

For Immediate Release
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by Bob Gray for THMF

The Music of Memory

If you're a reader, a writer, or merely someone like me who is entranced and enthralled by Texas music, then the **FREE** Saturday morning seminar sponsored by the Texas Heritage Music Foundation on September 27th at the Cailloux Center on Schreiner Campus in Kerrville, Texas, could be one of the best memories of 2003 you take through the coming years.

Here we will have the chance to dip into a four-part discussion about the founders of Texas music. Leaders of this discussion will be Nolan Porterfield, Jean Boyd, Ramiro Burr, and Dr. Gary Hartman.

Nolan Porterfield authored the definitive 1979 tome, *Jimmie Rodgers: the Life and Times of America's Blues Yodeler*, for the Music in American Life series from the University of Illinois. He has spent much of his own life on the origins and influences of Texas music, and Jimmie Rodgers in particular.

If you're a music fan, then Nolan's discourse on the Father of Texas music is a necessary part of understanding how we arrived where we are. His encyclopedic knowledge and engrossing delivery are refreshing well-spring in a landscape of academic dry holes.

Then we will have the opportunity to contrast the hard-living but shortened (by tuberculosis) life of Jimmie Rodgers to the longest-lived band in music history – *The Light Crust Doughboys* – with **Jean Boyd**. Jean, a professor of Music History at Baylor University, has written extensively on Texas music, including a book on the Doughboys of Burrus Mills and another on the *Jazz of the Southwest: An Oral History of Western Swing*.

The Light Crust Doughboys formed in the early 1930's and are still going strong. Before his death in 2001, Jean had the opportunity to talk extensively to Marvin

‘Smokey’ Montgomery, who was with the band since 1935 (and the band’s unofficial historian). His sound and creativity were central to the band’s music, and he performed with them right up to a few days before he died. (Which sets the scene for another contrast: Jimmie Rodgers recorded his last song a mere thirty-six hours before he died.)

Weaving Montgomery’s story and that of other band members into a comprehensive understanding of a main branch of Texas music, Jean’s strong voice promises to deliver knowledge and insight into a sorely neglected Texas treasure.

Until recently, the Mexican influence has been another long ignored area of Texas music. The word influence doesn’t properly describe the Mexican contribution – since a good case can be made that Mexican border music actually provided the original underpinnings. Gospel, blues, ragtime, and jazz all added to that supporting structure.

Express-News columnist and A&E reporter **Ramiro Burr** is probably the single best source on the subject. He’s invested the last two decades studying and writing about Spanish-language music. Having written hundreds of articles, reviews, songs, and interviews for dozens of publications, his newest book, *The Billboard Guide to Tejano and Regional Mexican Music* is the first true source book in the genre.

A growing acceptance and understanding of the Tejano connection and *la lengua* is necessary to a complete overview of Texas music. It helps to remember that Mexicans were Texans before the Tennesseans and Virginians ventured west. We’re excited to have Ramiro provide the profit of his prodigious investment for our enjoyment.

The unifying thread, of course, is the Texas heritage of music and its foundations. Perhaps the unifying authority for this enormous subject is our final guest, **Gary Hartman, Ph.D.**, director of the Institute for the History of Texas Music at Southwest Texas State University.

Enjoying the music in and of itself is enough for some – maybe most. But our lifetimes are part of this field of wild flowers called Texas music. This is our – your – history, too. We should prosper from and appreciate the uniting scholarship Dr. Hartman brings to the discussion.

If you're at all like me you'll make time in your schedule to attend this unique and enjoyable learning experience in the **Cailloux Hall on Schreiner University** campus in Kerrville, Texas, from **10 am to Noon on Saturday, 27 September**. Understanding the music of your life is a giant step in comprehending man's life in general – and your own in particular. I'll save you a seat. And, Hey! It's **FREE**

What: Seminar on Texas Musical Heritage

When: Saturday, 27 September

Time: 10 am to Noon

Where: Cailloux Hall, Schreiner University campus, Kerrville, Texas

This event is part of the Texas Heritage Living History Weekend that begins on Friday, September 26, with over 40 performers gathering at the Robbins Lewis Pavilion on the Schreiner University Campus from 9a.m.-3p.m. Billed as "Another Way of Learning" this event is free and open to the public. Lunch will be available on the grounds. Sunday at 3:00 p.m on the campus the Second Annual Literacy and Learning Concert will begin with proceeds benefiting Families and Literacy and the Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund.