



Terri Hendrix

The former Texas Music Association Female Entertainer of the Year is an autobiographical writer who merges country, blues, folk and pop into a potent mixture

San Marcos, Texas is the base for Tycoon Cowgirl Records and the label's only artist (and owner), Terri Hendrix, whose latest, stunning album is *Wilory Farm*, produced by Lloyd Maines.

Memorable moments on this rainbow of delights include the emotion and personal desperation expressed in *Hole In My Pocket*, the toe-tapping *Wind Me Up* and the free-form western swing tear-up *Lluvia De Estrellas (Rain Of Stars)*. The album is a joyful creation, and reason enough to look back on the career of Terri Hendrix to date.

Hendrix was born into a music loving family in San Antonio. Her grandmother would sit on her front porch singing for neighbours, while her father, an army professional, played guitar. It was natural, then, that Terri would pursue music through her high school years and, later, at university in Abilene where she had won a Music Scholarship.

However, "I really disliked music school. Every class I attended was taking the fun out of music. I never performed in public at this time. I could barely get through a song without stopping. I was, however, writing original music."

Hendrix transferred to Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos and began to study Coaching and PE. Working bar to pay for her college studies, Terri ran into fellow San Marcos musician, Todd Snider, who was also waiting tables. "He invited me to a songwriter's night. I'll never forget that experience. I got up to perform and I could not play one of my songs because of my poor guitar skills."

However, she took music lessons from a local music store owner named Grant Mazak. Eventually, they began dating and formed a duo called Grant and Terri, playing covers of Eric Clapton, Fleetwood Mac and Patsy Cline plus some originals.

The duo (and the relationship) lasted about a year. Through Grant, however, Terri had earlier met a woman who was to have a profound effect on her future.

"Grant was real close to a woman by the name of Marion Williamson. One day we all went to lunch together. Grant had to leave early and Marion and I talked all afternoon and into the evening. I was very unhappy at that time, had few goals, no money and lots of bills. I was working double shifts waiting tables, with really no future."

The strong friendship that ensued between Williamson and Hendrix instilled in the aspiring youngster a desire to redirect the course of her life.

"By the time I was 23 I quit waiting tables and moved in with Marion on Wilory Farm. I began to do music fulltime and I dropped out of school because I was paying for my tuition and failing. Marion helped me buy a PA and I started working as a solo act. I played all over Texas with my main bases being San Antonio and New Braunfels." (Her first paying solo residency, back in 1992, was in the latter's Landa Station bar.)

Of her time spent performing in Texas Hill Country clubs, Terri told the Austin Chronicle's Andy Langer earlier this year, "Once people get to know you, you don't have to call the clubs - they call you. I didn't need a demo tape or press kit. All you need is to be a solo act and have your own PA - that's the secret."

In the mid-Nineties, Terri curtailed her appearances on the tourist circuit and began performing sets that almost entirely consisted of original material. Williamson, meanwhile, had been teaching her the basics of chord construction and how to read music, disciplines that were delivered in a more palatable form than at college. The most crucial of Williamson's teaching tools was what Hendrix describes as "record tours" - selections of classical, popular and folk music recordings which Terri would avariciously absorb.

Sadly, Williamson, the woman whom Hendrix says changed her life, passed away from cancer in the spring of 1997.

By 1996, Terri's burgeoning fan base was clamouring for the release of an album. Engineered and produced by Mark Rubinstein in Seguin, Texas, the 10 track project was titled *Two Dollar Shoes*. When it came to repressing the record, having consistently sold it off the stage, Hendrix enlisted the help of Lloyd Maines.

"I met Lloyd in 1997. He heard a demo tape of some of my tunes and then we met at SXSW at a showcase that I was doing. I was only vaguely aware of his reputation at the time. He said that if I re-sang *Crossroads* and *Cathy's Corner* and then let him re-mix the whole thing, it would be a much better recording. So we did that. Now I am totally out of the second pressing and am not sure what I'm going to do with it. I still get a lot of requests to re-issue it though."

In truth, Terri has sold 3000 copies of *Two Dollar Shoes* to date. For a first release from a fledgling operation, that is remarkable.

While she has been picking up verbal

plaudits from industry stalwarts like Maines, Hendrix has received more tangible awards from local bodies and publications. In 1995 the San Antonio Texas Music Association voted her Female Entertainer of the Year. For three of the last four years, Terri has been *San Antonio Current's* Female Vocalist of the Year, while in 1997 the same publication awarded her the title of Songwriter of the Year.

Listening to *Two Dollar Shoes*, there is no doubt Hendrix is an autobiographical writer. She merges country, blues, folk and pop influenced material to produce a potent mixture. In concert, audiences regularly request the title track.

"I wrote the song about the phrase 'Judge not, lest ye be judged.' I got the idea in Abilene because it was a Baptist school, so it's not really about shoes."

As for musicians she works with, Hendrix says, "Before I met Ric Ramirez and Ron Welch in 1996, I played with a lot of different players. Now I mainly play with Lloyd Maines on guitar and dobro. Every once in a while I will put together a band with Paul Percy on percussion, Ron on guitar, Darcy Deaville on fiddle, Ric on bass and Lloyd on dobro and pedal steel. As a duo, Lloyd and I get a bigger sound. Lloyd is really making my sound more solid now."

In September, 1997 she began work on

her second album at the Fire Station Studios in San Marcos with Lloyd Maines in charge of production. Maines played guitar, steel, dobro, banjo and mandolin while the backup group, the Wilory Farmhands, consisted of Ramirez and Welch, John Inmon (guitar, sitar), Paul Percy (drums, percussion), Gene Elders (5 string fiddle), Ponty Bone (accordion) and Riley Osbourn (keyboards).

The album, *Wilory Farm*, named for her friend Marion Williamson, was released in June this year.

The album features a dozen selections plus an uncredited track, *The Sisters Song*, an affectionate recollection of growing up which first appeared on *Two Dollar Shoes*.

With her latest recording, Hendrix has taken a quantum leap forward in terms of quality. Two covers, Kennedy-Rose's *Love Like This* and *Last Song*, co-penned by Bill Mallonee and Julie Miller, sit comfortably alongside 11 of Terri's originals. The opening track, *Flowers*, is subjectively drawn from the same inspirational wellspring as Betty Elders' *Bed Of Roses*, *Bed Of Thorns* while the narrator here expounds a more upbeat perspective, *Wallet* draws upon a unique lyrical source – "This song is a collection of quotes I gathered from what people at my shows told me" – while we have already mentioned other fine moments.

On the liner, Hendrix writes of her

teacher, Marion Williamson, "She taught me guts and not to quit. She showed me the value of individualism and strength of character in my music." *Wilory Farm* is the direct result of the influence of the changer upon the changed.

Scoring gigs beyond the borders of Texas is the next career hurdle for Terri. Onstage, her between-song banter is reputed to be as much a highlight of her performance as her songs. Andy Langer's aforementioned article marked Hendrix down as a "shameless talker and storyteller" with an "energetic and immediately likeable stage persona."

With those credentials, Hendrix should have little trouble capturing hearts and souls on a national, as well as international, basis.

We'll let Lloyd Maines have the last say. "Terri Hendrix delivers honest emotion in her music. She throws herself head first into every song she sings and writes. I've never worked with anyone who works harder. Did I mention that she is also a great guitar player? Terri's the real deal. I consider *Wilory Farm* among the top albums that I have produced."

For final, irrevocable proof, all you need to do now is listen to that album ...

Wilory Farm is available from Tycoon Cowgirl Records, PO Box 2340, San Marcos, Texas 78667, USA. ■

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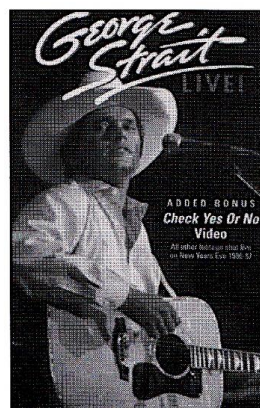
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