

ISSUE 11

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# GRINDSTONE

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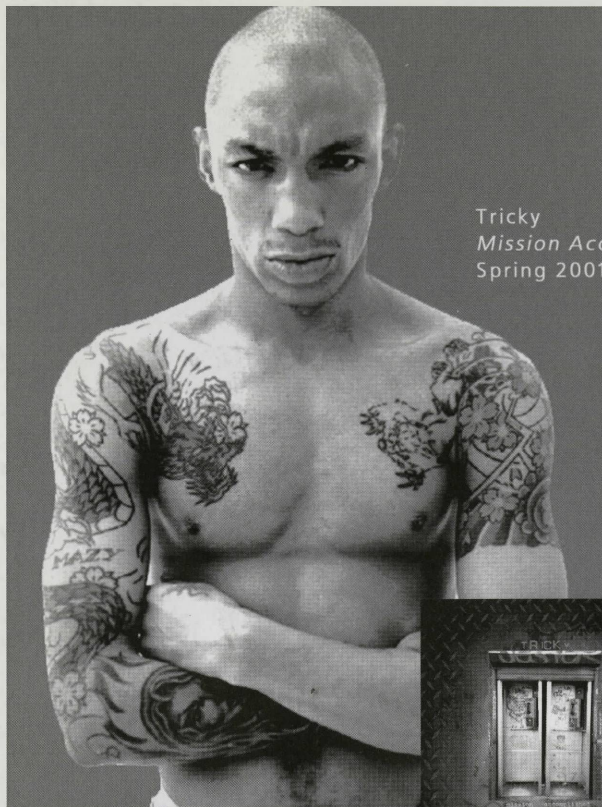
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HANK WILLIAMS III

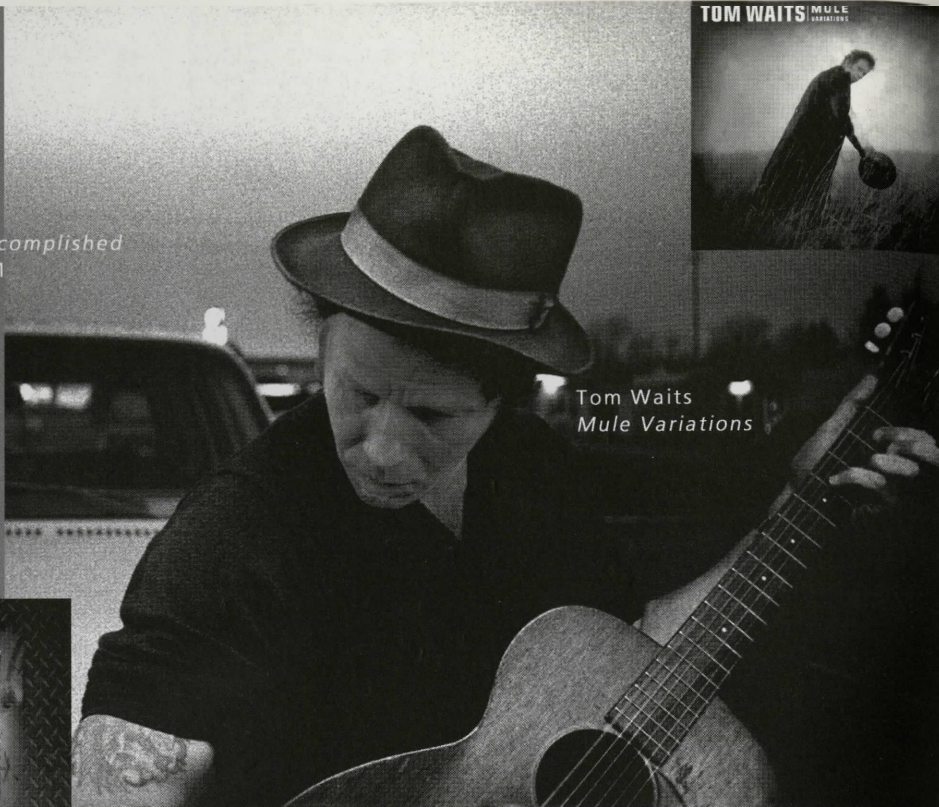
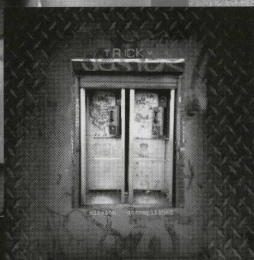
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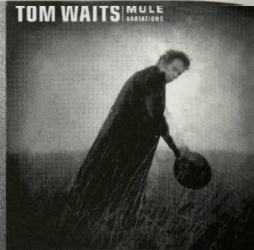




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**eleven**  
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H E L L B I L L Y H O N K Y T O N K E R

# HANK WILLIAMS III

Interview by **Charles Andrews**

photography by **Robert Matheu**

and **Pamela Esposito**





Discussing the three Hank Williamses can get confusing enough.  
I don't mean to add to it, but...

## just which Hank Williams are we talking about here?

If you hadn't heard of him, you might be asking,

"Hank Williams Jr.'s got a boy making music? That would be Hank Sr.'s grandkid?!"

# Whoo-ee *bet he's a ringer."*

R I G H T S O F A R

Maybe you learned of him from the deservedly obscure '96 Curb Records release, 'Three Hanks'. Three reputations sullied. Hank Jr. and the son he ditched 20 years before at age 4, harmonizing in the studio with the disembodied voice of Sr., nearly half a century in the grave.

If you heard that record and thought it wasn't so great, bad concepts, brain-dead arrangements and mediocre playing, at best—worked OK for Natalie Cole and her dead daddy, but they kinda drained the life out of Hank's songs in the process—then you'd have the same opinion of it that Hank the Youngest does. A sham, he calls it.

If you are aware of Hank III (as he's most often called), it's more likely through his 'Risín' Outlaw' album released on Curb last year. It's drenched in the words and spirit and licks of the kind of honky-tonkin' music Nashville now disdains and fears, but with aural clues that these country players can rock real hard.

That record took months to even hit 7,000 sales, not because it isn't good but because there's just no way in hillbilly hell to market it. Except the hardest way: on the road. Club by bar by roadhouse, from Sunset Strip to Berlin. Getting yelled at in cow towns to sing Hank Sr. songs, getting goosed in urban dives into rockin' out. Opening for Ray Price one night and Nashville Pussy the next, for Rev.

Horton Heat in front of big crowds, and for Beck, and Neil Young, and very big crowds.

If you know Hank III because you've heard him live, you know what I'm talking about. You won't be shocked and heartbroken when you hear his next album (which he says will be called 'This Ain't Country') roar out of your speakers as a whisky amphetamine blast of screaming punk. Because depending on the venue and crowd, you're likely to hear him mix in small to large doses of the music he grew up loving and playing, and it ain't pretty and it ain't slow, the guitars don't twang and the bass don't walk.

He claims his granddaddy was the first cowpunk. There's plenty of evidence. He was such a wild one that the Grand Ole Opry wouldn't let him in their clubhouse until he'd piled up so many #1s they had no choice. When Hank the Eldest didn't change they tossed him out again, not long before his booze-and-pill-battered heart failed a few minutes before 1953. He was only 29, and at the peak of his career. Eleven #1s and three dozen Top10s in six years.

Hank Jr. shook Nashville in the '70s & '80s by fusing his country to loud electric Southern rock, with a rowdy reputation that equaled dear old Dad's and outdistanced it by a couple of decades. He once tumbled 500 feet off a mountain and split his

skull and ripped most of his face off, and found his greatest success after the reconstructive surgery healed. Now Hank III is ushering the family tradition into the 21st Century in his own hellbilly style.

The more you find out about him, the harder it is to make any simple statements. He told me he plans to be around a long time and now indulges only in "the slow death of pot and alcohol." But there are too many current stories and a recent intervention/rehab to take that at face value. In person he's got that seductive Southern country aw-shucks politeness, but seems to defer to no one and alters nothing for appearances.

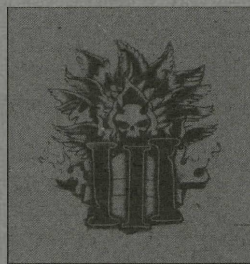
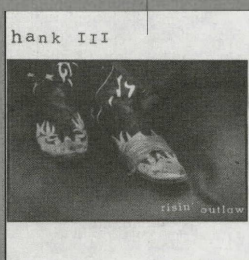
I seized an opportunity for a quick interview in his bus after Hank III's standout performance at Hootenanny 2000 in Irvine, CA, July 1, and apologized that I was without the tape recorder I didn't expect to need that day. He not only rustled one up for me (and pawed through at least a dozen cassettes scattered around the chaotic living quarters, popping them into a player one by one until he found one that wasn't a fragment of a song he was working on), but he gripped the recorder between his knees the whole time so it would be midpoint between us for balanced recording. Of course, that also freed his hands to create and then consume a mighty fat doobie during the interview.

***A true professional.***



1996 THREE HANKS

1999 RISIN' OUTLAW



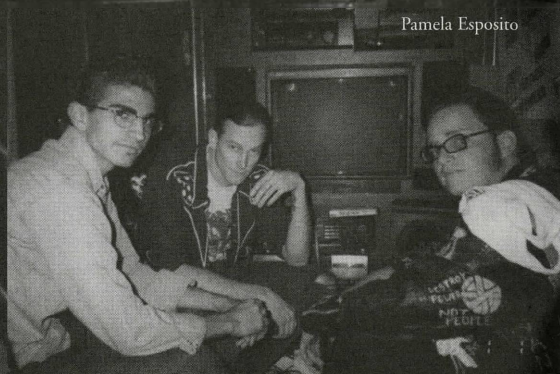
2000 HANK3 & ASSJACK BOOTLEGGED



it's nice having kids comin' up to me sayin',

"You rock!," instead of,  
"Boy, you sure look like and s

H I L L B I L L Y H O W L E R



Pamela Esposito

**GM** How did that first album come about?

**H3** The "Three Hanks"? Or the "Ris'in' Outlaw"?

**GM** Well, what about "Three Hanks"?

**H3** The "Three Hanks" was more of a sham. They (Curb Records) had all three Hanks singin', Hank Williams, Hank Jr. and me. I really didn't want to do it, I told 'em why don't you wait seven, eight years and let me get my own fan base. I really didn't like it, especially the way they recorded the Hank Williams songs, but, um... it was all right. Then we moved on to the 'Ris'in' Outlaw'. It was a two-year battle gettin' that album out.

**GM** Why do you say it was a battle?

**H3** Because they rejected a lot of my songs. They were sayin' I was too country for radio.

**GM** (chuckles) "...too country?!"

**H3** Yes.

**GM** So I guess you showed them.

**H3** Well, I'm gettin' ready to. I've already got the second album written.

**GM** Has Curb heard that one?

**H3** Not yet. They will whenever they call me into the studio.

**GM** What do you think Curb's going to think about that?

**H3** I'm gonna tell 'em, either my way or you can take me to court and sue me for what I've got, which is really not that much. (laughs) You'll be able to tell, my next album [after that] will be a lot more traditional sounding...

**GM** Traditional?

**H3** 'This Ain't Country' is gonna be the rock album, we're recording a rock album in August. [Then, the traditional record will be] mixed more raw, and you can hear the doghouse bass a lot more, and there'll be some Hawaiian steel on it.

**GM** Oh, so there'll be another one...

**H3** After that. After the rock album.

**GM** Then, you're going to go back to traditional again.

**H3** Yes.

**GM** You are really confusing people.

**H3** (laughs, big grin) Ahhh... I know it. The next country album might be called 'Lovesick, Broke and Driftin'. We'll see.

**GM** I read that you've got people coming up to you saying you're not as good as your daddy, or your granddaddy, or you're better than him. How does that whole weight of history affect you?

**H3** I just try not to think about it. It's got its good and its bad. It does open the doors, and I get to meet heroes of mine, like from the Knitters, Exene. She told a friend, "You better get out there and check out Hank III," and that's an honor just to hear stuff like that. But I'll never be the writer Hank Williams was, 'cause I'm just... I'm just different. He was a one-of-a-kind kinda guy. Each Hank Williams has got their own uniqueness.

**GM** It seems like the words are important to you.

**H3** Oh yeah. (muffled, after another hit) I can write, but I can't get as deep as him. Sometimes. Sometimes I can. But he had words like, uh...uh, man, umm, sheeeeeoooo.....uh, like in, uh...

*I'm not trying to hold Hank III up to ridicule here, but his inability at that moment, no doubt due to the aforementioned joint, to come up with a single Hank Williams lyric was too good to keep a secret. It seemed kind of... endearing. Definitely genuine.*

**GM** "I'm So..." (I prompt, mercifully)

**H3** ..... "I'm So Lonesome.....I Could Cry."

**GM** Stuff that resonates 50 years later.

**H3** Right. It's hard. So I just try not to think about it and do my thing day by day, and try to have as much fun with it as possible.

**GM** So when you had a chance to make the first solo album, did you think, I've got to be careful what I say because I've got this name?

**H3** No, I don't care about what I say, the next album will prove that. We're pretty raw, and tell it the way it is. I love playin' country, and I love rockin' out too. It might confuse some people, but we don't want to be one-hit wonders, we want to stick around a long time. We care about the road not the radio, we don't write songs for the radio. I write songs for myself.

**GM** So when it comes to the end of the road, do you have any thoughts about how you'd like to be remembered?

**H3** Uh... I don't know, I just want to get my... dark side and my happy side out there, and people will say, "Well, maybe Hank III was little crazier, and confused a lot of people in his wilder days but then he straightened up towards the end," and when I get older I'll probably just do official country, and grow old with my fans.

**GM** You don't want to check out as early as your granddaddy...

**H3** No, no, I don't. I don't have no death wish, none at all.

**GM** So does that mean you've kind of changed your younger ways?

**H3** No, I have a good time. I do the slow death, alcohol and pot. (chuckles)

**GM** I think some people, who are looking to you to sort of... save country music, are going to feel let down when they hear the second album, the hard rocker...

**H3** Well, that's why the third one... (chuckles), you know. But I'll be gaining respect from a lot of kids out there, and it's nice having kids comin' up to me sayin', "You rock!," instead of, "Boy, you sure look like and sound like your granddaddy."

**GM** So you're getting both reactions, and those are the two sides of you, because you grew up playing that kind of music. You really didn't rediscover country music until you were about 21.

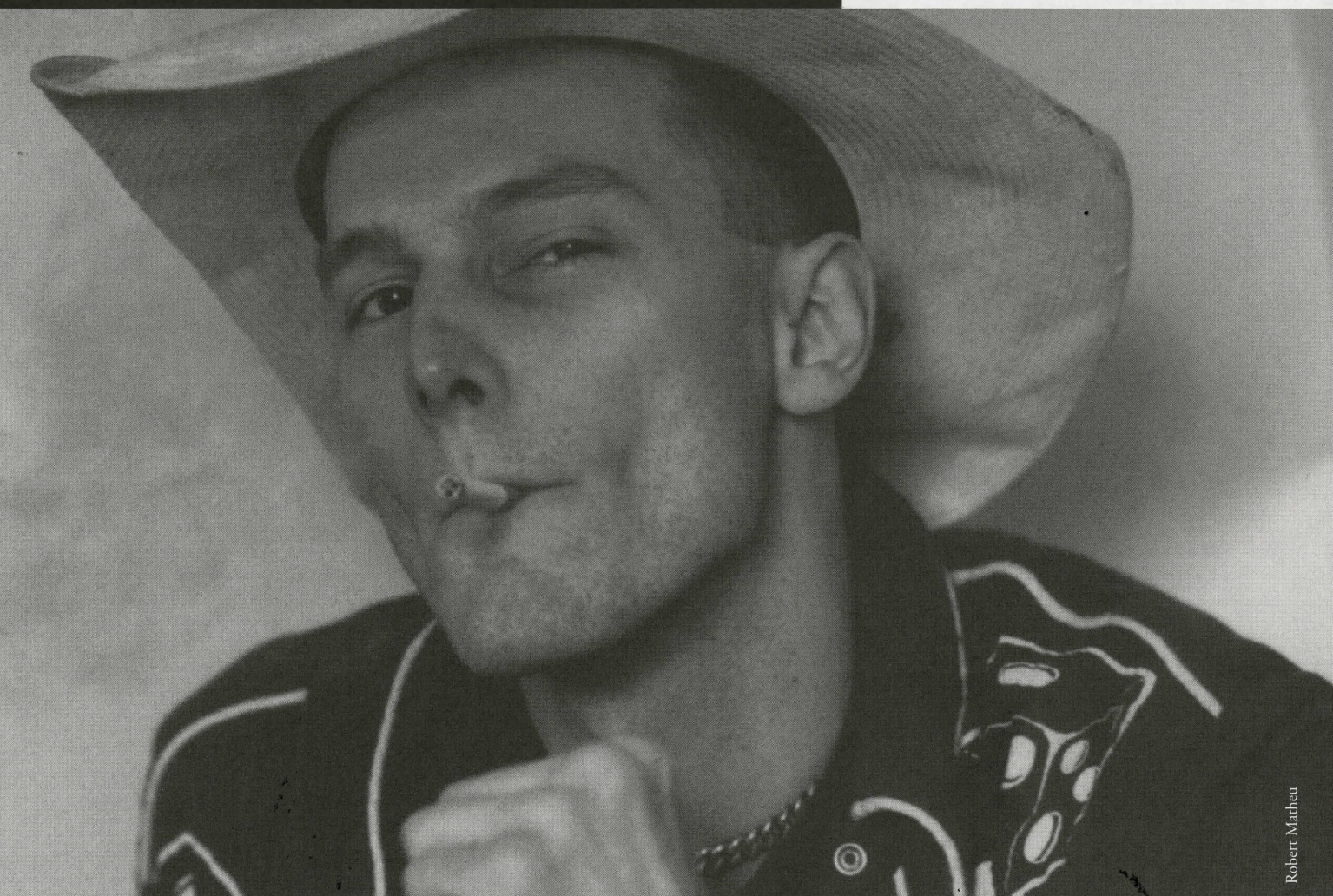
**H3** Yeah, I really didn't start studying it until then. When you're a player and songwriter, it's like going to school...

**GM** So you'd like both Merle Haggard and Ozzy Osbourne to come up and say, "Your set rocks."

**H3** Absolutely. Absolutely. Or be on both of their albums. That's the versatility we want. It's great. One night we open up for Ray Price and the next night we open up for Nashville Pussy, so we couldn't ask for more. We just want to stick around and play, man.



ound like your granddaddy.”



Robert Matheu



One last telling anecdote: It is hard to say just how calculating Shelton Hank Williams III is. He didn't embrace country music until served with a paternity suit that his punk gigs couldn't pay for. (If you get to hear the bootleg of his current thrash stuff, you'll quickly realize he could never get signed with that music. But it is effective live. His band could hold their own in any Hollywood rock dive.) His first country gigs were in Branson, doing Hank Williams songs in a spangly suit and a big white hat. But then... that's exactly how his daddy started, too.

For all his seeming down-home ingenuousness – and he is in person a very unpretentious, likable guy – when you start adding things up you realize here is a musician as aware and calculating about his career as a Garth Brooks or a Madonna. It may be a small thing, but when I got his autograph on the CD, under his name he wrote “2000.” Like Willie Mays does these days. Because a '57 Willie Mays signature is worth a lot more than a '00 one. You've got to be fairly hip to show biz to know that, and you've got to figure you're going to be around a long time and you're going to be Big.

Ain't nothin' wrong with that, as long as the goods are in the grooves. ***If the shoe fits...***

**Hank Williams III is represented by**  
**Artist Information**

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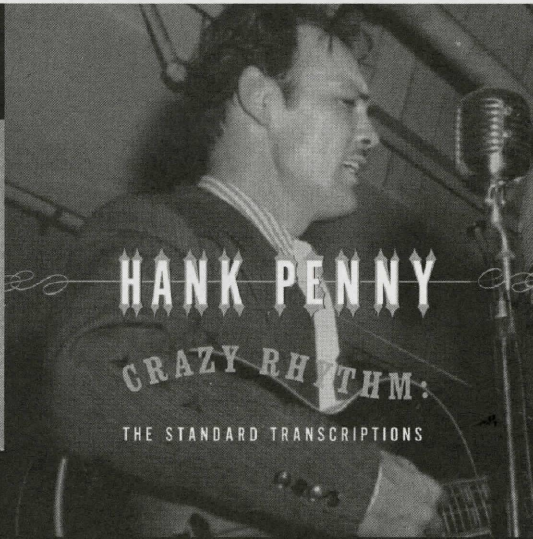
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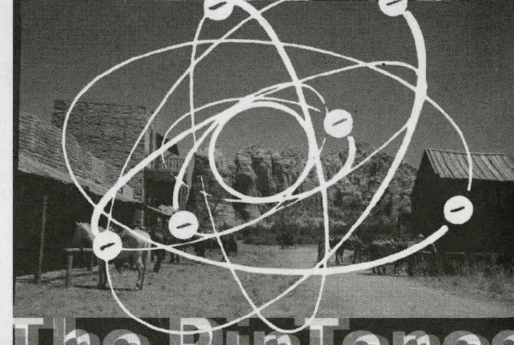
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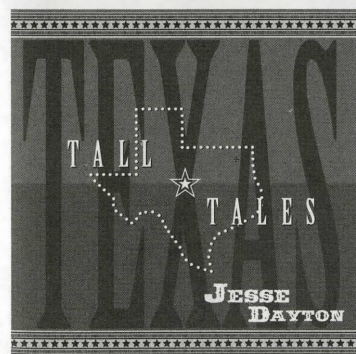
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-The Houston Chronicle



*When Nick Curran decided to record a full length release for Texas Jamboree Records nobody really knew what to expect. All anybody knew was that it was going to be a blues record. And that's what Nick gave us. But who knew that this guy possessed pipes that could raise the hair on the back of your neck? Geez! And his guitar playing was firmly in the pocket. Nick had smartly avoided the stale white boy/SRV blues of his peers and instead tapped into the great jump rhythm and blues that reigned supreme from the early to mid-fifties. You can hear the influence of such artists as Johnny "Guitar" Watson, Guitar Slim, Roy Brown and Little Richard. Nick has definitely spent a good deal of time sifting through 78s on labels like Specialty, RPM, Duke, and Imperial. And now it is my pleasure to introduce to you, from Dallas, Texas... Nick Curran and the Nitelives.*

**Nick Curran is on**  
**Artist Information**

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In the fall of 1999, Nick Curran was still playing with Kim Lenz and her Jaguars. But when Derek Peterson invited him to do a recording session in Austin Nick jumped at the opportunity. This was Nick's first time to record at my brother's studio, Fort Horton, and we were all excited to have him along. He played alongside Leroy Biller on a track called "Here 'Tis".

After that, Nick headed back to Dallas where he had to get ready to record Kim Lenz's 'One And Only' record. After that initial session, however, he kept in touch with Billy Horton and said that he'd like to cut a solo blues 45. Billy quickly informed him that it would be just as cheap to record and put out a CD!

And that's just what happened. 'Fixin' Your Head' was recorded live in three days in Austin, Texas, with some top-notch musicians. Billy was responsible for getting Lisa Pankratz to drum on the disc. Nick knew Murph Motycka from his days back in Maine and he also wanted to use Eric Przygocki on upright bass. Billy decided to flush out the session with another sax player (Jim Trimmier) and was aiming to get T Jarrod Bonta on piano. But when they found out that T was in Europe with Marti Brom they were forced to scramble. Their search lead them to a Monday

night blues jam at Antone's. They approached Riley Osborne but he was unavailable for the session. But another young piano pounder, Matt Farrell, was at the club that night! Billy and Nick quizzed Matt on his influences and he passed. The puzzle was complete!

'Fixin' Your Head' was released in the Spring of 2000 and the newcomer has been lauded with great reviews. Yes, the record is a departure from the rockabilly he played with Kim Lenz and the rock and roll he played with Ronnie Dawson. This is the real deal. Authentic, '50s-style r&b. And when Nick had time off from touring with Ronnie Dawson he decided to embark on his first West Coast tour in the summer of 2000. Thus was born his new band... the Nitelives.

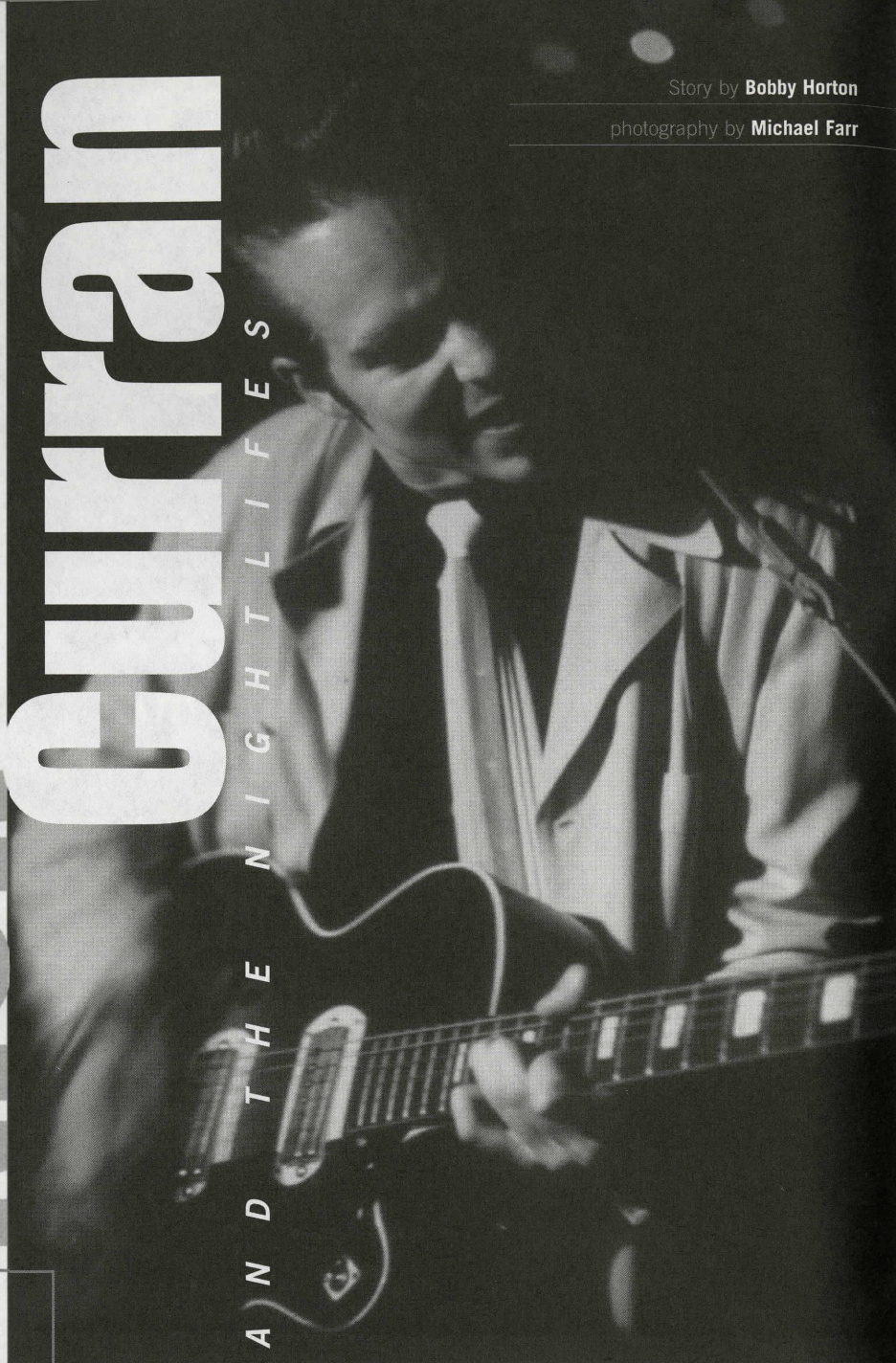
The Nitelives consist of honkin' tenor player Murph Motycka and upright bassist Eric Przygocki from the record. The newest member of the band is drummer Phillip Law. Law is a young drummer from Dallas who really compliments the rhythm section. The west coast tour was quite a success and he plans to continue touring. Don't miss this band when they hit your town!

Story by **Bobby Horton**

photography by **Michael Farr**

# Nick Curran

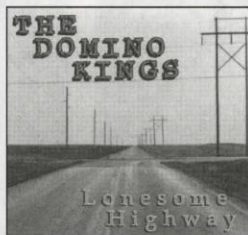
AND THE NITELIVES





**Real** Authentic is a word that certainly comes to mind when one sees the Domino Kings for the first time. These guys are the real deal. Hailing from a small town in southwestern Missouri, they have managed to capture the true essence of Americana music. A heartfelt blend of country, rockabilly, bluegrass and gospel dictates the mid-tempo sounds of the Domino Kings. In this part of the country, only one other source of entertainment can claim a larger draw and that would be the Bass Pro Shop! Yee Hāww!

# domino Kings



Story by **James Dooms**

photography by **Jenny Fillmer**

With a biting country twang, a rockabilly beat and hard-time laden lyrics, the Domino Kings have reached modest success with their debut album, 'Lonesome Highway.' This album contains songs about highway drivin', train ridin' and killin' songs that paint such a vivid image in the listeners mind that you would swear you were there!

When asked about the story behind the 1950's style country ballad "Last Letter," guitarist Stevie Newman replied with a chuckle, "Oh, I stole it from an old blind black guy playin' the blues. Naw, I wrote that a couple of days after my first wife and I split up. It was sorta about my daughter but more about the split. The other guys in the band made me take the line about her being "a money grubbing whore" out of the song. And the part about three nights on a hardwood floor with no blanket or pillow..."

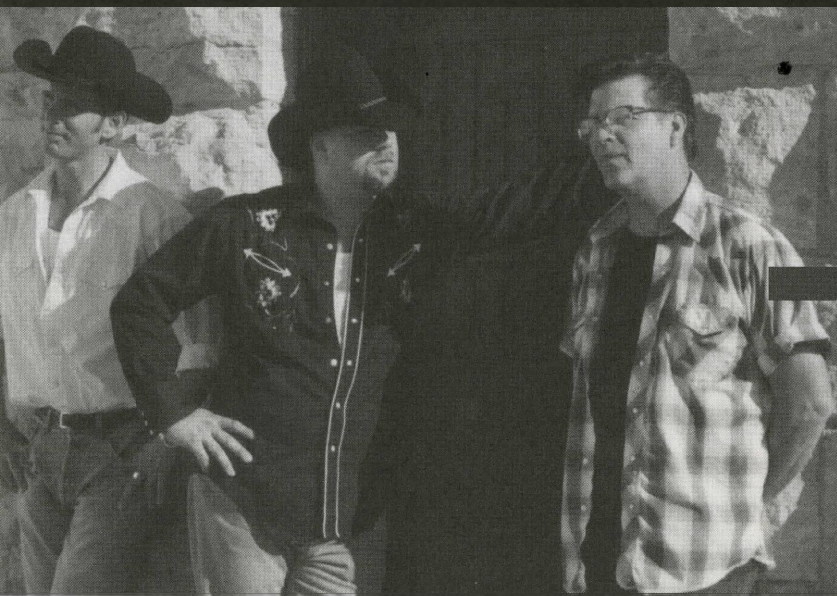
Another song that stands out on 'Lonesome Highway' is a train riding song "Ride, Ride, Ride." Les Gallier's drumming keeps a steady driving beat like an old steam engine while Brian Capps thumps the doghouse and sings a sorrowful song of running from a lost love. "[It] was a song that I wrote before [the band was] ever together. I wrote the lyrics when I was stuck in a train stop waitin' for a train to pass. It stopped right in front of me and I waited forever! I just decided that I needed to write a train song," Brian Capps modestly states.

In addition to the Domino Kings being some of the best musicians you'll ever encounter, they agree that their lyrics are the most important aspect of their music. Newman summed up with a single comment, "I feel lyrics are only important if the people can understand 'em. Like I always say, you ain't gonna spend 15 minutes groovin' to one of our songs like some Grateful Dead jam."

With over 100 original songs to choose from, it is obvious that songwriting is a priority for the band. Newman continues, "With our songs, I want to walk that fine line between serious songwriters like Steve Earl and your "party" bands like the Rev. Horton Heat... those bands that people like to go out and cut loose to. I want to balance right in between those two songwriting styles. People take your songs serious but they can go out to see your show and have a good time!"

The Domino Kings began recording their second album, 'Life And 20', back in June. When confronted about the feel of this new recording, the band stated that, "It has a real Honky Tonk sound to it. It's not goin' to be "retro"... we don't consider the first one "retro". It's by no means going to be Garth Brooks or anything like that!" Recording took place at Lou Whitney's (the Skeletons) The Studio, in Springfield, Missouri. "We have a real advantage working with Lou. He really knows how our music is supposed to sound and how to get that sound to the album."

Hard work and determination have been the backbone of their blossoming careers. When asked about any big breaks, Capps responded with an almost Johnny Cash sounding voice, "I don't know that we have had a real big break. We have had to work real hard for everything. We've earned it... every bit of it." Recently a chance meeting landed them in front of 200,000 people at the Summerfest in Pensacola, FL. Despite the incredible exposure and the fun they had, the Domino Kings agree that the intimate setting of small clubs is their true love.



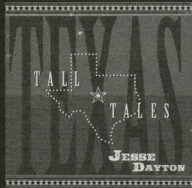
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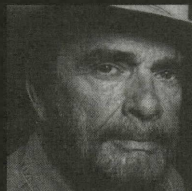


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One of the last of a dying breed, Jesse's raucous, bluesy, country twang harkens back to the days when bands played on stages protected by chicken wire and a drunk sheriff. Perhaps the perfect record for today's music fan who's looking for a little depth and authenticity, something today's radio waves are desperately lacking.

Pete Anderson



## Merle Haggard If I Could Only Fly

Anti-Inc./Epitaph Records  
2798 Sunset Blvd. LA, CA 90026

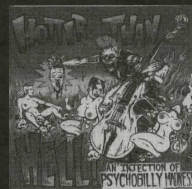
The Lonesome Fugitive! Mama Tried! Swinging Doors! Just a few of the songs sung by the man who, alongside Buck Owens & Wynn Stewart, defined the Bakersfield sound.

Well, guess what? The Hag is back, & it ain't no NashVegas record label that's putting it out. It's distributed by California-based punk rock label Epitaph, which also has T-Model Ford and Tom Waits on their roster. Epitaph is helping to save American music... God bless someone for having the balls to step up to the plate!

Hag's new release 'If I could Only Fly' throws him back in the spotlight with his legendary band The Strangers. From the laid-back weeper of "Wishing All These Old Things Were New" (where prison & cocaine are just old hat) to "Honky Tonk Mama" (where Merle pours all his Fats Waller & Jimmie Rodgers roots out), this is a must for real country fans.

Incidentally, I met Merle while opening some shows for him in Texas & he was one of the coolest guys I've ever met. So if you're driving home late at night (which I seem to do a lot), pop in this recording and think about what old Merle's seen & done... It makes for a hell of a ride!

Jesse Dayton



## Hotter Than Hell An Injection of Psychobilly Madness

Hairball 8 Records  
PO Box 26500 #111 San Diego, CA 92196

This CD can best be described as "Psychobilly 201". This has some of the best and brightest from what some might call the next generation of psychobilly. Thanks to the miracle of the CD, Hairball 8 crammed more than TWO DOZEN different acts on here, and when I say different, I MEAN different! There are some definite stark contrasts between the lineup in here with some notable acts like the Linkin' Logs, Los Gatos Locos, the Brainbats, Bea Pickles, and the Hillbilly Hellcats. This is definitely worth putting in your collection to impress your friends with this find.

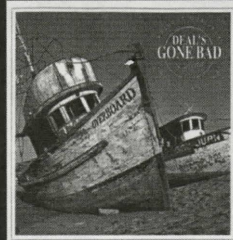
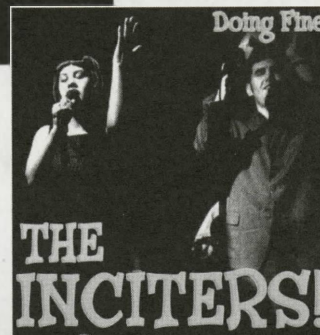
Peter Altescu

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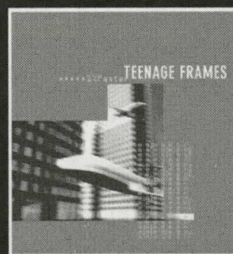
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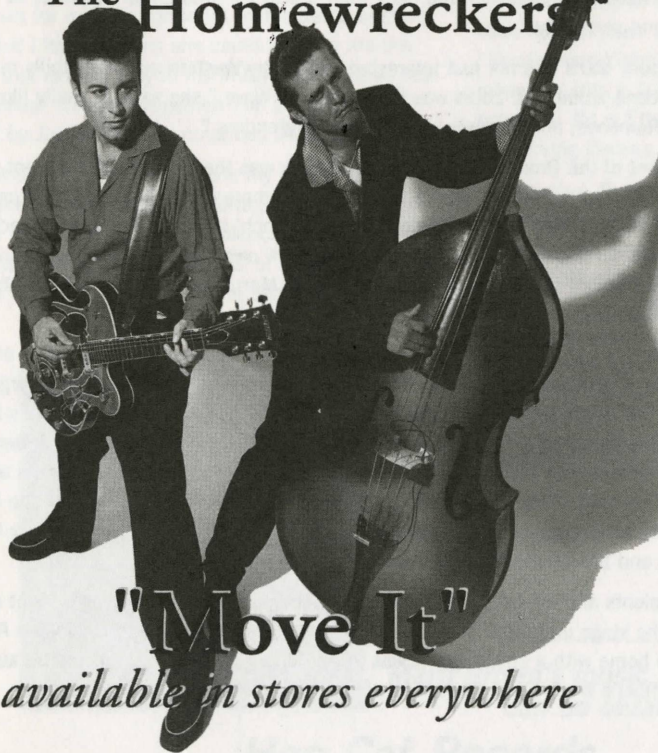
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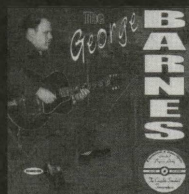
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# REVIEWS



## The George Barnes Octet The Complete Standard Transcriptions

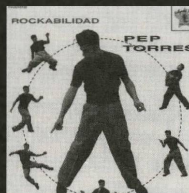
Soundies Records  
800.832.8388  
www.soundies.com

George Barnes, if you know his name at all, is one of the great minor characters of jazz. A kind of prodigy guitarist in the thirties, he was one of Chicago's local hotshots, who went on to work with the really huge names of the day.

Barnes always had a reputation as one of the greats, but it was based on music that few (if any) people had ever heard, played by this octet he had in Chicago. Well, now it's sixty years after the fact, and nobody really cares about George Barnes anymore. No matter.

The Barnes Octet was really incredible, a strikingly original group that played highly arranged jazz with classical leanings, much like John Kirby or Raymond Scott. The difference is that this group is really based around the guitar. And Barnes was a pretty edgy player. Hearing this, you can definitely figure out what the Bob Wills guys were checking out in addition to Charlie Christian. Don't buy this cuz it's the missing link, though. Buy this cuz it's amazing, and because George really deserves new respect.

Skip Heller



## Pep Torres Rockabilidad

Hollywood Vintage Records  
PO Box 480662 Hollywood, CA 90048

If you try to compare Pep Torres to Ritchie Valens, you had better duck because Mr. Torres might hit you over the head with his 6 string. And don't confuse Torres' version of "La Bomba" with Valens' song "La Bamba".

'Rockabilidad' is the latest efforts of Mexican-American singer Pep Torres. Filled with 18 songs, this CD is worth the price. Torres has written 4 of the 18 tracks and displays a promising talent for authenticity and witty lyric writing. The CD's lead track "Dimelo" is an uptempo number sung in Spanish. His tongue-in-cheek humor on "Bear Out There" is clever and catchy. A collaborated effort of Torres and Big Al Downing on "I Wanna Get Back" provides one of the disks brightest moments.

Torres embraces his Latin roots and re-works tired covers in a clever way by singing the all too familiar lyrics in Spanish. His version of "O Boy" is carefully disguised as "O No" and "Happy Baby" (recorded by Bill Haley and the Comets) gets a Latin makeover. The homage to the Latin pioneers continues in the liner notes and credits many lesser-known pioneers of "Rocanrol".

It will be interesting to see Torres grows into his creativity and reaches a little further into his obvious talent for music. This CD is filled with bright moments, however, at times I was thrown off by the artist's hesitation at some of the lyrics and the sparse arrangements in some songs. More experimentation with chord changes and other instruments would add depth, as well as extra backing vocals of the Gabardine Four. Torres "Rockabilidad" is a nice example of an artist first draft; I am looking forward to hearing the final project.

Toni Czechorosky



# The Style of MARTI

Interview by **Toni M. Czechorosky**

in collaboration with **Marti Brom**

*The name Marti Brom, one of the foremost voices in the modern rockabilly scene, brings to mind the picture of a fearless, feisty female shimmying and strutting on stage as she delivers 100 proof lyrics to rollicking' tunes played furiously by the boys backing her. Taking a second look at her, one takes into account her amazing vocal abilities and musical gifts, but there is much more to her. Marti's style is down-home sweetness holding a cocked and loaded pistol. Her ready smile and sophisticated demeanor cut a fetching figure in a scene dominated by tattoo-sporting greasers and biker chick chic.*

As I prepared to interview her, I contemplated Marti's style, both musical and personal, and was delighted to have the opportunity to find out what influenced her. Musically there are hints of Patsy Cline in her sassy delivery. I have also heard a bit of Elvis in her phrasing and seen some Judy Garland in her showmanship.

She was the youngest of 3 children in a fairly creative St. Louis family. "My father was a newspaperman, my mother painted. One sister played the guitar a bit," she recalls. "My other sister and I built a darkroom. I still would like to pursue photography."

Musically, she was influenced by many entertainers. "I always sang in glee club, I was a soprano in choir. One of my early music teachers left such an impression on me because she was a lounge singer. I just thought that was so great! I was in awe of her." Marti continues, "Judy Garland was a huge influence on me. I used to watch old movies, MGM musicals. I watched South Pacific, West Side Story, Show Boat... I really like early Barbra Streisand, too. I admired her and Judy Garland for their powerful delivery and grand showmanship."

"I didn't start listening to Patsy Cline until my early twenties. Michael Stipe (of REM) was a friend of mine in St. Louis before he moved to Athens. One day he told me that I had a quality to my voice that reminded him of Patsy Cline and that I should listen to her records. They weren't very easy to find back then. I also admired Linda Ronstadt for her strong voice and versatility."

As a young adult, Marti was not just interested in Country/Western and Rockabilly music. "The music scene around St. Louis was primarily New Wave," she says. "I really liked Blondie, the Ramones, and Chrissie Hynde of the Pretenders."

Another element of the Brom style I found fascinating was the level of commitment not just to her art, but also to her family. With a foundation of impressive releases (including 'Lassoed Live', 'Mean' and the most recent, 'Snake Ranch' in which Brom is backed by the Barnshakers, an impressive rockabilly group in their own right), it would seem ideal and obvious that she would be touring non-stop. However, Marti's priority of family and home keep her touring dates short and sweet.

"I do very little touring, since I am not willing to leave my family for a long period of time. When I do tour, I plan a succession of dates around an event or a place that we target. Such as Viva Las Vegas and some of the European Countries since the Barnshakers live in Finland." She elaborates, "I love the Barnshakers. They revived my interest in performing. They are as much at ease playing a Country tune as R&B or Rockabilly, or even an occasional Eartha Kitt number. What is great about the Barnshakers is that they take all the musical influences they have mastered and create their own original sound. Their versatility has really shaped and broadened my own musical direction."

Despite her talents and life-long obsession with theatrical presentation, stage fright actually kept her off the stage until after she was married. One day her husband Bobby, an Air Force Officer, came home with a challenge. It was in the form of a flyer which listed an audition call for an Officer's Wives Club production of 'The 1940's Radio Hour'.





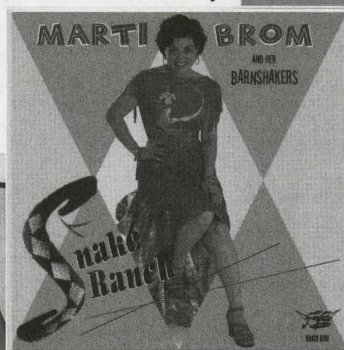
# BROM

"Bobby was surprised when I hesitated because the material and the costuming were right up my alley. He finally said that if I didn't go for this, I probably wasn't serious about someday going on stage." She declared, "I did it. I just decided he was right and I had to do it once and for all even though I became physically ill at my previous attempts at performing. At the audition I sort of hid behind the piano, but landed the starring role. After the opening performance dancing in my slip in an Aircraft hangar before a bunch of hootin' and hollerin' servicemen, my stage fright permanently disappeared. I just loved it."

Another aspect of the Brom style and something that is Marti's signature, is her manner of dress when performing. I remember the first time I saw her in Austin at SxSW about 3 years ago. She was wearing the sassiest black fringe dress complete with silver spider web appliques. Creating the image of a gal who means business, Marti designs and helps create each and every one of the costumes she dons when performing.

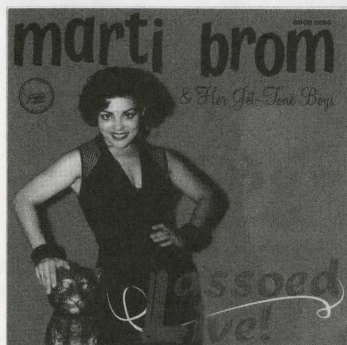
"I used to be fascinated with dress up! I also worked with vintage clothes and eventually became a display artist," she said. "I love to get really creative with my costumes. A gal in Austin named Susan Penn makes most of my stage clothes. When I approached her, she was known for making wonderful embroidered western shirts. But I had a feeling she could bring to life the dresses that existed only in my imagination. We've now made several creations together. The latest one was inspired by Jimmy Dickens notorious Devil suit."

She continues, "Susan also made my Snake dress. I dreamt about that dress for months, since getting the idea from a painting of a snake charmer on an old circus banner. I never grew out of playing dress-up and that is a big part of my fun in performing."



Marti's latest project is another extension of her ever evolving style. "I love finding obscure recordings of singers that most people haven't heard" she explains. "I heard a song called 'Feudin' and Fightin'" on a local radio station by a singer named Dorothy Shay. I loved it. I soon found a Dorothy Shay album while at a thrift store and bought it right then and there. Dorothy Shay was a jazzy lounge act famous for her hillbilly schtick. I took it to Western Swing bandleader Cornell Hurd and we started playing that and similar material live at Jovita's Cantina in Austin. I enjoyed it so much that we have now released a 6 song EP of this material called "Feudin' and Fightin'". That was my first experience recording with a 10 piece band. One of the coolest songs we did is Ethel Merman's "Moonshine Lullaby" from Irving Berlin's musical 'Annie Get Your Gun'.

With such a diverse project upon us, I can only imagine what side of Marti Brom's style will emerge when she takes the stage to move into the next facet of her career. With style, poise, integrity, and a voice that melts your ears and heart like butter, I readily crown Marti the queen of contemporary rockabilly music. Let's just hope the queen doesn't keep her townspeople waiting too long for a glimpse of the royal procession.



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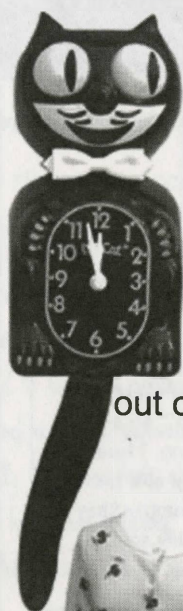
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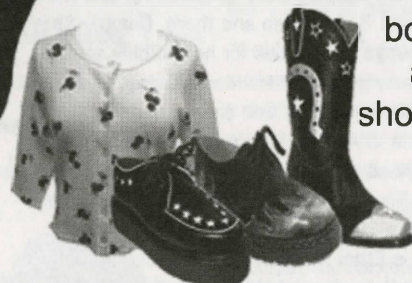
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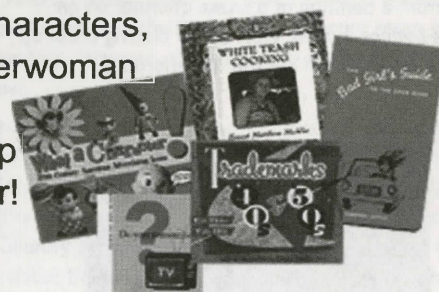
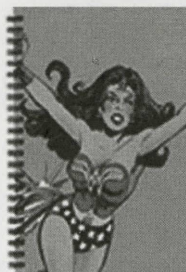
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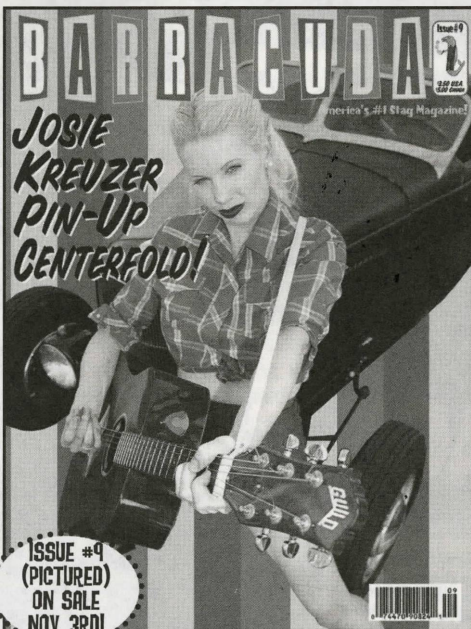
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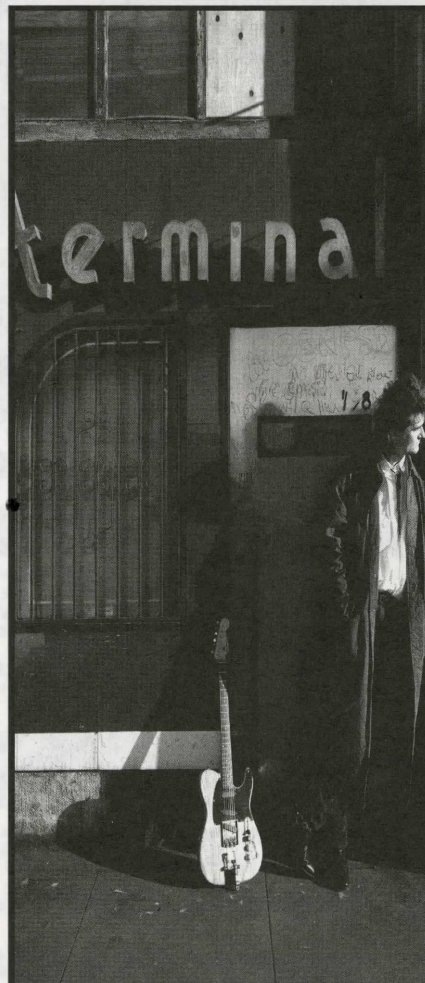
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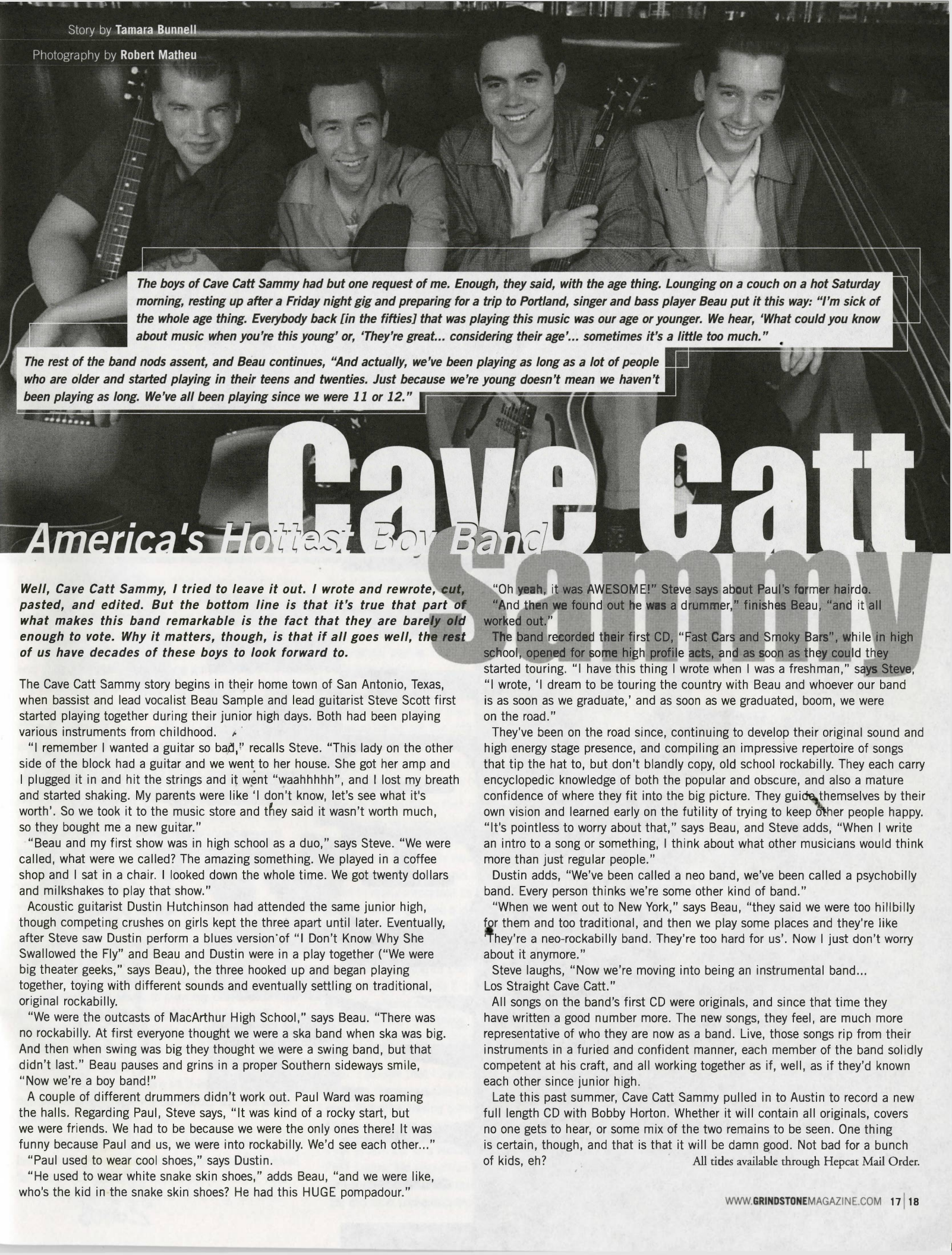
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*The boys of Cave Catt Sammy had but one request of me. Enough, they said, with the age thing. Lounging on a couch on a hot Saturday morning, resting up after a Friday night gig and preparing for a trip to Portland, singer and bass player Beau put it this way: "I'm sick of the whole age thing. Everybody back [in the fifties] that was playing this music was our age or younger. We hear, 'What could you know about music when you're this young' or, 'They're great... considering their age'... sometimes it's a little too much."*

*The rest of the band nods assent, and Beau continues, "And actually, we've been playing as long as a lot of people who are older and started playing in their teens and twenties. Just because we're young doesn't mean we haven't been playing as long. We've all been playing since we were 11 or 12."*

# Cave Catt America's Hottest Boy Band Sammy

**Well, Cave Catt Sammy, I tried to leave it out. I wrote and rewrote, cut, pasted, and edited. But the bottom line is that it's true that part of what makes this band remarkable is the fact that they are barely old enough to vote. Why it matters, though, is that if all goes well, the rest of us have decades of these boys to look forward to.**

The Cave Catt Sammy story begins in their home town of San Antonio, Texas, when bassist and lead vocalist Beau Sample and lead guitarist Steve Scott first started playing together during their junior high days. Both had been playing various instruments from childhood.

"I remember I wanted a guitar so bad," recalls Steve. "This lady on the other side of the block had a guitar and we went to her house. She got her amp and I plugged it in and hit the strings and it went 'waahhhhh', and I lost my breath and started shaking. My parents were like 'I don't know, let's see what it's worth'. So we took it to the music store and they said it wasn't worth much, so they bought me a new guitar."

"Beau and my first show was in high school as a duo," says Steve. "We were called, what were we called? The amazing something. We played in a coffee shop and I sat in a chair. I looked down the whole time. We got twenty dollars and milkshakes to play that show."

Acoustic guitarist Dustin Hutchinson had attended the same junior high, though competing crushes on girls kept the three apart until later. Eventually, after Steve saw Dustin perform a blues version of "I Don't Know Why She Swallowed the Fly" and Beau and Dustin were in a play together ("We were big theater geeks," says Beau), the three hooked up and began playing together, toying with different sounds and eventually settling on traditional, original rockabilly.

"We were the outcasts of MacArthur High School," says Beau. "There was no rockabilly. At first everyone thought we were a ska band when ska was big. And then when swing was big they thought we were a swing band, but that didn't last." Beau pauses and grins in a proper Southern sideways smile, "Now we're a boy band!"

A couple of different drummers didn't work out. Paul Ward was roaming the halls. Regarding Paul, Steve says, "It was kind of a rocky start, but we were friends. We had to be because we were the only ones there! It was funny because Paul and us, we were into rockabilly. We'd see each other..."

"Paul used to wear cool shoes," says Dustin.

"He used to wear white snake skin shoes," adds Beau, "and we were like, who's the kid in the snake skin shoes? He had this HUGE pompadour."

"Oh yeah, it was AWESOME!" Steve says about Paul's former hairdo.

"And then we found out he was a drummer," finishes Beau, "and it all worked out."

The band recorded their first CD, "Fast Cars and Smoky Bars", while in high school, opened for some high profile acts, and as soon as they could they started touring. "I have this thing I wrote when I was a freshman," says Steve, "I wrote, 'I dream to be touring the country with Beau and whoever our band is as soon as we graduate,' and as soon as we graduated, boom, we were on the road."

They've been on the road since, continuing to develop their original sound and high energy stage presence, and compiling an impressive repertoire of songs that tip the hat to, but don't blandly copy, old school rockabilly. They each carry encyclopedic knowledge of both the popular and obscure, and also a mature confidence of where they fit into the big picture. They guide themselves by their own vision and learned early on the futility of trying to keep other people happy. "It's pointless to worry about that," says Beau, and Steve adds, "When I write an intro to a song or something, I think about what other musicians would think more than just regular people."

Dustin adds, "We've been called a neo band, we've been called a psychobilly band. Every person thinks we're some other kind of band."

"When we went out to New York," says Beau, "they said we were too hillbilly for them and too traditional, and then we play some places and they're like 'They're a neo-rockabilly band. They're too hard for us'. Now I just don't worry about it anymore."

Steve laughs, "Now we're moving into being an instrumental band... Los Straight Cave Catt."

All songs on the band's first CD were originals, and since that time they have written a good number more. The new songs, they feel, are much more representative of who they are now as a band. Live, those songs rip from their instruments in a furied and confident manner, each member of the band solidly competent at his craft, and all working together as if, well, as if they'd known each other since junior high.

Late this past summer, Cave Catt Sammy pulled in to Austin to record a new full length CD with Bobby Horton. Whether it will contain all originals, covers no one gets to hear, or some mix of the two remains to be seen. One thing is certain, though, and that is that it will be damn good. Not bad for a bunch of kids, eh?

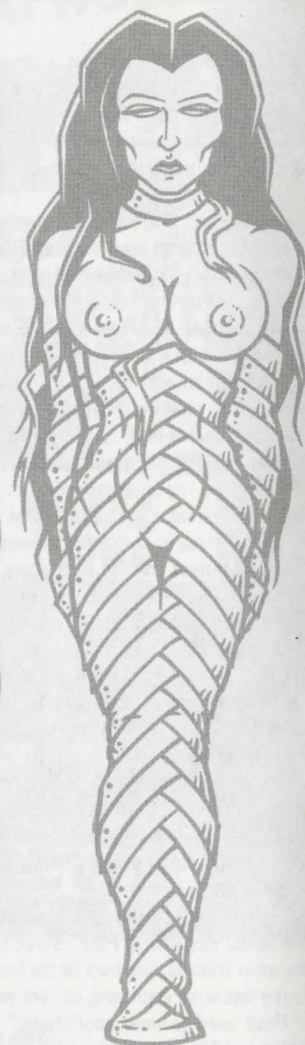
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**"I like pissing  
people off,"**

*says Dan Collins*

*Normally, if I heard somebody say that, I'd think 'What an idiot.' But I know Dan, and he's a good guy. Dan doesn't go out of his way to be rude to people, or anything like that. He's just being himself, but people who are uptight or closed minded could get offended. For instance, some might not like the name of his car club, The Pedestrian Killers.*



**© Dan  
Collins**

M R . B A D W R E N C H

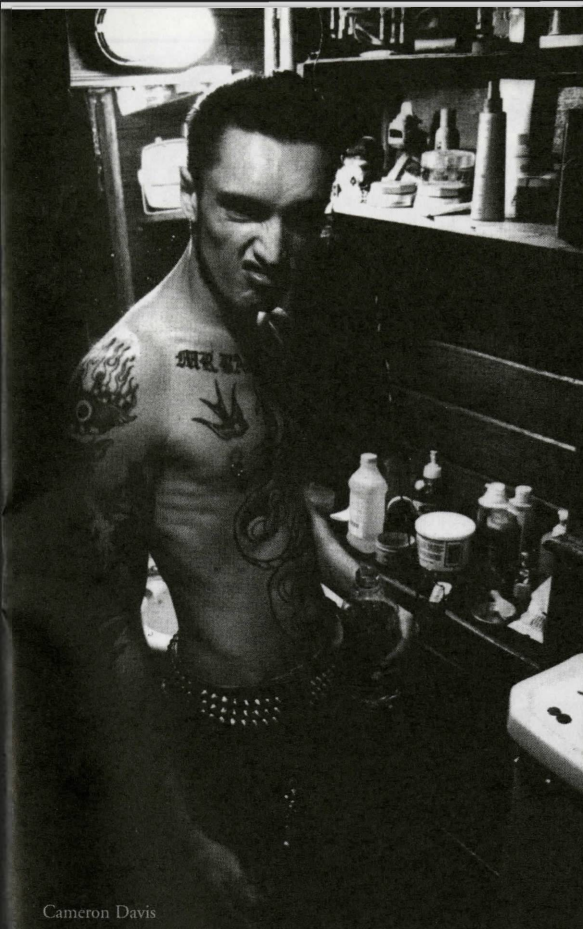
# DAN COLLINS BUSTER

Story by **Cameron Davis**

photography by **Michael Farr**

and **Cameron Davis**





Cameron Davis

There are two things in particular that fascinate me about Dan. One is that people just seem to want to be around him — some guys got it, some guys don't. The other thing that intrigues me is the spectrum of his talents; he works on cars, he paints, he plays in a band, he designs clothes and he even models. And it just kills me that he's so young!

First and foremost in Dan's world is art: "That's the thing that I'm going to be doing until the day that I die, no matter what. It's cool to be your own boss, but at the same time it's hard to get your ass out of bed in the morning. I'm not good at getting up early unless there's a car show to go to. I don't have as much discipline as I should. I should be working 8 hours a day, 6 days a week doing nothing but art."

Working with paints on canvas gets a bit boring at times, so Dan does commercial stuff with pen and ink on artboard, enamels on metal and whatever else he stumbles across. And he's becoming computer literate by trial and error, and feels he's good enough to get a 'real' job doing graphics if need be. When asked if he's ever had a regular job, he emotes, "Ya, I've worked a lot of regular jobs, and it sucks! I've worked doin' one thing or another since I was 14. I might have to get a regular job someday, you never know. I'm running around like a madman and I don't even have a regular paycheck coming in."

When not involved in something art related, you'll find Dan in the custom car scene or in the music scene. The music was all around him growing up... "I was listening to Eddie Cochran and The Stray Cats when I was 8 years old. But at the same time I was listening to The Misfits and Ramones and X. My parents split up and my dad ended up in like a duplex sharing a big place with other musicians and artists. One of the guys was a cartoonist who was into rockabilly, and [my dad] was dating a chick that was totally into punk rock, so I had all these different influences. I was living with him half the time. [I was shown how] to wear my hair in a DA, and I used to grease my hair back. I was totally into that kind of music. I didn't know that one was rockabilly and one was punk, I just knew I liked the music."

"I love rockabilly because of the sound and the original attitude that was coming from [people like] Jerry Lee and Screamin' Jay Hawkins, which is the angst and the darker stuff. I just always identified with that stuff. That's why I thought the punk was cool. A lot of the neo rockabilly was missing that, so I got into the European psychobilly. It had the combination of stuff I wanted to hear: cool guitar sound, standup bass, but it had the anger & frenzy that makes you want to drive fast. And it was real. They're not concerned with using vintage equipment."

For people like Dan Collins, that means there's one more thing to do... start a band. When Mr. Badwrench takes the stage, Dan is transformed into Buster Kretin and puts on a wild and freakish display. Buster is joined by Chopper Von Frankenstein and Pitstop Tragedy on dueling guitars, Nick 'O Teen on drums, and G.G. Allenwrench on upright bass.

"People have described us as a cross between the Cramps, Misfits, and Hank Sr. If you can imagine what a hybrid of those bands would sound like, that's probably pretty close. But we have so many different influences between the five of us that you'll hear all kinds of different stuff in there. [For example], some of us are into stuff like Tom Waits and Nick Cave. We're not psychobilly, and we're not pretending to be psychobilly... but then again, it depends on what your definition of psychobilly is.

"I'm tired of trying to impress the rockabilly kids and make 'em realize that what we're doing is cool. These kids that were supposedly 'rockabilly rebels,' they're listening to the worst doo-wop I've ever heard. When I have to listen to "Duke Of Earle" five times in a row at a car show, I'm about to blow my brains out. And that's one of the better songs! Most of the stuff they're playing is sung by kids wearing V-neck varsity sweaters, which is so far from what would've been cool back in the '50s — which is what these kids are trying to emulate. There are all these kids in their hotrods listening to varsity doo-wop... it's like something outta the Twilight Zone.

"I'm not trying to make anybody like our music, because we're doing something that's pretty fuckin' far out there from a traditional point of view. And there's really good traditional rockabilly out there.

But if Gene Vincent or Eddie Cochran were alive today they'd be doing stuff like what we're doing. They wouldn't be playing the same old shit, because they weren't about copying other people, they were about saying 'fuck you' to the system and doin' their own stuff.

"I know we'll get a lot of shit for this, but I'd say we're more rockabilly than a lot of these bands because we've got the attitude that the [original] guys had back then. We're building the cars, we're living the life — not just talking about it. We don't care about pissin' people off."

Though this is Dan's first musical project, he has high hopes yet reasonable expectations. He feels that they could easily play stadiums and arenas, but doesn't ever really expect airplay on commercial radio. Even with art in his blood, he admits, "the band is really important to me. I would hate to have to actually make a decision between my art and the band."

Dan's car infatuation didn't come about until he began driving. And in this short amount of time, he's owned many rods & customs. "I didn't really grow up around old cars. When I started getting into the whole '50s thing, it was because of the cars, not the music. I like the music, but it's secondary to the cars. I'm just addicted to cars, man. I decide that I have to have a certain type of car, and then once I've had it, the challenge is over. But after having something like 25 cars, I have my dream car."

That dream car is a Hemi powered '34 Ford coupe. He also owns a '40 Ford pickup, a chopped '50 merc and '28 Model A pickup truck. He does

whatever work he can himself, from basic mechanical work to bodywork and pinstriping. As you can see, Dan Collins is quite a diverse and motivated young man. I haven't even touched on the acting or modeling work he has done, or the clothes designing for Redsand and Speed Kills.

### Dan Collins can be reached at Artist Information

Mr. Badwrench Website:

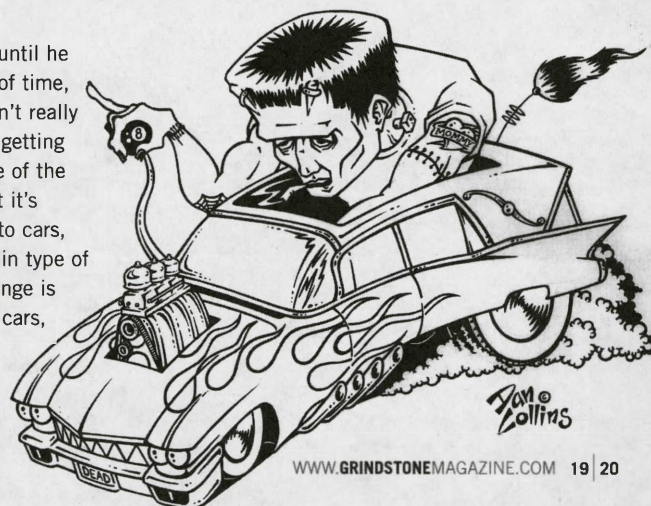
[www.MrBadwrench.com](http://www.MrBadwrench.com)

Art Website:

[www.DanCollinsArt.com](http://www.DanCollinsArt.com)

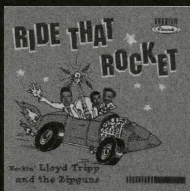
Mr. Badwrench CD, 'Up Jumped The Devil'  
coming soon at most major record stores.

[vongizmo@aol.com](mailto:vongizmo@aol.com)





# REVIEWS



## Rockin' Lloyd Tripp and the Zipguns Ride That Rocket

Uranium Records

101 27th St. #9 San Francisco, CA 94110

rockinlloyd@yahoo.com

Whooooo-doggy, what we have here is traditional rootin'-tootin' rockabilly rowdiness in the venerable vein of Carl Perkins, Billy Lee Riley, Eddie Cochran, and Gene Vincent: truck drivin', juke joint-shakin', ducktail-curlin' rockabilly liveliness! The hiccup-saturated backwoods 'n' barefoot vocals are robust and brawny, energetically oozing with bad boy alley cat swagger. The freight train-rumblin' crosstie-stumblin' bass lines rambunctiously roll with finger-poppin' bone-breakin' precision. The hollow keg barrel percussive poundings of the shufflin'-and-ploddin' drums slapped a knot the size of Texas upside my brew-drenched noggin. And the smokin' roadhouse-swingin' guitar sizzles and stings somethin' fierce, like a swirling swarm of enraged hornets on the attack. Mightily impressive, indeed! So slip on your blue suede shoes, hit the dance floor with your hot lil' honey, and spastically kick up the dust to the hip-swivellin' booty-twistin' tunes of Rockin' Lloyd Tripp And The Zipguns.

Rowdy Roger Moser



## Johnny Taylor Lifetime

Stax/Fantasy

2600 Thenth St. Berkeley, CA 94710

Hands down, Johnny Taylor was the last of the real great soul singers. Having been pretty much ignored on the white side of town, JT packed up and went to the chitlin circuit where he reigned as king until his untimely death at age 66 this year.

What we have here is an amazing 3-CD set, encompassing his entire career including his earliest gospel recordings & unreleased material. Plus you get all the hits including the dynamic "Who's Making Love", "Disco Lady" (arguably a great soul record despite its title), and one of his last chart toppers, "Two Dollars Left" (a ghetto classic).

'Lifetime' is an essential look at one of America's true great talents. Check it out.

Allen Larman



## Thee Michelle Gun Elephant Gear Blues

Alive/Total Energy Records

PO Box 7712 Burbank, CA 91510

It's about time America catches up with one of Japan's greatest treasures. Thee Michelle Gun Elephant's (T.M.G.E.) 'Gear Blues' is not only their best recording but it is their first domestic release. They have actually released another record in Japan since this one, but Japanese imports of their other titles have been hard to obtain.

This is prime garage rock. Imagine a head-on collision between Dr. Feelgood, The Jam, The Damned and The Sex Pistols. In their only LA Appearance last year, they tore it up - well executed is an understatement. Unlike other Japanese bands, these guys really know how to play.

Check out this CD and hear such modern day classics as "Satanic Boom Boom Head" and "G.W.D."

Allen Larman

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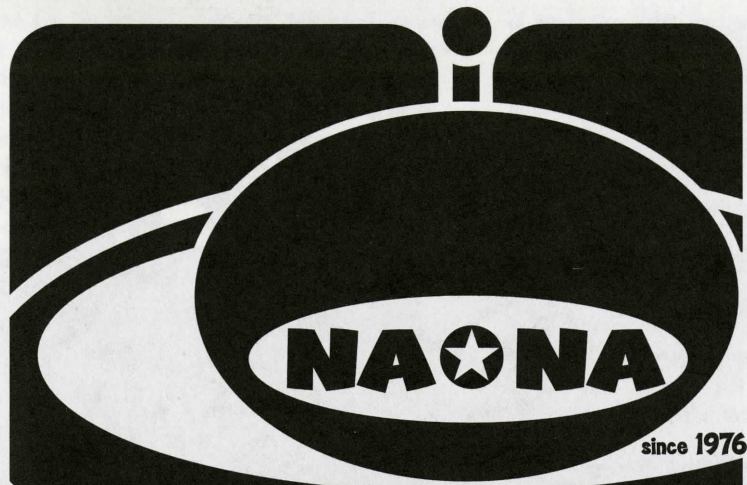
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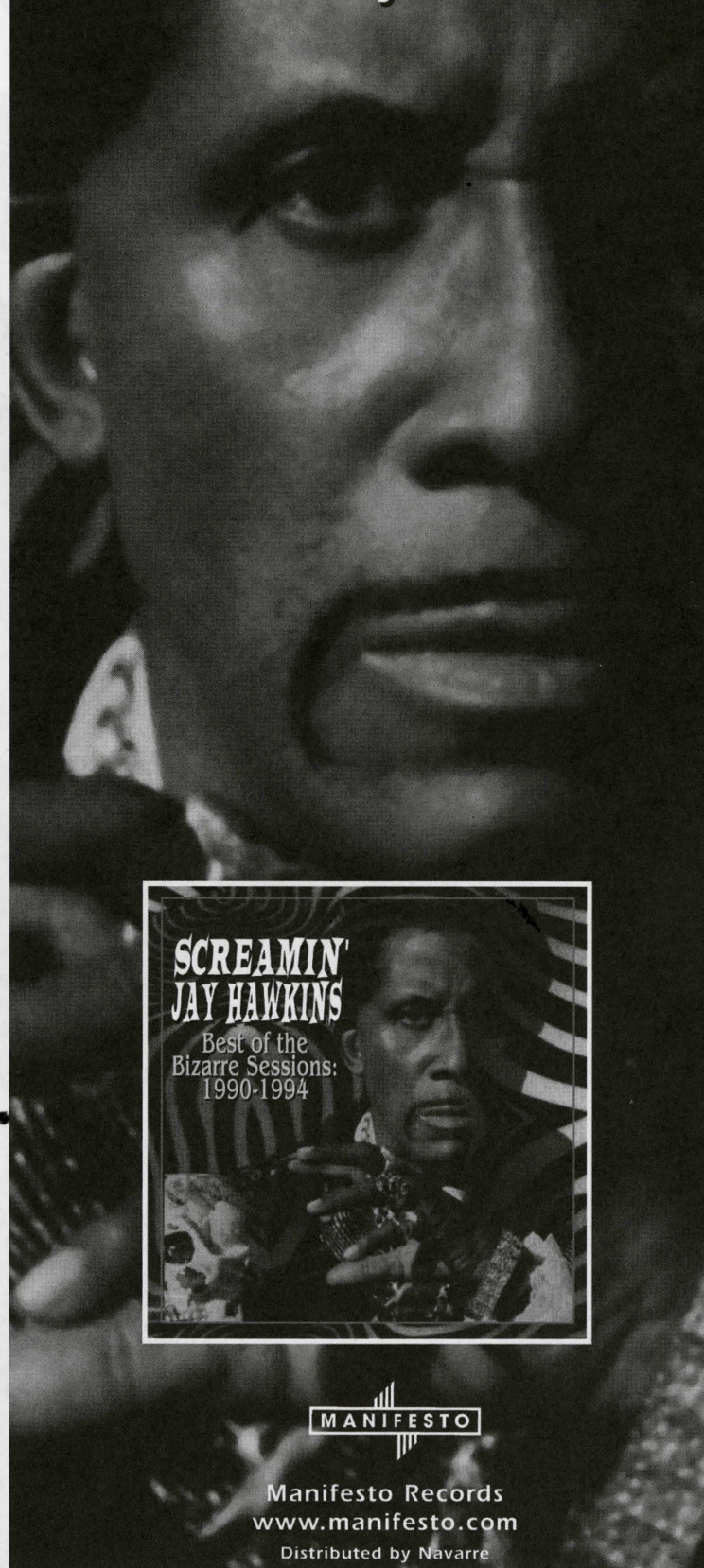
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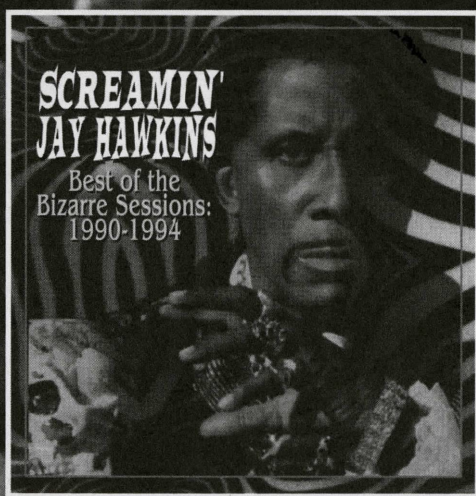
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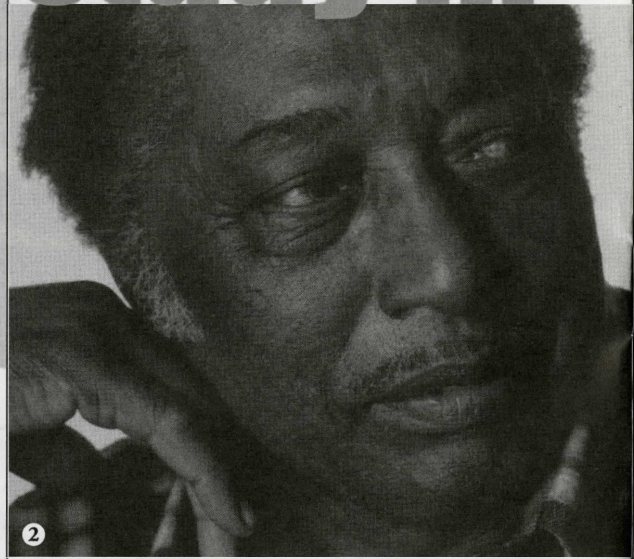
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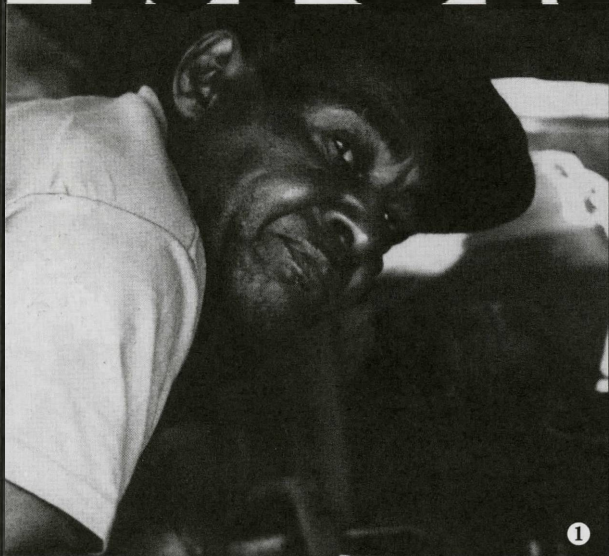


*In 1996, while I was working at a college radio station, it was decided that the blues library needed to be thinned out a little in order to make room for newer artists. The program director asked the blues DJs to put their heads together and decide what albums they'd never consider playing. The sole album all the blues DJs agreed they would never play was R.L. Burnside's 'An Ass Pocket Full Of Whisky'.*

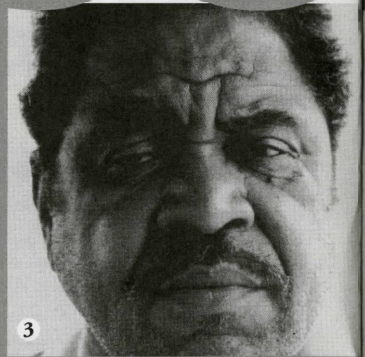
study in



broken



*Considering the fact those same blues DJs hold guys like Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eric Clapton, and Kenny Wayne Shepard as paradigms of blues excellence, their decision was not surprising.*



① T-Model Ford | ⑧ R.L. Burnside | ③ Elmo Williams | ④ Mick Collins

⑤ Bassholes | ⑥ Tav Falco



'An Ass Pocket Full Of Whisky' features Burnside, a 73-year-old black man from Mississippi, and the Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, young white blues deconstructionists from New York, playing blues about as far removed from the stereotypical twelve bar guitar wizardry as gasoline is removed from drinking water. The music of Burnside and Spencer is startling, raw and sits uncomfortably somewhere between punk and blues and is the perfect starting point for what the Japanese have been calling "broken blues" for some time now.

Fat Possum Records is probably the biggest proponent of broken blues with a roster that includes legendary bluesmen Junior Kimbrough, R.L. Burnside,

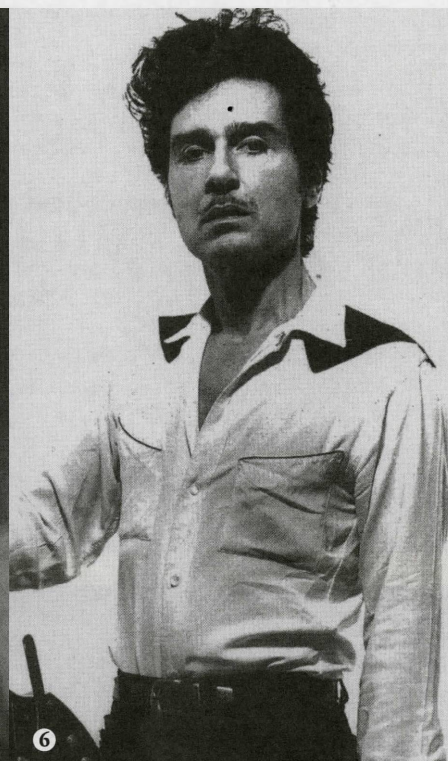
of music you listen to alone, because hearing Kimbrough's voice in front of other people would be too much like eavesdropping on your own mother's suicide.

R.L. Burnside and T-Model Ford are still very much alive and still kicking — hard! Both men are in their seventies and both have served time on chain gangs for murder. At the tender age of 18, T-Model Ford stabbed a man to death in a barroom brawl with a pocket knife. "I could really stomp some ass back then, stomp it good," he says. R. L. Burnside (who shot a man in the back of the head, served only three months — that was because a white plantation owner wanted him out in time for cotton

approach more barbaric than punk bands that are a quarter of his age, Elmo Williams makes all post-John Lee Hooker blues seem somehow irrelevant.

Williams, Burnside, Ford, and a half dozen other Fat Possum guys are rawboned, gritty, and impossible to ignore. They are also nearly all octogenarians and rapidly approaching the grave. This has put Mathew Johnson, the owner of Fat Possum, in a peculiar position. How well can these guys hold up physically and mentally on the road? And how can you sell records when most of the guys on the label are illiterate and have spent most of their lives within 20 miles of where they were born? Fat Possum is currently around a million dollars in debt

*If you haven't heard of Andre Williams or Tav Falco  
and the Panther Burns by now, chances are you  
spend more time worrying about the length of the  
cuffs of your jeans than you spend in record shops.*



legendary wildman Hasil Adkins, and soon-to-be legends Elmo Williams and T-Model Ford. Most of Fat Possum's artists hail from in or around Oxford, Mississippi, and most share a similar sensibility — their music is, by modern blues standards, crude and earthy. The "bands" usually consist of two people, a singer/guitarist and a drummer — and for whatever reason, isolation, poverty, or madness, most of the albums seem like they could have been recorded thirty to forty years ago.

Junior Kimbrough died in 1998 at the age of 67. He recorded back in the 1930's with Charlie Feathers ("Feel Good Again") but never recorded a full-length album until 1992. In the intervening 50 years or so he played juke joints, developing a rambling, hypnotic style of playing suited to the demands of playing from ten or eleven at night until sunup. The songs on his four albums often climb past the six-minute mark but he is rumored to have sometimes played the same song for an hour and a half. Kimbrough's music is achingly sad, the kind of music that wraps you up and carries you to someplace lonely and personal. It's the kind

planting season and intervened with the judge) has a more philosophical take on his prison sentence. "I didn't mean to kill nobody. I just meant to shoot the sonofabitch in the head. Him dying was between him and the Lord."

Life for these men has never been easy. If you're born poor and black in Mississippi it's almost a guarantee that chaos, drugs, and violence will be a big part of growing up. Burnside still has scars on his ankles from the time he spent on a chain gang and T-Model Ford lost a testicle from a savage beating he received at the hands of his own father. These men have lived ugly lives but it's probably the reason their music is so powerful.

Like the best punk rock, coming from the bottom with nothing left to lose makes it easier to dig down and let loose with the loudest, rawest, elemental groans and nobody on the Fat Possum label groans as loud or wild as Elmo Williams. If you've ever felt like there was a connection between Howlin' Wolf and the Oblivians but you couldn't quite place your finger how or where, the album 'Takes One To Know One' will put all your questions to rest. With an

and the light at the end of that tunnel is far away indeed. Currently they've received a form of financial salvation from punk label Epitaph. One only hopes the fierceness of Fat Possum rubs off a little on "punk" bands like Rancid and NOFX.

In The Red Records has got nothing to worry about when it comes to dying artists or frenzied and deranged sounds. Starting with the Gories, In The Red has always released records by punk bands whose unacknowledged influences come from people with names like Elmore James, Big Joe Williams, and Lightning Hopkins. Mick Collins from the Gories said about his band, "We never played anything with more than six notes in it because six notes was all we needed".

Those six notes helped the Gories carve out a large niche in the punk underground and the records they left behind sound like the Cramps might have if they'd come from Detroit instead of New York and were digging up old soul records instead of obscure rockabilly 45s. Check out Collins' newer band the Dirtbombs to see the continuation of the Gories grease and spit



approach albeit with even more of an R&B edge to it.

Another broken blues band on In the Red is the Bassholes who probably have more unintentional similarities to the aforementioned Fat Possum artists than anyone. Like Elmo Williams and T-Model Ford, the Bassholes are a two-man band. And like Junior Kimbrough, the Bassholes have the ability to conjure bleak, deeply personal images. But unlike these men, singer/guitarist Don Howland is constantly changing directions. No two Bassholes recordings sound alike, yet they all sound like the Bassholes and no one else. Their double album 'When My Blue Moon Turns Red Again' finds the band especially angry and rocking and is well worth checking out.

Other In The Red bands richly deserving your attention are the Cheater Slicks, from parts unknown, and Cedar Rapids, Iowa's the Horrors. The Cheater Slicks released their first record in the late eighties as a four piece band consisting of brothers Tom and David Shannon on guitars, drummer Dana Hatch, and bassist Merle Allin, brother of notorious and now-deceased scum-rockers G.G. Allin. After their first album, Allin left and they devolved into a three-piece band that has gotten better, louder, and more eerie with each subsequent release. Currently the band exists somewhere between the psychedelic and the psychotic, yet they still have their roots deeply imbedded in the same murky filth that gave the world bands like the Gibson Brothers, Doo Rag, and the Flat Duo jets.

The Horrors on the other hand sound like pure, uncut pigfuck. Your favorite garage band may only play three chords, but they're the three best chords, right? Well, the Horrors take that approach even further by playing the best two chords, usually out of tune and as loudly as possible. Broken blues really doesn't do justice as a description for the brand of antagonistic nihilism these boys churn out. Stomp stomp stomp.

If you haven't heard of Andre Williams or Tav Falco and the Panther Burns by now, chances are you spend more time worrying about the length of the cuffs of your jeans than you spend in record shops. Andre earned his stripes with a string of recordings on the legendary Fortune label out of Chicago. "Bacon Fat", "Jailbait" and "The Greasy Chicken" were the teething biscuits for a slew of R&B combos of the fifties and sixties (not to mention late-seventies punks like the Cramps and the whole psychobilly scene), and original pressings of those treasured discs trade now for big bucks. However, Mr. Rhythm fell on some hard times after being turned on to cocaine by Ike Turner, and he was eventually discovered homeless by some of the members of the Demolition Dollrods sometime in the mid nineties. Enter In The Red owner Larry Hardy, the aforementioned Mick Collins and Danny Dollrod. Add distortion, pornography, and booze. Mix well. Bake in a recording studio, and you come out with the most outstanding record of Mr. Williams' career, 'Silky'. It's a house party captured on wax, a celebration of sex, sin, and sleaze, and an album absolutely

reviled and ignored by blues purists. But then again, Andre is now playing new material at punk clubs instead of dusting off old standards at county fairs. As a musician you're either vital or a relic, and I suspect Andre Williams will die on stage before he winds up in a rock and roll rest home.

Another elder statesman who has recently released a new album on In The Red is Tav Falco And His Unapproachable Panther Burns. Tav has always been a bit of a mystery to me. His albums have always had a healthy dose of obscure cover tunes. He recorded an R. L. Burnside song before R. L. Burnside got it on tape. And he's turned his back on the very music scenes (No Wave Psychobilly and Swamp Blues) he helped spawn rather than exploit them for financial gain. His latest album, Panther Phobia, is just as uncanny and outside as any of his previous albums, and will probably be recognized as a blues album long after Tav has gone in search of different musical pastures. But for now, it stands as his best album in at least a decade.

These groups are not the only ones playing this type of music. Crypt Records had the Oblivians, Fireworks and the Revelators. Sympathy has the Hard Feelings and the Deadly Snakes. Like the garage bands of the sixties, these groups are popping up all over, a trend I hope to see continue. It's elemental, raw, and undeniably American music. Compared to the stale state of slick, popular blues, it's easy to see why the Japanese coined the term "broken blues" to describe it. But if this music is broken, I pray to God no one ever tries to fix it.

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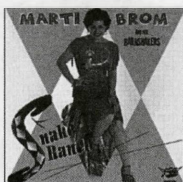
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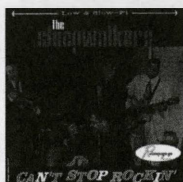
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### Marti Brom - Snake Ranch

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### The Sleepwalkers -

Can't Stop Rockin' (Relampago-Go) GOGO96

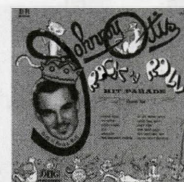
San Diego, CA roots rockers, The Sleepwalkers mix blues, jump-blues, rockabilly, Tex-Mex, country, good 'ol rock & roll and even some polka thrown in! This is a well-recorded debut CD with an excellent sound that should appeal to all roots music lovers.



### James Dead - Revenge

(Dry River Bed Records) DRB 7007

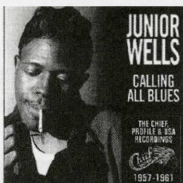
This bona fide primitive rock band from Arizona wreak their special brand of havoc, playing too loud and too fast, hating authority, and wanting to kick just about everyone's ass with a cutting edge approach to their love of early rock 'n' roll.



### Johnny Otis and V/A -

Rock 'N Roll Hit Parade (Ace) CDCHD 774

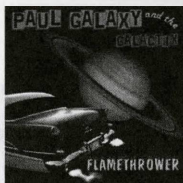
The first time on CD for this super-rare Dig album with it's classic period sleeve. Features The Jayos/ J.O. Orch./ TBC/ Arthur Lee Maye & Mel Williams and many many more.



### Junior Wells - Calling All Blues

(Westside) WESA 866

The complete Chief, Profile, and USA catalogue from the late 50s/early 60s. Every solo side Wells cut for these labels is a masterpiece of Chicago Blues. Most feature the cream of the city's musicians of the period, including Willie Dixon, Syl Johnson, and Earl Hooker.



### Paul Galaxy & The Galactix -

Flamethrower (FanFare Records) FF 062499CD

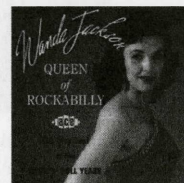
On their debut cd, Paul Galaxy and the Galactix, a swingin' trio from Denver, CO, mix rockabilly, surf and swing to come up with a great sound! 14 songs about chicks, cars, rockets and cocktails! Their tunes are so hot, it almost melts the snow off of the Rockies!



### Ernie Maresca And V/A -

The Original Wanderer (Ace) CDCHD 762

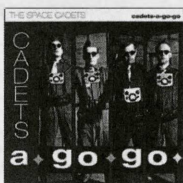
The Wanderer is right up there with Louie Louie as one of the seminal rock'n'roll songs. Here you have three versions, one of which is the original 1957 song demo, coupled with many great doo wop and 60s pop songs also written by Ernie Maresca.



### Wanda Jackson -

Queen Of Rockabilly (Ace) CDCHD 776

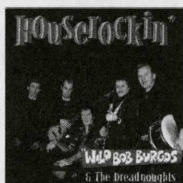
A 30 track compilation of the Queen of Rockabilly's Capitol recordings. Tracks include Baby Loves Him/ Mean Mean Man/ Fujiyama Mama/ Cool Love/ Honey Bop/ I Gotta Know/ Let's Have a Party/ Money Honey/ Long Tall Sally/ Hot Dog! That Made Him Mad and more.



### The Space Cadets -

Cadets A Go Go! (Vinyl Japan) JRCD 35

They came from beyond! They came as a four piece rock'n'roll combo! They call themselves The Space Cadets!!! The Space Cadets first crashed into our atmosphere in the summer of '95. Formed by drummer Ricky Lee Brawn, they brought together top personalities in the world of rockabilly and rock 'n' roll including members of Restless, The Stargazers, Red Hot & Blue, The Big Six and The Chevalier Brothers.



### Wild Bob Burgos -

House Rockin' (Raucous) RAUCD 068

You only have to mention British Rock 'n' Roll and the name of Wild Bob Burgos springs to mind. One of the hardest working musicians in the country, Wild Bob has been a member of countless leading Rock 'n' Roll bands, most notably Matchbox, Shotgun and Screaming Lord Sutch & The Savages, and is first choice to back many of the legendary original American Rockers visit these shores. When he's not playing as part of one of his bands, Bob also works as a solo artist and enjoys a cult following with greasers worldwide, and fans of British Rock 'n' Roll music in general.



### Elvis Presley - Good Rockin' Tonight -

The Complete Louisiana Hayride Archives

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This 2-CD set contains the early live, original Louisiana Hayride recordings that include rare and previously unreleased material. Narrated by one of the original Hayride announcers - Frank Page. From his humble first appearances in 1954 up to his final appearance in 1956 to a crowd of over 10,000 people, the evolution of Elvis is heard here. This set is an absolute must for fans.



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The Leisure Experiment

(2-11 Records) TE 70139

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*The pinhead guide to...*

Story by Skip Heller

photography from Varese Sarabande Records

# Chicano ROCK

*East LA's rock'n'roll is one of*

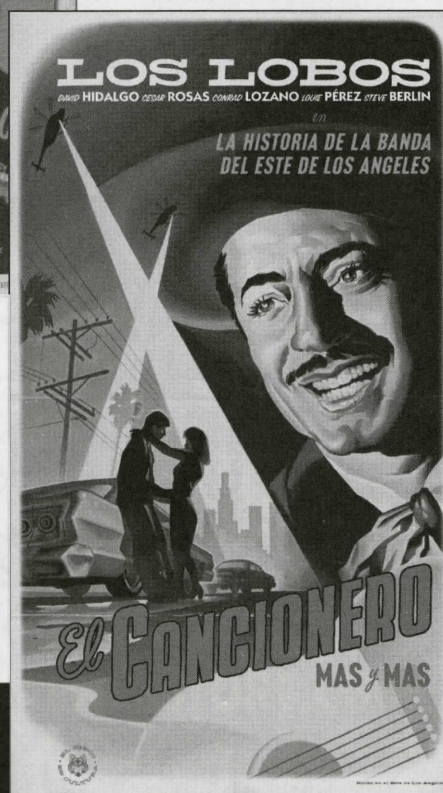
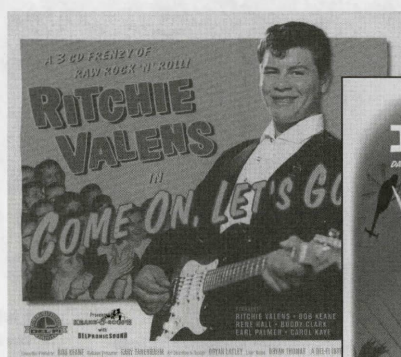
*the richest things about the regional culture.*

*Rooted in more than one tradition,*

*it's a cross-cultural,  
multi-generational deal.*

Racism being what it is here, odds are you haven't heard "My Heart Cries" by the Romancers, "Baby Please" by Cannibal And The Headhunters, or "The Town I Live In" by Thee Midnighters. Although East LA bands periodically cracked the national Top 40, Mexican-Americans were then (and now) as ghetto-ized in the record biz as they were anywhere else. Thee Midnighters weren't playing the Whiskey or Pandora's Box (even if they could have easily torn new ones into the Beach Boys, Byrds, or whoever else).

As a result, East LA became the epicenter of its own music business, with record labels, live venues, and its own stars. This article is a cheap attempt to put it in a nutshell.





## even before Lalo

The voice that established a true Mexican-American sound first erupted not from East Los Angeles, but from San Antonio, TX.

Lydia Mendoza is considered by many to be the Godmother Of Mexican-American music. Her debut, "Mal Hombre", cut for Victor in 1934, was a departure from the slick, urban Mexican music of the period. It sold very, very well. Her sound, although decidedly Mexican, was not the Mexico City mariachi sound. Instead, it was an intense female voice backed primarily (sometimes only) by a twelve-string guitar.

Mme Mendoza is often compared to Jimmie Rodgers; just as modern country music realizes its template in him, so does Mexican-American music in her. Her sound, while rooted in traditional Mexican music, found common ground between Mexican folk songs and popular theater music. She may not have invented anything per se, but she crystallized Mexican-American musical expression. Her appearances on the high-powered border radio stations beamed her voice all over over the Americas, and she was a star wherever Spanish was spoken.

The economics of the Mexican music industry, combined with the racism of the mainstream, meant that, no matter how many records she sold, her royalty statements are worth less than a birthday card from your ex-wife. By the fifties, she was recording for the small Ideal label, for whom she cut another of her biggest hits, "Amor Bonito". Freddy Fender, upon release from the Louisiana State Penitentiary, worked as an engineer for the label. His first job was to record Mme Mendoza.

"She went through the tunes she was going to record very slowly and softly," he recalled, "and I set the levels on the tape recorder. Then she said she was ready, and BOOM! Her force, her volume... It was like a huge wave. I think that's why she was so successful in the 30's when recording was so primitive, because she didn't even need a microphone for you to feel her."

## Lalo Guerrero

Lalo Guerrero is roughly the same age as Lydia Mendoza. His roots are in Tucson, AZ, where he was born and grew up dreaming of being another Bing Crosby. He moved to Los Angeles in 1938, and began recording with a group called Los Carlistas.

Riding around with Lalo in his Cadillac one day, he told me he didn't want to be a professional Chicano... "There was no money in Mexican music. I wanted to sing in English. I recorded in English. I had an English name — Don Edwards. But you

couldn't do a Ricky Martin then — Hispanic guy with an English name, you know. You had to sing Mexican music."

So he did. Despite efforts to break the mainstream, Lalo was clearly ghetto-ized. As late as 1948, with "Pecadora", Lalo made typical Mexican music. But by 1949, he was literally changing not only the music, but the community perception of Mexican-American music.

During that period, the pachuko was a hot topic. These zoot-suited suaveitos spoke a slangy hybrid of Spanglish and craved both Latin and American pop styles. And the American pop styles they craved weren't the postwar whitebread, but rather the proto-rhythm'n'blues of Louis Jordan, Lionel Hampton and the like. Lalo was playing downtown LA nightclubs, and saw up close what this clientele wanted. His output for Imperial Records at this time is amazing. He made music that summed up the pachuko culture; "Chicas Patas Boogie", "Los Chucos Suaves", a Spanish cover of Louis Jordan's "Saturday Night Fish Fry" (called "La Tamalada"), and more. They are some of the best LA rhythm'n'blues there is.

But it's not exactly rhythm'n'blues. The horns have more syncopation and remarkable flexibility. Not only the words, but the music as well reflected a new Mexican-American lifestyle. The music was equal parts Mexican and American.

"I wanted to sell records. So I thought, 'Why don't I write some music in the language they speak?' It was very intentional."

These songs have become symbols of the zoot suit period, of the Sleepy Lagoon riots, of the first rumblings of a Chicano uprising. They are as much a pachuko trademark as is Tin Tan's pompadour. They're also an early example of Chicano culture's strong affinity for rhythm'n'blues, and for the brown community's ability to develop its own culture without outside help. Until Lalo parodied "The Ballad Of Davy Crockett" in 1955 (as "Pancho Lopez"), mainstream media was out of his grasp. But as long as a person of color appeared as a comedian, he was acceptable. Lalo made enough money being cute and funny to buy a nightclub in East LA. The swagger of his jump sides was too much for White America.

Guerrero launched East LA rock'n'roll almost single-handedly (Don Tosti's records were important too). But he didn't stay in that genre any more than he stayed in parody-land. Guerrero has cut everything from banda to children's music to protest songs.

## rock 'n' roll arrives

...but rhythm'n'blues, especially the wild honking saxophone raves of Big Jay McNeely, Chuck Higgins, and Joe Houston, had already cornered a huge, avid listenership. Huggy Boy and Art Laboe became the mainstays of rhythm'n'blues radio they remain to this day.

Probably the first real rock'n'roll star in the community was Little Julian Herrera, whose ballads

like "Symbol Of Heaven" struck a deep chord. Herrera was known for amazing stage choreography and a wild disposition. Unfortunately, he got popped for murder and promptly vanished. His whereabouts are a question mark.

But way out in Pacoima, Ritchie Valens came to the attention of Del-Fi Records mogul Bob Keene. Keene's accounting procedures have been commented about by yours truly in the past. But his ability to spot talent — regardless of race — is a point in his favor, as was his savvy as a record producer. Keene liked the raw material he found in Valens, and shaped him into a contender. The early rehearsals of "C'mon, Let's Go" reveal a diamond in the rough. Keene's pre-production polish is spotless. He then put Valens in front of great session players that could match his energy with authority and finesse. The resulting hits — "C'mon", and the two-sided smash "La Bamba" and "Donna" cannot be overestimated in terms of their influence. We all know what happened next.

Another Bob Keene discovery was guitarist/singer & songwriter Max Ubaldez, leader of the Romancers. Ubaldez looked and sang a bit like Valens. But his talents overall were formidable, Valens or no. The Romancers could cut vocals, instrumentals, hard-hitting rockers, and gorgeous ballads. They had it covered. But legal troubles kept Ubaldez from singing on record through the early sixties, so they cut instrumental records. They're probably the most significant East LA link between the Valens period and the British Invasion. Though they were soon to be eclipsed in popularity by other local bands, they made one of the two or three best East LA records ever — a vocal group cover of Etta James and Harvey Fuqua's Chess near hit "My Heart Cries". They were in the right place before the right time.

## Eddie Davis era

The mainstream ignored Chicano rock. The record company divisions that serviced the Mexican community stuck to pre-rock styles. If this community was to thrive, it would have to self-start. Unlike the Sunset Strip bands of roughly the same era, theirs was not by nature a club music.

"We'd play at house parties, or picnics, or at Kennedy Hall," Thee Midnighters singer Willie G recalls. "When you did that, you couldn't just play rock. The families were big, a lot of generations to entertain there, so we did rock, standards, boleros, whatever." The fact that these bands weren't playing for the same audiences as Anglo bands helped shape the approach differently. Groups developed strong loyal local followings.

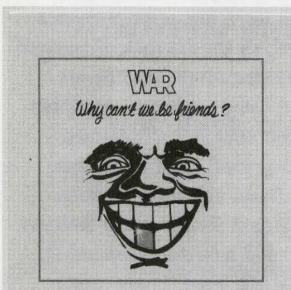
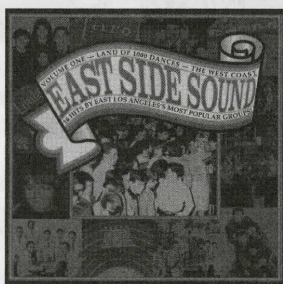
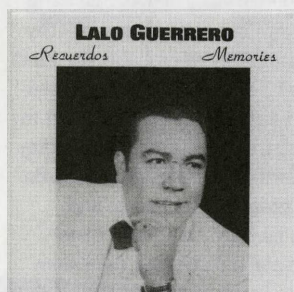
Local moguls Eddie Davis and Billy Cardenas saw the East LA scene as a sort of micro-Motown. They signed neighborhood bands and issued singles on their own labels; Faro, Linda, and Rampart. One of the first signed was the Romancers. But the Romancers still failed to

*continued on next page*





**Cannibal**



find the sales and airplay they so richly deserved. Beatlemania dwarfed everything but Motown anyway.

"Farmer John" by the Premiers and "Land Of A Thousand Dances" by Cannibal And The Headhunters did well enough that the masters were leased to major labels, and each scored in the national top forty, to say nothing of being outright smashes in Los Angeles. Cannibal And The Headhunters even toured as an opening act for the Beatles.

But the greatest East LA band of this period was Thee Midnighters, fronted by Li'l Willie G, a singer who could be, at will, a shouter, a crooner, or a preacher (which is what he became later on). Thee Midnighters had an incredibly wide range of material, the musicianship to play the stuff, and the showmanship to put it over. They ruled.

They were initially called the Fabulous Gentiles. "We had this bass player who was Jewish," recalled Willie, "and his dad didn't like us too much, so every time we'd pick him up for a rehearsal, his dad would be yelling, 'What are you doing with those gentiles?'," so, to have a laugh on him, we kept the name. Then we changed it to Benny and the Midnighters." Benny owned the van.

Thee Midnighters, although they never had a national hit, owned East LA. Their singles sold very well locally, and they could play everything from East LA parties to Chico Sesma's Latin Holiday shows at the Hollywood Palladium to Casey Kasem's rock'n'roll package shows to Dick Clark's 'Shebang' TV show. And everyone who ever hired them thinks they were the best band they ever got.

## social changes

In 1965, Edward R. Murrow, America's greatest broadcast journalist, aired his documentary TV special 'Harvest Of Shame', which showed, in sinister detail, the lives of San Joaquin Valley farm workers. Caesar Chavez fast became the kind of role model to Chicano youth that no rock star could ever be.

The innocence that spawned the East LA "we can do it, too" ethic was fading. Being a Chicano implied something completely different than ever before. It was a far cry from the zoot suit riots almost two decades before. Mexican-Americans put a collective foot down, demanding better conditions for themselves at work and their children in school. Mass media was suddenly at their access. Caesar Chavez was one of the most recognized Californians of the day.

By 1967, rock'n'roll was having its own upheaval. East LA was no different. Thee Midnighters went from "Love Special Delivery" to "Chicano Power", from dances to campus rallies. And this was typical. Up to this time, East LA bands had English names,

their eye closer to the Beatles than Los Panchos. But soon enough, groups had names like El Chicano, Tango, and Malo.

The names weren't the only Latin thing about these groups. Chavez instilled a real pride in Mexican-Americans, and they started emphasizing that they were people of color, instead of trying to downplay it.

Chavez had, in the sixties, organized a grape boycott. The farm owners fought it and him, but Chavez' non-violent protests, his commitment to raise an effective union for the farm workers, and his God-given ability to bring together people in a common cause made news for years — national news. The media portrayal overall was positive towards Chicanos, and pride was in order. As Ronald Reagan was governor during this period, Chavez had his work cut out for him. But, after the grape boycott had become national, the governor's spin-doctoring on behalf of the farm owners (called the "growers") couldn't save their image. Growers eventually gave into the union. It was a time of celebration.

Oddly, one of the great protest songwriters of the era was not a young Dylan-esque individual, but was Lalo Guerrero, with anthems like "Corrido De Delano" and "El Chicano".

And Guerrero's son Mark tagged the cultural wall as well. Coming up in East LA bands like Mark and the Escorts, he was part of the sixties East LA scene. But with his new group, Tango, he sang directly about Chicano concerns in songs like "I'm Brown".

Other groups, like Redbone, actually had real national hits, like "Come And Get Your Love", and "Witch Queen Of New Orleans", which were squarely in the rock/pop idiom of the day, but still combined rhythm'n'blues and Latin elements.

Up in Oakland, War took off, and, even if they didn't live in East LA, they typified the lifestyle, in songs like "All Day Music", "Summer", and, of course, "Low Rider".

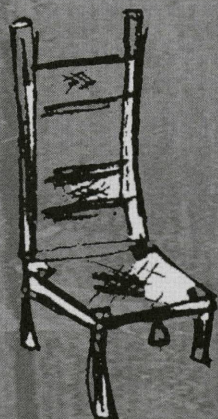
But the most widely received Chicano band of the age was Tierra, fronted by the Salas Brothers, who had recorded for Eddie Davis. Actually, it wasn't until 1980 that the group had a hit. They released two albums in the seventies which didn't sell. But, in 1980, they'd more than make up for it.

Their third album contained a cover of the old Intruders soul hit "Together". It went to #18 on the Billboard charts. Little wonder. It's letter-perfect soul music, with great vocal harmonies, and a smoldering groove. Also, at the end of the song, the group swoops in for a little nostalgia, singing part of "Cowboys To Girls". No doubt many couples danced to this wonderful record on their anniversaries. It was the biggest Chicano hit since Ritchie Valens — and until "La Bamba".



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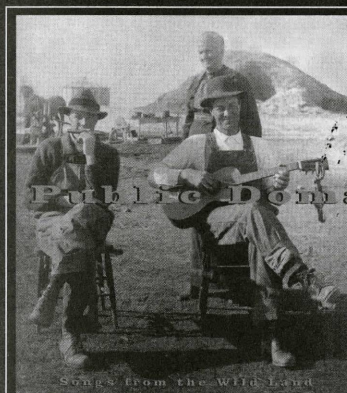
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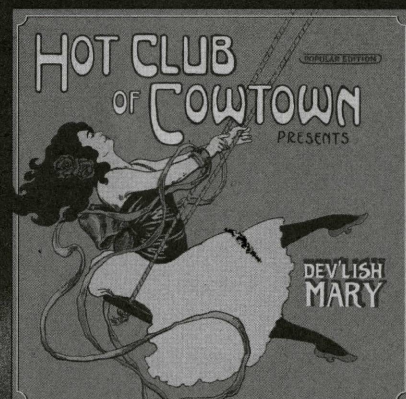


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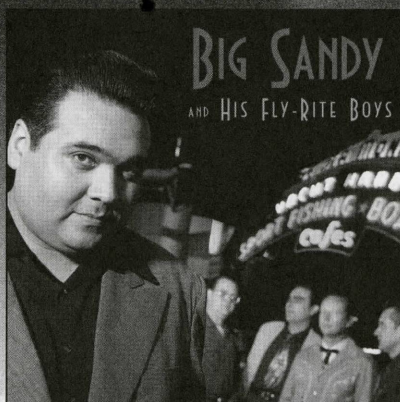
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## Los Lobos

Los Lobos were formed in East LA in 1973. They started out as rockers, got into playing Mexican music, then plugged back in again. They opened for the Blasters back in the day. This led to their getting signed to Slash, and establishing themselves as probably the greatest American rock'n'roll band ever. It's hard to over-sell them. They started out great and they keep evolving.

In 1987, they scored a #1 with "La Bamba", recorded in the Valens style for the movie of the same name. Pretty much anything they did with any radio-friendliness to it would have sealed superstardom for them after that single. So they made an all-acoustic, all-Spanish Mexican folk album, 'La Pistola Y El Corazon'. On the heels of that, they cut a children's album with Lalo. They've since followed it up with a series of discs that, while staying true to their roots, are of such striking originality that it is safe to say no band is more radical in their idea of perpetuating tradition. Only Public Enemy are their equals for pure sonic invention. The Lobos are the coolest band ever. Few bands have enjoyed such an engraved invitation to stardom, and fewer still take such pains to tell stardom to go fuck itself.

In the Lobos wake, several strong bands have come up, most notably the Blazers. Also, Willie G has returned to recording, in addition to keeping very busy as a priest. His comeback disc, 'Make Up For Lost Time', is a joy and was produced by David Hidalgo (of Los Lobos). Lalo still performs, often with my group. Many East LA anthologies have

Max Uballez

popped up, the most comprehensive being the four-volume 'East Side Sound' on Varese Sarabande. They're completely essential, full of well known and obscure gems. There's also a disc of the same name on Dionysus that concentrates on the best of the garage stuff. They have a follow-up in the works, with liner notes by Mark Guerrero. There's a Lalo disc called 'Recuerdos' that you can find if you know where to look (hint: Olvera Street across from the shoe stall). That's the one to get, as it contains the original recordings of twenty classics.

It's hard to say whether East LA rock'n'roll will ever grab the retro spotlight the way rockabilly has. Even now, racism pervades. The swing/jump revival did not push Louis Jordan reissues to new commercial heights, but rather Louis Prima (a white guy who, in all fairness, made some great records, but Jordan still prevails). Although Latin stuff is currently in commercial vogue, it's hard to believe that these oldies — most of which weren't hits except on KRLA request shows — will suddenly be discovered. Since Sancho's cold-blooded ousting from KPCC, it's a sound gone from the airwaves (except when it gets requested on Art Laboe's show).

This is great music, covering almost sixty years of life in Southern California. Do yourself a favor and don't go through life with blinders on.



Romancers

### Required reading:

- **Land Of A Thousand Dances**, by Tom Waldman and David Reyes, University Of New Mexico Press
- **Barrio Rhythm**, by Steven Loza, University Of Illinois Press also, check out [www.markguerrero.com](http://www.markguerrero.com)

### Required listening:

- **Lalo Guerrero**, 'Recuerdos', PO Box 5022, Palm Springs, CA 92263
- **Ritchie Valens**, 'Come on, Let's Go!', Del-Fi Records, PO Box 69188, Los Angeles, CA 90069
- **Los Lobos**, 'El Cancionero', Warner Archives/Rhino

# THE GRINDSTONE MAGAZINE

## So here it is... issue #11.

We hope you enjoy the magazine and will continue to support our efforts to praise and publicize the artists who are out on the road killing themselves town by town, dive bar by dive bar, just to keep alive the music we all love.

To all the folks who have contributed to or advertised in the magazine... Thanks! We can't do it without you! A big thank you also goes out to all the fans of the Grindstone who have come out to our events and supported the acts we featured.

This next year is going to bring some exciting new expansion to the Grindstone. If you are interested in getting into the scene by being a part of it, then contact us. We are always looking for writers, people to promote and sell magazines at shows, photographers and people with phone skills to be advertising contacts. We probably cannot promise you much of anything other than the satisfaction of having helped this musical cause, but hey, that's all we've ever gotten out of it, too

Pamela and Cameron

### Special Thanks:

Billy Vera, Randy Burris, Skip Heller, Laura Kane, Emi Hirayama, Michael Farr, Allen Larman, Ralph Carrera, Deke Dickerson, Robert Matheu, Jean Hofmann, Helena Tammearu, Tamara Bunnell, Ronnie Weiser, Jesse Wallace, Jon Baldwin, Brad Merrit, Joel Kellum, Eny Lanson, Melba Toast, Jana Pendragon, Perry LaFine, Kenny Wessel, Chip, Ron Groeper, Ron Carlston, Susan Clarke, John Godin, Asia Minor, Glynnis Jones, Alpha Nerd, Ray Condo and His Ricochets, Hank 3 & crew, Nick Curran & crew, Blazing Haley, The Road Kings, Deadbolt, Speedbuggy, Hot Club of Cowtown, Jake La Botz, The Treniers, Junior Brown, BR5-49, The Reverend Horton Heat, Royal Crown Revue, Buck Owens, Ronnie Dawson, James Intveld, Collins Kids, Flying Neutrons, 8 1/2 Souvenirs, Lucky Stars, Red Elvises, Don (RIP) & Dewey, Rosie Flores, Wanda Jackson, SCOTS, Donnie Knctson, Justin Curtis, Hi-Fi and The Roadburners, Paladins, Big Sandy, Pete Anderson, Dave Alvin, Ruth Brown, Ronnie Hayward, Derailers, Ray Campi, Neko Case, The Comets, Ronnie Mack, Sonny Burgess, Glen Glenn, Los Straightjackets, Big Six, Smith's Ranch Boys, Robbie Fulks, Hadda Brooks, Carl Leyland, The Dusty 45's, Sammy Masters, Dallas Wayne, Dan Collins, Los Infernos, Cave Catt Sammy, Marti Brom, The Domino Kings, Hyperions, Russell Scott, Eddie & Shannon Hill, Frantic Flattops, Joey Altruda, Dave Stuckey, Moonshine Willy, X, Tony Redhorse, 3 Bad Jacks, Bill Bateman, Mojo Monkeys, Dale Peterson, Mighty Blue Kings, Throw Rag, Ronnie Mack, Sonny Burgess, High Noon, Lisa Pankratz, Rumble King, Von Franco, Bad Livers, Barnshakers, Marti Brom, Treniers, Blue Moon Boys, Cousin Lovers, Goldenvoice, Bloodshot, Vintage Buzz, Broken White, Stuff-O-Ramma, Paul & Nancy of NaNa, Delirium, Squaresville, 8 Ball, Barracuda, Hightone, Daddy-O's, Rhino, Ed Boswell & the gone but not forgotten Culver Saloon (Annette, Bill & George), The Garage, the gang at the Bigfoot Lodge, Viva Las Vegas (Tom Ingram & Barney Koumis), Epitaph, Stardust/Cleopatra, Steve & The Continental Club, Hootenanny (Bill Hardie), Happy Trails (Robert Douglass), Bear Family, Flipside, Dionysus (Lee Joseph), and HepCat.



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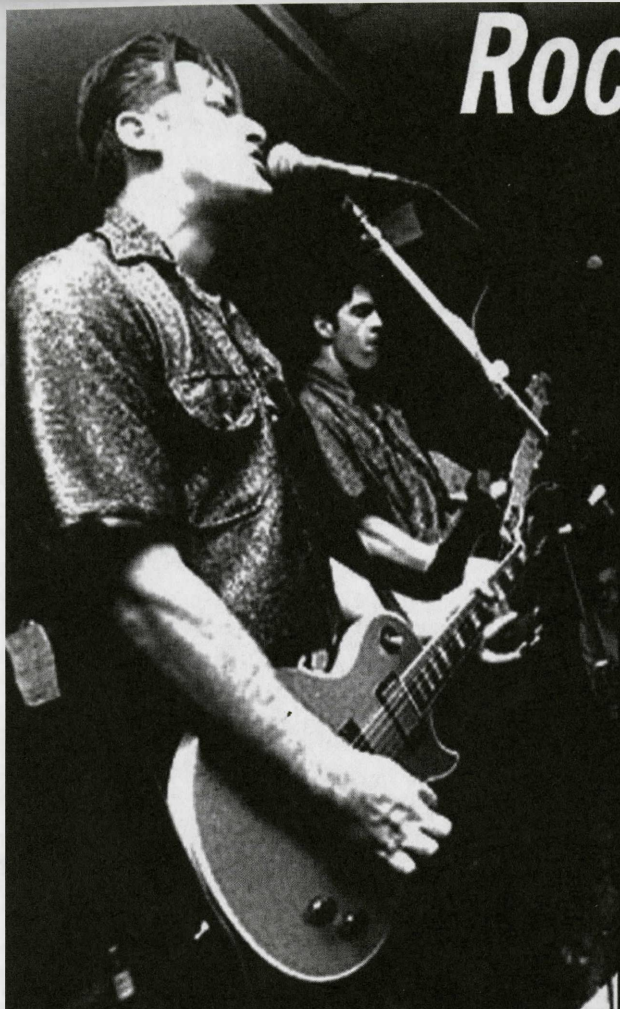
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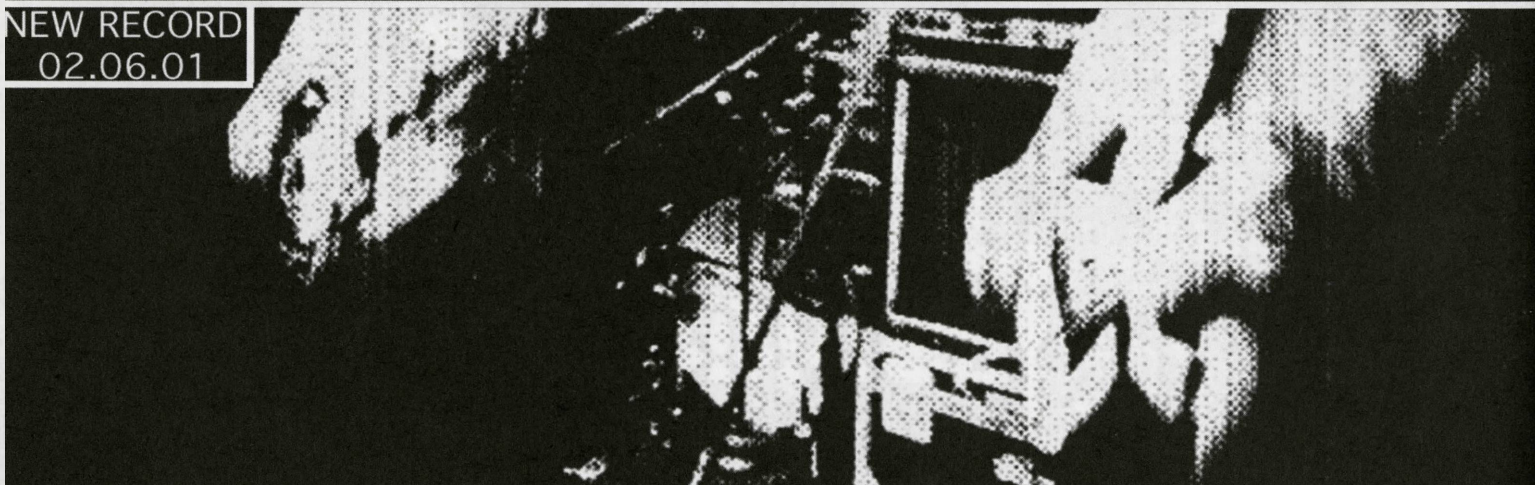
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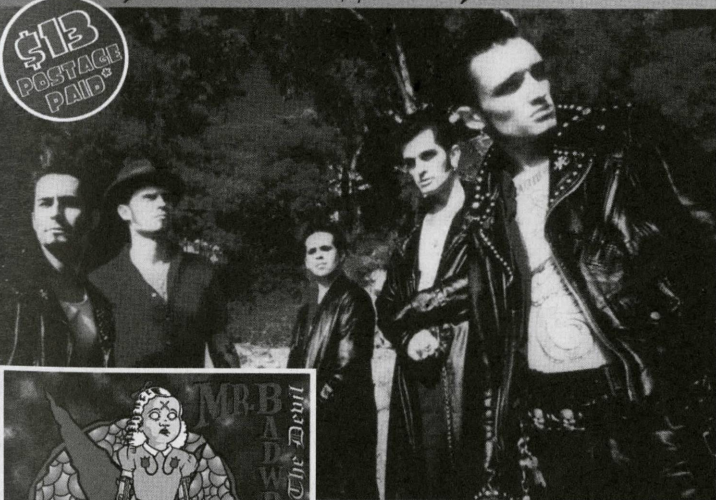
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# REVIEWS

FREE THE WEST MEMPHIS 3

## Free The West Memphis 3 Various Artists

Koch Records  
740 Broadway New York, NY 10003  
www.wm3.org

Just another fucking scary moment in US history for us all to ponder. Three young men, two sentenced to life and one sentenced to death, convicted of murdering three children as part of a devil worshipping ceremony. Evidence against them... they wore black concert T-s and loved dark music. Sure, I am glossing over details here but I trust you to go to [www.wm3.org](http://www.wm3.org) or [www.TheJusticeProject.org](http://www.TheJusticeProject.org) to learn the full scope of this case.

This CD has been put together by Danny Bland, Scott Parker and Eddie Spaghetti as an effort to raise awareness and support for the three convicted of this crime. The CD is packed with an impressive list of talent (L7, Steve Earle, Supersuckers, Joe Strummer, John Doe, Tom Waits, Rocket From the Crypt, Eddie Vedder, Tony Scalzo, Zeke, Kelley Deal, Mark Lanegan, Murder City Devils, Killing Joke and Nashville Pussy), performing the kind of music that the convicted murders followed and loved. There are many stand out rockin' cuts on this CD but Nashville Pussy's version of "Highway to Hell" gets my vote for best track. Other interesting cuts are Joe Strummer's "The Harder They Come", Kelley Deal's truly twisted rendition of "Fucking Hostile" and Eddie Vedder and the Supersuckers doing the X classic "Poor Girl".

Pamela Esposito



## Ronnie Hayward The Lost Utrecht Sessions

HayBird Records  
[haybyrdecords@hotmail.com](mailto:haybyrdecords@hotmail.com)

We receive music from all over the globe, but I hear one disc about every 6 months that knocks me on my ass. This is that disc. Yes, we did a story on Ronnie Hayward in issue #8, but if you didn't do your homework back then, now is your chance to catch up.

You'll feel the excitement immediately as the first notes come screeching out of a mandolin. Soon, with the addition of Ronnie's bass, a dobro that's just being hammered away on, a snare, and Ronnie's distinct voice (he's been compared to Charlie Feathers), you'll be rockin' full-speed. After the first song, it quickly slows down and settles in to some smooth ol' country as Ronnie croons away.

A damn fine recording, very raw, very feeling. Great arrangements, with the aforementioned instruments, some acoustic guitar, some electric guitar, and the occasional bongo all keeping the disc fresh from start to end. For example, some songs don't use drums because they aren't needed. It's like a fine pot of chili that's been simmering for hours, with just the right amount of spices added to it.

I don't know how exactly to put it into words, but it sounds like these cats are mixing together some r&b, some music from the sticks, and rock&roll and pushing it in a new direction I've never heard before. Ronnie wrote all 16 great songs, and he found some great musicians in Holland (including one guy from The Hillbilly Boogiemens, which you will read more about in a future issue)! Cameron Davis



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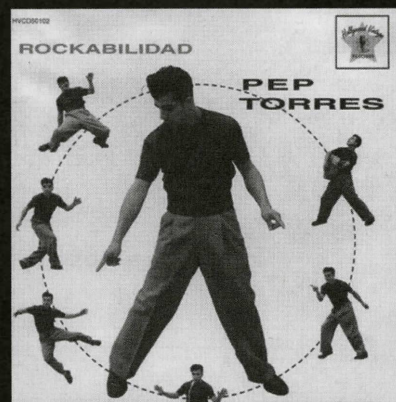
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# REVIEWS



## Randy Weeks Madeline

Hightone Records  
 220 4th St. Oakland, CA 94607

Former Lonesome Strangers frontman Randy Weeks hits the ground running with his unforgettable solo debut 'Madeline'. A lesson in the fine art of roots music and one hell of a good time, 'Madeline' delivers in every possible way. A little more than just Americana, twice as soulful as most country and infinitely more rockin' than the average independent label offering, it's no wonder that Lucinda Williams won a Grammy for her cover of Weeks' "Can't Let Go". This is a truly brilliant record, bordering on perfection — a musical experience not to be missed. To not own this record should be a crime. With 'Madeline', Randy Weeks has achieved what few musicians can only dream of; making music that will withstand the test of time.

Asia Minor

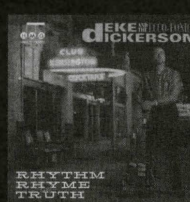


## Dallas Wayne Big Thinkin'

Hightone Records  
 220 4th St. Oakland, CA 94607

Ahhhhh, the sweet sounds of Country music... pure Country! Dallas is it, a velvet voice with the gift for turning a simple phrase of words into a country anthem. You may already know some of his music if you are a Robbie Fulks fan. They have been writing outstanding songs together for some time now. Robbie actually urged his friend to release this record and I can not thank him enough. Not unlike Fulks, Dallas also has some biting lyrics aimed directly at Nashville and it's plastic performers. If you enjoy Dale Watson, Red Simpson, or biscuits smothered in gravy... add Dallas to your diet!

Pamela Esposito



## Deke Dickerson Rhythm, Rhyme and Truth

Hightone Records  
 220 4th St. Oakland, CA 94607

Here's Deke's third and most mature endeavor with the Ecco-Fonics. Whereas his last disc was a lot of fun, this one's more of a work of art. The whole record flows really well. Bobby Horton has a full-time position in the band now, and there's the usual great contributions from the likes of Carl Leyland, Jeremy Wakefield and DJ Bonebrake. But wait... that's not all! To satisfy you Doo-Wopers out there (where are you all coming from anyway?), you'll hear the fine harmonizing of the Calvanes.

One of the charming things about the record is not the music, but the notes that Deke scribbled inside the booklet. It's a nice, direct communication to the owner of the disc about what's going on in Deke's life. It's personal information that will hit home with lots of you.

Deke sings the California truth in "CA Boogie", but the song that hit closest to home for me is "Give Me A Brunette". My sentiments, exactly!

Cameron Davis



Interview by **Pamela Esposito**

with help from **Helena Tammearu**

Photography by **Sonja**

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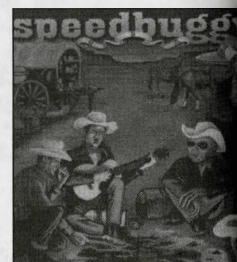
# SPEEDBUGGY

*“if you don't drink,  
it's actually Simple,”*

*Speedbuggy is one Los Angeles act that has been paying its dues for years now. They've played in every run down Hollywood club and bar the city has had to offer, and they've outlived many of them. Nothing lasts long in LA and the fact that a band can hang on for almost 8 years and maintain and expand a fan base is almost unheard of. The first time I ever saw them was in a strip joint and they set the place on fire with blazing guitar, slamming bass, and a driving amphetamine tempo. Speedbuggy was rock, country and punk all rolled into one... you could expect a mosh pit and two stepping all in one night. They have musically fused it all together. Give a listen to their third recorded effort 'Cowboys & Aliens', but make sure to catch them live for the real deal.*

*I thought I'd sit down for a few drinks with Timbo and Pat from Speedbuggy to get their story. Ask some basic questions, get it on tape... interview done. Any of you who know them personally are probably laughing your ass off right about now. You see, getting a straight answer from Speedbuggy lead singer Timbo and drummer Pat is almost impossible, not because of an unwillingness to participate, but (and I say this with all the love in my heart) because they are truly twisted. Timbo, who is known to get drunk and poke fun at his crowd, would of been enough of an interview challenge but add in his comic counterpart and you have even more fuel for the fire.*

*Given Speedbuggy's reputation for attracting a hard drinking, rowdy, hellraising hollywood crowd, I figured that a lot of alcohol needed to be involved in the interview process. I dragged my friend Helena out and we all met up at one of Hollywood's most famous and long standing dives, Boardner's. Boardner's is a serious drinking establishment where most of the clientele arrives in the early afternoon and stays until closing. It was, in my mind, the perfect setting to interview the red hot Los Angeles-based cowpunk band. Actually, we just sat back and enjoyed the ride, gently trying to steer the madness that is Speedbuggy.*





**Pam:** You guys get put into the category of Cowpunk, but not everything you do is so cranked up and driving. You have a fair amount of stuff on your record that is more ballad driven... we were even joking the other night about you doing Speedbuggy Unplugged!

**Timbo:** We did do one acoustic show once and it was good. We want to record another record, more acoustic. We just need to find someone to put it out... not a punk label.

**Helena:** Cargo is who you are signed with now?

**Timbo:** Yeah, but I will sign with whoever wants to pick us up!

**Pam:** Is that bitterness towards Cargo that I detect?

**Pat:** Stock answer time... Theeey'rrrr Great! Me personally, I would like to go full blown acoustic because it makes my job (drummer) so much easier. Let's play acoustic... it's nice and mellow. Maybe I can even sit out a few songs and you guys can play.

*(at this point, Timbo picks up the recorder for the Speedbuggy sales pitch)*

**Timbo:** So, to anyone out there who wants to give me some money... I would like to put myself into the studio...

**Pam:** So back to the Cowpunk thing.

**Timbo:** I grew up in Louisiana listening to, and living by the guys from Dash Rip Rock. So, I've always been into that shit from the early '80s.

**Pam:** Speaking of cowpunk from the '80s, we just got a record from Jason Ringenberg (Jason and the Scorchers). It is straight-up country.

**Pat:** He did one that way in the '80s too... it was awful. Not to bag on Jason. Hey, wait... I did not say it was awful... I heard the critics say it was awful. I still play it every day. It's in my car!

**Timbo:** Hey, what did David Lee Roth say about the critics? The only reason critics like Elvis Costello is because the critics look like Elvis Costello... and we all know what Elvis Costello said about Ray Charles.

*(again, Timbo reaches for the recorder this time to shut it off, shielding our readers from having to see Costello's distasteful remark once again in print)*

I guess in the mid '80s Elvis did not realize that was an improper word to use when describing an icon... well, on to the next subject.

**Pam:** I think that this is the first interview we have ever conducted where the artist has taken control of the recorder and done their own editing!!

**Timbo:** I've learned... do you know how many times I have thought "I could not have said that"?

**Pam:** Come on... why are you worried? It's still the sober side of the evening.

**Timbo:** God Bless You! Alright, we all need another drink.

**Pam:** Well, while you're both still sober... How did everyone in your band get together?

**Timbo:** Steven left NOFX and was not doing anything, then we knew Brady from drinking in bars.

**Pat:** Wait, let me get this straight... Brady was just a drunk from a bar you picked up that happened to play bass!

**H:** What bar did you meet in?

**Timbo:** Smalls! We all started jamming and we had this other drummer for a while.

**H:** So when did you two meet?

**Pat:** We never met... I had no idea of what I was getting myself into. I knew Steve, he would come see my old band all the time.

**Pam:** And that was...

**Pat:** Not a band you would want to know about.

**Pam:** Oh, one of those that you are real proud of.

**Pat:** I was in Kiss, I was the cat.

**Timbo:** No, no, no... he was the fox in Kiss! So... the fox had this chicken suit but he only wore it once. It was in the last Kiss auction... it brought about \$75,000.

**H:** I guess the chicken suit was not as popular as the boots.

**Pat:** It was a black and white chicken suit. So, anyhow, I was the chicken in Kiss and Steve called me up when I was between bands. I had seen Speedbuggy before and really liked them but the drummer sucked.

**Pam:** This band has been around for a while so what year are we talking?

**Timbo:** '94

**Pat:** No, no... you drunk, I joined in '97 or '98!

**Timbo:** Wow, that much later? I sure must of played a lot of shitty shows with that drummer who could not play.

**Pat:** Hell, I have played a lot of shitty shows with ya'll.

**Timbo:** It will get worse... we haven't peaked. What are you all drinking again... Vodka & Cranberry, Vodka & Orange...

**Pam:** Timbo, when did you move to Los Angeles?

**Timbo:** About 8 years ago and I started the band up. When we first started playing this stuff nobody in LA was doing it... we had to play bills with a lot of fucking Nirvana bands that sucked. So we just started to play every other Saturday night at Smalls. That went on for about two years. We would sometimes play a Ronnie Mack Barndance, but we were just too heavy for that traditional country crowd.

Bar Deluxe is what finally got us our main crowd.

**Pat:** Back then they were a good band just not yet

# you can't do this type of shit Lord knows I can't."



Speedbuggy is on  
**Artist Information**

Cargo Music, Inc  
4901-906 Morena Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92117-3432

[www.speedbuggyusa.com](http://www.speedbuggyusa.com)





“*Hell, to me country was not all that funny,  
it was not much like*



Pamela Esposito

centered on what they wanted to do. They were going in a bunch of different directions. It finally all came around when I joined the band!

**Timbo:** Oh, you were the catalyst?! You put it all together? Well, actually, we did have half of the guys who wanted to do straight punk. I do not think Brady had ever listened to country. I just got to the point that I was like, 'Fuck that, we are going to do the country thing.' The foot came down. Well, I am the singer and songwriter so it kinda worked out in my favor. I thought that there was this sort of Cowpunk scene in LA when I moved... I quickly found out that there was not and that the backwoods I came from was not at all that backwoods.

**Pam:** You have told me before that you and Pat have a good common ground of music you both draw influences from... bands like Tex and the Horseheads, Johnnie Thunders, Husker Du, the Clash and X, but what country artists do you admire?

**Timbo:** George Jones is God!

**Pam:** It is funny to me that most bands who have an edge to them immediately name George Jones as a major influence... why not Merle, Waylon or Hank Sr.?

**Timbo:** Because George is the greatest fuck up. He always lands on his feet. Obviously he is one of the best singers, but talk about fuck ups! I mean Hank Williams was a fuck up but he didn't fuck up for that many years! George has been fucking up forever... didn't he just drive off a bridge?

**Pat:** He fucks up gracefully.

**Timbo:** He fucks up and then comes back and has a hit. As far as songwriters go I love Kris Kristofferson and Willie Nelson.

**Pat:** That's your opinion dude... what about Joe Strummer!

**Timbo:** Yeah, it is all about the hard luck song. Things basically suck unless you have money.

**Pat:** Our lyrics are not rocket science... you get what you get.

**Timbo:** Well, excuse me! Who needs another drink? I need another drink.

**Pat:** I mean our lyrics are to the point... drunk people, down and out people, people that nothing is ever going to work out for. Basically that and then

you just throw a few trucks in there.

**Timbo:** It's actually simple, if you don't drink you can't do this type of shit. Lord knows I can't. Pam, how come the graphic designer is doing the interviewing... no one else wants to write about us?

**Pam:** Well, I don't think anyone else from my magazine is brave enough to drink with ya'll... I know, I am the artist... I just make stuff pretty.

**Timbo:** Make us pretty, Darling. Lord knows my mother could not do much to help me but she tried. I don't know but I always sort of thought we could musically do what ever we wanted. I was always into the Louisiana sound, ya know... mix it up. The Replacements were great at mixing it up, and no one said shit... but ya know with this cowpunk thing it gets weird if you throw too much stuff into it. People have a hard time accepting it. They think to be cowpunk you have to speed every song up.

**Pat:** Yeah like George Jones meets Minor Threat... that just does not mix.

**Timbo:** Or they go the other way... like Goober and the Peas, making everything funny... 'Hey look at me in my coveralls.' Hell, to me country was not all that funny, it was not much like Hee-Haw. I use to go to the Opry, that was a family outing. They had great music with the best concession stand ever! I would be like 'Pa, they have the best hot dogs' and he would be like (crack), 'Shut up and listen to the music'... 'but Pa,' (smack)... folks would be looking over as Dad hit me, but hey, that is a whole other story.

*(Given that Timbo is such a jokester, I do not think we have a past example of child abuse here)*

**Pat:** Man, it sounds like you need some therapy!

**Timbo:** I'll tell you what we need...

**Pam & Helena:** Another drink!

**Pam:** It would sure be hard not to have a good time around ya'll.

**Timbo:** Exactly, I just want people to show up to our shows and get hammered drunk, party, spill beer all over themselves and pass out... well, buy our CD and T-shirts, then pass out. Just have a good time, no big message in the music, the way music use to be. Somehow this bullshit alternative

music scene took over and made everyone not have fun. Now they have to think about everything... it is all about the musicians big message!

**Pam:** I would have to say that you attract one of the most fun crowds I have seen in LA. People actually really cut loose at your shows, they have a blast drinking and dancing.

**Pat:** Pam, that's not dancing, they are all just drunk and swaying and staggering around.

**Timbo:** That's what it is about, having fun up there. I try to show people that.

**Pam:** I bet that Mariachi outfit you wear on stage breaks the ice!

**Timbo:** Oooo, it's wool and it's very hot and bothered, but I like it! I just want to play in front of crowds, good crowds, big crowds, make money and enjoy life. Why else do you do this?

**Pat:** The only reason to be in this business is to eventually be the big band and make money.

**Timbo:** Yeah, we're all musical whores. No, no wait... we want to be a little indie band forever. But hey, if some big band wants to take this little band out on the road...

**Pat:** Yeah man, we are indie by choice!

**Timbo:** Hey, I love my indie credit. Every night I put my head down on my pillow and I pray to sweet Jesus... Don't take away my indie standing, don't give me any money... that way I can still write about how shit sucks in the morning!

**Pam:** Hmmm, if you became rich, what do you think you would write about?

**Timbo:** I'd cut a finger off my hand so shit still sucked and I would write about that.

**Pat:** No man, you would just rip off the songs you wrote 10 years before.

**Timbo:** Pat, that hurt bad! Actually, I would hire someone and make his life miserable then follow him around with a tape recorder asking "How bad did today suck"... it would be sort of like what we are doing right now. Yeah, tell us about it Johnnie... you had to shovel shit all day then lay in it to make this 20 bucks. Cool, that will make a good song... thanks.



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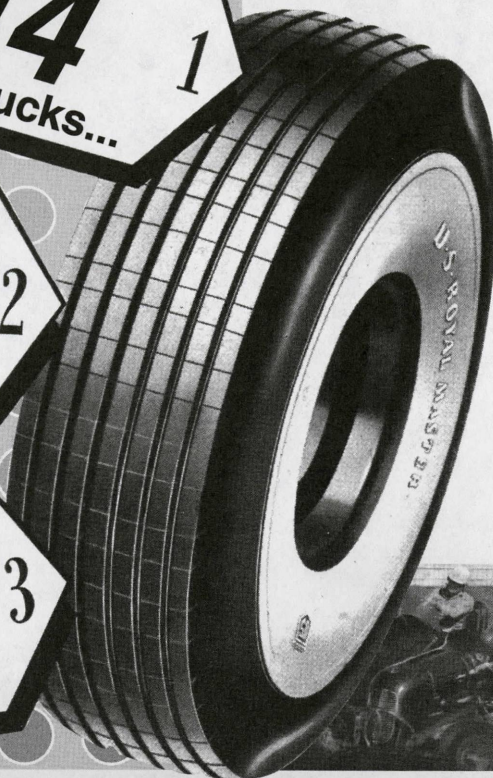
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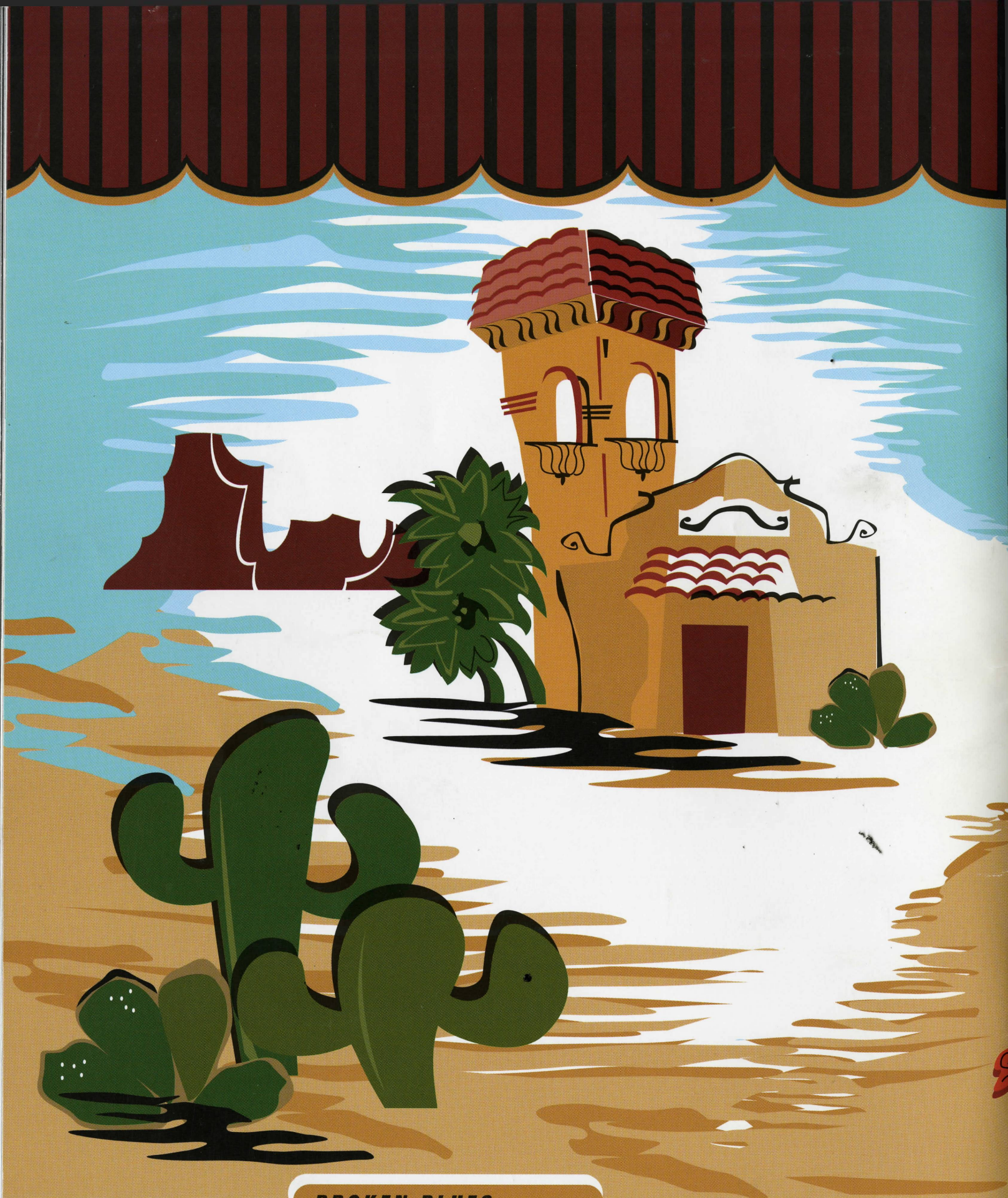
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