album for The Monkees label, Colgems. A songwriter for Screen Gems, Murphey's songs had already been cut by The Monkees. Livingston and Murphey became friends and formed a song publishing company, with Roger Miller and Guy Clark, called Mountain Music Farm. Booked for a tour Texas, Murphey invited Bob along as his bass player. Livingston had never played bass before, but soon picked the instrument up.

Michael [and Bob] was spotted playing The Rubiyat in Dallas by Bob Johnson, and the legendary producer went on to record Murphey's debut solo album "**Geronimo's Cadillac**" in Nashville. When Bob was invited to join Three Faces West, Gary P. Nunn became Murphey's bass player. However, Johnson insisted that Livingston was an essential element in Murphey's band sound and Bob was entitled to return. As a result, a little later based out of Austin, Texas, Murphey's sidemen became the *multi-purpose* [Austin] Interchangeable Band. That band not only supported Murphey on the road and in the studio, but also hooked up [in the same capacity] with Jerry Jeff Walker and other local songwriters. Later still, the Interchangeable's became the Lost Gonzo Band, and having signed a contract with Capitol Records [MCA issued the album in the UK] they released a self-titled debut disc in 1975. At that time, the band line-up consisted of Gary P. Nunn, Bob Livingston, John Inmon, Kelly Dunn, Donny Dolan and Tomas Ramirez. Ramirez left the band, and The Gonzos went on to release "**Thrills**" [1976]. By the time "**Signs Of Life**" [1978] was cut, Dolan had departed, and Bobby Smith and Michael J. Holleman had come onboard. Over the years, in tandem with being a Gonzo [they only performed occasionally for many years], Livingston and his bass continued to tour and record with Jerry Jeff Walker. In 1979, the Gonzo's consisting of Livingston, Inmon and Paul Percy cut a studio/live album with Ray Wylie Hubbard titled "**Something About The Night.**" A couple of year's later, Livingston issued his debut solo recording "**Waking Up,**" and followed it seven years later with "**Sign Of Life.**"

During the nineties, the Gonzos cut a pair of CD's. The first, "**Rendevous,**" featured Nunn, Livingston and Inmon aided by *guests* Jerry Jeff Walker, Lloyd Maines and others. When "**Hands Of Time**" appeared, Nunn had departed and Messrs. Livingston and Inmon, were joined by Lloyd Maines, Riley Osbourn, Paul Percy and original band member, Tomas Ramirez. Bob's 1996 solo album "**Open The Window**" is a collection of children's songs.

In the early seventies Bob's wife and his sons, Taylor and Trevor, had begun visiting India where Iris studied philosophy. Moving to Malakara, India on a permanent basis a decade later, Livingston would visit his family on an annual and sometimes extended basis. In 1987, by way of defraying his annual outlay, Bob, under the auspices of the State Department, began touring India as a musician. His first

programme was titled "History of American Folk and Country Music," and the set included some of his own songs as well as old cowboy standards. Since that initial tour, Bob has returned to India many times on behalf of the State Dept. He has also performed in Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Burma, and a couple of years ago toured the Middle East. On these visits, particularly in India, Livingston would collaborate with local musicians and in due course he developed a musical work titled "Cowboys And Indians," merging the music of the West and East. Based on the latter work, Livingston's **"Mahatma Ghandi & Sitting Bull,"** features contributions from Indian as well as Texas musicians, was released in late 2003 by the Austin based Vireo label.

Discography :

With The Lost Gonzo Band : **"Lost Gonzo Band"** [1975] ; **"Thrills"** [1976] ; **"Signs Of Life"** [1978] ; **"Rendezvous"** [1991] ; **"Hands Of Time"** [1995] ; **"Dead Armadillos"** CD compilation of 1975 and 1976 albums [1996] :

Solo : **"Waking Up"** [1981] ; **"Sign Of Life"** [1988] ; **"Open The Window – Songs For Kids"** [1996] ; **"Mahatma Ghandi & Sitting Bull"** [2003] ; **"Everything Is All Right"** [2004] :

Arthur Wood

Kerrville Kronikles 10/04

[960 words]