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art & grit

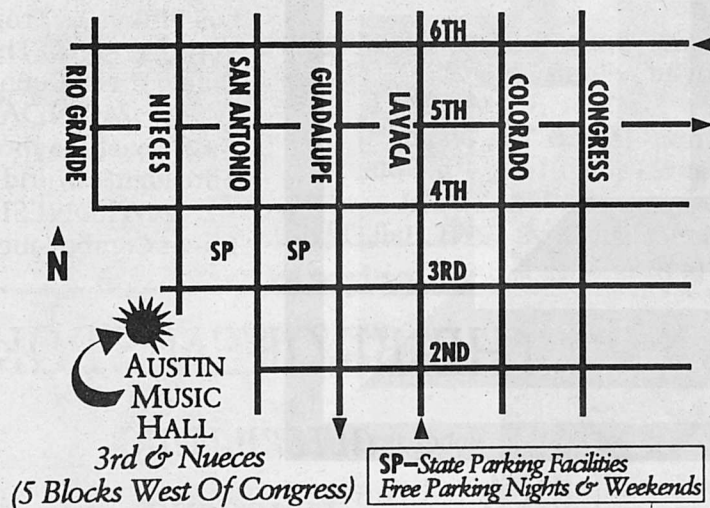
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Saturday 20Butch Hancock
Sunday 21Kelly Willis and Bruce Robison
Monday 22Jimmy LaFave
Tuesday 23Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones
Wednesday 24 ..Texana Dames with Tomás Ramirez

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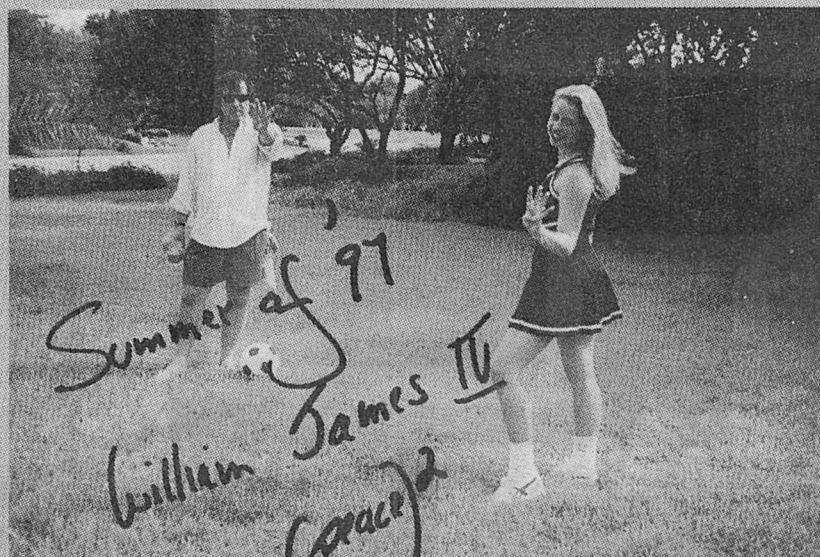
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PUSH & PULL

TEXAS ACCORDION ASSOCIATION 1998 CONVENTION

Here's your opportunity to make specific suggestions regarding the program for the next TAA convention. Send them to Sam Gentry (sgentry@austintx.net) or direct to Norman Seaton (nns5522@dccc.edu).

The big Texas Accordion Convention is scheduled for the weekend of March 21, 1998, in Plano, near Dallas. We are currently looking for suggestions for workshops. Piano, diatonic, and chromatic. We want suggestions for music types, etc. Of course we'll have the large accordion orchestra (always a popular item), and it is never the total convention. Talk to me—what do you want??

Norman Seaton
§ No Hall of Fame this month, basically due to piss poor organization. It was time for a Cajun, that was obvious, but which one? Ah, that's no so easy, and I didn't allow enough time to build a consensus, not to mention lay hands on a decent picture. So it's being held over till next month. Also, people have suddenly started spelling 'accordion' right, so no Accordion Wall of Shame either.

ACCORDION CALENDAR

TUESDAY 2ND

Debra Peters & The Love Saints Broken Spoke, 8pm, \$0. 3CAN December Rendezvous (NOT 9th).

WEDNESDAY 3RD

Gulf Coast Playboys Antone's, 6pm, \$0

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Jovita's, 8pm, \$0

THURSDAY 4TH

Crazy Jane & The Bishop w/Serge Lainé Fadó, 214 W 4th, 9pm, \$0

FRIDAY 5TH

Dancehall Boys SPJST Hall, Taylor, 8pm

Gulf Coast Playboys Jovita's, 8pm, \$0

SATURDAY 6TH

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones + more Kerrville Xmas Reunion, Waterloo Ice House (6th/Lamar), 8pm

Bayou Beaujolais w/Serge Lainé Wheatsville Art Festival, Wheatsville Coop, 3101 Guadalupe, noon, \$0

WEDNESDAY 10TH

Gulf Coast Playboys Broken Spoke, 9pm, \$0

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Jovita's, 8pm, \$0

THURSDAY 11TH

Gulf Coast Playboys Antone's, 6pm, \$0

FRIDAY 12TH

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Frio Brewery Xmas Party, 1905 N St Mary's, San Antonio, 5.30pm, \$0

SATURDAY 13TH

Los Pinkys Jovita's, 8pm, \$0

WEDNESDAY 17TH

Crazy Jane & The Bishop Fadó, 214 W 4th, 9pm, \$0

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Jovita's, 8pm, \$0

THURSDAY 18TH

Gulf Coast Playboys Antone's, 6pm, \$0

FRIDAY 19TH

Gulf Coast Playboys' Cajun Xmas Club 21, Uhland, 8pm

SATURDAY 20TH

Los Pinkys Little Mexico, 7.30pm, \$0

TUESDAY 23RD

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Armadillo Xmas Bazaar, Austin Music Hall, 8pm

SATURDAY 27TH

Los Pinkys La Tropicana, 9pm

Ponty Bone & The Squeezetones Cibolo Creek Country Club, 9.30pm

MONDAY 29TH

Gulf Coast Playboys + Los Pinkys Threadgill's World HQ, 6.30pm, \$0

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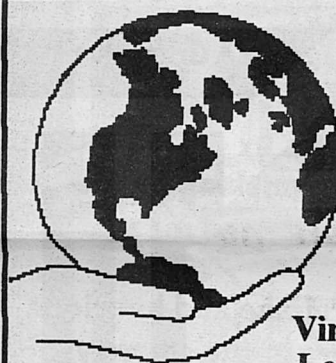
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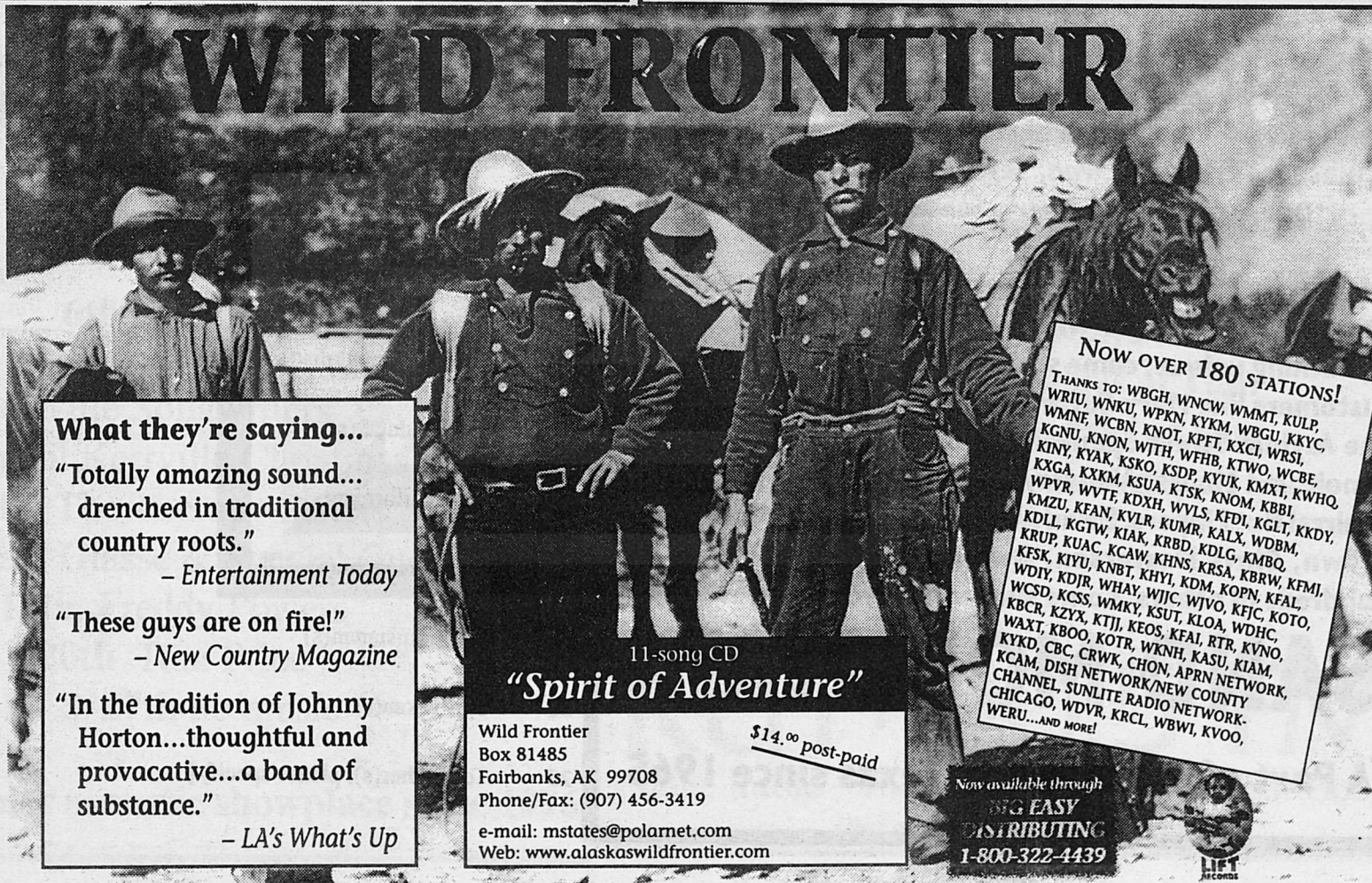


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1997 'ART & GRIT' POLL

3rd Coast Music and Third Coast Music Network, KSYM, San Antonio, invite you to participate in our first ever Art & Grit music poll. We hope you'll take the time to think about the 23 categories listed below, fill them in and return a ballot before Dec 24th to:

Art & Grit, 620 Circle Ave, Round Rock, TX 78664 or ThirdCM@aol.com

♦ To complicate things, you have the option of voting twice (or, of course, not at all) in each category, assigning SIX points in any ratio (unless otherwise specified, we'll assume votes are split evenly, 3 + 3).

♦ Poll results will be published in the January 1998 issue of 3rd Coast Music and featured on a Third Coast Music Network special.

♦ We won't ask you to toe the 3CM No Majors line, but please think Art & Grit.

PERSONAL INFO

I'm responding from (city/state/country):

ALBUMS

- 1 Top Album(s)
- 2 Top California Album(s)
- 3 Top Chicago Album(s)
- 4 Top Louisiana Album(s)
- 5 Top Texas Album(s)
- 6 Top [other(s), please specify]
- 7 Top Reissue(s)

BANDS

- 8 Top Band(s)
- 9 Top California Band(s)
- 10 Top Chicago Band(s)
- 11 Top Louisiana Band(s)
- 12 Top Texas Band(s)
- 13 Top [other(s), please specify]

INDIVIDUALS

- 14 Top Female Singer(s)
- 15 Top Male Singer(s)
- 16 Top Songwriter(s)
- 17 Top Instrumentalist(s)
- 18 Top Producer(s)
- 19 Top Californian(s)
- 20 Top Chicagoan(s)
- 21 Top Louisianan(s)
- 22 Top Texan(s)
- 23 Top [other(s), please specify]

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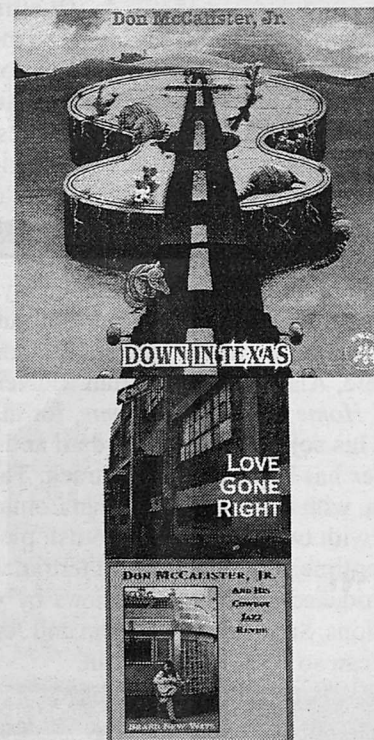
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3CM REVIEWS

ED MILLER • THE EDINBURGH RAMBLER

(Wellfield, CD)

Of his fourth album, Miller asked me, "If the best African music is recorded in Paris, the best Jamaican in London and the best Puerto Rican in NYC, why can't a great Scots album be made in Austin?" Good question, which reminds me of another, posed by an MCT poll respondent who in the Folk Artist category wrote, "Ed Miller of course. Who else is there?" A little unfair, there is a genuine, if obscure, folk underground in Austin, but his point is taken. In the hermetic world of folk music, Miller, a highly regarded member of the 60s Scottish Folk Revival, is a genuine star, touring America, Canada and his native Scotland. What you don't get from him is nostalgia, mysticism or 'Haggis Western' opportunism. What you do get is a well thought out, warmly and reflectively sung, array of traditional songs, hardedged contemporary songs by Ian Davidson, Jim Davison, Jim Reid, Alan Reid and Brian McNeill and Miller's own adaptations. Tommy Sands' *Home Away From Home*, for instance, he almost completely rewritten to reflect his sojourns in Amsterdam and Texas while Ewan McColl's *Manchester Rambler* has become the title track. The album winds up in fairly typical Miller fashion, with a medley of an Alan Lomax collected cowboy song, *The Devil Made Texas*, with two traditional Scottish pieces. Accompanied by fiddler John Taylor and longtime partner Rich Brotherton, who played no less than seven instruments and produced, with contributions by Cathy Brotherton and Mike Maddux on accordions, Serge Laine bodhran and Jeff Moeller, Miller proves that a great Scots album can so be made in Austin. JC

CAJUN STRING BANDS THE 1930s CAJUN BREAKDOWN

(Arhoolie, CD)

With the paying public demanding country and swing sounds in the mid-30s, the fiddle regained its primary role in Cajun music and the accordion, dominant since the 20s, virtually disappeared from Cajun bandstands. As an accordion fan, I naturally regard this as an unhealthy development, but it only lasted till the late 40s, when the accordion came storming back. Chronicling this interval, the 25 tracks, taken from 78s in Chris Strachwitz's collection, feature four by Leo Soileau & His Aces, two by Clifford Breaux with his sister Cleoma Falcon on Dobro, one by the Dixie Ramblers with fiddler Hector Dubon, and seven by The Hackberry Ramblers with Luderin Darbone, who, of course, is still an active performer. The major figure, however, less popular than Soileau or Darbone in his heyday, but enormously influential, is JB (Jean Batiste) Fuselier, with six tracks as the featured fiddler with Beethoven Miller's Merrymakers, including *Chere Tu Tu*, and five as the Merrymakers' leader, including *Ma Chere Basett*. The material varies considerably, from Soileau's traditional Cajun pieces plus drums, Breaux's blues fiddle and wildman vocals, particularly *Continuez De Sonner* (Keep A Knockin'), the Dixie Ramblers' Cajun interpretation of the New Orleans jazz standard *High Society*, with Duhon fiddling Alphonse Picou's famous clarinet solo, while the Hackberry Ramblers openly embrace English language pop and western, with *Rambling*, *Oh Josephine* and *My Little Girl*. JC

MAC CURTIS • ROCKABILLY UPRISING JOHNNY CARROLL • TEXABILLY THE BEST OF RAY CAMPI VOL I JACKIE LEE COCHRAN • ROCKABILLY MUSIC JIMMIE LEE MASLON SALACIOUS ROCKABILLY CAT

(Rollin' Rock/HMG, CDs)

Rockin' Ronnie Weiser, a rockabilly obsessed German loony who pretty much forced his parents to migrate to the US, was a key figure in the 70s Rockabilly Revival, putting out LPs, recorded in his LA living room or garage, by rediscovered 50s originals like Curtis, Carroll, Campi and Cochran, and young throwbacks like Maslon. In doing so, he ran up against a shortage not of talent but material, rockabilly being a quintessentially singles-based genre. King Records and Big D Jamboree veteran Mac Curtis of Forth Worth, for instance, recycles his own classics, *If I Had A Woman*, *Granddaddy's Rockin'*, Thumper (aka George) Jones' *How Come It* and Johnny Carroll's *Wild Wild Women*, but his album is as much country as rockabilly, not there's anything wrong with that. By 1977, Johnny Carroll of Dallas, once the definitive rockabilly wildman, was somewhat subdued, but Ray Campi, the godfather of the Revival and mainstay of The Rockabilly Rebels (featuring a teenage Maslon), the first authentic rockabilly band since the 50s, who plays on all these albums, was in great form. However, Cochran, who wrote almost all his vigorous material, is the pick of this litter, though all these albums deserve, if not quite demand, a place in any rockabilly library. JC

BEE HOUSTON & HIS HIGH STEPPERS

THE HUSTLER

(Arhoolie, CD)

Born in San Antonio in 1938, Houston, who "apparently" died in 1991, scraped together \$50 to buy a trumpet so he could join his school's drum & bugle corps, but it wasn't enough so he had to settle for a guitar. After playing in San Antonio in the late 50s, leading Texas tour backing bands for blues stars like Bobby Bland, he moved to Los Angeles where he worked with, inter alia, Big Mama Thornton, and, convinced by his stunning guitar work on her original version of *Ball And Chain*, Strachwitz made several attempts to record him and did finally release his eponymous, and only, LP in 1970. Added to that album's 10 tracks are eight unissued cuts, all featuring great sax section playing, notably by Wilbert 'Jiggs' Hemsley, plus *Woke Up This Morning* with Houston backing Thornton. The problem in the studio was Houston's idiosyncratic tuning—as he bent the strings while playing, he reasoned he should bend them while tuning—and one of his producers, Barret Hansen (aka Dr Demento), complained he'd spent half a session trying to get Houston in tune with the rest of the band. Since those sessions, Strachwitz seems to have relaxed his fealty to the standard European scale, pointing out that it hasn't actually been standard all that long and recognizing that many African-Americans have a different perception. Personally, I find the previously unissued tracks far more interesting than those originally deemed fit for release. A dynamic and distinctive player in any case, Houston, who, incidentally, wrote most all his material, is at his most arresting when his producers seem to have thrown in the towel—check out *Blues For Rupe* (D Flat Blues). JC

KING SOUL • WORK YOUR SHOW

(Freedom, CD)

Quite why African-Americans abandoned so many of the musical genres they created and developed so brilliantly is a knotty question I'll leave to sociomusicologists, but, leaving aside the much debated issue of legitimacy, there are some purely practical problems involved in white substitution. A short stroll down 6th Street will prove that any three or four idiots can call themselves a blues band and sort of get away with it, but R&B and Soul are rather more demanding. Not only do you have to have a decent singer, a strong rhythm section, a competent horn section, a hot sax player and a wailing organist, you actually have to rehearse. All of which goes to explain why Tom Clifford vocals/harmonica/accordion, Larry Lange bass/vocals, Michael Christian drums/vocals, Landis Armstrong guitar/vocals, Charles Dickey trombone, Rick White trumpet, Joey Colarusso sax, Patrick Parker-Benfield organ, with Jim Panek piano and organ on nine tracks, Andra Mitrovich vocals on one have the field to themselves in Austin. The upside is, nobody else around is mining an incredible legacy of material. Clifford wrote two of the 11 tracks, the classically styled *Ask My Baby* and the Zydeco-flavored *Blow My Stack*, and, while avoiding obvious boomer crowdpleasers, covers a mix of obscurities and one-time hits. Opening with Allen Toussaint's *You See Me*, taken from Robert Parker's version, they deal in fine style with *Somebody's Changing* (My Sweet Baby's Mind) from Johnny Sales' only LP, Sam & Dave's *Rich Kind Of Poverty* and *When Something Is Wrong With My Baby*, Little Willie John's *Take My Love*, Howard Tate's *Glad I Knew Better*, a standout version of OV Wright's *I'd Rather Be Blind*, *Crippled And Crazy*, Lee Dorsey's *Get Out Of My Life Woman* and Freddie Scott's *Are You Lonely For Me*. The obvious love and devotion to it aside, who else is playing this great stuff? JC

LOU ANN BARDASH • AT THE VORTEX DAYNA KURTZ • OTHERWISE LUSCIOUS LIFE DAR WILLIAMS WHAT DO YOU HEAR IN THESE SOUNDS

(NSR/Deebles/Razor & Tie, CDs)

Having launched Tom Ovans on the path to cult status, Bardash makes her own move with a moody album, produced by Ovans and featuring, in her brooding alto, his *Gone To Mexico*, Leonard Cohen's *Tower Of Song* as a 3/4 blues shuffle, Bessie Smith's *Sorrowful Blues* country-style, the Art Hodges Trio's *Blues 'N' Booze* and seven originals. With dissonant chords, offbeat structures and idiosyncratic writing style, Bardash's intellectualism makes me wonder, even more than Ovans' CDs, why they live in Nashville, her 'Art' is Big City stuff. This is equally true of Kurtz, a mesmerizing performer who, producing herself as it were on the fly, creates amazing atmospheric effects with her incredible voice and stunning guitar work. If the way she plays her highly charged original songs on this live album can distract attention from the songs themselves, she leaves most Girls With A Guitar for dead. Having heard Dar Williams' killer takeoff of Robert Earl Keen, I'm willing to forgive her a lot, but she pushes me beyond the limit with *The Christians And The Pagans*. On this six track EP, I guess it comes down to how much you're willing to pay for her superb reading of *Wilder Than Her*, accompanied by Fred Eaglesmith, which really is better than his own recorded version, though I'd rather he rerecorded it, live for choice. JC

DAVE HOOPER



December appearances

Mon 1st	La Palapa, 7pm, w/Anxiety Attack
Tue 2nd	La Palapa, 7.30pm, w/Mike Kearney
Thu 4th	New World Deli, 41st & Guadalupe, 7pm
Wed 10th	Threadgill's #1, 7.30pm, w/Anxiety Attack
Sun 14th	Artz Rib House, 6.30pm, w/Anxiety Attack
Tue 16th	La Palapa, 7.30pm, solo

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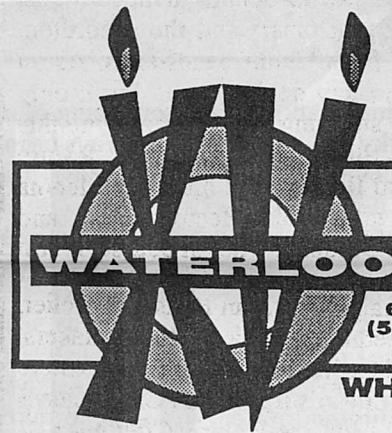
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3CM REVIEWS

DUNCAN McLEAN • LONE STAR SWING

(Random House, paperback)

Having won a literature prize which had to spent on foreign travel, McLean, not just a Scotsman but from the Orkney Islands, decided to use the dosh to indulge his passion for Western Swing with a trip to Texas, of which the climax ("Either that or the anti-climax") would be the 1995 Bob Wills Memorial Weekend in Turkey. His account of his meandering pilgrimage, from the Louisiana border to Turkey via Wichita Falls, Fort Worth, El Paso, Presidio, San Antonio and Austin, combines travelogue with musings on Western Swing. Very much a stranger in a strange land, coming from an island where it's impossible to drive 20 minutes in any direction without reaching the sea, and to whom traffic lights, let alone rush hour on a Texas freeway, were novelties, McLean's witty accounts of incidents along the way and reactions to such Americana as a barbed wire museum, the Presidio Onion Festival, Rush Limbaugh or an issue of *Weekly World News* are very engaging. On the Western Swing side, one can only marvel at how deeply a man in such a far-flung backwater still managed to immerse himself in the music and acquire such a profound grasp of its recordings, history, lore, esoterica and minutiae. McLean remarks at one point on his "two years of saving and half an hour of planning," and his attempts to connect with Western Swing veterans and aficionados are rather less successful than John Williams' pursuit of noir writers in his very comparable *Into The Badlands*, but even the fumbles are entertaining. His reliability on details is called into question by the Austin chapter, which is riddled with minor errors (eg "Toni Rice"), but on the other hand, he certainly had 6th Street's number. Still, there are no pretensions here to being a reference work, though there's some great data on Vernon Dalhart's pseudonyms, and overall it's a very good read. JC

SISTERS MORALES AIN'T NO PERFECT DIAMOND

(Luna, CD)

Roberta, the tall blonde one, and Lisa, the small dark one, are something of a personal paradox, a) because I don't do perky real well but have always been real fond of them and their bubbly form of country-rock, and b) because the Houston-based sisters are just about the only people I've run a cover story on (MCT #51) who actually had commercial potential. In fact, they were later signed to RCA, but, vindicating my role as a straw to show which way the wind isn't blowing, dropped after cutting two albums RCA deemed nonviable. Miraculously, they were still on the roster, with medical coverage, when Roberta Morales learned she had a sarcoma on her leg, so some good came of it. Back in the world, they've finally put out their own album but, like so many people with a great live show, have difficulty projecting their infectious vitality and joi de vivre, so, a more routine paradox, people familiar with them may be a little disappointed while everyone else will be bowled over. They sing and harmonize beautifully, and their band, notably David Spencer, consistently amazing on electric, steel and gut-string guitars, is formidable. Where old friends and newcomers will be united is on the really outstanding tracks, Roberta's *The Wheel*, Roberta & Lisa's *The Storm* and Lisa's *Everything Around Me Remains The Same (The Lumber Song)* plus Bobby Collazo's *La Ultima Noche* and Augustin Lara's *Noche De Ronde*. This Hermanas Morales mode, an essential and electrifying part of their show, not to mention who they are, was, due to Nashville having taken a much-deserved bath in the Spanish language market, a particular bone of contention with RCA. So if this was only one, if the most obvious, of the compromises they didn't have to make, RCA's loss is our gain. JC

GEORGE JONES & TAMMY WYNETTE GOLDEN RING

(Razor & Tie, CD)

Twenty years ago, when country music was on roughly the same cultural level as red velvet flock wallpaper, enjoying a white trash album like this was something of a guilty pleasure. Trying to explain that all you had to do was ignore the production, the lyrics, the strings and the choirs and concentrate on the voices, and if it wasn't for fucking Billy Sherrill, Jones and Wynette would be recognized, separately and together, as two of the great singers of our time, well, it was just way simpler to present this stuff as outrageously wonderful kitsch. Even the most fastidious could relate to that. Twenty years later, with country music on the roughly the same cultural level as Barbie dolls, it doesn't sound half bad. The best of the Jones/Wynette albums, it includes two #1 hits, Bobby Braddock's title track and Milton Berle's signature tune *Near You*, plus duet versions of Buck Owens' *Cryin' Time*, Carl Belew's *Even the Bad Times Are Good*, Johnny Tillotson's *I've Seen Better Days*, Ray Price's *I'll Be There (If You Ever Want Me)* and Carl Smith's *If You Don't Somebody Else Will*, making it far superior to the usual one hit single plus nine duds country LP formula so familiar to Jones fans. Even so, it's still a Billy Sherrill album—the only credits are for his poxy background vocalists. JC

ANNA FERMIN • TRIGGER GOSPEL

(sighlow, CD)

Maybe he says it to all the girls, but when Fermin opened for Johnny Cash (and by the way, ain't it sad?) at House of Blues in Chicago late last year, he told her, "Little lady, you got a real pretty voice, keep up the good work." If Cash's health was already failing, there was nothing wrong with his ears. Fermin does indeed have a pretty voice, in fact she might've reminded Johnny of Rosanne, though—and this is not something I say lightly—comparison with Patsy Cline is not altogether fanciful, in fact on *I'll Forget You* it's virtually unavoidable. Pure, expressive, supple and vibrant, with an engaging combination of vulnerability and forthrightness, Fermin sings better than any of the country divas I've heard lately and her songs are far better (course, that's not saying much). What direction Fermin will go in is rather a good question as she came to Chicago from Manila, and I don't think there's a quota for Filipina country artists, but there *must* be a niche somewhere for someone who sings so good. A demo CD, with only five tracks plus, unlisted, the drastically overproduced but still kinda interesting *Star Quality*, featuring her with a basic guitar, bass and drums working band, this does at least satisfy the old showbiz maxim, "Leave 'em wanting more." JC

ONE FELL SWOOP • LOOK OUT

(Magoos, CD)

Knowing almost nothing about this acoustic "folkcountryirishblueswhatever" outfit, I have an image of a St Louis venue packed weekly with a rabidly loyal following. They just sound like the kind of group you could get hooked on and need a regular fix of. If nothing else, I could get addicted to pianist Cheryl Stryker's bittersweet voice with its ragged melancholy edge, and the album cunningly sets the hooks by opening with her singing, for Stryker is only one of three convincing lead vocalists, fronting six of the 13 songs, bassist Dade Farrer taking two, guitarist John Wendland five. Wendland is also the group's principal lyricist, contributing ten richly intelligent songs that range from the weltschmerz of *Feet Of Clay* to the irony of *Seven Solid Days*, the bleak observation of *Lone White House* to the white trash humor of *Hairless Chihuahua*. On the instrumental side, pride of place goes to Andy Ploof, absolutely splendid on mandolin, fiddle and dobro, and Steve Molitor, whose amazing harmonica work keeps making me think there's an accordion in there. One striking aspect of this intricately textured album is its uncluttered production and limpid separations, which give the songs, the singers and all the instruments plenty of elbow room. All in all, this is one hell of an impressive package, but if the rest of the band set it up for her in magnificent style, it's Stryker who delivers the knockout. She sounds like a cross between Catherine Irwin and Janet Bean, and I'm willing to state with total confidence that if you like Freakwater, you'll dig One Fell Swoop. JC

MONICA 'LI'L MO' PASSIN & THE MONICATS

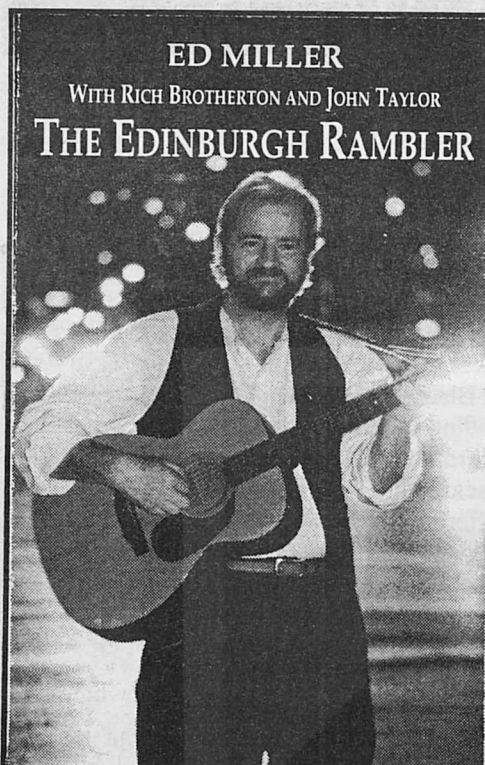
(Townhouse, CD)

New York City? Brooklyn-born Passin describes country music as her "survival tactic," a form of escapism which, with a voice that echoes both Loretta Lynn and Wanda Jackson, she's developed into a very convincing honky tonk blend of country and rockabilly. *Two Hearts* first appeared on a 45, included on Diesel Only's *Rig Rock Jukebox*, and with Tim Carroll's *Every Kind Of Music But Country*, George Jones & Melba Montgomery's *Let's Invite Them Over, Out Of Business* (Little Jimmie Dickens?) and eight originals, notably *Put Up A Fight*, she seems to sing every number as if it were a single and this were a Greatest Hits compilation, which, premeditated or not, is a very effective approach. JC

DON McCALISTER JR • DOWN IN TEX

(Appaloosa, Italian CD)

Say what you like about McCalister, the man really knows his musicians, routinely putting together killer aggregations. Bandleading, in these exiguous days, has become something of a lost art but, like, say Bob Wills, McCalister can create a whole that's far greater than the sum of its parts. In this case, the recipe calls for his smooth, relaxed vocals, four originals supplemented by Butch Hancock's *Bluebird* (which will be included on *Bluebird: The 17 Definitive Versions, Vol 2*), Townes Van Zandt's *White Freightliner*, Willy DeVille's *No Such Pain As Love* and songs by co-writing partner Roger Brown, David Schiede and David Hammond, performed by Ernie Durawa/Merel Brigante drums, David Carroll bass, Chris Gage/Jesse Taylor/David Hammond/Slim Richey electric guitars, Champ Hood fiddle, Ponty Bone accordion, Floyd Domino piano, Christina Marrs/Theresa Brunelle background vocals, Doug Sahm 1941 lap steel and Stan Smith clarinet. If I had to boil everything I've learned about Austin music down to three words of sage advice, they'd be, "Hire Stan Smith," but all these players deliver big time. In fact, McCalister, with typical modesty, winds the album up with a tour de force instrumental by Jesse Taylor, an outrageous OTT electric guitar version of *Steel Guitar Rag*, recorded live at Switzerland's Frutigen Festival and worth the price of the album on its own. If Western Swing, the obvious influence on his earlier albums, can also be called Cowboy Jazz, I'd describe McCalister's latest development as Honky Tonk Jazz. JC



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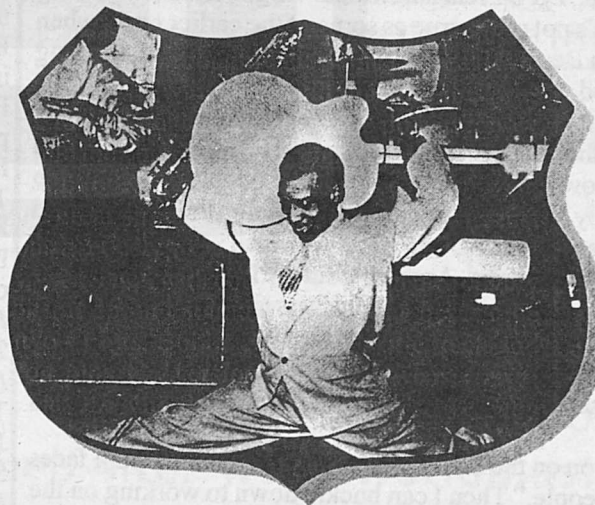
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HAD I BUT KNOWN . . .

Had you been in or around Austin in September 1989, you might have picked up the very first issue of a little pamphlet size mag devoted to Austin music. Leaving aside minor details, like three different names (Music City—Music City Texas—3rd Coast Music), three different formats and a steady expansion of the focus, here's the 100th issue. I'll be celebrating this rather dubious landmark at Threadgill's World HQ on the 22nd, with coverpersons Jo Carol Pierce (#1 and, uniquely, two others), Betty Elders, Butch Hancock, Jimmy Dale Gilmore, Jesse Taylor and Ray Wylie Hubbard, so swing on by.

◆ Looking back through 99 issues, there's some wonderful people, musicians, DJs, clubowners and musicologists, represented on them, most, I'm proud to say, making their first appearance ever on a magazine cover. Course, many were making their *only* appearance on a magazine cover, but that reflects the esoteric taste I'm stuck with. The Lord in his infinite wisdom didn't see fit to allow me to appreciate commercial music, or even stomach dissembling about it, any more than he gave the people I admire the facility to play it. Like many of them, I'm sure, I sometimes feel it would be nice to be able to make a bob or two, but you have to play the hand you're dealt.

◆ Quite who winds up on the cover and, more generally, which albums get reviewed, is something of a mystery even to me. This gig is a bit like panning for gold, with the proviso that I'm working downstream from several major raw sewage outlets. Uncomfortably aware that for every nugget I catch in my solitary sieve, countless others go tumbling by, I can only take solace in the fact that much bigger operations can't do much better. Even if they can tell gold from turds, which most of them can't, the flow of album releases is an overwhelming flood.

◆ Consider that in 1995 Soundscan registered 17,124 new domestic CD releases, about 47 each and every day, which is merely a rock bottom figure, the real total has to be significantly higher. You'd think my No Majors rule would be a big help here, but it only cuts that down to a (purely nominal) 11,274 indie releases. Even if, pace Theodore Sturgeon's dictum, 90% of them are crud, or at least irrelevant to 3CM's crusade, that still leaves a shitload of records, of which I write about a fraction of the fraction I get sent. Still, I've always found someone worthwhile to put on the cover—OK, there's one I now regret, but it was long time ago and a *very* slow month.

◆ Not that I'm inviting you to guess who that was, but I've stuck a list of coverpersons on the end of the High John column, and if you can tell me what they have in common, I'd be real interested. Might learn something about myself. Actually, that's not really true as some of the earlier ones, when Eve McArthur and/or Sylvia Benini, the other members of the founding Gang of Three, were still involved, were negotiated and not exactly my idea.

◆ Who'll be on the next 100 covers? Who'll be on next month's cover? Your guess is as good as mine—thinking of which, hot tips are always appreciated and followed up on. For now, I'd like to thank all the people who pick up 3CM and read it, especially the regulars, more especially the people who send me cash money for the privilege, and most especially the subscribers who've been with me from the start. And, of course, I have to thank the people who make this deal possible, all my advertisers (if they actually paid up that is, if they didn't, fuck 'em, may their children become death metal guitarists and never leave home), and, again, particular thanks to my long haul sustainers, whose businesses have survived eight years of advertising with me.

◆ Hope to see a bunch of you on the 22nd, so I can look at your smiling faces and think, "These are my people." Then I can buckle down to working on the next 100 issues, so we can do it again in 2005.

JC

CORNELL HURD

Follow any Austin country band long enough and you're going to notice new faces from time to time. With some, this can happen every week seems like, but if the Cornell Hurd Band sheds members and acquires new ones at a slower pace than most, it only means that changes are more noticeable. Still, as long as Hurd, guitarist Paul Skelton and Danny Young on rubboard were up there, even the departure of bassist Frank Roeber, who'd been playing exclusively with Hurd for 30 years, didn't seem to matter too much. However, the other night we went up to Henry's and the individual changes suddenly added up into a transformation. I've always loved these guys, but that night they were amazing. If all we'd heard was South African-born fiddler Vanessa Gordon tearing up *Jesse Polka*, Herb Steiner blitzing *Westphalia Waltz*, nylon-string acoustic rhythm guitarist Blackie White (aka Guy Juke) showcasing *Saginaw, Michigan* or Cornell Hurd responding to a request for a George Strait song by singing *Deep Water* (well, Strait did record it), I'd have gone home happy.

◆ "They were so good that night it fucking scared me," Hurd says later. "The potential in this lineup scares me. There's a whole different mindset in the band. Not that it was *bad* before, just different, but this is damn close to being my favorite band ever, I love each and every one of them. It's got all these other great soloists as well as Paul, and other singers, and right now we're only scratching the surface of what it's capable of." With a new album about to be released, Hurd is already talking about the next, a live album that'll tap that potential.

◆ One thing about the Cornell Hurd Band you can't help noticing is its size. There are nine people in the current lineup, more than Dale Watson and The Derailers put together, a fact that jars with Austin reality. "Some nights, I have to hit the ATM machine to make sure there's enough money to pay everybody. Do I need a rubboard player? Of course not. Do I love playing with Danny Young? Absolutely. Do I need a nylon-string guitarist? No. Do I want Guy Juke in the band? Absolutely. So sometimes it costs me to play, but I quit thinking about depending on music for a living a while back. Now I'm gambling that if I put something together that's really good, people will pay money to hear it."

◆ Where the size pays off is in what Hurd calls "our schtick," the big Texas shuffle. "All the guys I really liked growing up were Texans. Johnny Bush, I was a huge fan of his, still am, Ernest Tubb, Hank Thompson, Bob Wills, Ray Price, Floyd Tillman, Red Steagall, they were all from Texas. OK, Johnny Paycheck wasn't, but he *was* in the Cherokee Cowboys, that's close enough. The thing about them was they were bigger than life. They had so much *power*. I've had a band pretty much all my life and sometimes I think, why am I still doing this? I enjoy playing, I enjoy the camaraderie and I enjoy the sense of accomplishment when everything goes right, but most of all, I'm passionate about the music."

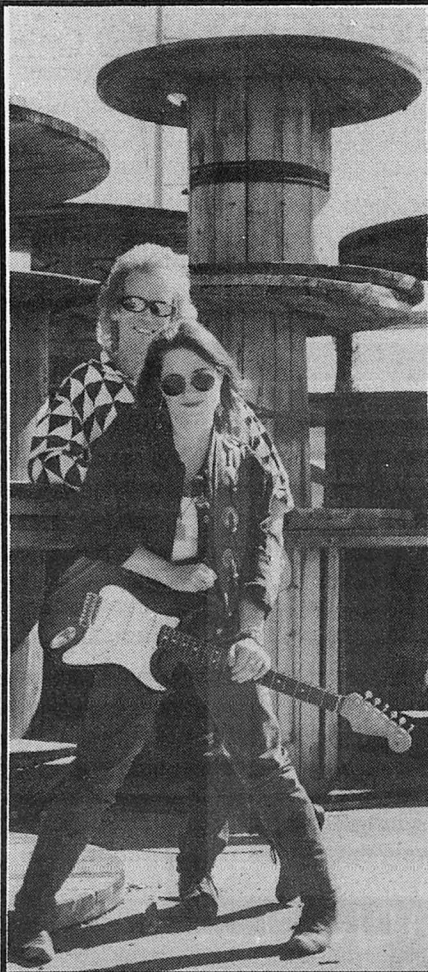
◆ Which may explain why Hurd's been putting out his own albums since 1975, and his willingness to emphasize great but neglected songs from the past. "It may sound kind of bizarre, but I think I make records to prove a point. I get to do whatever I want with no compromises. Each record's sold more than the one before, and people tell me each one's an improvement. I try to work with good people. I'm an OK singer and songwriter, but I do think I'm a pretty good bandleader and I've been real fortunate to work not just with good players but people I actually like, people with good attitudes."

◆ Though Hurd was regularly voted #1 for Stage Presence in the MCT poll, he and his band, particularly Skelton, have always enjoyed more esteem among other musicians than with the clubgoing public—during an Austin City Limits taping of local country bands, Dale Watson went so far as to publicly denounce the exclusion of the Cornell Hurd Band. Perhaps their main appeal to some is too unsettling for most, total dedication to the music and its history combined with a sardonic appreciation of the self-parody always latent in country music, hot musicianship and a cool sense of the ridiculous. JC

CORNELL HURD BAND • TEXAS FRUIT SHACK

(Behemoth, CD)

Fortunately for him, Hurd says "I'm not hung up on everything sounding exactly the same as on the record when we play live," because this album was cut in a transitional period and features players who've moved on, mere cameos by some of the current members and a host of special guests. Mind you, there's plenty of room. Rather than whittle down 21 tracks, almost enough for two albums, Hurd opted to include them all—his label isn't called Behemoth for nothing. The core band is Hurd, Paul 'Hit Man' Skelton guitars, Bobby 'Scrap Iron' Snell steel guitar, Cody Nicholas piano, Danny Young rubboard, Frank X Roeber bass and powerhouse drummer Karen Biller, 'The Venus of the Traps,' with appearances by, among others, Johnny Bush, Texana Dames and Bill Kirchen vocals, Debra Hurd and Floyd Domino pianos, Howard Kalish and Vanessa Gordon fiddles, Lucky Oceans and Herb Steiner steel guitars, Blackie White rhythm guitar and Ponty Bone accordion. Faced with all this, one can only pick out highlights, the obligatory Moon Mullican, *Don't Ever Take My Picture Down*, the Texas Playboys' *Heaven, Hell Or Houston*, the title track, Hurd's *I Only Think About You Every Day*, Johnny Bush's *Those Mind-Breakin' Blues*, Ray Price's *I'm Not Crazy Yet*, Wynonie Harris' *Just Like Two Drops Of Water*, Bush singing Tom T Hall's *Jethro* and Hurd's *I'm A Linda-holic*, Johnny Paycheck's *Talk About Me*, Jerry Lee Lewis' *The End Of The Road*, Hurd's *It Wouldn't Be Hell Without You*, Spade Cooley's hit *Detour*, sung by Hurd, Bush and Kirchen, and Roy Brown's *Good Rockin' Tonight*. Well, there's your money's worth of big Texas shuffle right there. JC



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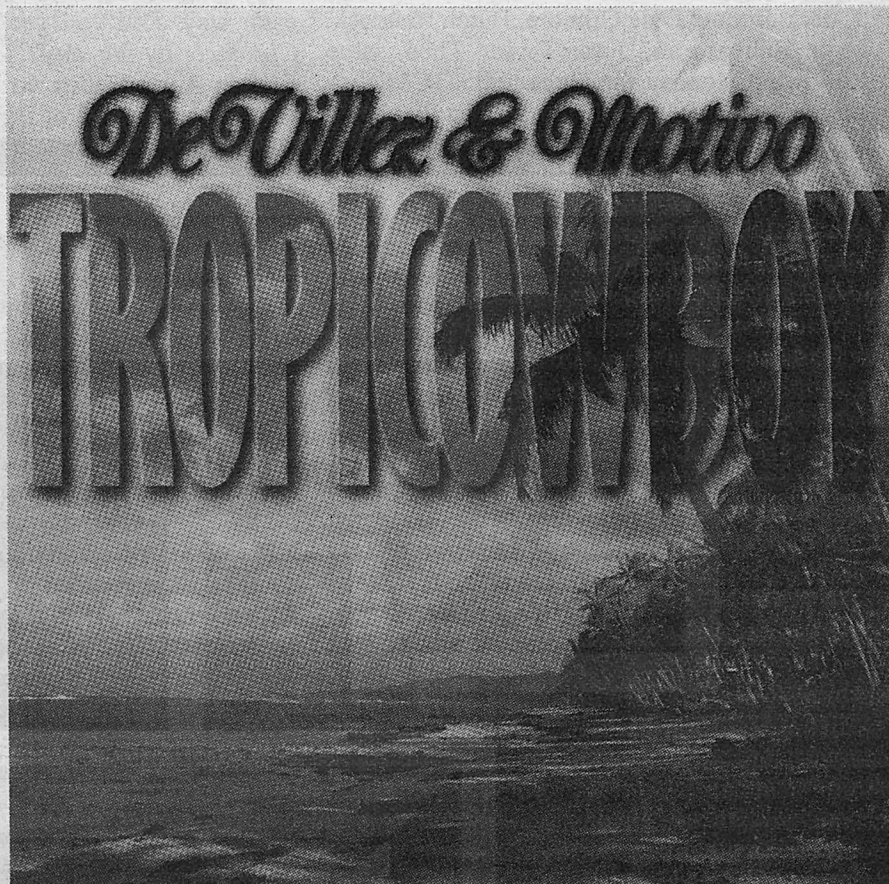
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HIGH JOHN THE CONQUEROR SOAP

Very quickly, a plug for two (free!) shows, my **100th Issue Party**, Threadgill's World HQ, Monday, December 22nd, with Jo Carol Pierce, Betty Elders, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Butch Hancock, Ray Wylie Hubbard and Jesse Taylor. Then, same place, following Monday, the Threadgill's/3CM New Year's Eve Eve Eve Party with Gulf Coast Playboys, Los Pinkys and Very Very Special Surprise Guest. Because of contractual obligations, I'm not allowed to speak his name, but he's been on the cover of 3CM and he isn't American. You figure it out.

◆ Nothing's more irritating to a journalist than to have an error inserted into his or her copy, so my apologies to Jana Pendragon, who contributed last month's feature on **James Intveld**. The reference to Intveld playing lead guitar with The Blazers was entirely my mistake, it should, of course, have been The Blazers.

◆ And an humble apology to **Lu Young**, Danny's better half, another of my favorite people and the actual creator of The Popeye. Improvising on the theme of a burger with olives offered near Michigan State campus, Lu originated the Popeye at Young's Pizza in Kingsville when she married Danny and if you haven't tried it at Texicalli Grille, you're missing out on a great noshing experience. As for **Danny Young**, turns out he recognized Socrates from his Philosophy 101 textbook, which, far as I can make out, was *The Big Picture Book Of Great Thinkers*.

◆ Without wanting to embarrass them, there are some people I feel deserve recognition for their generosity in supporting **Mandy Mercier's** medical bills benefit. Danny Young picked up the tab for last month's 3CM ad (without wanting to diminish his noble gesture, I did cut Mandy a major deal, my contribution in lieu of the cash I don't have), The Broken Spoke waitstaff kicked in their wages, Hubcap Annie sent a check for \$100 and Under The Sun one for \$50. Not just a great show—we left after Butch Hancock, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Jesse Taylor's set, figuring it wouldn't get any better than this, and later heard that Joe Ely turned up unexpected by anyone—but a great turnout that took a big bite out of Mandy's medical debts. I was particularly chuffed by the presence of 3CM subscribers from Maine and Rhode Island—OK, they were coming to Austin anyway, but timed their visits round the show, so I can take some credit.

◆ The high energy of the Mercier benefit was in stark contrast to the Rape Crisis Center's the week before, and I can't help feeling Christine Albert might ought to rethink her allegiance to the Paramount, a great room acoustically, but apparently very inhibiting both to performers, none of whom really caught fire, and, more to the point, the paying public—on paper, the show she organized ought to have sold out, but not so. Maybe the absentees intuited how it would go, opening with solid Boxcars, Don Walser and Jimmy LaFave sets, hiccuping with Jimmie Dale Gilmore's curious choice of material, then deteriorating sharply when the Big Names came on. I used to think, whenever I saw **Shawn Colvin**, this may be this time I'll get it, but I give up. Annoying songs in an annoying voice with annoying patter in between, in a word, pretentious. I've been putting off seeing **Hal Ketchum** since he returned to Austin, and his set vindicated my worse fears. Fucking frightful Nash Vegas crap. "Baby, I feel the power, this is our finest hour"—may not be 100% accurate recall, but close enough. Ketchum, whose cassette-only **Threadbare Alibis** is still one of my favorite albums, used to be something else, but when he sold out, he went all the way and I wonder if he'll ever get back.

◆ To clarify last month's hint, **Rory Elijah Hancock** is Butch's son, born on October 5th, and if you've been trying to reach him to order a copy of **You Coulda Walked Around The World**, be patient.

Butch is commuting between the Airstream headquarters of Rainlight Records in Terlingua and Rory's mother's home in Wimberley, a good ten hours each way. Did you see the review in the *Austin Chronicle* by the way? They somehow managed to find an Austin music writer, one Christopher Hess, who'd never heard of Butch, or, if he had, skilfully concealed his knowledge. A different approach, I guess, if a very stupid one. "A sparsely performed and produced acoustic folk album recorded by someone with an interesting Dylan-like voice who knows a bit about country." If you ever see a line like that about someone of Hancock's stature in 3CM, I'd take it as a personal favor if you'd grab a gun, come right on over and finish me off.

◆ Thinking of which, I take back everything negative I've ever said about *No Depression*. Well, no, actually I don't. It still suffers from an excess of uncritical enthusiasm, but if, as rumored, it's about to be acquired by the *Chronicle*, the inevitable result will be the introduction of something even worse, a surfeit of complacent ignorance.

◆ I'm more willing to retract (somewhat) on **Postcards2**. Several people who subscribe to both P2 and 3CM told me I'd come in during one of its periodic attacks of collective idiocy and I must admit it has improved. In fact, the whole deal was made worthwhile by one gem, unearthed by John Wendland of One Fell Swoop (see Reviews), to whom many thanks. As a 3CM Christmas Shopping Special, to help you with all those pesky what to buy for whom problems, according to **CD Universe**, an Internet mail order operation, people who buy particular artists also tend to buy certain other artists, so if you know someone likes the artist in column A, apparently they'll like the corresponding one in column B (and, presumably, vice versa). We did NOT make any of this up, though editing multiple column B suggestions down to one, I did select shamelessly for maximum vomit value. Good luck.

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Steve Earle	Pearl Jam
Joe Ely	Motorhead
Jimmie Dale Gilmore	Procol Harum
Emmylou Harris	Genesis
Jimi Hendrix	Chicago
Janis Joplin	Tuck & Patti
Jerry Lee Lewis	Queen
Louvin Brothers	Motorhead
Bill Monroe	Selena
Buck Owens	Counting Crows
Gram Parsons	Everything But The Girl
Elvis Presley	Metallica
Muddy Waters	Ministry
Gillian Welch	King Crimson
Real Hank Williams	Led Zepplin

◆ If that doesn't help and you're still looking for a unique gift for your music loving friend, how about The Wit And Wisdom of Steve Earle? You think I'm joking? For the equivalent of \$15 in Dutch money (guilders? I used know this kind of shit) you can get one of only 1500 numbered copies of the 72 page **Steve Earle In Quotes—A Book**. "Nearly 200 quotes and stories on and about Steve Earle, ranging from women to the death penalty, from interruptions at concerts to comments on Earle from other people." If you've been married to a lot of women does that mean you know a lot about women?

◆ My all-time favorite band has resurfaced! Can't remember when the last reference was, but in a recent issue of *Country Standard Time*, a wonderfully schizoid New England mag that tries to serve both Nashville and alt-country, with often hilarious results, we're told that **Joe Ely** "has been spending his time with **The Flatliners**—his [sic] group from the 1970's with Butch Hancock and Jimmie Dale Gilmore." Ely's next MCA album will, I gather, be Tex-Mex rather than Spanish flavored, despite the presence of Teye. One Who Was There tells me that at a recent Ely gig, someone started a chant, taken up by most of the room, of "Teye sucks! Teye sucks!" This was in Chicago, which has always been one of 3CM's strongest subscriber bases. Coincidence? You be the judge.

◆ Update on **The Lucinda Williams Album**. It's actually done and ready to roll, people have tapes of it. But you ain't going to see it anytime soon and not because of her notorious perfectionism. She took so long that by the time she was done, American had gone belly up and is asking outrageous sums, a rumored half mill, for it, and nobody's biting.

◆ According to *The Salt Lake Tribune*, **Garth Brooks** "believes the dip in sales of country music in the '90s is attributable not to a lessened interest in the genre but, rather, to a lessening in quality of the most popular country music." Well, there you have it, straight from the horse's ass.

RADIO PLUS CALIFORNIA

Sully Roddy *All Kinds Of Country* • now on KYCY 93.3fm, San Francisco; Sunday, 7pm-midnight. Roddy lost her KNEW slot when the station switched to satellite feed, but her show was only off the air for a few weeks before being picked up KYCY.

• New address: Sully Roddy, KYCY, 500 Washington St, San Francisco 94111

Robert Douglas & Jana Pendragon *Happy Trails* • KXLU 88.9fm, Venice; Thursday, midnight-1am. Special features include recorded highlights of the Barn Dance (first Thursday each month) and Jana Pendragon's Late Night Radio Edition (third Thursday each month) featuring on-air performances by Bakersfield/LA C&W and roots music bands, interview, news and special guests.

• Robert Douglas, P.O. Box 593, Venice, CA 90279; colvmn@gte.net

• Jana Pendragon honkytnk@ix.netcom.com

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!

Christine Albert, Terry Allen, Austin Lounge Lizards, Bad Livers, Danny Barnes, Bells Of Joy, Libbi Bosworth, Erbie Bowser, Marti Brom, Van Broussard, Troy Campbell, Bobby Charles, Mary Costello, Ronnie Dawson, Derailers, Barb Donovan, Fred J Eaglesmith, Betty Elders, Michael Elwood & Beth Galiger, Alejandro Escovedo, Rosie Flores, Dan Forte & Teisco Del Rey, Michael Fracasso, Robbie Fulks, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Johnny Gimble, Paul Glasse, Butch Hancock, Tommy Hancock, Wayne Hancock, James & Gayle Henry, Herman The German, High Noon, Tish Hinojosa, Erik Hokkanen, Champ Hood, Joe Horn, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Cornell Hurd Band, James Intveld, Evan Johns, Steve Jordan, Ingried Kaiter, Emily Kaitz, Hal Michael Ketchum, John Kunz, Jimmy LaFave, Valerio Longoria, Loose Diamonds, Christina Marrs, Kimberly M'Carver, Kathy McCarty, Pat Mears, Lydia Mendoza, Mandy Mercier, Peg Miller & Glynda Cox, Katy Moffatt, Sisters Morales, Larry Monroe, Beaver Nelson, David Obermann, Don Americo Paredes, Dewey Phillips, Jo Carol Pierce, Toni Price, John Reed & Speedy Sparks, Ted Roddy, David Rodriguez, Calvin Russell, Mingo Saldivar, Kevin Smith, Cary Swinney, Jesse Taylor, ThaMuseMeant, Therapy Sisters, Chris Thomas, Townes Van Zandt, Don Walser, Dale Watson and Bradley Jay Williams



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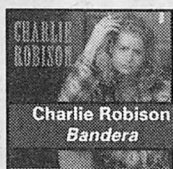
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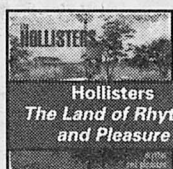
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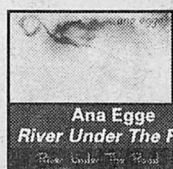
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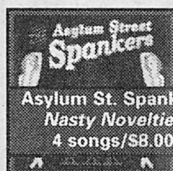
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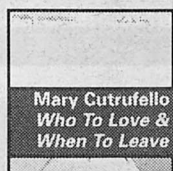
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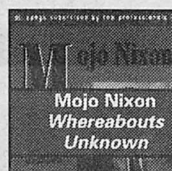
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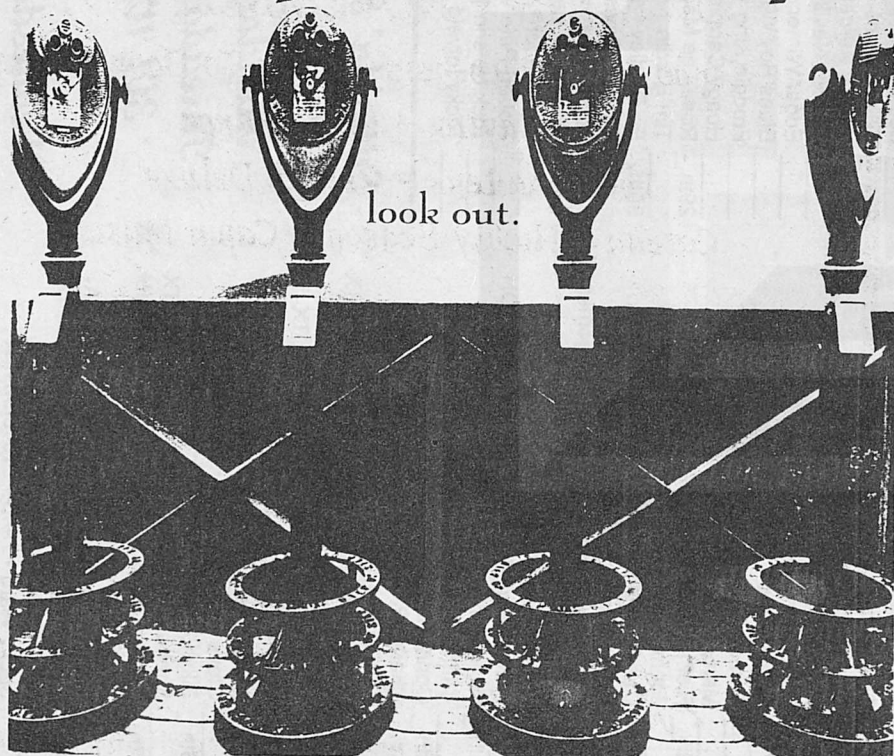
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