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#31/120 AUGUST 1999



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***** (or not)

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EXPOSED ROOTS

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DANNY GATTON

WAYNE HANCOCK

REX HOBART
& THE MISERY BOYS

HOT CLUB
OF COWTOWN

SCOTTY MOORE

MUDDY WATERS

MINGO SALDIVAR

HANK THOMPSON

TEXAS BELAIRS

ROGER WALLACE

BIG JOE WILLIAMS

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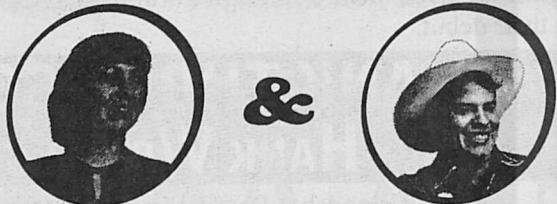


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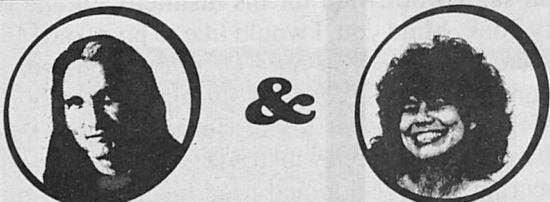
SATURDAY AUGUST 7



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WAYNE HANCOCK

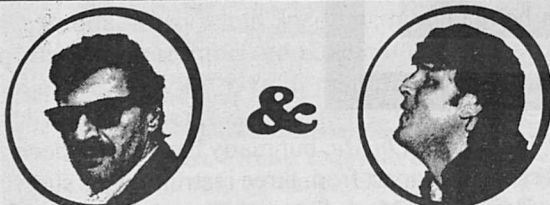
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JIMMIE DALE GILMORE

JO CAROL PIERCE

SATURDAY AUGUST 14



BUTCH HANCOCK

CARY SWINNEY

FRIDAY AUGUST 20



TERRI HENDRIX

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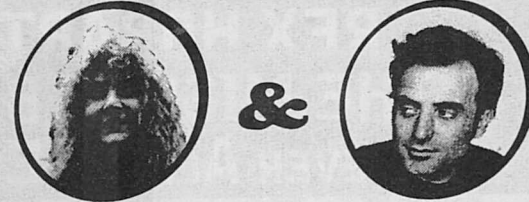
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EXPOSED ROOTS

(K-Tel double CD ***)

Coming back to this mainly to pass on a letter from Peter Blackstock which shows that *No Depression* has pretty realistic expectations for this compilation of 'The Best of Alt Country.' And that they can take a joke, unlike K-Tel (kicking myself for not saving compiler Patrick Whalen's emails, which were quite wonderfully pompous). In Whalen's defence, compilations are most always compromises, as wish lists yield to the reality of which bands and labels you can actually get to sign off on the deal. However, while it may have been infeasible to include certain acts, such as, to take an example dear to *No Depression*'s heart, Uncle Tupelo, legal and/or budgetary hassles do not explain the glaring omission of The Waco Brothers, since painstaking research, ie a phone call to Nan Warshaw, reveals that K-Tel never contacted Bloodshot. That such a key act, or any the roster of this seminal label, were never considered for inclusion calls the validity of the entire project into question right there, but even accepting that no compilation can be all things to all listeners, I can't get round that nagging Kiss of Death vibe K-Tel emanates. Before I pass you on to Blackstock, anyone notice that *No Depression*'s July/August issue has the subhead 'Surviving The Death Of Alt.Country (Bimonthly)'? **JC**
Hey John,

Just got the new 3CM; enjoyed your brief rundown of the K-tel compilation. One correction, just to set things straight: You don't get the Ginzu knives or the Veg-o-Matic with the purchase of the set, but you do get the machine that makes "mounds and mounds of julienne fries!" Actually, as far as we know, there are no plans to sell this thing via TV commercials—which is kind of a shame, 'cuz I'd love to see what they'd come up with.

♦ As for *No Depression*'s involvement—which was only to write liner notes (Pat Whalen at K-tel selected the tracks, though obviously if we hadn't approved of the track selection we would've declined to participate)—there really was only one reason we did this. That being: The market K-tel tends to reach is considerably different from what we've already managed to reach reasonably well on our own. They have a presence in chain stores that likely wouldn't ordinarily carry records by many of the artists who appear on this compilation.

♦ We believe, by and large, that the music those artists are putting out is good, and worthy of more people's attention. Sometimes it's just a matter of getting the music in a place where other people might hear it, and that's an opportunity K-tel could offer in places we wouldn't really be able to reach ourselves. For the magazine, it's basically the same benefit: Just as the compilation may get these artists' music into the hands of people who've never heard of them, it also may get our magazine into some of those hands (via a reply card packaged into the disc that offers a free copy of *No Depression*).

♦ As for whether any of this will actually *work* like we're thinking—well, who knows. You may end up being right that "K-Tel are going to be royally pissed when the sales figures start coming in"—but this was their project to begin with (ie, they came to us with it, not the other way around), so obviously they're willing to take that risk, and I think they deserve credit for that. However, it may be premature to assume that this compilation won't sell much. Pat Whalen reported to us a couple weeks ago that advance orders from distributors exceeded K-tel's expectations, with about 40,000 shipped (still fairly modest of course, but more than I'd have guessed).

♦ None of which necessarily means anything yet, of course. As John Kunz astutely noted in that *Austin Chronicle* article on Watermelon Records, the only sale that ultimately counts is when the customer takes it to the counter. We'll find out how that turns out soon enough. In the meantime, we have no qualms about trying to get the music (and our mag) out there to more people who we think might appreciate it.

Adios, **Peter Blackstock**, co-editor, *No Depression*

REX HOBART & THE MISERY BOYS FOREVER ALWAYS ENDS

(Bloodshot ***)

Maybe people who can write songs use that skill as part of the process of internalizing pain and suffering, or maybe the modern generation of songwriters has a keener appreciation of the consequences of antisocial behavior, but my impression is that a lot less acting out happens in songs than in real life. As you can tell from the band's name, Hobart and his Kansas City outfit are not exactly rodeo clowns, and the song titles, *I Always Cry At Weddings*, *I Walked In While He Was Changing Your Mind*, *Happy Birthday Broken Heart*, *Between A Rock And A Heartache*, *Make Me Hate You Before You Go*, tip you off that women pull a lot of shit on poor old Rex. However, it doesn't have adverse affects on their health, because, while self-pity is nothing new in country songwriting, Hobart is wedded to the festering art, in fact one song is actually titled *Feeling Sorry For Myself*. Guess it'd be inconsistent, but just once I'd like to see him go into old-fashioned 'I'll kill myself over your dead body if you fuck anybody but me' mode. Seems to run in the family, too, as his mother contributed the stoic tearjerker *Mother Of A Member Of The Band*. Produced by Lou Whitney of The Skeletons, and more or less Bakersfield Sound, this is something of a crying in your beer loser epic as Hobart makes you feel his pain, over and over. Unfortunately, the sentiments have all been done before, both written and sung better than this. Unusually banal for Bloodshot. **JC**

THE HOT CLUB OF COWTOWN TALL TALES

(HighTone ****)

Not often one can pan a record without upsetting anyone, but neither Hot Club nor HighTone had much ego invested in *Swingin' Stampede*, which started life as a rush job Watermelon project, leaning far too heavily on the trio's live set standards, crippled by shitty engineering, and released, far as I can tell, on the calculation that enough virtuosity, especially Elana Fremmerman's sensational fiddle playing, still shone through. Even without such a positive, indeed heartwarming, indicator as "Produced by Dave 'Pappy' Stuckey," you have to figure this one is going to be better because they really had nowhere to go but up. From the opener, *Draggin' The Bow*, a fiddler's showcase favored by Harry Choates and RJ Chatwell, Fremmerman is still Hot Club's main selling point, would indeed be just about any group's main selling point, but everything's been beefed up round her, from production and engineering to material and additional players, notably Peter Ecklund on cornet. A dilettante when it comes to Western Swing, I figured that if the material on the first album was familiar to me, it had to be almost unbearably vieux jeu to hardcore enthusiasts, but this time Hot Club's dug a bit deeper as well as coming up with four excellent originals. Bob Wills is represented by *I Laugh When I Think How I Cried Over You* and *Joe Bob Rag* (and maybe *Sally Goodin*), but apart from Joe Venuti & Eddie Lang's *Wildcat* and Pee Wee King's *Bonaparte's Retreat*, I, at least, can only tentatively associate the other covers. *Always And Always* brings Red Norvo & Mildred Bailey to mind, oh yes and Don Julian & The Meadowlarks, *Polkadots And Moonbeams* has to predate Bill Evans, I'm thinking Ethel Waters for *There'll Be Some Changes Made*, but *I Can't Tame Wild Women* and *Red Hot Mama* have me completely stumped. Guitarist Whit Smith contributes two originals, one cowritten with Stuckey, bassman Billy Horton another, written with Bobby, the other half of The Horton Brothers, and Fremmerman the fourth, and best, *Darling You And I Are Through*. Vocals aren't Hot Club's forte, but Fremmerman, tentative on stage, does much better in the studio, still no Laura Lee McBride but making up in charm what she lacks in projection. If Hot Club could still use to emulate Ray Condo's deep diving into the Western Swing dumpster and ability to spot usable material in other genres' archives, this at least gives them a solid platform to develop from, way better than their debut. **JC**

HANK THOMPSON HANK WORLD

(Bloodshot Revival/Soundies ***)

Unless he's stopped dyeing it recently, you've never seen anything quite as unnatural looking as Hank Thompson's hair, but there's no denying the reality of his achievements, five decades of hits and 60 million sales worldwide for his distinctive brand of Western Swing Honky Tonk. Mind you, I would like to point out, as it seems virtually forgotten, that *The Wild Side Of Life*, Thompson's biggest hit and signature song, was a cover of an Imperial single by Jimmy Heap & The Melody Masters, of Taylor, Texas (they cut *Release Me* first too, poor bastards). More relevant trivia is that Thompson studied electrical engineering at Princeton and used his skills not only to become the first country act with a touring sound and light show, frankly a distinction I'd keep quiet about, but to build a state of the art home studio. In the early 50s, signed to Capitol and recording in Hollywood, he also had a separate deal to supply transcription discs for radio airplay, which he made himself back home in Oklahoma City. The 23 tracks on this album, handpicked by Thompson himself, probably the only person who's heard them in over 40 years, include some of the hits, *Rub-A-Dub-Dub*, *If Lovin' You Is Wrong*, *Humpty Dumpty Heart* and *Don't Take It Out On Me*, but many have never been released before in any version and, apart from three instrumentals showcasing The Brazos Valley Boys (sans Merle Travis), *Westphalia Waltz*, Benny Goodman's *Don't Be That Way* and Bob Will's *Texas Playboy Rag*, they're all originals. If you're asking yourself why he didn't take them to Capitol and guessing this isn't his strongest material, you'd be right, though, of course, by current Nashville standards, a lot of the songs are pretty damned good. If you don't have Thompson's 1961 masterpiece, *At The Golden Nugget*, the first ever live country album, which does feature Travis, you're not a serious enough fan to need this. **JC**

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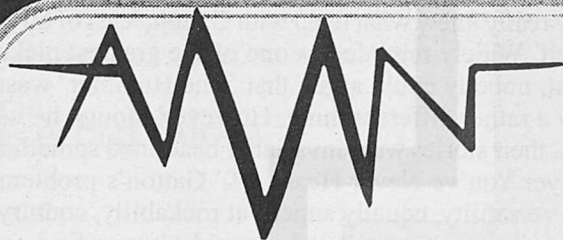
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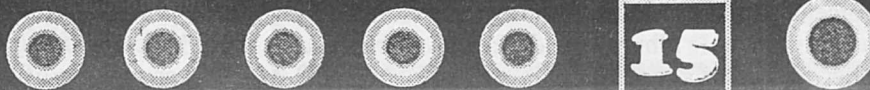
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midnight	Rockalt Weekend	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	FlyWeekend
1am	LA Jukebox	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	No Borders Wknd
2am	No Borders Weekend	No Borders, repeat	No Borders, repeat	No Borders, repeat	No Borders, repeat	No Borders, repeat	Tejano Country
3am	Fly Weekend	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Breakin' In, repeat	Texas Cafe/Rogers
4am	Breakin' In Weekend	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Fly, repeat	Breakin' In Weekend
5am	Rockalt Weekend	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt Weekend
6am	Rockalt, repeat	"	"	"	"	"	"
7am	Breakin' In	Good Morning	Good Morning	Good Morning	Good Morning	Good Morning	Breakin' In
8am	Texas Best repeat	"	"	"	"	"	Texas Best repeat
9am	"	Texas Best repeat	Texas Best repeat	Texas Best repeat	Texas Best repeat	Texas Best repeat	"
10am	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
11am	TVTY 11:30 No Borders	"	"	"	"	"	No Borders Wknd
12pm	12:30 LA Jukebox	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Rockalt, repeat	Breakin' In
1pm	1:30 Breakin' In	"	"	"	"	"	LA Jukebox
2pm	2:30 Breakin' In	No Borders	No Borders	No Borders	No Borders	No Borders	KGSR Unplugged
3pm	3:30 KGSR Unplugged	Fly	Fly	Fly	Fly	Fly	Rockalt Weeken
4pm	"	Breakin' In	Breakin' In	Breakin' In	Breakin' In	Breakin' In	"
5pm	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!	What's the Cover!
6pm	"	"	"	"	"	"	Tejano Country
7pm	KGSR Unplugged	Texas Best	Texas Best	Texas Best	Texas Best	Texas Best	Texas Best Weekend
8pm	Texas Best Weekend	"	"	"	"	"	"
9pm	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
10pm	Rockalt Weekend	Rockalt,	Rockalt,	Rockalt,	Rockalt,	Rockalt,	Rockalt,
11pm	"	"	"	"	"	"	"

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MUDDY WATERS THE LOST TAPES BIG JOE WILLIAMS & FRIENDS GOING BACK TO CRAWFORD

(Blind Pig ****/Arhoolie ****)

Guess I really have gone over to the Blues Nazis. Listening to a composite of two 1971 concerts, at Washington and Oregon Universities, when he wasn't even at his peak, I can't even begin to imagine what goes through the minds of white kids who think they can play anything even remotely comparable to Muddy Waters, nor why anyone would bother to buy anything they recorded when they can get albums like this. Dammit, even Muddy's son, Big Bill Morganfield, with his dad's Telecaster, rig and band, can't get anywhere close, as he regrettably demonstrates on another recent Blind Pig release, **Rising Son**. Unearthed, along with many other treasures, by Richard Chalk of Dallas' Topcat Records, from the stash of blues promoter Link Wyler, this captures Muddy Waters during a period when Chess was putting out hideously opportunistic albums, **Electric Mud** the most notorious, but the live performances were still uncompromising. With Pinetop Perkins replacing the late Otis Spann on piano, George Smith harmonica, Sammy Lawhorn and Pee-wee Madison guitars, Calvin Jones bass and Willie Smith drums, a ten minute workout of *She's 19 Years Old* is the show-stopper, but all eleven tracks are sensational, with Waters rivaling his ferocious 40s and 50s best on *Long Distance Call*. If you have a PC, videos of that song and of an interview are included. I can't actually make them work myself, but surely Blind Pig wouldn't lie to us.

♦ More Real Deal, 26 previously unreleased tracks from sessions organized and directed by country blues giant Big Joe Williams. In May 1971, Chris Strachwitz went to his home in Crawford, MS, and recorded Williams both on his own and backing friends, neighbors and relatives, Glover Connor, Austen Pete, John 'Shortstuff' Macon and Amelia Johnson. A woman ahead of her time, Johnson then hired a lawyer who blocked release of the recordings, so they've been gathering dust for 28 years. Cast from the same down home mold as Williams, his friends have an engaging rawness, but the main attraction, of course, is Big Joe. Not many people can claim to have recorded constantly for four decades without ever doing, or being conned into doing, anything bad, or even mediocre, and Williams sure doesn't mar a flawless reputation. **JC**

THE WORLD OF CRAZY CAJUN

(Edsel ****)

Pete Macklin, who heads up Edsel's Crazy Cajun project, has one of the music world's more interesting problems, organizing 4000 masters into a coherent release schedule. That would be 333 regular size albums, still 180 if, as on this one, he put 22 tracks on each, but then special packages like this, and many other projected samplers, drive the number up again. Huey P Meaux was a busy fellow to be sure and it might have helped Macklin if he hadn't been quite so damned good at what he did. To put his Houston label in perspective, this is really a sampler for another sampler, the forthcoming three CD box set **Crazy Cajun Story**. So it only includes tracks by Doug Kershaw, Ronnie Milsap, Delbert McClinton, Mickey Gilley, Sir Douglas Quintet, Moe Bandy, Floyd Tillman, Freddy Fender, Roy Head, Cate Brothers, BJ Thomas, Barbara Lynn, Frenchie Burke, Johnny Copeland, Rod Bernard, T-Bone Walker, Lowell Fulson, Clarence 'Frogman' Henry, Link Davis Sr, Dr John and Tommy McLain. There just wasn't room for Joe Barry, Sonny Landreth, Clifton Chenier, Jimmy Donley, etc, etc, etc. Meaux may have lost his freedom, and his personal reputation, but his legacy as A&R man and producer can never be taken away from him. **JC**

SCOTTY MOORE THE GUITAR THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

(Razor & Tie *)

No one would dispute that Winfield Scott Moore III was a great sideman, one of the all time best, but this album, originally released in 1964, reinforces an opinion I formed back in the days when jazz racks were flooded with albums of noodling, often inspired but noodling nonetheless, by everybody who'd ever played with Miles Davis—sidemen have no business making records. Without The King in front of him, Moore's showcase guitar playing on such Elvis standards as *Hound Dog*, *Heartbreak Hotel*, *Milk Cow Blues*, *Mystery Train*, *Don't Be Cruel* and *Love Me Tender*, though beyond question superlative, seems sterile and pointless, fascinating perhaps to other guitarists but otherwise superfluous. To make it worse, even students of Moore's dazzling technique have to contend with a male voice choir, so fruitily over the top as to sound like a Stan Freberg parody, that makes the whole album sound like elevator music. This was produced by Billy Sherrill, need I say more? **JC**

ROGER WALLACE HILLBILLY HEIGHTS

(Texas Round-Up ****)

Very unusually, Wallace is a singer who can best be described as a musicians' musician, a term one normally associates with sidemen. However, though he's kept a low profile since he moved to Austin from Knoxville, TN, content to play second fiddle to Teri Joyce, tagging along with The Tagalongs, his debut album will, for sure, elevate him from Austin buzz name among Real Country musicians and aficionados to international buzz name among Real Country musicians and aficionados. Picking up the musicians' musician theme, Wallace is superbly backed by Jim Stringer electric guitar, Marty Muse steel guitar, Erik Hokkanen or Elena Fremmerman fiddle, Brad Fordham bass and Lisa Pankratz drums (even more fabulous than usual on the shuffles). Admittedly, this gang could make most anyone sound good, but Wallace combines a terrific, atavistic, honkytonk voice and vocal style with songwriting to match. In fact, apart from Wynn Stewart's *I Don't Feel At Home*, his nine originals are at least as good as the four covers and some, *Wishful Drinkin'*, *The Runaround* and *Wine By Wine*, are much better, another anomaly. Anybody in the market for a fresh, and first class, dose of Faron Young style honkytonk is in for a real treat. **JC**

TEXAS BELAIRS SONS OF PREACHERS

(Doghouse ****)

More a melee than a band is a reputation that still haunts Lubbock's leading roots band for most of this past decade. Time was when the entertainment might very well include an on-stage fraternal fist fight as an added attraction. Originally a kickass rockabilly trio, the Mings brothers, Kent, a quite exceptional storyteller who wrote ten of the twelve songs, Kevin, who learned to play drums on Joe Ely's old kit, and Wes 'Tex,' an upright bass player of the Ray Campi workout school, broadened the band's scope by adding Harold Aiken, one of those amazing West Texas/New Mexico skull orchard steel players, and Billy Whitson on rubboard. The internal friction has cooled off enough for them to finally cut an album, which features some telltale guests, Jesse Taylor, Ponty Bone and Lloyd Maines. Ely comparisons may not be farfetched but don't tell the whole story of a band that carries the idiosyncratic West Texas tradition, not so much breaking molds but seeming unaware if them, into another generation. A charming, if somewhat esoteric, touch is closing with a poem read by local legend Willis Cooper. Terrific musicianship and exemplary songwriting. **JC**

HOT ROD GUITAR THE DANNY GATTON ANTHOLOGY

(Rhino, double CD ****)

Nobody really knew what to do with Gatton, least of all the DC guitar monster himself. Widely regarded as one of the greatest pickers of all time, if not the greatest, nobody could argue that 'The Humbler' wasn't about the fastest, admittedly a rather different thing. However, though he was idolized by guitar magazines, their stories were invariably headlined something like 'The Greatest Guitar Player You've Never Heard Of.' Gatton's problems were twofold. His incredible versatility, equally superb at rockabilly, country, jazz, R&B, rock & roll, rock and pop, meant that he could always find session work, but his reluctance to focus on one style made him almost impossible to market except to other guitarists. Where another DC legend, Link Wray, was undisputed master of one genre, Gatton was an obscure cult figure in many. Also, Gatton worked on the unwise assumption—let this be a lesson to all you musicians out there—that his universally acknowledged virtuosity would bring record companies flocking to his door. In point of fact, his three most admired albums, **Redneck Jazz** (1978), featuring Buddy Emmons and Evan Johns, the all instrumental **Unfinished Business** (1987) and **The Humbler: Robert Gordon With Danny Gatton—Live** (1996) were put out by NRG Records, ie Norma Gatton, his mother. When, in his 40s, he did connect with a major, Gatton made yet another rash assumption, that Elektra's seven album deal gave him plenty of time and space in which to explore his extraordinary musical range, but only two were actually released, **88 Elmira Street** (1991) and, featuring irritating and redundant vocals by Delbert McClinton and Rodney Crowell, **Cruisin' Deuces** (1993). With the notable exception of Gatton's collaboration with Tom Principato, the aptly named **Blazing Telecasters**, Rhino's 27 track collection touches most bases, from his 1975 debut with The Fat Boys, **American Music**, the NRG and Elektra albums, Blue Note's 1992 **New York Stories Volume One**, jazz, of course, as was Big Mo's 1994 **Relentless** with Joey DeFrancesco on B-3, and Big Mo's **In Concert 9/9/94** (Gatton committed suicide six weeks later), plus three previously unissued tracks. Gearheads aside, it's hard to imagine many people not snoozing from time to time, depending on their musical preferences, but there's a ton of incredible playing here. **JC**

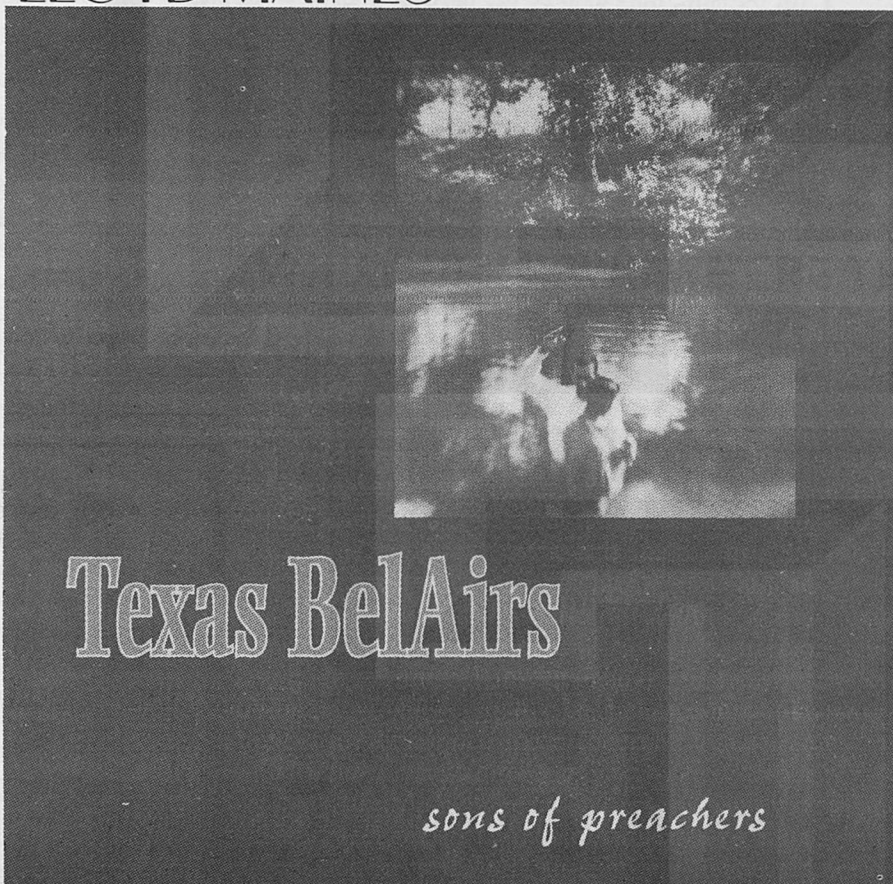
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IF THE GOOD LORD'S WILLING AND THE POWER STATION DON'T CATCH FIRE

Were you to ask me now for two good reasons to live in Austin, I'd say Danny & Lu Young's Popeye burgers and let me get back to you on the other one. Ten years ago, I wouldn't have had to think about it: Jimmie Dale Gilmore was at (original) Threadgill's every Wednesday and Butch Hancock & The Sunspots were at the (old) Black Cat every Monday, which is why I moved here. OK, the first bit's not really true, because, no matter what, there are still many good reasons to live in Austin, Danny & Lu themselves for starters, but the second is almost literal.

♦ Over the last ten years, much of my life, reflected in the pages of *MCT/3CM*, has revolved round the musicians I admire and the venues in which they played, and in which I discovered yet more great musicians. Most of the people are still around, but many of my favorite places, sadly, are no longer with us, while others aren't what they used to be. When I started thinking about my 10th anniversary, my aim was to pay tribute to key venues as much as to the musicians we mutually supported.

♦ I started off hatching a complex scheme that involved Threadgill's, as the most senior of my haunts, the very first Austin joint I ever set foot in, where you could find me any Wednesday night for several years, Cactus Cafe, the only constant over the last decade, and Jovita's, the hub of the universe anywhere between three and five nights a week. However, when Threadgill's offered me World HQ weekends for the entire month of August, well, how could I spurn such a generous vote of confidence and public gesture of support? I'd like to take this opportunity to tell the Cactus and Jovita's, hey, I love you guys to death, and I'll make it up to you somehow.

♦ So, I've got a venue, now for the lineup. Well, obviously I have to have Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock. Also mandatory are my evolutionary poster children, Jo Carol Pierce, who graced the cover of the very first issue of *Music City*, Michael Fracasso, the first *Music City Texas* cover story, and Gulf Coast Playboys, with whom I switched to **3rd Coast Music**. After that, the lineup almost wrote itself, and, as it's listed below, I'll simply note the gaps: Don Walser plays Threadgill's every week already, so I'd obliged if you'd regard his Thursday nights as informal extensions of my deal and go see him. Ray Wylie Hubbard is in full album launch mode, but we're fixing to do something together in September. Terry Allen, well, I still have my fingers crossed, but I'd regard him turning up as a miracle. Jesse Taylor's been in Switzerland for a while and nobody seems to know when he'll get back, if ever. And, of course, David Rodriguez has been in self-imposed exile for years.

♦ Otherwise, though, I got most everybody I really wanted. However idiosyncratic this may be as an overview of the best of Austin and Texas music in the last ten years, you gotta admit it's a pretty great lineup. And, I might add, a terrific bunch of people. My admiration for these guys is rivalled only by my affection for them.

♦ Also, the concepts almost worked out, in fact the only oddball is the Henry's weekend, but the 6th or 7th were the only dates that worked for Cornell, Jimmy, Wayne and Christina, for all of whom I was more than willing to grab any window of opportunity and screw the inconsistency. But my Lubbock, Third Coast and (though sadly lacking LaFave) Chicago House nights came together real well. Re the Chicago House nights, to head off people who are thinking of showing up with their guitars, I should make a full disclosure about the so-called Open Mikes, which, apart from adhering to the old three song format are completely phony. Most of the slots have already been filled by Chicago House vets such as Edge City, Leeann Atherton, Julieann Banks and Steve Hopkins—sign-up was six weeks in advance!

♦ All shows run 9.30pm to midnight with no cover (but there may be tip jars—give!).

TRIBUTE TO HENRY'S BAR & GRILL

FRIDAY 6TH

Cornell Hurd Band
with Martí Brom and Mitzi Henry
+ Jimmy LaFave

SATURDAY 7TH

Christina Marrs
special guest Wayne Hancock

LUBBOCK NIGHTS

FRIDAY 13TH

Guest MC: Elyse Yates
Jimmie Dale Gilmore
+ Jo Carol Pierce

*At one point, we thought, for contractual reasons, that we might have to bill this as "Jo Carol Pierce and Very Special Surprise Ex-Husband"

SATURDAY 14TH

Butch Hancock + Cary Swinney

THIRD COAST MUSIC NETWORK NIGHTS

FRIDAY 20TH

Guest MC: Jim Beal Jr
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special guest ReBeca

SATURDAY 21ST

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Guests of Honor: Peg & Glynda

FRIDAY 27TH

Betty Elders + Michael Fracasso
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+ Open Mike, host Betty Elders

SATURDAY 28TH

Barb Donovan + Troy Campbell
+ Open Mike, host Barb Donovan

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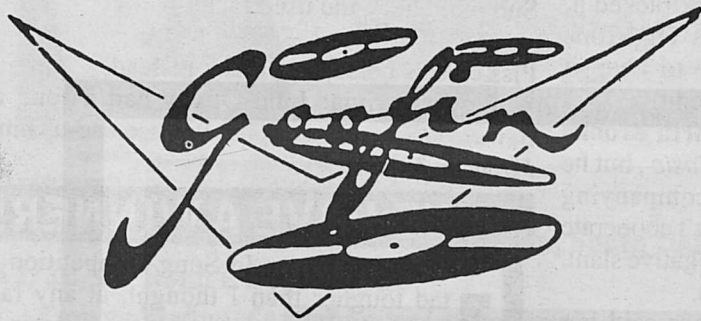
(ARK 21 *****)

Don't want to seem self-referential, but I've a couple of reasons for casting back to last month's issue. Firstly, I could've gone either way with Johnny Dilks and now realize I was way too generous. Playing my advance copy of this album, instead of waiting until July was squared away, would have tilted the balance decisively against him. Best you can say for Dilks is that his competence casts Hancock's brilliance into sharp relief. Which brings us to my second point; just as with Ray Wylie Hubbard, my Wayne cover story (*MCT #73*) caught Hancock at the outset (**Thunderstorms And Neon Signs**) of a rising arc, for he too started out great and keeps getting better and better. Often described as 'the hardest working man in show biz,' Hancock, with zero tolerance for bullshit, may also be the hardest man to work with in show biz, and it's a real tribute to ARK 21 that he's with them for another album, from which we can readily infer that they don't get in his way. Produced once again by Lloyd Maines, in a mere 16 hours, the shithot lineup, frequently acknowledged, Bob Wills style, by Hancock, includes guitarists Dave Biller, Jim Stringer, Paul Skelton and Sean Mencher, steel guitarist Jeremy Wakefield, fiddler Erik Hokkanen, piano prodigy T Jarrod Bonta, guitarist/trombonist Bob Stafford and, carrying most of the rhythm, Rick Ramirez on bass, though Hancock did allow drums on two tracks, Carl Perkins' *Blue Suede Shoes* and Bill Mack's *Saturday Night*, though not just any old drummer, but Ms Lisa Pankratz. The only other cover among the 15 tracks, by the way, is Ernest Tubb's *Kansas City Blues*, the rest being often astounding Hancock originals. Compared to the somewhat experimental **That's What Daddy Wants**, this a more sharply focussed version of Hancock's 'Juke Joint Swing,' a blend of honkytonk, Western Swing, blues and big band that scrapes away the accumulated crud of decades that's dragged country down into the Mass Culture swamp. Simply because of his vocal style, Hancock's never going to shake Hank Williams comparisons, to which, of course, one can respond by pointing out that Hank ain't writing songs or making records anymore, but if Hank Never Died is a crucial aspect of Hancock's philosophy, it's only one aspect. Far from being retro, Hancock has deliberately turned his clock back to an era when country routinely achieved greatness and started over. This might not work for just anybody, but it sure does for Hancock, because this is a truly great, truly country, album. **JC**

BLAZE A BLAZE BFI VOLUME TOO

(Deep South ***)

None of the late Blaze Foley's friends and admirers—but I repeat myself—would argue that ideally you should be listening to his own performances of his songs rather than their interpretations. However, as I mentioned in last January's cover story, marking the release of Volume One of a projected three CD tribute, though Foley left several albums worth of recorded material, none of it has been made available since his 1989 murder. Having already touched on this inexplicable, not to say senseless, lacuna, I'll say no more than *cherchez la sheister* and move on to applaud the love, generosity and talent that's gone into this gallant and noble project to perpetuate the name of the great singer-songwriter. A project, moreover, that's improving, Volume Too being rather better value than its predecessor. Far from having skimmed the cream off the Foley songbook in the first round, the 15 magnificent songs include my personal Blaze favorite, *Faded Loves And Memories*, the A side of one of his two 80s singles and the B side of the other. Moreover, the first volume seems to have been a learning experience for executive producers Ryan Rader and Jon Smith, because this time round the songs do more than stand up, they sound far better and the performances don't vary as wildly in quality. I have to pick out three tracks for special mention, superbly focussed readings of *Clay Pigeons* by Julieann Banks, *It's Just You* by Calvin Russell and *Faded Loves And Memories* by Richard Dobson, but David Waddell (*Let Me Ride In Your Big Cadillac*), De Lewellen (*Officer Norris*), John Casner (*The Way You Smile*), George Ensle (*Blue Love*, which he cowrote), Sheri Frushay (*Election Day*), Harvey 'Tex Thomas' Young (*Down Here Where I Am*) and The Rhythm Rats (*WW3*) all do Blaze proud. Somewhat less impressive but still acceptable are Shiva's Headband (*Misty Garden*), Tom Smith (*Alibis*), Jim Stricklan (*No Goodwill Stores In Wakiki*), Rachel Rain (*Oval Room*) and, the closest thing to a dud, The Ramblers (*Cold, Cold World*). Volume 3 is already in the works, and will, or so I'm told, at long last include a version of *Girl Scout Cookies*. **JC**



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- **Country Standard Time** (Jon Johnson)



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- **Blue Suede News** (Dennis DeWitt, assistant editor - review of Vegas performance).



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JOHN THE REVELATOR

Been gone too long. As British country journalist Steve Taylor was quick to point out, the Okeh Ramblers' local football team is **Southampton FC**, not Southampton United. Steve only moved to Austin last year, so he still has a grip on these things, while I obviously can't rely no more on decade old memories. So now you know.

♦ And while, rather unusually, we're on the subject of sports, at least one group of people were relieved rather than elated by the **San Antonio Spurs'** NBA victory. Spurs tickets, flags and memorabilia apparently sopped up every last cent of discretionary spending money in town for the entire month of June, so clubs and record stores suffered mightily and were real glad when things got back to what passes for normal in San Antonio.

♦ To help former Chicago House habitues who drew a blank on the name Mizzy Wiggins, of the Wiggins Sisters, she went by **Mary Hallman** when she lived in Austin. An occasional vision, clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, not to say altogether too fetching, she occasionally came straight from Breckenridge Hospital and played Open Mikes in her nurse's uniform. Bet that jogs a few memories. Being up in New England, Mizzy & Casey have one small problem. Every now and then, they run into people who confuse them with Freemont, New Hampshire's Helen, Dorothy & Betty Wiggin, aka **The Shaggs**. Reason this is a problem is that among connoisseurs of such things, **The Shaggs' 1972 LP Philosophy Of the World** is considered one of the worst albums ever made, so breathtakingly inept as to achieve cult status and become a highly prized collector's item.

♦ Now the truth can be told, and I'm pretty sure it'll be news to **Chicago House** owners Peg Miller and Glynda Cox, who, as a general thing, used to take Open Mike nights off, leaving the bar staff and host/hostess to run the club. Open Mikes define potluck, it takes true optimism to sit through hours of dreadful shit hoping for a payoff, but I used to drop by Chicago House's pretty regular when Jimmy LaFave and Betty Elders were hosting, and could hardly help but notice at one point that things had got very worthwhile, really good stuff for the hour or so before and after the 10pm host slot. But I soon learned that this wasn't some kind of grassroots artistic boom. I'm sorry to say I can't remember, if indeed I ever knew, Lori's surname, but, far more than a barmaid, she was the most practical music critic I've ever come across. Charged with entering the called in sign-ups, she simply ignored first come, first served protocol, giving the choice slots to people she approved of while banishing those she didn't to the far less desirable ones early and late in the evening, or even denying there were any openings at all if she really detested them. Hideously undemocratic, but great for the long suffering audience.

♦ So make me a liar. A couple of days after the July issue hit the stands, I got a call from a reader who, following up my mention of it not being available, asked a local record store about Townes Van Zandt's **Live At The Old Quarter, Houston**, and they had the double CD in stock, new. It probably doesn't matter much, but I'll protect the source on general principles because technically they shouldn't have. A while ago, Charly licensed Tomato's entire Van Zandt catalog for UK distribution only, but while their license has long since expired, copies of their editions and various repackagings are obviously still kicking around (Barclay Thompson of Goldrush Records in Perth, Scotland, reports he still has them in stock), and some of them seem to have snuck into America, surprise, surprise.

♦ In last month's **Johnny Dilks** review, I appropriated the expression "Wayneabe" without attributing it, mainly because I wasn't sure who originally coined it. Since then, I've backtracked it, but the source turns out to be one of Dilks' HighTone labelmates (a broad enough category to keep it vague), so I doubt he really want the credit.

♦ From the *Blue Chip Radio Report*, **Garth Brooks** is on the cover of the current *Country Music*, but he refused to be interviewed for the accompanying article. A spokesman said that Garth didn't cooperate because he felt the story would have a negative slant. So that's why he never returns my calls.

♦ In a recent *Request*, **Natalie Maines** said her heroes were Sandra Dee and Olivia Newton-John. I don't think this is a reflection on Lloyd & Tina's parenting skills. Sometimes kids just turn out rotten.

♦ Press release quote of the month: "We know plenty about watching helplessly as sweet promise goes bubbling down the crapper. We are an indie label after all." This was kind of a swansong from Bloodshot's **Kelly Hogan**, in the Rex Hobart (see Reviews) one-sheet as, perhaps carried away by the rave critical response to her *Drunkard's Blues* on The Pine Valley Cosmonauts' Bob Wills tribute album, she's gone back to being a singer.

♦ Liner note snippet of the month: Though revered as a gearhead guru, **Danny Gatton** (see Reviews) actually started out playing Gibsons until, while working as a Nashville session player, he was converted to Telecasters by his roommate, Roy Buchanan. When Fender introduced the Danny Gatton Model '53, it was their most expensive custom made guitar, and one of the people who played it was Gatton himself, because he'd traded the original for a 1934 Ford.

♦ Nice to know that someone, to wit Bill Groll, is keeping an eye on my old **South Austin** stomping grounds. Groll puts out a weekly email 'South of 6th' newsletter, which you can subscribe to, or simply access, at <http://musicnewsletter.homepage.com>, with calendars and reviews relating to 78704. While I don't share his ardent enthusiasm for Trish Murphy, Groll is basically on the same wavelength as 3CM, with a decided penchant for cool but low cost entertainment, so check him out.

♦ After 233 shows, **Jim Ellinger**, without whose one man, eleven year crusade KOOP would quite simply not exist, has had his *Austin Airwaves* show summarily axed. One hopes the Board of Trustees got some personal satisfaction out of this as they can hardly pick up a local paper anymore without seeing themselves, as they complained in *The Daily Texan*, "demonized," because when it comes to Agitprop, Ellinger pisses all over the so-called 'Cadre,' whose public pronouncements remind me irresistibly of the famous (in Britain) remark by the Scottish poet Hugh MacDiarmid, "There is more to life than lesbians."

**GIVE THEM THEIR
FLOWERS
(WHILE THEIR ALBUMS
ARE STILL IN PRINT)**

Every so often, someone asks me why I don't rate albums and, feeble as it may sound, the answer is that I've never been able to think of a system that, if not flamboyantly unique, was, at least, not the same old stars. However, just after Barbara Roseman got on my case about it last month, I was listening to Terry Allen's version of *Give Me My Flowers* and thought "That'll work." So here's the deal:

Absofuckinlutely essential; cheap at twice the price

Damn good; excellent value for money

Worthwhile; good value for specialized collections

Sub par; check the used racks

Piss on this noise; buy crack instead
♦ Flowers trivia: John Otway had a song called *Beware Of The Flowers*, but Pigface one-up him with *Flowers Are Evil*.

WE HAVE A WINNER!

Guess the Sisters In Song competition was a tad tougher than I thought, at any rate too tough for most search engines. First in with a perfect 10, winning both the Sisters Morales and Wiggins Sisters CDs, was John Patterson of Santa Cruz, CA. Hanspeter Eggenberger of Zurich, Switzerland, and Patrick Hurley of Dublin, Ireland, were the runners-up, winning a CD each. Both Euros had the Rovell sisters as Spring rather than The Honeys (*Pray For Surf*), but fair enough, they did use that name for one 1972 LP so I have to allow it. Ed Mattingly of Austin, TX, came unstuck on Jelly Beans (*I Wanna Love Him So Bad*), but as his was the very first entry, I'm going to find him a consolation prize. Otherwise, people gave up at seven or eight, tripped up by Jelly Beans and/or The Teen Queens (*Eddie My Love*) and/or The Bobbettes (*Mr Lee*). Rather surprisingly, everybody got The Angels (*My Boyfriend's Back*).

Barbara & Phyllis Allbut —The Angels
Barbara Ann & Rosa Lee Hawkins—The Dixie Cups
Bette & Rosie Collins—The Teen Queens
Betty & Mary Weiss—The Shangri-Las
Emma & Jannie Pought—The Bobbettes
Elyse & Maxine Herbert—Jelly Beans
Marilyn & Diane Rovell—The Honeys
Maxine & Bonnie Brown—The Browns
Millie & Dolly Good—Girls Of The Golden West
Veronica & Estelle Bennett—The Ronettes

♦ Sisters trivia: Marge & Mary Ann Ganser, the other half of The Shangri-Las, are identical twins. The Shangri-Las started out as The Bon Bons, The Bobbettes as The Harlem Queens. Marilyn Rovell married The Honeys' producer, Brian Wilson, and Ronnie Bennett married The Ronettes' producer, Phil Spector. The Ronettes, originally a dance act as The Dolly Sisters, began recording as Ronnie & The Relatives. Aren't you glad you know all that?

THE BEST DAMN FIDDLE PLAYER IN AUSTIN ONE-OFF BALLOT

For me, as collator, the single most fascinating category in the old MCT ballots was Fiddle/Violin, which invariably went to the wire. With the narrowest of margins separating the front runners, the last ballot in usually determined whether the #1 title went to Gene Elders, Erik Hokkanen or Champ Hood. The landscape's changed since then, and I'm curious to see how people like Hot Club Of Cowtown's Elana Fremerman (see Reviews), Eamonn McLoughlin, Darcie Deaville and Jason Roberts would do now, so indulge me in a reprise of this one category. Here's the deal: you've got 10 points which you can spread anyway you want, giving one each to 10 different fiddlers, all 10 to one fiddler or any other combination you can think of. For the purposes of this exercise, Dripping Springs (ie Johnny Gimble) is ineligible.

♦ Fiddle trivia/Faron Young content: In 1988, Faron cut a song called *Twin Fiddles Turn Me On*.

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14 Donn's Depot with the band, 9pm

15 Austin Airport Stage, 5.30-7.30pm

19 'What's The Cover?', Austin Music Network, 5pm

20 Cypress Creek Cafe, Wimberley, 8.30pm-12

21 Central Market South, 6.30-10pm

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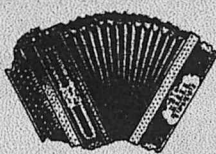
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MINGO SALDIVAR THE RETURN OF THE DANCING COWBOY

(Hacienda)

Recently, I mentioned being at a Conjunto Aztlan show in Lincoln, Nebraska, at which the capacity audience was, if anything, rather more Anglo than Hispanic, remarking that this was something you don't see in Austin. A rather dramatic confirmation of this point was the Cinco de Mayo celebration in Fiesta Gardens, where an all-star bill—Valerio Longoria, Flaco Jimenez, Johnny Degollado and Mingo Saldivar—drew a massive crowd among which the Anglos, including Lucky Oceans, Speedy Sparks, DL and myself, well, if you told me we were 5% of the audience, I'd be absolutely amazed.

◆ This imbalance is in very marked contrast to any Zydeco festival I've ever been to, and if the range of pigmentation is rather more subtle at, say, Lafayette's Festivals Acadiens, I'd give long odds that a significant proportion of the audience doesn't have a drop of Cajun blood or understand much, if any, French (the Austin contingent takes Tom Manke along as token coonass and interpreter). The obvious question is, why do the Francophone accordion-driven dance musics of Louisiana draw sizeable non-French speaking audiences, domestic and international, while the Spanish language accordion-driven dance musics of Texas are all but confined to the Tejano community? It's safe to say that Flaco Jimenez, notoriously willing to water his music down for predominantly white audiences, will be the first and last Conjunto artist most Anglos can name. Some might, with a little thought, be able to add Steve Jordan, but how many are aware of Lydia Mendoza, far and away the bestselling artist, in any genre whatsoever, in the entire history of Texas music?

◆ For whatever reasons, Zydeco and Cajun have been accepted as worthy of national and international coverage, while Conjunto sits in a big fat blind spot. One can see this clearly mirrored in Texas Folklife Resources' pragmatic booking of its annual Accordion Kings festivals, which perforce must take demographics into account. So Mingo Saldivar can headline in Houston but can't even be on the bill in Austin, from which one can deduce not only that Houston has a far larger Hispanic community but also that Austin isn't near as hip as it likes to think it is, something TFR's learned the hard way. This year's Accordion Kings, by the way, on the 27th & 28th at Old Settlers Park, Round Rock, features Valerio Longoria y Su Conjunto and Steve Riley & The Mamou Playboys.

◆ Much as I love Conjunto, a daunting field for aficionados to outline or neophytes to explore, I won't pretend I can singlehandedly do much for it. However, I can dare hope to do a little something for Tejano Country, which is a much more manageable proposition, even if you include that loathsome braindead-even-by-Nashville-standards let's-cut-ourselves-a-slice-of-the-Spanish-market major label crapola. Not to put too fine a point on it, you can put together a cream of the crop collection with a mere four albums, and one of them hasn't even been released yet. **16 Tex-Mex Country Gold Hits** (Hacienda *****) includes country songs in both Spanish and English by Mingo Saldivar, Janie C Ramirez, Freddy Fender, the sensational Lisa Lopez, whom Hacienda have lost touch with but are trying to locate, and Conjunto greats Tony De La Rosa, Isidro Lopez and Valerio Longoria. Going pure and simple on the strength of her wonderful cassette-only **Tu y Las Nubes**, I'm expecting great things of **Mi Vida y Mi Querier**, due out in September, again from Hacienda, by Janie C Ramirez, a McAllen schoolteacher.

◆ Which brings us to the primary figure of Mingo Saldivar, who acquired a taste for country music in the 50s, when he was a US Army paratrooper, and pretty much invented the entire Tejano Country concept, translating songs by people like Buck Owens and Johnny Cash into Spanish, writing originals and, of course, using accordion as lead instrument. While most of his albums are straightforward, though superlative, Conjunto, he cut loose with one of 3CM's Ten Essential Albums, **The Dancing Cowboy Sings Country** (Hacienda *****), which features his **Ruedo Del Fuego (Ring Of Fire)**, a monster hit in Mexico, bilingual **Streets Of Bakersfield** (giving a very different sense to "You don't know me but you don't like me") and much more.

◆ **The Return Of The Dancing Cowboy**'s title refers to the two and a half year interval, very long by Tex-Mex standards, since Saldivar's last album. Reflecting an ugly maturing of the local music business, he's been tied up in legal wrangles with a Mexican label (used to be they robbed you blind, but at least didn't set lawyers on you). Unfortunately, due to a comedy of errors involving Hacienda's pressing plant and UPS, the interval was at least one day too long because the bugger still hasn't shown up, so obviously I can't actually review or rate the album as such.. Still, if it's half as good as **The Dancing Cowboy Sings Country** (you did notice the five flowers?), I'll be happy.

◆ While Saldivar was playing Cinco de Mayo, DL said, "You know who Mingo reminds me of? Joe Ely!" And, by God, she's absolutely right (watch it, girl, I'm the one who's supposed to have the musical insights in this family). If Johnny Degollado is the Don Walser of the East Side, the extraordinarily charismatic Mingo Saldivar is the Joe Ely of South Texas. Or maybe Joe is the Mingo Saldivar of West Texas Look, I don't ask you for many favors, but do this one for both of us—check out my man Mingo.

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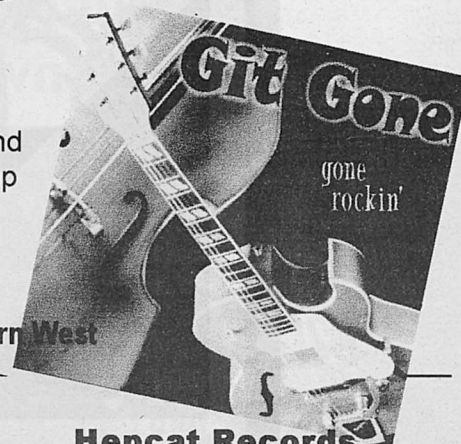
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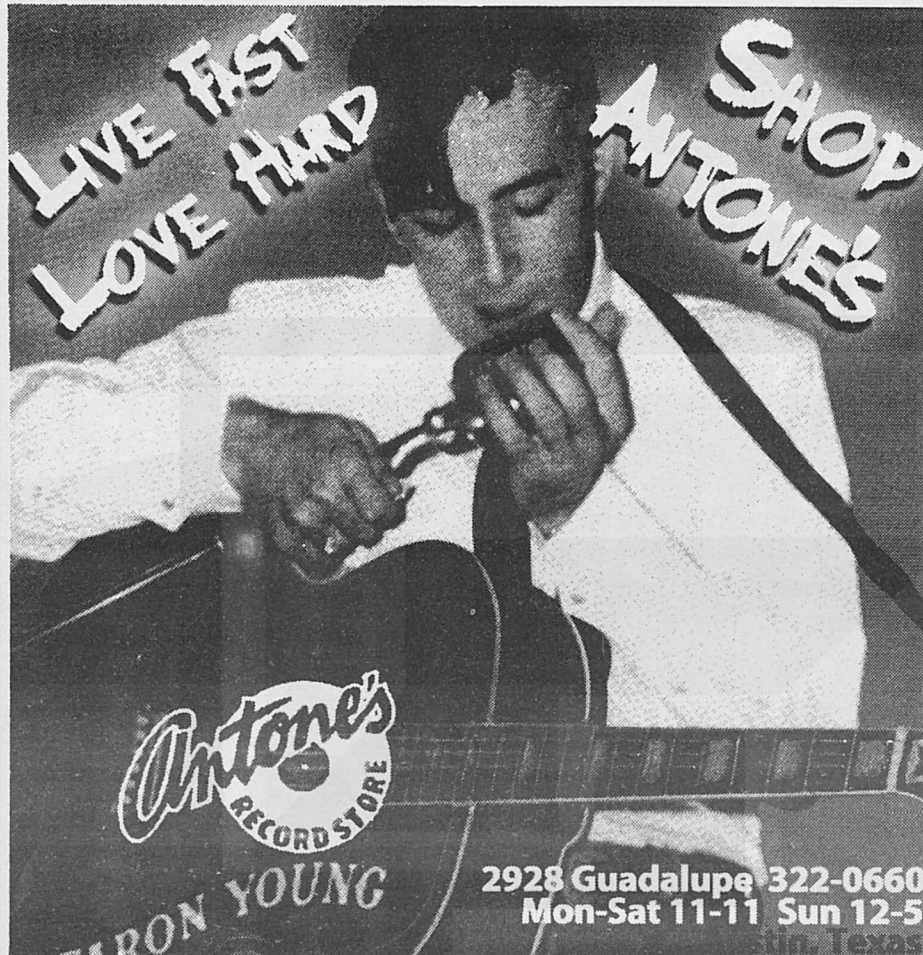
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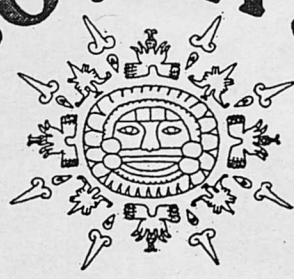
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WHO KNOWS WHERE THE TIME GOES?

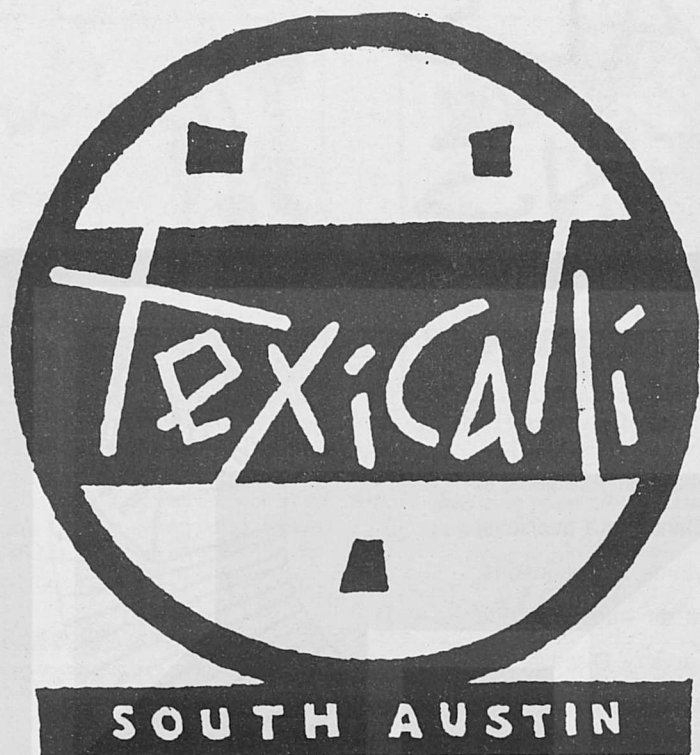
Question is, am I as tenacious as a bulldog or dumb as a Dalmatian? This month marks the end of a ten year cycle with the 120th issue in the *Music City/Music City Texas/3rd Coast Music* continuum. To be perfectly honest, it never occurred to me, back in August 1989, when Eve McArthur, Sylvia Benini and I lashed #1 together, that I'd still be at it a decade later. During that time, more music magazines than I can remember have jostled for rack space and ad dollars for a while and then disappeared. Actually, I've seen all kinds of magazines come and go, because, however much Austin's grown, it's still too small for niche publishing. First lesson, which I learned the hard way but pass on free, gratis and for nothing to anyone thinking of putting out a special interest mag in Austin, is that you have to live off the *Statesman* and *Chronicle's* leftovers, and let me tell you, friends, that's gnawing on some very dry bones. Frankly, if I'd had a lick of sense, I wouldn't've started up here in the first place and if I weren't married to a compelling reason to stick around these parts, I'd be someplace else by now, probably San Antonio or, though after so many years in Texas the first winter would probably kill me, Chicago.

♦ Ten years ago, Austin music coverage was probably no worse than it is today, but back then, fresh from the London trenches, I was appalled and figured I could do better, perhaps misled by the fact that for a good few years people had been paying me handsomely to write about music, particularly, as Britain's leading, ie only, authority, about West Texas music (this didn't last too long, but it was a nice little earner while it did). Here's some career advice: if you want to be loved and respected by one and all in America, do *not* set up as a music writer. In Austin at least, music critics rank somewhat below land developers and only slightly above Californians in popular esteem. Quite right too, I can't abide most music writers and I are one.

♦ Of course, if Austin's music businesses, with certain exceptions that we'll get to in a minute, won't support *any* specialist magazine, the problem has been compounded by my pitiful inability to sell advertising—I can only attribute *MCT/3CM's* survival to good karma and a fortuitous taste for tacos. However, what I used to think was a major liability, the fact that I was trying to sell something deeply alien to many Americans, the bloodyminded, like it or lump it British approach, seems ultimately to have been a saving grace. At any rate, the trail of Austin music mag corpses would seem to prove that giving blow jobs doesn't work. Say what you will about *MCT/3CM*, ten years is more than any other music mag has lasted in the Live Music Capital of the World.

♦ This bit is my equivalent of those monster lists of thanks you see in CD liner notes, but these are seriously good people who've sustained *MCT/3CM* over he years and I don't get too many chances to acknowledge their vital role. So may the Good Lord take a liking to Texicalli Grille, Threadgill's, Waterloo Records, MusicMakers, Cactus Cafe, Jovita's, Terra Nova, Flashpoint, Amelia's, Bob Grady Records, Under The Sun, Don Walser, Workhouse Guitars, Antone's Record Store, KUT, Lubbock Or Leave It, Local Flavor, Miles Of Music, Texas Round-Up and Cheapo Records. More generally, thanks to everyone who ever advertised in the mag and actually paid for it (tip #2 for would-be publishers, make Direct Events prepay), and to all those wonderful people round the world who send me money every year for subscriptions, especially the hundred or so, starting with #0001, Ranger Rita (who made me invent subscription rates on the spot back in September 1989), who have complete sets of all 120 issues.

♦ Issue #240? Jeez, there's a concept. Well, if the music keeps coming, my strength holds up and newsprint doesn't become obsolete . . . **JC**



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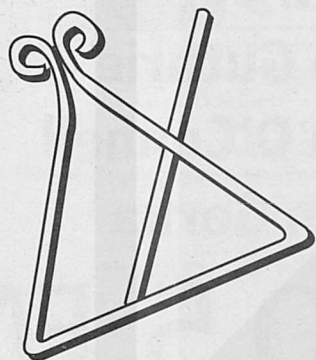
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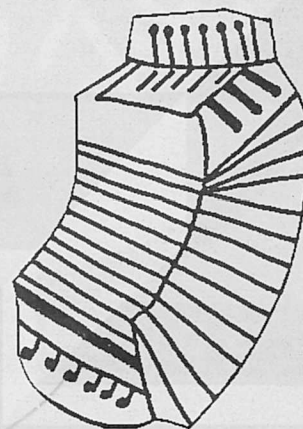
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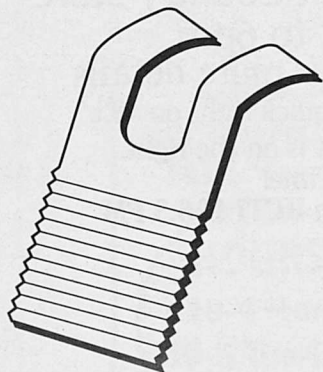
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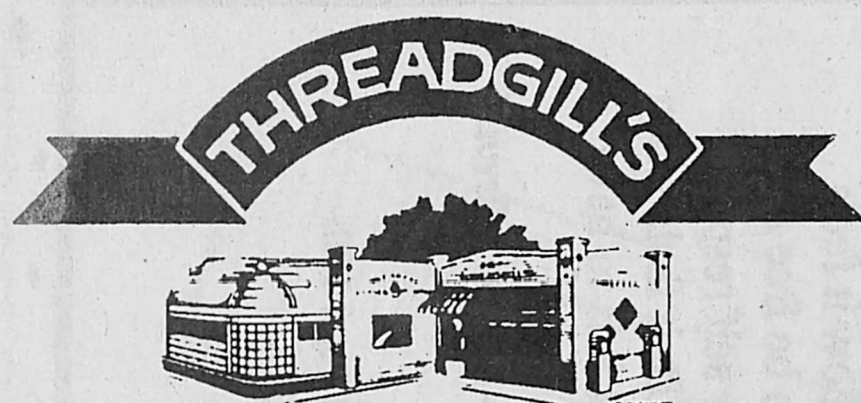
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