

# **3<sup>rd</sup> COAST MUSIC**

**#181/270 FEBRUARY 2012**

**RED BIRD GIRLS**



**CHIP TAYLOR**

**On Red Bird, Blue Cat  
& Evie Sands**

**JOHN THE REVEALATOR**

**FAR #149**

**ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS**

**REVIEWS \*\*\*\*\* (or not)**

**Stephen David Austin • Eric Dahl**

**Charlie Faye • Bobby Flores**

**David Rodriguez**

**Melissa Ruth & The Likely Stories**

**'NONE OF THE HITS,  
ALL OF THE TIME'**



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## FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #150

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DURING JANUARY 2012

- #1 JASON ARNOLD & THE STEPSIDERS: CRAZY THINGS**  
(self) \*CP/\*DT/\*GS/\*LB/\*MB/\*PP/\*SH/\*TG
- 2 **Darrell Scott: Long Ride Home (Full Light)**  
\*AA/\*AG/\*AH/\*ATC/\*BP/\*DWB/\*OO/\*RL
- 3 **VA: This One's For Him: A Tribute To Guy Clark (Icehouse)**  
\*BF/\*CS/\*MDT/\*MO/\*TL
- 4 **John Lilly: Cold Comfort (self) \*JH/\*TB**
- 5 **Gretchen Peters: Hello Cruel World (Scarlet Letter) \*MW/\*N&T**
- 6 **The James Low Western Front: Whiskey Farmer (Union Made)**  
\*LMG/\*RH/\*TF
- 7 **The Great Unknowns: Homefront (self) \*GM/\*RC**
- 8 **The Far West (Light Fighter) \*MP**
- 9 **The Little Willies: For The Good Times (Milking Bull) \*BS**
- 10= **Louis Johnson: Old Friend (self)**  
**Eric Taylor & Friends Live At The Red Shack (Blue Ruby)**  
\*BW/\*LH
- 11 **Kevin Gordon: Gloryland (self) \*DF/\*JP**
- 12 **Lincoln Durham: The Shovel Vs Howling Bones (self) \*TPR**
- 13 **Shoebox Letters: You Or Someone Like You (self) \*GG**  
**Brock Zeman: Me Then You (Busted Flat) \*RA**
- 14 **Kathleen Edwards: Voyageur (Zoe) \*RV/\*SR**
- 15= **Willie Nelson: Remember Me (R&J)**  
**Andy Statman: Old Brooklyn (shefa) \*DJ/\*JW**
- 16 **John Howie Jr: Leavin' Yesterday (Hands Up!) \*DD**
- 17 **The Carper Family: Back When (self) \*FS**
- 18 **The Refugees: Three (wabuho)**
- 19= **Tom Armstrong: Wine Stained Heart (Carswell) \*KC**  
**Kevin Dooley: Moonlight Highway (self) \*GF**  
**Ruthie Foster: Let It Burn (Blue Corn) \*SC**  
**Robert Earl Keen: Ready For Confetti (Lost Highway) \*MM**  
**Kelly Pardekooper: Yonder (Leisure Time) \*BB**
- 20 **Randy Thompson: Collected (Jackpot)**
- 21= **Kenneth Brian Band: Welcome To Alabama (Southern Shift)**  
**Tom Pacheco: Luminol; The Houston Sessions (Frog Claw) \*EW**
- 22= **Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer: Little Blue Egg (Red House) \*KM**  
**Johnny Cash: Live Around The World; Bootleg Series III**  
(Columbia Legacy) \*BL
- Charlie Faye: Travels With Charlie (self) \*DS**
- Nanci Griffith: Intersection (Proper) \*RF**
- Jenai Huff: Transitions (self) \*FH**



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**WHERE MUSIC STILL MATTERS**

### \*XX = DJ's ALBUM OF THE MONTH

Freeform American Roots is compiled from reports provided by 140 freeform DJs. More information can be found at <http://tcmnradio.com/far/>

## CHIP TAYLOR REMEMBERS RED BIRD, BLUE CAT & EVIE SANDS

**J**erry Leiber & Mike Stoller's label was about as cool a label as there was in those days. First, Jerry & Mike were great songwriters and producers in their own right. The fact that they opened the door to other writers and producers was sort of unusual, but a complete blessing for aspiring writer/producers like Ellie Greenwich, Phil Spector, Shadow Morton, Jeff Barry, my producing partner Al Gorgoni and myself.

I think that one of the main ingredients to the success of their labels is often swept under the rug. That ingredient was a Mafia-connected, gambling-addicted horseplayer by the name of George Goldner. When George needed funds to pay off his debts—and he always needed money to pay off his debts—there's no telling what he'd do. Some say he would bootleg his own records and sell them under-the-table to stores. But whatever he did, he was also a hell of a music man who had an awesome ear for picking hits. And, I guess because of his underworld ties, as well as his good 'ears,' radio stations had a hard time saying 'no' to George. He was straightforward, confident about his opinions and easy to like. I loved being around him. Without George, there would have been no Red Bird/Blue Cat record label.

Red Bird was sort of built on the success of the Dixie Cups single *Chapel Of Love*, written by Ellie Greenwich, Phil Spector & Jeff Barry. Joe (You Talk Too Much) Jones, who discovered the Dixie Cups in a talent show, produced the record. From what I heard, George Goldner was the one who totally championed the record when Jerry Leiber questioned releasing it. He was totally convinced it would be a smash.

I met Mike & Jerry for the first time when Al Gorgoni, my writing/producing partner, & I were trying to find a home for an awesome teenaged white soul singer Evie Sands. At the time of our meeting, the first song we recorded with Evie, Trade Martin's *Take Me For A Little While*, wasn't quite finished yet. We had a cool track and a great vocal by Evie with cool background parts. We hoped Red Bird would pay for the costs of the horn and string sessions needed.

Jerry & Mike loved it on first listen. We shook hands on a deal in minutes. Then Mike played the song on piano and we started arranging horn and string parts. The record was finished in a couple of weeks. The original plan was to release it on Red Bird, but at the last minute Jerry & Mike thought it would be a good lift to the sister label, Blue Cat. They (and George Goldner) were convinced it was going to be a smash.

### THE 'STOLEN TEST PRESSING' STORY

Test pressings of *Take Me For A Little While* were sent to promotion men in major markets one week before release. In Chicago, the promo man played it for a cohort, who decided to 'borrow' it for the night. He brought it to a Jackie Ross session. Jackie was coming off a #1 record and was in the process of recording her follow up. He played it for Jackie's producers, who stopped their session immediately and recorded *Take Me For A Little While* instead of the song they had begun. The next day they took out full-page ads in *Cash Box* and other trade magazine's announcing: THE NEXT #1 SINGLE FROM JACKIE ROSS, TAKE ME FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

Jackie's record bulleted high on the charts. Evie's limped on. George Goldner called Leonard Chess, who—once he discovered the truth about the recording—had Jackie's record taken out of circulation immediately. The result was damaging for all involved. The DJs were mad at being caught in a blind switch. Those playing Jackie's record refused to go on Evie's. In fact they were angry at Evie's camp for stopping the Jackie Ross record and making them look like fools. It was a shame. If the stolen test pressing incident had not occurred, Evie would have been a star. Now we all had to adjust.

Al Gorgoni & I had just written a cool little song, *I Can't Let Go*. We recorded a version with Evie and Blue Cat rushed it out. The Hollies heard and covered it. Their version quickly went to #2 on the English charts and became a hit in the US as well, overshadowing Evie's record. This was just another notch in the Evie Sands hard luck story.

In 1967, I wrote *Angel Of The Morning* and with Al Gorgoni, produced it with Evie. But the week it was released on Cameo Records the company went bankrupt. Evie's record was #1 in request wherever played and the initial pressing of 10,000 records was gone in a week. My friends, Chips Moman & Tommy Cogbill then produced the first hit version by Merrilee Rush where you can hear hints of Evie's recording.

Finally Evie's luck changed. In 1969, Al Gorgoni & I produced the definitive version of my song *Anyway That You Want Me* with her and sold over a half million copies.



## MELISSA RUTH & THE LIKELY STORIES Ain't No Whiskey

(Both Ears \*\*\*\*.5)

First thing you learn as a music writer, probably in any field but, in my experience, particularly with singer-songwriters, is that you have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find a prince. Or, in this case, a princess. Though she misfired with the overwrought and overwordy **Underwater And Other Places** (2008), second time out, Melissa Ruth, a Eugene, OR, music teacher, is truly addictive. I love everything about this album, the vocals, the songs, the arrangements and the 'Doo Wop Twang' artistic vision. In between the two recordings, she fell in love with a 1958 Guild Freshman (one pickup, one tone knob), "It was a light switching on in my understanding of guitar." She also came to realize that "The songs were asking for wide open spaces," and with her sultry, compelling voice backed only by her husband Johnny Leal slide, rhythm and bass guitars and his brother Jimmy Leal drums, she gives different shades of dark poetry about transformations and transitions, woven with subtle traces of blues, country and jazz, a wonderfully contrasting light, airy setting. From the first track, you want to hear the whole album, and then you want to hear it again. **JC**

## CHARLIE FAYE • Travels With Charlie

(self \*\*\*\*)

Knowing he didn't have much longer to live, John Steinbeck set out on an epic 1960 road trip with his standard poodle, chronicled in **Travels With Charley; In Search Of America**. If she were more pretentious, Austin singer-songwriter Faye could have subtitled her third album 'In Search Of Americana.' Putting a finger unerringly on the fact that touring musicians might have been everywhere, man, but in reality are always passing through, Faye decided to spend a month each in ten different cities and towns, getting to know them, making friends, putting together a local band, playing gigs and, the ultimate point of this album, writing and recording a song. As a result, while the locales, LA, Tucson, Lafayette, Burlington, Milwaukee, Portland (OR), Nashville, New York, Boulder and Austin (Asheville is listed on the one-sheet, but seems to have been a dry well) are easy enough, and boyfriend Will Sexton's name pops up regularly, the credits are, literally, all over the map. As are the styles, from folk-rock to country-rock to Hard Country (my favorite track is *Two Timer*, cut in Nashville with Buddy Spicher, Chris Scruggs, Kenny Vaughan and Mike Bubb), eclecticism which seems have thrown some reviewers for a bit of a loop. As much an exploration of herself as of Americana, this is something of a sleeper, an album that sneaks up on you, revealing more every time it's played. Something about Faye's vocals and phrasing makes me think of Nina Simone, who, similarly, had no problem mixing idioms on the same album. **JC**

## STEPHEN DAVID AUSTIN • A Bakersfield Dozen

(self \*\*\*\*)

Enclosing a bottle opener ("can be used for both domestic and imported beers!") with a CD that has 'Bakersfield' in the title sends a pretty clear message, but Austin, who lengthened his name to avoid confusion, thus joining "the ranks of 'the men with three names,' an elite club primarily occupied by serial killers and musicians," comes at The Bakersfield Sound from left field. Influenced equally by Owens and Haggard, The Blasters and The Beat Farmers, he writes blue collar Americana poetry, with a recurring 'you can't go home again' theme, backed by the cream of California country musicians, Marty Rifkin pedal and lap steel, dobro and electric guitar, Paul Marshall bass, Shawn Nourse, drums/percussion, Teresa James background vocal, Brantley Kearns fiddle and Skip Edwards piano and accordion, whose lengthy resumes all end with "etc." With ten originals and a cover of Lennon/McCartney's *Baby's In Black*, Austin ranges from the wry humor of *Best Ex I Ever Had* and *MySpace* ("please download my music"), to the pathos of *The Cage*, about a man released into an utterly unfamiliar world after 40 years in prison, to the observational *Kansas Ain't In Kansas Anymore*, inspired by a story about Wichita street gangs, to the heartfelt tribute of *The Day Buck Owens Died*. **JC**

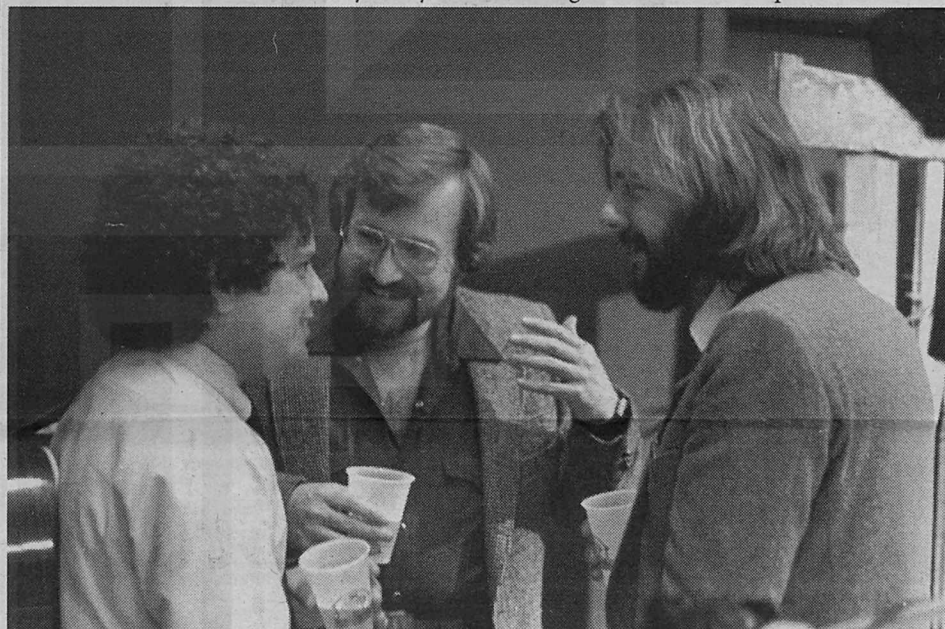


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## DAVID RODRIGUEZ • RACING AIMLESS

(Waving Fish \*\*\*\*.5)

Not long ago, I heard from Marvin Dykhuis that David Rodriguez told him he'd stopped performing and writing to concentrate on qualifying as a lawyer in The Netherlands. Then Tom Cantrell, bass, mandolin, acoustic guitar, backing vocals, "rattlesnake" and the moving force behind it, sent me an album of nine new songs. So, a bit of a surprise, though a very welcome one, to hear Rodriguez's voice again. For the last 22 years, I've considered him to be one of the best singer-songwriters I've ever heard and while I'll always list **Man Against Beast** aka **The True Cross** (Dejadisc, 1992), live solo acoustic, as one of the truly Essential Texas Records, it, along with his other 90s albums, and even more recent under the radar self-releases, take some finding. To those familiar with their minimalist settings, the instrumentation, which also includes harmonica, accordion, keyboards, banjo and electric guitar, with parts recorded virtually in The Netherlands, Italy, Texas, Pennsylvania and New York, then mixed in Texas and mastered in London (at Abbey Road) and Wisconsin, make this one sound very different. However, the songs and their delivery, especially *Everything It Ain't* and *Unbroken Highway*, evoke everything that was remarkable about David Rodriguez back in Chicago House days. Be warned though that if you haven't heard those earlier albums, this one may cost you in scouring the Internet for copies of them. **JC**



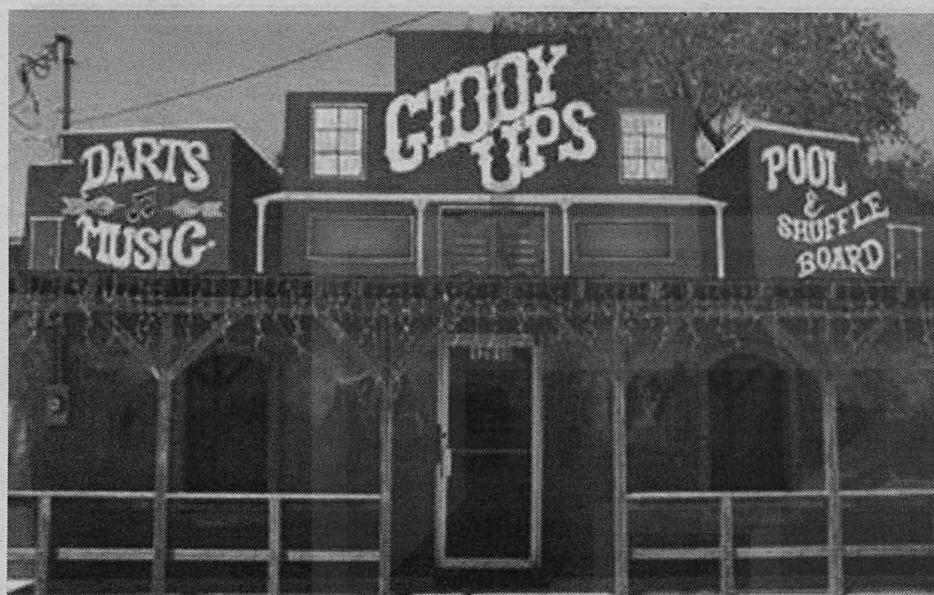
David Rodriguez, Dr. Hugh Sparks and Tom Cantrell c1979. "At the time, I was the executive producer of Austin Community Television's The Austin Connection of which Hugh was the host. The premise was to have a 'known' singer/songwriter introduce a lesser known talent. On the evening this photo was taken, Bobby Bridger was the 'known' talent and David was the new talent. We were younger and prettier then." Tom Cantrell.

## ERIC DAHL • Live By Your Word

(Yew Lane \*\*\*\*)

Most all the albums I've reviewed this month have one thing in common—survivors of a mammoth listening session, they were made by people who have some fucking clue how to construct an album. One, Melissa Ruth's, was a surprise, the others, not so much. With singer-songwriter Dahl, I had the strong musical aesthetic of **Whatever The Jungle** (1999) as a predictor and, apart from the uncharacteristically busy *Book Of Love*, he's once again offering an album on which the songs and the music complement each other, neither getting in the way of the other. Dahl, originally from the Pacific Northwest, spent three years in Austin in the late 90s and returns to those Texas days with 12 songs recorded in Austin as they took shape in performance and worked over by veteran producer/engineer/guitarist/steel guitarist John Keane of Athens, GA. Dahl gives copious credit to legendary drummer Ernie Durawa, who I assume was responsible not just for the varied rhythmic styles but also for roping in the likes of Monte Mann lead guitar, Larry Eisenberg upright and electric bass, Floyd Domino piano, Howard Kalish fiddle and Scott Walls pedal steel. I'm not sure how studying mediaeval literature (at Oxford University no less) factors in, but Dahl, now a Professor at the University Of Georgia, is also an award-winning poet, and it shows. **JC**





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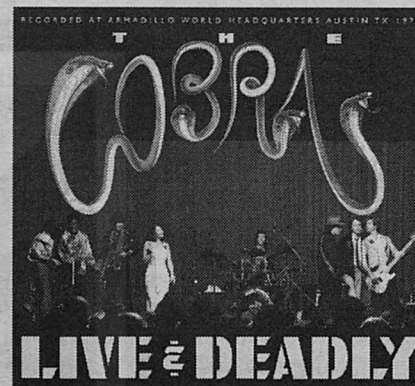


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 Margaret Moser



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 the globe have been playing this  
 CD, and its second pressing is  
 awakening new attention and  
 garnering even more acclaim..

*...what can I say that adequately  
 conveys the beauty of her leads  
 and harmonies? She  
 glows in the dark.*

John Conquest

This song swap among musical pals  
 has led to a successful songwriter  
 series in Lockhart at their  
 Gaslight-Baker Theatre and Dr.  
 Eugene Clark Library.

*There's not been another project  
 like Fletcher Clark's Taking Turns.*  
 Hank Alrich



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# JOHN THE REVEALATOR

**M**ade a terrible omission in reviewing Brian T Atkinson's *I'll Be Here In The Morning* last month. I mentioned some people I would have thought should have been interviewed for the book, but clean forgot **Richard Dobson**. Back in the day, Dobson, who's put out 20 albums, most on the Swiss label Brambus, and who I've described as 'the invisible man of Texas songwriting,' often accompanied **Townes Van Zandt** on tours so that there'd be someone to play an acceptable substitute show if Van Zandt was too fucked up. My apologies to Dobson and thanks to Grant Peeples for pointing out the omission.

- Last month, I passed on Joe Specht's tip to check Lost Highway's website for a **Mary Gauthier/Guy Clark** duet of *I Drink*, which didn't make it to the album. **Gurf Morlix**, who produced **Mercy Now**, offers this perspective: "Every time I had to deal with a major label, there were problems. It was Mary's idea to have Guy sing the duet on *I Drink*. I thought it was a brilliant choice. Guy came in to the studio and did it. He kind of talked most of his part, but that's Guy. I thought what we got was great. Then we got word from the label in Nashville that the 'even higher ups' in LA wanted it off the album. Wanted Guy off of that song. This was comin' from someone who probably never even heard of Guy Clark. Mary and I were fighting artistic battles with the label on several other fronts at that time, and she decided to let them have this one. I took Guy off, put Mary back on, and sang the harmonies myself. I think the version with Guy on there is sublime."

- As a footnote to mentions of **Evie Sands'** original version of *Angel Of The Morning*, **Chip Taylor** told me he was once interviewed by a woman who flat refused to believe that a mere male could be sensitive enough to have written it.

- And as a footnote to this month's editorial, I have to admit to some bias in favor of **Tanya Tucker**. Before she came to England for a 1987 country music festival, I spent a memorable day in the company of Ms Tucker and an EMI Platinum credit card, and after my interview with her, complete with gory details about Glen Campbell's cocaine psychosis, appeared in *Time Out*, I got an equally memorable, and very public, hug.

- Equally, I have to admit to some bias against **Glen Campbell**. I never encountered him in person, but his version of John Hartford's *Gentle On My Mind* is up there among my Most Loathed Hit Records. Guess it's about #7, behind Don McLean's *American Pie* and *Vincent*, Starship's *We Built This City*, Billy Ray Cyrus' *Achy Breaky Heart* and Cat Stevens' *Wild World* and *Morning Has Broken*, but ahead of Richard Harris' *MacArthur Park*.

- With SXSW and, more importantly, **NotSXSW**, looming, time to mention that if you'd like to get advance information, including an email of my final, complete-as-far-as-I'm-concerned calendar, as it'll appear in the March issue, drop me a line and I'll add you to the group. I should tell you though that NotSXSW, in the umbrella usage (ie all unofficial events) is going to be much smaller this year due to changes in Austin's noise ordinances and their enforcement. Though only one venue, Freddie's on S 1st, has told me they're definitely pulling the plug, several others are, at best, pessimistic about their chances of getting permits. The G&S Plan B is to give the City the finger and move everything indoors.

- Thinking of SXSW, check out **'Hitler Gets Invited To SXSW'** on YouTube. If you haven't come across any of the numerous overdubs of a sequence from *Der Untergang*, a German film about Hitler's last days in the bunker, starring Bruno Ganz, this one features Hitler and his generals being invited to showcase at SXSW Comedy and Hitler's reaction when he's told that they have to pay for their travel and accommodation expenses. "SXSW is not the Make A Wish Foundation... Why are you letting people treat you like crack whores?" When one of the generals says it'll be good for their careers, Hitler responds, "It's about not letting assholes get away with highway robbery... The fact that they're asking artists to subsidize their festival is truly fucked." Austin musician Troy Dillinger commented "I'd say 'Where's the musicians' version of this?' but musicians rolled over 20 years ago."

- How does a music writer know he (or she) is getting old? When someone they saw busking on 6th Street puts out a Christmas album, that's how. The PR email I got in early December, which I first forgot and then thought had passed its sell-by date, until a friend begged me to have a go at it, started off oddly enough, with Kenny G's **Wishes: A Holiday Album**. As far as I know, Kenneth Bruce Gorelick is still Jewish, though whether, in Peter Cook's famous formulation, "I'm not a Jew, I'm Jewish," he's practicing, I neither know nor care. Guess he's as entitled as anyone to make a buck out of Christmas. However, scrolling down, the next offering was **Fireside Songs For The Soul** by **Guy Forsyth & Carolyn Wonderland**, "wonderful reinterpretations of holiday classics like *Baby It's Cold Outside* and *Merry Xmas (War Is Over)*, along with highlights from the live show, including *Run Run Rudolph*, *Walking In A Winter Wonderland* and *You're Not Gonna Get What You Want For Christmas*." Forsyth & Wonderland are not the first practitioners of 'the Devil's music' to make a Christmas album, BB King, no less, put one out in 2001, but King rather illustrates the basic truth about Christmas albums: you put one out when your career has peaked or plateaued or you just don't care anymore. As a very cynical MCA exec once told me, "The great thing about Christmas albums is that they tell me exactly how many hardcore fans an artist has, the ones that will buy anything, so then I can decide whether to keep them or cut them."

- Of course, I speak as someone who works in a store and has to listen to Christmas music eight hours a day, five days a week, from Thanksgiving until Christmas Eve, which seems like eternity, only longer. I think I speak for all my fellow sufferers when I say that the last fucking thing I want to listen to at home is fucking Christmas music—when the carol singers come around, we're locked and loaded.

- Most years round this time, I get to start making fun of the **International Country Music Conference**, but two announcements in a row make me wonder if ICMC's academics have flat run out of ludicrous topics and have been forced to get serious and relevant. The first, in which I would happily participate as I regard cowriting as an unclean abomination, is: "Chris Wilson of the University of Toronto will be providing yet further insight into the songwriting process in his presentation *I Got Three Hours Next Tuesday Morning: Co-Writing on Music Row and the Strategic Responses of Nashville Songwriters*." Wilson... indicates that co-writing 'has become standard operating

procedure for songwriters on Music Row."

- The description of the other is probably more interesting than the actual presentation: "Independent scholar and country artist Caroline Gnagy of Austin, Texas will be presenting *The Welded Chain That Binds Us: One Family's Journey From Prison Cell to Opry Stage*." Gnagy's presentation will deal with 87 year-old ex-convict Tom Cook from Chestnut Mount, Tennessee who 'ran moonshine for the East Coast mafia as a young man, and consequently served two 3-year terms and part of a 5-year prison term in various penitentiaries in the 1950s and 1960s. He is fast-talking, charismatic, and the father of Nashville-based Grand Ole Opry star, **Elizabeth Cook**.' Gnagy will discuss Tom Cook's experience in a country prison band as well as his impact on daughter Elizabeth Cook's country music career." Now that's country.

- However, the next announcement returns us to more familiar ICM territory: "Kirby Pringle of Cal Poly, Pomona will be provocative in his *Spurs and Speciesism: Country Music and the Commercialization of Animal Cruelty* presentation..." Pringle argues that "the early country music of the 1940s and '50s was the soundtrack for homeownership and suburbanization and thus encouraged sprawl and the loss of animal habitat. Modern country music is still the soundtrack for animal suffering, though there are a few notable exceptions. Pringle's presentation will show why animals should make tracks should they hear country music."

- Loved this, from a January issue of *The Onion: Nation's Sound Engineers Gather To Talk About Their Ponytails*, "AUSTIN, TX—Sound engineers from around the country converged on the Hilton Garden Inn for their annual convention in which they discuss their ponytails. "It's always fun to catch up with other sound guys, just so we can swap stories about changing out bad cables, smoke cigarettes together, and see how our ponytails are," said Joe Spencer, a sound engineer from Kansas City, MO which 11-inch ponytail was poking out of the hole of his Zildjian ball cap and obscuring the tour dates on his Megadeth T-shirt. "But despite our cool jobs, it's pretty much like any other convention. We talk about new Mag-Lite innovations, see presentations on ponytail-friendly headphones, and swap tips, like how, in a pinch, you can use a mic clip as a clasp to secure your ponytail." At the close of the weekend-long event, attendees will reportedly observe a moment of silence in honor of the late Ted 'Smash' Bailey, a sound engineer who had an impressive 24-incher and told Peter Gabriel to fuck off in 1983."

- William Michael Smith's piece about **Linda Chorney** gatecrashing the Grammys got mixed responses. Some were horrified, others figured good for her if she could game the system without spending meagbacks on a publicist or three. I have to admit that I'm neutral on this one—I don't give a shit about the Grammys. In any case, I assume the only reason Americana didn't get chopped in the recent pruning was because it was only a couple of years old.

- Starting with this issue, **3CM** is going to look a little different than it has for some years as my printers are now using a different paper stock. This means a little less real estate, so I'm trying to figure out how to maximise what I have. If you have any comments about the readability of fonts and/or font sizes, I would be very glad to hear them.






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## **FEBRUARY LIVE MUSIC SCHEDULE**

Every Monday X 20th, Austin Cajun Aces, 6.30pm	16th, Paul Glasse, 7pm
Every Tuesday, Brennen Leigh, 7pm	17th, Deuve Coupe, 10pm
1st, Twilight Trio, 7pm The Peacemakers, 10pm	18th, Ponty Bone, 10pm
2nd, Liz Morphis, 7pm	20th, Brennen Leigh, 6.30p,
3rd, Larry Lange's Lonely Knights, 10pm	21st, MARDI GRAS
4th, Sunset Valley Boys, 3pm	22nd Lissa Hattersley, 7pm
8th, The Peacemakers, 10pm	The Peacemakers, 10pm
9th, T Jarrod Bonta Trio, 7pm	23rd, Matt Smith, 7pm
10th, Jim Suhler's Monkey Beat, 10pm	24th & 25th, Denny Freeman, 10pm
15th, Floyd Domino, 7pm	29th/= TBA, 7pm, The Peacemakers,
The Peacemakers, 10pm	

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Never Heard of 'Em Showcase  
The White Swan  
12th & Chicon, Austin

**Wednesday 2/15, 6:30pm**

Deb Champion's Song Writer Showcase,  
Holiday Inn @ Vanderbilt, Nashville, TN

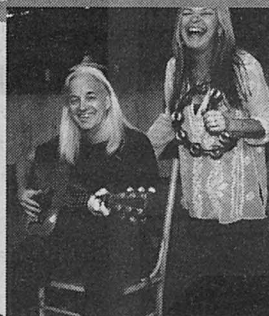
**Friday 2/17 Writers in the round with John Cronin**  
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**Monday 2/20, 8pm**

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## REVIEWS CODE

\*\*\*\*\* Killer  
\*\*\*\*\* What's not to like?  
\*\*\* Can do better  
\*\* Why did they bother?  
\* Piss on this noise

## HERE BE MONSTERS

**S**o, last month I said I'd get back to you about Kevin Russell's comment that Townes Van Zandt "wasn't as good as Ted Hawkins." On one level the response to this is easy—bollocks. Hawkins put on a great show, but on a good night Van Zandt was absolutely mesmerizing. However, there's another aspect to this comparison. It's one thing to make judgements about the song, but should that extend to making judgements about the singer? Hawkins wowed Europe in the late 80s/early 90s, but a child pornography bust pretty much kicked his reputation over there into touch.

The question, of course, is whether personality flaws should factor into consideration of an artist's work. Which, in turn, raises another question about the magnitude of the flaws. On one, fairly low, level, for instance, I imagine most of us, given a choice between going to see an artist we feel good about or another we consider to be a self-important, if equally talented, jerk, will have little difficulty deciding which to support. However, being an asshole is one thing, being a violent criminal is, you'd think, another matter altogether. Or is it?

It's not hard to come up with clear examples of sociopathic or psychopathic behavior being excused, forgotten, brushed under the carpet, especially when it comes to "youthful indiscretions." Ike Turner, for instance, sold more records and won more awards, culminating in a 2007 Grammy, after **I, Tina** and **What's Love Got To Do With It** demonized him. Beating Tanya Tucker so badly that she needed reconstructive facial surgery did nothing to keep Glenn Campbell out of the Country Music Hall Of Fame. The Tucker/Campbell incident, in which her jaw was broken and her front teeth knocked out, is particularly instructive. While I don't for one moment condone any violence against women, hospitalization seems a step up from bruises and black eyes. However, while you can find plenty of references to the couple's "tumultuous relationship," it takes God's own amount of Googling to confirm what ended it. In 1981, nobody wanted to know, not the press, not the fans and not the Nashville establishment, which desperately didn't want country music associated with cocaine abuse. Which kind of goes to show that short of killing his wife, a star can get away with pretty much anything, though, come to think, it might have been the life sentence rather than the crime itself which put a serious crimp in Spade Cooley's career.

I have to admit that I have no clear answer to any of the questions raised above. On the one hand, I can detach Huey P Meaux's career from the child pornography, while Ted Hawkins is forever tainted. Equally, I can admire Ike Turner the musician, if not the man, but am quite happy to write off Glen Campbell's entire career. Is this fair? Of course not, but, to paraphrase Mittens, music writers are people too, my friend. Which is why you'll never see David Allan Coe's name in **3CM**. Whoops.

JC

## VA: THE RED BIRD GIRLS

(Real Gone \*\*\*\*\*)

**J**erry Leiber & Mike Stoller are, of course, immortal as a songwriting team and record producers, rather less so as record label owners, possibly because their hearts weren't really in it. In 1953, they formed Spark, which hit with The Robins' *Smokey Joe's Cafe* and *Riot In Cell Block #9*, but was folded in 1955 when the duo joined Atlantic. After leaving United Artists in 1963, they started Red Bird, a cluster of labels that also included Blue Cat, Tiger and Daisy, with industry veteran George Goldner, who'd sold Gee, Gone, Rama and Roulette to the infamous Morris Levy to cover gambling debts. The Red Bird family was far more successful than Spark, but still only lasted three years, by which time it was effectively controlled by Levy, so Leiber & Stoller sold the operation to Goldner for \$1. Goldner, in turn, sold it to Levy's Roulette except for The Shangri-Las' contract, which was acquired by Mercury.

The extraordinary thing about Red Bird (etc) was that Leiber & Stoller, already famous as hitmakers, brought in Ellie Greenwich & Jeff Barry, hot off writing most of Phil Spector's early hits, and the fledgling team of Chip Taylor & Al Gorgoni, while Shadow Morton, who, to prove himself, wrote *Remember (Walking In The Sand)* and had a demo of it cut by an unknown teenage girl group from Queens called The Shangri-Las, was hired as staff producer. Thus, Red Bird had most of the major players in the Girl Group Sound in-house. Record making is unpredictable, but Red Bird shot out of the gate in 1964 with its first release, The Dixie Cups' *Chapel Of Love* rocketing to #1 in *Billboard's* Hot 100, matched later that year by The Shangri-Las' *Leader Of The Pack*. Although female-fronted acts comprised only 40% of the roster, they accounted for more than 90% of Red Bird's hits.

The label's legacy should, in theory, have been wrapped up by a four CD set, **The Red Bird Story** (Charly [UK], 1991), but it was incomplete, very poorly curated and the sound quality was barely acceptable. **The Very Best Of Red Bird/Blue Cat Records** (Taragon, 1998), in stereo, was a vast improvement, but, as the title indicates, only covered the high spots, as did **Girl Group Sound; 25 All-Time Greatest Hits From Red Bird** (Varese Sarabande, 2001). Real Gone, formed last year by Collectors Choice founder Gordon Anderson and Hep Cat founder Gabby Castellana, chose to focus on minor and non-hits, for instance The Dixie Cups' *No True Love* rather than *Chapel Of Love*, the more obscure Red Bird girl groups, a couple of alternative takes and a previously unreleased single. The one glaring problem is that, I assume for legal reasons, there's nothing by The Shangri-Las, no *Out In The Streets*, *Bull Dog* or *Dressed In Black*, darn it.

However, the 20 tracks illustrate the label's depth of talent, even if many of the acts defy Google searches today, and, if nothing else, make available two genuine classics, the star-crossed Evie Sands' original versions of Taylor & Gorgoni's *I Can't Let Go* and Trade Martin's *Take Me For A Little While*, otherwise only available on imports. These, like The Ad-Libs' *The Boy From New York City* and *I'm Just A Down Home Girl*, were actually on the R&B/soul subsidiary Blue Cat rather than Red Bird, but that's a distinction that would only bother record collectors.

Ellie Greenwich, New York's 'Demo Queen,' not only cowrote many of the hits, but also recorded for the label, represented on this album by the fabulous *You Don't Know*, *Another Boy Like Mine* and the previously unreleased *Call Me His*, written by a very young Neil Diamond. The Goodies contribute *The Dum Dum Ditty*, The Jelly Beans *The Kind of Boy You Can't Forget*, How Fine Can One Guy Be and *I Wanna Love Him So Bad*, Bessie Banks the original version of *Go Now*, Roddie Joy *He's So Easy To Love*, Chi Chi McCauley *I Know He Loves Me*, The Butterflies, long thought to have been a multi-tracked Ellie Greenwich, but in fact a real group, *I Wonder* and *Gee Baby Gee*, The Bouquets *Welcome To My Heart*, The Young Generation (featuring Janis Siegel later of Manhattan Transfer) *The Hideaway* and The Charmettes *Sugar Boy*.

A besetting problem for labels like Red Bird was having potential hits covered by larger labels able to crush smaller rivals and lesser-known artists. This happened at least three times with Red Bird, twice to Sands, whose *Take Me For A Little While* lost out to Jackie Ross and *I Can't Let Go* to The Hollies' cover, while Bessie Banks' *Go Now* was steamrollered by The Moody Blues.

While I'm ambivalent about Real Gone's 'Very First Time In Stereo' claim—I still love the immediacy of mono, especially for singles—this is the best Red Bird package to date. The sound quality is superb and the 14 page booklet contains substantial information about some all but forgotten acts, for a change. As a rather curious bonus, following #20, there are 11 tracks of "studio chatter," lifted from the original masters, which offer a slightly eerie fly on the wall insight into the making of records 50 years ago.

JC





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- 1st Don Everly • 1937 Brownie, KY  
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- 2nd CB Stubblefield • 1927 Navasota, TX  
Glenn Barber • 1935 Hollis, OK  
Rusty Kershaw • 1940 Tiel Ridge, LA  
Eva Cassidy • 1963 Oxon Hill, MD  
Jenks Carman † 1968
- 3rd Johnny Guitar Watson • 1935 Houston, TX  
Shawn Phillips • 1943 Fort Worth, TX  
Buddy Holly † 1959  
Ritchie Valens † 1959  
The Big Bopper † 1959
- 4th Paul Burlison • 1929 Brownsville, TN  
Grace (Broussard) • 1939 Prairieville, LA  
Louis Jordan † 1975
- 5th Bob Dunn • 1908 Braggs, OK  
Link Davis Sr † 1972
- 6th Geno Delafosse • 1971 Eunice, LA  
Jesse Belvin † 1960
- 7th Dock Boggs • 1898 West Norton, VA  
Wilma Lee Cooper • 1921 Valley Head, WV  
Warren Smith • 1933 Humphreys Co, MS  
Earl King • 1934 New Orleans, LA  
King Curtis • 1934 Fort Worth, TX  
Gene Elders • 1951 Chicago, IL  
Dock Boggs † 1971  
Roxy Gordon † 2000  
Dale Evans † 2001
- 8th Skeet Dixon • 1929 Marshall, TX  
Ray Sharpe • 1938 Fort Worth, TX  
Tom Russell • 1950 Los Angeles, CA
- 9th Ernest Tubb • 1914 Crisp, TX  
Jivin' Gene • 1940 Port Arthur, TX  
Joe Ely • 1946 Amarillo, TX  
Bill Haley † 1981
- 10th Aldus Roger • 1916 Carencro, LA  
Rockin' Dopsie • 1932 Lafayette, LA  
Michael Fracasso • 1952 Steubenville, OH
- Mike Ireland • 1961 Kansas City, MO  
Ruthie Foster • 1964 Mineola, TX
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Moe Bandy • 1944 Meridian, MS
- 13th Tennessee Ernie Ford • 1919 Bristol, TN  
Boudleaux Bryant • 1920 Shellman, GA  
Leland H Miller • 1924 Columbus, TX  
Sheri Frushay • 1964 Austin, TX  
Terri Hendrix • 1968 San Antonio, TX  
Waylon Jennings † 2002
- 14th Valerio Longoria • 1924 Kenedy, TX  
Magic Sam • 1937 Grenada, MS  
Tim Buckley • 1947 Washington, DC  
Michael Doucet • 1951 Scott, LA  
Buddy Knox † 1999
- 15th Hank Locklin • 1918 McLellan, FL

- Little Walter † 1968
- 16th Jimmy Wakely • 1914 Mineola, AR  
Bill Doggett • 1916 Philadelphia, PA  
Charlie Ryan † 2008
- 17th Johnny Bush • 1935 Houston, TX  
Eck Robertson † 1975
- 18th Pee Wee King • 1914 Abrams, WI  
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Irma Thomas • 1941 Ponchatoula, LA  
Johnny Paycheck † 2003  
Johnny Carroll † 1995
- 19th Smokey Robinson • 9 1940 Detroit, MI
- 21st Bobby Charles • 1938 Abbeville, LA  
Carl T Sprague † 1979
- 22nd Jesse Ashlock • 1915 Walker Co, TX  
Ernie K-Doe • 1936 New Orleans, LA  
Mick Green • 1944 Wimbledon, UK  
Josh Alan • 1956 New York City, NY
- 23rd Steve Jordan • 1939 Elsa, TX  
Erik Hokkanen • 1963 Clearwater, FL
- 24th Michelle Shocked • 1962 Dallas, TX  
Tom Shaw † 1977
- 25th Ralph Stanley • 1927 Big Spraddle Creek, VA  
Faron Young • 1932 Shreveport, LA
- 26th Fats Domino • 1928 New Orleans, LA  
Johnny Cash • 1932 Kingsland, AR  
Mitch Ryder • 1945 Hamtramck, MI  
Chris Wall • 1952 Hollywood, CA
- 27th Hardrock Gunter • 1925 Birmingham, AL  
Bobby Balderama • 1950 O'Donnell, TX  
Jane Gillman • 1958 Washington, DC  
Little Joe Carson † 1964
- 28th Don Helms • 1927 Brockton, AL  
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