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#103/192 AUGUST 2005



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FAR #72

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FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #72

REAL MUSIC PLAYED FOR REAL PEOPLE BY REAL DJs DURING JULY 2005

#1 Marti Brom Sings Heartache Numbers

(Goofin' [Finland]) *BL/*BR/*BW/*CP/*GS/*JA/*KC/*LB/*MA/*MP
*RA/*RH/*RS/*S&D*TF/*WT

- 2 Laura Cantrell: Humming By The Flowered Vine
(Matador) *AN/*BK/*DF/*MDT/*NA/*TW
- 3 Eliza Gilkyson: Paradise Hotel (Red House) *AB/*FW/*JB/*JR/*TA
- 4 Caitlin Cary & Thad Cockrell: Begonias
(Yep Roc) *BF/8S/*DO/*3RC/*T&C
- 5 Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez: Red Dog Tracks
(Back Porch/Trainwreck) *AA/*CS/*RJ/*ST
- 6 John Hiatt: Master Of Disaster (New West) *DY
- 7 Terry Allen: The Silent Majority (Sugar Hill) *GC/*HP/*KB/*MF
- 8 Son Volt: Okemah And The Melody Of Riot
(Transmit Sound/Legacy) *GG/*GM/*JM
- 9 Adrienne Young: The Art Of Virtue (Addiebelle) *R&H
- 10 John Prine: Fair And Square (Oh Boy) *JS
- 11= The Modern Sounds Of The Knitters (Zoe/Rounder) *HG
Delbert McClinton: Cost Of Living (New West) *JZ/*DV
- 12 Carolyn Mark: Just Married: An Album Of Duets
(Mint) *DWT/*FS
- 13 Dwight Yoakam: Blame The Vain (New West) *OO
- 14 Bear & The Essentials: Two Time Fool (self) *DA/*TC
- 15 Rodney Crowell: The Outsider (DMZ/Sony) *WR
- 16 Keith Gattis: Big City Blues (Smith Entertainment) *BH
- 17 Grayson Capps: If You Knew My Mind (Hyena) *TT
- 18 Chris Hillman: The Other Side (Sovereign Artists/) *N&T
- 19= The Bel Airs: Got Love (Hightone) *JP
Shannon McNally: Geronimo (Back Porch) *ES
- 20= Ry Cooder: Chavez Ravine (Nonesuch) *SMJ
DeSoto Rust (self) *BB
Graham Parker: Songs of No Consequence (Bloodshot) *JF
Michelle Shocked: Don't Ask, Don't Tell (Mighty Sound) *SG
- 21= Del McCoury: The Company We Keep (Sugar Hill) *BP
The Morells: Think About It (Hightone) *B&C
Two Tons Of Steel: Vegas (Palo Duro)
Abigail Washburn: Song Of The Traveling Daughter
(Nettwerk America)
- 22 Adam Carroll: Far Away Blues (Blue Corn)
- 23= Bobby Flores: Too Many Rivers (Yellow Rose)
Dallas Wayne: I'm Your Biggest Fan (Koch) *KR
- 24= The Believers: Crashyertown (Bona Fide) *TO
Amber Digby: Music From The Honky Tonks (Yellow Rose)
Foghorn Stringband: Weiser Sunrise (Nettwerk) *XR
Jamie Kindleside: Kind-le-sid (self) *CD
Red Stick Ramblers: Right Key, Wrong Keyhole
(Memphis International)
- Greg Trooper: Make It Through This World (Sugar Hill) *KD
- 25= Brian Capps: Walk Through Walls (Hightone)
The Domino Kings: Some Kind Of Sign (Hightone)



*XX = DJ's ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Freeform American Roots is compiled from reports provided by 140 freeform DJs in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay. More information can be found at www.accd.edu/temn/far

LAURA CANTRELL HUMMING BY THE FLOWERED VINE

(Matador ****)

First I thought Brooklyn-based singer and DJ (and FAR reporter) Cantrell had made a couple of tactical errors on her third album. One, the Wyndham Hill-y title, is perhaps cosmetic (though these things do matter). More substantive is changing producers, from Jay Sherman-Godfrey, who did such wonderful, empathetic work on **Not the Tremblin' Kind** and **When The Roses Bloom Again**, to JD Foster, who throws in everything but cowbell—oh, wait a minute, there it is on track 7. Just kidding, but 19 is an awful lot of musicians. However, I have to assume this is all part of the former Bank of America executive's plan to reposition herself, moving away from country and towards pop (*why* is something you'll have to take up with her). Wynn Stewart's *Wishful Thinking* and the traditional murder ballad *Poor Ellen Smith* represent the country content on an album defined by Emily Spray's *14th Street*. Jenifer Jackson's *What You Said*, Dave Schramm's *And Still*, a Lucinda Williams' 70s rarity, *Letters*, and four fine originals. While Cantrell's voice is as crystal clear, graceful and expressive as ever, the material just doesn't do quite as much for me—which, of course, is not to say that it won't win her a gazillion new fans who wouldn't have related to the earlier albums. **JC**

DIESEL DOUG & THE LONG HAUL TRUCKERS MISTAKES WERE MADE (1995-2005)

(Cornmeal ****)

Had Dick Curless done nothing but record *Tombstone Every Mile*, Maine would, however unlikely, be forever identified with truck driving songs, and Scott Link picked a name for his Portland-based band, founded the year Curless died, that celebrates this proud tradition. However, it's far from being a big rig monolith. Celebrating its 10th anniversary, this is kind of an enhanced retrospective for a rock-edged, hard-driving alt.country band that, while massively popular in New England and eastern Canada, hasn't made much impression outside with its Sad Bird releases. Of the 16 tracks, five originally appeared on their 1997 debut **An Angel Not A Saint**, another five on **The Fine Art Of Carousing** (1999), well actually seven, but they rerecorded *If I'd Shot Her When I Met Her (I'd Be Outta Jail By Now)* and *I'd Like To Quit Drinkin' (But I Live Over A Bar)*. Another three tracks were on different volumes of the Greetings From Area Code 207 compilations while a Maine-ized version of Robert Earl Keen's *Merry Christmas From The Family* and Link's *Daddy's Drinkin' Up Our Christmas* only appeared on a 1997 promo cassette. Now that guitarist Charlie Gaylord has built Cornmeal into being Maine's premier label, more people should get to hear this brand of Down East country music. **JC**

DESOTO RUST

(self ****)

Very disarmingly, these Philadelphia-based roots-rockers don't dream of world domination, they're perfectly happy to share the Delaware Valley. "American roots music is making a strong comeback," says lead guitarist David Otwell, "and we want to be one of the bands making it happen in this area." However, with a distinctive sound and three members who can both sing and write strong songs, Otwell (one), rhythm guitarist Ray Hunter (seven) and bassplayer Mike Simmons (four), with drummer Dave Reeve staying in the background, they deserve to more ambitious. Simmons, who also produced and mixed, wrote the standouts, *100 Year Flood* and *For What It's Worth*, but the material, all original except for Red Simpson's *Close Down The Honky Tonks*, hits a very high standard for a band that's barely a year old but which can sound like The Band at its best. **JC**

VA: BLUES WITH A MESSAGE

VA: THE ROOTS OF THE NARCOCORRIDO

(Arhoolie ****/****)

Paul Oliver, author of **Blues Fell This Morning; Meaning In The Blues**, notes that in the transition from acoustic to electric, "blues of the personal, experiential and reflective kind were still recorded," and this CD brings together 18 of them. With titles like *The 1919 Influenza Blues*, *Depression Blues* and *Things Gonna Get Better*, Mance Lipscomb, Lightning Hopkins, Lowell Fulson, Fred McDowell, Willie Eason, Robert Pete Williams, Big Joe Williams and others demonstrate, in Richard Wright's words, that "The blues, contrary to popular conception, are not always concerned with love, razors, dice and death."

♦ Corridos are primitive blogs, story songs that challenge or contradict the official line, creating social heroes out of those considered criminals by Mexico or the US or both. The message of the enormously popular genre that celebrates drug-smuggling and smugglers (the #3 radio station in LA plays nothing but narcocorridos) is fairly simple: narcotraffic is America's problem, if you quit buying drugs it'd go away. Elijah Wald's **Corridos y Narcocorridos** collected hits by such current stars as Los Tigres Del Norte, this CD goes back to the 1880s to document the development of the form, which, fairly obviously, started taking fully recognizable shape during Prohibition. This is true popular music—every Jack-in-office wants to ban or control it, but nobody can. **JC**



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Plum Tucker (8pm)	23rd Brennen Liegh (6pm)
5th Larry Lange's Lonely Knights (10pm)	Karen Abrahams (8pm)
19th Karen Abrahams (6pm)	25th Craig Tountate (7pm)
Gene Taylor (8pm)	26th Thierry LeCoz (10pm)
12th Eve & The Exiles (10pm)	30th Brennen Liegh (6pm)
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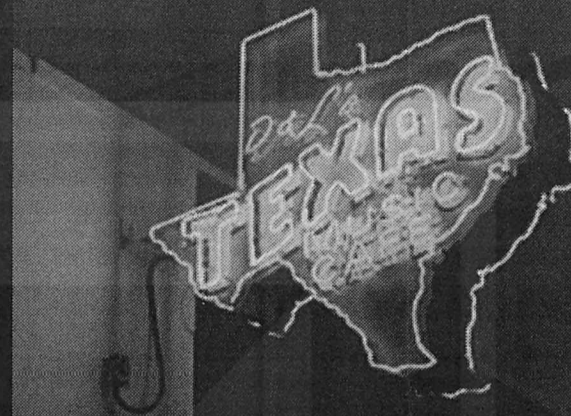
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ALL KILLER, NO FILLER

PERFECT FOR A RAINY DAY RADIO SHOW

One reaction to last month's editorial, from Obie Obermark, *Texas Renegade Radio*, KNON, Dallas, TX, was "A CD isn't a worthy release unless 11 of 12 songs are really good? Man, what planet do you come from? I wanna go there and see if they release more than one CD every two or three years." My first reaction was that I get CDs every month that meet, or almost meet, this standard, but then I started thinking about perfect radio albums, a rather specialized concept. Thing about radio is that many, in fact most, albums have some duds or filler or trainwrecks. but with a few it really doesn't matter what number you punch up on the ol' Denon, in fact you could, if you felt so inclined, switch to Continuous Play, or with the right equipment, Shuffle, and just walk away without a care in the world, either way never thinking "Shit, I really didn't want to play *that* track."

So I invited the FAR gang to list ten perfect radio albums each. The only rules were that any FCC violation, which are hideously vague these days, but the Pacifica Words are still definitely tabu, disqualified an album and they had to be original releases, no compilations or Greatest Hits. As always with these little games, I didn't ask them to do anything I wouldn't do myself, so I'll kick it off. It broke my heart that I couldn't squeeze in Jerry Lee Lewis' **Live At The Star Club, Hamburg**, but that's the way it goes.

Incidentally, all these lists have been alphabetized. There are a couple of small cheats, like **GP/Grievous Angel**, but what the hell. **JC**

JOHN CONQUEST

Terry Allen: Lubbock [On Everything] (Sugar Hill)
Clifton Chenier: Louisiana Blues & Zydeco (Arhoolie)

Amber Digby: Music From The Honky Tonks (Yellow Rose)

The Flatlanders: One Road More (Charly)

Jimmy LaFave: Austin Skyline (Bohemia Beat)

James McMurtry: Live In Aught-Three (Sugar Hill)

David Rodriguez: The True Cross (Dejadisc)

Mingo Saldivar: The Dancing Cowboy Sings Country (Hacienda)

Townes Van Zandt: Live At The Old Quarter, Houston (Tomato)

Lucinda Williams: Rough Trade/Koch

RICHARD SCHWARTZ

(*Amarillo Highway*, KZMU, Moab, UT)

eight out of ten of JC's +

Catherine Britt: Dusty Smiles & Heartbreak Cures (ABC Universal)

Merle Haggard: Tribute To The Best Damn Fiddle Player In The World (Capitol)

Emmylou Harris: Last Date (Reprise)

Kevin Kane & Kieran Welch: You Can't Save Everybody (Compass)

Willie Nelson: Red Headed Stranger (Columbia)

Gram Parsons: GP/Grievous Angel (Reprise)

The Reedy Buzzards (self)

Joe West & The Sinners: Jamie Was A Boozer (Frogville)

The Wilders: Spring A Leak (Rural Grit)

DANNY BIRCH

(*Route 78 West*, KVCU, Boulder, CO)

Dave Alvin: King Of California (Hightone)

Guy Clark: Keepers (Sugar Hill)

Steve Earle: El Corazon (Warner Bros)

Alejandro Escovedo: A Man Under The Influence (Bloodshot)

Emmylou Harris: Spyboy (Eminent)

Waylon Jennings: Honky Tonk Heroes (Buddha)

Lyle Lovett: Step Inside This House (Curb)

Tom Russell: Borderland (Hightone)

Townes Van Zandt: Live At The Old Quarter, Houston (Tomato)

Lucinda Williams: Car Wheels On A Gravel Road (Mercury)

THOMAS GREENER

(*Ragged But Right*, KVMR, Nevada City, CA)

Ry Cooder: Chicken Skin Music (Reprise)

Ronnie Dawson: Rockinitis (No Hit)

Wayne Hancock: Thunderstorms & Neon Signs (Dejadisc)

James Hand: Shadows Where The Magic Was (Two Of A Kind)

Sleepy LaBeef: The Human Jukebox (Sun) 1995

Wes McGhee: Heartache Avenue

(Road Goes On Forever)

David Olney: Top To Bottom (Appalosa)

Gram Parsons: GP (Reprise)

Doug Sahm: The Return Of Wayne Douglas (Tornado)

Paul Siebel: Wood Smoke & Oranges/Jack-Knife Gypsy (WEA International)

RICK CORNELL

(*Border Radio*, WXDU, Durham, NC)

Dave Alvin: Blue Blvd (Hightone)

The Band: Music From Big Pink (Capitol)

Richard Buckner: Bloomed (Dejadisc)

Aretha Franklin: I Never Loved A Man The Way I Love You (Atlantic)

Joe Henry: Short Man's Room (Mammoth)

Chris Knight (Decca)

James McMurtry: Live In Aught-Three (Compadre)

The V-Roys: Just Add Ice (E-Squared)

Townes Van Zandt: Live At The Old Quarter, Houston (Tomato)

Lucinda Williams (Rough Trade)

BRIAN BOURGOIN

(*Twisted Roots*, WCNI, New London, CT)

Dave Alvin: Romeo's Escape (Razor & Tie)

Billy Bacon & The Forbidden Pigs: Una Mas Cerveza! (Triple X)

The Bottle Rockets: 24 Hours A Day (Atlantic)

Fred Eaglesmith: Lipstick, Lies And Gasoline (Razor & Tie)

Alejandro Escovedo: A Man Under The Influence (Bloodshot)

Wayne Hancock: Swing Time (Bloodshot)

John Hiatt: Slow Turning (A&M)

Wanda Jackson: Heart Trouble (CMH)

James McMurtry: Live In Aught-Three (Sugar Hill)

Slobberbone: Everything You Thought Was Right Was Wrong Today (New West)

CARRIE DELZOPPO

(*The Cowboy's Sweetheart*, BayFM, Byron Bay, NSW, Australia)

Dave Alvin: King Of California (Hightone)

Greg Brown: Down In There (Red House)

Fred Eaglesmith: Drive-In Movie (Vertical)

Steve Earle & Del McCoury: The Mountain (E-Squared)

Emmylou Harris: Elite Hotel (Reprise)

Ray Wylie Hubbard: Crusades Of The Restless Knights (Philo) 1999

Willie Nelson: Red Headed Stranger (Columbia)

Darrell Scott: Aloha From Nashville (Sugar Hill)

Doc & Merle Watson: Remembering Merle (Sugar Hill)

Dwight Yoakum: Guitars, Cadillacs, Etc, Etc (Reprise)

DAN ORANGE

(*Bushwhacker's Breakfast Club*,

KZSC, Santa Cruz, CA)

Dave Alvin: Blue Blvd (Hightone)

Austin Lounge Lizards: Highway Cafe Of The Damned (Watermelon)

Joe Ely: Musta Notta Gotta Lotta (South Coast)

Jimmie Dale Gilmore: After Awhile (Elektra)

Grateful Dead: American Beauty (WB)

Jimmy LaFave: Trail (Bohemia Beat)

Los Lobos: Just Another Band From East LA (Slash/WB)

Gram Parsons: GP/Grievous Angel (WB)

Michelle Shocked: Short, Sharp, Shocked (Mercury)

The Subdudes: Annunciation (High Street/BMG)

DAVID OBERMANN

(*Folkways*, KUT, Austin, TX)

The Beatles: Rubber Soul (Capitol)

Eliza Gilkyson: Hard Times In Babylon (Red House)

Eliza Gilkyson: Lost And Found (Red House)

Eliza Gilkyson: Land Of Milk And Honey (Red House)

Emmylou Harris: Elite Hotel (Reprise)

Tim O'Brien & Darrell Scott: Reel Time (Howdy Skies)

The Wailin' Jennys: 40 Days (Jericho Beach)

JEFF ROBSON

(*Tell the Band To Go Home*,

CJUM, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada)

Rodney Crowell: Fate's Right Hand (DMZ/Epic)

Fred Eaglesmith: Drive-In Movie (Vertical)

David Francey: Torn Screen Door (Laker)

David Francey: The Waking Hour (Red House)

Reid Jamieson: The Unavoidable Truth (Maple Nationwide)

Ray Lamontagne: Trouble (RCA)

Lyle Lovett: I Love Everybody (Curb)

Nathan: Jimson Weed (Nettwerk)

Skydiggers: Restless (Capitol)

The Wailin' Jennys: 40 Days (Jericho Beach)

BILLY LEE

(*Countrybilly Show*, NEAR/Caroline, Ireland)

Big Sandy & His Fly Rite Boys: It's Time (Yep Roc)

Johnny Burnette & The Rock & Roll Trio: Tear It Up (Solid Smoke)

Johnny Cash: Unearthed (American)

Ray Condo: High And Wide (Joaquin)

Bob Dylan: Royal Albert Hall 1966 (bootleg)

Elvis Presley (RCA)

Doug Sahm: The Return Of Wayne Douglas (Tornado)

Bruce Springsteen: Nebraska (Columbia)

Hank Williams: any album

Lucinda Williams: Car Wheels on a Gravel Road

JAMIE HOOVER

(*Songs Of The Mother Road*, KSUT, Ignacio, CO & KSJD, Cortez, CO)

Terry Allen: Lubbock [On Everything] (Sugar Hill)

Guy Clark: Old No 1 (RCA/Sugar Hill)

Iris Dement: Infamous Angel (WB)

Joe Ely: Honky Tonk Masquerade (MCA)

Emmy Lou Harris: Elite Hotel (Reprise)

Ray Wylie Hubbard: Loco Gringo's Lament (Dejadisc)

Wes McGhee: Landing Lights (Terrapin)

Kimmie Rhodes: West Texas Heaven (Justice)

Billy Joe Shaver: Tramp On Your Street (Volcano)

Dwight Yoakam: Buenos Noches From A Lonely Room (Reprise)

Well, Obie, looks like the planet I come from is this old, familiar ball of mud. Just going by these first respondents, apart from the gap between **Elvis Presley** (1956) and **Rubber Soul** (1965), nearly every year saw the release of at least one album that one of your colleagues considers to be perfect for radio. In fact, according to this group, of the 40 years between 1965 and 2005, only five, 1966, 1969, 1974, 1984 and 1985, failed to come up with anything that stucj. And the **Top 12 Perfect Radio Albums** (so far)?

Terry Allen: Lubbock (On Everything)

Dave Alvin: Blue Bvd

Fred Eaglesmith: Drive-In Movie

Alejandro Escovedo: A Man Under The Influence

Emmy Lou Harris: Elite Hotel

James McMurtry: Live In Aught-Three

Gram Parsons: GP/Grievous Angel

Doug Sahm: The Return Of Wayne Douglas

Townes Van Zandt: Live At The Old Quarter, Houston

The Wailin' Jennys: 40 Days

Lucinda Williams: Lucinda Williams

Lucinda Williams: Car Wheels on a Gravel Road

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 Thu 25th • Mark Jungers & The Whistling Mules
 Fri 26th • Chris Scruggs
 Tue 30th • Crimson Jazz Orchestra

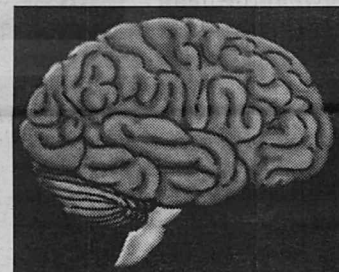


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ARNOLD ROGERS & JERRY LANGLEY MANY TEARS AGO; THE LIFE & TIMES OF JENNY LOU CARSON DURWOOD HADDOCK I REMEMBER JENNY LOU CARSON

(Nova, paperback ****/Eagle International ****)

Joan Weber took it to #1 on the Pop charts (3 million units), Teresa Brewer to #6 (2 million), Patti Page #7 (900,000), Sunny Gale #17 (120,000), Peggy Lee peaked at #26 (175,000), while Hank Snow hit #1 on the Country charts. It was also recorded by Ann-Margaret, Connie Francis, Billy Fury, Wanda Jackson and Dean Martin. Sounds like a songwriter's wet dream, but while *Let Me Go, Lover* was her career highlight, this kind of multiple charting was almost routine for Virginia Lucille Overstake, aka Jenny Lou Carson, the first woman to write a #1 country hit, *You Two Timed Me One Time Too Often*, which put Tex Ritter at the top of the charts for 11 straight weeks in 1945, the year after she became, as the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame coyly puts it, "good friends" with Fred Rose. Already well known in Chicago, with songs recorded, while she was still a teenager, by The Girls Of The Golden West, Patsy Montana, Louise Massey and Red Foley, she reached national prominence with *Jealous Heart*, a #2 hit for Ritter earlier in 1945, but rumor was that Rose actually wrote it and gave it to his girlfriend. While their relationship, as Rogers & Langley freely acknowledge, had a strong element of self-interest on her part, by late summer 1945, Rose had cut off direct contact with Carson, and their brief romance hardly accounts for her subsequent career. Nonetheless, talk that she'd screwed her way to success, hardly a unique or even particularly unusual route in commercial music, then or now, dogged her for many years. Rogers & Langley didn't set out to write a biography of Carson, so there's very little about her childhood before she first appeared on the WLS *Barn Dance* at 16, or her last 25 years as an alcoholic recluse. Rather this is an account of the career of a beautiful, vivacious, ambitious and successful songwriter and performer set against a backdrop of the times she lived in and the people she interacted with. Admitting her personal flaws, and that she wrote as many stinkers as winners, their densely textured story, punctuated by the hits she wrote for Eddy Arnold and Red Foley, her most faithful customers who both cut 14 of her songs, Gene Autry, Tex Williams, Ernest Tubb, The Andrews Sisters, Johnny Cash and Willie Nelson, illuminates not only Carson but an entire era, 1931-1956, of country music. Though lavishly illustrated with hundreds of photos, sheet music covers, documents, *Billboard* ads, etc., they're all photocopied, with mixed success, on the other hand, that made the price of this 350 page, large format paperback right.

♦ Haddock's big moment as a writer and performer was in 1954/5 with the much-covered, most notably by Carl Smith and Patsy Cline, *There She Goes*, but many years ago he coppered his country bets by moving into record promotion, eventually leaving Nashville for Telephone, TX, to run the premier Real Country mail/internet order house Curtis Wood/HonkyTonkin.com. His companion CD, featuring 12 of Jenny Lou Carson's songs, seems rather disconnected from the book, which mentions that "Many of her finest compositions are among the least known today," but, playing lap steel, fiddles, keyboard, bass, acoustic and electric lead and rhythm guitars, mandolin, harmonica and percussion himself to capture the period feel, his labor of love showcases the cream of Carson's catalog, *One Little Teardrop Too Late, Many Tears Ago, You Two Timed Me One Time Too Often, Blues In My Heart, These Tears Are Not For You, A Penny For Your Thoughts, Jealous Heart, Let Me Go Lover, I'm Lonesome For You Annabelle, Chained To A Memory, I'd Trade All Of My Tomorrows* and *Don't Rob Another Man's Castle*. JC

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(Cracker Barrel/Opry Music ****/****)

Faron Young, Sonny James, Marty Robbins, Loretta Lynn, Bill Anderson, Tammy Wynette, Skeeter Davis, Hank Locklin, Connie Smith, Porter Wagoner, The Browns and Roger Miller, recorded live at the Ryman between 1964 and 1967—what's not to like about **Country Greats**? OK, with only 12 cuts, this does seem a little short, and Sonny James' syrupy *Young Love* still has the power to make me queasy, but *Hello Walls* (Young), *Devil Woman* (Robbins), *Blue Kentucky Girl* (Lynn), *Bright Lights & Country Music* (Anderson), *End Of The World* (Davis), *Send Me The Pillow That You Dream On* (Locklin), *Green Green Grass Of Home* (Wagoner), *The Three Bells* (Browns) and *Dang Me* (Miller) all hit the spot, with Wynette's *I Don't Wanna Play House* and Smith's *Once A Day* as the total knockouts.

There's always been a marked tendency for country singers to twist the Sincerity knob up to 11 when they're singing sacred, and **Gospel Treasures** positively oozes Sincerity. With Sonny James (*Just A Closer Walk With Thee*), Charlie Louvin (*Prayer Is The Key To Heaven*), Flatt & Scruggs (*Father's Table Grace*), Roy Acuff (*Great Speckled Bird*), Bill Monroe (*Swing Low Sweet Chariot*), Osborne Brothers (*Cryin' Holy Unto The Lord*), Wilma Lee Cooper & The Clinch Mountain Clan (*Glory Land March*), Porter Wagoner (*If Jesus Came To Your House*), Willie Nelson (*Family Bible*), Bill Carlisle (*A Rusty Old Halo*), Archie Campbell (*Most Richly Blessed*) and Don Gibson (*God Walks These Hills*), this also has only 12 tracks, but it seems much longer. JC

'BIG BOY' ARTHUR CRUDUP 1905-1974

Much as I would like to be proven wrong, I'm reasonably certain that the 100th anniversary of the birth of 'Big Boy' Arthur Crudup will go largely unremarked. So, quickly nipping into a phone booth and donning my tattered and threadbare Underdog Man outfit, I will do my small bit on behalf of an almost forgotten father of rock & roll. While I have no quarrel with the conventional wisdom that the first rock & roll single was Jackie Brenston & His Delta Cats' *Rocket 88*, now usually more accurately credited to Ike Turner, three years after he produced it, Sam Phillips made history with a song written by Crudup—*That's Alright Mama*, Elvis Presley's 1954 debut Sun single. Elvis went on to record two other Crudup songs, *So Glad You're Mine* and *My Baby Left Me*, leaving their writer little more than a footnote to the Presley legend and rock & roll history.



However, as Presley himself might have told you, Crudup not only had a unique and innovative sound and style, which may be why he was the King's favorite bluesman and a key inspiration, he was the first rock & roll songwriter, with an intuitive ability to write simple, effective guitar songs, even though, or possibly because, he was 30 years old before he first picked up a guitar and was never more than a rudimentary player. He was also one of the edgiest, most ferocious of postwar blues singers, but we'll get to that in a minute.

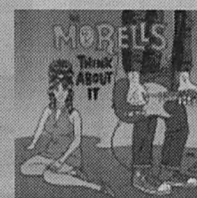
Born August 24th, 1905, in Forest, Mississippi, the aspiring musician moved to Chicago in 1940, where he busked on the streets and lived in a crate beneath the El tracks. Then one day in 1941, RCA/Bluebird producer Lester Melrose dropped some coins in his hat and invited him to play at a private party that night. The party was at Tampa Red's house and among the guests were the cream of Bluebird's roster, including Big Bill Broonzy and Lonnie Johnson, a tough crowd for a street singer. By September 1941, Crudup was himself an RCA artist, hitting the R&B charts through the 40s with *Rock Me Mama, Who's Been Foolin' You, Keep Your Arms Around Me, So Glad You're Mine*, and *Ethel Mae*. The original *That's All Right Mama* was cut in 1946, but wasn't a hit. Like most black artists, Crudup saw little of the money his singles made, most of which was pocketed by Melrose, whose good taste was matched only by his greed, and in 1954 he quit and didn't resurface until 1961 with remakes of his Bluebird hits on Bobby Robinson's Harlem-based Fire. In the late 60s, following a tip from Big Joe Williams, Delmark's Bob Koester tracked down Crudup, who was working as a contract farm laborer, and they made two albums that were as solid as his early work, after which, for few years before his death in 1974, Crudup started to make some decent money playing to appreciative crowds at blues and folk festivals.

He should, of course, have been very comfortably well off for the last 20 years of his life, just from the Presley royalties (*That's Alright Mama* was also recorded by Eddie Cochran, Carl Perkins, Rick Nelson, The Beatles, Bob Dylan and many, many others), but he never made a dime from it. In 1973, he negotiated a settlement with Hill & Range, but when the publishing house realized that he was almost 70 and in poor health, it decided to make him sue, figuring, correctly, that he'd die before a court decision obliged them to pay up. I read somewhere that when Presley heard about this, he sent Crudup money out of his own pocket, but I can't verify it.

It seems to be fashionable in blues pedant circles to denigrate Crudup, perhaps because of his links to detested rock & roll, his minimal guitar skills or the fact that his very individual work, that didn't borrow from or relate to that of other blues players, doesn't fit into any schema, as once popular but no more than second-rate. However, any of the rather surprising number of available compilations tell a very different story. When, for instance, you hear Crudup's own ambiguous version of *That's Alright Mama*, bristling with menace, full, as one writer put it, of "piss, vinegar and razor-sharp teeth," or his bitter and baffled *My Baby Left Me*, you can't help thinking that Presley blended Crudup's words with the swaggering style of another of his favorite performers, Dean Martin.

Available compilations notwithstanding, no label has both a vested interest in Crudup's centennial and the media clout to draw attention to it. The most recent collection, **Rock Me Mama** (2003), volume 7 in "The Secret History Of Rock & Roll" series **When The Sun Goes Down**, was on Bluebird/BMG Heritage, but BMG Heritage doesn't even exist anymore. Others are on British and Austrian labels (Document's four volume **Complete Recorded Works, 1941-54** and Wolf's **The Very Best Songs Of The Father Of Rock & Roll**), or deeply suspect (Classic Blues' two volume **The Essential** and Collectibles' crappy sounding **Mean Ole Frisco Blues**). Much as I dislike pimping for a major, I have to go with **Rock Me Mama**, the third and, with 22 tracks, largest incarnation of a 1972 RCA LP and 1992 CD, even though it still doesn't include the rather essential *Goin' Back To Georgia*. JC

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TERRY ALLEN • THE SILENT MAJORITY

(Sugar Hill *****)

Subtitled 'Terry Allen's Greatest Missed Hits,' this "compilation of out-takes, in-takes, mis-takes, work tapes, added tos, taken froms, omissions and foreign materials" finds me on much surer ground than with last month's book + CD **Dugout**. Apart from anything else, I've already reviewed it once, when it was put out on Allen's own label, *Fate*, in 1992 (*Music City Texas* #42) and this version is unchanged except for one thing, the cover art. *Fate's* was a photo of Allen with Nancy Reagan, which Sugar Hill dropped in favor of a rather haggard looking Allen patting a stuffed (?) coyote (? anyway some kind of lupine critter), which I'd think would make the original release fairly collectible. Most of the 16 tracks were cut at Caldwell Studios, Lubbock, including *Rollback*, *Oh Mom*, Allen's distinctive arrangement of *Home On The Range* and the outtaken *3 Finger Blues* from Margaret Jenkins' dance production *Rollback* and the seven minute *Loneliness/Rockin' By Momma Lonesome Rose/Lonely Road*, with recitation by Jo Harvey Allen, from her dance production *Pedal Steel*, *I Love Germany* and *Oh Tired Feet*, work tapes for a production of Georg Büchner's play *Leon & Lena (and lenz)*, *The Burden* from the soundtrack of Wolf-Eckert Bühler's film *Amerasia*, *Cocktail Desperado* from David Byrne's film *True Stories*, *Arizona Spiritual* from *High Performance* #23, and *High Horse Momma*, which got left off *Lubbock (On Everything)*. Apart from the acid solo *Advice To Children*, Lloyd Maines plays on all these, with other Maines brothers and Panhandle Mystery Band members appearing in various combinations on most. Then there are four recorded in Madras in 1992, featuring such Indian instruments as veena, santoor, mridangam, gatham, tambora, tabla, kholi and bass dolak, *Yo Ho Ho*, *Big Ol' White Boys*, *New Delhi Freight Train* and *Hearts Road*. As I said back when, this is Advanced Allen, beginners are advised to cut their teeth on *Lubbock (On Everything)* or *Smokin' The Dummy*, but there's some extraordinary stuff here. I have to wonder how many new completists Allen has acquired since the *Fate* release went out of print, which probably took some time, but you gotta love Sugar Hill for making all his albums available. **JC**

EVAN JOHNS & THE H-BOMBS WITH DANNY GATTON SHOWDOWN AT THE HOEDOWN

(Jellyroll *****)

Since he left Austin, I've heard rumors about guitar crusher Johns living, or possibly dying, in various places round America, and his last album, 2001's *Moontan*, came from a Florida label, but he's resurfaced clear across the continent in Vancouver, with a Canadian wife and an album of 20 year old recordings from his original stomping grounds. Though The H-Bombs, with Ivan Brown bass and Mark Korpi second guitar, were selling out good size DC area rooms with his original material, Johns couldn't raise any label interest so moved to Austin to join The LeRoi Brothers then, though very briefly, with Columbia. On March 16th 1984, a month before he first folded The H-Bombs, they played at the 8x10 in Baltimore and Johns invited his mentor, DC guitar legend Danny Gatton, to join them. Johns' New Brutalism approach to recording—he may not be the *only* musician in the world who would want to record live at Austin's The Hole In The Wall but he's certainly the only one who could get away with it (Freedom's 1995 *Burnin' Down The Barn*)—may horrify some with its casual indifference to balance. Johns has written many excellent songs, most notably *Day Go By*, but you'd have to strain hard to make out any of his lyrics here. Still, that's beside the point, this is all about DC guitar trash, twang and thunder, balls to the wall rock & roll. The scheme is really easy to follow, the first solo is by Johns except on three tracks when Korpi leads and the second solo is always by Gatton. Boasting that the newest instrument on stage was a '64 Strat and the most modern piece of equipment a '69 SVT Ampeg, Johns says "This band played at absolutely deafening volumes, so Crank It UP!" Good advice, but break out the ol' air guitar first. **JC**

CAITLIN CARY & THAD COCKRELL BEGONIAS

(Yep Roc ***)

Back when, I thought Cary was the best part of Whiskeytown and featured Cockrell's 'put the hurt back in country' debut, *Stack Of Dreams*, as a cover story (#54/143), but Cary's solo career got off to a rocky start with the jangly and overthought *While You Weren't Looking* and both she and Cockrell faltered on rather monotonous second albums, respectively *I'm Staying In* and *Warmth & Beauty*. Putting the two North Carolinans together must have seemed like a terrifically Good Idea, and friends who've caught their acoustic duo show did indeed admire the combination. Unfortunately, even without the help of Chris Stamey, it doesn't work on record. First time through, two magnificent and distinctive voices make a great initial impression, second time it still sounds pretty good, except let's skip Cockrell's treacly stab at Percy Sledge's *Warm And Tender Love*, and come to think nothing short of cold hard cash upfront would make me sit through the ghastly *Conversations About A Friend* again. Third time, the album begins to sound contrived, manipulative, mechanical, soulless and hollow. One can't blame them for what PR people say, but flak like Surefire's "Cary and Cockrell have resurrected the country duet tradition" is pure bullshit. Compared to Bill (Chambers) & Audrey (Auld), they don't have a clue about duet singing. **JC**

CLIFTON CHENIER

LOUISIANA BLUES & ZYDECO

(Arhoolie *****)

Billed, rather modestly, as "His first album for Arhoolie Records," this was, in fact, Chenier's debut album and, therefore, the first ever Zydeco album. However, it's also something more than that, it's the benchmark, the gold standard, the reality check, the album against which every other Zydeco album in the last 40 years can be measured, and usually found grievously wanting. Produced by Chris Strachwitz at Houston's Gold Star Studio, the first 11 tracks, six with backing by Cleveland Chenier rubboard and Madison Guidry drums, five with Elmore Nixon piano, Cleveland Keyes guitar, Fulton Antoine bass and the great Robert St Judy drums, were released on LP in 1965. This budget price version, replacing the now deleted CD reissue, includes another eight tracks from that session, two of which, *Clifton's Blues* and *Let's Rock A While*, appeared on *King Of The Bayous*, the other three, *Elmore's Blues*, *Clifton's Two Step* and *Zydeco Et Pas Sale* (take 1), being previously unreleased. The album's title and the two different lineups reflect a compromise, one side of the LP each, between Strachwitz, who wanted an album of puro Zydeco two steps and waltzes, and Chenier who wanted to record more commercial R&B. Turns out both men were right, making, in one go, both the greatest zydeco and one of the greatest blues albums of all time. While the engineering was somewhat inept at times—there's no indication that the sound has been tweaked, but some tracks, notably the instrumental *Hot Rod*, sound stronger than I recall—every track crackles with inventive energy and while, of course, Chenier's accordion (harmonica on two tracks) and vocals dominate, Nixon, Keyes and St Judy turn in some fabulous work. Dare I say this is a Must Have? Yes, I dare. **JC**

FREAKWATER • THINKING OF YOU

(Thrill Jockey *****)

Never having visited Louisville, KY, I can only imagine why the locals call it 'Loserville' or 'Lousyville' but bringing Catherine Irwin, who still lives there, and Janet Bean, who's long lived in Chicago, together more than balances the shame of being KFC's base. Having reviewed three or four Freakwater CDs, and Irwin's solo album, over the last ten years, I've pretty much run out of superlatives for the pioneer alt.country group (their first album came out a year before Uncle Tupelo's 'groundbreaking' *No Depression*), but as it's been six years since *End Time*, I can't just say "yet another great Freakwater album." So I'll just have to go negative. Freakwater have mutated their sound before without alienating fans, but a good rule of thumb here is that the fewer members of Thrill Jockey 'scrap-rock' band Califone, whose leader Tim Rutili produced, join Irwin, Bean and their longtime bassist Dave Gay on any given track the better. Not that I mind the Jimi Hendrix quote in the intro, but *So Strange*, at least, is a little too jangly. Also, while I think Irwin is one of the most remarkable songwriters of our times, and she and Bean could harmonize the phonebook, suffusing it with low key angst and existential dread, on the otherwise terrific *Jack The Knife* ("my fingers will forever be entwined around the knife I left behind") 'memory' flat doesn't rhyme with 'ebony.' Other than that, it's yet another great Freakwater album, not, perhaps, the one I'd recommend first, that would be *Springtime*, but it's still up to the standard that made Freakwater not only the first—and the way things are going possibly the last—alt.country group but also the best. **JC**

MISS LESLIE & HER JUKE-JOINTERS HONKY TONK REVIVAL BILLY DEE • WHEN THE VOW BREAKS

(Zero Label ***/5/Country Mile ***)

Some musicians choose to play country but for others, Houston area's Leslie Lindsey and Austinite Billy Donahue, for instance, it was never just an option, they're country to the bone. Lindsey and her veterans, including her guitarist husband Randy, have a lot going for them, mainly her clear as a bell Connie Smith style voice, which, if not as nuanced as Amber Digby's, is more mature and confident within her midtempo comfort zone, and the songs of Jake Jenkins. A former Karl Shiflett & Big Country Show colleague of Randy's, the banjo player contributed five of the 13 tracks, including the best, *Honky Tonk No More* ("Now a dollar plays a song I wouldn't give a nickel for, no the jukebox in the corner don't play honky tonk no more"). Other songs include Houstonite Hilary Sloan's *I Threw Your Pictures Away*, Bobby Bare's *I'm Walking Slow*, George Jones' *Talk To Me Lonesome Heart*, Loretta Lynn's *I'll Sure Come A Long Way Down*, Jerry Crutchfield's *(I've Got My) Future On Ice* and the Osborne Brothers' *Midnight Angel*. The title may seem a little overdramatic, but maybe times are tougher round Houston than they are in Central Texas.

♦ Veteran country bassplayer Donahue, who also plays harmonica, accordion, banjo, ukelele and tuba on the follow up to his 2003 *Heart, Don't Fail Me Now*, has stellar backing, with guitarist/producer Redd Volkaert, Floyd Domino piano and organ, Jason Roberts fiddles, Ricky Davis steel guitar and Tom Lewis drums, but comes up a tad short on material, all original except for Johnny Paycheck's *The Only Hell (My Mama Ever Raised)*. Rather oddly, the title track, with its very thin pun, is the weakest song on the album, which peaks with *Paper Sack* and *Not Tonight (I've Got A Heartache)*. Dee's bigass baritone is as formidable as ever and his Vern Gosdin like style goes a long way to papering over the problems, but, like Dale Watson, for whom he used to play bass, he has a few songs that should have been written off rather than recorded. **JC**



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Sun 7th, Gospelaires, 11am
Freddy Steady 5 + The Uranium Savages + Greezy Wheels, 6pm
Weds 10th, Roky & Sumner Erickson + The Texcentrics, 9pm
Thurs 11th The Bluerunners + Eve & The Exiles, 9pm
Fri 12th, The Bluerunners + The Dime Store Poets, 9pm
Sat 13th, Bugs Henderson + Driver, 8pm
Sun 14th, LZ Love, 11 am
The Gourds, 7pm
Weds 17th, Gary P Nunn, 9pm
Thurs 18th, Roky Erickson & The Explosives, 9pm
Sat 20th, Stephen Bruton + Van Wilkes, 8pm
Sun 21st, Durden Family, 11am
Thurs 25th, Speedin' West (Cindy Cashdollar, Redd Volkaert,
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Sat 27th, The BoDeans, 8pm; South Austin Jug Band, 10pm
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Thurs 11th, Combo Mahalo, 7:30pm
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Weds 17th, The Dealers, 7:30pm
Thurs 18th, - Speedin' West, 7:30pm
Tues 23rd, Carolyn Wonderland, 8:30pm
Weds 24th, Paul LeMond Band, 7:30pm
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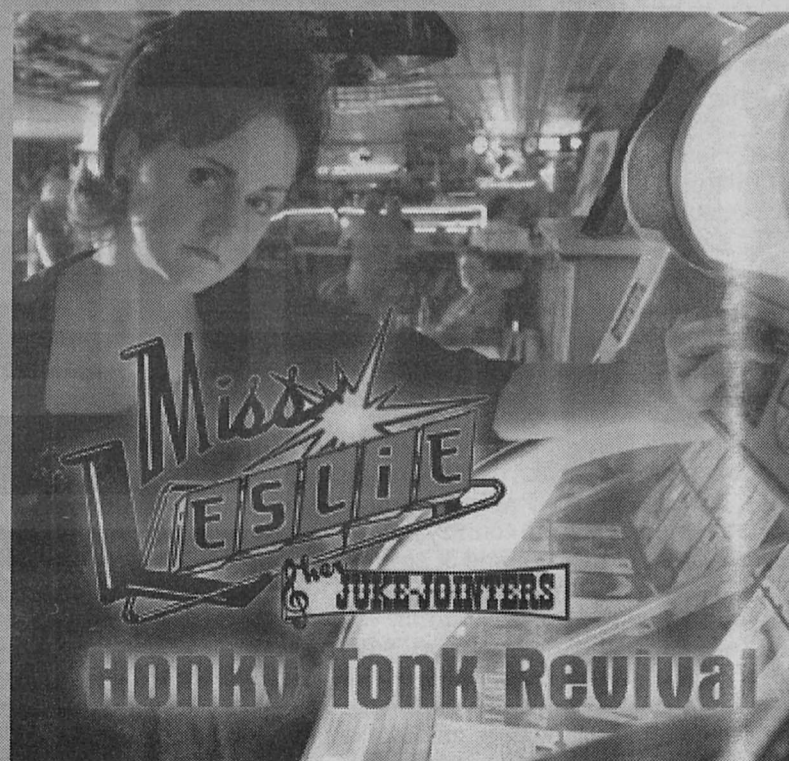
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BUSTED!!! Nashville Sony Office Cited For Payola

This may seem hard to believe, but a record label has been nailed for unethical business practices. It's not hard to believe that a label did something wrong, but it's shocking that they actually got caught.

According to a settlement announced by the New York Attorney General's office, Sony BMG Music is guilty of using a number of unethical methods to get their music on radio stations. Sony's top executives, including those in the Nashville office, were said to have been fully aware that their offices used methods such as bribes and fake call-in requests in order to get more airtime for Sony artists. As a result of this settlement, Sony will pay a \$10 million penalty that will ultimately be donated to charity.

Sony admitted no wrongdoing, though the large penalty is a pretty good indicator of their actions. Accusations had Sony giving things such as trips, flat screen TVs and cash to radio programmers in exchange for airplay. They were also accused of requiring staff members to pose as fans calling in to stations to request songs.

As titillating as it sounds to hear that a record label has gotten busted for such things, Sony's actions are hardly a surprise to anyone who has spent any appreciable amount of time in and around the industry. Payola began in the early days of radio and has pretty much always existed in some form. The term itself is a contraction of 'pay' and 'Victrola,' the seemingly ancient record player, if that gives you any idea of the lengthy history of this practice.

Those of us in Nashville have certainly seen it for years. Except in Music City, payola has a different name. It's called Country Radio Seminar. Every February, staff members from country radio stations descend on Nashville in the name of strengthening the industry through panel discussions, exhibits and all of the other meaningless bullshit that you see at every large convention in America. But at this gathering, the label staffs have 'entertainment budgets,' which means that "Gator in the mornings from Arkansas' #1 country station" gets an expensive meal and night with a big city prostitute. And in addition to getting wined, dined and 69'd, there's cash. I have personally witnessed fixed cash giveaways at CRS events. Everyone in the room knew the fix was in and it was understood in a 'wink, wink' sort of way.

CHARLES EARLE'S B-Sides

But now that a label has gotten busted for this sort of thing, will these pay-for-play practices stop? Uhm, no they actually won't. You see, Sony's problems came as a result of a cyber paper trail. Copies of a number of emails that detail Sony's unethical practices were obtained and used against the label in order to bring about the settlement. Thus, I'm pretty certain of two things... 1. payola will never cease and 2. the dumbasses in the promotion departments will never, ever send another email offering a flat screen TV to a radio programmer if he will play the new J Lo song a few more times each day.

THERE SHE IS...

Proving once and for all that beauty contests no longer have any cultural relevance whatsoever, officials at the Miss America pageant announced last month that Country Music Television will televise their event for the next two years. Okay, actually this is a move that is less surprising than it might seem, given that sagging television ratings of the pageant have left the event in the position of not being desirable programming to a major network. After last year's pageant failed to break the barrier of 10 million viewers on ABC, pageant officials likely expected that their new home would be cable. And while it is surprising that a larger cable outfit such as USA Network or TBS didn't take a chance on Miss America, CMT isn't necessarily a bad fit. This schmaltzy evening of all-American girls is certainly chock full of the small town values that country audiences often embrace. But since CMT is in less than 80 million homes, one has to wonder how much further the audience will dwindle.

After the pageant's move to CMT was announced, local media was quick to ask if Miss America might soon be held in Nashville after decades of being broadcast from New Jersey. Nashville city officials and pageant representatives had no comment.

YOUNG TO BE FILMED AT THE RYMAN

Legendary rock artist Neil Young will be filmed for a concert DVD over a four day period in August at Nashville's Ryman Auditorium. Making things even more interesting for Music City is the fact that Jonathan Demme, the Oscar winning director of *The Silence Of The Lambs*, is working with Young on the project. Young has been in Nashville off and on during the last several months working on a new album. The DVD will feature performances and Young's work in the studio. Considering Young's infamous appearance with The Band in *The Last Waltz* where he was geeked out of his mind on blow and grabbing Joni Mitchell's ass, I'll watch him on film anytime.

FROM BAD TO WORSE

A couple of months ago I used a good bit of this page to tell of the sad recent events in the life of former country hit maker Mindy McCready. You may recall that after reaching the top of the charts in 1996, McCready was arrested and convicted in 2004 for prescription drug fraud. Then, earlier this year, she was arrested for DUI, a violation of her probation, and then severely beaten by her boyfriend, both within the same week.

Sadly, the story gets worse. As I'm writing this, McCready is hospitalized involuntarily in Florida after attempting to take her own life with a mixture of alcohol and pills. McCready, who was accompanied in Florida at the time of her suicide attempt by the same boyfriend who tried to kill her earlier this year, will stay in the hospital for an undetermined period of time as a result of a Florida law that allows physicians to admit patients against their will if they are a threat to themselves.

If all of this isn't enough, it appears that McCready's suicide attempt came after she learned of criminal charges that have been filed against her

in the state of Arizona. The five charges, including two felonies and an allegation of identity theft, are said to be related to an attempt by McCready and a man named Guillan Cissin-DeAngelo to purchase two luxury boats valued at \$1.4 million. These actions on the part of McCready were said to have taken place in June, just a month after her hospitalization from the severe beating she took from her boyfriend.

McCready's story is taking twists and turns that wouldn't seem believable if they weren't true. This may seem kind of morbid on my part, but where do I sign up for the movie rights? This would make for some compelling cinema.

WHY, THANK YOU MS HARRIS

The folks at Amazon.com are doing something unusual to celebrate their 10th anniversary. A few lucky fans have been chosen to have the albums they ordered delivered to them by the artists who recorded them. Case in point; a research associate at Nashville's Vanderbilt University named Won Yeong was visited in person last month by Emmylou Harris, who showed up to deliver copies of *Wrecking Ball* and *Red Dirt Girl*. This is a pretty cool promotion on the part of Amazon, and you can only imagine how surprised Yeong was to see Harris walk through the door. She will be even more surprised when, after listening to the brilliant *Wrecking Ball*, she realizes that *Red Dirt Girl* is boring and mediocre.

COMING TO A PHONE NEAR YOU...

Cingular wireless announced last month that a 30 second snippet of the new Gretchen Wilson single *All Jacked Up* is available as a ring tone before it is being released to radio stations and record stores. The song/ringtone, which is the title track of Wilson's new album (due in late September), can be downloaded for \$2.49 on any Cingular phone. I'm not sure how to feel about this one. Sign of the coming apocalypse? Silly trend that kids will be bored with in a few years? Whatever the case, it's just one more thing that makes me feel like a technical retard. My phone doesn't play songs. I don't have an iPod/mp3 player. I actually like going to record stores and purchasing a CD, rather than going through the sterile process of downloading. Sigh...

FROM MOTOR CITY TO MUSIC CITY

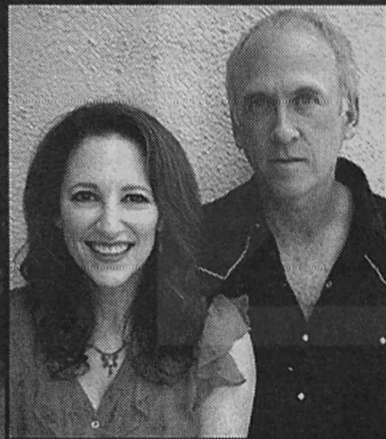
Redneck rock & roll rapper Kid Rock purchased a home in Nashville last month. The Detroit native dropped \$800,000 on a three-story condo in the mid-town West End Avenue area. Kid has long been friends with Hank Williams Jr and the members of MuzikMafia, the gathering of artists that spawned huge careers for Gretchen Wilson and Big & Rich. He had visited Nashville several times in recent years, including one trip which resulted in a brawl at a strip joint. On Kid's first night living in town, he spent the night pounding whiskey with Keith Urban, Uncle Kracker, members of Nashville's rockers Kings of Leon and Holly Williams, daughter of Hank Jr. Kid's presence in town ought to make things a little more interesting.

HELLO LARRY

Larry King, television's oldest collector of wives, made a very surprising Nashville appearance last month... as a guest host on the Grand Ole Opry. Now I know what you are thinking; what the hell is a 70-year old Jewish guy who specializes in softball interviews on a news channel doing hosting the Opry? Well, it just so happens that King's latest young plaything, Shawn Southwick-King, is an aspiring country singer. She has a forthcoming single called *In My Own Backyard*, the title track of her debut CD, that will soon be completely ignored by country radio. But I guess having a famous hubby gets you a spot on the oldest and most respected country music broadcast in the country.

Lorrie Singer & Bradley Kopp

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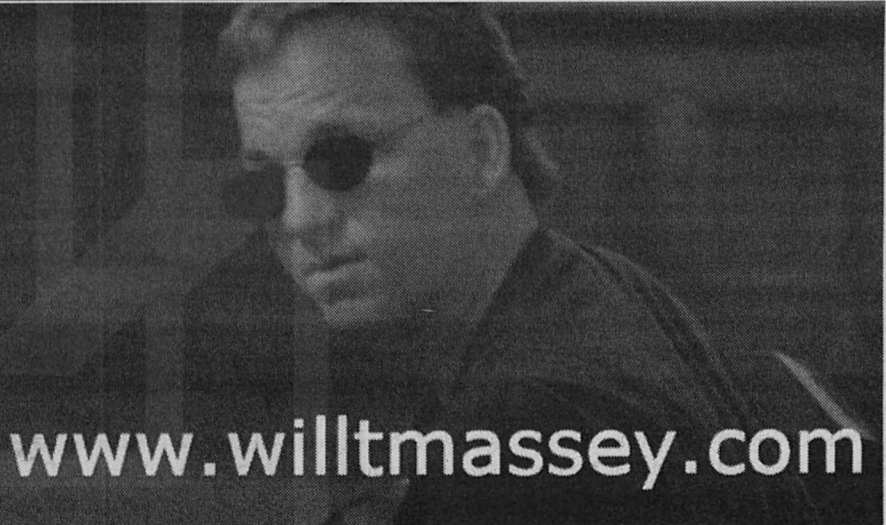
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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Like many Chicago bluesmen getting ripped off by their record labels, **Big Boy Arthur Crudup** supplemented his income by moonlighting under aliases, cutting singles for Checker, rather thinly disguised as 'Percy Lee Crudup,' and Trumpet as 'Elmer James.' Rather charmingly, the **Mississippi Musicians Project** of Starkville High School got the wrong end of the stick on this and included in his profile that "In addition to his vocals, he cut trumpet singles."

◆ While **Lester Melrose**, whose larceny drove Big Boy to temporarily quit music, and consider giving it up entirely, is the villain in the Crudup story, he was by no means the only white promoter who robbed black artists blind, he wasn't even the worst, that distinction probably belongs to Maurice Levy, or possibly Leonard & Phil Chess. ASCAP wouldn't accept black songwriters (to be fair, this was more a class than racial bias, they wouldn't accept hillbillies either, which is why blues, R&B and country songwriters alike flocked to BMI), so there was little remedy against manipulation of credits and royalties. Of course, in these far more enlightened times, blacks are no longer discriminated against but treated equally by most record companies, which now rip off all artists, regardless of race, creed or color.

◆ Mention, in the Crudup story, of *Rocket 88*, generally considered the first rock & roll single, reminds me that the most consistent strand in the feedback I got about this year's **Green Bay Rockin' 50s Fest** was that **Ike Turner** put on an absolutely outstanding show. Actually, he put on two, first a Kings Of Rhythm demonstration that he was, his later reputation notwithstanding, one of the rock & roll greats, then a version of the Ike & Tina Turner Revue, featuring the latest incarnation of Tina, which Bob Brom described as "incredibly cheesy. Marti loved it." To which Marti responded, "Well, we were in Wisconsin after all." The Broms and others spotted Turner several times out jogging and say he doesn't look anything like 74.

◆ If you read *Country Standard Time* you may now be under the impression that **Carrie Rodriguez** is the daughter of "Texas country singer **Johnny Rodriguez**." Which, of course, is utter nonsense, and the magazine's website version of the same article on Chip Taylor & Carrie has, presumably reacting to a "Hey, you dumb fucks" email, and without acknowledging the print version error, corrected it to "daughter of Texas rootsy singer David Rodriguez," not how I'd describe him myself but a qualified improvement.

◆ In the same issue, **Robert Gordon** says "I always try and put a tougher edge on the songs than traditional rockabilly has." Assuming he wasn't misquoted, always a possibility, this sentence simply makes no sense, but then Gordon was never the sharpest note in the bar and may well be under the delusion that it's possible to be tougher than, let's say, Jack Scott or Charlie Feathers. Domino Kings guitarist Steve Newman remarked, "Let's hope when he sees that in print, he'll think 'God, I wish I hadn't said that.'" And apparently "Gordon has never been comfortable being strictly typecast as a rockabilly performer." Oh yes? He sure seemed comfortable enough in the late 70s when it looked, for a few minutes, like he and Link Wray might put rockabilly back in the mainstream and, as the interview later makes clear, 30 years after that bubble burst, most of his gigs are European rockabilly festivals.

◆ What's in an album title? I gotta to say that **Humming By The Flowered Vine**, Laura Cantrell's new one (see Reviews) gives me touch of the heeby jeebies. Not as much as, say, **The Piper At The Gates Of Dawn** or **On The Threshold Of A Dream** (mind you, the title of just about any Pink Floyd or Moody Blues' album makes me want to puke just because it's a Pink Floyd or Moody Blues album). I often wonder how much thought artists put into naming their albums. For instance, eponyms are all very well when people know who you are, but

if nobody outside Bumfuck, KS, has ever heard of you, calling your debut **Joe Blow** would seem pretty damn stupid, but musicians, or at any rate singer-songwriters, do it all the time. My favorite example of how you can come adrift with a poorly chosen title is **David Rodriguez's** cassette **Man Against Beast** (disclosure, that title, a phrase from one of the songs, was my idea). When the usually rather acute Steve Wilkison put it out on Dejadisc, he renamed it after one of the song titles. Later on, he realized that he'd put himself in a double bind. Regular people thought an album called **The True Cross** sounded like it was going to be Christian music, hence to be avoided at all costs, while the kind of people who do buy Christian music don't buy albums by Hispanics.

† BIG AL DOWNING

Wanda Jackson recalled about touring with the African-American who played piano on her 1958 *Let's Have A Party* Capitol Tower sessions, "He couldn't eat in most of the restaurants. He couldn't eat in the hotel restaurants. They'd have to take his food out to the car. On our jobs, he couldn't even use the men's restroom. He had to stay on the stage. The guys would bring him Cokes and things... It was very hard on Al. We've all asked him how he put up with it, and he said, 'It's for the music.'" This would make a fitting epitaph for a man who, though never more than modestly successful, nonetheless made his versatile mark on rockabilly, rock & roll, country, R&B, even disco.

Turning down a Kansas State basketball scholarship, the teenage Downing, who'd taught himself to play piano on a busted up instrument missing most of its keys, joined Bobby Poe & The Poe Cats, when mixed race bands were very rare, who were then hired to back Jackson. As a solo artist, he charted a duet with Little Esther Phillips in 1963, two rock & roll songs in 1964 with his band The Chartbusters and a disco single in 1975, then, raised on country music, scored two Top 20 country hits in the late 70s, *Mr Jones*, which he performed at the Grand Ole Opry this past May, and *Touch Me (I'll Be Your Fool Once More)*, making him one of the more successful of black country artists. With a pounding piano style that blended boogie-woogie and country styles, Downing's legacy also included his own *Down On The Farm* and a sensational version of Jimmy McCracklin's *Georgia Slop*.



TERRY ALLEN & ART LOVER

This (cropped to fit) was the cover of the original Fate version of **The Silent Majority**, for the benefit of those of you who never came across a copy.

A member of the Rockabilly Hall of Fame, Downing built an international following through touring and sheer force of personality. "He was almost like a big kid, he was so loving and accepting of everyone," says Downing's publicist, Martha Moore, of So Much Moore Media, "You could just feel the love coming out of him. He overcame a lot of obstacles and always continued to do exactly what he wanted to musically. He was a true entertainer and he will be missed on many levels."

Born January 9th, 1940, in Centralia, OK, Big Al Downing died of leukemia on July 4th.

LOOSE DIAMONDS #17 A DJ's PRIVATE STASH RICK AUGUST

I live in Regina, Saskatchewan, on the western Canadian prairies. I guess I sort of backed into roots music as a young man, finding myself buying Doug Sahm and Emmylou and such, and staying home to watch Ian Tyson's show on CBC. I suppose being half Scottish by heritage gave me a head start.

I began to get more actively involved in music in the early 90s, producing a local folk festival for a couple of years (which of course got fairly twangy under my tutelage), then promoting alternative roots acts live in Regina.

However, Regina at the time had no alternative media, which made it difficult to introduce non-mainstream music. I became part of a small group that launched an independent alternative community FM station in 2001—a major regulatory and financial mountain to climb.

Since that time, CJTR has carved a respectable market share in our previously alternative-starved city. CJTR has been home to my roots radio show, *Borderlines*, since Week One of the station's history. *Borderlines* is heard every Sunday from 3-5pm CST—feel free to drop in at www.cjtr.ca.

These are a few of the many albums that seem to stick to my ribs:

Terry Allen: Lubbock (on everything)

(Fate 1979/Sugar Hill 1995)

Grievous Angels: One Job Town (Stony Plain, 1990) NB: this is the Canadian not US band

Chris Gaffney & The Cold Hard Facts

(ROM, 1989)

David Essig: High Ground (Woodshed, 1975)

Ian Tyson: Old Corrals & Sagebrush

(Stony Plain, 1983)

Dave Alvin: King Of California (Hightone, 1994)

Keith Jarrett: The Koln Concerts (ECM, 1975)

Bob Dylan: Highway 61 Revisited

(Columbia, 1965)

Cheri Knight: The Northeast Kingdom

(E-Squared, 1998)

Katy Moffatt: Walkin' On The Moon

(Philo, 1976)

Steve Young: Solo/Live (Watermelon, 1991)

Robbie Fulks: Country Love Songs

(Bloodshot, 1996)

Clive Gregson & Christine Collister: Home

And Away (Flying Fish, 1986)

Butch Hancock: West Texas Waltzes

(Rainlight, 1978)

James Hand: Evil Things (Cold Spring, 2000)

John Hiatt: Slow Turning (A&M, 1988)

Robert Earl Keen Jr: West Textures

(Sugar Hill, 1989)

David Rodriguez: The True Cross

(Dejadisc, 1992)

Richard Thompson: Rumor & Sigh

(Capitol, 1991)

I could add a hundred more, but John only has so much ink to spare. If this was kind of a 'Desert Island' collection, however, there are a couple of emerging female country acts paddling their canoes towards landfall—Amber Digby and Winnipeg's Romi Mayes.

TERRY ALLEN

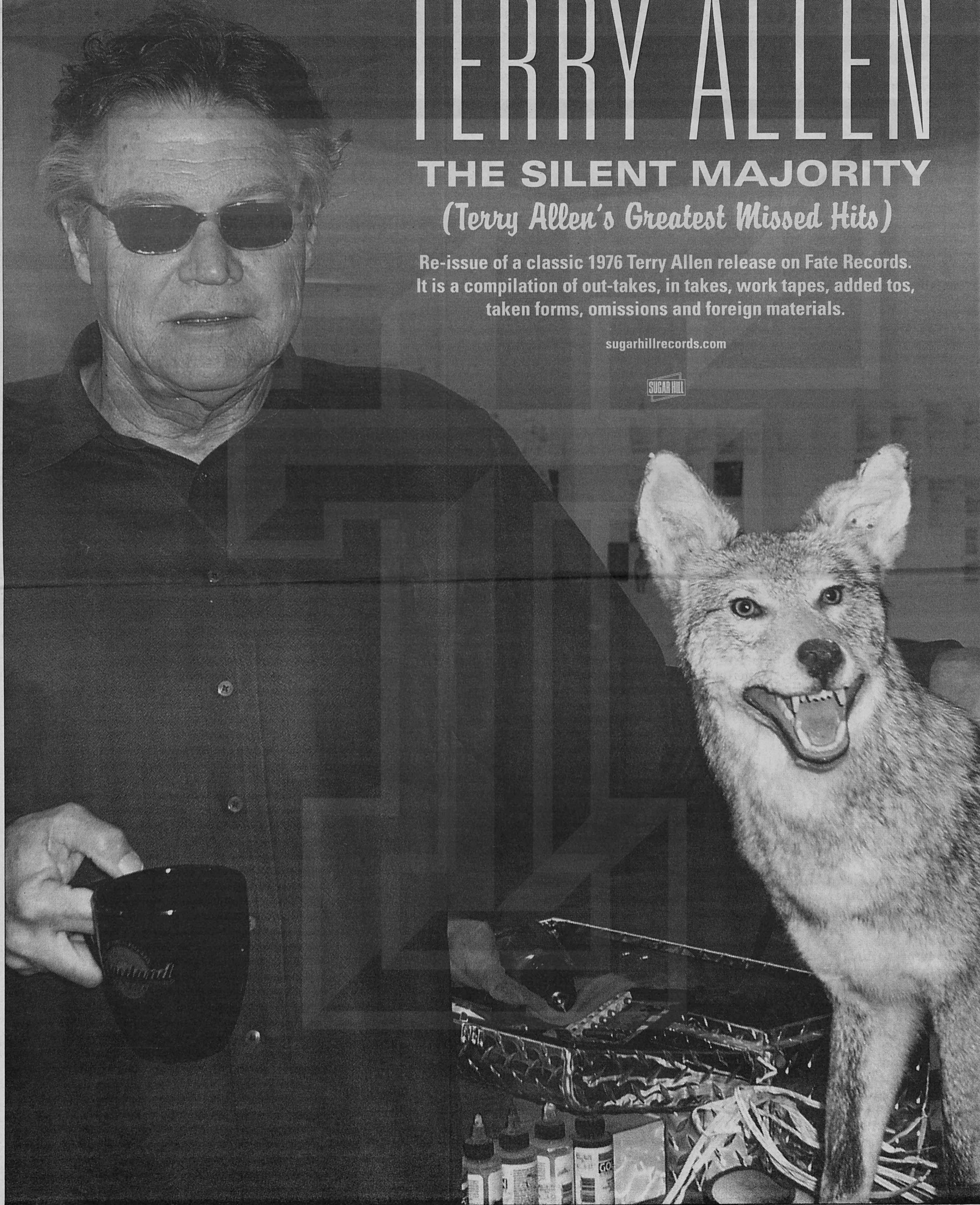
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IT'S NOT AIMED AT ANYONE

A throwaway line, I thought, but, assessing Tift Merritt's chances in the Song of the Year category for its 2005 Awards, my remark that "the AMA seems to have nothing against babes" set off a fairly intense discussion in an Americana-ish egroup, during which one participant opined "Mainstream music is all about fuckability. In this music, fuckability shouldn't disqualify someone."

Well, obviously no one is going to disagree with the basic sentiment. While the combination of good looks and real talent may, as I commented about Sarah Borges a few months ago, seem more than a little unfair, if talent comes wrapped in a pretty package, well that's how the cards were dealt. A prime example, albeit in a different art form, would be one of the most beautiful women of the 20th century, if not the most beautiful, who did everything Fred Astaire did only backwards and in high heels (incidentally, born Margarita Carmen Cansino, Rita Hayworth was a Latina. Not many people know that).

But that was the 20th century, the epitome of the 21st is Anna Kournikova. We all know that the music biz can make silk purses out of sows' ears, stars who couldn't sing the national anthem from the original sheet music if their lives depended on it, but tennis should be real clear cut. Two people go on a court, one wins, the other loses, end of story. So how come the highest earning tennis player isn't even in the top 100 game winners? OK, altogether now, because she has tits out to Christmas.

My view, as I've said before, is that the AMA's dream, and its real agenda, is to find and act as a launching pad for a Star, someone who'll drag Americana out of the 'critically acclaimed' ghetto and put it in the marketplace, but even if this were a rank canard, the reality is that if anyone can pull this off, they're going to have to play by mainstream rules. In other words, any putative Americana star is going to have to be a babe or a hunk, in Professor Rojstaczer's terms, fuckable.

Do I like this? Do I like the thought that someone as gaunt as Hank Williams or chunky as Patsy Cline wouldn't have a prayer in modern Nashville? Of course not, but that's beside the point. The only consideration left to any of us is whether or not this hypothetical Americana star needs to have any actual talent. You may call it semantic quibbling, but when I refer to Merritt as a babe, this does not preclude possession of talent, the way bimbo would, and, though she's useless at songwriting, Merritt can sing as well as look good doing it. Still, while I think that the critics who compared the clichéd *Tambourine* favorably to *Dusty In Memphis* should have their poetic licenses revoked, it got a ton of great press and a Grammy nomination (Best Country Album), but all that, plus a slew of glamorous publicity pix, couldn't move it out of the stores or get it on radio, not even, something she missed in her diatribes against corporate commercial radio, college or community stations.

So does that mean that our conjectural star will have to be *even better looking* than the gorgeous Merritt, or more unambiguously talented, or both? Or does it mean that Lost Highway/Universal just didn't throw enough promotion money at her album? Or perhaps people didn't believe she was really all that fuckable because she wasn't dating a big time athlete or film star. Or maybe, as I believe, it's simply not doable, more precisely, if it can be done, the end result would be anemic Americana, to go along with the bloodless mass market versions of every other genre in America. In other words, worthless.

Merritt's album had two problems. One was simply not being good enough to appeal much to the inundated niche market for Americana. The other? There is no other market. *Tambourine* was chasing shadows.

JC

THE MORELLS • THINK ABOUT IT BRIAN CAPPS • WALK THROUGH WALLS THE DOMINO KINGS SOME KIND OF SIGN THE BEL AIRS • GOT LOVE

(Hightone)

For musicians in or around Austin, Texas, the really vexing questions about recording all start with Who, as in Who would I like to have produce my CD? Who can I realistically afford? Who might actually want to work with me or at least be willing to fit me into their schedule? While it'd be going too far to say you can't throw a rock in Austin without hitting someone who calls himself a record producer (when I say 'himself,' this is very much a boy's club), there are dozens of the bastards. About six of them are any good. Who are they? That's for me to know and you to pay my standard consulting fee—four Casbeers' enchiladas and two Fat Tires—to find out.

However, for musicians in and around Springfield, Missouri, things are a good deal simpler. There are, apparently, two, maybe three, studios in the town of 150,000, but one of them is The Studio, and if there are any other record producers, real or pretend, it really doesn't matter because The Studio is owned and operated by Lou Whitney. Originally from Phoenix, his first experience of the music business was seeing Lee Hazelwood and Al Casey drinking beer in an air-conditioned studio at two in the afternoon on a scorching Arizona summer day. "This has got a lot of pluses going on," the teenager decided. Stranded in Springfield when he was fired by a national real estate company, Whitney, who'd always been in bands as a bassplayer, formed The Morells and helped out at a local studio which he was able to buy when the owners divorced. Despite being rather off the beaten path, he's produced and/or engineered dozens of roots rock albums over the last 20 years, and, as producer and often more, is the common denominator in Hightone's four 'Big Noise From Springfield' albums and national tour.

As it's his band, we'll start with The Morells, which Whitney and guitarist D Clinton 'Donnie' Thompson, who'd been playing together since 1973, formed in 1980. This is only The Morells' third album, 1982's *Shake And Push* being separated by almost 20 years from the eponymous 2001 'follow-up,' as Whitney & Thompson spent most of the 80s and 90s, and put out more albums (four), fronting The Skeletons, basically a hired gun backing band for Steve Forbert, Syd Straw, Dave Alvin and others. Eccentrically eclectic, The Morells' strong suits have always been devilish tight sprung rhythms, Whitney joined here by drummer Ron Cremp, like keyboardist Dudley Brown a former Ozark Mountain Daredevil, Thompson's fabulously greasy Telecaster and spot on material. Along with originals, the 11 tracks include Chuck Berry's *Nadine*, the Delmore Brothers' *Girls Don't Worry My Mind*, Paul Revere & The Raiders' *Ups And Downs*, Cousin Joe Pleasant's *How Come My Dog Don't Bark (When You Come Around)* and The Monkees' *Let's Dance On*, and *Think About It* (*****) can only cement their reputation as a bar band with a cult following.

As The Morells, under the name The True Liars, will be backing him on tour, and most of them played on his debut, we'll move on to Brian Capps, former lead singer of The Domino Kings, which he quit in 2001 because of 'creative differences,' which sounds so much nicer than getting into an ugly barroom fist fight with the guitarist. Capps was bitten by the music bug at five, when his parents took him to a Johnny Cash concert, and includes two Cash numbers, Merle Travis' *The Devil To Pay* and *Dark As A Dungeon* on *Walk Through Walls* (*****). While he doesn't have TMIB's resonance, there's a certain Cash-ish flavor to Capps' phrasing, which could hardly be served better than by Whitney, Thompson et al's chugalug backing. What gives the album its special oomph though is Capps' seven excellent originals (there's also a cover of Rodney Crowell's *Standing On A Rock*), of which the standout is *When We Learn* ("Maybe love ain't as bad as we made it out to be").

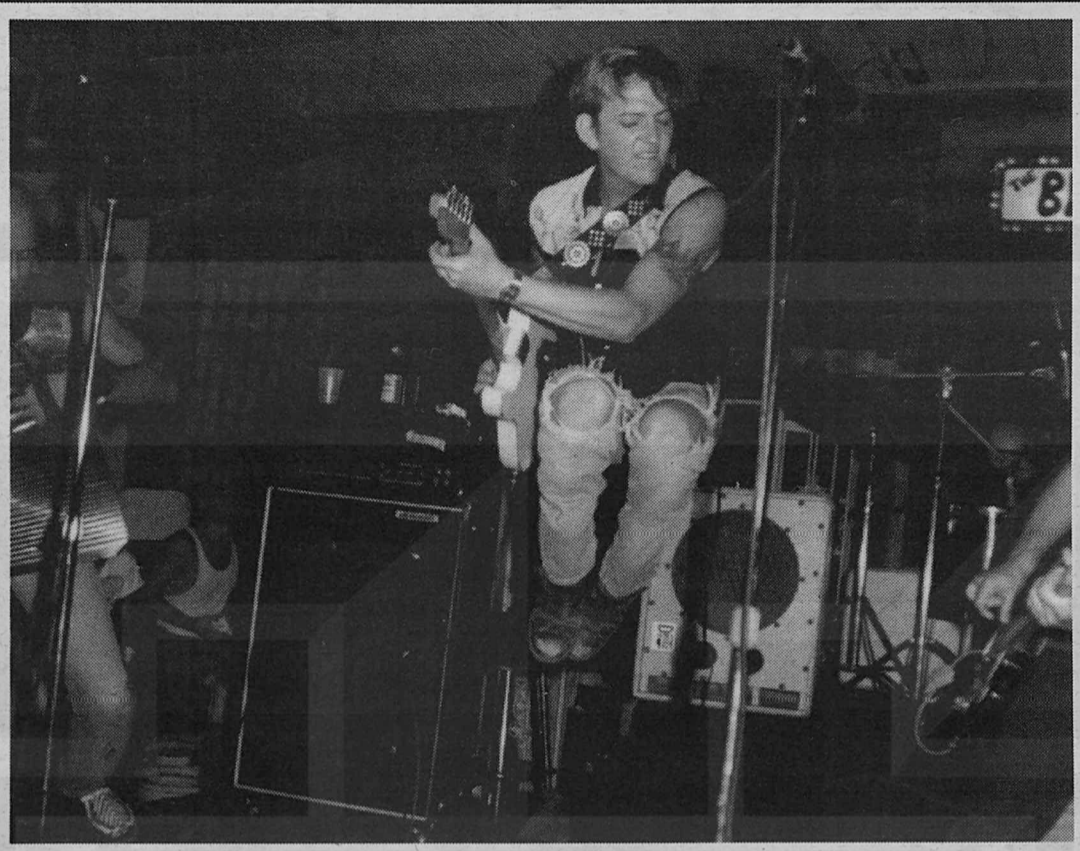
Losing your lead singer, your record label (Slewfoot) and thousands of dollars worth of equipment and merchandise (stolen in New Braunfels, oh the shame) might be taken as *Some Kind Of Sign* (*****.5) that maybe the band isn't meant to be, but The Domino Kings have already bounced back once, with *The Back Of Your Mind*, and are very much in business with their fourth album. Guitarist Steve Newman, who says "We grew up on songs about God and killin' and Jesus and mother and killin'," wrote nine of the 11 songs, the others coming from drummer Les Gailler and former Domino King, Newman's cousin Jimmy Ginnings, and if the latter's *Walk Away If You Want To* is the standout, Newman's *Pain In My Past, It's All Over But The Crying*, *Dark Side Of The Moon*, *Every Night About This Time* and *You Tear Me Up*, not to mention the obligatory murder song, *Bridges I've Burned*, are all highlights. Finely balanced between honky tonk and rockabilly, roots rock just doesn't get much better than The Domino Kings. Incidentally, Capps plays bass on two tracks, so I guess he and Newman made up.

I'm sure Whitney did his best for the Columbia, MO, based Bel Airs, but, like all white bar blues band albums, *GOT LOVE* (**) has to compete with all those darned reissues. During the second track, it occurred to me that I could be listening to Howlin' Wolf instead. God, I love the Wolf.

For all I know, The Bel Airs are a really great live act, but even with a question mark hanging over that portion of the bill, the Big Noise From Springfield package already offers three fine albums and the promise of a really outstanding night out. They won't get to Texas until October though.

JC

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1st -- Piano Slim • 1928 LaGrange, TX
 ----- Jerry Garcia • 1942 San Francisco, CA
 ----- Piano Red † 1985
 2nd -- Big Walter Price • 1917 Gonzales, TX
 ----- Hank Cochran • 1935 Isola, MS
 ----- Betty Jack Davis † 1953
 ----- Leo Soileau † 1980
 ----- Redd Stewart † 2003
 3rd -- Mercy Dee Walton • 1915 Waco, TX
 ----- Shelton Dunaway • 1934 Monroe, LA
 4th -- Lee Martin • 1929 Golden Meadow, LA
 ----- Frankie Ford • 1939 Gretna, LA
 ----- Mark O'Connor • 1962 Seattle, WA
 5th -- Tuts Washington † 1984
 6th -- TK Hulin • 1943 St Martinville, LA
 ----- Memphis Minnie † 1973
 7th -- Felice Bryant • 1925 Milwaukee, MN
 ----- Esther Phillips † 1984
 ----- Rodney Crowell • 1950 Houston, TX
 8th -- Knocky Parker • 1918 Palmer, TX
 ----- Juan Lopez • 1922 Jackson Co, TX
 ----- Webb Pierce • 1926 West Monroe, LA
 ----- Mel Tillis • 1932 Pahokee, FL
 9th -- Robert Shaw • 1908 Stafford, TX
 ----- Merle Kilgore • 1934 Chickasha, OK
 ----- Aldus Mouton • 1941 Cankton, LA
 ----- Jesse Ashlock † 1976
 ----- Jerry Garcia † 1995
 10th -- Louise Massey • 1902 Hart Co, TX
 ----- Leo Fender • 1907 Buena Park, CA
 ----- Wanda Coffman • 1911 Roanoke, TX
 ----- Ronnie Bennett • 1943 New York City, NY
 ----- Lucille Bogan † 1948
 11th -- Clint West • 1938 Vidrine, LA
 ----- Ronnie Dawson • 1939 Dallas, TX
 ----- Percy Mayfield † 1984
 12th -- Rex Griffin • 1912 Gasden, AL
 ----- Percy Mayfield • 1920 Minden, LA
 ----- Buck Owens • 1929 Sherman, TX
 ----- Porter Wagoner • 1930 West Plains, MO
 ----- Rod Bernard • 1940 Opelousas, LA
 13th -- King Curtis † 1971
 14th -- Johnny Burnette † 1964
 ----- Sarah Borges • 1978 Taunton, MA
 ----- Roy Buchanan † 1988
 15th -- Bobby Helms • 1935 Bloomington, IN
 ----- Don Rich • 1941 Olympia, WA
 ----- Big Bill Broonzy † 1958
 ----- Lawrence Walker † 1968
 16th -- Chuck Guillory • 1919 Mamou, LA
 ----- Durwood Haddock • 1934 Lamesco, TX
 ----- Cookie • 1936 Jennings, LA
 ----- Robert Johnson † 1938
 ----- Champ Hood • 1952 Spartanburg, SC
 ----- Norman Petty • 1984

17th -- Walter Brown • 1917 Dallas, TX
 ----- Wayne Raney • 1921 Wolf Bayou, AR
 ----- Jimmy Donley • 1929 Gulfport, MS
 ----- Guitar Gable • 1937 Bellevue, LA
 ----- Kevin Welch • 1955 Long Beach, CA
 ----- Dorsey Burnette † 1979
 18th -- Hank Penny • 1918 Birmingham, AL
 ----- Johnny Preston • 1939 Port Arthur, TX
 ----- Mark Rubin • 1966 Stillwater, OK
 19th -- Al Ferrier • 1935 Montgomery, LA
 20th -- Jim Reeves • 1924 Carthage, TX
 ----- Justin Tubb • 1935 San Antonio, TX
 ----- Don Leady • 1949 Alton, IL
 ----- Leon McAuliffe † 1988
 21st -- James Burton • 1939 Shreveport, LA
 ----- Jackie DeShannon • 1944 Hazel, KY
 22nd -- John Lee Hooker • 1917 Clarksdale, MS
 ----- Marie Falcon • 1920 Rayne, LA
 ----- Dale Hawkins • 1938 Goldmine, LA
 ----- Hociel Thomas † 1952
 ----- Marvin Denton • 1956 Racine, WI
 ----- Floyd Tillman † 2003
 23rd -- Tex Williams • 1917 Ramsey, IL
 ----- Hoyle Nix † 1985
 24th -- Big Boy Arthur Crudup • 1905 Forest, MS
 ----- Wynonie Harris • 1915 Omaha, NB
 ----- Carl Mann • 1942 Huntingdon, TN
 ----- Nat Stuckey † 1988
 25th -- Chelo Silva • 1922 Brownsville, TX
 ----- Elvis Costello • 1955 London, UK
 ----- Cliff Bruner † 2000
 26th -- Rockin' Dopsie † 1993
 27th -- Wade Fruge • 1916 Eunice, LA
 ----- Carter Stanley • 1925 McClure, VA
 ----- Elroy Dietzel • 1927 Seguin, TX
 ----- Charlene Hancock • 1938 Morton, TX
 ----- Fernest Arceneaux • 1940 Duralde, LA
 28th -- Dayna Kurtz • 1965 Matawan, NJ
 29th -- Jimmy C Newman • 1927 Mamou, LA
 ----- Mingo Saldivar • 1936 Marion, TX
 ----- Jimmy Reed † 1976
 30th -- Kitty Wells • 1918 Nashville, TN
 ----- Preston Frank • 1947 Oberlin, LA
 31st -- Jerry Allison • 1939 Hillsboro, TX

ARMADILLO WORLD HQ 35th ANNIVERSARY

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