

**For Immediate Release**  
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**by Bob Gray for THMF**

## **A BURR in the Saddle**

“The important things in life are fun, family, and fellowship,” says **Ramiro Burr**, “but to be remembered, you have to give something back. That’s what I try to do.”

And he succeeds admirably. As a writer he opened an entirely new line of inquiry into the world of Spanish-language music, producing the first ever source book with the *BillBoard Guide to Tejano and Regional Mexican Music*. As a speaker he has enthused hundreds of children and adults, gently asking them to examine their lives and desires – to make choices as to what they really think, want to do, how to act. As an interviewer and music reviewer he has probably touched more lives and careers than anyone in the business. And he’s only 47.

I asked him what he enjoyed most about his profession - what one thing made him get up in the morning excited to start the day. His multi-faceted answer is indicative of a thoughtful man who loves his work.

“I like interviewing intelligent artists, those who can provide new insights into the music or life in general. I find that to be most enjoyable – when I can walk away from an interview with a new idea to consider, to integrate into what I already know and find it fits.” But then, “I also love to be the first to interview a new group, especially when I discover that they are not only good, but have something new to show the public. Few people realize how much strength it takes to do something totally new – and then wait to see if the public appreciates it. I love live shows, where the artist is really ‘on’ – not simply playing the same show over and over – one who gets the audience involved. I like being able to give new groups a little push.”

He also likes talking to kids. “Elementary school kids are the toughest audience in the world,”

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he says laughingly. “Adults may stifle a yawn or fidget when they’re bored,” he continues, “but school kids start throwing spitballs and paper airplanes. They won’t fake an interest they don’t have. I’m elated when I find that I’ve actually reached some of them. One of the things I talk about is why the arts, and music specifically, is important. That the purpose of music is to move you to the dance floor – or to tears. That the purpose of the artist is to be brave enough to attempt something new.

“But to answer your question: I wake up excited each day because I love my work. I was very lucky to find my place so early in life. The first time I was asked by the high school guidance counselor what I wanted to do after graduation, I told him I wanted to be a construction foreman. It’s what my stepfather did, and I figured it’s better to be the boss than otherwise. I really didn’t know. But then the next year the counselor gave me a book of careers to look through. When I opened the page that discussed newspaper reporting, I knew I’d found my home.”

So, how did you get started? “That would be when my high school newspaper asked for volunteers to write. I found it was a natural thing for me. My guidance counselor told me I needed to attend the UT of Austin for journalism. When I came home and told my folks what he’d said, my father said he would make sure it happened. And he did,” says Ramiro.

After graduating from college, he worked the cop beat in Laredo before moving to San Antonio and doing the same job for the SA Light. In 1985 he was moved into entertainment reporting, and that was the real beginning. Everything since derived from it. “I was lucky to have a good guidance counselor and a father who was willing to make things work out.”

What kind of music do you prefer to listen to? “Believe it or not, I still like Frank Sinatra. And I’m very partial to the Mexican “singing cowboys” of the 1940’s and 50’s, guys like Jorge Negrete and Pedro Infante. But what I listen to at home when I’m relaxing is the New Wave of

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the 1980's. U2, The Cure, The Cult, Psychedelic Furs, there are a dozen or so anyway that renew the feeling in me of something being done that's great in its own way."

I asked Ramiro if he'd ever interviewed a performer that he didn't like. "Well, yes, but I have to say that it wasn't that I didn't like him. I thought he was rude and wanted to sabotage the interview for some reason. It occurred to me that maybe he just didn't understand the questions. It was Gene Simmons, of KISS. He called me one morning about four o'clock and just rambled. When I'd ask a specific question about the band's music, his standard answer was, 'Well, man, it's just plain old rock and roll, you know.' I can't count the number of times he gave me the same answer. But it worked out okay for an interview – I gave my questions and his answers, and it all came out rather funny."

It's hard to imagine how a man as young as Ramiro Burr could have achieved as much as he has. I keep going back and reading the bio on his website, because I'm astounded at the sheer quantity of the work. His articles have been published in over twenty magazines and newspapers; he's conducted hundreds of interviews of top bands – you'd recognize every one in a list that seemingly has no end; he's been the featured speaker at a dozen colleges; Ramiro also works with university interns, teaching them the basics of music reporting, interviews and reviews; and this recitation of accomplishments hardly dents the surface.

Nor does it give any indication as to the quality of the work. I began reading some of the interviews and articles and invariably was unable to stop. If you have a little time, drop by his website: [www.ramioburr.com](http://www.ramioburr.com). If you have a little more, stop by Cailloux Hall on the **Schreiner University** campus on **Saturday, September 27**, between ten and noon – Ramiro will be leading a seminar (free to the public) on the Texas heritage of music and its foundations.

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When you need a speaker to whom the audience will actually listen, call him at: **210 250-3429**.

And if you want to meet someone who has “given something back” – and I mean given far more than he could take in three lifetimes – Ramiro Burr is the man. He *will* be remembered – and, thank goodness, he isn’t finished yet.

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**What: Three Day Event sponsored by the Texas Heritage Music Foundation  
Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> September, Living History Day, 9 am to 3 pm, Schreiner campus  
with over 40 performers, and Noon tribute to Jimmie Rodgers. FREE!  
Sat, 27<sup>th</sup>, Texas Heritage Seminar, 10 am to Noon, Cailloux Hall, Schreiner  
University FREE!**

**Also Sat, 27<sup>th</sup>, Hill Country Youth Orchestra Fiddle Contest, 10 am –over FREE!  
Sun, 28<sup>th</sup>, Literacy & Learning Concert, 3 pm, Dietert Auditorium,  
Schreiner University –  
Headliner: Ruthie Foster with Cyd Cassone. \$15 cover.**

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