

On the Road

by Kathleen Hudson
Executive Director, Texas Heritage Music Foundation

Texas music is a fabric woven with many textured threads. Texas music is a carnival of diverse experiences. Texas music is microcosm of a world where diversity creates beauty. You can listen to Willie Jaye play guitar leads in a standard blues song then watch him join Los Texmaniacs, adding that blues lead to the Tex/Mex Max and Miguel create. Willie Jaye opened for B.B King at Sunset Station in San Antonio. He rocked the crowd and no one was disappointed. He put together a band that contained some of the best horn players in San Antonio along with two women singing backup. A huge sound driven by blues.



Asleep at the Wheel bring jazz and blues to new country music heights, and Bett Butler delivers smooth jazz in her performance in a dark jazz club in San Antonio. Tish Hinojosa blends her life on the Westside of San Antonio with her love of words to create music that is delivered in two languages. And Spanish is the loving tongue.

Ft. Worth may be “Cowtown,” but Billy Bob’s showcases all genres, giving hometown Delbert McClinton a place to return to his roots and rock out, Texas style. In Texas you can always find a group of fans sitting around listening carefully to the words of a songwriter who his baring his soul with guitar in hand. James McMurtry blends exquisite guitar technique with stark and stunning lyrics. Yes, Texas music satisfies my eclectic soul and provides a field rich for mining treasures. Enough metaphors? Yep, that’s right. I’m from Texas too.

I might have been born in Maryland while my dad was in the Navy, but Ft. Worth was home. I’ve dabbled, experimented, explored many lifestyles in Texas, always heading to school everyday to teach. Homebase for me. I trained horses in Ft. Worth in order to barrel race and rodeo. I searched out the blue clubs around the state, this genre of music pulling at my heart strings in rare ways. I danced whenever I could, I listened to the words of Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt, I researched the women who have helped create this rich tapestry.

Living now in Kerrville, home of the Kerrville Folk Festival (the reason for my move here back in 1984), I have been exploring the Hill Country music scene. A new venue in town is Pampell’s, on the corner of Sidney Baker and Water Street. Most evenings you can hear local musicians, buy good drinks (coffee too!), and share good conversation. String Dancer, Graham Warwick, Jay Sims, and Louis Real are a few of the regulars. Pampell’s is an historic spot, with rumors that Jimmie Rodgers, Father of Country Music who built his dream house in Kerrville, might have practiced his music upstairs in this old opera house. When in Kerrville, don’t miss an evening at Pampell’s. Ken and Lorraine Wilson æ great hosts and owners. Open mike on Thursdays. Blues jam on Sunday afternoon with Smith and Warwick.

The only place to dance regularly in town is at the Inn of the Hills on the Junction Highway. Monday night Meltdown at the Inn features songwriters, giving us a chance to hear the words written from the heart of Brandon Jenkins, Brandon Rhyder, Susan Gibson, Charlie Robison, Bonnie Bishop, Walt Wilkins and many more. Meyer Anderson seems to be the favorite dance

band, but a good selection of bands rotate through for the weekly gig from Tues. through Saturday. I know I've learned a few new steps out on that floor.

October 20-22, I had a spectacular musical moment attending "A Ride With Bob: From Austin to Tulsa," a staged production of the life of Bob Wills as interpreted by Ray Benson, Asleep at the Wheel, Jason Roberts on fiddle as one version of Bob, and a great cast from Austin. Marco Perella played the Bob who was telling the story to Ray as they drove up the road from Austin to Tulsa. CK McFarland wrote a soulful version of Bob's life that included a line of women, his wives, each telling her story. The music was pure Western Swing, the story was Texas history.

Staged in the Kathleen Cailloux City Center for the Performing Arts, the THMF had the chance to be the local sponsor and our Wayne Kennemer Scholarship Fund benefited from the three-day almost sold-out run. H-E-B presented the show with support from Southwest Airlines, AT&T, Texas Commission on the Arts, Harvey Hildebrand, and Exon/Mobile. Harvey, our state representative, invited Ray to come to Kerrville with the show. Harvey loves Texas music and knows his music. Good thing he's the head of the committee for Culture, Recreation and Tourism in Texas!

I saw the show all three nights, and by night three I was filling up with tears as the bus driver for Ray moved around the dance floor, picking up clothing that turned him into Bob Wills. And Marco Perella did bring Bob to life on that stage! We watched Bob as a child, with Damien Green at 15 playing fiddle like Bob Wills. Jason Roberts, fiddle player for Asleep at the Wheel, played the adult Bob. His portrayal left me feeling like Bob was part of my family. I loved him!

And Marco brought a joy to the stage, as he interacted with each story on stage, convincing us that we were hearing this story from the spirit of Bob Wills. The dancing and music, the poignant scenes, the voice of Tim Curry as Old Man Bridges, the wildness that Rich Perkins brought to the stage as W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel as others, all left three large audience groups thrilled. Not a word of complaint. I'm thinking we need to create a tribute to Jimmie Rodgers as well in his Texas home here. And Jason Robert could sure be Jimmie!

The set was perfect, with a huge panel of clouds as the backdrop. Sometimes we felt like we were in heaven with Bob looking down, other times we were on the road with Bob, the wide open spaces calling us out. Perfect image for the show. And the vintage signs for various companies led credence to the visuals. H-E-B got its start in Kerrville, and the H-E-B sign was prominent on stage as presenter of the show.

A good match for Texas heritage and tradition! And a good match for THMF, an organization dedicated to preserving and perpetuating all the traditions of Texas music. See www.texasheritagemusic.org for more information. And consider joining up! We are in the middle of membership drive right now. I am also proposing a "Texas Songwriting Chair" for Schreiner University. All we need is some funding. The songwriters abound.

And now for a look at my stack of CD's, impossible to write about all of them in this column. I'm choosing a Rounder Record release called "Best of The Smokin' Joe Kubek Band featuring Bnois King," as my favorite. I told you blues music calls out to me. "Served Up Texas Style" delivers music that feels like the plate of food picture on the cover, barbecue, beans and cornbread. The band tours the country ending up at J&J's Blues Bar (one of my hometown favorites) on December 31. Listening to this album urges me to go find a good dance floor. 15 intoxicating cuts of highly energized Texas guitar blues is the quintessential Smokin' Joe collection. Remember, I entered my great love of music through the doorway of blues. Maybe I just like moving my hips!

Another new favorite is “Ear Food Orchestra Enshrined,” recorded live at Sam’s in San Antonio. Another rich mixture of Texas sounds, this Cd captures New Orleans, rhythm and blues and soul. Ms. Neesie stands out front, growling out the blues, her husband, “Rockeem,” doubles as music writer for the San Antonio Express News...Jim Beal. Contact him for a copy of the Cd. Get ready to dance. rockeem@hotmail.com I last heard the band at Casbeers in San Antonio on Blanco. There Joe serves up hot enchiladas and hot Texas music. Check out the web for their schedule.

November 12 is the annual Big Band Bash at the Pioneer Pavilion in Fredericksburg, a Johnny Nicholas production benefiting educational music programs. Tickets for sale at Wolfmueller’s in Kerrville and at www.hilltopcafe.com or 830-997-9242, and in Fredericksburg at the FSD Community Ed, Hilltop Café, Martin’s Exxon and Western Beverages. This year Marcia Ball returns to join Augie Meyers, Joe King Carrasco, Greg Piccolo, Johnny Nicholas (of course), Floyd Domino, Cindy Cashdollar (on that beautiful steel guitar), The Mexican Roots Trio and a host of great players. Expect lots of dancing, horns, and good food. Patron tickets for \$75 include a great meal before the show served between 5 and 7 p.m. General admission tickets are \$25, and the show begins at 8:00 p.m.

I’ve attended most years and danced my way through the evening. Again, the rhythm and blues mixed with Mexican Roots create a living texture of the Texas music scene. Johnny Nicholas is the passion behind the event, and music education in the Hill Country benefits. Some memorable moments for me include Marcia Ball bringing in some crawlin crawfish music from New Orleans along with her own original sound; Al Gomez blazing away on trumpet, Augie Meyers bringing a slice of real Texas to the stage (He recorded with Bob Dylan, for goodness sake), Cindy Cashdollar bringing a most humble spirit along with a huge talent (She recorded with Bob Dylan, for goodness sake), and Floyd Domino on keyboard, balancing out that Marcia Ball energy on keyboard, and more. So much more. I remember Stephen Bruton in a flashy purple coat and Jimmie Vaughan just being flashy. In an understated way, of course. So many of these performers are my favorites! All heart and soul.

Another Hill Country artist, Debbi Walton, has been selected as a finalist for the 2006 Independent Music Awards, and her latest release “Still Your Fool” is up for Album of the Year in the R&B category. Years ago we brought Debbi to the Schreiner coffeehouse, when we were in the lobby of the old cafeteria. She walked in, kicked off her shoes, and delivered the blues! Nothing like a woman singing from her heart. She also performs regularly around the area. Look her up. You won’t regret it.

I received another CD from Doctor G (Greg Anderws), a Texas singer-songwriter whose debut CD, “Mudcat,” launched Kent Finlay’s new indie label for songwriters---Cheatham Street Records. Dr. G’s debut “mixes up-tempo Texas swing, rock and roll, and swampy blues (there it is again!) with stories of loneliness and longing, forbidden love, police brutality, and disillusioned soldiers.” An interesting connection with THMF news, at fourteen, he learned to play and sing when his father taught him Jimmie Rodgers’ “Waiting For A Train.” Yep, Doctor G needs to come sing in Kerrville some September when we celebrate the birthday of Jimmie. He is also the assistant director of the Center for Texas music History at Texas State University in San Marcos. We have sister/brother organizations! Cd’s available at www.lonestarmusic.com and bookings at www.doctorgandthemudcats.com You know from the description that this music is right up my own musical alley. Yep, I love it when they mix it up.

November 2 Raul Salinas is featured at the Texas Music Coffeehouse at Schreiner University. We will also have a poetry slam, a tribute to Native American culture, a song by Rev. Goat Carson from New Orleans and more surprises! A full evening of speaking truth to power. The event is in the Cailloux Center on campus from 7-9 p.m. Free and open to the public. Raul, owner of Resistencia Bookstore in Austin, is known for his powerful writing and his compelling performance.

As you can tell, dear reader, I'm having a good time writing this column. Nothing I love more than sharing what I love with the world! Now it's your turn to share. Write me at kat@maverickbbs.com Send me your CD's, your songs, your stories. And join the THMF at www.texheritagemusic.org Free Leonard, down the road, Ils sont partis. Kat

On The Road

by Kathleen Hudson, Ph.D.

email: kat@maverickbbs.com

www.texheritagemusic.org

www.schreiner.edu