

On The Road
By Dr. Kathleen Hudson
March 2011

“Music is my refuge. I would crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.” Maya Angelou

GRAMMY AWARDS

Writing this as the Grammy Awards show comes to an end, having enjoyed exciting performances by **Eminem**, **Bob Dylan** and **Mick Jagger**. Thinking about what makes music enduring, great, award-winning. And I have to admit I had not even heard the album of the year! What’s up with that? Do I listen to the wrong radio station? Well, classic rock is my first love and that includes Bob Dylan! Mick is 67 years old. Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. And Eminem did exactly what I like, stalked around the stage passionately rhythmically saying the words.

TEXAS MUSIC COFFEHOUSE

If you read this early in the month, you can come to Schreiner Lion’s Den (student center) and hear the THMF tribute to women’s voices featuring **Susan Gibson** and **Lisa** of **Art&Lisa**. Susan has already been down the road of fame, having written “Wide Open Spaces,” performed by the Dixie Chicks. And Lisa is walking down that same road, writing and singing strong songs! She and Art have two albums, both using many Texas musicians including Jon Inmon, Lloyd Maines, Shelley King, Richard Bowden, and Walt Wilkins. Both Susan and Lisa are not only talented, but also real women with stories to tell and a heart to tell them!

AUSLANDER FESTIVAL

The Auslander in Fredericksburg presents the 6th annual Spring Music Festival during my spring break and during South by Southwest in Austin. Whew...I’ll be wearing out the road between Austin, Fredericksburg, and my home at Midway on I-10. The festival begins on March 10 with **Drew Kennedy and Josh Grider**, two men with distinct voices and strong songs.

Monte Montgomery plays March 11 at the Auslander. Now we all know Monte in the Hill Country. If you have not heard him play in a while, prepare to be blown away. He is at one with his guitar, and I love his songs! “Wishing Well” might be my favorite, but that changes. I last saw him out at his mom’s, Maggie Montgomery, playing on a new porch stage at a site historic in Texas near the Bat Cave at Alamo Springs. March 12 is **Joe Ely** night. He is a chapter in my first book on Texas songwriters, and I have been listening to him a long time. One great memory was in Cannes, France, when the band played Midem, after being stopped at the Italian border for hours. I also love the Ely show when he includes Flamenco guitar playing. I love his version of the Tom Russell song, “Gallo del Cielo.” Joe Ely, from Lubbock, Texas, (now Austin) rocks with the best of them,

March 13 brings another favorite of mine is **Jimmy LaFave**. He not only outperforms Dylan on Dylan’s songs, but he is original on his own songs and rocks! My sis, Carolyn Pillow, actually brought Jimmy to play my 60th birthday party, and I brought him to my class at Schreiner. One best performance was the Woody Guthrie Tribute at the Kerrville Folk Festival. Am I raving yet?

The rest of the week includes Mike McClure, Slaid Cleaves (ah, that voice), Max Stalling, Cory Morrow, Two Tons of Steel, ending on March 19 with **Walt Wilkins & The Mystiqueros** (and that will rock). Remember, "Trains I Missed" is a song that carries my philosophy of life. Celebrate it all! Go to www.theauslander.com

SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST IN AUSTIN

South by Southwest goes on in Austin March 15-19, featuring more music than anyone can absorb in one week, along with opportunities to explore any aspect of the music business. This conference is well-organized and huge! Louis Black and Roland Swenson are visionaries that had big dreams. Now this event overshadows all other music gatherings with myriad opportunities to enjoy. Check out the website for schedules and details. I did just get the word that the featured speaker is(drum roll).....Yoko Ono! The founder of Reverbnation is hosting a panel. Topics include writing, publishing, engineering, social networks and everyone is any aspect of the music business heads to Austin in March! www.sxsw.com

BLAZE FOLEY

Gurf Morlix performing **Blaze Foley** is on my cd player right now, "**Blaze Foley's 113th Wet Dream,**" and I am distracted by the quirky stories I am hearing. Better write and listen later. Gurf Morlix, who has worked with many musicians in Texas, producing Ray Wylie Hubbard and Lucinda Williams, is paying tribute to the Late Great Blaze with this album of Blaze tunes. Not sure I have a favorite, but "If I Could Only Fly," also recorded by Merle Haggard, is moving in this Morlix version. Knowing the level of their friendship adds to my experience, having interviewed Blaze once at the house of Townes Van Zandt in Austin. Blaze came over, and Townes said, "You better talk to him." I was interviewing for my book on Texas songwriters that came out with UT Press in 2001. He kissed Geraldine for my camera, then we sat in front of a fish tank for the interview. What memories there. Townes was sitting on the floor, eating the remnants of lettuce and an onion, the only food in his refrigerator. I had just driven him back from the Kerrville Folk Festival. The documentary film on Blaze is touring with Gurf and the CD release. Good stuff true to Texas. See www.gurfmorlix.com for more information.

CAILLOUX THEATRE

One of my February adventures was an evening at the Cailloux Theatre listening to **Robert Earl Keen** tell his stories and sing his songs. I was also writing a biographical entry for the Grover American Music Dictionary so I paid close attention, noticing that the Keen edge was sharp, the wit quick, and the stories true to Texas. Loved hearing the old ones, "This Old Porch," written with Lyle Lovett and The Front Porch Band in College Station, "Gringo Honeymoon," "The Road Goes On Forever," and "I'm Coming Home To You," and "Sonora's Death Row." He was joined by veteran band-mates, **Rich Brotherton** on smoking guitar and **Bill Whitbeck** on bass. My experience with Keen songs started with his 1983 New Folk Award at the Kerrville Folk Festival, his self-produced album, "No Kinda Dancer," and my love for his writing! When I interviewed him for my first book on Texas music, he and I were both reading Cormac McCarthy. Love all these literary Texans. Joe Ely was reading "Howl" by Ginsberg when we talked. And James McMurtry, well, just check out that name. Literary is in the DNA.

RODDY TREE

I attended the I heard **Josh and Kristi Foster Grider** at **Roddy Tree Ranch** outside of Ingram in February. They were singing various songs of love, and at one point during the

evening, Kristi's sister Stacey joined them, adding a new song to the mix. Keith has a great venue out at Roddy Tree so keep your eyes open for his new schedule. I know he is bringing the McKay Brothers as well as a return from Noel McKay and Brennen Leigh.

That show, chilly and warm at the same time, was an evening of great harmony, lively interaction, and wonderful songwriting. Noel and Brennen had some fire dancing between them on the cold night they played. Mack Barham, new designated photographer for the THMF, captured the twinkle in their eyes as they sang the words, "I'll be your ball and chain."

I also heard **Billy Bright** (doing some Bluegrass Bob Dylan with a version of "Tangled Up In Blue.") Before we know it, summer will be here with Sunday afternoon shows and Junior Pruneda! The THMF wants to host some special shows there as well. Maybe Gurf singing Blaze. Maybe someone singing Townes. Love the idea of preserving this music, sharing this music by paying tribute. I have this idea of performing the words to some of these songs I love with music (Jacob Ames?) in the background. We shall see.

One Saturday I headed to Fredericksburg at the invitation of photographer Mack Barham to hear **Bill Lewis** playing at Silver Creek, perfect listening venue, with good food as an accent to the music. Sol Patch also played there, and Ben Beckendorf has a Blue Monday show weekly. Bill has played the September Texas Heritage Music Day in Kerrville, along with gigs at Luckenbach, Hondo's, and most Hill Country venues. I invited Bill back for the Texas Heritage Music Day on September 30. Mark your calendars now! Many of Bill's songs tell stories in the true Texas way. "Love Is A Bitch" was my friend's favorite. I loved hearing Bill do a favorite Townes' song, as well as my favorite Dylan, "You're Gonna Miss Me When I'm Gone."

Another February highlight was the **4th annual Blues Festival at Luckenbach**. I took in the early part of the show, including Mark Searcy Band, Ruben V, and Guy Forsythe. Guy is returning to play Pampell's in Kerrville early March. I was reminded, once again, of that door the blues opened for me. I attended the Memphis Blues Awards in 1986 and started the **Texas Heritage Music Foundation** in 1987. Love the blues. Luckenbach is showcasing all genres of Texas music (well, no rap festival yet!), and Abby does a great job providing a venue and lineup that stirs the Texas soul. I missed the Hug-In with Gary P. Nunn. I did go to a house concert at Jack Field's that presented the stunning writing of **Shake Russell**. Nothing better than "Deep In The West" or "Two Silver Hearts." Paula Reynolds brought Kevin and Barbara of the Dust Devils to her house concert in February. A great way to hear music in a smoke-free environment that creates the space for an intimate evening, sharing food included.

HOUSE CONCERT ON THE RIVER

Paula, a THMF board member who manages the **Bard Project** sending musicians into the schools, also has Hilltop House Concerts and is working with the UU Church and THMF to create more intimate venues for music. March 18, Steve Young and his son, Jubal, will play at a UU venue, The River Bluff Party Barn in Center Point on the Guadalupe. THMF is a co-sponsor. Bring food and \$15 for the performer. 6:30. He did write "Seven Bridges Road," "Lonesome, On'ry, and Mean," and "Montgomery In The Rain," and he is at the forefront of the outlaw Texas music wave! He has also visited my classroom, and I have heard more of his story. Reservations made at

www.hilltophouseconcerts.com

Reaching out into April, I invite you to the last coffeehouse featuring spoken word on April 6 with Thom Moon Poet from Austin/Australia. April 7 is the Texas Writers Conference at Scheiner, an afternoon of workshops followed by an evening reading. Texas Poet Laureate, Karla Morton, will be one of the featured readers. Put that on your calendar. She is the first woman to be Laureate in 17 years. I love her Ft. Worth handmade boots and the story she tells about them.

A new venue in Kerrville, Bandaleros. Victor tells me that he is bringing in bands from Mexico and considering other genres such as a Friday night country dance. The venue was once the Hill Country Opry, and Victor has upgraded the interior to a place where you can dance, listen, even move upstairs and talk a bit. Check it out as the new venue in town. Bandaleros is located at the junction of Highway 27 (Ingram Highway) and Bear Creek Cutoff.

A few reminders: Check out my weekly appearance at www.the-hill-country-calendar.tv and tell all musicians you know to send me stories and material for this column and that show! March 2, partially funded by a grant from the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, **Susan Gibson** will perform a free show at 10:30 a.m. at Dietert Center on Guadalupe. Support live music. Visit local venues and buy product from musicians. Read this magazine for updates on venues and schedules. Ils Sont Partis KH

“Music is your own experience, your thoughts, your wisdom. If you don’t live it, it won’t come out of your horn.” Charlie Parker