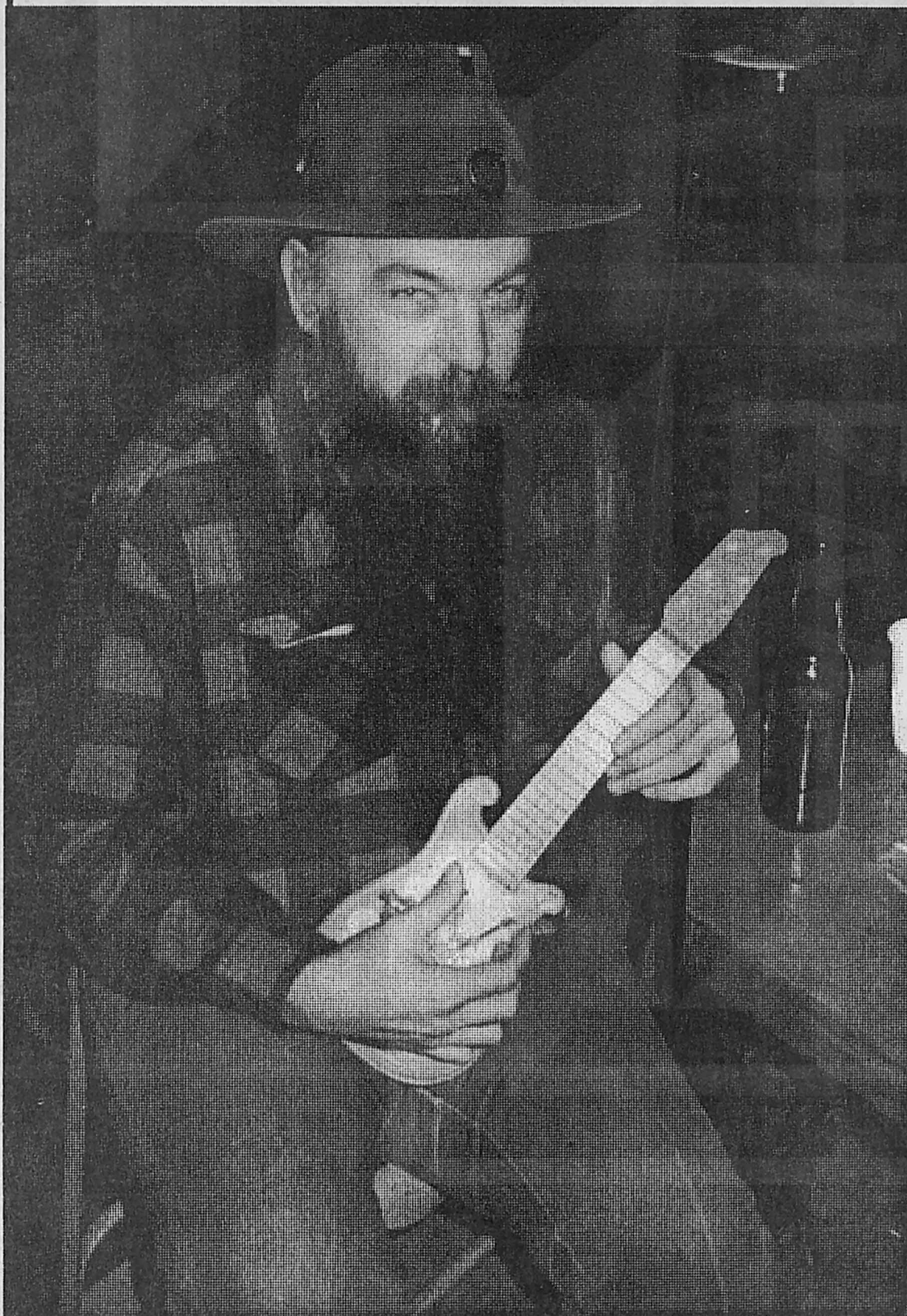


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BLAZE FOLEY

#35/124 DECEMBER 1999



REVIEWS

***** (or not)

MARTÍ BROM

LOS CHOFERES

BLAZE FOLEY

ELIZA GILKYSON

JIMMY GILMER
& THE FIREBALLS

JETTON & WHEELER

LOY SISTERS

BUCK OWENS

DOLLY PARTON

TWO DOLLAR
PISTOLS
with TIFT MERRITT

WEST COAST
PINUPS

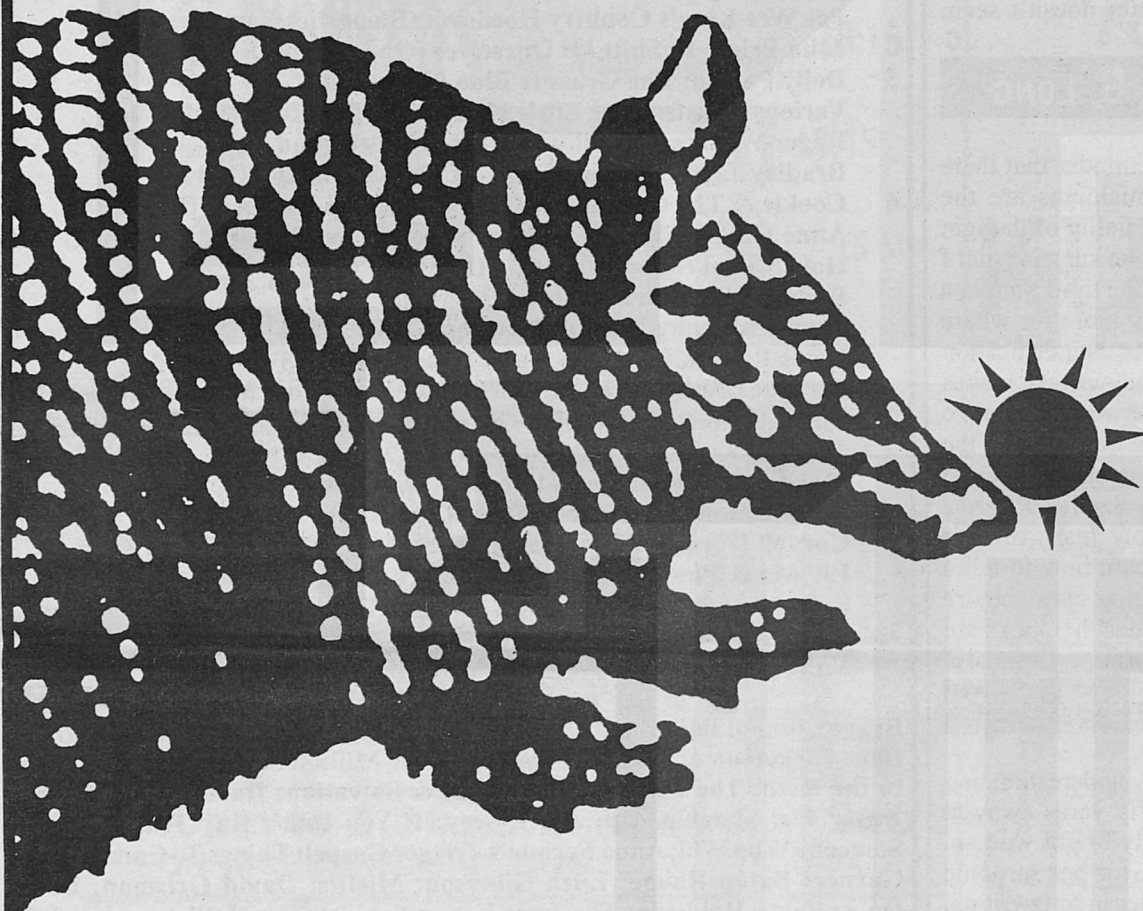
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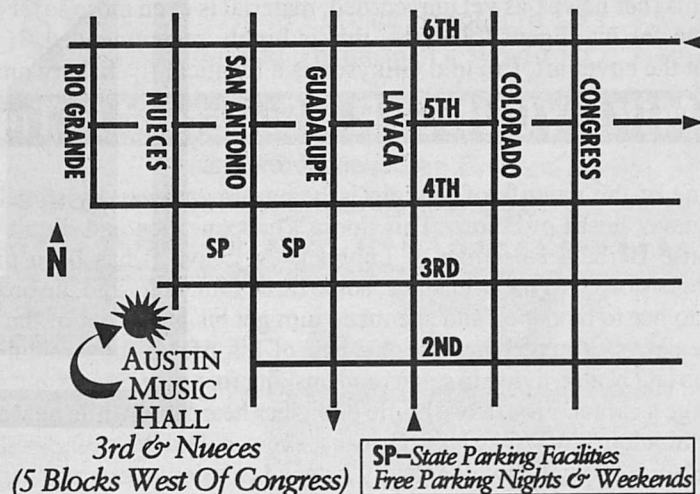
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LOS CHOFERES • CORRE LA METER

(Discos Taxi)

Chauffeur implies a peaked cap and limo, but *chofere* can equally be a professional or just any old driver, an ambiguity that photographer Daniel Schaefer uses to describe the combination of an amateur frontman and an ace band, Alfredo Romayor accordion, Jesse Botello sax, Joe Guzman drums, bass, percussion, and Bradley Jay Williams bajo sexto, drums, percussion. Bullied into becoming a musician and songwriter by Keith Ferguson, El Güero, to whom the album's dedicated, Schaefer claims "Keith, and Bradley, were Dr. Frankenstein. I'm the monster." Like Ferguson and Williams, Schaefer might best be described as an American-Mexican-American, so steeped in the culture he wears it more comfortably than many *asimilados*, writing and singing in both Spanish and English. In much the same manner as Mingo Saldivar's bilingual approach, Schaefer's two English rancheras and, perhaps an historic first, an English schotiz, *One Glass At A Time* by Scott Young of Red Meat, make the music that much more accessible without being in any way incongruous. And, his disclaimers notwithstanding, Schaefer doesn't seem incongruous as frontman of a rocking conjunto.

JC

THE LOY SISTERS • WHERE WE BELONG

(SpinSight)

Ritchie Valens' picture on the wall serves as a constant reminder that there are exceptions to my rule of thumb that teenage musicians are the embodiment of tenuous mastery of their instruments, superficiality of thought and tiresome reinvention of the wheel. Even so, it's with some surprise that I find myself coming out in support of teenage performers for the third time in a year. To be honest, I admire Rachel (16) and Sarah (18) Loy more for where they may be heading rather than for where they are right now, but their dedication to their craft, combined with very real talent as singers and songwriters, makes this a very impressive debut. Hovering somewhat uncertainly between alternative country and folk-pop, with a rather unfortunate Indigo Girls influence in the vocal arrangements, they are, not surprisingly, a little short on strong enough original material, though both come up with one knockout, Sarah's *Where I Belong* and Rachel's *Long Lost Enemy*. Already ahead of many, many of their seniors, when they work out a more individual sound and learn how to tell a keeper, they'll be a force to reckon with. Apart from anything else, they're cuter than a basket of kittens (and for those who cling to the idea that looks are irrelevant, I have just two words to say to you—Shania Twain).

JC

ELIZA GILKYSON • MISFITS

(Realiza)

Never having seen Gilkyson in a really large venue, I may be underestimating the distance over which she can project it, but from fifty yards away at least, you can tell immediately that this is one extraordinarily bright woman. Add to this a self-candor that would be almost painful but for her sardonic sense of humor, oh yes, and an ability to harness all these qualities in songwriting, which, of course, isn't a given, and you have to figure that her relative obscurity is of her own choosing. Maybe fame would have done her in the way it did Joni Mitchell, to whom she can, in some ways, be compared, though without the pretensions, self-importance and folie de grandeur. Something of a catch-up album, mostly recorded in LA in 1995-96, with a couple of tracks, including Dylan's *Chimes Of Freedom*, with Joe Doe on vocals, dating back to 1992, on which she seems less tormented and more self-confident than on her five previous albums (her newer, as yet unrecorded, material is even more so). For those with a taste for intelligent folk-rock, this is highly recommended. If you wonder about the cover art, I'm told Gilkyson is a fanatical fly-fisherwoman. **JC**

MIKE YOUNGER • SOMETHIN' IN THE AIR

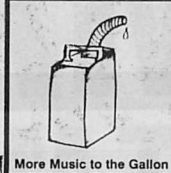
(Beyond)

One of the payoffs of this gig is being blown away by somebody you've never heard of before. This doesn't happen often and didn't happen here because Barbara Roseman of Lubbock Or Leave It has been preaching the Younger gospel to me ever since, some three four years ago, he brought a demo tape to her to be duped and she made him get his guitar out of the car and play some songs. Younger has spent much of his life drifting round America by thumb and beater, living in squats and busking for spare change, but still managed to forge a career. First, a Nashville publisher heard him while he was playing on John Sinclair's WWOZ, New Orleans, show, called the station and signed him on. Then Rodney Crowell actually listened to a demo tape and came aboard as producer, which got Younger a record deal. No question though that Younger made his own luck, because he's a real singer-songwriter find. Echoing Steve Earle's famous line about Townes Van Zandt, Crowell says "Mike Younger is the real thing. I'll fist fight anyone who says otherwise," and his enthusiasm for what he felicitously calls Younger's "no-shit poetic realism with a tendency towards museum quality," becomes instantly understandable when you hear a debut that may eventually be rated along with those of Dylan, Prine, Waits, Earle and Springsteen. Barbara knows a songwriter when she hears one. **JC**

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GUY CLARK: COLD DOG SOUP (Sugar Hill) *TG/*TJ/*KR/*BW

- 2 Doug Sahm: various albums, in tribute *PD
 - 3 The Derailers: Full Western Dress (Sire)
 - 4 Blaze Foley: Live At The Austin Outhouse (Lost Art) *JH
Pee Wee King's Country Hoedown (Bloodshot/Soundies) *WH
John Prine: In Spite Of Ourselves (Oh Boy) *KD
 - 5 Dolly Parton: The Grass Is Blue (Sugar Hill)
Various Artists: Poor Little Knitter On The Road (Bloodshot)
Roger Wallace: Hillbilly Heights (Texas Round-Up)
Bradley Jaye Williams: Tex-Mex Gumbo (Lazy SOB)
 - 6 Cookie & The Cupcakes: Kings Of Swamp Pop (Ace [UK]) *DT
Anne Hills & Michael Smith: Paradise Lost & Found (Redwing) *DJ
Holy Modal Rounders: 1 & 2 (Fantasy) *JS
Buddy Miller: Cruel Moon (Hightone) *DF
Jimmy Murphy: Electricity (Sugar Hill) *JLH
Davis Raines: Big Shiny Cars (Crossfield) *RS
Sprague Brothers: Let the Chicks Fall Where They May (Hightone) *BC
Third Degree: Zydecopia (Third Degree) *ER
Two Dollar Pistols with Tift Merritt (Yep Roc) *MT
 - 7 Mark Brine: Real Special Feelin' (Wild Oats)
Ed Burselson: My Perfect World (Tornado)
Cornell Hurd Band: At Large (Behemoth)
Lil' Mo & The Monicats: Hearts In My Dream (Passin Fancy)
Sally Timms: Cowboy Sally's Twilight Lament for Lost Buckaroos
(Bloodshot)
West Coast Pinups: Woman's Work (Hard Eight)
- ONE OFFS

ONE OFFS

Brave Combo: Polkasonic; The Carter Family: Longing For Old Virginia; Deke Dickerson & The Ecco-Fonics: More Million Sellers; Ani DiFranco: to the teeth; The Ditchdiggers: Light & Salvation; David Doucet: 1957; Dusty 45s: Shakin' Up; Jon Emery: If You Don't Buy This, I'll Find Someone Who Will; Anna Fermin's Trigger Gospel: Things To Come; Larry Garner: Baton Rouge; Eliza Gilkyson: Misfits; David Grisman: Dawg Duos; Barry Holdship: The Jesse Garon Project; The Hollisters: Land Of Rhythm & Pleasure; Buddy Holly: The Apartment Demos; Jim Lauderdale, Ralph Stanley & The Clinch Mountain Boys: I Feel Like Singing Today; Leftover Salmon: Nashville Sessions; Mance Lipscomb: Live! At The Cabale; Los #3 Dinners: Quiero Un Camaro!; The Louvin Brothers: Songs That Tell A Story; Mulehead: The Gospel Accordion II; Michelle Murphy: Once A Night; Tom Pacheco: The Lost American Songwriter; Elvis Presley: Platinum, A Life In Music; Red Dirt Rangers: Ranger's Command; Bill & Mary Reid: Old Homestead; Johnny Sansone: Watermelon Patch; Best Of Red Simpson; Ted & The Talltops: Rockn' Roll Honky Tonkin'; Texas Belairs: Sons Of Preachers; Two Tons Of Steel: Oh No!; VA: Blaze A Blaze Vol Too; VA: Return Of The Grievous Angel; Onie Wheeler: Onie's Bop

FAR charts are compiled from reports sent in by actual DJs with freeform (ie no playlists) radio shows on public, college and community stations round the country (and in Australia). Each of them lists the four albums they took most pleasure in playing, one of which can be their Album of the Month (designated by a * and their initials).

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PD: Paul Daly, KSYM, TX
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TG: Thomas Greener, KVMR, CA
JH: Jamie Hoover, KGLP, NM
JLH: John Hauser, KOOP, TX
WH: Wade Hockett, KBOO, OR
DJ: David John, KTRU, TX
TJ: Tom Jackson, WLUW, IL

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ER: Eddie Russell, RPEM/JRRI
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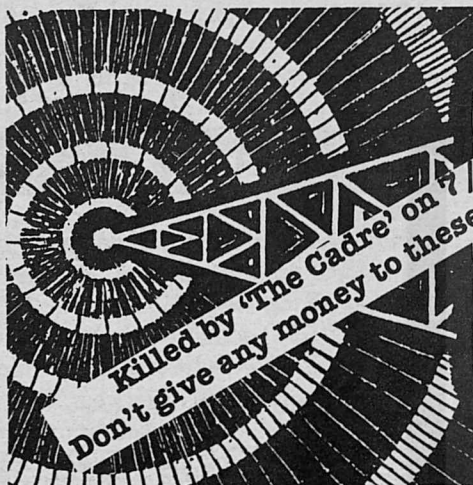
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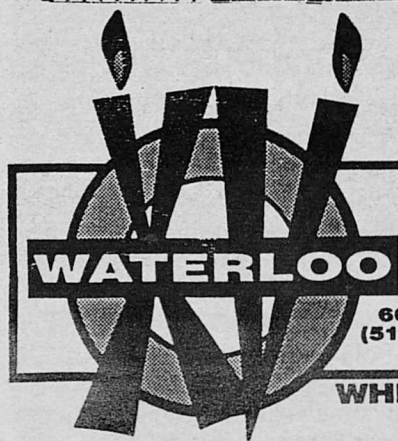
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MARTÍ BROM & HER BARNSHAKERS SNAKE RANCH

(Goofin' [Finland] *****)

Contemporary rockabilly just doesn't get any better than Martí Brom and that, my friends, isn't, in the immortal words of The Duke, an opinion, it's a fact. Anybody who listens to this and still contends she has any serious rivals simply isn't paying attention and can be stuffed down the waste disposal. Brom's somewhat checkered career started strong with some fine Renegade tracks (due to be reissued on CD sometime soon) but began to hiccup when she moved from St Louis to Austin and encountered the band du jour problem. Apart from a self-released CD boxed with the same material in mono on four singles (**Mean!**, Squarebird), she's only put out a cassette of a KUT *Live Set* appearance. However, over in Europe, where they know a thing or two about rockabilly—trust me on this one—that was enough to convince Goofin', who put a cleaned-up version of **Lassoed Live** out on CD earlier this year (3CM #26/115) and commissioned this album, recorded in Helsinki with Finnish rockabilly band The Barnshakers and, at his best, Austin piano whiz T Jarrod Bonta. As she has before, Brom pays tribute to female rockabilly pioneers, Joyce Green (*Black Cadillac*), Martha Carson (Otis Blackwell's *Now Stop*) and Charline Arthur (*Kiss The Baby Goodnight*, arranged perhaps the way Arthur would have done it for RCA if she hadn't been fucked over by Chet Atkins), along with Mickey & Sylvia's *No Good Lover*, Eddie Jackson's *You Put It There* and Jean Shepard's *Jeopardy*. However, strong as this material is, the contemporary songs, *Blue Tattoo* and *This Is Love Not Liquor* by Austin country singer Teri Joyce, and, distinguished by engaging and somehow authentic taking of liberties with syntax, *They Call Me Crazy*, *Lovesick Clown*, *Snake Ranch* and *Love Hound* by Jussi Huhtakangas and Vesa Haaja of The Barnshakers (doncha love those crazy Finnish names?), hold their own and, in fact, the best single number on the album is Brom's own *Eat My Words*. My only reservation about giving this five flowers is that, judging by the live and recorded previews I've had of it, Brom's next album, with the Cornell Hurd Band, on which she spreads her wings well beyond the rockabilly at which she so excels, is almost certainly going to turn out even better. **JC**

JETTON & WHEELER • WE'VE HAD A FEW

(New Bohemian *****)

Robert Jetton and John Wheeler boast that all their songs were written on beer-soaked bar napkins, and one can well believe it. Based in Nashville, more specifically The Broadway Brewhouse, the two are country-rockers with more serious honky-tonk attitude than most honky-tonkers. If nothing else, they open up with one of the great barroom songs of all time, *It Might As Well Be Me* ("There's a cold beer sittin' on the bar and somebody's got to drink it"), in which they offer this classic gem of honky-tonk philosophy—"The Good Lord won't forgive me if I don't sin now and then." If the title rather implies cold ones or shots, well, there's plenty of drinking here, but it can just as easily be taken to mean a few turns round the block of life and love. The guys do best when they're at their most incorrect; turning a girl down in *Not Tonight, I've Got A Heartache* is a well done example of the clever catchphrase school of songwriting, but at the other extreme, ("To tell the truth") *I'm Gonna Lie* is an unequivocal admission that a man will say just about anything to get a girl into bed, and brutally powerful. **JC**

TWO DOLLAR PISTOLS WITH TIFT MERRITT

(Yep Roc *****)

Rather jumping the gun, the press release claims that John Howie and Tift Merritt are "generally acknowledged as having two of the very best singing voices in contemporary country." It's certainly half-true: rating Howie best male country vocalist, as I did last January, isn't exactly controversial, however Merritt's The Carabines may be the only act in America that hasn't got a CD out, and I rather doubt their 7" single has really spread the word much outside North Carolina. Still, this seven song EP sure won't hurt her chances of gaining that general acceptance (and'll probably spin off a Carabines album, which'd be all to the good). Together, Howie & Merritt make a very creditable, and credible, attempt to emulate the Golden Age of country duos, with covers of George Jones & Melba Montgomery's *Suppose Tonight Would Be Our Last*, Porter Wagoner & Dolly Parton's *Just Someone I Used To Know*, Willie Nelson & Emmylou Harris' *One Paper Kid*, duet treatments of Waylon Jennings' *Had It All* and Charlie Pride's *I'm So Afraid Of Losing You Again*, plus two originals. There's still a touch of self-consciousness about a collaboration that only started back in March and has a way to go before it can rival the Australian duo Bill & Audrey's **Looking Back To See**, but Howie & Merritt really do have two of the best singing voices in contemporary country and, more to the point in this context, a clue about what duet singing involves. If the EP length suggests this is something of a test run, to see if there's a market, or alt.market, for country duets, I sure hope it works out. **JC**

THE WEST COAST PINUPS WOMAN'S WORK

(Hard Eight *****)

No flies on this two year old San Diego sextet, which proudly proclaims, "Featuring country music's newest honky tonk angel, Cella Blue." Take Ms Blue out of the equation and this is still a pretty hot Bakersfield Sound outfit. Put her blend of supple confidence and warm intimacy up front and it all gets a bit special. With virtually everyone else in the band feeding her songs, two and a half from bassplayer Ben Farkas, three and a half from rhythm guitarist Joe McGrath, three from drummer William Graham Jr and the two best from lead guitarist Johnny Smokes (my kinda guy), with Merle Haggard's *Big City* as the only cover among the 12 tracks, Blue is wonderfully convincing. **JC**

JIMMY GILMER & THE FIREBALLS SUGAR SHACK

(Sundazed *****)

Did you know Jimmie Gilmore added the Dale to avoid being confused with a famous West Texas star? Gilmer got his 1963 smash, and subsequent Dot LP, in just under the wire before rock & roll got wiped out by the British Invasion and he was consigned to oblivion. This is a great slice of vintage Texas rock & roll, featuring the original single version of *Sugar Shack*, with Norman Petty's Solo-Vox overdub, and three Dot singles as bonus tracks, but what lifts it right out of the nostalgia bracket is the presence of George Tomsco, one of the greatest Texas guitarists, some would say the greatest of all Texas guitarists. **JC**

CHRISTMAS WITH BUCK OWENS & HIS BUCKAROOS CHRISTMAS SHOPPING


(Sundazed *****)

Xmas albums are outward and visible signs of stardom. Even though, with the exceptions of Phil Spector's *A Christmas Gift To You* and James Brown *Santa's Got A Brand New Bag*, they're predictably wretched, they demonstrate that an artist has enough clout to make the label put out an album that only hardcore fans will conceivably buy. Actually, the market probably isn't the fans themselves but their desperate friends and relatives. Back in the 60s, Buck Owens rated two Capitol Christmas albums, **Christmas With . . .** in 1965 and **Christmas Shopping** in 1968, and about all you can say for them is that they're better than most country Christmas albums, which are maudlin and trite *even by Christmas album standards*. This is, after all, Buck, with Don Rich, Doyle Holly, Red Simpson, Tom Brumley, Bob Morris and Willie Cantu on the first album, Rich, Holly, Brumley, Morris, Jelly Sanders, Earl Poole Ball and Jerry Wiggins on the second, and the relentless jollity is broken up with occasional instrumentals to remind you who they are. If you have a friend or relative who's a Buck Owens fan, and you're getting desperate, **Christmas With . . .** is marginally preferable, not least because the pitifully lame artificial snow on Buck's shoulders on the **Christmas Shopping** cover makes him look like he's suffering from terminal dandruff. **JC**

DOLLY PARTON • THE GRASS IS BLUE

(Sugar Hill *****)

Bluegrass has always been a problem for me, because some people for whose opinions and taste I have the greatest respect think it's the business, but it flat bores the pants off me. About ten minutes of top shelf will hold me for a year. As a corollary, if I happen on a bluegrass album I actually like, it turns out not to be 'true' bluegrass at all, at least not according to the fanatics, which means this probably isn't true bluegrass. As I reported early this year, Parton wasn't just dropped by MCA, the entire subsidiary she was on was eliminated, but I gather she's not looking for another label and teamed up with Sugar Hill for a one-off project, her debut bluegrass album. Which, of course, makes a lot of sense because she gets access to such amazing Sugar Hill stars as Jerry Douglas, Sam Bush, Stuart Duncan, Bryan Sutton, Jim Mills and Alan O'Bryant, all of whom back her, along with Alison Krauss and others. However, despite a lot of talk about reworking originals like *Will He Be Waiting For Me* and *Steady As The Rain* and transforming songs like the Louvin Brothers' *Cash On The Barrelhead*, Johnny Cash's *I Still Miss Someone* and Johnny Bond's *I Wonder Where You Are Tonight*, not to mention Billy Joel's *Travelin' Prayer* and Blackfoot's *Train, Train*, "God's bluegrass band," as Parton dubs them, are still playing behind a country singer. Not that I'm complaining, mind you, works great for me. Parton has never been much good at making albums, and this could have been just the latest in a long string of failed experiments, but despite the odd weakness, *Silver Dagger*, for instance, carries too much Folk Revival baggage, this attempt to get back her roots, if somewhat calculated, has more than enough good moments to sustain it. Is it really bluegrass? Who cares? **JC**



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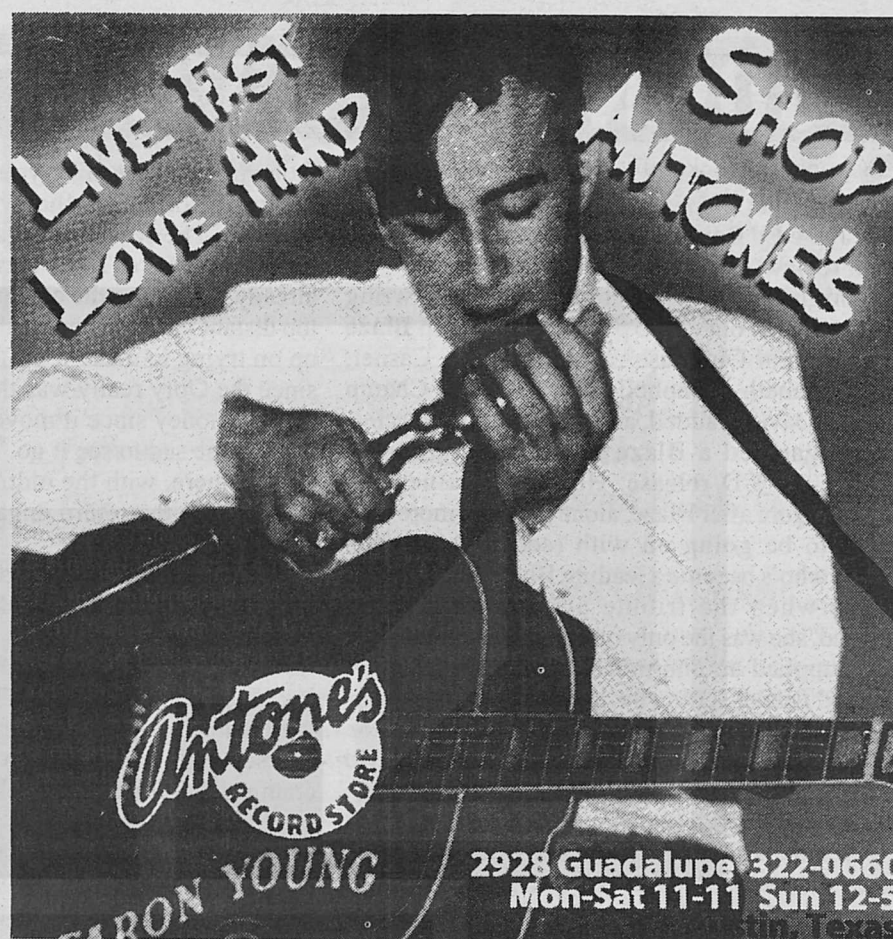
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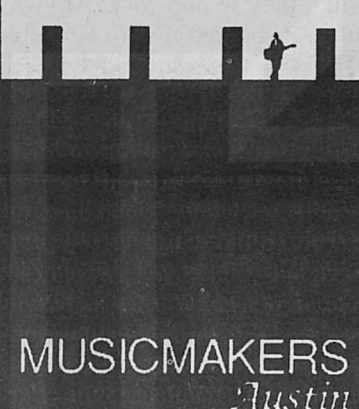
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JOHN THE REVELATOR

Catching up on last month's catching up, one thing that slipped by me was that the late great **Jesse Ed Davis**, mentioned in October's John Trudell review, was not Cherokee but Kiowa.

◆ My original idea for the cover story was to wring some memories out of the people involved in **Blaze Foley's** Austin Outhouse recording, John Casner, Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, Ed Bradfield, Champ Hood and David Waddell, and also **Mandy Mercier**, who's organized a Blaze Foley Supergroup to celebrate the CD release. However, Casner, the principal figure after Blaze, alone gave me more than enough to be going on with (see cover story). Mercier, who's become a leading Blazologist mainly because when the tribute albums were being organized, she was the only one who knew the proper lyrics, supplied an enormously detailed history of Foley and friends, going back to the 60s/70s singer-songwriter scene in the Montrose district of Houston (Blaze, Townes Van Zandt, Lucinda Williams, David Rodriguez, Vince Bell, Shake Russell & Dana Cooper, John Vandiver, Nanci Griffith and Eric Taylor) and its mass migration to Austin. I hope another Blaze album gives me a chance to use this in the near future, but for the time being, the immediately relevant bits are that Mercier, Blaze's one time girlfriend, fiddler and harmony singer will be joined at Jovita's (12th) and The Hole In The Wall (13th) by **Gurf Morlix**, Blaze's guitarist for many years before joining Lucinda, **Champ Hood**, who played with him some in the period before his death and was on the Outhouse album, and **Shake Russell**, revealed to have been Blaze's bassplayer in an incarnation of which even DL, who's been going to see Shake &/or Dana for 20 years, knew nothing. The Supergroup's guests will include Barbara K, Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, Texana Dames, Sherry Frushay, Calvin Russell, George Ensle, Lost John Casner, Cody Hubach, Rich Minus, Pat Mears and the Waddell brothers.

◆ A while ago, **Jimmie Dale Gilmore** told me he wanted to try releasing his own albums, but since then there have been various life-after-Elektra reports, involving negotiations with Nonesuch and (shudder) Ryko. However, he's finally ended up right where he said he wanted to be. Produced by Buddy Miller, **One Endless Night** is set for release on March 2nd, on Windcharger, and you can get a RealAudio or MP3 preview by going to www.pressnetwork.com. Currently the clips are of rough mixes which will be replaced by more finished ones in the next few weeks. Come to think, harking back to the last para, **Gurf Morlix** has an album due out in February sometime, on Catamount.

◆ Desperation time over at Capitol Nashville, which shipped four million copies of Garth Brooks' idiotic **In The Life Of Chris Gaines**. With sales stalled out at 600,000, which I guess tells us how many hardcore Brooks fans there really are, they don't much want to see 3.4 million coming back, so they're offering \$3 per CD rebates to retailers who agree to put this turkey on sale at deeply discounted prices. Normally majors are very keen on stores holding to the Minimum Advertised Price, but on this one, Capitol are actively encouraging them to get rid of the bastards any way they can.

◆ I'm not a big fan of **Vince Gill's** music, but I have to hand it to him for being the only Nashville star with the balls to publicly speak out against the **Grand Ole Opry's** decision to fire veteran house band members Buddy Harman, Leon Rhodes, Joe Edwards, Jerry Ray Johnston and Ralph Davis. As much a link with country music's history as any of the featured acts, these wrinkly players will, it's

thought, be replaced by youngsters in a predictably doomed effort to lure 'hot' young stars to perform at the Opry. The obvious next step will be the ouster of such holdovers as Little Jimmie Dickens. Some are already predicting the closing of the Opry, in the not too distant future, when current owners Gaylord give up on trying to make it profitable. It's been a while since the Opry really was the Cathedral of country, for my money since it moved from the Ryman, but it'd still be sad to see it go. At least Don Walser got to play there, with the oldtimers. Whether it'll still be there for the return engagement he was offered remains to be seen.

◆ Which reminds me, I was going to run a review of **Larry Cordle & Lonesome Standard Time's Murder On Music Row**, until I realized I was reviewing the artwork and not the album itself, which is OK but nothing special. The cover is a street scene with a steel guitar on a gurney being loaded into a hearse, while the back shows the band posing round country's tombstone. Check it out, hell, you might even like the album.

◆ The main thing that pisses me off about Nashville isn't so much the music, which I simply avoid as much as possible, as the fact they still call it country, which means people who really are playing country have to call it something else so people won't think they're pop-rock. Anyway I had this idea, and even discussed it with Guy Juke, of a symbol to be used whenever 'country' referred to Nashville shit rather than the real thing. Not sure how it'll work out in practice, but in theory † is The Genre Formerly Known As Country.

◆ Wish I'd Thought Of That Dept. The current *Twangzine* (www.twangzine.com) features a very funny Y2K spoof, reporting that Nashville studios are packed with artists trying to finish albums prior to Jan 1st 2000. "Without computers that means no click track. How do you expect a professional country musician to keep time without a click track? Even worse than the absence of the click track will be the loss of drum machines . . . Without the drum machine, it just ain't country . . . No more effects loops, no electronic reverb, no sampling no digital playback, no more going in to fix things any more. All of these multimillion dollar high tech studios will be useless come New Year's Day . . . After that, all records will have to be cut live to analog tape. There will be no overdubs, no click tracks, no layering, no more fancy effects. It will be just the artist and his music. Who wants to hear that? It's the end of an industry."

◆ How's this for a cool sounding gig? Sending in his FAR #4 report, Chicago DJ Tom Jackson mentioned that he was planning to go to "The second annual, 'Heather McAdams Country Legends Calendar Brought To Life' show at The Hideout, with Kelly Hogan singing Ricky Nelson, The Blacks doing Johnny Paycheck, The Texas Rubies doing Flatt & Scruggs, Robbie & Donna Fuks doing Joe & Rose Lee Maphis."

◆ Singer-songwriter venues, performers and audiences tend to be somewhat subdued and low-key, but Mo Humble ain't having none of that at **Humble Time** tapings out at Freiheit Country Store. If you want to see a host who'd be regarded as a bit over the top at wrestling matches or circus sideshows, Mo's your man. Last month, Humble Time announced the results of a ballot, and as it's currently the most serious grassroots operator in the Texas singer-songwriter scene, I thought you might be interested in the 1999 **Humble Awards**:

Outstanding Female Songwriter: Susan Gibson
Outstanding Male Songwriter: Bret Graham

Rising Star—Female: Terri Hendrix
Rising Star—Male: Tim DuBois
Favorite Song: *Too Deep In Love* (Bret Graham)
Outstanding Performance—Female: Susan Gibson
Outstanding Performance—Male: Guy Forsyth
Outstanding Performance—Group/Duo:

The Groobeers
Outstanding Technical Ability: Ace
Heart Award: Al Barlow
Texas Legend(s): Aaron Allen, Ray Wylie Hubbard
Outstanding Duo: Braden & O'Connor
Outstanding Group: The Groobeers

◆ For the benefit of those who can't follow Spanish, I attach a translation of the lyrics of *Los Profesionales*, the key song on the **Los Choferes** CD (see Reviews) The motif came from a letter written by Margaret Ferguson to the *Austin Chronicle's* editor about an article that appeared in the paper following her son's death, "shooting a dead man over and over again," an image firmly in the Norteño tradition. The (spit) echoes Keith Ferguson's habit whenever he mentioned anything or anybody he found offensive.

"Sadly I tell the following
A matter that recently happened
They shot the body of El Güero
A body without life, already dead.
Who would have believed the act
Of giving it to a poor dead guy.
That's how the professionals
Hired by the *Austin Chronicle* are
Those lowlife, fucking bastards (spit)
Don't know what it is to love
Those lowlife, fucking bastards (spit)
Don't know how to show respect."

Daniel J Schaefer © BMI, 1997

LETTER TO DOUG SAHM

Oh, man!!! I have watched the TV and newspaper. But I am not down as you would not want me to be!! It's cold here in this prison cell in Huntsville. I am laying here on my bunk, thinking of all the good times we had from 1957 when you came to Winnie to see me. I was a barber then, doing local acts in my spare time. I thank you for all that. But I would like to hear you one more time as I walked in clubs saying "I want to send this to my producer Huey P Meaux" and you would fire up *Mover, Rains Came, Mendocino*. No one will ever play the intro on those songs like you Doug!! You had a feeling on that guitar that was yours only!! I had a letter from Augie Meyers, Bobby Smith and Joe Gracey and Doug Hanners this week. I also sent you a Xmas gift I had made for you on the 15th of November. Don't know if you got to see it or not. Last nite as I lay on my bunk, this came to me:

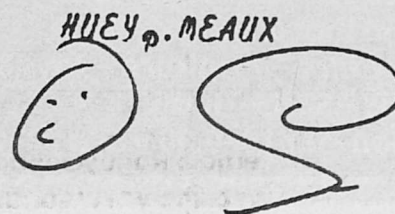
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The list went on till the billboard ran out of room. You brought the world to Austin . . . you left us your music to enjoy! So you will live on forever. Doug! Save me a seat right next to you, as I will follow you someday soon. Bon voyage, mon ami. Love you and miss you.

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5th Jimmy Lee Hannaford
10th Roger wallace + (5.30pm) Dee Lannon
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***** Essential ***** Damn good

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*** Sub par ** Piss on this noise

SPECIAL USAGE

† = the genre formerly known as country

YE OLDE AUSTINE

Driving round town delivering magazines last month, it occurred to me that my distribution route would make a pretty good map of what's left of 'Old' Austin. It's a rather specialized test, but taking a free magazine into any establishment will tell you right away whether you're dealing with Old or New Austin. If they say something like, "Sure, stick 'em on top of the cigarette machine," you're in Old Austin. If they say you have to get permission from corporate headquarters and provide a rack, or that they only allow the *Austin Chronicle*, you're in New Austin, and piss on it, I say. By this test, incidentally, some relatively new businesses, Cheapo Records for instance, are 'old,' and some long established ones, Trudy's say, are 'new.' One could, of course, just as easily use the terms 'Hippie' and 'Yuppie,' it comes to much the same thing.

♦ This particular thought came in the aftermath of being interviewed by a writer from *Time Out*, the London entertainment weekly of which I was once Country/Folk editor, who was preparing an article on America's musical tourist destinations. There's nothing like a direct question to focus the mind on things one takes for granted, and the answer to 'Do you recommend Austin?', which even five years ago would have been a no-brainer, now turns out to be, 'Well, no, not hardly.' OK, there's a bit of leeway there, if you've already been to Austin and know your way around, have friends here who are on the same wavelength, or, like so many 3CM subscribers come specifically for NotSXSW, fair enough, but as for flying into Austin cold and expecting to have a great musical experience, forget it.

♦ One of the things that came up in the interview was my view that, in terms of a specifically Austin/Texas experience that you wouldn't get anywhere else, the people who are any good are, by and large, the same people who were any good five or ten years ago, except now they're much better known and many of them are out of town most of the time. So, while you're scouring the Austin club listings, wondering what the hell kind of music all these acts you've never heard of play, you may well find your options limited to Don Walser, Cornell Hurd, Ponty Bone and The Gulf Coast Playboys, because everybody else is either on tour, maybe even playing your home town, or taking a break. Mind you, those are still pretty good options, one has to remember that these things are relative, but the fact remains, it's a lot harder to fill wish lists than it used to be.

♦ I can't help wondering what Blaze Foley, a man who embodied Old Austin, would make of the city now if he could visit. Would he stick around a place where The Austin Outhouse, a joint which embodied Old Austin funky, couldn't survive? More to the point, where would he go instead? There seem to be more and more people who'd like to know the answer to that one.

JC

BLAZE FOLEY LIVE AT THE AUSTIN OUTHOUSE

(Lost Art *****)

Having rather despaired of seeing an actual Blaze Foley release this (or any other) decade, I gave the first cover of 1999 to a tribute album, covers of Blaze's songs by his friends. So it gives me enormous pleasure to close the year with the real thing, particularly as it was my January story that brought John Casner, who recorded it, together with Tom Tobin & Craig McDonald of Lost Art Records. However, as I've already said my piece about the great singer-songwriter, I'm giving this space to Casner to recount some of the background to this album. John mentions 115 minutes of tape, so obviously some songs have been sacrificed, but the most important, *Clay Pigeons*, *If I Could Only Fly*, *Small Town Hero*, *Our Little Town*, *Picture Cards*, *Election Day* and *Faded Loves And Memories*, are all there. On December 12th & 13th, Mandy Mercier will lead a Blaze Foley Supergroup at CD releases (see John The Revelator). **JC**

Blaze Foley and Townes Van Zandt were drinking vodka and coke on the side porch of Spellman's Lounge early one sunny November afternoon in 1980. I'd just moved to Austin and was playing a demo tape for the manager, looking for my first Austin gig. After negotiating a future Sunday night engagement, I was told Townes had sent word for me to join them and hurriedly turned off the tape, as *Pancho & Lefty* was coming up next, and I wasn't sure Townes would appreciate my interpretation. Both Townes and Blaze were very encouraging and provided me with several leads where singer-songwriters could find work in Austin, including the Bentwood Tavern (soon to become the Austin Outhouse). Blaze and I became friends, often playing at the same clubs and sitting in at each other's gigs. Blaze's shows at places like Spellman's, the Outhouse and Taco Flats were like attending a Songwriters Anonymous meeting, as there were usually more songwriters than citizens in the audience and you never knew who you might get to hear perform. Blaze always shared his stage with friends and fellow songwriters.

♦ Blaze came up with the idea to record two nights at the Outhouse. He wanted to get as many of his songs as possible on tape for demos and maybe find a European label interested in releasing a live album. We scheduled December 27th & 28th, 1988 to do the recording and Blaze, of course, took the opportunity to invite several friends, including Sarah Elizabeth Campbell, to do guest sets, so they too could have live recordings of their songs. As we were setting up, I realized Blaze didn't have a guitar. Townes had bought him a nice Takamine with a built-in pickup with his royalties from Willie and Merle's recording of *Pancho And Lefty*, but that guitar was in the pawn shop. Not to worry. Blaze never did sweat the small stuff, his good friend Tony di Roadie would bring a guitar. Roadie's guitar had no pickup, requiring the use of a microphone, which accounts for much of the "Outhouse ambiance" on the tape, including sounds from the cash register, the tip jar, squeaky bar stools, the ladies room door and intermittent harmonies from the audience. Blaze did most of the two nights solo, occasionally inviting Ed Bradfield (the bartender) to join him on harmonica. Champ Hood had come to play with Sarah Elizabeth and sat in on a couple of songs.

♦ During the first week of January 1989, we rerecorded *Oh Darlin'* and *Oooh Love* in my garage studio (this time Blaze played one of my guitars). Blaze and Sarah Elizabeth added some harmony tracks, David Waddell bass tracks for a few songs and I added some piano. During these sessions, we whittled the six hours of recording down to about 115 minutes, to fit on a cassette and scheduled a tape release party at the Outhouse for February 26th, 1989. Our intention was to make 50 or so tapes, enough to cover the cost of the recording. When discussing how much to charge for the tapes, Blaze was unsure at first. Then he said he wanted to charge \$5 and donate \$1 from each tape sale to the homeless shelter.

♦ On the afternoon of February 1st, 1989, I took a press release for the tape release party to the Outhouse, only to find Blaze had been shot and had died that morning following surgery. My first inclination was to cancel the party, but Blaze's attorney and several close friends insisted he'd absolutely want the tape released, and anyway the money was needed to help pay for his funeral. Two runs of 250 were produced, money from the second run being donated to the Austin homeless shelter in Blaze's name. The original Outhouse tape has been out of print for at least six years.

♦ In 1998, Ray Benson called to say he would be glad to play at a tribute show to honor the late Jubal Clark, but needed some flexibility in the scheduling because Merle Haggard was at his studio that day. I took the opportunity to leave Merle a Blaze tape, assuming (correctly) he'd never heard Blaze perform, even though he and Willie had recorded *If I Could Only Fly* in 1987. A few weeks later, Merle's manager called and said Merle wanted to get several more copies of the Outhouse tape, and tapes of anything else Blaze had ever recorded. I met with Merle on his bus before a show in Dennison, Texas, and hand-delivered the tapes. Merle was genuinely interested in Blaze, where he had grown up, who his friends were, who had played with him. Merle asked if the Outhouse was still open, suggesting he'd like to make a video there with musicians who'd played with Blaze. I told Merle that when *If I Could Only Fly* was first released, a trade paper in Nashville had quoted Merle saying it was the best country song he had heard in 15 years. When I told Merle that Blaze kept a copy of that magazine rolled up in his boot for months, Merle visibly shuddered. A few weeks later, I got a call from Merle saying he had been listening to Blaze every day on the bus and that, even though he'd recently rerecorded *If I Could Only Fly*, he intended to record it again, feeling he better understood the song after listening to Blaze sing it.

♦ Lost Art Records has generously brought together the resources to remix and edit the Outhouse tapes for CD. We were able to structure the financing so that Blaze's mother will get the largest share of the proceeds, with 20% of the net income donated to the Austin Resource Center for the Homeless in Blaze's name. Blaze's attorney, Peggy Underwood, was very helpful in taking care of legal issues and contracts and making arrangements for Blaze's mother. Blaze was one of the most powerful songwriters and performers to come out of the Austin music scene in a long time and he deserves to have his music and songs available for people to hear—and feel. This CD will, I hope, give more people the opportunity to experience Blaze.

John Casner



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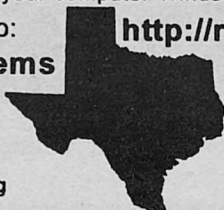
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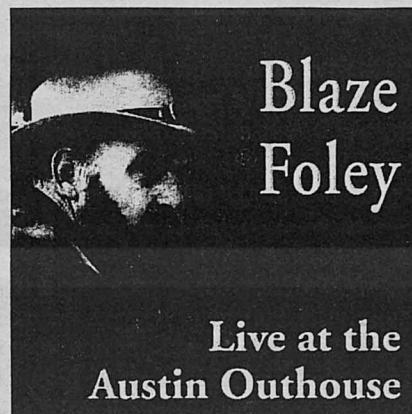
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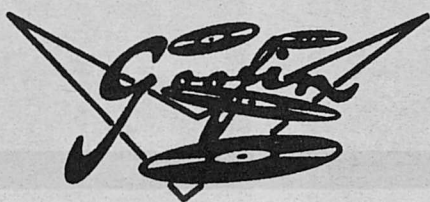


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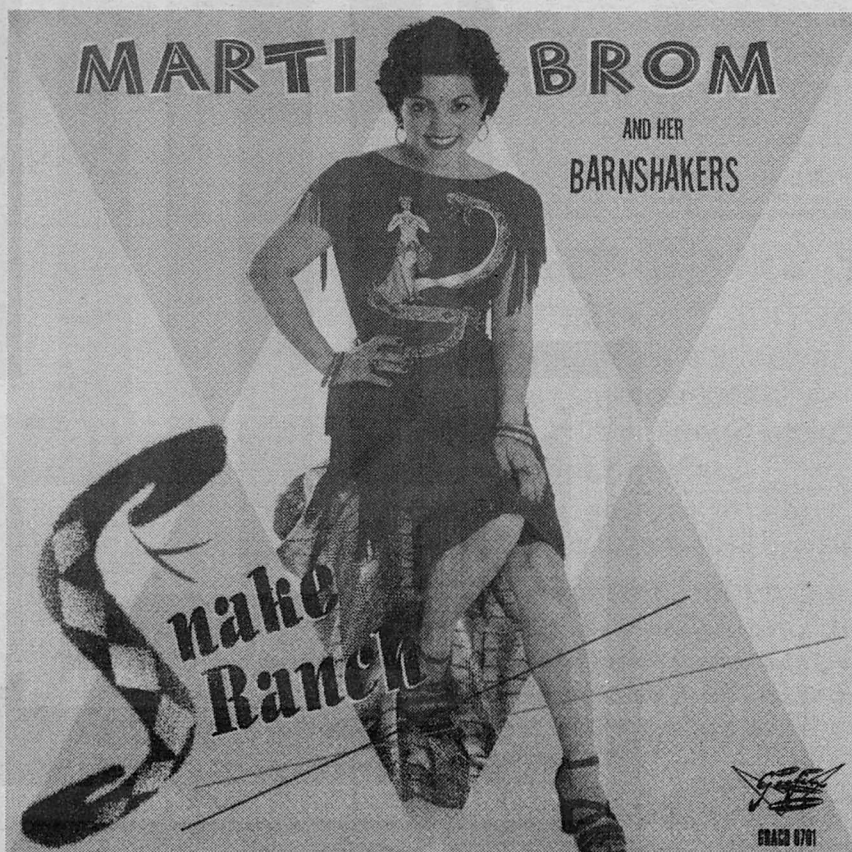
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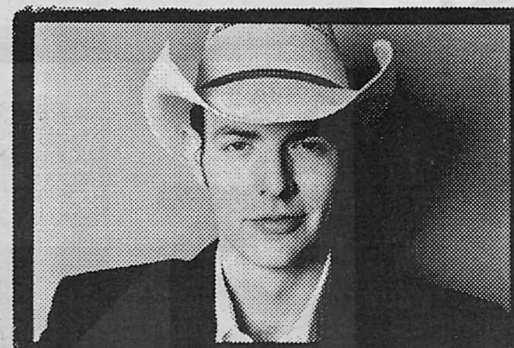
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DECEMBER ARRIVALS & DEPARTURES

- 1st -- Slim Willet • 1919 • Victor, TX
 ----- Sandy Nelson • 1938 • Santa Monica, CA
 ----- Magic Sam † 1969
 ----- Lee Dorsey † 1986
- 2nd -- Charline Arthur • 1929 • Henrietta, TX
- 3rd -- Rabon Delmore • 1916 • Elkmont, AL
 ----- Jimmy Heap † 1977
- 4th -- Larry Davis • 1936 • Kansas City, MO
 ----- Freddy Cannon • 1940 • Lynn, MA
 ----- Ernie Durawa • 1942 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Gary P Nunn • 1945 • Okmulgee, OK
- 5th -- Sonny Boy Williamson • 1899 • Glendora, MS
 ----- Little Richard • 1935 • Macon, GA
 ----- Molly O'Day † 1987
- 6th -- Hugh Farr • 1903 • Llano, TX
 ----- Robert Ealey • 1925 • Texarkana, TX
 ----- Joe King Carrasco • 1953 • Dumas, TX
 ----- Tish Hinojosa • 1955 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Leadbelly † 1949
 ----- Roy Orbison † 1988
- 7th -- Grey Ghost • 1903 • Bastrop, TX
 ----- Tom Waits • 1949 • Pomona, CA
 ----- Bill Boyd † 1977
- 8th -- Floyd Tillman • 1914 • Ryan, OK
 ----- Johnny Otis • 1921 • Vallejo, CA
 ----- Marty Robbins † 1982
- 9th -- David Houston • 1938 • Bossier City, LA
- 10th -- Otis Redding † 1967
 ----- Faron Young † 1996
- 11th -- Big Mama Thornton
 ----- • 1926 • Montgomery, AL
 ----- Brenda Lee • 1944 • Lithonia, GA
 ----- Troy Campbell • 1964 • Germantown, OH
- 12th -- Kevin Smith • 1967 • Colorado Springs, CO
 ----- Clifton Chenier † 1987
- 13th -- Conni Hancock • 1957 • Lubbock, TX
- 14th -- Charlie Rich • 1932 • Colt, AR
- 15th -- AP Carter • 1891 • Mace Springs, VA
 ----- Rose Maddox • 1926 • Boaz, AL
 ----- Jesse Belvin • 1932 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Fats Waller † 1943
 ----- Betty Elders • 1949 • Raleigh, NC
 ----- Steve Forbert • 1954 • Meridian, MS
- 16th -- Kimberly M'Carver • 1957 • Mesquite, TX
- 17th -- Spade Cooley • 1910 • Pack Saddle Creek, OK
 ----- Chris Sandoval • 1924 • Laredo, TX
 ----- Nat Stuckey • 1937 • Cass Co, TX
 ----- Arthur Neville • 1937 • New Orleans, LA
- 18th -- Pee Wee Crayton • 1914 • Rockdale, TX
 ----- Eddie Cleanhead Vinson
 ----- • 1917 • Houston, TX
 ----- John Reed • 1945 • Charleston, SC
 ----- Jacky Ward • 1946 • Groveton, TX
 ----- Blaze Foley • 1949 • AR
 ----- Don Santiago Jimenez † 1984

- 19th -- Professor Longhair • 1918 • Bogalusa, LA
 ----- Bobby Page • 1938 • Rayne, LA
 ----- Phil Ochs • 1940 • El Paso, TX
- 20th -- Little Jimmy Dickens • 1925 • Bolt, WV
 ----- Herman The German • 1952 • Germany
- 21st -- Albert Lee • 1943 • Leominster, UK
 ----- Danny Barnes • 1961 • Belton, TX
- 22nd -- Hawkshaw Hawkins
 ----- • 1921 • Huntingdon, WV
 ----- King Karl • 1931 • Grand Coteau, LA
 ----- Red Steagall • 1937 • Gainesville, TX
 ----- Speedy Sparks • 1945 • Houston, TX
- 23rd -- Chet Baker • 1929 • Yale, OK
 ----- Esther Phillips • 1935 • Galveston, TX
 ----- Johnny Kidd • 1939 • London, UK
 ----- Tim Hardin • 1941 • Eugene, OR
- 24th -- Dave Bartholomew • 1920 • Edgard, LA
 ----- Lee Dorsey • 1924 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Stoney Edwards • 1929 • Seminole, OK
 ----- Cornell Hurd • 1949 • Honolulu, Hawaii
- 25th -- Cab Calloway • 1907 • Rochester, NY
 ----- Alton Delmore • 1908 • Elkmont, AL
 ----- Johnny Ace † 1954
- 26th -- Kristi Guillory • 1978 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Peck Kelley † 1980
- 27th -- Scotty Moore • 1931 • Gadsden, TN
 ----- Will T Massey • 1968 • San Angelo, TX
 ----- Bob Luman † 1978
- 28th -- Billy Williams • 1916 • Waco, TX
 ----- Dorsey Burnette • 1932 • Memphis, TN
 ----- Charles Neville • 1938 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Adam Landreneaux † 1973
 ----- Freddie King † 1976
 ----- Hoagy Carmichael † 1981
- 29th -- Rose Lee Maphis • 1922 • Baltimore, MD
 ----- Tim Hardin † 1980
- 30th -- Bo Diddley • 1928 • McComb, MS
 ----- Skeeter Davis • 1931 • Dry Ridge, KY
- 31st -- Rocky Morales • 1940 • San Antonio, TX
 ----- Robert Pete Williams † 1980
 ----- Rick Nelson † 1985

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