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CHARLES EARLE at the CMA Awards
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BIRTHS & DEATHS
REVIEWS * * * * * (or not)

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BACK TO THE FUTURE

KISS ON THE BREEZE

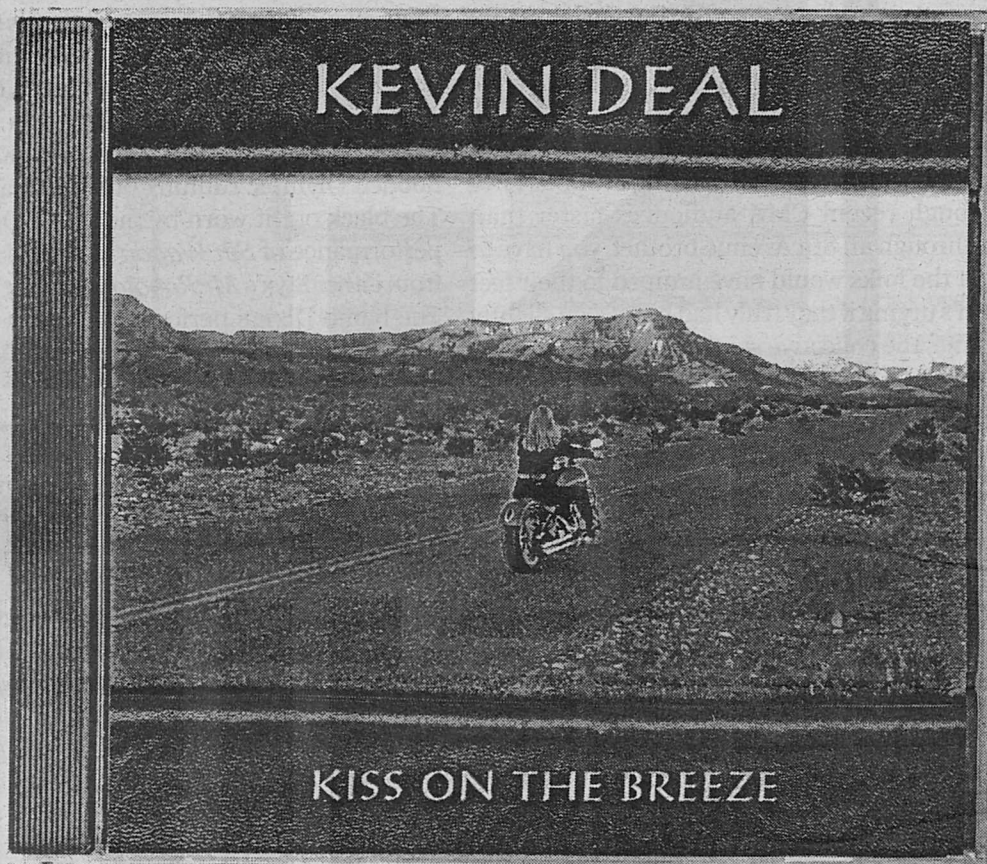
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Jim Musser



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Kat Vickers



CHARLES EARLE • A NIGHT TO FORGET

There was a moment last week during the CMA Awards telecast that just sort of summed up what an awkward, disorganized mess the whole country music industry has become. It happened just after our 'country' awards show opened with Faith Hill singing a rock song backed by an African-American gospel choir. As moderately enthusiastic applause began throughout the crowd, Hill's husband Tim McGraw, dressed as though he was auditioning for the role of the cowboy in *Village People 2000*, decided from his perch on the front row that everyone should stand up while applauding his wife. He stood alone for a moment, and then maybe a third of the crowd joined him on their feet with what seemed like an obvious sense of reluctance.

◆ Had the crowd really been blown away by the song or the choir? It didn't look that way. Gospel choirs are more common at music awards shows these days than boob jobs and limos. And since standing ovations have spread through recent CMA audiences faster than chlamydia through an 8th Avenue brothel, you have to assume that the folks would have jumped to their feet without Tim's urging if they truly had been even slightly moved. To me, the collective sentiment was obvious.

◆ "Did we really like her performance that much?"

◆ (pregnant pause to look around the room)

◆ "Uhm... (standing up now)... I guess we did."

◆ Right in the middle of a crowd full of industry people who lack any sort of leadership and vision, Tim McGraw had seized the day. Nobody would have even noticed if somebody in the back of the room or in the balcony had risen to their feet. But since the celebrity husband on the front row thinks we should get out of our seats, let's all follow suit.

◆ And so it went on a CMA Awards night that was supposed to be different. We had all heard for months how things were headed in a more traditional direction. The success of more traditional artists Brad Paisley and Lee Ann Womack had been trumpeted from the pages of the kiss-ass country music press as being the red flag for a major shift in the industry. This was to be the year, we were told.

◆ Am I exaggerating, you ask? Actually, no. Consider that *The Tennessean*, a paper with its head so far up Music Row's ass that a sneeze by one of their critics sends Tony Brown to the proctologist, championed the cause of Paisley and Womack. All three writers in the paper's pre-CMA coverage (Brad Schmitt, Craig Havigurst and Peter Cooper) predicted a win for Womack, saying that she was "changing country music" with her "bluegrass-ready voice". In predicting a victory for Paisley, Schmitt, who brings to music criticism the same skills that Heidi Fleiss brings to PR, said that Paisley has "touched a nerve with the music industry".

◆ So with this kind of buzz from the mainstream press one would have expected easy wins for Womack and Paisley last week. But in what I view as a crushing blow to the supposed paradigm shift in country music, Faith and Tim were the winners in the Male and Female Vocalist of the Year categories. I won't even bother to comment on the vocal talents of these two, as nobody even seems to care. But what about the return to traditionalism that folks have been blathering about for the last six months, huh? What about the message you people seemed to be sending by voting *Murder on Music Row* the Vocal Event of the Year? Attention CMA voters, the boss men on the Row are indeed guilty of killing country music, but they used Faith and Tim as the murder weapons. And I don't care if McGraw's childish excuse for a publicist finds a way to ban me

from the Super Bowl, the World Series and Brown's Diner for saying so.

◆ As you can probably tell, I'm not real happy with the way things turned out on CMA night. Here are a few more observations:

◆ **Lance Bass** of N'Sync: Gee, wasn't Dr. Dre available? Actually, having Bass on the show is just one episode in a long line of desperate attempts on the part of the show's organizers to somehow bring pop fans on board. I suppose they thought that having Sting and Michael Bolton on the show, as they did in recent years, would magically help to increase country's share of the market. Naturally, they were wrong. And the funniest thing about having Bass on the show is that tons of vapid little pre-teens probably watched with the sound off until he appeared, and then changed channels.

◆ **Dixie Chicks**: The lead singer Dixie wore an outfit that looked like a combination of Kathy Freeman's hooded Olympic running outfit and a bad chandelier. The black outfit worn by the fiddle Dixie during their performance of *Sin Wagon* looked like it was rejected from either Styx's *Mr. Robot* period or the movie *Tron*. The banjo Dixie's performance outfit should be hung on a board in a cornfield to scare away crows. And can we all just get over this pseudo-controversy about the phrase "mattress dancin'"? I mean, haven't any of you people ever gotten laid before? Using a cutesy euphemism for screwing and dressing in Halloween costumes on an awards show may seem daring. But both gestures are ultimately little more than immature insults to country music.

◆ **Murder on Music Row**: This is the second awards show this year where this Larry Cordle/Larry Shell composition has received a standing ovation. Now, I really like both of those guys a lot and am glad their work got such a response. But are you people sheep, or what? In case you still haven't gotten it, they're talking about YOU.

◆ **Keith Urban**: It was with mixed feelings that I watched this enormously talented Aussie on the telecast. I was certainly happy for his solo success, though I couldn't help but remember predicting to him and his band mates in The Ranch a few years back that they would be up for the Horizon Award one day. I did notice one puzzling thing, though. I've seen Urban perform easily about 35 or 40 times in the last 5 years. At every single show, his guitar of choice was a tobacco sunburst Fender Telecaster, which he promptly played the hell out of nightly. That guitar is like an extension of his body. Yet on the CMA's, Urban was sporting a black Rickenbacker which, curiously enough, matched his outfit. Methinks I smell the foul stench of an image consultant.

◆ **SHEDAISSY**: Okay, this trio's appearance may go down as one of the worst ever in CMA history. They were out of breath and off key, and they looked more like Solid Gold Dancers than country artists. But since their label is owned by Disney (aka Mouschwitz), I figure they may have a good future as theme park performers. I can even imagine a SHEDAISSY ride that is sort of like a tilt-a-whirl with flower-shaped cars.

◆ **I Hope You Dance**: The whole set with the Maypole and the pretty little daughter dancing around was nice enough, I guess. But I read in *USA Today* that Womack's label will begin pushing this critically-acclaimed song to pop radio soon. Here's a theory worth pondering. The few things that pop fans might even want to consider listening to on country radio these days are already on pop radio, which eliminates the need to change stations and hear a few other country artists.

We didn't get our biggest share ever in country music back in 1993 by getting stuff played on pop radio. We just made country radio interesting enough that folks turned to us as an alternative to pop stations. But what do I know? I'm just a loud-mouthed critic.

◆ **Kenny Rogers**: It was great to see Kenny get his some current recognition after such a long and successful career. He did hurt our industry to a certain extent by hanging out in Vegas so much during the 1980's, but he has sold a lot of records at times when nobody in town was selling anything, and *Buy Me a Rose* was a good song. Of course, he could have given a formal apology for doing the movie *Six Pack*, but I guess his publicist talked him out of that one.

◆ **Terri Clark**: Has anybody else noticed that she's the same height as Brenda Lee without the cowboy hat? Seriously, I have to give her credit. I've never liked her work before, but I think her new single is terrific. If you haven't heard it, I'm confident that it's on the jukebox at The Kit Cat Bar. Drop in and give it a listen.

◆ **Kim Richey and Mary Chapin Carpenter**: It's a big event when these two wonderfully talented ladies drop in to sing with Trisha Yearwood at the CMA Awards. But apparently it's not a big enough event to get the limp-wads at country radio to play their records.

◆ **Tim McGraw's *Things Change***: The message of this song, as far as I could tell, is that it is okay to sell out as long as the times have changed.

◆ **Billy Gilman**: This is a kid who isn't old enough to get a work permit and spend a few afternoons a week at the local Dairy Dip. A business that employed him would be breaking the law, and we would view them as horrible child abusers who should be shut down immediately. Hell, Kathie Lee Gifford got a world of grief because her crappy clothes were made by twelve-year-olds, and she didn't even know about it until the press told her. But nobody has the slightest sense of outrage that Billy Gilman's parents can pull him out of school and take him on the road so that they can get rich. And if you think I'm wrong about this scenario, ask LeAnn Rimes' attorney.

◆ **Charlie Daniels**: Did any of you see the film *Dill Scallion*, where the fictitious country singer was promised a belt buckle "as big as a cow turd". I think they gave it to Daniels instead.

◆ **Jo Dee Messina**: I am now convinced that this woman has made a deal with the devil in order to get where she has inexplicably gotten. If Celine Dion's older brother were a linebacker by day and a redheaded drag queen at night, he just might be able to mimic a dancing Jo Dee Messina.

◆ **Lonestar**: These guys would have been laughed out of Nashville and LA fifteen years ago. Now they're big country stars. Go figure.

◆ **Charley Pride**: His line about his "pigmentation situation" was the funniest of the evening.

◆ **Reba**: She cut the sleeves off of an Elvis from Hawaii outfit, hired a few Déjà Vu dancers and, apparently, N'Sync's choreographer. The end result was about as country as a Red Sox versus Toronto Blue Jays game at Fenway Park, with the Bruins playing the Maple Leafs across town later that night for good measure. Go back to Vegas, woman.

◆ After the show was over, I hopped in the car with a friend and drove around listening to Bruce Robison, Jack Ingram and Charlie Robison. I needed that kind of fix really bad. It reminded me that there are a few other folks out there like me who hate pop-country music as much as Eminem hates gay people and his mother.

◆ This year's CMA Awards were no different than any other year in recent memory. And right now I can't imagine that it will change for at least a few more years.

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#17 • DECEMBER, 2000

*XX = that DJ's Album of the Month

#1 MARTÍ BROM: FEUDIN' & FIGHTIN' WITH THE CORNELL HURD BAND

(Goofin') *JE/*JHo/*VL

- 2 The Domino Kings: Life & 20 (Slewfoot) *BC/*BL/*JSp/*TS
- 3 Cornell Hurd Band: A Stagecoach Named Desire (Behemoth) *KD/
*SH/*WH/*ChL/*JSn
- 4 Elizabeth Cook: Elizabeth Cook (Bro n Sis) *AB/*EB/*KC/*SG/*PP
- 5 Merle Haggard: If I Could Only Fly (Anti) *BW
- 6 VA: O Brother Where Art Thou? (Mercury) *RJ/*SJ/*BR
- 7 Ted Roddy & The Tearjoint Troubadors: Tear Time (Music Room) *EW

Doug Sahm: The Return Of Wayne Douglas

(Tornado/Evangeline) *DF/*TG

Dwight Yoakam: Tomorrow's Sounds Today (Reprise) *MP

- 8 Johnny Cash: Solitary Man (American) *RH
- 9 Houston Marchman: Tryin' For Home (Blind Nello) *MM/*KR/*WR
- 11 Deke Dickerson: Rhythm, Rhyme And Truth (Hightone) *GW
- 12 VA: Badlands: A Tribute to Bruce Springsteen's Nebraska
(Sub Pop) *LW

- 13 Laura Cantrell: Not The Tremblin' Kind (Diesel Only) *RS
- 14 Sonny Landreth: Levee Town (Sugar Hill)

Lattie Moore: I'm Not Broke But I'm Badly Bent (Westside)

- 15 VA: Freight Train Boogie (Jackalope)
- 16 Kasey Chambers: The Captain (Asylum/WB) *DO
- 17 John Prine: Souvenirs (Oh Boy)

VA: Shuffle Town: Western Swing On King 1946-50 (West Side)

Waco Brothers: Electric Waco Chair (Bloodshot)

Dallas Wayne: Big Thinkin' (Hightone)

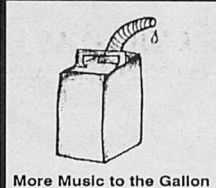
Hank Williams: Alone With His Guitar (Mercury)

- 18 Gary P Nunn: It's A Texas Thing (Campfire) *BW
- Dale Watson Christmas Time In Texas (Continental) *MT
- 19 Emmylou Harris: Red Dirt Girl (Nonesuch)
- John Hiatt: Crossing Muddy Waters (Vanguard)

MA: Mathias Andrieu, NSEO, Paris, France
AB: Allen Baekeland, CJSW, Calgary, Canada
DB: David Besonen, KNON, Dallas, TX
EB: Erika Brady, WKYU, Bowling Green, KY
JB: Jim Beal Jr, KSYM, San Antonio, TX
RB: Rob Banes, KEOS, College Station/Bryan, TX
SB: Stu D Baker, KRXS, Globe/Phoenix, AZ
BC: Bill Conner, KNBT, New Braunfels, TX
RC: Rick Cornell, WXDU, Durham, NCA
KC: Kay Clements, KWMR, Point Reyes, CA
KD: Ken Date, 2RRR, New South Wales, Australia
PD: Paul Daly, KSYM, San Antonio, TX
RD: Renee Dechert, trail.nwc.cc.wy.us, Powell, WY
JE: Julie Espy, KUCI, Irvine, CA
BF: Bill Frater, KRCB, Santa Rosa, CA
DF: Dan Ferguson, WRIU, Kingston, RI
KF: Kirsty Fitzsimons, Anna Livia, Dublin, Ireland
TF: Tom Funk, KGLP, Gallup, NM
LG: Lynne Greenamyre, KKFI, Kansas City, MO
SG: Steve Gardner, WXDU, Durham, NC
TG: Thomas Greener, KVMR, Nevada City, CA
CH: Clint Holley, WERE, Cleveland, OH
JoH: John Hauser, KOOP, Austin, TX
JaH: Jamie Hoover, KSUT, Ignacio, CO
RH: Rolf Hierach, Radio RheinWelle, Germany
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TH: Tristessa Howard, WTTU, Cookeville, TN
WH: Wade Hockett, KBOO, Portland, OR
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GJ: Greg Johnson, KRXX, Oklahoma City, OK
RJ: Rik James, KGLT, Bozeman, MT
SJ: Suzanne Jameson, KXCI, Tucson, AZ
TJ: Tom Jackson, WLWU, Chicago, IL
AL: Aleksandar Lazarevic, M+, Mladenovac,
Yugoslavia
BL: Billy Lee, NEAR/Caroline, Ireland
ChL: Chip Lamey, WLFR, Pomona, NJ
CrL: Craig Lammers, WBGU, Bowling Green, OH
VL: Vida Lee, KKUP, Cupertino, CA
MM: Mark Mundy, KNON, Dallas, TX
RM: Rod Moag, KOOP, Austin, TX
DN: Doug Neal, WDBM, East Lansing, MI
DO: Dan Orange, KZSC, Santa Cruz, CA
JP: Jana Pendragon, KXLU, Los Angeles, CA
MP: Michel Penard, ISA, Pont de Beauvoisin, France
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JR: John Roths, KEOS, College Station/Bryan, TX
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MR: Mike Regenstreif, CKUT, Montreal, Canada
WR: Wesley Robertson, KVMR, Nevada City, CA

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Joel Phelps & The Downer Trio: Inland Empires (Moneyshot) *CZ
Southern Culture On The Skids:
Liquored Up And Lacquered Down (TVT) *JZ
- 21 Johnny Bush: Lost Highway Saloon (Lone Star)
The Hangdogs: Beware Of Dog (Shanchie)
The Rockhouse Ramblers: Bar Time (Hayden's Ferry)
The Sprague Brothers: Forever And A Day (Hightone)
VA: A Shot In The Dark; Tennessee Jive (Bear Family)
Don Walser: I'll Hold You In My Heart (Valley Entertainment)
- 22 Cyndi Boste: Home Truths (self) *TF
Drive By Truckers: Alabama Ass Whuppin' (Second Heaven) *ST
David Francey: Borderline (Laker) *MR
Rosco Gordon: Memphis Tennessee (Stony Plain) *DTh
Rod Moag: Ah-Haa! Goes Grass; A Bluegrass Tribute To Bob Wills
(Textracs) *JH
- Joe Paul Nichols: Route 3 Gloryland (Custom) *GS
Lance Palmer: Restoration (self) *RP
Reckless Kelly: The Day (Reckless) *PD
Herb Remington & Charlie Shaffer: Precious Memories
(Glad Music) *ER
- Amy Rigby: The Sugar Tree (Koch) *DY
Sons Of The Never Wrong: One If By Hand (Gadfly) *TJ
Sons Of The San Joaquin: Sing One For The Cowboy
(Shanachie) *RW
- Ralph Stanley: Man Of Constant Sorrow (Rebel) *MA
VA: Cliff's Picks (Antone's) *DJ
VA: 20 Odd Hollers;
Fredheads Salute The Songs Of Fred Eaglesmith *RD
Whiskeytown: Pneumonia *AL
- 23 Marlee McLeod: There We Are (Hayden's Ferry)
Tom Armstrong Sings Heart Songs (Carswell)
VA: 40th Anniversary Collection (Arhoolie)
VA: Big Mon (Skaggs Family)

BR: Bruce Ross, KZSU, Stanford, CA
GS: Gerd Stassen, Radio Ems-Vechte-Welle,
Germany
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#1 DOUG SAHM: THE RETURN OF WAYNE DOUGLAS

*TG/*GS/*JSn/*BW/*EW

- 2 Johnny Cash: Solitary Man *BF/*RH/*BL/*JSp
- 3 Slaid Cleaves: Broke Down *DJ/*MM
- 4 Dave Alvin: Public Domain *JE/*JHo/*BR
- Neko Case & Her Boyfriends: Furnace Room Lullaby *AB/*DY/*CZ
- 5 Dwight Yoakam: Tomorrow's Sounds Today *MP/*JZ
- 6 Ted Roddy & The Tearjoint Troubadors: Tear Time *DF/ChL/*MT
- 7 Merle Haggard: If I Could Only Fly *WH
- 8 Deke Dickerson & The Ecco-Fonics: Rhyme, Rhythm & Truth *VL/*RS
- 9 Tom Armstrong Sings Heart Songs *KF/*TF
- 10 Steve Earle: Transcendental Blues *WR
- 11 Marti Brom: Feudin' & Fightin' With The Cornell Hurd Band
- 12 Marah: Kid's In Philly *RC/*ST
- 13 The Gourds: Bolsa de Agua *DT
- Kelly Hogan & The Pine Valley Cosmonauts: Beneath The Country Underdog *TJ
- 14 Elizabeth Cook: Elizabeth Cook
- Justin Trevino: Loud Music & Strong Wine
- 15 Emmylou Harris: Red Dirt Girl *RD
- Dave Stuckey & The Rhythm Gang: Get Out Of This *SH
- Dallas Wayne: Big Pinkin' *KD
- 16 VA: O Brother, Where Art Thou? *SJ
- 17 Kasey Chambers: The Captain
- 18 Pat Haney: Wrong Rite Of Passage *EB
- Terri Hendrix: Places In Between *PP
- 19 Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys: Night Tide
- Cornell Hurd Band: A Stagecoach Named Desire
- Alison Moorer: The Hardest Part
- Susanna Van Tassel: The Heart I Wear
- 20 VA: Big D Jamboree Live *JH
- 21 Ryan Adams: Heartbreaker
- Jimmie Dale Gilmore: One Endless Night
- The Hangdogs: Beware Of Dog
- John Hiatt: Crossing Muddy Waters
- Houston Marchman & The Contraband: Tryin' For Home
- Gurf Morlix: Toad Of Titicaca
- Cary Swinney: Martha
- 22 16 Horsepower: Secret South *AL
- John Hartford: Live From Mountain Stage *SG
- Joel Rafael Band: Hopper *LW
- Ruthie & The Wranglers: Live At Chick Hall's Surf Club *TS
- Johnny Staats Project: Wires & Wood *KR
- Uncle Lightnin': Sunday Breakfast *RP
- VA: The Best Of Broadside 1962-1988 *MR
- Carl Vaughan: Six Feet Deep In The Heart Of Texas *ER
- Rhonda Vincent: Back Home Again *MA
- Waco Brothers: Electric Waco Chair *PD
- 23 Audrey: The Fallen
- Sam Bush: Ice Caps
- Ray Condo & His Ricochets: High & Wide
- James Intveld: Somewhere Down The Road
- The Lucky Stars: Hollywood & Western
- The Spurs: Go Boy Go
- VA: Shuffle Town; Western Swing On King 1946-50

FEMALE VOCALIST

- #1 MARTI BROM
- 2 Kelly Hogan
- 3 Susanna Van Tassel
- 4 Elizabeth Cook
- 5 Emmylou Harris
- 6 Neko Case
- 7 Terri Hendrix
- Laura Cantrell

SONGWRITER

- #1 CARY SWINNEY
- 2 Slaid Cleaves
- 3 Terri Hendrix
- 4 John Hiatt
- 5 Dwight Yoakam

MALE VOCALIST

- #1 JUSTIN TREVINO
- 2 Merle Haggard
- 3 Ted Roddy
- 4 Dave Alvin
- Doug Sahn
- Dwight Yoakam
- 5 Slaid Cleaves
- 6 Tom Armstrong
- 7 Jimmie Dale Gilmore

SINNER

#1

MISS TAMMY FAYE STARLITE

TIM CARROLL • NOT FOR SALE

(self released ****)

Putting the record straight, Carrol is rather more than Elizabeth Cook's boyfriend. The onetime Blue Chieftains singer (and writer of their seminal Diesel Only singles *Punk Rockin' Honky Tonk Girl* and *I Think Hank Woulda Done It This Way*), Carroll was signed to Sire and cut an album, **Rock & Roll Band**, which was never released; this, with its ironic title and handwritten liner notes, is his bootleg edition of his own record ("The worst that can happen is they send me a 'cease and desist' letter"). Rather amazingly, considering he was working for a label notorious for micro-management, producer Andy Paley added few flourishes to the guitar, drums and bass trio's basic live sound. With old and new material, including songs featured in the movies **Election** and **Drop Dead Gorgeous**, this is honest and exceptional roots rock with, courtesy of Sire's budget, better than usual production values. Just don't tell Seymour. **JC**

SHORTY LONG • CHICKENBOXER

(Grumpedump ***)

Keeping track of the Asylum Street Spankers' personnel changes requires score cards and diagrams, but this album answers two questions—what became of Pops Bayless and Mysterious John? Bayless always gave the impression of being the Spankers' memory bank, not that he's old enough to remember the material from first time round, but he just seemed the most comfortable and natural with it. The Spankers' original emphasis on eccentric period novelty songs was modified by Christina Marrs' flair for vintage blues, Guy Forsyth's showboating and Whammo's punk poetry, but Bayless, with fellow soprano and baritone ukelele players Jessica Leigh and Unkel Shecky Shaver, East Side Flash dobros, Crapstack Jones doghouse bass and, of course, John Dodson on kazoo, has gone back to the initial blueprint, though with more original material, very much in the same spirit. The 15 tracks include John Prine & Fred Koller's *Let's Talk Dirty In Hawaiian* and Sonny Cunha's *Hula Girl*, 30s jazz and blues, Clarence Williams & Sidney Bechet's *Vipermaid*, Erika Eigen's ragtime parody *I Want To Marry A Lighthouse Keeper* (featured in Kubrick's **A Clockwork Orange**), along with six originals by Bayless. If you liked Robert Crumb's Cheap Suit Serenaders, odds are you'll go for Shorty Long, but I guess it comes down to how you feel about ukeleles. **JC**

KAREN ABRAHAMS FOR THE LOVE OF THE SONG

(BabyHead ****)

Entertaining is rather the lost dimension of original Austin music, but, working a restaurant circuit that pays better than clubs but is a whole lot tougher, Abrahams has learned that having a big, soulful voice and crackerjack musicians like Marvin Dykhuis, Ron Erwin and Glenn Kawamoto, isn't enough. You have to vary pace, style and tempo, throw curveballs, find ways of getting and holding people's attention without blasting the food off their plates. The experience serves her well on an album that's a major advance on her somewhat patchy 1997 **Still Feeling Blue**. She and Dykhuis, who produced have developed a formidable vocal/guitar partnership, and with the help of Erwin, Kawamoto, Chip Dolan, Vanessa Gordon, Richard Bowden, Dickie Erwin, Champ Hood and Ruthie Foster, the 12 tracks, mostly originals, with covers of *If I Had Any Pride Left At All*, Chrissie Hynde's *Back On The Chain Gang* (reggae with accordion!) and *Dumbest Move I Ever Made*, subtly draw you in, eliciting admiration without demanding it. Abrahams reminds me of one time Austin chanteuse Lillian Standfield in that her fans tend to be fellow musicians, but given some airplay, this album could alter that. **JC**

GREETINGS FROM AREA CODE 207

(Cornmeal ****)

Billed as 'Alt-Country & Roots Rock From Portland, Maine,' this compilation, ranging from rockabilly to bluegrass, suggests that Austin's music scene isn't really such great shakes if a city with one tenth the population can do so well. There are some Texas connections; the album kicks off with Slaid Cleaves, who moved to Austin from Portland, includes a track by High Noon guitarist/songwriter Sean Mencher, who moved to Portland from Austin, while another track is a cover of Groovy Joe Poovey's *He's In A Hurry (To Get Home To My Wife)*. The strongest impression I came away with was that the women in Maine sure sing pretty. The standout track, *Take The Wheel*, features The Piners' glorious Boo Cowie, but Sara Cox, Carol Noonan and Jenny Whitter all do lovely work (Cindy Bullens took herself out of contention by using synth bass and a drum program). Apart from Cleaves' *Last Of The V-8s*, the songs are mostly unreleased, with a few self-released or put out on small local labels, so you're not likely to be getting any duplicate tracks. Check this piney action. **JC**

ROD MOAG • AH-HAA! GOES GRASS A BLUEGRASS TRIBUTE TO BOB WILLS

(Texttracs *****)

Caught between a rock and a hard place here. On the one hand, I'm deeply suspicious of tribute albums in general, and Bob Wills tributes in particular. Even if they're not, as the best known rather clearly seem, opportunistic, the artistically bankrupt riding the coattails of a far greater talent, there doesn't seem a whole lot of point to them when actual Bob Wills albums are available. On the other hand, I know Rod Moag to be pure of heart, and certainly not trying to revive a flagging career. Also, the Singin' & Pickin' Professor is coming at his project from a different angle, and enlisted musicians who actually played with Wills. Like Moag himself, who plays guitar, fiddle, mandolin and dobro, most of the players straddle Western Swing, country and bluegrass, so this album's certain to fail the Bluegrass Nazi purity test, thank God. The featured Wills veterans are fiddlers Johnny Gimble and Buddy Spicher and drummer Johnny Cuiello, along with Bob's niece, singer Dayna Wills, and the all-star cast includes Byron Berline, Mike Auldrige, Cindy Cashdollar, Alan Munde, Gurf Morlix (who coproduced with Moag), Billy Contreras, Paul Glasse, Jake Jenkins, Don Keeling, Don McCalister Jr, Mark Rubin and Tom Swartzell, so a whole mess of dobros, mandolins and banjos alongside the fiddles and upright basses. The 13 tracks include some standards (*San Antonio Rose*, *Faded Love*, *Roly Poly*, etc), but Moag set out to pick numbers that lent themselves to bluegrass, or at least quasi-bluegrass, treatment, along the way coming across the mid-50s *So Long, I'll See You Again* which, uniquely for Wills, featured a banjo solo. The combination of marvellous playing with Moag's engaging personality and drive puts this up with Haggard and The Pine Valley Cosmonauts near the top of the 100 Best Bob Wills Tribute Albums. **JC**

DION • KING OF THE NEW YORK STREETS

(The Right Stuff/Capitol, 3 CD box set)

Even though he belongs in the same rock & roll pantheon, one of the handful of artists whose first name is identification enough, the discontinuity between young Dion and not so young Dion is even sharper than that between pre-Army and post-Army Elvis, and I'm not altogether sure that he's really well served by a retrospective such as this. The problem is that it rather dramatically underscores the crucial role in the Dion legend of Angelo D'Aleo, Fred Milano and Carlo Mastrangelo. Even though Columbia, grooming him for a Las Vegas solo career, parted him from The Belmonts, Dion's 'solo' hits, like *Runaround Sue* and *The Wanderer*, retained their classic doo-wop sound, with The Del-Satins (uncredited then and now) providing vocal backup. What Dion chose to do with his life and his music is, of course, entirely his affair, but the unavoidable fact is that this set is one third sublime and two thirds rather ordinary (and that's giving him plenty of the best of it). Somewhere in the ten years between the immortal *I Wonder Why* and *Abraham, Martin And John*, a song I loathe even more now than I did in 1968, which offhand I wouldn't have thought possible, Dion's brains turned to mush. Maybe it was the smack, maybe it was being born again, but the coolest teenager on the face of the planet somehow morphed into a Hallmark folkie. Which makes this a tough one to rate. The first volume, *The Wanderer*, gets five flowers, no two ways about it; listen to *I Wonder Why* and you realize just how utterly worthless, even with studio technology undreamed of in 1958, the current crop of boy bands really are. Dion & The Belmonts were so damned brilliant, they could even make a sensational *reunion* album. The other two volumes, *Abraham, Martin & John* and *Brooklyn Dodger*, well, the nicest thing I can think of to say about them is that they're a bit iffy. **JC**

GRAM PARSONS • ANOTHER SIDE OF LIFE

(Sundazed ***)

While it wasn't my pick, I could most definitely live with the FAR djs election of *GP/Grievous Angel* as the #1 Album of the Millennium. However, if I'd heard these 'lost recordings' back when they were made in 1965-1966, I would never have guessed that this wannabe Greenwich Village folkie would develop into one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, and, frankly, I'd defy you to say any different. The 18 tracks, mostly covers (Buffy Saint-Marie, Fred Neil, Tim Hardin, Dick Weissman, Tom Paxton, Rev Gary Davis, etc), with five originals including *Brass Buttons*, make up an important, but quite extraordinarily uninteresting, historical document. **JC**

BUCK OWENS & HIS BUCKAROOS CARNEGIE HALL CONCERT DON RICH & THE BUCKAROOS COUNTRY PICKIN'

(Sundazed *****/*****)

Pretty much at the top of his game in 1966, Owens originally balked at the Carnegie Hall's invitation, doubting whether there was sufficient demand in New York. Not only was the event a resounding success, the recording, of which he remarked "God dang! Nobody forgot anything, nobody ever made a slip, nobody played through (someone else's instrumental) break, (there were) lots of key changes, modulations, nobody made one error I could find," inspired a series (Japan, London, the White House, Vegas, Reno) of live albums. The complete, unedited concert, in Ken Nelson's original stereo mix, showcases Owens, Don Rich, Doyle Holly, Tom Brumley and Willie Cantu not just as great musicians, individually and collectively, but as consummate entertainers, varying their pace with full length versions of some hits, three medleys that whipped through 13 standards, spoofs of Ernest Tubb, Johnny Cash and The Beatles and plenty of stage business and comedy routines.

◆ Owens' career as a singer and songwriter tends to overshadow his early reputation as a guitarist, playing for stars like Faron Young, Tommy Sands and Wanda Jackson. Then again, having Don Rich in his band tended to distract attention from his own abilities. With his solo career going nowhere, Owens was hosting a radio show in Tacoma, WA, where he met local fiddler Donald Eugene Ulrich, but when *Under Your Spell Again* broke in 1959, Owens moved back to Bakersfield, taking Rich with him, and until his death in a 1974 motorcycle accident, Rich was an integral and massively influential component of Owens' sound. He took to the Telecaster immediately, soon surpassing his boss, and proved to be a master of high third harmonies, while losing his taste, though not ability, for fiddle. This anthology brings together 24 mid to late 60s numbers showcasing Rich's guitar, fiddle and vocal solos, many of them Rich or Rich-Owens originals. If there was a Sideman Hall of Fame, Rich would have to be in the initial draft, and if there was a Country Guitar Player Hall of Fame, an awful lot of people would insist on his being the first one in the door. **JC**

BILLY HANCOCK & THE TENNESSEE ROCKETS SHAKIN' THAT ROCKABILLY FEVER THIS IS BOB E ROCK

(Ripsaw/Bluelight *****/No Club *****)

Both these albums come out Washington's amazing late 70s/early 80s rockabilly boom, spearheaded by Tex Rubinowitz, Danny Gatton and Robert Gordon. Billy Hancock was the singer and bassplayer in Gatton's seminal Danny & The Fat Boys before starting his own band, and while the liner notes are extremely confusing, in fact they make absolutely no sense whatsoever, his Finnish CD appears to fuse two 1981 LPs. At any rate, there are 17 tracks of absolutely first rate rockabilly. Like the original rockabillys, Hancock adapted songs from other genres, using songs by Dr Ross, Muddy Waters, The Delmore Brothers, Hank Snow, Big Boy Arthur Crudup, Conway Twitty, Nappy Brown, Leiber & Stoller, Hank Williams and Johnny Kidd & The Pirates, rather than sticking to established material, which sets him apart from the run of selfconscious revivalists, and he could rip it up and handle a ballad with equal panache.

◆ Most people cram a CD and one-sheet into the smallest possible padded bag, but No Club's package was a fair size because it also included a copy of Tex Rubinowitz's eponymous 1985 LP, a Rubinowitz 45 and a Billy Hancock 45. I don't mind telling you that by the time I got to the main item on the agenda, I was in a *very* receptive frame of mind. From the fact that, apart from two tracks released on 45 in 1986, Rock's 14 cuts are being issued for the first time, I deduce that he peaked when the rockabilly boom was winding down, because he's a fine singer, rather smoother than most rockabillys, but Eddie Angel and Evan Johns make sure there's no mistaking this for anything but primal rockabilly. Produced by Tex Rubinowitz, for whom Rock played bass and provided the opening act, this is a real find. While I have Ripsaw and No Club's attention—hey, guys, how about a Martha Hull CD? **JC**

THE COMPLETE RITCHIE VALENS

(Whirlwind, DVD)

Confession: I don't have a DVD player—I had to go over to a friend's to check this out. Do I now feel I need a DVD player? Well, the 95 minute documentary, *Viva Ritchie!*, is certainly interesting, but would I watch it, or browse the interactive portion, as often as I played the 28 tracks on the audio portion that chronicle Valens' meteoric eight month career? Not hardly, and I already have all those, and much more, on Del-Fi's definitive *Come On, Let's Go!* box set. Problem is, I'm in this for the music, and what DVDs have to offer seems fairly extraneous, but, hell, I'm still ambivalent about CDs. You may have seen that Valens finally got inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, but that doesn't let them off the hook with me. It took them too long. **JC**

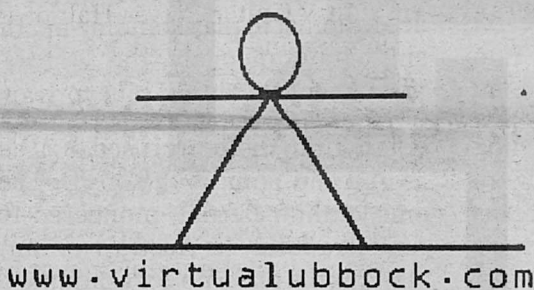
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SOUTH AUSTIN

JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Wayne Watch is now over, thank God, but as a postscript, should you happen to be in San Antonio, you can pay homage at a **Doug Sahn** altar. Set up for a show marking the first anniversary of his death, it's now a fixture at **Casbeers**, my favorite SA hangout. Having made a name for itself with fab enchiladas and burgers, it's becoming a real force in San Antonio music; the calendar, 100% local not so long ago, now includes national touring acts like Jason Ringenberg, The Mollys, Rosie Flores and Webb Wilder (a major coup was landing The Blazers, who've promised to come back), and visiting Texans such as Cary Swinney, Jon Dee Graham, The Lucky Pierres, Wayne Hancock, Sisters Morales and Adam Carroll. Eat and/or drink and/or listen, you can't really go wrong in this 70 year old bar. I love this place.

◆ Thinking of San Antonio venues, Robert of the admirable **Carlsbad Tavern** told me this story a couple three months ago, but it slipped my mind. Hearing that **Jeff Beck** was available, he called Beck's agent, found out the going price, did sums in his head and agreed to it. Now let's make sure we're clear on this: money wasn't an issue, Robert was willing to pay what they were asking. Anyway, while they were working out the details, the agent asked Robert about Carlsbad's capacity, so he told him, around 150. Deal breaker; Beck won't play any room that can't hold at least 600 people. Of course, he has no control over how many actually show up, so what this means is that Beck will play for 150 people in a club that holds 600, but he won't play to a full house of 150. How messed up is that?

◆ Been hearing dire stories about the state of musical affairs back in the Old Country for some time, and a British subscriber confirms that things didn't pick up in 2000: "Not been a great year for memorable UK gigs. What was perhaps memorable was leaving the **Steve Earle** gig after he'd been on for around 30 minutes delivering dull dull dull music. The support band—I've expunged the name—were truly execrable, playing 80s power pop, and it was even more depressing to discover that they're on Earle's label."

◆ A local **3CM** reader sent in this gem—prepare to have your hide chapped. "I talked to a friend who went to College Station to see **Joe Ely** open for The Dixie Chicks. He overheard a young woman yell 'Hey, that's a Pat Green song' when Joe performed *Me And Billy The Kid*. When my friend corrected her by letting her know that Ely wrote the song, she came back with, 'Well, Pat does it a lot better.'"

◆ In November, **3CM** was in *The Times* of London, in December there an indirect mention in *The New York Times*. An *NYT* Sunday magazine feature on Chicago club **The Hideout** mentioned "the tavern's front door, which sports a 'What Would Ernest Tubb Have Done?' bumper sticker."

◆ A while ago, *Country Music* asked me to participate in their **2000 Critics Poll**. I hadn't actually seen a copy of it for quite a while, in fact I was under the impression it had been one of the casualties of the Nashville Slump, but I figured it was a chance to maybe slip some of Our Guys into the mix, so I sent in my ballot. Having forgotten all about it, I got an email from a FAR dj expressing his shock and horror at seeing my name in the magazine and when my comp copy showed up, with Faith Hill on the cover, I understood what he meant (mind you, I could ask what he was doing reading it). On the plus

side, Hill didn't get a single vote in the poll (Shania Twain got just one out of the 800 cast in the nine categories). On the minus side, pretty much all my nominees sank without trace.

◆ I could also have asked "and how come you were reading it?" about a tip that led me to pick up a recent issue of the semiliterate *Country Line*, 'Texas' only Country Music, Cowboy, Outdoor and Lifestyle Magazine.' This is an extract from a cover story interview with Cory Morrow, a sidekick of Pat Green, who sat in on the deal, though, in all fairness, I should say that, apart from their putting Walt Wilkins in the same company as Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark, it shouldn't be held against them. OK, here goes; "Morrow: 'The really good songwriters that Pat and I look up to see the world in a different light. They see it for what it is. Townes VanZant, Clark, Walt Wilkins.' Green: 'Dillan.'" The 'VanZant,' repeated later in the article, is bad enough, but *Dillan*? So who screwed up, the writer or the editor? Well, problem here is that they're the same person, **TJ Greaney**, whose motto is 'We make the *Chronicle* look good.'

◆ A step down from semi-literacy, over the holidays I picked up some more gems from the wonderfully clueless **Jay Ross Martin**, 'Texas Music' writer for the *Conroe Courier*. 'Ernest Tubbs' and 'Emilou Harris' are par for the course, but legends were his strong suit in December; the "legendary Austin nightspot" where Joe Ely recorded '**Live At Antoine's**,' and "legendary Texas songwriter Tom Russell." I doubt even the most ardent Russell fan would describe him quite like that. I can only assume Martin was grasping at the straw of Russell owning a place outside El Paso, but I'm still trying to figure out the rationale behind the #3 in his list of 12 'Texas Music' stocking stuffer suggestions—John Prine's **Souvenirs**. Prine, Texas, Prine, Texas, nope, it's just not coming to me.

◆ I'm privileged to be on the mailing list for rock critic **Dave Marsh**'s periodic email rants, and particularly liked this recent one about the experiences of his friend "Tony Goldmark, a high school student in San Francisco who makes hilarious novelty records. At 13, Tony sat down and figured out a record that every parent had to hate utterly: the Barney theme set to *Stairway To Heaven*. (I didn't hate this because it was hilarious and because it meant Tony was not asking me questions about Solomon Burke records I couldn't answer. Come to think of it, that was when he was nine). Anyway, Tony now has a lot of files posted on MP3.com and last summer, received from management a message reading as follows: "Dear MP3.com artist, This song has been placed on hold and has not been released to the public for the following reason. Inappropriate Content: Song: *Kill The Backstreet Boys*. Your song has either a song title or lyrics that are offensive or otherwise inappropriate. Regards, MP3.com."

In the nightmare world of thought policing from which such messages emanate, MP3.com was just being socially responsible. Some deranged teenager might listen to Tony's song and actually try to kill the Backstreet Boys. In the actual teenage world in which Tony Goldmark lives, of course, boys harbor such fantasies every time their sister or their girlfriend turns on the radio and starts to moon at such unmacho music. Murdering them would be the least of their fantasies, I should think; torturing them and tearing out their tongues and vocal cords would be more likely."

◆ This reminds me of my favorite game in **High Fidelity**, which, by the way, I strongly recommend, though Nick Hornsby's novel is even better. The game is: If you could kill *one* of The Backstreet Boys, which one would it be?

◆ Guess **Sandra Bullock** and **Bob Schneider** are the real thing. According to Michael Corcoran's *Sandywatch* column, they were going to spend New Year's Eve at a Guns N' Roses concert. I've never loved a woman enough to go to a Guns N' Roses concert with her, but then I've loved a woman who'd dream of asking such a thing.

◆ New Year's Resolution: try to develop a better attitude towards the **Americana Music Association**, even though the organization has given me no reason to think well of it.

◆ FAR's man at WDVR, Sergeantsville, NJ, Len Brown, moved to Austin some months ago, but the station is back on the roster in the person of **Joe Snyder**, who worked with Len on *Radio Ranch* and took it over when he left, maintaining the format.

† VALERIO LONGORIA

Born in Kenedy, TX, on Feb 14th 1924, the great Conjunto accordionist died on Friday, December 15th. Given an accordion by his migrant worker father when he was seven, Valerio Longoria honed his skills in the Army and in 1946 returned to San Antonio and, accompanied by the legendary Juan Viesca on upright bass, began to change the face of Conjunto. He was the first accordionist to play standing up, the first to play and sing simultaneously, the first to double tune his instrument, enabling him to transpose songs into different keys. He introduced drums and Colombian boleros into the genre, used dual accordions as early as 1951 and, along with Tony De La Rosa, Ruben Vela and Paulino Bernal, pioneered the now standard ranchera form. As Austin's Johnny Degollado says, "He was the one who got Conjunto the way it is" (only a couple of months ago, Longoria sat in with Johnny D at El Jacalito).

◆ Longoria also redrew Conjunto's map to embrace the Chicano diaspora. Invited to Chicago in 1959 for a three month residency, he stayed for eight years, moved to Miami, back to Chicago, then, via New Mexico, Arizona, Oregon and Idaho, to Los Angeles, where he stayed for another eight years, finally returning to San Antonio after a 22 year absence. While he was gone, his style was appropriated by others, but he quickly reclaimed his rightful place.

◆ His innovations and accomplishments aside, Longoria was one of the genre's most versatile and accomplished accordionists, a composer who contributed standards since 1947, when he cut *El Rosalita*, one of the most recorded of Conjunto songs, and an affecting singer whose range encompassed the sophisticated romanticism of boleros and the stark drama of corridos.

◆ Like many older Conjunto artists, Longoria, whose five decade career took him from Corona and Rio's 78s to Hacienda's CDs, with scores of 45s and many LPs for Discos IDEAL in between, long ago lost track of how many records he'd made. Of what's available, Arhoolie's **Texas Conjunto Pioneer** and Hacienda's **La Piragua** are recommended.

◆ When I interviewed Longoria for a cover feature (**3CM** #5/94, June 1997), he wrote his epitaph far better than I could attempt when he remarked to me about his 16 years of teaching at San Antonio's Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, "My soul and my name will keep on through my students. And that's a beautiful thing, a real treasure to me."

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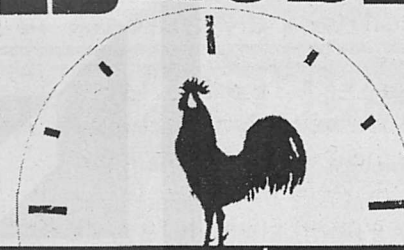
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RING IN THE OLD

Gearing up for the very first issue of this brand new millennium, I look at my checklist of 'definites' and what do I see? One artist who's been dead for over 40 years, two others, and a tribute to a third, who've been gone for over 25; an album originally released in 1966, two others from the 80s and a career retrospective of a performer whose glory days were in the late 50s/early 60s. Near the top of the original list was a reissue of Joe Maphis' 1957 **Fire On The Strings**, but I just realized it's a February release, so you'll get that next month.

◆ Not exactly cutting edge journalism, you'd think, but music seems to me to be unique in that its past is still with us and the present has to compete on equal terms with it. Thanks to the miracle of recording technology, music history doesn't fade away and one obvious fashion in which its persistence manifests itself is that reissued albums get review space and airplay, just as if they were brand new. It is, of course, true that records tend to get reissued at rather longer intervals than books get reprinted, record companies having rather less interest in their back catalogs than publishers, a circumstance which a number of speciality labels contrive to make into quite a nice little earner. And it has to be said that reissued albums are often being made available in a different format from the original, usually in enhanced and expanded versions, which provides some justification for giving them fresh exposure.

◆ Nonetheless, for many writers and DJs, there's no effective distinction between a new release and a reissue, though I'd be willing to venture that, in most cases, the older album makes it to the CD player first. A striking instance of impartial treatment of the past and present can be found in the December *Freeform American Roots* radio chart; **Shuffle Town**, a collection of Western Swing singles originally released by King Records between 1946 and 1950, took the #1 spot because enough FAR reporters figured it was better than any of the scores of new Americana releases they'd been sent. Strike a match on that.

◆ Jason Shields, publisher of *Texas Jamboree*, once remarked to me about music polls, "The trouble is, all the musicians I think are any good are dead." He was, of course, exaggerating, but his essential point remains. In certain genres at least, musicians are going to be compared not just with their contemporaries but with every performer, living or dead, whose music is still available. The cruel injustice is that the genres in which the past and present form a single continuum are precisely those in which artists have to scramble to make a living, whereas those which offer fame and fortune have no awareness of their history.

◆ Looking at that last paragraph, I have to admit I'm overstating. If there ever was a time when critics, DJs, musicians and audiences truly knew and respected the history of whatever music they loved, it sure ain't today. Even specialized jazz and blues writers and DJs, for instance (let's not get into the horrors of country media), seem no longer to realize or care that, when viewed in any context other than hype, Jane Monheit and Johnnie Lang, to take a couple of glaring examples, are no fucking use.

◆ The dumbing down of critical standards is a real problem, but then again, it's not *my* problem. Round these parts, an album doesn't get special respect just for being old, but if it's got *Cry, Cry, Cry* or *Chicken Pickin'* on it, well, just because Ritchie Valens and Don Rich have been dead for decades, doesn't mean they ain't still cooler than shit, and, more to point, cooler than most of the artists working today.

JC

GRIFF LUNEBURG & CACTUS CAFE

David Obermann was hosting a seminar on folk music at the 1989 SXSW, and some poseurs were pissing and moaning about the dearth of serious listening rooms and serious listeners. So I mentioned Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock playing every week to a Threadgill's crowd that was eating and drinking and smoking and talking and carrying on but it didn't seem to bother them any, and afterwards this guy came over to shake my hand. And that's how I met Griff Luneburg, whose face should be familiar to anyone who has any interest in singer-songwriters and who's lived in, or even passed through, Austin anytime since 1983. Mind you, the other face on the cover may even more familiar. Luneburg has been managing and booking Cactus Cafe for 18 years, but Chris Lueck has been pouring the cold ones there for 16. Luneburg boasts, "I don't just have the best bartender in Austin, I have the quietest."

◆ Which is a consideration because, even if Luneburg has little time for self-importance, the Cactus is a serious listening room. In various incarnations, it's been around since 1933, taking its present shape when the UT Student Union reopened in 1979 after major renovations. Initially the music was "low grade," but when Luneburg, a student/bartender, took over, the Austin music scene was going through one of its periodic recessions. The Alamo had just closed and Emmajoe's was soon to go dark, so Luneburg was able to offer a new home base for Nanci Griffith, Butch Hancock, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Lucinda Williams, Townes Van Zandt, Lyle Lovett, Robert Earl Keen and Darden Smith. Most shows were free; "Nanci wanted \$200 and administration thought no one would pay a cover, so I had to convince them. We charged \$2 for nonstudents, \$1 for students, and packed the place every month. People like Lucinda, 60 people would be a good crowd, but once people started showing up, we'd hit them with a cover charge."

◆ The first roadshow was Dave Van Ronk, at \$5, but Luneburg's emphasis on providing good sound (immortalized by Van Zandt, "I like the system here, the bottom's low and the treble's clear") and treating artists right began to pay off. "Our first big, big show was Suzanne Vega. Her agent wanted \$500 and we turned 100 people away. After that, the calls really started coming in." The Cactus became the place for singer-songwriters and folkies to play on national tours, partly because other Austin clubs were too large, too small or just not interested, and, of course, none could offer guarantees or write checks backed by the State of Texas. "You can't make any money out of this," Luneburg observes, but he's kept the Union administration happy for almost two decades.

◆ Paradoxically, however, Luneburg long ago gave up on what would seem to be a built-in constituency provided by the Union. Estimating that students make up no more than 10% of any Cactus audience, Luneburg recalls keeping track of discount tickets. "We had Townes playing one time and 100 or so people paid full price and two paid student price, so I said 'Fuck 'em, we'll have a flat rate.' Kids today..." He doesn't finish the thought, but it's often occurred to me that generations of UT students have spent years in the same town as some of the great singer-songwriters of our time, and in walking distance of the main venue where they, and their visiting peers, perform, and they went to see Sixth Street cover bands instead.

◆ You may wonder why I've chosen this moment to celebrate Luneburg's tenure at the Cactus, and I guess it was just Millennial thinking about all the changes I've seen in the Austin music scene in the last 12 years, and realizing that I go back further with Griff and the Cactus than anywhere else. There are other places that were going in 1988, though not all that many, but I've logged more, and better, hours at the Cactus, even though, unlike Chicago House, Henry's, La Zona Rosa (Mks 1 & 2) or Jovita's, it's not a place where you hang out. You go there for a reason, and Luneburg supplies plenty of those.

◆ When I arrived in Austin, I rather naively thought that Griff and the Cactus were links in a national chain. I long ago realized that they're both unique, and we're real lucky to have them. JC

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- 3rd -- Leon McAuliffe • 1917 • Houston, TX
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- 9th -- Jimmy Day • 1934 • Tuscaloosa, AL
 ----- Buck Ramsey • 1938 • Lubbock County, TX
 ----- Katie Webster • 1939 • Houston, TX
 ----- Roy Head • 1943 • Three Rivers, TX
- 10th -- Ronnie Hawkins • 1935 • Huntsville, AR
 ----- Cyril Neville • 1948 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Alejandro Escovedo • 1951 • San Antonio, TX
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- 11th -- Tommy Duncan • 1911 • Hillsboro, TX
 ----- Slim Harpo • 1924 • Baton Rouge, LA
 ----- Goldie Hill • 1933 • Karnes Co, TX
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- 12th -- Fred McDowell • 1904 • Rossville, TN
 ----- Tex Ritter • 1905 • Murvaul, TX
 ----- Ray Price • 1926 • Perryville, TX
- 14th -- Billy Walker • 1929 • Ralls, TX
 ----- Allen Toussaint • 1938 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- T-Bone Burnett • 1948 • St Louis, MO
- 15th -- Alan Lomax • 1915 • Austin, TX
 ----- Queen Ida • 1930 • Lake Charles, LA
 ----- Earl Hooker • 1930 • Clarksdale, MS
 ----- Captain Beefheart • 1941 • Glendale, CA
- 16th -- Mac Curtis • 1939 • Fort Worth, TX
 ----- Barbara Lynn • 1942 • Beaumont, TX
- 17th -- Steve Earle • 1955 • Fort Monroe, VA
- 19th -- Leo Soileau • 1904 • Ville Platte, LA
 ----- Sleepy Hoffpauir • 1931 • Crowley, LA
 ----- Charlie Waller • 1935 • Hendersonville, TX
 ----- Phil Everly • 1939 • Brownie, KY
 ----- Janis Joplin • 1943 • Port Arthur, TX
- 20th -- Leadbelly • 1889 • Mooringsport, LA
- 21st -- Smith Ballew Jan 21 1902 Palestine, TX
 ----- Wolfman Jack • 1939 • Brooklyn, NY
 ----- Jackie Wilson † 1984

- 22nd -- Sam Cooke • 1935 • Chicago, IL
 ----- Jimmy Day † 1999
- 23rd -- Django Reinhardt • 1910 • Liverchies, Belgium
 ----- Tom 'Wildcat' Courtney • 1929 • Waco, TX
 ----- Lisa Pankratz • 1968 • Austin, TX
 ----- Paul Robeson † 1976
- 24th -- Tuts Washington • 1907 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Jack Scott • 1936 • Windsor, Canada
 ----- Doug Kershaw • 1936 • Tiel Ridge, LA
 ----- Aaron Neville • 1941 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Tex Thomas • 1951 • Littlefield, TX
- 25th -- Jimmy Wyble • 1922 • Port Arthur, TX
 ----- Speedy West • 1924 • Springfield, MO
 ----- Etta James • 1938 • Los Angeles, CA
 ----- Laura Lee McBride † 1989
- 26th -- Dennis McGee • 1893 • Bayou Marron, LA
 ----- Claude Gray • 1932 • Henderson, TX
 ----- Huey 'Piano' Smith • 1934 • New Orleans, LA
 ----- Lucinda Williams • 1953 • Lake Charles, LA
- 27th -- Joe Shelton • 1911 • Hopkins Co, TX
 ----- Elmore James • 1918 • Richland, MS
 ----- Moon Mullican † 1967
 ----- Mahalia Jackson † 1972
- 28th -- Carl White • 1932 • Dallas, TX
 ----- Carolyn Hester • 1938 • Waco, TX
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