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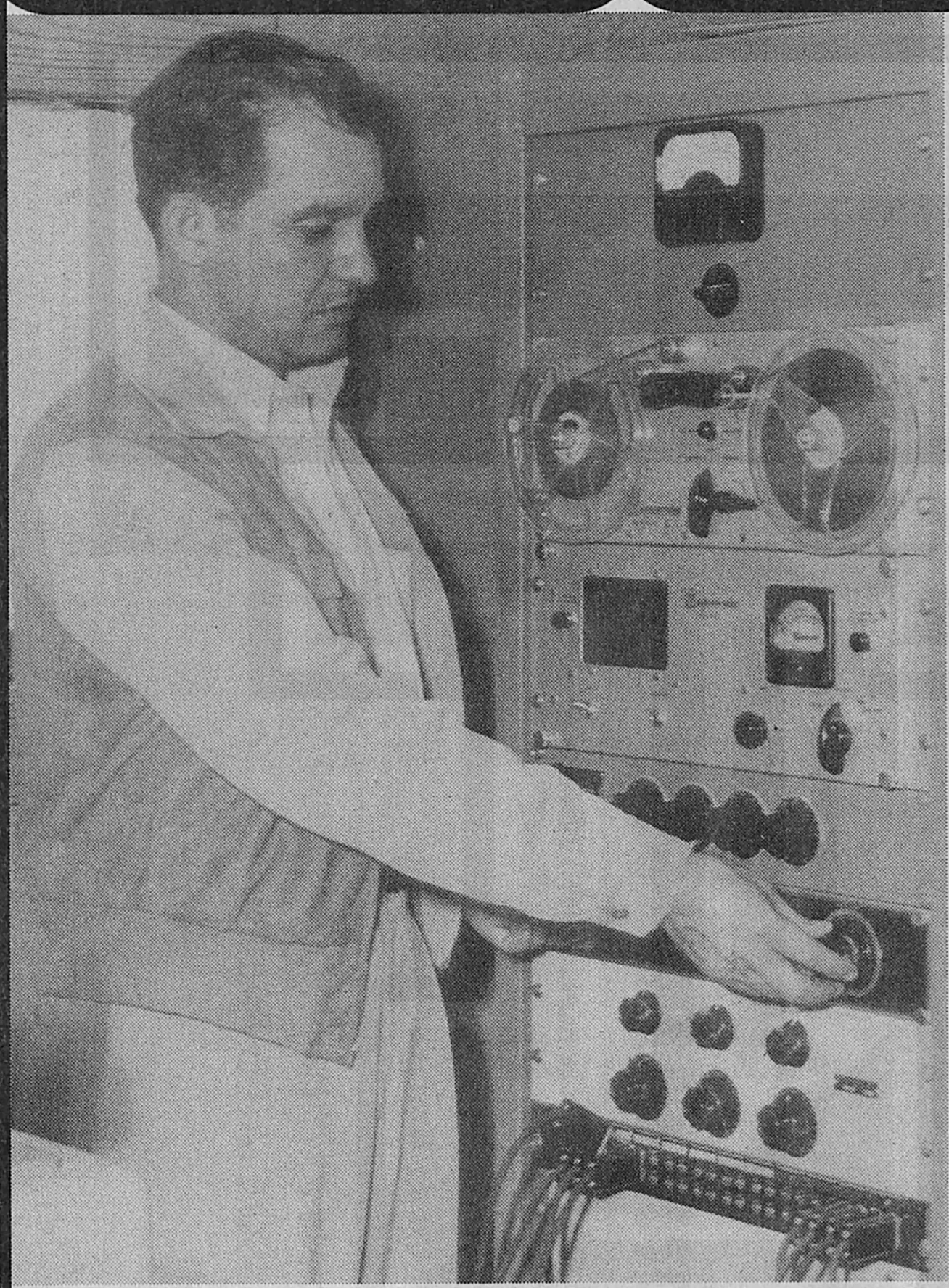

REVIEWS

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(or not)

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SAM BAKER

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SARAH BORGES

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THE DETROIT COBRAS

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MICHAEL FRACASSO

•

JERRY LEE LEWIS

•

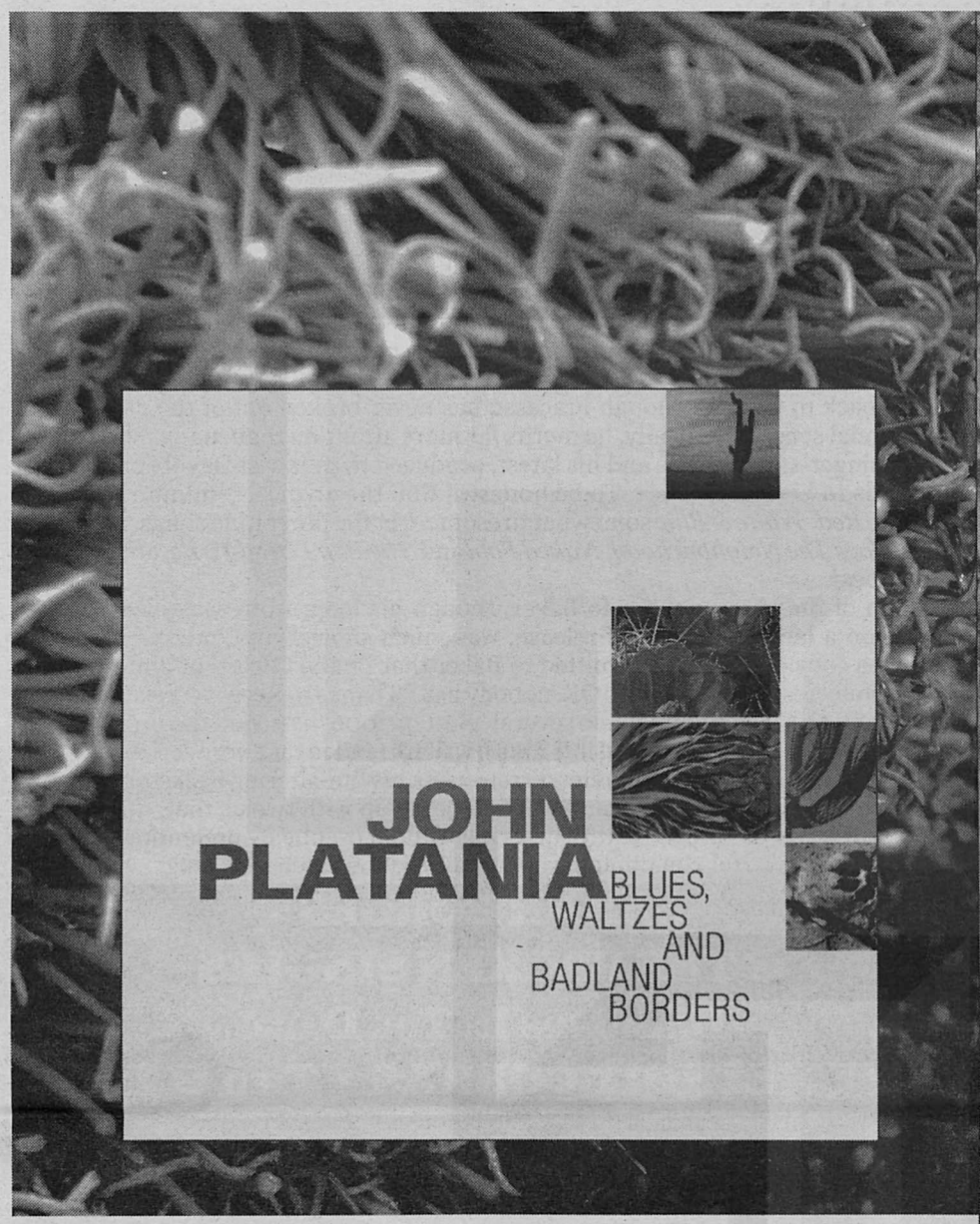
JENNY WOLFE & THE PACK

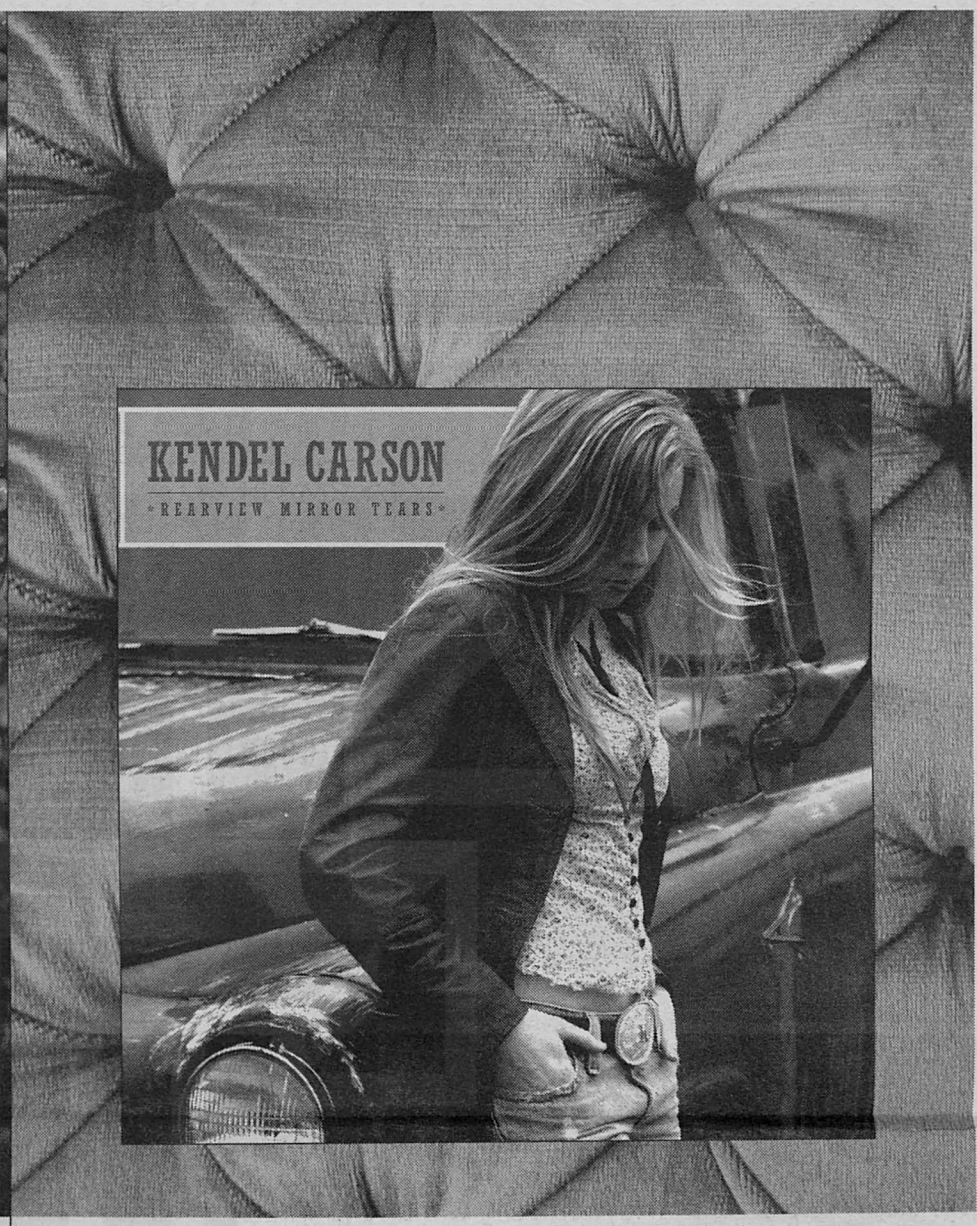
JOHN THE REVEALATOR

FREEFORM AMERICAN ROOTS #94

ROOTS BIRTHS & DEATHS

If I have to explain, you wouldn't understand





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DURING MAY 2007

#1 JIMMY LAFAVE: CIMARRON MANIFESTO

(Red House) *AN/*BF/*DB/*FW/*MN/*N&T/*NA/*RA/*SB/*TG/*XE

2 Gurf Morlix: Diamonds To Dust (Blue Corn) *BS/*BW/*DA/*MM/*PP/*SC
3 John Prine & Mac Wiseman: Standard Songs For Average People (Oh Boy) *AB/*BR/*KC/*MP/*RJ
4 Elizabeth Cook: Balls (31 Tigers) *B&C/*GS/*RJT
5 VA: Just One More; A Musical Tribute To Larry Brown (Bloodshot) *BB/*JS/*TW
6 Robbie Fulks: Revenge! (Yep Roc) *GM/*KM/*SH
7 The Detroit Cobras: Tied And True (Bloodshot) *DF/*HG/*RMP
8 Dennis Brennan: Engagement (Hi-N-Dry) *DG/*TO/*TT
9 David Serby: Another Sleepness Night (Harbor Grove) *CP/*FS
10 Chris Knight: Trailer Tapes (Drifter's Church) *BP/*EB
11 Leaving, Tx: Anywhere On Good Roads (Lucky Range) *HT/*RH
12 Oh Susanna: Short Stories (Maple Music) *JB/*MA
13 Johnny Bush & Justin Trevino: Texas On A Saturday Night (Heart of Texas) *DT
14= Mavis Staples: We'll Never Turn Back (Anti) *JP
Dale Watson: The Little Darlin' Sessions (Koch) *LB/*MT
15 Dale Watson: From The Cradle To The Grave (Hyena) *OO/*EW
16 Richard Fontaine: Thirteen Cities (El Cortez) *R78/*RV
17 Southern Culture On The Skids: Countrypolitan Favorites (Yep Roc)
18 Sarah Borges & The Broken Singles: Diamonds In The Dark (Sugar Hill) *JZ
19= Johnny Bush: Kashmere Gardens Mud (Icehouse) *JH
David Olney: One Tough Town (Red Parlor) *DR
20= Audrey Auld Mezera: Lost Men and Angry Girls (Reckless)
Ann Savoy & Her Sleepless Knights: If Dreams Come True (Memphis International) *DC
Uncle Earl: Waterloo, Tennessee (Rounder)
21= Rani Arbo & Daisy Mayhem: Big Old Life (Signature Sounds) *KB
Vince Bell: Recado (Steady Boy) *ND
Crooked Still: Hop High (Signature Sounds) *ES
Bill Hearne's Roadhouse Revue: Heartaches & Honky-Tonks (Frogville)
Little Pink: Gladly Would We Anchor (Night World) *MDT
22= Nate Gibson & The Gashouse Gang: Sing All The Way Home (Cow Island)
Maria Muldaur: Naughty, Bawdy And Blue (Stony Plain) *MR
23= Avett Brothers: Emotionalism (Ramseur) *SG
Michael Fracasso: Red Dog Blues (Little Fuji) *CD
24= The Laws: Ride It Out (JML Music)
The Wilders: Throw Down (Free Dirt)
Adrienne Young: Room To Grow (Addiebelle) *R&H
25= Blackie & The Rodeo Kings: Let's Frolic Again (True North)
Jim Bryson: Where The Bungalows Roam (Kelp) *JR
Kendel Carson: Rearview Mirror Tears (Train Wreck) *DY
Eilen Jewell: Boundary County (self) *JA

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

Freeform American Roots is compiled from reports provided by 140 freeform DJs in the US, Canada, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Uruguay. More information can be found at www.accd.edu/tcmn/far

MICHAEL FRACASSO • RED DOG BLUES
SAM BAKER • PRETTY WORLD

(Little Fuji ❀❀❀❀/self ❀❀❀❀)

Fifteen years, six CDs (plus a retrospective) and four labels after he released his debut cassette, Fracasso's back on his own Little Fuji imprint, and, when I saw him at Casbeers recently (where he pulled out the fab *Tender Dilemma/Thing About You* from that cassette, thank you Michael), suffering from a severe case of the shorts. Universally respected, both for his literate songwriting and distinctive delivery, he must have several folders full of rave press clippings, but Fracasso rather illustrates Honest John's definition, 'critically acclaimed = sold 12 copies.' At this point, I originally took off an editorial tangent, which I'll save until next month, getting back to this CD, though Fracasso has never broken out of the pack in any commercial sense, artistically, he merits far more attention than many much better known singer-songwriters, and his latest, produced by guitarist David Hamburger, only adds to his significance. To be honest, I find the atypical 7-minute Civil War folk epic *Red, White & Blue* somewhat tiresome, but the other nine songs, especially *There Goes The Neighborhood*, *Naked Fool* and *The Boy I Used To Be*, are Fracasso at his finest.

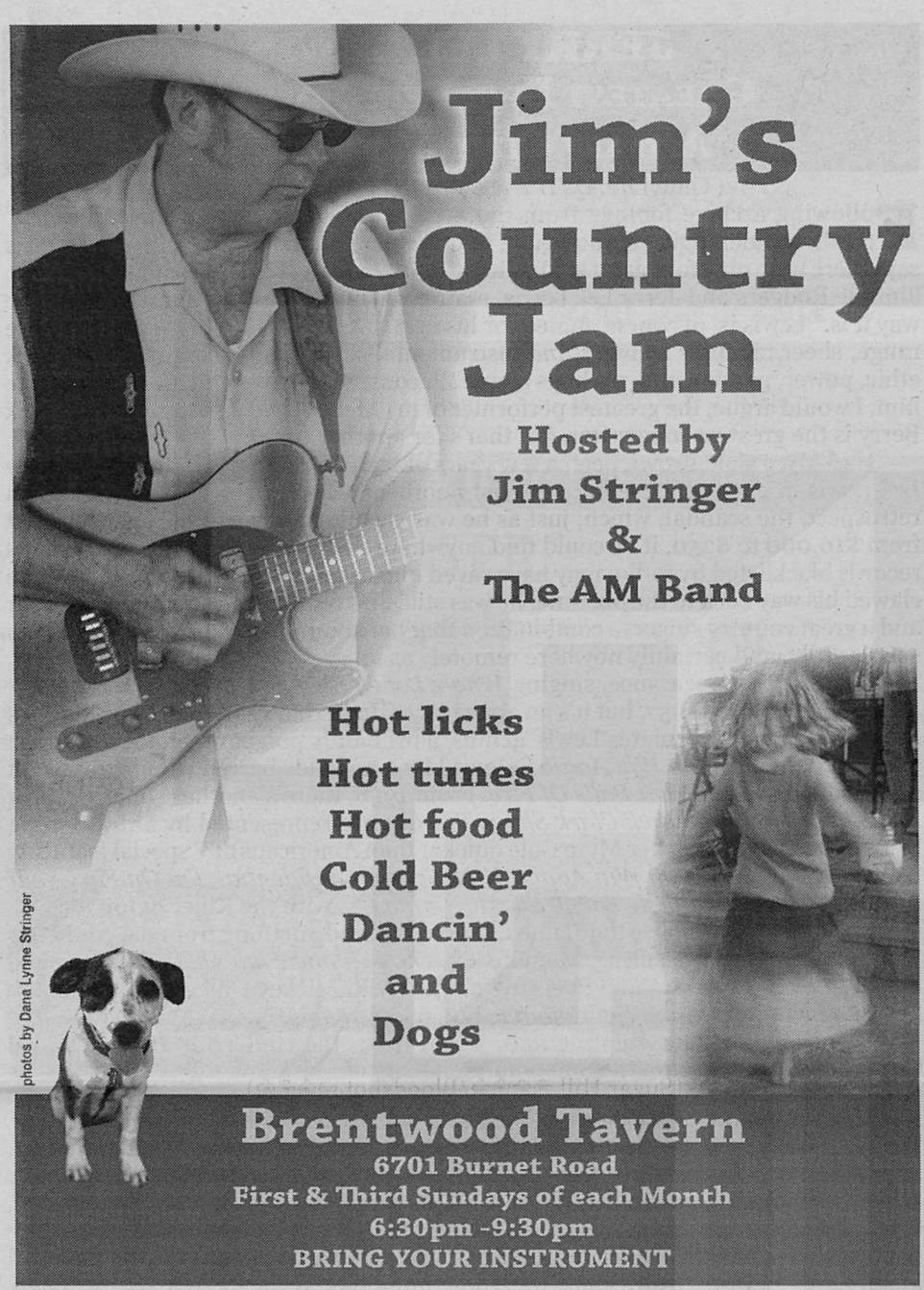
♦ Much of the above applies to Baker, though his loop, from self-release, to re-release on a label, back to self-release, was much shorter and quicker. When he sent me a copy of **Mercy**, I admitted to Baker that I hadn't heard of him, to which he cheerfully responded, "That's OK, nobody has." Thanks to Reckless' reissue, which hit #1 on the FAR chart and made several "Best of 2006' lists, and the proselytizing of Gurf Morlix, whose views sensible music writers tend to take very seriously, that's changed somewhat. Without endlessly repeating his life-altering backstory, Baker's focus is on 'big' songs and, once again, he's come up with twelve that, not quite as terse as **Mercy**'s, are pregnant with meaning without ever being pretentious. Baker's words are so powerful you don't hardly notice that he can barely sing. **JC**

SARAH BORGES & THE BROKEN SINGLES
DIAMONDS IN THE DARK
THE DETROIT COBRAS • TIED & TRUE

(Sugar Hill ❀❀❀❀/Bloodshot ❀❀❀❀)

Just after this year's Old Settlers Music Festival, David Obermann emailed me to say that he'd had the honor of introducing Sarah Borges—"Oh, my God!" Pretty much the universal reaction to Borges live, but her overwhelming power on stage seems difficult, at least for Paul Q Kolderie, who also produced her debut, **Silver City** (Blue Corn, 2005), to capture in the studio, and, frankly, I would have advised her to try someone else (or make a live album). Still, if this again seems rather Borges Lite, one has to bear in mind that people who've never seen her in person will experience her blend of rock and country very differently and it does have its undeniable successes, Hank Ballard & The Midnighters' *Open Up Your Back Door* comes close to capturing the live sound and Tom Waits' *Blind Love* makes a magnificent studio track. Other covers are of X's *Come Back To Me*, The Compulsive Gamblers' *Stop And Think It Over* and a very effective autobiographical reading of Dolly Parton's *False Eyelashes*, with Borges writing or cowriting the other seven tracks. Don't get me wrong, this is a fine album, it just isn't the great album I'm hoping for from Borges. If I have high expectations, she's the one who raised them.

♦ Either vocalist Rachel Nagy and guitarist Mary Ramirez, The Detroit Cobras' only constants over the last 12 years, really are tough, kickass, take no shit broads who get what they want or Detroit producers, in this instance John Stramek, promoted from engineer/mixer of **Baby** (Bloodshot, 2005), aren't afraid of a little sweat and grease getting into their equipment. Whichever, their three previous albums were loud and ragged, the group, famed for its raucous live shows, seeming about one step away from disintegrating into total chaos. If, this time, the approach is relatively low key and controlled, it's because they have a purpose, showcasing Nagy's sultry vocals, and a theme—bummers. As usual, they've dug deep into the R&B/soul vaults and while some dismiss the Cobras as a mere cover band, say what you will, they sure know a great neglected gem when they hear one, usually, or so Ramirez told me, on a tape made by a record collector trying to impress them, and they sure know how to make it their own. Garnet Mimms' *As Long As I Have You*, The Flirtations' *Nothing But A Heartache*, James Brown's *If You Don't Think*, originally cut by Anna King on a 1963 album Brown produced, Little Willie John's *Leave My Kitten Alone*, Art Neville's *What's Going On?* (written by Dr John), Dori Grayson's *Try Love*, Bettye LaVette's *You'll Never Change*, fellow Detroiter Gino Washington's *Puppet On A String*, The Cookies' *Only To Other People*, Irma Thomas' *The Hurt's All Gone*, The Melodians' *It's My Delight*, the 'traditional' *On A Monday* (usually credited to Leadbelly) and The Equals' *Green Light*, there's some pretty obscure acts, let alone songs, in that lineup. This is one of those albums where your favorite track changes every time you play it. **JC**



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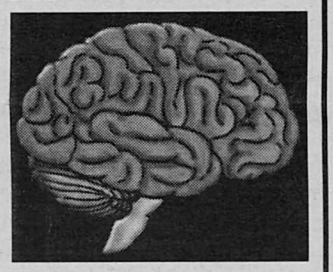

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JOHN THE REVEALATOR

Right concept, wrong context; last month, I contrasted **Jimmy LaFave**, on only his second label in 15 years, with **David Olney**, who's on his eighth in the same period. Which is true as far as it goes, but they're not, as I said, label mates, as Olney's latest home is by no means Red House but Red Parlor. In fact, Red House is one of the few labels Olney hasn't been on.

♦ You know what they say your home town. When the South Texas Walk of Fame folks asked me to do the honors for **Armando Marroquín** at this year's inductions, my first thought was to try and contact his family, and my first attempt was calling the local paper in 'The Birthplace of Tejano Music.' Kind of a dead end. The woman I spoke to at the **Alice Echo-News Journal** had never heard of Marroquín and said nobody else in the office had either. Such is fame. However, I found a mention on the net of an **Armando Marroquín Jr** assigning a San Diego (TX) radio station license, rang KUKA, which took my number and five minutes later I was talking to Marroquín's elder son, so it worked out OK.

♦ Couldn't get too deep into it in the cover story, but the number of women on **Discos Ideal**'s roster, which included Lydia Mendoza, Chelo Silva, Carmen y Laura, Las Abajenas, Hermanas Fraga, Rosita Fernandez, Hermanas Segovia, Delia y Laura, Hermanas Cantu, Hermanas Guerrero, Maria Luisa Guerrero, Las Rancheritas and Hermanas Mendoza, really was quite extraordinary, enough to rate their own Arhoolie compilation. A Tejana once told me "Some Hispanic men are ten years behind Anglos in their ability to accept successful women." Pause. "The rest are much worse." Round about the same time, Eva Ybarra told me that she couldn't keep young players because their friends would rag on them about working for a woman, so her Conjunto was made up of old farts who didn't give a shit. And this was in the 90s, so you can imagine how tough things were for female musicians in the 40s and 50s, when the unwritten law was that Hispanic women would automatically quit showbusiness when they got married (by contrast, the convention in country music was that women were acceptable if they were married to someone in the band). The saving grace for the women of Discos Ideal, and its first rival, Falcon Records, was that though polite Hispanic society frowned on them, they were enormously popular on cantina jukeboxes.

♦ I actually can't remember how long it's been since I wrote Johnny Conqueso's obituary, but **KYSM**'s Faculty Advisor seems unaware that I got canned by the station as I'm still in his *Third Coast Music Network* email group (as is former DJ Paul Daly, who moved to Dallas even longer ago). Anyway, John Onderdonk recently shared some programming concerns with me; "As you know [San Antonio College] is a Drug and Alcohol Free Campus and the pressure is on, not only locally, but nationally, to play down drug and alcohol usage on campuses nation wide... I encourage you to think twice about playing songs which exhort the excessive and blatant use of drugs and alcohol. Surely, there is a wider variety of music out there to draw upon." Well, I'll drink to that. Of course, there goes the honky tonk portion of the program. Apart from anything else, *TCMN* is a big supporter of local hero Johnny Bush and, well, you do the math.

♦ Spaced this out last month, but following my March obituary of ultra-obscure Western Swing steel guitarist and band leader **Tom Morrell**, I discovered that there is at least one place where you can actually buy copies of his '**How The West Was Swung**' series. **Out Of The Past**, on Burnet, in Austin, stock all 15 volumes, including the most recent, **Relaxin'**, released just before Morrell's death and, I gather, impossible to order through his seeming inactive website.

♦ The other day, I was talking about the ins and outs of selling CDs, but have since learned that in some places it can be a bit more complicated than popping up San Pedro to see what Mitch will give me for that somewhat redundant Alabama box set. If we were in, say, Tampa, under new **Florida** legislation, first CD Exchange would have to get a permit and post a $10,000 security bond just to sell **secondhand CDs**. Then, when I roll in the door, Mitch would have to fingerprint me—yes, you heard that right—make a copy of my state ID, pay me only in store credit and, finally, sit on any CDs I 'sell' him for 30 days before reselling them. Utah already has a similar law, others are pending in Rhode Island and Wisconsin, where selling CDs will be harder than getting a driver's license. The Rhode Island law seems particularly foolish as you can drive to another state and unload your surplus CDs in, what?, 15 minutes. The purpose, in theory, is to stop people breaking into cars and homes, stealing CDs and cashing them in for money to buy drugs, though, in my experience, you're not going to get very high on what most stores'll give you.

♦ Back in 1995, I inadvertently scooped the *Austin Chronicle*, whose editor freely acknowledged that the first he knew of **David Obermann**'s departure from Austin, and, hence, KUT's *Folkways*, was when he read the cover story of *Music City Texas* #74. Obermann returned after a few years in the UK, but now he's left KUT again, signing off on May 19th, leaving a huge hole in Austin radio. This is a man whose approach to folk music was, for me, epitomized by his having Ronnie Dawson & High Noon play live on *Folkways*. How cool is that?

♦ Apologies for the '**irregardless**' last month, which did not go unnoticed. It was supposed to a placeholder until I found something that flowed better than 'no matter what,' but, hell, that would have done the job without offending against Fowler.

JERRY LEE LEWIS
GREATEST LIVE PERFORMANCES
A HALF CENTURY OF HITS

(Time Life, DVD ❀❀❀❀/3 CD box set ❀❀❀❀)

Following archive footage from the 50s, 60s and 70s, there's an 'interview' (really a wideranging monologue), filmed at Sun Studios in 1993, in which Lewis says there were only four great stylists in the 20th century, Hank Williams, Al Jolson, Jimmie Rodgers and Jerry Lee Lewis, matter of factly adding, "And that's just the way it is." Lewis is, of course, famed for his ego, but he's right. This is a man whose range, sheer talent as a singer *and* instrumentalist, intensity, commitment, work ethic, power, passion and, perhaps above all, consistency, live and on record, make him, I would argue, the greatest performer of my lifetime (I'd also argue that Chuck Berry is the greatest songwriter, but that's for another time).

Had Myra Gale Brown been a few years older and/or not related to him, Jerry Lee Lewis might well have become just another flaky, reclusive superstar, so, in retrospect, the scandal, which, just as he was rivalling Elvis, cut his fee overnight from $10,000 to $250, if he could find anywhere that would have him, and got his records blacklisted by radio, may have saved him as an artist. In any event, after he clawed his way back to the big time, he was still, and remained, a great rock & roller and a great country singer, a combination that hardly anyone else ever pulled off as successfully, and certainly nowhere remotely as long.

His first TV appearance, singing *Whole Lot Of Shakin' Going On*, was on *The Steve Allen Show* in 1957, but it's an appearance, later that year, on Dewey Phillip's *Pop Shop*, that encapsulates Lewis' genius, a brilliantly poignant, nuanced version of Hank Williams' *You Win Again* followed by a no holds barred wild man assault on Otis Blackwell's *Great Balls Of Fire*. From 1958, there's another superb clip, of *Breathless*, from *The Dick Clark Show*. The 60s are represented by a rowdy 1964 British (my people got over Myra Gale quicker than Americans) TV special featuring *Great Balls Of Fire*, *You Win Again*, *High School Confidential*, *I'm On Fire*, *Your Cheatin' Heart* and *Whole Lot Of Shakin' Going On*, with the Killer in top form.

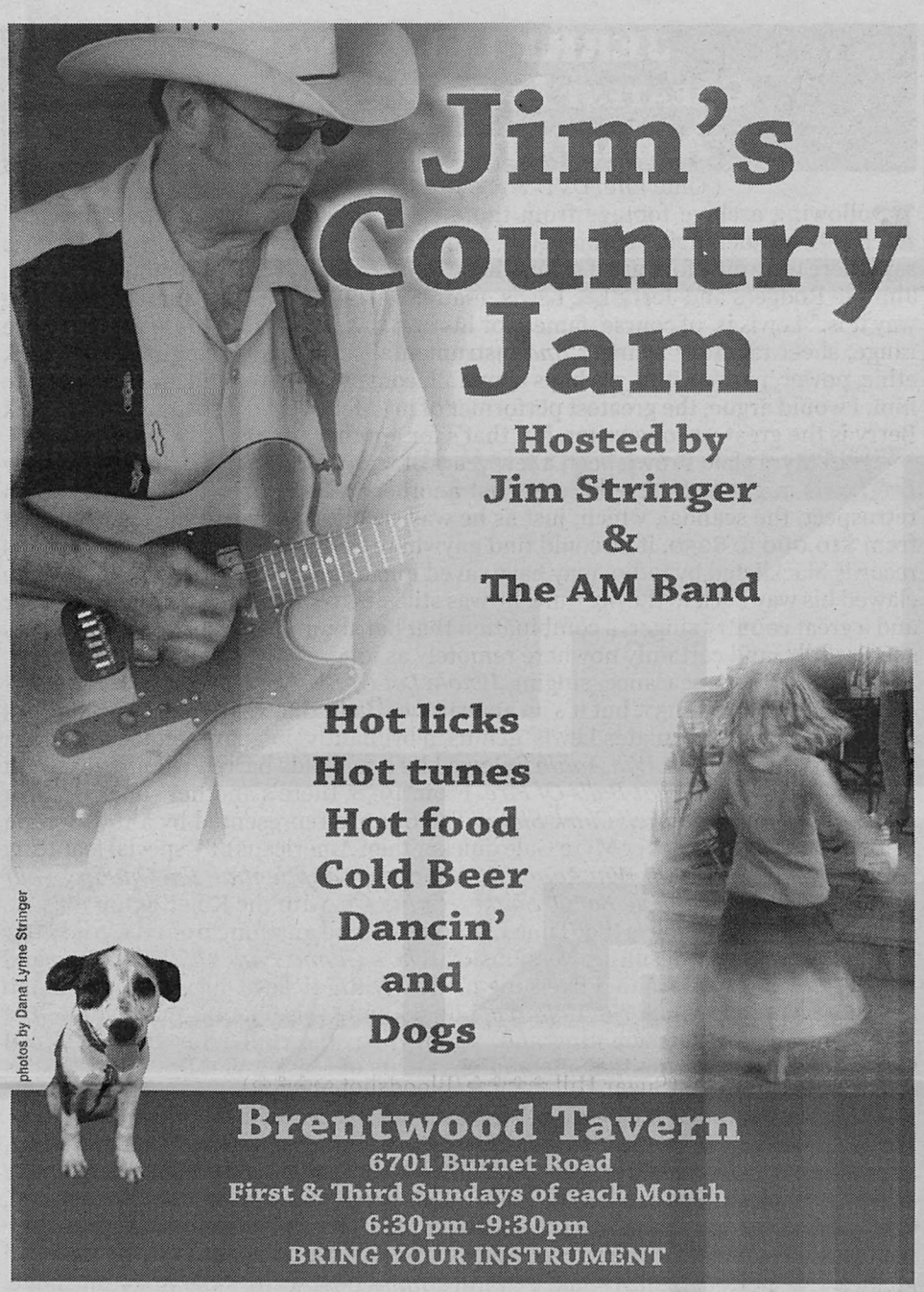
I find it hard to believe that Time Life couldn't find anything from the 70s better than fine but rather desultory versions of *Who's Gonna Play This Old Piano* and *Me And Bobby McGee* and a five song medley with Mickey Gilley, all from Ralph Emery's awful *Pop Goes The Country*, but skipping this chapter takes you to the 'interview,' which is fascinating and, a real treat, the trailer for **High School Confidential**, featuring the outstanding talents of Mamie Van Doren. If it fades out at the end, and is somewhat repetitious, the monochrome footage makes this compelling—I dunno, maybe rock & roll and black & white just go together.

There have been countless Jerry Lee Lewis collections, none of them definitive, least of all **The Definitive Collection**, but **Half Century Of Hits** claims to be "the first-ever complete career retrospective," and if it doesn't quite achieve its goal, it's still the best and most wideranging compilation since **All Killer, No Filler** (Rhino, 1993). More or less giving one CD each to the Sun, Smash/Mercury and Elektra/Sire periods, it has some irritating omissions, such as the first Sun single, *Crazy Arms*, and, as it claims to include all the hits, inexplicable ones, such *She Still Comes Around (To Love What's Left Of Me)*, but what it includes is all great stuff. Rounding the set off are five previously unreleased recordings, three from 1981 and two, a not altogether successful version of Lefty Frizzell's *Don't Stay Away (Til Love Grows Cold)* and the prototypical original *New Orleans Boogie*, cut in 1952, when Lewis was only 16. **JC**

JENNY WOLFE & THE PACK

(Steady Boy ❀❀❀.5)

What's in a name? In this instance, quite bit. Unlike Redheaded Stepchild, an earlier and shortlived product of Michele Murphy's Natural Ear Music Camp, this is not an ensemble of more or less equally gifted kids. Take Wolfe out of the equation, and you've got some fairly talented young players, Steven Campbell keyboards, Zeke Jarmon (Spencer's boy) lead guitar, Lily Judge bass, Ian Stewart violin and Ben Durbin rhythm guitar, who may or may not go on to become real musicians. Leave her in and you've got a rock & roll version of The Stone Poneys. Under the guidance of Natural Ear tutor and veteran rocker Freddie 'Steady' Krc, who produced, played drums and guitars, wrote four of the 12 songs, including The Explosives' *In My Head*, and, rather obviously, selected such material as *Shakin All Over* (I doubt many other Americans, let alone teenagers, have even heard of Johnny Kidd & The Pirates) and Roky Erickson's *Starry Eyes*, The Pack do just fine, but this is Wolfe's album all the way. For her age, she's phenomenal, however she is only 14, so it's hardly surprising that she hasn't quite gained full mastery or fine control of the 12-cylinder, turbocharged, hi-test boosted road rocket that's her voice, but when it all comes together, most clearly on Mike Nesmith's *Different Drum*, she's neck and neck with the young Linda Ronstadt. Wolfe's potential is, quite obviously, staggering (though a word of advice, Jenny, stick with Freddie and watch out for the Peter Ashers). Even if she's still a somewhat tentative student driver, it's well worth going along for this ride, if only so you'll have an original copy of her debut album rather than the 'Early Years' reissue down the line. **JC**



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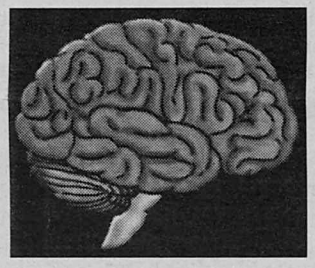

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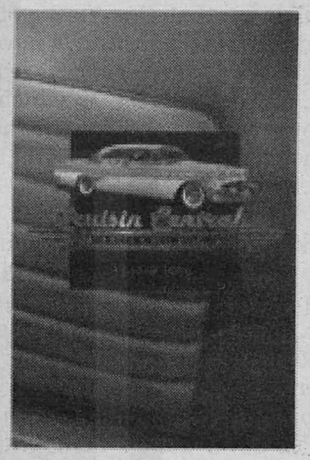

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THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

Reading, more accurately rereading, last month's issue—**3CM** is, au fond, the magazine I wish someone else would write and publish, but they don't so I have to do it myself—something, which may already be obvious to many readers, struck me about the reviews lineup, Townes Van Zandt, Gurf Morlix, Jimmy LaFave and David Rodriguez. At no point do I really explain who these people are or why they're important. I just assume all y'all already know who they are and why they're important, so we can skip the preliminaries and go straight to the meat and potatos.

The problem, of course, is that this may tend to make **3CM** somewhat esoteric, accessible and comprehensible only to the illuminati. When you're putting out a specialized, niche publication, you have to distinguish between necessary and superfluous exposition, between patronizing or, worse still, boring some readers and mystifying others. Sometimes it's fairly easy, as a newcomer, Kendel Carson, for instance, needed some background even for the most advanced roots fan, but at this stage I am not about to explain Townes Van Zandt because, even if space isn't always at a premium, I don't want, say, Richard Schwartz or Patrick Hurley to be drumming their fingers and going, "Yes, we all know that, Conquest, get on with it."

The question, of course, is does Van Zandt need introduction? I haven't noticed one recently, but during the 90s, regular as clockwork you'd see these features about 'this incredibly great singer-songwriter I've just discovered,' to which, of course, my reaction was always 'Wipe the snot off your face, kid,' but maybe they did serve a purpose, did get some people interested enough to investigate further. All I know is that I can't write those things, or, rather, I could if somebody paid me to, but I don't on my own dime.

Is it fair and reasonable to assume a working knowledge of, or, at the very least, a nodding acquaintance with, the music of Van Zandt, Morlix, LaFave and Rodriguez? With **3CM** subscribers, I'm on pretty safe ground, as I imagine that if they keep coming back for more of the same, it's because they're neither bored nor mystified. As to more casual readers, the people who pick up the several thousand copies I strew around and which aren't there next month (unless those pricks at *InSite* have covered them up), from the feedback I get, I tend to think they're mostly old school, pre-postliterate music lovers—I've never done a demographic survey, but I'm pretty sure there's enough grey hair among **3CM**'s readership to thatch a fair size cottage.

I also assume a common mind set, a basic agreement on the big picture, even if we disagree on specific artists and albums. I figure I don't have to waste time and space arguing that Van Zandt, Morlix, LaFave and Rodriguez's music is superior to, say, commercial country or major label singer-songwriter crapola, because the very fact that you're reading this in the first place tells me I'd just be preaching to the choir, a pointless and irritating exercise (I wish someone would explain this rather simple dynamic to Dale Watson).

3CM, in its various incarnations, has had several mottos, like 'Art & Grit' and 'Tough Love For Roots Music Since 1989,' but the one that goes to the heart of this issue is: 'If I have to explain, you wouldn't understand.' **JC**

ARMANDO MARROQUíN

Discussions about music inevitably tend to center on the stars, past, present and future, but there are a host of other, largely anonymous, figures behind them, literally in the case of sidemen, metaphorically with club owners, managers, agents, publicists, record label folk, DJs, even music writers, all doing their bit to help, or hinder. However, while musicians' fates are ultimately in their own hands, one crucial decision can make them immortal or doom them to obscurity, and that is their choice of, or acquiescence to, a record producer.

Coming up with a Top Ten of Texas musicians would be taxing simply because most music lovers, regardless of taste, would have trouble cutting down to that few. Coming up with a Top Ten of Texas record producers would pose a slightly different problem, coming up with that many. As they've been something of a bête noire of mine these many years, too often screwing up albums and walking away unscathed from the wreckage, I may, if only by process of elimination, have a slightly easier time of it, but while I'd hate to have to rank Eli Oberstein, Jim Beck, Norman Petty, Huey P Meaux, Paula Wolak, Rick Garcia, Walter Morgan, Lloyd Maines and Gurf Morlix, the #1 spot is easy—Armando Marroquín.

Hard as it may be to comprehend today, there was a time when major labels had rosters of several hundred artists each selling a few thousand units, rather than a handful selling millions, and, from the mid-20s, RCA Victor/Bluebird, Brunswick/Vocalion and Columbia/Okeh's included Tex-Mex stars like Narciso Martínez and Lydia Mendoza. However, their success, when, in the entire South, let alone the Rio Grande Valley, owning a gramophone was very unusual, depended almost entirely on jukeboxes. When shellac was rationed during WW2, ethnic and regional acts were the first to be dropped, so in the postwar boom, jukebox operators such as Armando Marroquín, of Alice, TX, found themselves jumping through US Customs hoops to import Mexican records that were not entirely to South Texas tastes.

As a producer, Marroquín started small, recording his wife and her sister in the family kitchen, later moving his equipment into the garage, and cutting small runs of 78s solely for jukeboxes, but in 1946, picked up by LA's Four Star Records, Carmen y Laura's *Se Me Fue Mi Amor (A La Guerra)/Quisiera Volar* was an instant hit in a ravenously hungry market and attracted the attention of Paco Betancourt, owner of Rio Grande Music, San Benito, a South Texas distributor for RCA and Columbia. The two men established Discos Ideal, the first locally owned, let alone Hispanic owned, record label in Texas, with Betancourt financing a proper recording facility. Filling the vacuum left by Anglo labels, Discos Ideal was quickly able to attract such established and rising stars as Martínez, Mendoza, Chelo Silva, Beto Villa, Tony De La Rosa, Valerio Longoria, Conjunto Bernal and many more. Parting ways with Betancourt in 1959, Marroquín started his own Nopal Records which operated through the 70s, when the Tejano market went into its long decline. Born September 12th, 1912, in Alice, he died there on July 4, 1990. In recognition of his work, the Texas legislature officially designated Alice 'The Birthplace of Tejano Music' in 2001.

This basic summary, a respectful but rather hollow footnote, might have been all that Texas music history would accord Marroquín, but in 1991, Chris Strachwitz of Arhoolie Records learned that the Discos Ideal masters, which were thought to have been lost or destroyed had, in fact, been carefully stored at Rio Grande Music, and were for sale. Arhoolie's compilations of Discos Ideal's output would illustrate not just the importance of the label, but the genius of Armando Marroquín.

Perhaps the key to understanding Marroquín's amazing talents as a record producer is that he started out selling 78s to cantinas and restaurants for $5 each when commercial singles were 35¢, and he was able to do this because his clients knew they'd make it back and more, a nickel at a time, on jukebox spins. In other words, they trusted him to give them hits, and for 13 years that's what he did for Discos Ideal, which, incidentally, makes the Arhoolie compilations so stunning, one South Texas jukebox-proven hit after another.

Apart from a golden ear, so keenly tuned to popular taste that he could anticipate it, and an utter mastery of whatever recording technology was available to him, Marroquín was also a great A&R man, though, of course, until the label's success spurred competition, he pretty much had his pick of Tejano artists. Under his watch, Beto Villa perfected the Orquesta sound, Valerio Longoria introduced such innovations as vocals, drums and bass into Conjunto, and, which is easy to overlook, Discos Ideal bucked a (still) deeply patriachal society by signing and supporting not just superstar Mendoza but numerous other, far less famous female performers.

A couple of years ago, Sue Donohoe, formerly of Austin record store Local Heroes, who now lives in Corpus Christi and is involved with the South Texas Music Walk of Fame, invited me, as a technical South Texan and supposedly knowing a bit about Texas music, to participate in the nominating process, and, naturally, my first thought was of Marroquín, with Brownsville-born Chelo Silva as runner-up (they're inducting her next year). What I didn't anticipate was that they would ask me to to come and make a formal presentation. Moreover, though this is down to me, Armando's widow, Carmen Marroquín, and their sons Armando Jr and Mario will be present. Anyway, the one thing I hope I can put across loud and clear will be this: Armando Marroquín was the greatest musicman in the history not just of Tejano but of *all* Texas music. **JC**

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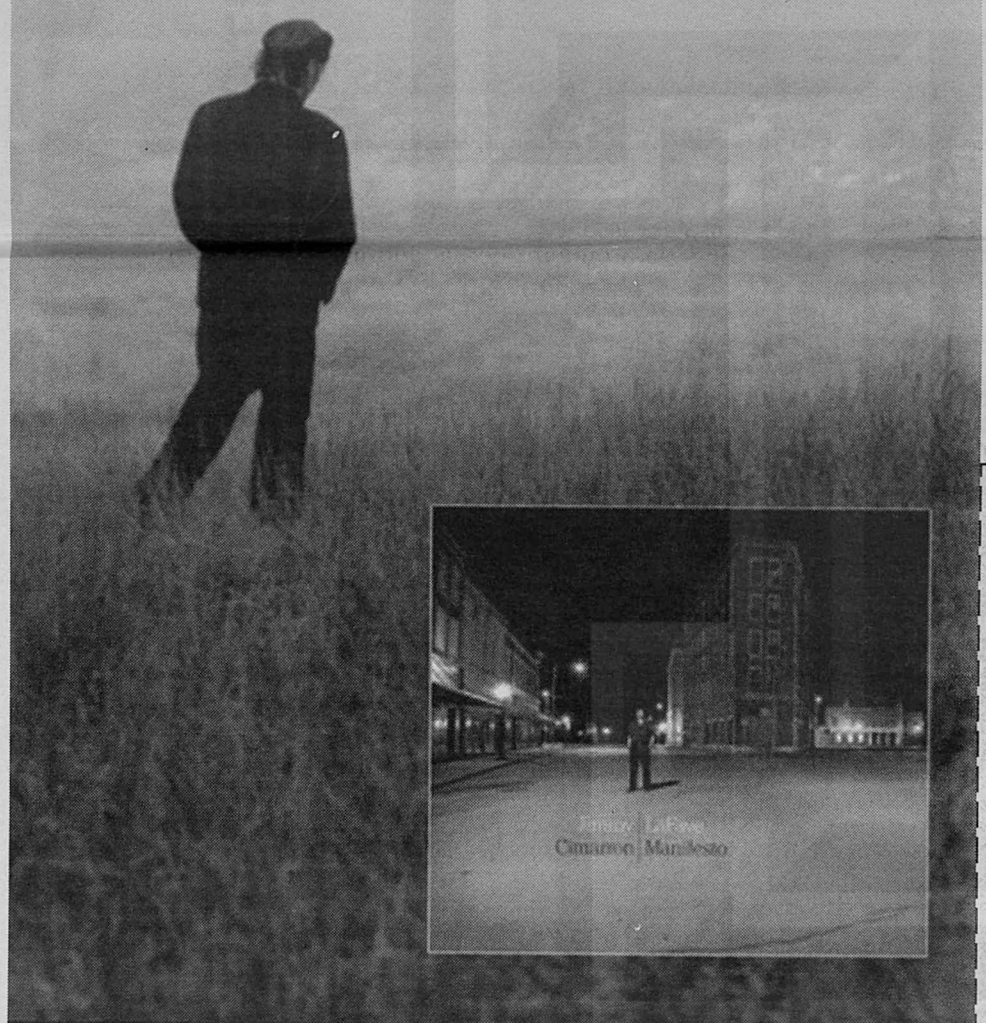

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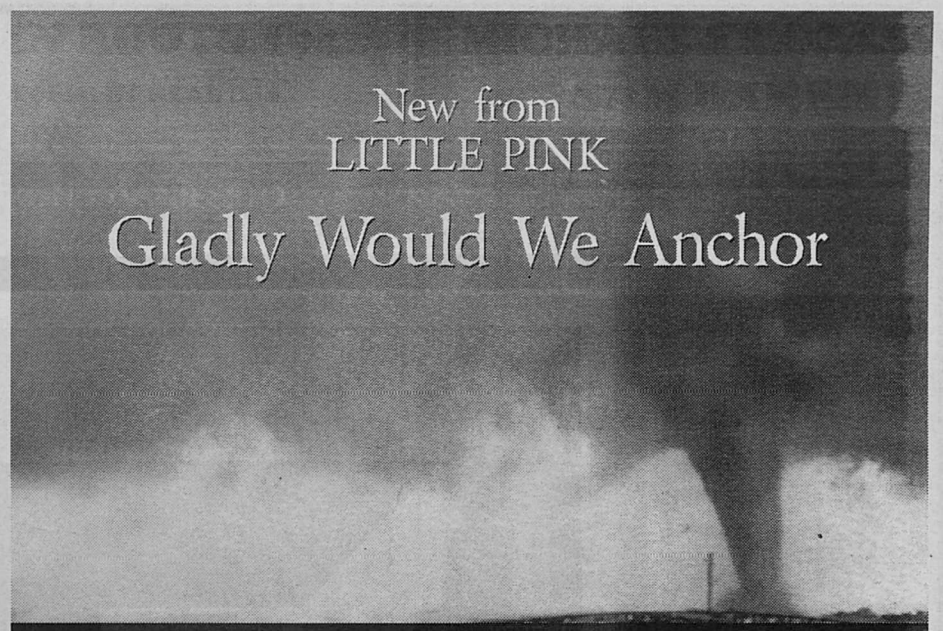

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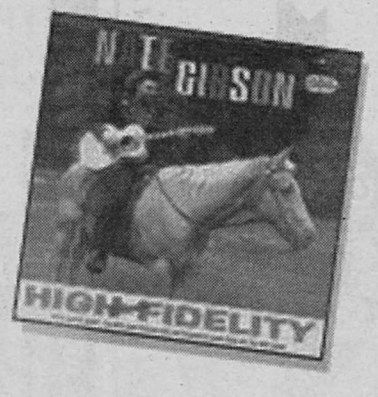

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1st --- Johnny Bond • 1915 Enville, OK
------ Shelly Lee Alley † 1964
2nd -- Carl Butler • 1927 Knoxville, TN
3rd -- Memphis Minnie • 1897 Algiers, LA
------ Buster Pickens • 1916 Hempstead, TX
------ Joe Bonsall • 1921 Lake Arthur, LA
------ Boots Randolph • 1927 Paducah, KY
------ Billie Joe McAllister † 1967
------ Deke Dickerson • 1968 St Louis, MO
4th -- Texas Ruby • 1908 Wise Co, TX
------ Freddy Fender • 1936 San Benito, TX
------ Rabon Delmore † 1952
------ John Hartford † 2001
5th -- Narciso Martinez † 1992
------ Conway Twitty † 1993
6th -- Gary US Bonds • 1939 Jacksonville, FL
------ Joe Stampley • 1943 Springhill, LA
------ Clarence White • 1944 Lewiston, ME
------ Steve Riley • 1969 Mamou, LA
------ Adolph Hofner † 2000
------ Smokey Montgomery † 2001
7th -- Wynn Stewart • 1934 Morrisville, MO
8th -- Adolph Hofner • 1916 Moulton, TX
------ Alton Delmore † 1964
9th -- Les Paul • 1915 Waukesha, WI
------ Herb Remington • 1926 Mishawaka, IN
------ Jackie Wilson • 1934 Detroit, MI
------ Slaid Cleaves • 1964 Washington, DC
10th - Howlin' Wolf • 1910 West Point, MS
11th - John Inmon • 1949 San Antonio, TX
------ Bruce Robison • 1966 Houston, TX
12th - Charlie Feathers • 1932 Holly Springs, MS
------ Bobby Earl Smith • 1943 San Angelo, TX
------ Junior Brown • 1952 Cottonwood, AZ
------ JE Mainer † 1971
------ Angelais LeJeune † 1974
------ Johnny Bond † 1978
13th - Clyde McPhatter • 1972
14th - Wynonie Harris † 1969
------ Merrill Moore † 2000
15th - Tex Owens • 1892 Kileen, TX
------ Leon Payne • 1917 Alba, TX
------ Waylon Jennings • 1937 Littlefield, TX
16th - Bob Nolan † 1980
17th - Red Foley • 1910 Blue Lick, KY
------ Henry Zimmerle • 1940 San Antonio, TX
------ Mike Buck • 1952 Fort Worth, TX
------ Dewey Balfa † 1992
18th - Martí Brom • 1961 St Louis, MO
------ Bobby Flores • 1961 San Antonio, TX
19th - Bobby Mack • 1954 Fort Worth, TX
20th - T Texas Tyler • 1916 Mena, AR
------ Brian Wilson • 1942 Hawthorne, CA
------ Ira Louvin † 1965
------ Louise Massey † 1983
------ Boudleaux Bryant † 1987
21st - Clifford Scott • 1928 San Antonio, TX
------ Paulino Bernal • 1939 Raymondville, TX
22nd Kris Kristofferson • 1936 Brownsville, TX
------ Jesse Ed Davis † 1988
23rd - Zeb Turner • 1915 Lynchburg, VA
------ June Carter Jun 23 1929 Maces Spring, VA
------ Elton Britt † 1972
------ Wade Frugé † 1992
25th - Clifton Chenier • 1925 Opelousas, LA
------ Eddie Floyd • 1935 Montgomery, AL
------ Link Davis Jr • 1947 Port Arthur, TX
------ Jody Nix • 1952 Big Spring, TX
------ Paul Pearcy • 1954 Temple, TX
26th - Big Bill Broonzy • 1893 Scott, MS
------ Andy Wilkinson • 1948 Slaton, TX
------ Chris Isaak • 1956 Stockton, CA
27th - Nathan Abshire • 1913 Gueydan, LA
------ Roy Wiggins • 1926 Nashville, TN
28th - Lester Flatt • 1914 Overton Co, TN
------ Groovy Joe Poovey • 1938 Dallas, TX
------ Lloyd Maines • 1951 Lubbock, TX
29th - Johnny Ace • 1929 Memphis, TN
------ Bill Kirchen • 1948 Bridgeport, CT
------ Tim Buckley † 1975
------ Lowell George † 1979

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15th, Redd Volkaert
16th, James McMurtry
17th, Durden Family, 11am
Monterey Pop 40th
Anniversary Tribute, 6pm
21st, Weary Boys
22nd, Big Brother
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24th, Durden Family, 11am
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