

On The Road  
For Feb. 2012

Writing this from San Miguel de Allende in Guanajuato, Mexico after listening to **Pedro Cartas with Zambe at Hecho en Mexico**, the perfect restaurant on Ancha de San Antonio. When Pedro sat down with his violin at the end of the show, and the ceiling over the patio was rolled back to allow La Luna llena to shine down on us, we heard the theme song from Paradisio as a tribute to romance! A couple next to me had already enjoyed the tango music by dancing, and a group of 4 young people used the aisle to dance to a gypsy tune. I am actually thinking about Tango lessons in Kerrville, but might need to realize I did give up horses for a reason. My knees and back. Maybe they would like tango!

A woman at the table next to me, dressed in black, looked over at her companion when the band announced “Libertango” by Astor Piazzolla, saying, “Put on your seatbelt.” We heard Duke Ellington and D’Jango Reinhardt (Willie’s influence), Miles Davis and Ray Charles. A tribe of decorated women ran in to belly dance at the end of the first set, unexpected. Seems a class was in session across the street. I ate shrimp grilled on rosemary branches with cream spinach and nopales grilled. Crème Brulee topped off the meal, and the evening was just as spectacular.

Pedro Cartas, from Cuba, has been playing in San Miguel for years. You can get his CD online by going to [www.zomozmusic.com/Cartas](http://www.zomozmusic.com/Cartas) or Facebook Miguel Favero. I am letting that music be background to my experience at home on the high plain west of Kerrville.

Music is central to the San Miguel experience, along with history, art, gourmet food, literature (**Writing Conference in February** features Margaret Atwood and Joy Harjo), film (check out movies options at Café Etc by asking Juan his opinion), y mas. Always y mas.

Let me look back at the last month and share some memories. **Traci Hancock of Texana Dames** fame was heading to MD Anderson for her second round of treatments for cancer on the day I attended a fundraiser for her at Jovita’s on South First in Austin. The place was packed for this much-loved family, and everyone was in attendance, even a sister I did not know about! The Hancock family are part of my life in many ways and have a place of honor in the collection of interviews that I have in my book on women in Texas music. How about an afternoon with Cleave Hattersly and Greasy Wheels. Sweet Mary ended the set with a wild ride on the “Orange Blossom Special.” Ponty Bone, who shares their Lubbock roots, got us all up and dancing. Sweet energy prevailed. Tommy Hancock showed up and dance with wife, Charlene. All who know Texas music history, know of this supernatural band that hit Austin years ago. One person shared this with me: “This family hit town and they were almost too weird for Austin. I mean feathers in their hair and dancing barefoot in the streets.” I was thrilled to be adopted as a “dame” years ago when I played my castanets with them at Guerro’s and when I followed them around Europe for ten days, documenting their effect on songwriting festivals in Frutigen and in Austria.

Another heart warming event was the annual **Freddy Powers Picking Party** on January 1, Darrell Royal style. And he was sitting on the front row listening! Catherine, wife of

Freddy, announced the rules, “You listen when you are in this room. If you need to talk, go outside.” The full room obeyed as Bo Porter kicked off the afternoon with some real honky tonk. His voice rearranged some of the cells in my body as the sound waves went through me. Rattlesnake Annie has known Freddy for decades, and her tribute included “Brazos de Dios,” and “Comanche Tears,” a song she performs acapello. In fact, she stepped away from the mike and commanded the room with her voice and presence. That woman is legendary in her own lifetime.

Freddy was in a wheel chair, dealing with the ravages of Parkinson’s, and he was listening carefully. After a few hours it was his turn on stage. Drive By Trucker’s had performed, and now they played for Freddy as he sang. One had to hold his hand to quiet the shaking, but Freddy was clear about the singing. “I Just Want To Sing My Song,” was the last one we heard from him. How true is that for us all? Freddy Powers, loved by all, respected by the best in the business, family to Darrell, Merle and Willie among others, still commands an audience. The litany of jokes he told kept us all in stitches. Freddy-style! Catherine told me that he wanted to die on the road, so they live in their RV at La Hacienda RV Park, and Ken, the owner, told me of all the wonderful gatherings in this pavilion newly named after Freddy! His gift at turning 80. Hard to believe. A joke was made about the Darrell Royal stadium and Freddy Powers Pavilion when both men were alive and in the room.

My last event before turning in this column was the **Buddy Holly Show** at the Kathleen Cailloux Performing Arts Theatre. Chris Huber as Buddy, and Greg Bitkower adding jazz licks to the famous songs of the fifties thrilled a sold-out house. We heard that the song “That’ll Be The Day,” was recorded by the Quarrymen who later became the Beatles; “Not Fade Away” was a hit for the Rolling Stones; and the Beatles did know of the Crickets when they formed their name. Many interesting bit of Texas music trivia, as Holly was Texas born and bred. I am always shocked when I realize his career lasted a little over two years. This band presented the entire Holly story this summer at the point theatre, and the response to the music led to this incarnation that is available for parties and events throughout Texas. I loved being in a sold-out audience at our Cailloux Theatre!

The first **THMF coffeehouse** at Schreiner features **Ruben V** on Wed., Feb. 1 from 7-9. His recent appearance at Pampell’s thrilled the packed crowd with Hendrix, Muddy Waters and Stevie Ray Vaughan. Expect a visual treat as he fully embraces his guitar and becomes his music. Stephanie Urbina Jones with Florin Sanchez will play March 7. Ils sont partis