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#55/144 AUGUST 2001



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FAR #24 • BIRTHS & DEATHS

REVIEWS (***** or not)

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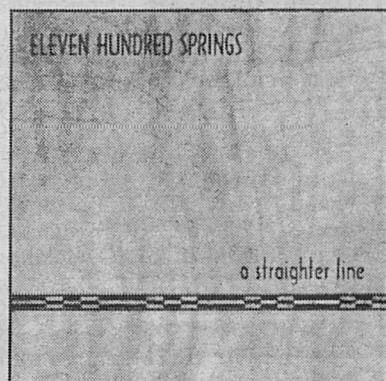


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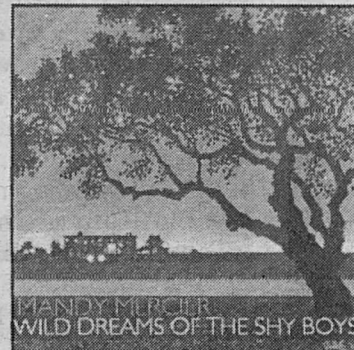
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(Country Music Foundation) *BiW/*DN/*GW/*JZ/*LG/*RD/*ST

- #2 Karen Poston: Real Bad (Music Room) *DF/*DY/*GS/*JHo/*KF/*MT
- #3 Ray Wylie Hubbard: Eternal And Lowdown (Philo) *DwT/*TG
- #4 Jim Lauderdale: The Other Sessions (Dual Tone) *BF/*DC/*SS&DD
- #5 Scott Miller & The Commonwealth: Thus Always To Tyrants (Sugar Hill) *DA/*PD/*SB
- #6 VA: Roadside Attractions; More Songs From Route 66 (Lazy SOB) *BR
- #7 One Fell Swoop: Crazy Time (Magoo) *LW/*SJ
- #8 The Del McCoury Band: Del And The Boys (Ceili) *SG/*TA
- #9 Albert & Gage: Burnin' Moonlight (Moon House) *RH
Lucinda Williams: Essence (Lost Highway) *MP
- #10 Roger Wallace: That Kind Of Lonely (Texas Round-Up) *TS
- #11 Dudley Connell & Don Rigsby: Another Saturday Night (Sugar Hill) *CrL/*JHa
Gillian Welch: Time (The Revelator) (Acony) *KC/*KL
- #12 Patty Loveless Mountain Soul (Columbia) *DTu
Tom Russell: Borderland (HighTone) *MM
- #13 Toni Price: Midnight Pumpkin (Antone's) *LH
West Coast Pinups: Caution; Swinging Doors (Hard Eight) *MA
- #14 Ted Roddy & The Tearjoint Troubadors: Tear Time (Music Room) *DB/*RT
- #15 Robert Earl Keen: Gravitational Forces (Lost Highway)
- #16 Dale Watson: Every Song I Write Is For You (Audium) *EW/*JSn
- #17 Shaver: The Earth Rolls On (New West) *CM
- #18 Truckadelic: Hey Y'all, Watch This! (Second Heaven) *JE/*VP
- #19 Jim Stringer & The AM Band: On The Radio (Music Room)
Rhonda Vincent: The Storm Rages On (Rounder)
- #20 Richard Dobson: Hum Of The Wheels (Brambus) *DJ
- #21 Alejandro Escovedo: A Man Under The Influence (Bloodshot)
Star City: Inside The Other Days (Star City) *TW
- #22 Cave Catt Sammy: Comin' On Strong (Big Bellied)
Fred Eaglesmith: Ralph's Last Show (Signature Sounds)
VA: Avalon Blues: A Tribute to the Music of Mississippi John Hurt (Vanguard)
- #23 Dave Carter & Tracy Grammer: Drum Hat Buddha (Signature Sounds) *PP
Radney Foster Are You Ready For The Big Show? (Dualtone) *TF
Duane Jarvis: Certified Miracle (Slewfoot) *RC
Sally Jones: Love Hurts (Pinecastle) *EB
- #24 Marcia Ball: Presumed Innocent (Alligator)
Thad Cockrell & The Starlite Country Band: Stack Of Dreams (Miles Of Music)
Jimmy LaFave: Texoma (Bohemia Beat)
VA: Songcatcher (Vanguard)
VA: Down From the Mountain (Mercury)
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- #25 Cynthia Gayneau: West Of West Texas (Botte) *RW
Nanci Griffith: Clock Without Hands (Elektra) *RJ
Tom Paxton & Anne Hills: Under American Skies (Appleseed) *MR
Pernice Brothers: The World Won't End (Ashmont)
- #26 Ass Ponys: Lohio (Checkered Past)
Joe Goldmark: Strong Like A Bull . . . But Sensitive Like A Squirrel (Hightone)
VA: Tribute To John Hartford Live From Mountain Stage (Blue Plate)
- #27 Ernie Ashworth: The Early Years (Hilltopper) *BaW
Libbi Bosworth: Libbiville (Ramble) *RS
The Buckaroos: Masters Were Devils (Outside [France]) *JSp
Mark Eitzel: The Invisible Man (Matador) *CZ
Richard Fontaine: Whiskey, Painkillers & Speed (Cryptophonic) *JSm
Robbie Fulks: 13 Hillbilly Giants (Boondoggle) *SH
Roxy Gordon & Wes McGhee: Townes Asked . . . (Wowapi) *RP
Tom House: Jesus Doesn't Live Here Anymore (Catamount) *AL
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HANK WILLIAMS • I SAW THE LIGHT HANK WILLIAMS AS LUKE THE DRIFTER BEYOND THE SUNSET

(Mercury *****)

Religious beliefs and honkytonk lifestyles being somewhat incompatible, many artists felt it necessary to make a clear choice between secular and sacred music. Hank, however, in whom the conflict was personified, sang hymns even when he was playing bars and dancehalls. Loyal to the tradition in which he was raised—his only formal training was at a gospel singing school—his very first recordings were *Calling You*, *Wealth Won't Save Your Soul* and *When God Comes And Gathers His Jewels*, on Sterling in 1946, the core of **I Saw The Light**, originally released in 1954 as a box of four 78s, then as a 10" LP, then, with four extra tracks, as a 12" and now, with yet another four, on CD. **Beyond The Sunset** brings together for the first time all of the 14 narrations so dear to his heart. Pretty much everything on these albums could have been hokey past belief, and it's the measure of Williams' genius that songs like *Message To My Mother*, scratchy, distorted and beyond low-tech, can still rip your heart out. **JC**

RIP MASTERS • THE ROCK & ROLL ALBUM

(Rattler ****1/2)

Breathes there a man (not sure women go in for this kind of behavior) with soul so dead, he won't be pounding air piano part way through Masters 41/2 minute *I'm Movin' On*? Wonderfully seconded by guitarist Tony Gilkyson, the Rockabilly Revival veteran mixes in a few covers, a few instrumentals, a few ballads and no less than three hidden bonus tracks (*Suwanee Boogie* recorded live in Sweden, *Red Cadillac & A Black Moustache* and *FireFlite*) on top of the 13 listed. I may be kidding myself, but it sure sounds like Masters is hammering a real piano rather than some piece of high-tech plastic as he carries forward the Jerry Lee/Little Richard rock & roll piano wildman banner. **JC**

TRUCK DRIVER'S BOOGIE; BIG RIG HITS 1939-69

(Country Music Foundation ****)

Handcrafted by Diesel Only's Jeremy Tepper, this really deserves the 'Classics Collection' label. Though the 60s boom, inaugurated by Johnny Horton's 1956 *I'm Coming Home*, with Grady Martin on trendsetting guitar, is well represented, by Dave Dudley, Del Reeves, Kay Adams, Dick Curless, Red Simpson and others, it's placed in context as part of a venerable subgenre dating back to Cliff Bruner's prewar *Truck Driver's Boogie*. **JC**

RC BANKS • CONWAY'S CORNER PONTY BONE • FANTASIZE

(Loud House ****1/2/****)

Banks and Bone's careers have been intertwined—this isn't even the first time they've both been on the same label—since their formative years in Lubbock. While they played roles, as players and songwriters, in the West Texas saga, Banks and Bone became archetypal Texas musicians, absorbing influences all the way from Baton Rouge to Brownsville, and, though Banks is also a mean guitarist, harmonica player, organist and pianist, both rely on the primal Texas instrument, the accordion. Banks' range of moods, from lovelorn pathos to cornball humor to save the planet, is as wide as his range of styles, from chunky chank to honky tonk to blues shuffle, but also a little exhausting. The ever engaging Bone, though helped out by Banks, The Texana Dames, Ed Vizard, Danny Roy Young, Smokey Joe Miller, Don Leady and other guests, sticks more or less to a live set feel, so his album flows more freely. The Parisian stylings of Johnny Mercer's instrumental *Midnight Sun* are a highlight that will remind even those familiar with his work of Bone's easy mastery of the accordion, attested to on the cover by Flaco Jimenez. **JC**

MANDY MERCIER WILD DREAMS OF THE SHY BOYS

(Wild Cantina ***)

Perhaps influenced by the breakout of her buddy Lucinda Williams, Mercier has opted to make a full production AAA album, and though I love the girl and wish her well, I just can't get comfortable with it. In fact, working against her irrepressible rootsy energy, she doesn't seem altogether comfortable herself, sounding most relaxed on covers of Blaze Foley's *Anything Less* and Lowell George's *Willin'* and less natural on even the strongest of the eight originals, particularly her love it or loathe it Columbine song. Mind you, most AAA sounds a bit forced to me and this has been well received by people more in tune with the genre, so give it a listen, maybe you'll get more out of it. **JC**

DUGG COLLINS • SOUNDS LIKE TEXAS THE UPTOWN SAVAGES ROCKET DRIVIN' DADDY

(Startex *****/Cuca ****)

Collins and Jon Ziegler have a mutual problem—how to introduce their albums on their radio shows. Western Swing/country singer Collins is on KFDI, Wichita, KS, while rockabilly/jump blues frontman (and FARster) Ziegler hosts *Jonny Z's Chicken Shack* on WMSE, Milwaukee, WI. Not that either has any reason not to throw themselves into the mix. Career DJ Collins was on the legendary Lil' Darlin', where labelmate Johnny Paycheck baptized him 'Dugg' (his real name's Brad), and there was talk of his 70s singles being reissued, thought that now seems unlikely unless Startex manages to license them. However, recording at Justin Treviño's studio, with musicians like Kevin Smith, Floyd Domino and Bobby Flores, Collins, who rarely performs live these days, shows he hasn't lost his touch. Originally from Memphis, TX, he pays tribute to local boy Bob Wills with *Hang Your Head In Shame*, *Bubbles In My Beer* and *Roly Poly*, but the real touchstones are Mel Tillis' *Another Bridge To Burn*, Hank Cochran's *If She Could See Me Now*, Conway Twitty's *Walk Me To The Door*, Roger Miller's *When Your House Is Not A Home*, Floyd Tillman's *It Makes No Difference Now* (with Johnny Bush), Gene Watson's *Dreams Of A Dreamer* and Bill Anderson's *You Lied To Me*. Collins sure isn't a Nashville pretty boy, but he can sing circles round any contemporary star.

◆ The six-piece Uptown Savages have a great, supple rocking sound, often reminiscent of the early T-Birds, featuring tenor/baritone sax, piano and upright bass, and some smart originals, mostly by Ziegler, with an edge of intelligence that sets the band apart in a field dominated by formula writing. *She's Too Good For Me*, for instance, stands macho posturing on its head. With a nod to The King (*Tiger Man*) and LaVern Baker's *Voodoo Voodoo*, 14 stylish tracks. **JC**

JON EMERY • VIP THE LEROY PRESTON SONGBOOK

(Rib House ****)

Drummer/rhythm guitarist Leroy Preston, who now lives in Vermont, was co-founder of Asleep At The Wheel, and perhaps the first to flee (there's an hilarious book waiting to be written called 'How And Why I Left Asleep At The Wheel'), departing in 1978. With the help of Art Blondin (of Artz Rib House), Blackie Farrell, Cornell Hurd, Chris Gage, Marty Muse and others, Emery pays tribute to his old friend with 12 of Preston's songs, some of which (*My Baby Thinks She's A Train*, *I Wonder*, *When Love Goes Wrong*, *The Bartender*, *Somebody Stole His Body*) were recorded by the Wheel, but get a new lease of life from Emery's patented hillbilly rock & roll treatment. **JC**

JEFF HUGHES & CHAPARRAL • HEAD FOR COVER

(Sonic One **)

Erstwhile Great White Hopes of Austin country suggest what went wrong by covering Guns & Roses, Rod Stewart, Bad Company, AC/DC, Springsteen, Roxy Music, The Cure and, disastrously, Lennon's *The Ballad Of John And Yoko*. I've heard alt country defined as "REM in cowboy hats," so this, which actually includes an REM song, may be the definitive alt country album. **JC**

THE ROUGH GUIDE TO AMERICANA

(World Music Network [UK] **)

Hands up everyone who'd include Townes Van Zandt and Dave Alvin on their Americana compilation. OK, mighty fine, now hands up everyone who'd have them sing covers rather than originals. OK, the young lady at the back, would you like to introduce yourself? Sylvie Simmons of *Mojo* magazine? Well, Ms Simmons, looks like you're on your own. Want to look on the bright side of this rather eccentric collection, which juxtaposes Must Haves with Never Heard Of 'Ems, and see it as a legitimization of the 'genre'? Well, bear in mind that previous Rough Guides covered Portuguese, Kenyan & Tanzanian and Australian Aboriginal music, which kinda puts things in perspective. **JC**

RAY LIBERTO • WILDMAN

(self ***)

Go to the rock & roll pianist's www.texaswildman.com and you'll find it's not your usual musician's website: "Our solution comes with complete instructions of how to skin a snake . . . Just one 2 oz bottle will tan two 5 feet snakes." Not just another day job though—of his six tracks, two, a TNT single, were cut in 1958, two others, backed by the Sonny Ace Quintet, in 1959, while a second version of *Baby, You Know How I Love You*, with Donn Walker on guitar, and *Boogie Woogie Country Girl*, featuring the horn section of Augie Meyers & The Mozambique Band, in 1977. Prolific he ain't, but Liberto is a genuine breath of San Antonio's distinctive contribution to rock & roll. **JC**



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CHARLES EARLE B-Sides

SALES BOOM? NOT HARDLY

Music Row's Sad Search for Reasons to Be Optimistic

Desperation is a funny thing. It causes people to cling passionately to the tiniest shred of hope in the face of grave circumstances. Let's say you're a white-collar guy who took a wrong turn on the way to a Rams game, for instance. Trying to explain to an East St Louis crackhead how the Bush tax cut will benefit the poor before he robs you and shoots you is the kind of thing I'm talking about.

◆ Another good example of this scenario has taken place with the country music industry in the last few weeks. Soundscan released the sales figures for the first half of 2001 last month. These numbers revealed that country music album sales for the first six months of this year have increased 3% over the same period in the year 2000. Afterwards, a few industry types were quoted in Nashville's daily paper, and words like "encouraging" and "optimistic" were used. This is a sign that things are turning around. Or at least that's what they would have you believe.

◆ But when you cut through the typical industry platitudes and bullshit being spouted by label spokespersons, you begin to see that they are very misguided, as is usually the case. For starters, this 3% increase amounts to about 600,000 units. Sales went from 29 million last year to 29.6 million this year. So what we're talking about is basically an increase of a little more than one gold album over the first half of 2000. In a segment of the industry bloated with ridiculous budgets and artists who get dumped for not selling platinum, calling a gain of 600,000 in sales "encouraging" is like trying to ease the tensions of Californians by announcing that they can put out raging brushfires by pissing on them.

◆ It's also important to remember that the 29.6 million in sales only amounts to a little more than 8% of the total number of records sold in the US during the first six months of this year. A small increase may cause a sigh of relief for some, but that 8% figure was significantly higher during the country music boom of 1991-1993.

◆ But the most curious and ironic thing about this increase in sales is that it may have come as a result of two records that have little or nothing to with Nashville. Can you imagine the looks on the faces of your average Music Row executive when they heard that the two best selling country albums so far in 2001 are the soundtracks from **Coyote Ugly** and **O Brother, Where Art Thou?** It must have been kind of like finding out that your wife's pregnant and you're sterile on the same day.

◆ Consider that the wonderful music of **O Brother, Where Art Thou?** is everything that Music Row has gotten away from in recent years. The album is peppered with cuts from Alison Krauss, Gillian Welch, The Whites and Emmylou Harris, and lord knows you won't be hearing any of them on country radio anytime soon. However, the folks on the Row don't mind counting the sales of this album among their own when talking to their bosses at the parent companies in New York and LA.

◆ And the idea of counting the **Coyote Ugly** soundtrack as a country record is absurd. Yes, LeAnn Rimes is on it, but her contributions are pop/rock songs, and lousy ones at that. The rest of the album is a bunch of oldies, disco songs, a Don Henley thing, and that damned annoying *Unbelievable* song. How is Nashville responsible for any of that? Oh wait, I

remember now. Even though she currently lives in California and sings pop songs, LeAnn Rimes was originally signed to a Nashville label. By that line of reasoning, I know a great way to increase Nashville's sales. Paul McCartney lived here for a few months in the 70s and did some recording for a solo album while in town. Thus, let's claim the entire Beatles catalogue as country, and then our problems are solved. We can instantly add over 100 million units in sales, and then we can all have foie gras and Cristal for breakfast and wipe our butts with \$50 bills.

◆ Seriously, the idea of albums that truly belong in other genres counting as country sales is nothing new. There have been plenty of soundtracks in recent years featuring two or three songs from Nashville artists that ended up in our final yearly tally. Likewise, since *Billboard* doesn't acknowledge Americana music with a chart, artists like Steve Earle will often be a blip on its country chart for a few weeks after a new album is released. Personally, I don't know whether Earle would be happy to annoy Music Row with his presence or angry that his sales boost their totals, but this is simply how things are.

◆ The biggest point that should be made about country music sales for the first six months of this year is that artists like Nickel Creek, Dolly Parton and Patty Loveless are combining with the **O Brother** soundtrack to prove that more traditional country music can find a spot on the charts. And it's important to remember that these records are selling well with very little Music Row promotion behind them. Perhaps, rather than patting themselves on the back for modest sales increases, the folks on the Row should be out signing bluegrass bands.

WHAT AN ASSHOLE

You count on the entertainment industry being full of carpetbaggers and thieves, but what happens when the good guys are the folks getting robbed?

◆ Nashville singer/songwriter John Hiatt and his wife Nancy have filed suit against Larry Cherry, an investment advisor who has been missing since June. The suit alleges, in a nutshell, that Cherry and a few associates squandered somewhere in the neighborhood of a half million dollars worth of Hiatt's money. Hiatt has been a client of Cherry's for more than a decade. Though he hasn't made a lot of money from album sales, Hiatt has earned a considerable income from songwriting credits for other artists. Hiatt is one of many clients who have lost money to Cherry. A rather large failed nightclub venture appears to be one investment that Cherry took a huge loss on in recent months.

THAT IRONY SURE IS IRONIC SOMETIMES

If there is one thing I trust less than a person in the music industry, it's a bible-thumper. But what happens if they are one in the same?

◆ Former Capitol Nashville recording artist David Slater was arrested last month on charges of burglary and credit card fraud. Slater is accused of breaking into a number of cars at a Nashville-area YMCA and forging signatures while using credit cards that he had stolen. What makes this all the more interesting is Slater's occupation at the time of the thefts. He was a minister at the West End Church of Christ.

◆ A 1987 Star Search winner, Slater signed a deal and released two albums for Capitol before deciding to give up music for the ministry in 1994. No word yet from church members about whether he was actually seen dancing or having fun at any time.

MALO GOES SOLO

In case you haven't heard, Grammy and CMA Award winning band The Mavericks appear to be history. They haven't played together in months, and front man Raul Malo is currently working on a solo album. That the band is breaking up isn't much of a shock, there had been rumblings of trouble among the members ever since they were abandoned by MCA Nashville after releasing the brilliant but not ready for country radio album **Trampoline**. Though the record sold a whopping 750,000 copies overseas, MCA's gutless bastard numero uno, Tony Brown, sent The Mavericks in search of a new home. There was talk that they would go to the pop side of MCA in Los Angeles. However, since Malo looks a bit like an older Orson Welles these days, pop radio and MTV aren't likely to be friendly places either.

◆ Then, last fall, the band fired guitarist Nick Cane, claiming he wasn't an original member of the band and wasn't entitled to full pay during a time when there wasn't much money coming in anyway. Though he had been involved in every Mavericks project, Cane was cut loose like a hired gun. Many stories had also surfaced in recent years from members of the band's road crew that said they fought a lot and acted like elitists towards those who weren't in their inner circle. Whatever the case, and even taking into account that they may have behaved complete jerk offs at times, it is a shame to see a band capable of so much good music end in such an ugly fashion.

YO. THIS SUCKS

Here is another reason to hate white rap. Kid Rock, a candidate for the greatest self-parody of all time award, dropped in on a big country show in his hometown of Detroit last month. The scrawny, candy-assed Kid made appearances during the performances of Kenny Chesney and Tim McGraw during their arena show. Always a shameless self-promoter, Kid brought out a six-pack of Bud Light onto the stage during McGraw's set, much to the delight of tour sponsor Anheuser Busch (sounds like a good reason to order a Miller to me). Associating himself with Hank Jr was a somewhat reasonable move for Kid Rock given the bloodlines and all. But being seen with a couple of pop-country dipshits like Chesney and McGraw instantly destroys any 'outlaw' credibility the Kid may have ever had.

I DON'T WANT MY CMT

Coming to a TV near you, the new and, uh, improved CMT. New parent company Viacom is giving Country Music Television a facelift over the next few months. There will be a much larger budget and, unfortunately, an apparent resemblance to sister network MTV, another Viacom property.

◆ Look for even more effort to attract a young demographic, with kiddie fare such as Jessica Andrews getting her own live special to showcase how the Music Row suits destroyed country music while trying to sell it to children. To their credit, the folks at CMT will air a live broadcast from the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday nights. However, they will also be sponsoring a show where country artists perform duets with performers from the pop and rock genre. The first name mentioned for this show...Kid Rock.

◆ Regardless, you could almost hear Nashville's publicists sigh in relief. Ever since Prime Time Country was pulled from TNN, there'd been almost no TV exposure for young country acts. Now they'll at least be able to get a minute amount of TV audience for their no-talent hack clients. Gee, things are getting better all the time.

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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Good 'real world' point from a reader who basically agreed with last month's assessment of **Lucinda Williams**' latest, but argues that "I think many of us would rather have a spotty album every two years than have to wait six years for a masterpiece." On the trivia side, when Williams was touring **Car Wheels**, I was appalled by her bassplayer-slash-boyfriend. I recently discovered that I wasn't the only one who thought that, whatever his other merits, he stunk up the place as a musician. When guitarist Bo Ramsey told Williams she had to let him go, she fired Ramsey instead. However, wossname's now been discarded in both roles, and Ramsey is back in the band. The moral is, if you're going to take up with musicians, make sure they're good ones, like Williams' Austin-period companion, bassplayer Lorne Rawls.

◆ I've been told that late in life, **Chet Atkins** repented his Nashville Sound sins, supposedly acknowledging that the push for sales was at the expense of the music. I've not been able to track down anything along these lines that he said on the record, and would appreciate it if anybody can steer me right. I'm not sure how much repentance really matters, but I guess, like George Wallace renouncing segregation in his old age, it's better than nothing.

◆ And while we're seeking enlightenment, following up my bit about Kaye Adams in June, a reader asks if I know anything about **Alice Renee**, who made a country opera album with Adams and Jerry Naylor called **The Legend Of Johnny Brown**. He says she was a terrific singer but he hasn't been able to find out anything about her, and I'm drawing a complete blank, so any help on this one would be very welcome.

◆ Looks like there may be something of a crisis looming in the roots music magazine business. As you may have noticed, I've been chugging along at minimum levels for the last few months, putting out 12 page issues, which I'm not ecstatic about but I figured, well, guess this is just a slow summer, it happens, things'll pick up. However, in the latest *Blue Suede News*, **Marc Bristol** notes, "we have more and more people sending us CDs for review—essentially asking for free advertising—and less and less offering to buy paid advertisements . . . There are a lot of labels who'll pay a publicist to hammer on me for free ink, but would never consider buying an ad." Been there, Marc. Bristol tells me that while newstand sales are in good shape, he's probably going to have to cut back from 64 pages, with review space taking the hit, which, as he's quarterly and **3CM**'s monthly, will put us in the exact same boat. I have some issues with *BSN*'s upbeat approach—Marc even managed to find someone who liked Rosie Flores' 'live' at Cibola Creek album, which must have taken some doing—but his mag's trademark is that it covers *everything*, from everywhere, in every format, so any reduction in review space is bad news for the roots world. While I don't much care whether it sinks or swims, *Country Standard Time* isn't exactly crammed with ads either.

◆ It's possible that *No Depression* is sucking the blood out of everyone else, but there's no point in bitching about this, or about the failure, however shortsighted, of people with albums to sell to bother advertising them. In fact, there's fuck all we can do about declining ad revenues and diminishing viability. Bristol jokingly says "I could threaten to put

the puppy to sleep," but the reality, given that both Marc and I would make more money digging ditches, is that we can't support roots music if it doesn't support us, so the day may come when there's only *No Depression*. Won't that be peachy? Nothing you or I can do to avert this nightmare, just thought I'd warn you.

◆ Back in May, when I thought my membership had expired, I mentioned that I hadn't been able to quit the **Americana Music Association** because they hadn't yet asked me for more money. They still haven't, but I'm told that they quietly postponed sending out renewal notices, extending all the existing memberships until September. My suspicion, of course, is that they anticipated a terminal implosion of the membership rolls, but I'm curious to see what they can come up with in the next month or so that will persuade people to reup.

◆ Why are you telling me this? A recent press release claims that "In **Jack Kapanka**, James Taylor meets Garth Brooks . . ." Christ, there's a stomach-churning concept. I think you guys may have the wrong number.

◆ In a sprawling, and for the most part extremely tedious, feature, the *Austin Chronicle* gave **Charlie Robison** all the rope he wanted, and he managed to hang himself pretty good, in a staggering display of arrogance and self-importance. I have to admit, I'm with him on Brad Paisley ("a fucking moron"), but comparing yourself with Steve Earle, Lyle Lovett, and Dwight Yoakam is a bit strong when you don't have much in the way of material, rubbishing Pat Green doesn't really work when nobody can tell the difference between the two of you, and endless prattle about integrity doesn't exactly square with presenting a 'Discovery' Award to poxy little Billy Gilman, the epitome of all that's wrong with Nashville (some very fancy, though futile, wriggling in this episode). There was a time when Robison was a pretty fair honkytonker, and his 1995 Vireo CD, **Bandera**, which he's frantically recycling, is well worth having, but for a man who owes everything to being Mr Emily Erwin, he takes himself pretty damn seriously. At least Pat Green doesn't make himself out to be a one-man 'Outlaw' revival. Someone needs to tell Robison that that 'legend in his own mind' stuff doesn't work.

◆ If you see *Nashville Scene*, you'll know this is a few months old, but, having held it over a couple of times, I better use it now before **3CM** makes the big move. One of the few good things to come out of the city is the paper's annual '**You Are So Nashville If . . .**' contest, in which readers are invited to complete the sentence. There is, of course, more to Nashville than so-called country music, in fact the music biz is only #3 in the local economy, trailing insurance and religious publishing—not many people know that. So music related entries comprised only a small proportion of the total. Anyway, these are the ones I thought were the funniest, and best illustrated the resemblances and differences between Nashville and Austin. We'll start off with the master of this particular art, Gary Wayne Davis, who had no less than three good ones among the published finalists:

- ... you recently bought a 48-track state of the art recording studio at a yard sale in Brentwood.
- ... it was your broken heart he turned into that godawful #1 country song.
- ... you have one reason to stay here, two reasons to leave and three cuts on hold

- ... you know to say 'industry showcase' rather than 'unpaid gig' (Dana Delworth)
- ... you got thrown out of the Bluebird Cafe for snoring (Philip Marlowe)
- ... you drive a \$500 vehicle and own a \$3000 guitar (Lonnie Ingram)
- ... you know all the words to *Murder On Music Row* but own every Garth Brooks and Shania Twain CD (Rob Prentice)
- ... you've ever invited friends over to cowrite (David Kirkpatrick)
- ... you get a cassingle with your Sunday paper (Jimmy Stratton)
- ... your rock band has a mandolin player (Beverly Burke)
- ... you have to submit a demo just to sing with your church choir (Ann Street)
- ... you think MP3s are bad for the music industry but don't know how to download them (Brian Siskind)
- ... you went to your therapist's CD release party last week (Maria Brewer)

◆ The difference between Austin and San Antonio, according to Jim Beal Jr, is that "in Austin you can't smoke anywhere and in San Antonio we smoke in church." A friend in a touring rockabilly band has a different take; "In Austin, the rockabillies buy hotrods. In San Antonio, they build them."

◆ Curious coincidence in the cover story roundup; both Leslie Satcher and Jenny Kerr sing songs by **Bobby Gentry**, respectively *Ode To Billy Joe* and *Mississippi Delta*. Now there's a name you don't hear often these days, or indeed anytime much since 1970.

◆ One new FARster this month, **Chip Meshew**, aka Texas Red, *Fat Sunday* ("Sort of patterned after the legendary KFAT radio in Gilroy CA. Although they are no longer on the air I try to keep their spirit alive every Sunday morning"), KCSS, Turlock, CA.

† ROY NICHOLS

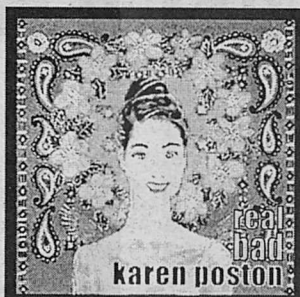
Born in Chandler, AZ, in 1932, Roy Nichols was two weeks shy of his 16th birthday when, on the strength of his playing on a Saturday morning Fresno radio show, he was hired, at \$90 a week, a fortune in 1949, by The Maddox Brothers & Rose. At a concert in Mesa, AZ, a teenage couple worked their way up to the front of the crowd, Bonnie Owens recalling, "I never took my eyes off Rose Maddox, Buck never took his eyes off Roy Nichols." In a 1997 interview, Rose Maddox said, "He could play anything. Every guitar picker in the country wanted to play like him, but none of them ever compared. He was one of a kind. But the music aside, he was like any 16-year old kid—feisty, causing us trouble." After 18 months, matriarch Lula Maddox fired him for sneaking out of his Las Vegas hotel room to play the slots.

◆ During the 50s, Nichols played on various radio shows and with Lefty Frizzell and Johnny Cash, joining Wynn Stewart in 1960. When Stewart's bassplayer formed his own band in 1966, his first hire was Nichols, who stayed with Merle Haggard & The Strangers until he retired in 1987. During that period, Nichols was the driving force on 38 #1 and 33 Top Ten hits. In February 1996, Nichols suffered a stroke that put him in a wheelchair and cost him the use of his left hand.

◆ A Django Reinhardt fan, Nichols' creativity on his Fender Telecaster influenced three generations of rock and country guitarists. Some would say he was the greatest country guitarist of all time, nobody would dispute that he was up there with the frontrunners. Roy Nichols died in Bakersfield on Tuesday, July 3rd.



karen poston -- "Real Bad"



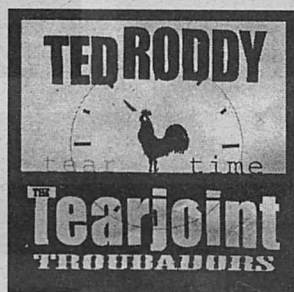
Karen Poston's songs move people to tears. She weaves intimate details and subtly revealing story lines with distinctive melodies to make songs that draw you into a place and time and haunt the imagination.

--Slaid Cleaves

Ted Roddy -- "Tearjoint"

...Tear Time is no exercise in nostalgia. It's music with deep roots in classic country and R&B sounds, music with a history, but as contemporary as next Saturday night, and no more likely to go out of style.

--Michell Moore / Pop Matters



Jim Stringer -- "On the Radio"



The music of Jim Stringer and the AM Band as found on the new On The Radio may be rooted in the old school '50's from both the 'billy and the rockin' perspectives, yet it's an invigorating and fresh blend that doesn't come off the least bit dated.

--Dan Ferguson / TIMEOUT

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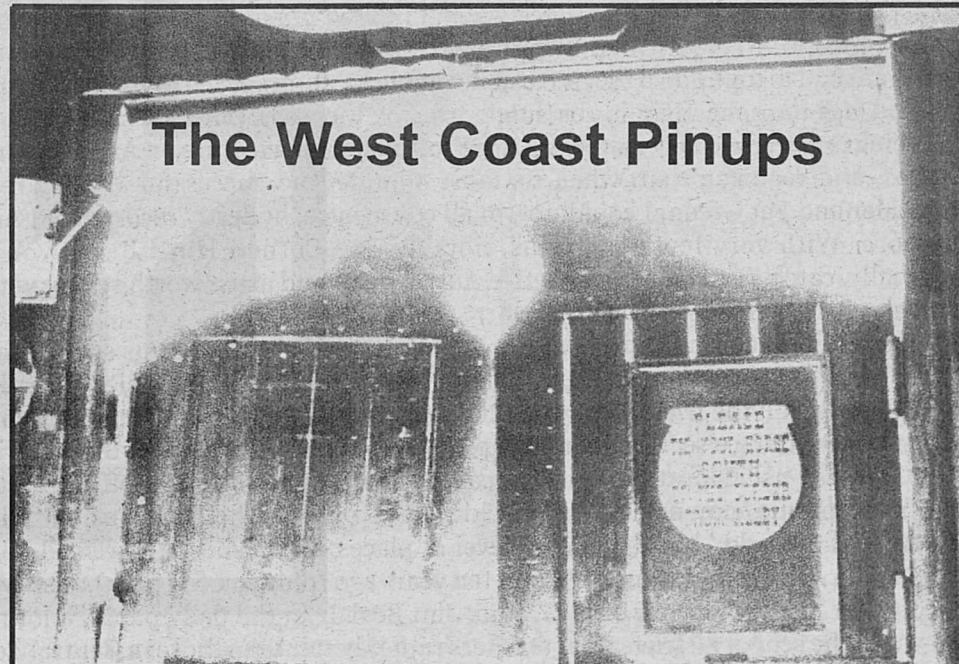
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***** **Essential** ***** **Damn good**

*** **Specialized or slightly flawed**

** **Sub par** * **Piss on this noise**

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DRIVIN' SOUTH

How many Austinites does it take to change a lightbulb? Ten; one to actually change it, the rest to talk about how the old lightbulb was better, brighter, much cheaper, took up less room and used less electricity. There are, I'm sure, plenty of people who think Austin's growth and the changes that have come with it are all for the good, but comparing Austin Now unfavorably with Austin Then is a favorite local hobbyhorse, probably dating back to about a month after the city was founded. I'm not sure what the minimum residency requirement is before you're allowed to start bitching about Austin's deterioration, but Debra Lou has been here off and on since the early 70s while I moved here in 1988, and neither one of us cares much for what Austin has become. Which is why we're moving to San Antonio (see new address).

◆ Leaving aside the escalating cost of living, traffic, sprawl, pollution and all the other benefits the high-tech boom brought to Austin, over the last 13 years I've witnessed the gradual atrophy of a music scene on which that boom has had an almost entirely negative impact. Back when, I figured *Music City Texas* was an open-ended concept. Wrong. I joke that the writing was on the wall when a Santa Fe restaurant had to tone down the menu at its Austin location because people complained the food was too spicy (this is absolutely true, by the way), but I guess my epiphany was being interviewed last year by a British journalist for a feature on American music Meccas, and realizing that, when its most popular and successful artists are Bob Schneider and Pat Green, I could not, in all conscience, honestly recommend Austin anymore. With very few exceptions, notably The Cornell Hurd Band, you can, eventually, catch just about every active Austin band and artist worth seeing without having to fuck with Austin itself.

◆ There are, of course, unique things about Austin that will keep us schlepping up and down I-35 for years to come, Jovita's, Cactus Cafe, Texicalli Grille, Threadgill's and, of course, all the friends we've made through mutual love of true Austin music. Apart from anything else, I'll be coming up at the beginning of every month to distribute 3CM in all the usual location—Austin readers aren't going to get cut off.

◆ San Antonio may not be, in Jim Stringer's phrase, 'The Live Music Audience Capital of the World,' but the energy level at places like Casbeers, Carlsbad Tavern and Tin Pan Alley reminds me of Austin ten years ago (plus you can park). Also we get Third Coast Music Network on the radio, Jim Beal Jr in the daily paper, a lot more house and the school districts treat teachers rather better than those in Central Texas.

◆ I've had a truly wonderful time in Austin, and count myself fortunate to have been here in the late 80s/early 90s, when almost every single week, almost always for no cover, you could see Butch Hancock & Jesse Taylor, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Jo Carol Pierce, Jimmy LaFave and Betty Elders (hosting Open Mikes where I first heard David Rodriguez, Michael Fracasso, Terri Hendrix et al), Don Walser, Junior Brown, High Noon, Bad Livers, Alvin Crow, Wayne Hancock, Dale Watson—if that don't qualify as a Golden Age, I don't what does. However, moving on isn't really much of a burden when I reflect that, with the exception of Roger Wallace, the people who are any good in Austin are the same people who were any good six or seven years ago. **JC**

**EVANGELINE • FELT LIKE HOME
ONE FELL SWOOP • CRAZY TIME
LESLIE SATCHER • LOVE LETTERS
BECKY HOBBS
FROM OKLAHOMA WITH LOVE
JENNY KERR BAND • ITCH**

(Squatch *****/Magoo *****/Warner Bros ****/
Beckaroo ****/JennyCo ****)

Uxorious is my middle name, but when it comes to female singers, I don't mind admitting that I'm a fool for a pretty voice. Over the years, I have, not counting innumerable fleeting flirtations, given my heart, musically at least, to Lucille Bogan, Lydia Mendoza, JoAnn Campbell, Janis Martin, Julie London, Charline Arthur, Sandy Denny, Mary Coughlan, Dolores Kean, Betty Elders, Marti Brom, Anna Fermin, Michele Pittenger and Tracey something who sang a heartstopping and unforgettable version of *Old Boyfriends* in a London pub about 25 years ago. About the only thing I can say for myself is that at least I don't just love 'em and leave 'em, but, fickle and inconstant bastard that I am, ask me twice who my all time favorite woman vocalist is and you're likely to get two different answers. Right this moment in fact, I'm torn between Jennifer Potter of Evangeline and Cheryl Stryker of One Fell Swoop.

◆ As alternative country adopted rock's post-Dylan double standard for vocalists, the burden of maintaining country's tradition of great, or at least distinctive, vocals has fallen almost entirely on the shoulders of female singers. However, few bands (The West Coast Pinups are a commendable exception) seem to grasp what would seem a fairly obvious concept, that if you're lucky enough to have a really wonderful singer, you should give her the fucking songs and not piss about wasting time with the guys' mundane vocals. This is a trap that both Seattle-based Evangeline and St Louis' One Fell Swoop have fallen into, though the former have recognized the error of their ways and promise to redeem themselves next time out, while the latter give Stryker considerably more front time than she had on their last album, **Look Out**.

◆ The point is that though both bands are more than competent and have some excellent original material, Evangeline's by Chris Cline, most of One Fell Swoop's by John Wendland and/or Andy Ploof, this doesn't make them all that exceptional and, for my money, the compelling reason for buying their respective albums are Potter and Stryker. Potter, from rural Idaho, makes no bones about her debt to early Emmylou Harris and Stone Poneys-era Linda Ronstadt, and the album's only cover, *Making Believe*, will make you a believer right there. Her phrasing and pacing are simply mesmerizing. Stryker is a more passionate singer, though precisely nuancing her intensity so as not to overwhelm the acoustic backings, while wringing every ounce of meaning out of the songs on this Gurf Morlix produced album. Two wonderful singers and I can only say that if you should ask me which prefer, the answer would be whichever happens to be on the turntable at the time.

◆ Guilty pleasure time. Originally from Paris, TX, Leslie Satcher is a Nashville hack whose songs have been cut by Lee Ann Womack, Vince Gill, Reba McEntire, Chely Wright and other Music Row trash, and I had no positive expectations whatsoever of her debut. However, I have to admit that I was utterly charmed by Satcher's voice and professionalism, at least until #8, the intolerable *I Will Survive*.

◆ Okie Beckie Hobbs has also had many Nashville songwriting successes, notably Alabama's *Angels Among Us*, but she still commands considerable residual affection in honkytonk and rockabilly circles from the energetic vocals and piano playing of her 70s heyday. This was released in 1997, but showed up in the latest Texas Music Round-Up catalog, and if there's rather more techno-dance stuff than I care for, she still has all the sparkle that made her MCA, Tattoo and RCA albums so engaging.

◆ San Francisco-based Jenny Kerr has a knack for eliciting somewhat ludicrous hyperbole, "could take on Lucinda Williams with one hand tied behind her back and not miss a beat," "could pass for musical Texans any time," "in the same league ... as Tom Russell and Nanci Griffith," when the truth is that her meld of blues, twang and funk on her eight cuts is sporadically successful. Multi-instrumentalist (guitar, banjo, harmonica, piano, Dobro) Kerr has a big, earthy voice and a good band, but she writes best in twang mode and really needs to lose the funk element. **JC**

ROY HEINRICH & THE PICKUPS

Dance Calendar

Fri 3rd, Austin Street Live, Seguin, 8-12

Sat 4th, Ego's, 8.30-10.30

Sun 5th, Hannover's, Pflugerville, 8-12

Thu 9th, Bergstrom Airport, 4-6

Sat 11th, Chaparral, South Congress, 9-1

Fri 24th, Central Market (N), 6.30-9

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Friday 10th, outdoor concert, Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, TN

Sat 11th, Grand Ole Opry, Nashville, TN

Fri 17th, Mucky Duck, Houston

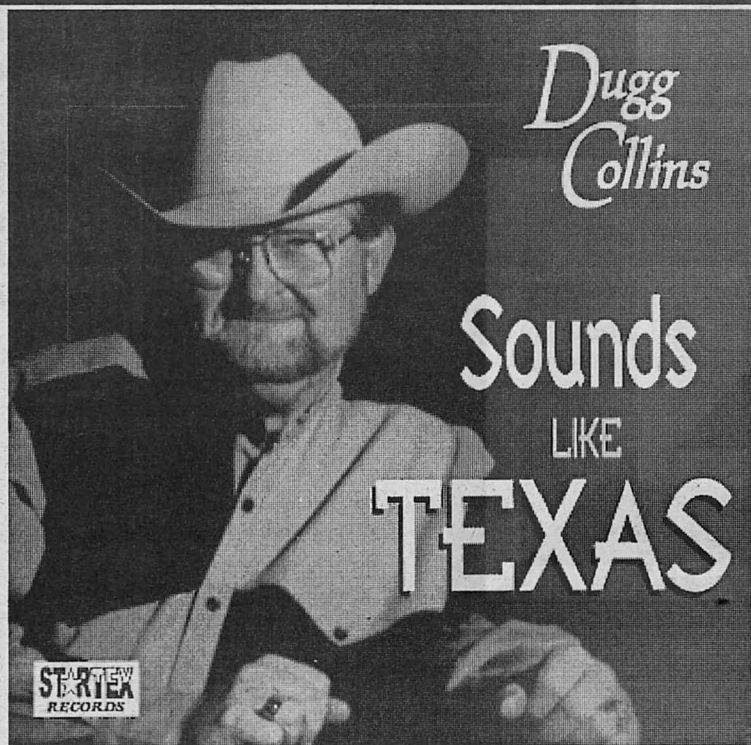
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1st Piano Slim • 1928 • LaGrange, TX
Jerry Garcia • 1942 • San Francisco, CA
Piano Red † 1985

2nd Big Walter Price • 1917 • Gonzales, TX
Hank Cochran • 1935 • Isola, MS
Betty Jack Davis † 1953
Leo Soileau † 1980

3rd Mercy Dee Walton • 1915 • Waco, TX
Shelton Dunaway • 1934 • Monroe, LA

4th Lee Martin • 1929 • Golden Meadow, LA
Frankie Ford • 1939 • Gretna, LA
Mark O'Connor • 1962 • Seattle, WA

5th Tuts Washington † 1984

6th TK Hulin • 1943 St Martinville, LA
Pat McDonald • 1952 • Green Bay, WI
Memphis Minnie † 1973

7th Felice Bryant • 1925 • Milwaukee, MN
BJ Thomas • 1942 • Houston, TX
Rodney Crowell • 1950 • Houston, TX
Esther Phillips † 1984

8th Knocky Parker • 1918 • Palmer, TX
Juan Lopez • 1922 • Jackson Co, TX
Webb Pierce • 1926 • West Monroe, LA
Mel Tillis • 1932 • Pahokee, FL
Joe Tex • 1933 • Rogers, TX
Ian Moore • 1967 Berkeley, CA

9th Robert Shaw • 1908 • Stafford, TX
Merle Kilgore • 1934 • Chickasha, OK
Aldus Mouton • 1941 • Cankton, LA
Jesse Ashlock † 1976
Jerry Garcia † 1995

10th Louise Massey • 1902 • Hart Co, TX
Leo Fender • 1907 • Buena Park, CA
Wanna Coffman • 1911 • Roanoke, TX
Jimmy Dean • 1928 • Plainview, TX
Ronnie Bennett • 1943 • New York City, NY
Lucille Bogan † 1948

11th Clint West • 1938 • Vidrine, LA
Percy Mayfield † 1984

12th Percy Mayfield • 1920 • Minden, LA
Buck Owens • 1929 • Sherman, TX
Porter Wagoner • 1930 • West Plains, MO
Roy Gaines • 1934 • Houston, TX
Ronnie Dawson • 1939 • Dallas, TX
Rod Bernard • 1940 • Opelousas, LA
Paul Ray • 1942 • Dallas, TX
Joe Tex † 1982

13th King Curtis † 1971

14th Johnny Burnette † 1964
Roy Buchanan † 1988

15th Bobby Helms • 1935 • Bloomington, IN
Don Rich • 1941 • Olympia, WA
Big Bill Broonzy † 1958
Lawrence Walker † 1968

16th Lil Son Jackson • 1915 • Tyler, TX
Chuck Guillory • 1919 • Mamou, LA
Durwood Haddock • 1934 • Lamesco, TX
Huey 'Cookie' Thierry • 1936 • Jennings, LA
Robert Johnson † 1938
Champ Hood • 1952 • Spartenburg, SC
Norman Petty † 1984

17th Walter Brown • 1917 • Dallas, TX
Wayne Raney • 1921 • Wolf Bayou, AR
Jimmy Donley • 1929 • Gulfport, MS
Guitar Gable • 1937 • Bellevue, LA
Kevin Welch • 1955 • Long Beach, CA

Maria McKee • 1964 • Los Angeles, CA
Dorsey Burnette † 1979

18th Curtis Jones • 1906 • Naples, TX
Hank Penny • 1918 • Birmingham, AL
Johnny Preston • 1939 • Port Arthur, TX
Mark Rubin • 1966 • Stillwater, OK

19th Al Ferrier • 1935 • Montgomery, LA
Johnny Nash • 1940 • Houston, TX

20th Jim Reeves • 1924 • Carthage, TX
Justin Tubb • 1935 • San Antonio, TX
Don Leady • 1949 • Alton, IL
Leon McAuliffe † 1988

21st James Burton • 1939 • Shreveport, LA
Jackie DeShannon • 1944 • Hazel, KY

22nd John Lee Hooker • 1917 • Clarksdale, MS
Marie Falcon • 1920 • Rayne, LA
Dale Hawkins • 1938 • Goldmine, LA

23rd Tex Williams • 1917 • Ramsey, IL
Hoyle Nix † 1985

24th Big Boy Arthur Crudup • 1905 • Forest, MS
Wynonie Harris • 1915 • Omaha, NB
Peppermint Harris • 1925 • Texarkana, TX
Mason Williams • 1938 • Abilene, TX
Carl Mann • 1942 • Huntingdon, TN
Nat Stuckey † 1988

25th Chelo Silva • 1922 • Brownsville, TX
Elvis Costello • 1955 • London, UK
Cliff Bruner † 2000

26th Stevie Ray Vaughan † 1990
Rockin' Dopsie † 1993

27th Wade Fruge • 1916 • Eunice, LA
Carter Stanley • 1925 • McClure, VA
Elroy Dietzel • 1927 • Seguin, TX
Charlene Hancock • 1938 • Morton, TX
Fernel Arceneaux • 1940 • Duralde, LA
Hop Wilson † 1976

29th Jimmy C Newman • 1927 • Mamou, LA
Mingo Saldivar • 1936 • Marion, TX
Jimmy Reed † 1976

30th Kitty Wells • 1918 • Nashville, TN
Jewel Brown • 1937 • Houston, TX
Jerry Allison • 1939 • Hillsboro, TX
Preston Frank • 1947 • Oberlin, LA

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