

On The Road for October 2005

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September, the birthday of Jimmie Rodgers, the Father of Country Music and Hispanic (Latino/a) Heritage Month. We combined these ideas at our September 7th coffeehouse, featuring an open mike for students and community members followed by a rocking Tex/Mex show with Los Texmaniacs and Willie Jaye on vocals and lead guitar. We gathered outside in the quad at Schreiner University and about 100 of us had a great time! A songwriter new to me, Josh, appeared from Comfort. We'll be talking more about his music at another time. Max Baca, Speedy Villanueva (on bass), Oscar (on drums) and Miguel on accordion brought an eclectic blend of many of the strands of Texas music. Me? Well, I wanted to dance and so I did.

Willie invited me to a jam at Santa's in San Antonio the following Sunday. There I heard him in all his blues glory is an Eastside bar that seemed to draw folks straight from church as well as straight from the streets of San Antonio. I was happy! We heard Mike with the San Antonio Blues Society take a lead with his horn, often accompanied by a sax player. A horn player retreating from New Orleans joined in. My favorite kind of evening. Santa's may not be Hill Country, but the Eastside of San Antonio provides an important experience with Texas music. Thanks, Willie Jaye.

October is THE month for history and heritage in Kerrville. Ray Benson and "Ride With Bob" are coming to town Oct. 20-22 at the Kathleen Cailloux Theatre. After selling out in Austin last spring, the show is now ready to go on tour. Kerrville is THE spot in the Hill Country for a dose of real Western Swing, with a fiddle player that even looks like Bob Wills at times! Come hear the threads of jazz and swing that help create Texas music. See www.texasheritagemusic.org for details. Great VIP packages available. You don't want to miss the special reception at Pampell's after the show. Harvey Hildebrand, a music-loving Republican senator in Texas, will be bringing a group to the show. This much I know. And I bet we also see Bert Winson, a swing lover who had produced many Tommy Morrell and the Top Hands recordings.

Pampell's, the newest sports bar in town, just opened with a commitment to showcase local music. Stop by early for a variety of drinks (yes, and coffee) and appetizers. You will be entertained by Louis Real or String Dancer or Jay Simms or any one of our pool of Hill County talent.

The THMF concert on September 25 was a showcase of local musicians, Sol Patch, Mr. Clark and Midway. The idea of honoring our local musicians is in the air right now! And remember, not only was Pampell's once an antique store and drug store, it was also an opera house and rumor has it that Jimmie Rodgers played guitar upstairs at one time. You can get the entire history in a book at Wolfmueller's Book Store downtown.

October 5 is the next Texas Music Coffeehouse featuring Steve Young, a songwriter with heavyweight credentials. When the Eagles create a hit from one of your songs, you know that the writing is reaching many, many people. "Seven Bridges Road" is that song.

When Waylon Jennings sings your song, you have expanded your audience in unimaginable ways. "Lonesome, Ornry and Mean" is that song. Steve will appear at the Hill Country House Concert (\$10 donation to the artist) on October 1 (Saturday), then come to Schreiner for my writing class at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, October 5 (Weir building) and play at the free coffeehouse that evening. After the open mike at 7:00 p.m. Steve has been a guest at Schreiner before. He can write the songs, sing the songs and talk about the writing. A rare combination of talents!

Also in October is the Past is Prologue Workshop at Schreiner University. Not much music in this one, but a program I've been doing for years, one that affects me! The power of Native American learning stories is described on the new site, www.learningpeople.org. This program creates the possibility of new community as well as personal growth. October 14, Friday, 7:30 p.m., Woody Morrison begins with stories from his own Haida tradition. Held in the Cailloux Ballroom on the Schreiner campus, PIP presents two learning stories on Saturday. Call me at 792-7409 for reservations or information.

I chose to attend the Jack Ingram Real Americana Music Festival at John T. Floore Country Store in Helotes on September 4. That was after attending the first night of the Wine and Music Festival in Kerrville on September 2 for the purpose of hearing Tom Russell and Andy Hardin play. Balladeers of the best sort. And Tom sang a song for the late Allen Damron, as Marie, Allen's wife, sat backstage listening. A moving tribute to a folksinger who will be missed sorely. He was part of my own introduction to the magic of the Kerrville Folk Festival.

Jack's show featured many of my favorite musicians along with providing me some discoveries. Hayes Carll, with Lisa Pankrest on drums, began by explaining his career with respect to his times on this show. "The first year I play at noon inside," he said. "The next year it was 12:30 inside. This year it is 1:00 outside. That's the movement of my career in three years." We laughed then listened to the carefully wrought songs. His droll sense of humor brought the spirit of Townes Van Zandt to the stage for me.

I discovered the music of Milton Mapes from Austin. I kept seeing visions of Daniel Lanois, and after the show I mentioned this to him. "That is one of my personal heroes," he added, smiling. I was glad to make the connection. "Everyday is like a movie. Every word is like a song. Drink up John. When it's gone, it's gone." He also claimed Neil Young as an influence.

I heard the Jon Dee Graham Trio for the first time. Another Wow. And he delivered a stunning love song, singing, "There's a prayer in every question, a blessing in every kiss. I pray to be the one who loves you best." His bass player was one of the few women even on the stage. The only woman booked was the evening headliner, Lee Ann Womack. The crowd loved her as she sang through some of her hits. Randy Rogers, Scott Miller (He rocks!), and Nathan Hamilton all rocked. In different ways, of course.

I discovered Deadman, a duo from McGregor, Texas, Steve and Sherilyn Collins. Later, when James McMurtry took the stage, he was wearing a Deadman t-shirt. I hope that means he liked them too. Ray Wylie shared the stage with his young son. I have the photos for that family album. And this young man could really take the lead. James told of his performance at a gathering in Dallas of Viet Nam Vets Against War, told of hearing Cindy Sheehan tell her story, told the stories behind some of his songs, and told the corporate world where to get off the wagon! He minced no words, and his

performance was equally strong. "We can't make it here anymore," he sang. His new album on Compadre Records came out September 6. "Stylish Things." Check it out. He ended his set with another favorite of mine, "Too Long In The Wasteland."

Lee Ann sang "Twenty Years and Two Husbands Ago," creating quite an uproar among the women at the show. "I may hate myself in the morning, but I'm going to love you tonight," was an invitation for Jack Ingram to join her on stage.

Another musical moment for me occurred at Hondo's in Fredericksburg when I finally heard my good friend, Vicki Gillespie, perform in her group, "Almost Patsy Cline." The fan base was loyal, the dance floor was full in the outside garden, and I loved their renditions of some of my favorites. And David Kemp, a band member, also wrote "It Could've Been You," and "Getting' Older's Getting' Easy," two originals that get everyone dancing. Lanette Fellows plays bass, writes and sings.

I took the CD home, listened to the smooth production and beautiful songs a while later, remembering how much we love a smooth dance band in Texas! I heard from one friend at Security Bank, "We hire them every chance we get. We have a group of people in the community who really love their music. They are great!" I remember when Vicki first stepped on stage and started playing keyboard. She left one life for another, and I was always a bit jealous. I mean, I haven't really stepped on stage yet except in the costume of Belle Starr!

Some THMF news: Andy Wilkinson, artist in residence at the Southwest Archives at Texas Tech, has asked me to consider giving our archives (photos, interviews) over to them in order to digitize and preserve them. When he arrived for a visit last month, he was accompanied by David Marshall, director of the Archives. Lo and behold, David was a former student of mine at Aledo High School many years ago. We reminisced and shared stories. He, too, went down the road of oral history!

Bill Drake at Schreiner University is submitting a grant proposal to NEA for consideration of participation in a European music festival in Belgium in 2007 that is going to focus on American Arts and Music. Bill is a genius at putting together the story. Looking forward to that possibility.

The THMF will receive part of the proceeds from the Ride With Bob show in Kerrville for the Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund. We need some serious fundraising for that account, having given away money each year to high school students who are passionate about studying music. Our last serious fundraising occurred when Willie Nelson and Family, and Little Joe y La Familia played our concert in 1997!

The band membership with THMF is growing. Look for a new presence on the website. Meanwhile, THMF has already connected some local musicians with paying gigs! Good for everyone. Members now include Mr. Clark (they rock!), String Dancer (playing at Pampell's regularly), Sol Patch (our first member), Midway (a generous family that also owns AC Print Shop),

Support Texas music. Support the local music scene. Try new venues and new musical experiences! Get out of that box. Free Leonard and down the road. Ils sont partis.