

# Texas Music Times

"THE RED DIRT IS HERE"

NOVEMBER 2006

FOR FANS BY FANS



**JASON BOLAND AND THE STRAGGLERS**  
**"The Bourbon Legend"**

LARGEST MAGAZINE IN TEXAS MUSIC

[WWW.TEXASMUSICTIMES.COM](http://WWW.TEXASMUSICTIMES.COM)

# ABOUT THE COVER

Jason Boland and The Stragglers are one of the most influential bands in Texas and Red Dirt music. They are special for many reasons including talent and hard work. It has not always been an easy road for Jason personally and the road schedule, working nights, and the general grin of the music business almost took their toll on him. Alcohol can be a problem with people who make their living entertaining in bars. Fans are really part of the problem as well. In every town fans show their appreciation by offering drinks to the band, and the bands often show appreciation by accepting. What most don't realize is that the artists are doing the same thing in a different town 5 nights per week. It would be like the fans getting loaded every night and driving 150 miles the next day to get loaded that night again while doing a job. It can be a one-way ticket to substance problems. I don't know the details of Jason's battles with these characteristics of the profession he is so good at. I became a JBS fan after those days were gone. However, I can only imagine and compare to what I see all over the scene and empathize with how difficult it must be to maintain a normal lifestyle. What I do know is that the Stragglers are at the top of their game and are only going to get better and better as the years develop. The first time I saw and met Jason was at a show this past summer and I was amazed at how great the show was and how much Jason's baritone voice reminded me of Waylon Jennings. After

What I do know is that The Stragglers are at the top of their game and are only going to get better and better as the years develop.

the show I asked him if it would bother him if I ever compared him to Waylon Jennings and he told me in with deep sincerity, "Heck no man, Waylon was the first real country music outlaw. He started it all and did so many different things in the business. It would not bother me at all." In retrospect, it was a stupid question my part and I regret asking it, but Jason's answer said more about him than the stupidity of my question. His answer was delivered with class and taste and he showed no sign

of being irritated with me. I walked away from that encounter realizing that I had just communicated with a very genuine man who saw his music and himself in the context of history and time with humility. Humility is a quality that impresses me about Jason Boland and The Stragglers. They never seem to take anything for granted and it shows. Their brand of country is leading the way of the new outlaws with a sound as distinct as those

before them. Some Jason's band mates are better suited in converse, tee shirts, and painters hats, as opposed to the trademark cowboy look, but they deliver country music better than almost anyone and they draw the modern cowboy, yuppie, and sneaker wearer to their shows. They are Noah Jeffries, Brad Rice, Grant Tracy, Roger Ray, and Jason Boland. They are Jason Boland and The Stragglers and Texas Music Times is proud to have them as our December 2006 cover story.

The Editor in Chief

## THE BOURBON LEGEND WALKS AMONG US

By: Mark Tucker

Growing up as an only child, I became accustomed to getting what I want, when I wanted it. When Jason Boland & The Stragglers new album title, *"The Bourbon Legend"*, was announced at the beginning of the year, my childhood tendencies rose up within me, and I've been literally counting the days until this album was mine. Thanks to an advance copy given to our magazine by Sustain Records, I now have the latest chapter in the legend that is; Jason Boland & The Stragglers.

About a year and a half ago, I heard Jason Boland for the first time. It was a cover of Merle Haggard's "I think I'll just stay here and drink", done by Jason Boland alongside buddy Kevin Fowler. When Jason came in on the second verse, I immediately thought it was Waylon Jennings. The delivery and vocals were shaky, and yet at the same time, the smoothest and most soulful singer I had ever heard. Initially I didn't even know who it was singing with Kevin Fowler, but I would soon find out. Over the course of the next few months, I would find out more about Jason Boland & The Stragglers, and with each album I bought, and each song I listened to, I became a bigger fan. Some artists are great singers, while others are great performers, or great songwriters. Jason Boland & The Stragglers have all of these components. It is Jason's voice, the lyrics, the band, and the performance that make this artist a must see, and every album a must have.

I have been to 10 JB&S shows this year. The first single, *"No One Left To Blame"*, which is already at number 15 on the Texas Music Charts, with the album not even released yet, has been played by Jason at his shows since early June. The first time I heard it live, the usually loud, sing along crowd became noticeably silent, as every Straggler fan listened to every word, every riff, and every beat of the new song. In typical Jason Boland fashion, he introduces the song by stating, *"This new album is gonna kick ass! It's what country music should be. None of this Rascal Flats boy band bullsh\*t. Although I do like that fat chick they have with em'.....You know, the lead singer!"*

Jason could not be more right about this new album, which comes out on the band's 8 year anniversary, Halloween Day, and unlike the music

coming out of Nashville, *"The Bourbon Legend"*, is all treat, with no tricks.

*"This is the record we have always wanted to make. It is the right record, at the right time"*, says Boland. The album is the band's first with Sustain Records, an independent Texas-based record company distributed by Universal Music & Video Distribution. Jason Boland's band is made up of Roger Ray (pedal steel, lead/rhythm guitar), Brad Rice (drums, backup vocals), Grant Tracy (bass guitar), and Noah Jeffries (banjo, mandolin, guitar). Some of the band's biggest musical influences are the Marshall Tucker Band, Johnny Paycheck, and Merle Haggard.

With all of the hype amongst JB&S fans around this new album over the past year, both at concerts, and on the web, I was a little worried about the album not living up to the build up. The fear became less and less however, as Jason Boland began playing more and more songs at venues that would be on the new album. Not only does this album meet any and all expectations I had, it's the best album I've heard, by this group, or any other. If you miss the way country music used to sound, if you miss Waylon Jennings, and if you miss the steel guitar, you will fall in love with this album.

The first track on the album, called, *"The Last Country Song"*, sets the tone for the entire album, hinting that vintage country music has gone away, but will always be found in the voice of Jason Boland. From there you hear the title track, *"The Bourbon Legend"*, which is also being played at shows currently. As Jason sings, it's apparent that this song could be an auto biography of his life that he has always been gracious enough to give his fans insight into, during his good times, and his struggles. *"No One Left To Blame"*, the first single out, follows, and is already becoming a known sing a long at shows.

If there has been one thing lacking in previous Jason Boland & The Straggler albums, and Texas/Red Dirt music in general, its love songs. *The Bourbon Legend* gives us 2 love songs, *"Up and Gone"*, and *"Everyday Life"*. Each of these songs are amazing both lyrically and vocally, and were a very nice surprise.

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AND ALL THE ARTISTS AND FANS THAT KEEP IT REAL....  
GOD BLESS

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## From the Editor in Chief

Welcome to the November 2006 issue of Texas Music Times. I would like to personally extend my thanks for taking the time to pick it up and give it a read. We are the largest magazine dealing with Texas Music with more column inches of content each month than any other publication in the genre. My commitment to each of you as a reader is to keep it that way. We focus on the artists, the stories, the music, and not ourselves. I would like to take a few words and thank some of the great folks that help me make this magazine work every month. First, my wife Rebecca puts up with my crazy and over the top attitude every month to get all the deadline issues completed on time. She is worthy of more thanks than I will ever give her. Steve Circeo is my friend and business sounding board. He also does a heck of a job on the TMT website and has developed a site that now enjoys hundreds of distinct visitors every day from all over the world. He loves the music and has helped me create TMT in a way that represents how we both feel. Thank you my friend. To my Niece-in-Law Danielle for putting up with my perfection on design and the late nights in front of the computer each month as we crunch for deadlines. Thank you so much. To Rachel Taylor for keeping our articles somewhere near the English language and for being the biggest Reckless Kelly fan in the country. Nicki and Les for being the best unpaid street team anyone could have. Mike and Mary for those great photos and for just being themselves. And to all the contributors and others who help out in so many ways. To the fans whom without we would not have a Texas and Red Dirt music scene. Thank you all so much. We are making a difference.

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Texas music is a passionate subject for the artists, fans, and industry at large; and there are views that individuals hold strongly. Words like "crap," "ass," "damn," and "hell" are likely to be printed in Texas Music Times LLC publications. If you are offended by words like that please be warned. Additionally, our management and authors may be persons of faith and refer to a deity that they believe in such as Lord, God, or some other name for a greater being. If you are offended by people who express belief in a higher being, then we suggest that you get over it.



(Continued from page 2)

Don't be fooled though, this album is anything but soft. It's both vintage Jason Boland, and its also the band's best effort in my opinion. Boland is still an outlaw, still untamed, still not selling out to the sounds or lyrics on most of what is now considered "country" radio. This becomes reality in the song, "Can't Tell If I Drink", with the lyrics, "Can't tell if I drink because she bitches, or she bitches because I drink". Another track, called "Rattlesnakes", hasn't been played at shows yet, but something tells me this will be an anthem at concerts that JB&S fans will be begging for. It's rough, its vintage, its Jason Boland pure and simple. To expand on the title, and the main lyrics, "Rattlesnakes, painted ladies, and cocaine", it's a song that only the Stragglers could do, and one you

can guarantee, won't be played on the radio.

"Time in Hell", is the next to last track on the album, and upon my first listen to the *Legend*, was a song I hit repeat on about 10 times right out of the gate. Any fan of any genre of music has a few songs that will always be a favorite, a song you could listen to over and over, for years and years. This one is one of a handful of songs for me. The song

is about hoping for something good, because you've been thru so much hell in life. With lyrics such as, "So put me on the red eye flight, and let me find the sun; I'm not the first, won't be the last, and all it takes is one; just take me far from this place, where the Garden of Eden fell; cuz I'm bound to go to Heaven, I've done spent my time in hell".



Any fan of great music, any fan of Jason Boland & The Stragglers, will fall in love with this album. Get the album, but more importantly, go see these guys live. They have so many songs now, that their fans insist on being played at every show, its now become an over 2 hour show, crammed with as many Straggler hits as you can count, and as always



Photo Courtesy of Sustain Records

the band is very gracious about hanging out with their fans after every show. A very humble act, considering the following they have. Its great to know that some artists don't let success change them, and we as fans are extremely lucky, to have The Bourbon Legend walking among us.

## "VOW" IS THE WORD FOR JOHNNY COOPER

JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER

By: Linda Higbie

The first time I saw the Phoenix born musician, Johnny Cooper, it was at an acoustic show in Stillwater, Oklahoma. After over three hours of non-stop original and cover tunes from some of his favorite artists and music, I walked away that night knowing Johnny Cooper was going to be huge someday. Since starting his career, Cooper has performed and toured with some of the biggest names in the Texas / Red Dirt music scene as well as some Nashville country artists. His bio alone is enough to impress anyone.

Now almost 18, Cooper began performing professionally just three years ago when he opened for the Great Divide in Denton, Texas. Today, he has two CDs under his belt; his first "Live at the Pub," was recorded at the Iron Horse Pub in Wichita Falls, TX. It is a compilation of six original songs and selected cover songs of his favorite artists. In January 2006, the CD won "Best Live CD" of 2006 and Cooper himself won "Texas Entertainer of the Year" at the Payne Co. Line Oklahoma Music Awards. In February of 2006, he recorded his second CD, "Ignition." Produced by Mike McClure, this CD

includes ten new original songs in addition to three bonus tracks.



Photo By Linda Higbie

He has been described as "the next generation of southern rebel Red Dirt music." Cooper has said he was musically inspired by Cody Canada, Bleu Edmondson, and

Wade Bowen. To add to the list of inspirations, he has also mentioned Tom Petty, The Eagles, Johnny Cash, and Lynard Skynard.

Recently Cooper performed at many different venues and held a CD release party for "Ignition." I was fortunate so attend two of those shows and I have to say, this album, blows the first one away. One can definitely hear a Cross Canadian Ragweed influence in the music. The original songs are amazing. When performing cover tunes, I must say, Cooper does Tom Petty, the Eagles, and Cross Canadian Ragweed justice.

From the first time I saw Cooper, I was completely awestruck. It amazes me how young he is, and yet how mature he carries himself. Still a teenager at heart, he is an old soul with depth and talent beyond his years. A good friend of mine told me the first time I saw him, "He is the next Cody Canada." I have to agree with this statement and have since heard several others say the exact same thing. I highly recommend checking out a show near you. I guarantee you will walk away in awe yourself and planning for the next gig. You can view a list of Johnny Cooper's upcoming shows at [www.johnny-cooper.com](http://www.johnny-cooper.com)

JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER JOHNNY COOPER

# Introducing Sterling Finlay

By: Steve Circeo

I've always been very curious about human nature, so when I looked at the photos I shot of Sterling Finlay as he played upright bass at a recent gig, and the word "innocence" crept into my mind to describe his nature, I knew I had to find out more. After all, here was a guy who was raised in the rough-and-tumble world of Texas Music. How innocent could he be?

I sat down with Sterling at his dad's place, historic Cheatham Street Warehouse in San Marcos, Texas. Kent Finlay first opened the Cheatham Street doors in 1974, and that hallowed stage has launched the careers of thousands of artists, including Stevie Ray Vaughan, Todd Snider, and George Strait.

When Sterling Finlay was a boy, Kent was busy performing, and Sterling's mom, Diana, ran the place, so Sterling literally grew up at Cheatham Street. "Every night around 8:00, they'd put a blanket on the pool table, tuck me and my sister in, and we'd go to sleep to the sound of loud music." That music was, and continues to be, very much a part of Sterling's life.

He got his first guitar when he was five-years-old, but when he was eight, he was presented with a bass. "It's always been really fun to play the bass," he says.

In fact, the first time I saw Sterling perform, he was playing bass for Dr. G and the Mudcats at the Red Room in San Antonio. The Red Room is a place where musicians go to play music, not sell beer, so one can usually get a good feel for a band while enjoying a performance there. That night I got the feeling that Sterling Finlay was an immense talent. He looked like he was really into the music, wanting to play each note just perfectly. He seemed to know exactly what he was doing, but also learning even more about his craft each time his fingers plucked a string.

Dr. G, a.k.a. Gregg Andrews, summed it up as only a poet can: "Sterling brings that loose, funky thing to the shows that really helps the Mudcats sink into our swampy groove behind his snaky bass tracks." Snaky. Cool.

Interestingly, even after having grown up right in the heart of this great Texas Music scene, music was not Sterling's first career choice. Nope. This young man had decided pretty early on that he wanted to become an English teacher.

"I've had some very, very incredible teachers in my life," he tells me. "It sounds kinda corny, but teachers are the ones that can change the world."

Working toward that goal, Sterling attended Texas State as an English major. However, a youthful indiscretion that led to a conviction for possession of marijuana knocked teaching in Texas out of the picture. Texas would always be his home, so with teaching no longer an option, Sterling dove into music full time.



Photo By Steve Circeo

"We all do stupid things when we're young, but when I knew music was going to be the way I went, I threw myself into it 100%. I like playing with as many people as possible, because the more people I play with, the more people I know, and the better I get."

**"I'LL BE HERE AS LONG AS I'LL BE HERE." HE LAUGHS, QUICKLY ADDING, "THIS PLACE IS IN MY BLOOD."**

And play with as many people as possible is indeed what he does. Sterling is in high demand, usually playing six nights a week and also Sunday mornings at church. He performs with Foscoe Jones, Robbie and the Robots, Big John Mills, Sidehill Gougers, Grant Ewing ...

"Grant was a bartender here. He'd just be here all the time, wouldn't even drink, so I said to him, if you're going to be here, anyway, you might as well tend the bar. But he'd get all flustered when we got busy, so he retired from that. Fortunately, he's really good at music."

... Dr. G and the Mudcats ...

"Dr. G came to songwriters night every week for, like, two years. He'd written some stuff, but he never got up on stage. He just sat in the back, listening, watching. We finally got him to start playing happy hour, and his album was the first release on my dad's label, Cheatham Street Records."

... Todd Snider ...

"Todd started out at Cheatham Street. Let's just say he had problems with employment, so it was pretty much music or nothing." Todd worked closely with Kent to learn songwriting, and he even lived with the Finlays for a couple of years. Sterling considers Todd to be one of his primary mentors. "He believes in me even more than I do." But they don't get to see each other as much as they used to, because Todd now lives in Nashville.

"People talk crap about Nashville, but I love Nashville," Sterling admits. "Look at it this way. There are so many musicians who go there, so, of course, there will be a certain percentage, maybe 40%, who aren't that good. But if that's who people want to hear, you can't blame Nashville being such a great music city."

Sterling's only twenty-five, and when I ask about what he thinks he'll be doing in ten years, he says he sees himself doing more of his own stuff. How about Cheatham Street? "Will someday all this be yours?" I ask, looking around the room.

"I'll be here as long as I'll be here." He laughs, quickly adding, "This place is in my blood."

As for the immediate future, Sterling has been recording in a home studio, laying down songs one track at a time. He's also learning to play fiddle, something he's always wanted to add to his repertoire. Expanding himself musically is important.

Isn't it enough to just play bass really well? "I like to keep growing musically. That's important to me. When I was growing up, we didn't have a lot of money, but we had music and we had love."

Music and love. At that point I tell Sterling about the photos I had taken of him and how I thought he looked so innocent in several of them.

"Innocent," Sterling repeats. "Yeah," he says, looking down quickly to hide a mischievous grin, "let's go with that." Then he looks up again and says, "God bless Brady Black." I can't disagree with that sentiment.

Sterling Finlay is a young man who loves his family, loves what he does for a living, and has a lot of really cool stories to tell about it all. I don't guess that adds up to innocence, but let's just say that I'm a little less cynical now than I was before I sat down with him. Thank you, Sterling.

# SIDEMAN BLUES

## Robert Cherry-Hot Licks from a Young Gun

By: Steve Circeo

I'm sitting in a house in a quiet neighborhood just outside San Marcos. My host offers me an apple soda and brags about how his girlfriend, Sarah, makes the world's best banana bread. Sarah is at this very moment in the kitchen, but the welcome aroma of freshly baking banana bread is not in the air – Sarah's busy paying bills. Natty, a hyperactive beagle with a typically neurotic craving for human attention, is trying to get me to tug on the other end of her pull toy. No dice, Natty, I have business to attend to.

This portrait of domestic serenity isn't what I expected when Robert Cherry, the flashy, lip-ringed lead guitar player for the Rich O'Toole Band, offered up his home as a venue for our interview. I'm really not sure what it was I expected. But it wasn't this.

"Yeah, people think weird things about me because of the lip ring," he understates. The lip ring and a whole lot else, I thought, like the way you shred those hot licks on stage every night, or the way you raise your axe to your face to feed us a few notes with your mouth. Or, maybe you're right, maybe it's the lip ring. Not a whole lot of those on the Texas country music scene.

But Cherry's not interested in the politics of the Texas music scene. He and Rich, along with drummer Barrett Hughes, have goals for the band, and they want to stay focused on that. In fact, Robert really only wants two things: to be true to himself and to play good music. "I don't like to get on bandwagons. I try to do my thing and not worry about anything else."

Robert wasn't always a fixture on the Texas Country Music scene. Before his gig with Rich O'Toole, he was in the rap-rock band 57 State. They had a loyal following and even made an appearance on HDNet's hip music show, "True Music." Then one day he got the opportunity to sit in with Rich and they hit it off. Robert's been part of the Rich O'Toole Band ever since.

Robert also does a lot of studio work with producer Mack Damon, who produced Rich O'Toole's debut album, *Seventeen*. "Mack is great, extremely talented at what he does. He has this insane ear for music – it's just ridiculous. That's why we work really well together, because I can take his vision and interpret what he's saying into guitar."

Mack concurs with Robert's assessment of their relationship. "Cherry has an amazing personality that meshes with other artists and aligns with their vision. From my standpoint as a producer, he tries to understand the perspective of the songwriter and producer's direction, and doesn't mind the journey it sometimes takes to get to that viewpoint. Oh yeah, and he has great chops."

This kid does have great chops, as anyone who's attended a Rich O'Toole show knows. Watching him play Rich's original compositions is one thing, but when the band takes on Johnny Cash's "Folsom Prison Blues" and Bob Dylan's "Maggie's Farm," Robert's guitar work, combined with Rich's powerful vocals, take those songs to a whole other level. Fresh and real.

"I try to keep it fresh all the time. I don't like to play the same thing twice. If you're at a show and record one of my guitar solos, you could compare it to the next show, and you'd see that we have a basic structure, but I try not to play the same solo the same way twice. That's how Rich is, too. He likes to do things differently every time."

We're interrupted by a knock on the door, and in walks Rich O'Toole in the flesh. He wants to know if he can do some laundry. He's got a gig tonight in Austin and he's far from home, but his clothes could use some freshening up. Ah, the life of a working musician. It's obvious that Rich is a regular guest here and he heads back to the laundry room.

Robert got his first guitar when he was a ten-year-old in College Station, but didn't really get going until about a year later when he moved back to his hometown, Nacogdoches.

Does he have any specific influences he can point to for his guitar work?

"It sounds kinda lame, but I'm really just influenced by people I play with, by different styles of music. In high school, I was in a metal band, so I learned to play metal. I had a teacher who was into 12-bar blues, so I learned that and incorporated it into the way I play. My youth minister, Andrew Worley, was my first guitar teacher, and he was really into 90's rock, like Pearl Jam. I can hear that from time to time in my playing."

"If I had to pick one person, though, I guess it would be Steve DeVries from Lufkin. He's the most incredible guitar player I've ever heard. He was my guitar teacher for a really long time and he probably influenced me more than anyone else."

So how are things going for the Rich O'Toole Band? "Rich and I are both college graduates, but we want to do music, because that's what we love. We love it, so we work hard at it. Where I'm from, the key to success in what you do is hard work. That's both Rich's and my attitude. This is our job, all week long, playing,

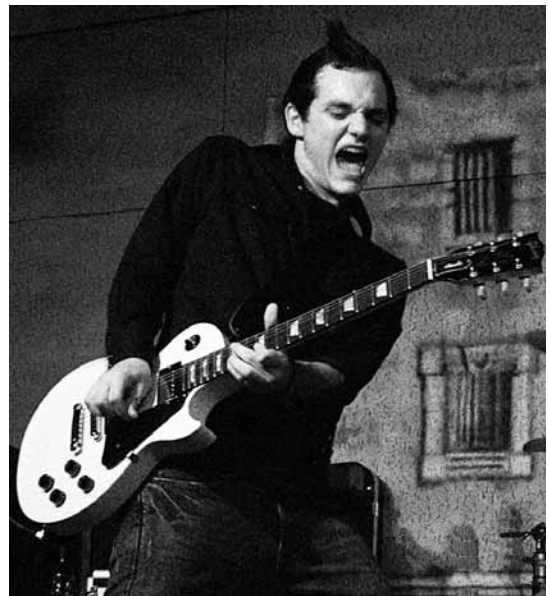


Photo By Steve Circeo

promoting. Hard work."

Hard work, indeed. The band played twenty-five shows in September, all over Texas. When they say coming soon to a town near you, they're not kidding. We hear Rich singing from the back of the house. It's a song I'm not familiar with, so Robert clues me in. "That's a new one Rich is working on." Sounds pretty good, I say. "Yeah, he'll just keep working it and working it until it becomes a whole song."

Rich writes the songs, but these guys really are a band, all in this together. "It's about Rich and it's his name, his songs, but he chooses his band members to shape his music. Barrett Hughes does an incredible job on the drums, and we just got a new bass player, Jason Ybarbo."

I remark that such humility from a frontman is not so common. "There really are no egos. We know that we're nobody without the fans. No matter who you are, there's somebody out there who doesn't know who you are. We try to figure out how to get that person to hear our music."

But what about the look? The crazy hair. The lip ring. "Hey, man, that's just me. We play in a lot of country places, and people look at me kinda weird, but they don't realize that I'm probably more country than they are. I spent my summers cleaning chicken houses and building fences on farm in Nacogdoches. I mean, my degree is in Agricultural Business."

So, don't let the look fool you. Robert Cherry is all about traditional values. Hard work. Banana bread. And laying down raw licks. That's rock and roll in Texas, right? Well, let's not forget – ya gotta have a dog. Okay, Natty, where's that pull toy?



# Granger Smith-Aggieland's Student Singer Songwriter

By: Gabe Shutt

When I started writing for magazines, I always had this fantasy that it would be like interviews I read in Rolling Stone. I guess everyone wants to be a rockstar and if you're a writer the closest thing you're going to get it writing for Rolling Stone. Interviews in Rolling Stone always seem to open with a description of some quaint hip little restaurant or coffee shop in SoHo or LA where the interviewer is inevitably waiting on said rock star. The rock star walks in and the two seem to slip into effortless conversation. The conversation just happens to be about whatever the rock star is promoting.

When I called Granger Smith and asked where he wanted to meet, for some reason that image stood out in my mind so I was a bit surprised when he said Whataburger. To me that's the mark of a guy who is comfortable in his own skin. He's not looking for the hip place to be, he's happy where he is now. His fourth album *Living Like a Lonestar* has just come out, and in December he will graduate from Texas A&M University with a degree in History.

About halfway through our conversation Granger warned me that he was probably going to answer half of my questions with this phrase "I got lucky." He says it whenever he mentions his publishing contract in Nashville, his band in College Station, or getting the opportunity to come back to school at A&M.

At age 19, Granger Smith opened the door when opportunity knocked. He had just released his first CD and was playing in bars around the Brazos Valley. As he puts it, the album got into the hand "of a friend of a friend of a friend in Nashville." Soon Granger had representatives from various labels flying down to College Station to catch his shows.

Granger accepted a publishing contract with EMI and moved to Nashville, leaving A&M and the Corp of Cadets behind him. For the next four years he worked as a songwriter, writing five days a week. Then when his manager decided to start his own publishing company, Granger got another opportunity. He got to come back to Texas A&M while still working as a songwriter. Granger reenrolled, this time as a history major.

"I love it [history]. It's the only thing I could tolerate these days." Granger says with a laugh. "I'm not going to use it. I mean I plan to keep playing and writing."

That's one of the things he's looking forward to most about his December graduation, getting back to writing full time and being on the road more especially in promotion of his new album. Granger lights up like a kid at Christmas when speaking of his new effort.

"I think is definitely represents me better than anything I've done before I think." Say Granger with a spark in his eye. "I really like no one was telling me what to do. I did it in my own studio with my band which was a first."

This is because unlike the other three albums, Granger produced it himself in his in house studio in College Station. His previous efforts were pieced together from studio sessions with EMI.

"Recording this album is something I will always remember." Granger breaks into stories about how recording the drum tracks led to the police showing up on his doorstep. And everything he says is followed by a laugh and a wide grin.

However, even with all the passion, he did have some reservations during the whole process.

"It was pretty scary to think that if this turned out poorly it would be a direct reflection on me."

That's not the case though. Granger seems really happy with the outcome. He is also as satisfied with the band he has assembled.

"They had already been playing together before I met them. They are older than me but I like it because they have steady jobs and there aren't any of the hassles you get when you play with a bunch of kids."

Granger has been touring with his band as much as is possible for a full time college student.

"I schedule all my classes on Tues and Thurs to keep my weekends long. I've had to move around tests and projects before, but not too much. Music takes as much time as the corps or bonfire did. This time of year my freshman and sophomore year was all about bonfire...and a full load of classes didn't matter then either."

Soon classes will be over and Granger will be walking across the stage to receive his diploma. After that, he will get back to writing every day, a discipline he learned from his time in Nashville.

"You get into a mentality where you say to yourself: I'm going to write today. Then something good comes on TV. But if you treat it like a job, you go in and write every day. It's a good routine. --You get your inspiration out in the world and then you sit down and write about it."

And Granger has some advice for his peers who think achieving their dreams are impossible or realistically improbable.

"No matter what the dream, finish up school first. That way, no one can blame you for having nothing to fall back on. After that, live life as "unrealistic" as possible! Go be a bartender in Key West or a ski instructor in Aspen...whatever your dream is do it now while you can! Down the road, you will never wonder and never regret and that is true contentment."

And something tells me that Granger Smith will live a long, unrealistic, and fully content life.



Photo Courtesy of Granger Smith

## TMT Trivia Contest~Win a 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION TO CLUB TMT.

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November: Q. How many cats fell on the floor of Willy Braun's party house in Willamina, Oregon?

October Q. was: On Les Lawless' new base drum there is a clock, what do the positions of the clock hands signify?  
answer: The hands are pointed at 9 and 12, which was the release date of *Just A Matter of Time*.

Winner was Erin Taylor of Gilbert, Arizona.

# The Gospel according to Randy Rogers Band: New York City

By: Tee Dubya

I'm a Red-Dirt fan. A big one. So much so that my wife tells me I'm obsessed. About right. I don't think I'm alone in the thought that we have something special down here in our neck of the woods that's about to burst like a gas can freshly lit on fire. Just me maybe, but I hope so, 'cause I can't handle any more Badonkadonk.

Anyway, doing what I do for a living, I'm afforded the flexibility of coinciding my business trips with the touring dates of my favorite Red-Dirt artists. Kinda cool gig because I can say, "hey, need me on this date?" "Yeah sure." And I'm off buying tickets.

On this particular trip, I found myself in New York City with a ticket to see the Randy Rogers Band open for Dierks Bentley on the Locked and Loaded tour. I was curious to see if those Yankees cottoned to our home-grown talent.

Think about that. Randy Rogers Band in New York City.

That's an image I just had to see for myself and I'm going to do what I can here to describe it for you. But just to make it interesting, I'm going to use a metaphor.

Here goes.

Randy Rogers is a preacher's kid. A Baptist preacher's kid no less. Now, I understand something about being a PK because I'm one myself (yep, it's true, don't worry though, similarities will end right there). However, this has always intrigued me about Randy Rogers. What's really intrigued me is that it seems the apple doesn't fall far from the tree.

See, personally, it's no surprise to me that someone with Randy Rogers' background has the soul in his music that he does. I assume he sat at the feet of some great communicators and he knows what's fake. And, to a PK, there's nothing more abhorrent than faking it. Faking it is grist-for-the-mill in average PK thinking resulting in a bit of an, um, well, edge as regards matters-of-the-soul. The problem with being a PK is that the faith is expected to show itself even if you haven't necessarily made it yours yet. It's your parents' faith. Faking it sucks until you've made the faith your own.

So, for a PK, anything involving soul can't be fake.

And I like to think that's why RR does a yeoman's job in delivering what we expect. He, along with his brothers in the faith, preach soul night after night. As evidenced by his latest in-between-song missives during shows, he's been railing against the vapid offerings of the often soulless machine that is country today. He

and the Band have been assuring the Red-Dirt faithful as of late that "country is not dead". Pretty ballsy considering they're now a part of that machine. More on that thought in the last paragraph.

Anyway, with this backdrop on my mind, Randy Rogers Band in New York City.

For those of you who haven't been there, New York City is a fascinating place. Images from the movie "Wall Street" or "Sex and the City" are fairly accurate. Everyone seems to be

a great middle they have to hit and I further assume they're making a profit at hitting that middle well.

And that's the very point, isn't it?

Isn't that why we're a little obsessed with our Red-Dirt preachers? They give back to us definitions of ourselves that ring true because we know full well that rolling in the sand with a pin-up ain't happening in the real world. Least not mine. Well, my wife's a pin-up but last I looked I'm not calendar material.

So, in a city that is the home of big money (Wall Street), big marketing (Madison Avenue), and big advertising (Times Square), what does the Red-Dirt gospel look like?

If you've seen them, you know what it looks like.

I don't have to tell you about Randy Rogers' wry, witty delivery that wins you over. Don't have to tell you about Brady Black's bow-legged intensity. Don't need to comment on Chops' little smile when the Texan in the front row called for "Ten Miles Deep" (his song). Or Geoff Hill's look of satisfaction that's he's right back where he should be after his family-circumstance-induced hiatus. Or Les Lawless's monster command.

Jon Richardson of The Randy Rogers Band



Photo By Tee Dubya

running around, real-fast-like, on some super-scotch mission to look fabulous, get rich, wear the right clothes, be seen at the right place, and eventually get a place on the Upper East Side complete with a closet full of Manolo Blahniks or Prada Suits.

They say it's the city that doesn't sleep. It's freaking true! I was jonesing for some Pizza at about 1AM the night before the show, and I had three choices within 2 blocks of my hotel. Not cruddy pizza either. Good stuff. Italians would have been proud.

So the Red-Dirt gospel in New York? Concert review please?

Ah, before I answer that, I need to preach a little more.

Don't know about you. But these Red-Dirt artists are my family. Yeah, I've got my own real family. But the Red-Dirt scene represents another kind of family. Why? You know why. Tired of force-fed palaver from dudes-in-suits that focus group the next single from the latest cheese-hunk with biceps. Nothing against it per se. Just ain't for me. I don't think I'm alone. The suits-in-the-machine are just trying to make a living and send their kids to college, albeit in Ferraris. Hell, I buy some of it, cause some of it's decent. But in general, I assume there's

Since RRB was the opening act and since they're new outside of our scene, the crowd was a bit sedate at first. Not like Billy Bob's or Cheatham Street or Gruene crowds. As I looked around, it was obviously a crowd that hadn't seen the RRB before. But as the set wore on, 'twas really cool to see the Yankees digging what we've come to take for granted. In short, the Randy Rogers Band delivered the Red-Dirt gospel and saved Soul for one more night.

Dierks Bentley seems like a genuinely good guy. And judging by the howl of the ladies in the audience, he and his band were on cue.

In any event, as I was walking back at the end of the night humming my favorite song from the new RRB CD, I got to thinking out loud, "man, I've been let down before, I'm not sure I Believe It's True." Walked a little more, gripped the stair-rail as I reached the hotel stoop and thought, "Hell, I don't have to see the future to believe. I'll take it on faith. Randy Rogers Band won't fake it. Ever."

Was good to be converted all over again. In New York City of all places.

Vist this writer at [www.myspace.com/teedubya](http://www.myspace.com/teedubya).



## WORMY DOG SALOON CELEBRATES THREE YEARS IN OKLAHOMA CITY

By: Gina Stricklin

*It was a hot August day in Oklahoma City. The temp was well over 100 degrees, and yet fans from all over had gathered in a parking lot in the heart of Bricktown. The reason for such an otherwise miserable day of heat? The people had simply come to celebrate the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Wormy Dog Saloon.*

The Wormy Dog Saloon has been wagging its tail in Bricktown, located in downtown Oklahoma City, for technically three years now. For some patrons, it's been a lot longer than that. The story began down on the strip, in the college town of Stillwater, Oklahoma. Although the physical structure has changed owners over the years, it has consistently been a venue for one of a kind atmosphere; old school parties, and some of its best live performers that anyone could possibly want to see in Oklahoma. In need of a Red Dirt/Texas Music fix? The Wormy Dog has the cure. Every weekend offers some of the best bands in this genre of music. Totally committed to entertaining their fans, this bar makes a point to have some of the best shows around.

The Wormy Dog definitely has its share of "regulars" that have either come from Stillwater back in the day, or appeared as that faithful crowd of followers since the doors opened three years ago. However, upon arrival, one thing is for certain. Every night at the Dog is a good night. On any given weekend, the staff is behind the bar and ready to serve. Upon spotting a regular, an order becomes unnecessary. They already have that bucket in hand and are filling it with ice-cold beer. Even the occasional patron will soon figure out that this is the best place to be for down-home service that will last all night long. Additionally, with the security offered by Phil "The Muffin," and an entourage of others, there is little threat of a fight breaking out and detracting from a good time.

The Wormy Dog is almost like a second 'family' to some. Friendships have formed, marriages have ensued, careers have begun, and a more profound appreciation has been inspired for Red Dirt/Texas Music.

The show didn't start until the early evening hours, but the preparation and hard work began bright and early. The line up on this particular occasion was expected to draw such a crowd that it was held in a parking lot behind the bar.

Bob, a great friend of mine and long time fan of the music, had arrived as one of the early risers to lend a helping hand. The stage, the food, the beer, and the merchandise booths were just some of the things that were on the "to do" list. It was a lot of work for the staff and Level Land Production (founded by Chuck Thomson) to take on, but that is why the production company took shape in the first place. The bands and talent that the Wormy Dog helped seed are growing at an amazing rate. So much so, that Chuck felt that in order for the fans to be a part of a bigger event, the shows would at times have to be moved outside. This is where his production company comes in.

The first band to play was No Justice. The energy that this band emits is incredible. Together, Steve Rice and Brandon Jackson front with vocals and rhythms, Jerry Payne on lead guitar, Armando on drums, and Tony Payne on bass, make up this multi-layered talent that will be "worth your money" every time you see them play. Singing some of their newest hits from their latest and self titled CD, *No Justice*, the band drew the crowd a little closer in with each song. Nathan Clewell, a long time friend of the band, helped out with his rendition of "Shine the Light on Me." Soon after, Armando lashed out a captivating drum solo during the song, "Self Expression." Brandon Jackson followed with an old Counting Crows song that gets better and better each time it is played. Upon being taunted and teased on how there would be no toast that night, the band broke out with one of their most popular songs, "The Toast." The crowd hung on every word and moved right into the finale with U2's, "Without or Without You," which instantly filled the air. They nail that song every time.

Next band to take the stage was Charlie Robison and the Enablers. The crowd was primed and ready. The fans continued to pour

in through the gates and it was still just as hot as ever. As Charlie and the band made their way to the stage, it caused one to forget about the heat that had lingered all day. Before we knew it, we were singing "Sunset Boulevard," drinking another ice cold beer, and telling Charlie that he rocks. Charlie, in his usual way, joked with the crowd, held up his own cold beer, and told us all how he was glad to be along for the ride. As the band was exiting the stage, the chant, "One more song, one more song," began to echo throughout the parking lot. And in true form, Charlie and the Enablers rushed the stage with one last song, "The Boys Are Back in Town." That song said it all.

Meanwhile, for those not interested in braving the heat, Talequah, Oklahoma based band Badwater, was kicking it from the inside. Dedication to making a name for themselves in this movement, Badwater always rocks the house. They would finish the night to a sold out crowd.

For headliners, the Wormy Dog had the one and only Jason Boland and the Stragglers. During the shows before him, Jason was surrounded by family and friends. Laid back in a lawn chair, Jason sat taking in the show. As he talked with friends, he reminisced over how he played Charlie Robison songs from within the infamous yellow house in Stillwater, Oklahoma when he first started out in the business. Now Charlie was opening up for him. Nancy Wolf, friend from the Stillwater days, said that he took great pride in the fact that he and his band headlined such acts as Charlie Robison and the Enablers.

Jason Boland and the Stragglers, sounding better than ever, crushed it once again. They rocked the fans with a whole lot of country, the only way they know how. To have everyone so spread out and come together at the same time, is truly a gift. The band was the perfect ending to a well deserved celebration.

Here's to the Wormy Dog for its continuing support and dedication to the bands of the Red Dirt/Texas Music—and for giving us die hard fans a place to come to each week. Cheers!

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# Wade Bowen in the Red Dirt .....

By: Andrew West Griffin

Dressed casually, in jeans, a long-sleeve Waterloo Records T-shirt and a winter cap, singer-songwriter Wade Bowen seems at ease on this cool fall night in Ada, Oklahoma. Complaining of a bit of a sore throat, Bowen is still upbeat and eager to talk about the past year, which has seen the release of his new record, *Lost Hotel*, released in February on the Universal imprint, Sustain Records. "It's been quite a big year for us," said Bowen, a native Texan who calls New Braunfels home. Big indeed. *Lost Hotel* has been viewed as a critical success and Bowen's best seller yet. The first single, "God Bless This Town," was a rousing success for Bowen, garnering tons of airplay on Texas music radio stations. "The radio support has been bigger than it's ever been," he said. Asked to compare the song and his music to other genres, Bowen says, "I don't know how to compare it to any other kind of music. It's the only music I know about." He also made his first music video for the song and back in the spring and early summer it was getting played on CMT, GAC and VH1 Country. And while he enjoyed the experience and was excited it was seen and heard by thousands, Bowen adds, "I think we're through with videos for this album." When asked about his touring behind *Lost Hotel*, Bowen says, "We're always on tour." Bowen leans up against the wall of the C4 dance club where he and the band are playing that night, and talks about touring and more. "We've been going all over, wherever we can," he said. "We've been playing a lot in the Midwest and the Southeast ... wherever they let us." Live, Wade Bowen and his band - guitarists Matt Powell and Matt Miller, bassist Casey Twist and drummer Brooks Robinson - are tight. They're also loud. While Bowen strums a six-string, Powell and Miller will alternate playing lead, with Powell typically wowing the crowd with his smoking solos. On this night, the crowd was dedicated. They know each song by heart and shout 'em right back to Bowen, particularly on popular songs like "Resurrection" and "Mood Ring." One of those in the crowd is Red Dirt living legend Mike McClure, who lives nearby. When Bowen isn't out on the road, he is usually back in New Braunfels, pickin' and grinnin' and hanging with his pals, including Randy Rogers, Stoney Larue, Brandon Rhyder and Cody Canada and their families. When talking about fellow Texas/Red Dirt music artists, Bowen speaks highly of Rhyder, whom he calls "one of my favorite songwriters." And regarding Randy Rogers, he said the Cleburne, Texas native is "one of my best friends in the universe." In fact, Bowen's latest single, "Lay It All On You," was co-written by both Rogers and Bowen (Bowen says he wanted "One Step Closer" to be the next single but that the label won out, opting for the Bowen/Rogers-penned track). The song was also featured on Rogers' 2004 breakthrough release, *Rollercoaster*. Believe it or not, Bowen said he's been hanging out with country singer Lee Ann Womack and will be doing an acoustic tour with her in December in Texas, along with Stoney Larue and Cody



Photo By Author

Canada. "She (Womack) won't let you down in the 'having fun' category," he said with a chuckle, adding that she loves music and will stay up till all hours, playing and listening to music. And when Cody and Stoney are in town, it's not unusual for the talented trio to be up until 7 a.m. hanging out and playing music as well. They also plan to do some writing together. Asked what he's listening to these days, Bowen replies that he's enjoying Chris Knight's new record and is flipping around on his iPod quite a bit. "I'm listening to lots of Merle Haggard right now. I'm trying to get back to those old roots, ya know, like George Jones," he said. He then noted that he had visited Jason Boland recently and told him that he had not yet heard his new album, *The Bourbon Legend*. "He's pretty (ticked) off that I hadn't heard it," he said. As for the future, Bowen said he will be touring some more and in December hit the studio, with *Lost Hotel* producer J.R. Rodriguez. "It won't take as long to make this one as it did the last one," he said. "It's gotta top the last one. But it'll be hard to top it."

## Eli Young Band at THE HORSEMAN

By: Dara Thompson

I made the trek to Ft. Worth to catch one of the most talented bands I've seen, the Eli Young Band. I've seen them live several times, and have never left disappointed, this show was no exception. In the vast sea of bands playing in and around Texas these days, the EYB is bringing something new and exciting to the TXRD music scene. The band's sound is very unique, a hint of country, a splash of rock, and sometimes I can even detect a slight insinuation of the old 80's rock/pop sound, with a bit of blues sprinkled in. The distinctive flavor transcends the boundaries of what most consider to be a traditional Texas music sound. One of the most endearing attributes of this band is their devoted fan following. Many Texas musicians have a signature tune that is their "sing-along" song, where the audience crowds the stage and belts out every word. I immediately noticed that almost every song turned into a "sing-along". The audience was well tuned into every word and sang right along with Mike Eli. Also notable is the way the band handles their after show time in the venue. Fans who have purchased merchandise, or even those just wanting to say hello and meet the guys have ample opportunity to interact with each member of

the band. In my experience, once a band gains the fan following and popularity that the Eli Young Band has, they tend to make themselves inaccessible to the very people who have gotten them to the top. Mike, James, Jon, and Chris always express their thanks for the people who have spent their money and time to come out and support their music, these guys are very appreciative of their fans, which just adds to the EYB appeal. The set list was jam-packed with twenty regular set songs, and 3 encore tunes. Oldie but goodie tunes such as "Uncertain" and "Guardian Angel" were crowd favorites, as well as a multitude of cuts from the Level album, such as "So Close Now", "Rain", "Highways and Broken Hearts" and of course, my personal favorite, "Oklahoma Girl". "Small Town Kid" was also a crowd favorite with lyrics that tell the life story of most of us growing up in the South. Mike also did an emotionally stirring version of "Everything is You". I was excited to hear new cuts, such as "Lonely All the Time" and "Enough is Enough". I must admit, although I just purchased the new "Live at the Jolly Fox" cd, I can not wait to hear the new material on the upcoming studio cd. The show was packed with energy and it is obvious that the guys love to perform. The Eli Young Band is unquestionably a break from the ordinary, undoubtedly a band to watch in the future.

# Converting at the "Revival" of Ryan Bales

By: Keith Howerton

Ryan Bales, Cody Brow, Danny RG, and Clay Oliver make up the talented group of guys known as The Ryan Bales Band. In the spring of 2006 they released their first independent record titled "Revival". In the past few months many good things have happened to the band including a solid tour of dates in Texas and Oklahoma, a signing with Smith music group, and a growing number of fans and supporters. In early October, Smith Music Group released the debut record to a wider distribution area than the band's independent release earlier in the year. The band is not exactly country but not exactly metal rock either. They are more of a rock band with an acoustic touch. They can rock with the best of them but can also lay down a ballad that is soft and sweet. A couple of the songs on the debut record have enjoyed some respectable airplay with radio DJs with taste. The guys have also recently shared the stage with some regional and national heavy hitters. In September they opened for Lynard Skynard, Drive-By Truckers, and Cross Canadian Ragweed at shows during the month. The band is becoming one of the most favored live performances in the Red Dirt and

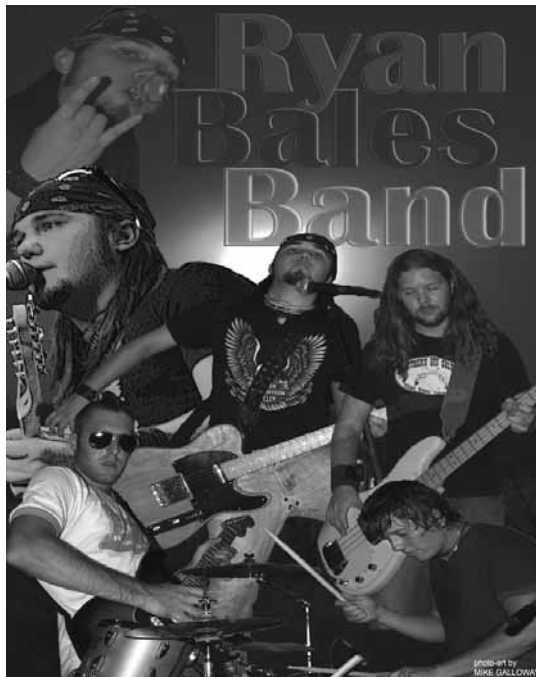


Photo By Mike Galloway

Texas circuit. The simple reason for that is that they deliver on stage every time they play and the fans are being converted at a Ryan Bales Band Revival one at a time. Ryan's gravel edged voice that fits so well with their own

material and great covers like "Just not good enough" by Mike McClure and the tightness of the band make for an entertaining show that delivers with intensity and emotion. Another redeeming quality of the Ryan Bales Band is their attitude about themselves and the music business. They don't take themselves too seriously and are always ready to take it easy and hang out with fans and others. Ryan is an extremely nice and well-mannered guy who shows none of the cocky edge side of many front men. He is a truly a respectful person and a friend to everyone who meets him. It is a contrast to the stringy haired bad boy look first impression. The band also has a sense of humor. On a recent tour with another band, they filled their tour mate's hotel rooms with helium-filled balloons in each of the band member's rooms. The other band did not think it was funny to have to come back to a room stuffed with balloons. However, anyone with a sense of humor has to find that funny. The next few months will hold great promise for the Ryan Bales Band as they venture on a wider geographic tour area and support the distribution of the re-release of Revival. The no doubt will do well and bring on more converts at the Church of the Ryan Bales Band. Good luck guys.

## South of Nowhere is "Something"

By Keith Howerton

South of Nowhere was originally intended to be a recording project, a labor of love so to speak, of songs that the group had written over a few years time. They had always had the idea of a "theme" album with a central line between songs similar to the Eagles Desperado, and Pink Floyd. They were driven to create a great recording as just a record and really had no plans for touring. In making the record that was released with the title "78016" Butch Cook (Rhythm Guitar) said "We had many other songs like everyone does, but these were chosen to follow the idea and theme instead of a collection of "singles" type material." Two songs were written specifically for the album - "Lonely Rider" and "Fair Share of Days." With this in mind, Ron Knuth (fiddle) loved the demo the band sent him and agreed to produce the project; he in turn brought in Mike Kennedy (Ace in the Hole Band) on drums, Randy Reinhart (Steel), Augie Meyers and Ginger Leigh along with his own considerable talent. Knuth has played with almost everybody in the business including Willie

and Hank Williams Jr. They already had Wade Parker for piano since the album was recorded at his studio. Wade was formerly in the band



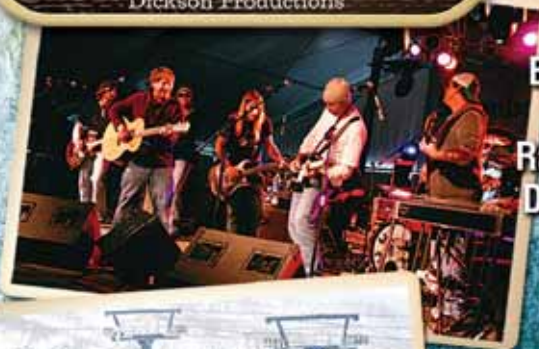
Photo By Melissa Webb

Prezence back in the 80's with Sean Sahn. There was a great response after the release of the album so the band released "Roll Into Laredo" as a single and it did very well on the charts and received airplay all over Texas. The band then made the decision to start playing live in support of the record. A personnel change were made when one band mate moved away to Midland with her husband and they brought in Holly Smith to take her place. In addition to "Roll Into Laredo" the song "Indigent Blues" is a track of significant note on the record. South of Nowhere is unique band in the Texas music scene with a different sound that blends 70s rock with modern alternative country. The band members are Layne Bales, Butch

Cook, Pat Bourcier, Adan Salinas, Barrynn West, and Holly Smith. For more information on South of Nowhere Band check out the bands website at southofnowhereband.com.



# Down home up high



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VISIONS OF RAMFEST 2006 WITH JACK INGRAM



Photos By Gabe Shutt at Floores Country Store, Helotes Texas

# Jack Ingram's ~ Real American Music Fest 2006

By: Gabe Shutt

*If you could host your own musical festival whom would you invite to perform there?*

It's one of those hypothetical questions that, for most people, holds as much possibility of becoming reality as getting stranded on a deserted island, and having your three people, (living or dead) magically appear for companionship.

Four years ago, Jack Ingram proved that he could turn the fantasy into a reality when he teamed up with John T. Floore's Country Store in Helotes, TX to produce Jack Ingram's Real American Music Festival. September 30, 2006 marked the fourth installment of the festival and the hope of many more to come.

There is one way to get invited to play RAMfest, as it's called. Ingram has to acquire an artist's album and love what he hears. This year was no different with a lineup that included Bruce Robison and Kelly Willis, Charlie Robison, Randy Rogers Band, Hayes Carll, Scott Miller and the Commonwealth, Chris Knight, and of course Ingram himself.

Ray Wylie Hubbard made his set particularly memorable. Not only was the appearance of Seth James on lead guitar a rare sight, but also the appearance of Hubbard's son Lucas as he joined the band for several songs, proving that musical talent runs in the family. Hubbard wasn't the only one who brought his family with him to the show. Many artists brought their parents and children to cheer them on and enjoy the day.

Ingram surprised fans by playing a brief twenty-minute set between Hubbard's and Scott Miller's shows. Appearing by himself on stage, Ingram proved he was still the same guy he has always been and that

fame has definitely not gone to his head. He did everything in his power to make sure the music and energy did not stop all day.

While the Dedrangers did not grace the main stage, the duo drew quite a crowd from the small stage inside. John Mike Schoepf, of the Beat Up Ford Band, joined in on bass guitar between Bruce Robison's and Charlie Robison's sets. During the next two interludes, Hayes Carll's bass player, Brad Fordham, stepped in as John Mike prepared for his own show. The Dedrangers proved to the crowd their place at the show as they intertwined their own masterful songwriting with covers of Fred Eaglesmith and Townes Van Zandt.

The highlight of the show was the performance by the festival's namesake. Ingram and his Beat Up Ford Band took the stage to close out the festival, playing the new song "Measure of a Man," that will appear on their upcoming album. Notable fiddle player Eleanor Whitmore, who had played with Bruce Robison and Kelly Willis earlier in the evening, also joined them.

One of the best parts of RAMfest is the feeling of intimacy one experiences even when the crowd swells into the thousands. Fans of all ages enjoyed the show while chowing down on Floore's famous tamales, fried pickles, and sno-cones. With a main stage area that is dotted with picnic tables and large oak, shade trees, one can lounge with friends and family but still be close to the action. The view is great, no matter where one chooses to appreciate the music from.

RAMfest has the feeling of the coolest family reunion ever. That's precisely what it is for Jack and his friends. It has become a chance for these musicians to come together and celebrate the people and things that they love; be that music that resonates with every person in the crowd, friends that may crack a joke or two about you on stage, or even just a frozen lemonade.

## radio lonestar

### What radio people are saying

"The Radio Lonestar Concert Series gives our listeners the chance to get up close and personal with the best Texas artists by providing great live music as well as intimate interviews with current and future stars."

-- **Moose Morgan, Ops Mgr, Star Country 95-9/96-9**

"The Radio Lonestar Concert Series takes me back to when quality musicians played quality music live! Every week Outlaw listeners can hear bands that can actually play, on superb shows presented in digital audio. Plus, I love the wit of host Clayton."

-- **Hank Moon, Program Director, 92.5 THE OUTLAW**

### What listeners are saying

"Cool show! It's just like being there."

-- **Jason, Corpus Christi**

"Thanks for bringing live concerts to the radio."

-- **Alan, San Antonio**

"I love that radio show!"

-- **Jerry Lee, Corpus Christi**

"Me and my boyfriend listen every Saturday."

-- **Holly, Sulphur Springs**

### Find out more!

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## CD REVIEWS

## The Mike McClure Band-Foam

By: Keith Howerton

If ever there was a record to over-exaggerate about it is the new one by the Mike McClure Band. Mike and his band mates, Eric Hansen and Tom Skinner have done it again with the help of Joe Hardy, Travis Linville, Lloyd Maines, Kevin Webb, Amanda, Brown, and Kim Mitchell with the recording of "foam". The record was recorded at ZZ Top's Billy Gibbon's studio called the foam room in Houston and is guaranteed to bring Mike to a completely different level in Texas, the Red Dirt, and nationwide. Mike's tunes already enjoy wide airplay on many stations including the worldwide mega-audience XM satellite radio station Channel 12. "Foam" is only sure to increase that audience by a wide factor. It is not a country-rock record or a rock-country record. It is a rock and country record with a wide variety of tunes that will please any McClure fan and make new converts to his genre of music that can really only be categorized as McClure. His style is so unique and songwriting so solid that he defines his own brand of whatever you want to call it. His fans just call it timeless. "Foam" has several extremely solid rock songs that Mike likens to what he calls "80s butt-rock", but they are better than that. The tones in a few of these songs are distinctively ZZ Top-ish due to the use of Gibbon's state of the art Marshall Amplification equipment. Those tones are a delightful departure from other McClure records but when added with Mike's distinct voice make for rock songs that are fresh and real. The record also includes some great alt-country songs including the first single "She don't want nobody" which includes the pedal steel work of Maines, and "Calling all cars" co-written with Adam Oder of Cedar Creek Studios in Austin. The song "Floods" is also on the record and is a revision from an earlier release on a now out of print EP. "Jack of diamonds" grooves with a ragtime sound enhanced by Linville's superb finger picking. The entire Mike McClure Band and Joe Hardy produced the record. Released on McClure's own Boo Hatch records "Foam" is a fantastic record that will not disappoint die-hard McClure fans and is bound to create thousands of new enthusiasts to his unique voice, songwriting, and style. The 2007 "Foam" tour will no doubt be a mainstay for fans all over the region and country. Loyal Mike McClure fans are already buzzing about the record on the band's myspace and the buzz is growing louder. "Foam" is very likely gonig to be a breakthrough record for Mike and take him to a higher level. He is very proud of the record and excited about touring with the new songs and most McClure fans can not wait.



## FULL THROTTLE~DRIVE

By: Linda Higbie

Full Throttle's CD *Drive*, which was produced by Jeremy Plato of Cross Canadian Ragweed and co produced by Adam Odor, is one CD that every lover MUST collection. intro to the tracks on the energy and the listener begging for Justin Belz lead vocals, on bass and vocals, and on the drums, never guess



Texas Music have in their From the other 12 album, the intensity keep rocking and more. With on guitar and Keegan Reed harmony Joe Cortez one would these guys

have only been together three years rather than a trio of well seasoned vets. Each band member delivers on this album. Justin and Keegan prove that they are not only great on their instruments, but in their song writing skills as well. With the harder rock sounds of "Burn Me Down," "Out of This Town," and "Wanted," to the bit more mellow tunes such as "Bye Baby Goodbye," "Matador," and "Somewhere, Texas," these guys deliver an intense experience for the listener. In addition, ballads such as "Hill Country Love," and "I Just Want to be Yours," only further validate the point that there is a bit of everything for everyone. The Jimi Hendrix classic "Spanish Castle Magic" finds its place on the album and it is Justin who lends his talent as he tears it up on the guitar riffs. If one listens close on "I Just Wanna be Yours," one of the best fiddle players in the current Texas Music scene can be heard. Brady Black of the Randy Rogers Band, lends his fiddle and mandolin skills on this album and Jeremy Plato of Ragweed even offers harmony vocals. Trust me, any true fan of Cross Canadian Ragweed and the Randy Rogers Band will love Full Throttle. These guys are well on their way to being one of the next big things in this music scene.

## Trent Summar and the New Music Mob's Horseshoes and Hand Grenades

By: Keith Howerton

Trent Summar was new to me when I got his new CD "Horseshoes and Hand Grenades" in the mail to listen to for a possible review. We get a good number of CDs at Team Texas Music Times and we listen to them all but we really can only comment on a bit over half of them. However, when I put in Trent's new one I was intrigued from the first few notes. The title track is a fun song that is what Nashville country used to be. It is fun without being completely stupid and written for a middle-aged divorced woman. After listening to the CD a couple of times I made some inquiries about Trent with his record label (Palo Duro) and his manager. What I found out made me smile. I learned that Trent is a prolific songwriter of some great country tunes of which I am a fan. He penned "Guys like me" which was recorded by Gary Allan on his 2003 record "See if I Care". I love that CD and the song. I also learned that Trent wrote "Somewhere between Texas and Mexico" on Pat Green's "Lucky Ones". It is the only song I the record I really care for. With that information in hand, I had to go back and really give this Nashville guy another listen. "Horseshoes and Hand grenades" contains 11 solid country tracks that are fun and refreshing. "Love you" written by Trent and recently put on the charts by Jack Ingram is on the record in a decidedly more country version than Jack's. I always like the songwriter's versions of their own songs more than someone else's version and Trent's "Love you" is as good as or better than Jack's chart topper. It proves that good songs are good no matter who does them. Trent Summar and his New Row Mob have created a CD that is outside mainstream Nashville that is decidedly better than the over-sold pop country of today. It is a fun record and is what mainstream country should be about.

# Our Music Scene According to Hayes

By: Gabe Shutt

Hayes Carll's songs hold none of the clichéd phrases one expects to hear, and if you're looking for verses about famous Texan dancehalls, floating the Guadalupe, or kicking back with a Lonestar beer, you're not going to find them in the liner notes of his albums. In a world of "songs about Texas", he is able to find a unique spin on every facet of life. Instead of trying to fit in, he has made a career by standing outside on the margins of the Texas music scene. And he seems to like it better that way. "I think I was fortunate to have been living in Arkansas and Bolivar (peninsula Texas) when I started writing. The Texas music, or any music scene really, didn't extend down there— so there was a lot of room to be creative without really being influenced by whatever the current trend was."

Rather Carll has been lauded by many as one of the most unique and truest voices in Texas Music. He has co-written with legends like Guy Clark and Ray Wylie Hubbard, been compared to Steve Earle and Townes Van Zandt, and along the way made a name for himself with songs rife with poetry, charm, and a lot of wit. The creation of each song for Carll starts simply enough. It starts with a line. "Most of my songs start with a line that I can't shake" Carll says with a ponderous look. "A lyric will catch my imagination and I'll try to build a song around it."

Carll chooses words and images that are both unusual and comfortingly familiar. Lines like "Well time is playin' tricks on me, makes me think I'm movin' fast/ I don't think I'm movin' at all/ And every stranger's face I see reminds me of the past/Come on big and leave you feelin' small" from Arkansas Blues are both universally significant and particularly personal as are all of his songs. Listeners not only sympathize they also empathize, placing their own circumstances very easily into the contexts that Carll provides.

Every rhyme is unexpected and each line is crafted meticulously. He doesn't mince words rather he uses every syllable to its fullest. His words have the ease of common conversation and the beauty of a Shakespearean sonnet. "I always wanted my songs to not be ordinary. So I'm drawn to words that stand out, that make an impression," says Carll stroking his beard and staring out the window. And he has made quite an impression. Carll scored a record contract

with the prestigious record label Lost Highway this year as well as traveling throughout the US, Canada, and Europe for shows.

"It's weird [playing in Europe] because each country has there own kind of underground movement. In some, like Norway, or Ireland they have a real appreciation for the story and the song." Carll noticed several differences



Photo Courtesy of [www.hayescarll.com](http://www.hayescarll.com)

between fan bases in Europe. "The fans are really intent. Everywhere you go people actually listen. We played in churches, barns, clubs, you name it. All of the fans are extremely attentive and respectful of the song and musician, sometimes unnervingly so." Carll chuckles.

Carll has found that the road isn't conducive to his songwriting however, which is why he is taking a break, and playing most of his shows in and around his new home of Austin for the next few weeks. "I always thought the road would be good for writing. And it is good for getting ideas but there is really no time to write. You go from clubs to hotels to radio stations to restaurants and back to clubs." Carll explains tucking his long hair behind his ear.

There is an authenticity that is as apparent in what Carll chooses to write as what he chooses to listen to. Asked about artists put him awe

Carll thoughtfully responds.

"I've been listening to a lot of Todd Snider, Ray Wylie Hubbard, Tom Waits, and Bob Dylan. Kristofferson and Prine and Fred Eaglesmith are always on the jukebox." He then quickly turns to friend and peer Adam Carroll with whom he often shares the stage. "Adam Carroll is a remarkable writer. There are more great lines in one Adam Carroll song than most of the stuff on the Texas scene combined"

"And then there's the stuff that just frustrates you." He groans suddenly. Carll, like his fans, is frustrated by a lot of what he hears on the radio. "A lot of guys are sounding the same these days. I think that happens when people have a lot of success with a certain style. But there is a lack of energy, rawness, excitement. A lot of people seem to be clones of each other. I see many bands that are making t-shirts before they write the songs. Going for the bus before they cross the state line. You have to be careful with what you're willing to do for instant popularity. We all want to sell out clubs and have fans and make money, but if you don't have the songs then the rest is temporary. Carll cautions those looking to pick up a guitar to be just like their idols. "Fads are gonna come and go. You can't just be trying to catch onto the wave. Because eventually the scene is going to change and then what are you going to be left with?" "What I try and remember is that you can't base your career on being Cory Morrow. You can't base your career on being Bob Dylan. You have to find your own way, your own voice. We all have our influences and our heroes but at

the end of the day, you have to find your own voice. Find what it is that makes you unique and embrace it."

As an example, he points to his friends and frequent openers of his shows, the DEDRINGS. "That's why I love those kids. They have a passion, and energy that too few acts have now. They write really unique songs. Are they as good as they will ever be? No. They are going to get so much better and that's exciting."

As he prepares to record his first album on his new label, Carll is looking forward to the future in every way and he just has one hope for the music industry. "I want to be excited again. That's all." And even as he says that his fans are already tittering over what his new album will be composed of, how it will sound, what songs will be included, when it will be released, all of them very, very excited.

# TMT PROFILE FIVE

## The Pear Ratz

Somewhere "Just South of the of the nueces" located a few miles south of San Antonio is a group of guys know as The Pear Ratz. This group of seasoned gentlemen are known in those parts for playing music for many years in a variety of bands including some 80s rock bands. Today Bob Strause, Rod Daws, Chris Nelson and David Rios make up the alternative country and rocking band known as The Pear Ratz. The group of guys have generated a solid following and fan base in the area between San Antonio and Corpus Christi with their own brand of music supported by live performances that have become the buzz of great music lovers in the area. The Ratz first CD titled "Rat Now released in Spring of 2006 under Bill Green's BGM music label landed the band solidly on the Texas Music map with 12 great songs that Hank T. Moon from KRPT 92.5 "The Outlaw" in San Antonio says, "Simply kick ass". Hank and other local DJs were quick to jump on the record and spin the single "Sing Jolie Again" giving the Ratz (as their fans call them) some deserved recognition. The songs hook about hiring "Reckless Kelly" every night as the Ratz party-house band has become a sing along at all Ratz shows. The Ratz are coming...go check them out at [pearratz.com](http://pearratz.com) or [myspace.com/pearratz](http://myspace.com/pearratz).



## DOCTOR G AND THE MUDCATS

Doctor G and the Mudcats have been playing together since the release of Doctor G's debut CD, Mudcat, in September 2005. The band grew primarily out of friendships formed at Cheatham St. Warehouse in San Marcos. Colin Brooks, an Austin singer-songwriter who now plays with Guy Forsyth and The Band of Heathens, played dobro, slide guitar, and lapsteel on the CD when the band first formed. Hunter St. Marie, of San Marcos, has since replaced him on slide guitar. Hunter,

who also used to operate the sound at Cheatham Street, has played with Doug Moreland, Broken Spoke, and the Grant Ewing Band. Sterling Finlay, of Martindale, has played bass and sung vocal harmonies at every one of the band's gigs and on the CD. He has also played with the Grant Ewing Band, Sidehill Gougers, Big John Mills and the Texas Road Dawgs, Foscoe Jones and the Distractions, Robbie and the Robots, and the Hudsons. Kyle Schneider, of Austin, is now the band's drummer, replacing Johnny Arredondo (Hal Ketchum, Charlie Sexton, Stop the Truck), who played on the CD. Kyle has played with Will Sexton, Houston Marchman, Ian Moore, and Erin Condo. Of San Marcos, Doctor G, who fronts the band and writes its songs, calls the band's mud-fried music "swampy tonk," a blend of Mississippi River swampy blues and hell-bent Texas honky tonk. Whatever you choose to call it, it's good!



## The Rich O'toole Band

Barrett Hughes, Jason Yabaro, Robert Cherry and Rich O'toole make up one of the best new bands on the Texas music scene. The recent release of Rich's first CD as launched the guys to a new level producing a schedule of over 20 gigs a month as they are earning one fan at a time all across Texas and they recently played a show at the Wormy Dog Saloon in Oklahoma City. They recently played both Ziegfest and fall Fandango. It is the bands great debut CD matched with fantastic live performance that is generating the buzz. They also have some great songs not on the record including what is going to be a classic of party fans called Marijuana and Jalapenos. Check them out at [richotoole.com](http://richotoole.com) and [myspace.com/richotoole](http://myspace.com/richotoole).

## The Brandon Key Band

The KEY to new Texas Country music is what some people call The Brandon Key Band. The Brandon Key Band was formed in May of 2006; when a few friends would always come over to jam and write songs. The day that Brandon went to a singer songwriter's night and preformed his songs changed everything. Brandon influences are displayed in has awesome collection of Texas Music T-shirts including Doug Morland, Pat Green, Mike McClure, Kevin Fowler, Roger Creager, Jarrod Birmingham, Cory Morrow, Radny Foster, and Cross Canadian Ragweed, all of them singed personally. The Brandon Key Band consists of Brandon Key lead vocals/rhythm guitar and the talented Paul Batchelder on mandolin/guitar. The Lazy Texas album is the first record by the Brandon Key Band and the songs where mostly written by Brandon and a few friends. The record has a wide verity of songs, from traditional country, to a new style of Texas Country. Brandon and Paul are both attending Texas A&M Kingsville majoring in Range and Wildlife Management. They work as hunting guides during the hunting season. The hunting and fishing gives them lots of ideas for new songs. Check them out at [brandonkey.com](http://brandonkey.com) and [myspace.com/brandonkeyband](http://myspace.com/brandonkeyband).

## Jackson Parten

Jackson Parten is an extremely talented songwriter and guitarist from San Antonio Texas. Jack Ingram called his first record one of the best he had ever heard. Currently Jackson is working on a soon to be released EP with his new band called The State Express of London. Jackson has the ability to play both guitar and keys with a voice that is distinct and pure. His music has a rock edge to it that but the virsitivity of his new band can add almost any instrument to the show including a banjo to bring a bluegrass flavor to Jackson's brand of folk rock. Jackson is a supurb performer and showman and his songwriting and performances have developed a strong following in the Hill Country and the San Antonio areas of Texas. His new EP is sure to take him to another level. Check out Jackson Parten and his band at [jacksonparten.net](http://jacksonparten.net) and [myspace.com/jacksonpartenandstateexpress](http://myspace.com/jacksonpartenandstateexpress).



**If you are an artist or know a great artist for our profile 5 feature, please let us know!**

**Join Club TMT for a Free Download from each of these artists.**



# Joe Ely at Gruene Hall

By: Scott Jones

There are very few "sure things" in life; taxes, nasty politics, bad football in Houston... and tremendous live concerts when Joe Ely plays with his electric band. On September 30th, Joe returned to Gruene Hall, in historic Gruene, Texas and as my buddy and I stood in front of the well-known venue, my friend suddenly flinched prompting me to ask him why. He said that he was admiring the horse trailer parked across the street, and more specifically the beautiful paintings of horses on the side. The paintings suddenly moved and he realized that those were real horses sticking their heads out of the trailer. That in and of itself epitomizes Gruene Hall. One can stand ready for a good live show, directly in front of the venue and still find themselves eight feet away from a horse trailer complete with the horses looking straight at you. Somewhere inside me I imagined them to be wishing they could get in to see Electric Joe Ely. Joe's story is well known. Born in Amarillo but raised in Lubbock, he was influenced by the rock sound of Buddy Holly and Jerry Lee Lewis. He learned guitar and recorded with Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Butch Hancock but lost the tapes. He joined the circus and then quit. He formed a band, toured Europe, played England with the Clash. Opened for the Stones, The Kinks, and Tom Petty. He's released more than a dozen albums. He's been all around and back again. Recently Joe's had a fair amount of fame writing and touring with the Flatlanders, doing solo shows, playing duets with Joel Guzman and touring with Lyle Lovett and John Hiatt. However, he's at his best when he just plays bareboned roadhouse Rock n Roll with his electric band. In the last decade, I've seen Joe play Gruene Hall no less than 20 times. The band has changed gradually over those ten years. For a long time, Lloyd Maines manned the pedal steel. He sits in only occasionally now. The late, great Jesse "Guitar" Taylor played lead for many of those years. David Grissom has returned a few

times to play lead licks. Davis McLarty and Jimmy Pettit have returned from time to time. Grammy winner and accordion virtuoso Joel Guzman often lends a hand. For a few years Teye, Flamenco guitarist extraordinaire, graced the stage. Regardless of who joins Joe for the electric band, the result is a raucous good time. On that particular night, the show was billed as the Joe Ely Band. There was Joel Guzman on keyboards and accordion, Jimmy Pettit on bass, collaborator Chris Searles on drums, friend and stand-in David Holt on lead guitar, and Joe on acoustic guitar. The show opened with "The



Photo By Steve Circeo

Road Goes on Forever," letting us all know that the party would never end. After "Pins and Needles," Joe broke into his anthem, "All Just To Get To You." That song brings back memories because the album version includes an East Coast Joe Ely clone on backup vocals. In fact, twice Joe stood in Austin's Frank Erwin Center fronting the E Street Band for this song, with Bruce Springsteen singing backup vocals like he does on the album. Having lived back East in the early 70s, I watched Springsteen try to make a living playing bars and colleges. When I came to Texas, I always thought that Joe Ely was a Texas Springsteen, singing about the lives

and troubles of Texans in the same way Bruce sings about the lives and troubles of the denizens of the Jersey Coast. These two are cut from the same mold. After another Joe Ely penned tune, the band played three Butch Hancock songs. The first, "If I Were A Blue-

bird," is pieced together by a long duet between Joe Guzman on accordion and Joe on acoustic guitar. The duet is so beautiful it has the ability to bring tears to an audience member's eyes. "Boxcars" followed and allowed Guzman to fill in the pedal steel line with his accordion. It's hard to imagine that such a setup would ever work but miraculously it does. While I missed Lloyd playing that trainlike riff at the end, Guzman did a fantastic job with it. After "Lord of the Highway," the blues song "Midnight Train" and the melodious "Streets of Sin," followed leading Joe into his mainstay, "Me and Billy The Kid." Believe it or not, I've had people ask me why Joe was performing a Pat Green song. That is blasphemy but I accept it as an educational opportunity. Then something strange happened. I heard a repeat at the concert. Well, not quite. The next song Joe performed was introduced, tongue and cheek, as a new song called "Bonnie and Clyde." It wasn't new. It was simply new lyrics applied to "The Road Goes On Forever." Thank you Robert Earle. The show slowed down for a few songs. Joe sang Jimmy Dale Gilmore's "Treat Me Like a Saturday Night," followed by "Live Forever," which he sang to induct Billy Joe Shaver into the Nashville Hall of Fame. Joel Guzman's wife Sara made a special appearance with Brad Kopp and performed "Maybe She'll Find Me"

with Joe on backup vocals. I snuck a peak at the set list and though "Cool Rockin' Loretta" was in the next spot, it never made it. Instead, the wailing roadhouse rocking "Fingernails" worked the crowd into a frenzy. With no hesitation and riding on that energy, the band ripped into a version of Buddy Holly's "Not Fade Away" that would have made Buddy, and every other band that covers it, proud. It was a blast. The encore was short but sweet. The fast pace continued with an old Joe song called "Johnny's Blues." Then, presumably in the spirit of not sending the crowd out in a frenzy, he wrapped the set up with a traditional song, perhaps called "Going Down That Old Dusty Road." This is the same song that the Grateful Dead covered, singing it as "Going Down The Road Feeling Bad." I saw Joe sing this song ten years ago as a duet with Bruce Springsteen at the Austin Music Hall when Bruce did a solo tour. It is a traditional Folk/Bluegrass song about the long, hard search for better places and better times. It's a good set closer. With a proven talent and musical resume such as his, Joe Ely will play over 60 shows this year, though only about ten will be with an electric band. He traditionally ends the year with two or three concerts between Christmas and New Year. Last year it was with the Liberty Lunch Band. This year it is with Double Trouble. So if you find yourself presented with an opportunity to witness such musical genius, don't miss it; you'll be sorry if you do.



## Scenes from the Film Coyote Funeral



### COYOTE FUNERAL-A FILM ABOUT THE MUSIC AND TEXAS

Jason May and Phelps Harmon produced and directed the independent Film "Coyote Funeral" on a dream and a tight budget. The result is a superb movie the way movies used to be made with plots and few special effects. The movie blends a great story line of two brothers who endeavor to walk across Texas after one of the brothers suffers a traumatic event. The plot weaves around their journey across Texas and the events along the way. Texas music is always in the backdrop as a guide to give context to the story line. Charlie Robison, Brandon Rhyder, Cooder Graw, Reckless Kelly and more are featured in song with a special appearance by Cooder Graw in a scene filmed a Gruene Hall. For more information on the film Coyote Funeral check out the website at [www.coyotefuneral.com](http://www.coyotefuneral.com) and keep up with news on film festivals and distribution. At Texas Music Times we have seen the movie on the big screen and we loved it. To get into theaters the makers of this great film need support. Please contact them and lend a hand so we all can enjoy this great movie.

# The Claw Italian band playin' Texas music

By: Stefano Parma

Playin' country and Texas music in Italy isn't easy: people don't know that genre because main radio stations don't transmit it and you can't find neither mainstream country neither Texas music in CD shops.

Anyway we love that music and we started playin' together trying to learn songs and a style that come from a different culture, sometimes it is difficult because you can't share your experiences with other musicians and people but sometimes it works because music is an universal language.

Band name is The Claw (Stefano Parma – electric guitar and dobro, Alessandro Belletti – bass, Maurizio Lettera – drums, Luca Lelli – lead vocals, Giovanni Zordan – acoustic guitar, backing vocals); our first musical influence was New Country but then we discovered great artists like Cory Morrow, Roger Creager, Jack Ingram, Randy Rogers Band,



Pat Green and we fell in love with their music because it has something that it is more real, so we took the direction of Texas Country music.

We had the honour to make the open act for Cory Morrow and we would thanks again Cory and his band for the wonderful time passed together, those moments will be impressed in our memories for a long long time. When we saw him coming on the stage with us while we were playin' his song The Preacher, our dream came true.

Now we go back to our project: playin' live Texas Music in Italy hopin' that our job will contribute to increase the popularity of this kind of music here.

Please visit our website for further infos and media [www.theclaw.it](http://www.theclaw.it) E-mail [info@theclaw.it](mailto:info@theclaw.it)

## BLEU EDMONDSON BAND SWINGS INTO OKLAHOMA

By: Dara Thompson

Oklahoma was blessed with the presence of the Bleu Edmondson Band twice in one week in late September, Bleu and the boys rolled into Tulsa's Dirty's Tavern for the first time. I have seen this band perform over 50 times in the past year, and I am always amazed that I have never seen the same show twice. The set list is ever changing, the energy level is always on warp speed, and Bleu's acoustic encore set at the end of the show was spectacular. The BEB did a few new tunes, which everyone was excited about. Of course, the staple songs, such as "Dallas", "It's Alright", and "Travelin' Man" are always crowd favorites as is the BEB's signature sing-along song, "\$50 and a Flask of Crown". "Crown" always brings the audience to their feet, front and



Photo By Steve Circeo

center and last night was no exception. I could not do Bleu justice if I failed to mention the acoustic encore set. Bleu was very generous and played a request and personal favorite of mine, "Tougher than the Rest" originally written by Bruce Springsteen. Bleu's acoustic version of this song is beautiful, very soul stirring. It was a special surprise to hear him do an old favorite from the Southland album, "Laughing Right Out Loud". The entire band puts so much passion into their performance that they are able to evoke much emotion from tears during "Empty Sky" and "You're Missing" to virtual head banging during "I Got Drunk" and "Finger on the Trigger. The Bleu Edmondson Band is touring like mad, working on new material for a CD that is rumored to be coming out in the spring.

## ROLLING OAKS SPORTS BAR & GRILL

<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Nov. 2</b>	<b>Josh Owen</b>
<b>Fri.</b>	<b>Nov. 3</b>	<b>Toni Price</b>
<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Nov. 4</b>	<b>Honeybrowne</b>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Nov. 9</b>	<b>Ruben V</b>
<b>Fri.</b>	<b>Nov. 10</b>	<b>The Mighty Orq</b>
<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Nov. 11</b>	<b>Mark Monaco w/ Scott Wiggins</b>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Nov. 16</b>	<b>Travis Mitchell Band</b>
<b>Fri.</b>	<b>Nov. 17</b>	<b>The Eric Tessmer Band</b>
<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Nov. 18</b>	<b>Brandon Jenkins "CD Release Party"</b>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Nov. 23</b>	<b>Zack Walther w/ Jackson Parten</b>
<b>Fri.</b>	<b>Nov. 24</b>	<b>Ruben V</b>
<b>Sat.</b>	<b>Nov. 25</b>	<b>Two Tons of Steel</b>
<b>Thurs.</b>	<b>Nov. 30</b>	<b>Bart Crow</b>

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# The Bart Crow Band

By: Linda Higbie

The Bart Crow Band has stated the following regarding their music style: "We are a country band, but we'll be whatever you want us to be. That's the beauty of doing what we do. The music is free to be anything that you want it to be." I have heard the music, but for you, seeing is believing. I was prepared for a good time and great music, but was beyond awed by how talented the guys of the Bart Crow Band really are.

Bart Crow is a tremendous songwriter. The band's CD "Finally" is compiled of 11 songs that are full of emotion and soul and leave an audience singing right along. The sound is a mixture of country and rock. In fact, the first time I heard them, they reminded me of a combina-

tion of The Randy Rogers Band, Mickey and the Motorcars, and Cross Canadian Ragweed all rolled into one.



Photo Courtesy of The Bart Crow Band

The Bart Crow Band is made up of four awesome musicians; drummer Charles Simons, bassist Kirk Richardson formally of Speed Trucker, lead guitarist Paul Russell, and of course singer/songwriter Bart Crow. Put these four together and what you get is a band with an energetic stage presence and music that will leave you begging for more. If you like Cross Canadian Ragweed, Randy Rogers Band, and Mickey and the Motorcars you are going to LOVE the Bart Crow Band. Check out their website [www.bartcrow.com](http://www.bartcrow.com) for a show near you.

## 10 City Run Revisited

By Keith Howerton

In the October issue of Texas Music Times I drafted an article on the San Antonio based band 10 City run. The piece was a semi-controversial article about a major record deal awarded via a band competition that did not turn out as expected. I based the piece on my own views of the band's new record "Something Else" and on my own discussions with the bands remaining member Hans Frank. My entire point of the article was to tell a story of modern day music making in the world of large record companies and how all that glitters is not always gold. However, the members of the band and a third party source had different views of events that transpired. In the end there is much discrepancy on if band members left the band or were fired. The two very different versions of the story are not what was really important to me, but I printed a few key points of only one version. It is those key points I wish to correct. First, the competition was not called a "Battle of the Bands" as mentioned in the October issue. Second, the two previous members of the band completely deny that they left the band due to the record deal not being what they had expected. In fairness I apologize for categorizing their departure as such. No matter what the specific details of the break up the categorization was unfair and not verified on my part. I regret writing it that way. However, in my recent discussions with the previous band members I realized that my thesis of the story was correct and that the band was not really a band at all and had not formed the bonds of friendship it takes to create a unit that can withstand the hardships of the music business. I still believe that "Something Else" is a great record and the songs on it were recorded well and I wish all those involved in the making of the record and the current members of 10 City run nothing but good luck and success in any of their future endeavors. I will continue to enjoy "Something Else" and the current live performances as simply a music fan who appreciates the work it takes to do all of it.

## MISSY QUERRY - with Views from the Industry

Temperatures have fallen, seasons have changed and before we know it the holidays are upon us (where has this year gone?) Although I hate cold weather this is one of my favorite parts of the year as it brings time for celebration with family and friends. One of the things that I enjoy most is creating my gift list and shopping for all of my favorite people. To many folks this chore ranks right up there with getting a root canal as they shutter at the thought of crowded malls, fighting for parking spaces, finding the time to shop and the added stress that all of this brings. Amidst all of the hustle and bustle is one common thread - the gift of giving. This is pretty much a "no brainer" as we are surrounded by the constant reminders from the Salvation Army bell ringers on every corner, the never ending commercials and the sentimental Christmas songs that fill the air. Giving of ourselves is an easy task when everything is so focused on that - but how many people give of their time and effort at other times? I can't think of a better occasion to share with you a few of the many ways that Texas Music artists and industry people have found to help others throughout the year. This past Labor Day 99.5 The Wolf's Justin Frazell gathered up a few of his friends (who just happened to be very popular) to put on the first annual "Pickin' For Preemies" event. Instead of hitting the lakes and parks many gathered at the Granada Theater in Dallas. Admission gave fans a chance to get up-close-and-personal with the artists at a dinner followed by an evening of acoustic performances. Cody Canada (of Cross Canadian Ragweed), Randy Rogers, Wade Bowen, Jason Boland, Stoney LaRue, Daryl Dodd, Aaron Watson, Sonny Burgess, Ryan Bingham and Brandon Rhyder each donated their time in support of this cause for the March Of Dimes raising right at \$20,000. This was a very special accomplishment for Frazell who became familiar with this organization two years ago when his daughter was delivered prematurely. Thanks to the help of The March Of Dimes beautiful Jaycie lives a happy and healthy life. On the other side of the D/FW area, 99.5 The Ranch lends a helping hand to many with their annual Texas Music Series CD. Each summer KFWR

hosts a free music series at the 8.0 in downtown Fort Worth's Sundance Square. Several of the performing artists donate the use of their tracks for this compilation. It is then made available to fans exclusively through Best Buy, Western Wearhouse and [www.lonestarmusic.com](http://www.lonestarmusic.com) creating not only a souvenir of the past summer but an avenue to help others. Proceeds from the sale of this album benefit The Ranch Children's Charities - a consortium of charities that includes but is not limited to The Boys & Girls Clubs Of Fort Worth, Fort Worth Stock Show Syndicate, Rocky Top Therapy Center and Make-A-Wish Foundation. Just this past month several artists were very generous in donating their time and talents with events throughout the state. Aaron Watson put on "Singing For The Hungry" at Abilene's Paramount Theater Oct. 24th benefiting Love And Care Ministries. On Oct. 29th Jason Eady, Josh Grider, Josh Owen, Ryan James, Ryan Turner and friends gathered at Hill's Cafe in Austin to benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation. On that same day Bart Crow hosted his second annual Music For Mika concert. Crow was joined by Cooder Graw, 1100 Springs, Steve Tenpenny, Susan Gibson and more for the event who's proceeds went to [kidsandcars.org](http://kidsandcars.org). These are just a few of the examples of how folks in the Texas Music community are using their resources to give to the many organizations that offer assistance to those in need. Many generously take time from their busy schedules to participate in benefit concerts with some supporting numerous causes year round Each time you support the artists that make this genre so great you are in turn helping them to help others. By giving the gift of Texas Music you can not only do a good deed but can avoid shopping hassles and bring smiles to the faces of those on your gift list at the same time. This is a winning combination for everyone. Keep warm and remember - it is all about the music!

**Missy Querry is Director Of Special Markets for one of the independent distributors in the music industry.**

# THE TALE BEHIND THE TUNE

BY: GEORGE BANCROFT

## The Tune: Willy the Wandering Gypsy and Me

### The Tale Teller: Billy Joe Shaver

I've interviewed Billy Joe Shaver twice now. The first time was in the spring of 2004. That episode was exactly the third interview I'd ever done, and my performance during interviews one and two didn't do much for my confidence. Years before, someone, somewhere told me a story about Billy Joe getting his big song-writing break after throwing down the gauntlet at the feet of Waylon Jennings. I'd hoped to hit my stride as an interviewer by getting Billy Joe to validate the story. I made myself a note to ask him about the matter and stuck it on the wall right in front of me before I picked up the telephone. We had a great interview. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit with the legend, so much so that I forgot to look up and see my reminder until just after I'd hung up the phone and patted myself on the back for being such a brilliant conversationalist. I stayed mad at myself about screwing that up for about eighteen months until Billy Joe put out a new record, and I had a good excuse to call him back.

Lucky for you that I did because I didn't make the same mistake twice, and now you're about to be treated to one of my all-time favorite Texas music stories. Toward the tail end of that second interview, after we'd talked about all the songs on Billy Joe's Real Deal CD, I caught a glimpse of one of the twenty-seven sticky notes that I had strategically placed about my furniture and person that read, "Don't forget to ask about the Waylon Jennings thing." Here's a very close approximation of how the conversation went from there.

**I was gonna ask you one more thing, Billy Joe, before I let you go.**

OK

**I gotta get confirmation on a story. I heard a story one time...something about Waylon Jennings promising you he'd put a bunch of your songs on a record, and it didn't happen.**

Yeah

**And you went up to Nashville. Could you tell me that story because I want to hear it from the horse's mouth if I can get it?**

*Well, it all started down there at that Dripping Springs Reunion, that first Fourth of July thing. I was in a trailer, and they were passing a guitar around, and they passed it to me. I was still cowboy'n then, and I was working on ranches and stuff. I start playin' Willy the Wandering Gypsy and Me. I heard a commotion in the back and, boy, out busts Waylon, and he's doin' God knows what back there, but he says, "I gotta have that song." I said, "Well, what do*

*you mean?"*

*He said, "Did you write that song?" and I said, "Yeah." And he says, "Well, I gotta have it." He says, "I'm gonna record that song." and I said, "Well, you can sure do that." He said, "You got any more of them cowboy songs?" I said, "Yeah. I got a whole sack full of 'em here," and he said, "Well, come on up to Nashville, and I'll record a whole album."*

*And that's the last I seen him. I went on up to Nashville, and I chased him around, God, I bet six weeks. I'd call over to his place over there, and he's on the line. And they said he's on the other line, and I knew he didn't have but one line. And I finally caught him at RCA... not RCA... it was...what was it? Yeah, it was RCA, I think. The great big place where Elvis recorded, and Captain Midnight, this friend of mine; he's a disc jockey; he let me in. He wasn't sup-*



*posed to let me in...folks like me. I come in. I was kind of weather-worn, and beat-up, broke, and I went ahead and stood there for a while down at the end of the hall there because (there were) these lines of women and everybody - hangers-on and stuff like that. People knew Waylon was gonna do something, but they just didn't know when or how, so I stood there for a while, and Waylon peeked his head out and saw me because Midnight told him I was there, and after a while, he finished whatever he was doin', and he come out of there with a couple of ol' bikers on each arm. I was down at the other end, and like I say, the hall was just lined with people 'cause Waylon was the biggest thing goin', I guess. Well, he hadn't really done it yet, but he was gonna do something and everybody knew it. He said, "What do you want, Hoss?" I said, "Well, now, ya know, ya told me to come up here, and you'd record my songs," and I says, "I don't expect you to record 'em, but I do expect you to listen to 'em, and if you don't, I'm gonna whip your ass right here in front of everybody."*

*And boy, them bikers started towards me, and he grabbed 'em and held them back, and he walked on up there to me, and he looked at me right in the eye, and I was ready. You know... I had my little ol' guitar with me 'cause I didn't have nowhere else to put it, and I thought he was gonna take a swing at me, but he didn't*

*'cause I was ready, ya know. I was a pretty good size ol' boy. I used to box and stuff, and I'm pretty good, and he kinda eased over there and grabbed me by my shoulder - - right where that funny bone is. People who know how to do that can do it, and he walked me into this other room, and he told me, "I'll tell ya what I'm gonna do. I'm gonna do something for you. I'm gonna do that one song, Willy the Wandering Gypsy and Me. I tell you what... I'm gonna let you sing, sing another song for me. I'm gonna make you a deal. I know you got a bunch of songs there, but if you sing one song for me that I don't like...then, man, out that door you go. I don't ever see you again. I said, "That's fair enough." So, I sang Ain't No God in Mexico, and then I sang him Old Five and Dimers, I think and then Low Down Freedom, and then I sang him Honky Town Heroes and by that time, he'd already figured it out. He just slapped himself on the leg and said, "Man I know what I gotta do now, damn it."*

*He went back in there and changed everything around. Boy, they got mad at him. Chet Atkins, the whole town was mad at him 'cause these songs I had were real raw and different. They weren't real flowery, and they said "God" in 'em which they wadn't even saying back then. Ya know... ain't no God in Mexico, and all that stuff, and they all just knew it was gonna bring Nashville down, sure enough, it didn't. It brought it up, so it worked out good for me, and that's how it happened, and Waylon did stick his neck out. He took his own band in there and played 'em and did the whole thing. Those were the kind of songs that none of the players there could have played. They were a little too slick. His band wasn't. They were like...Richie Albright was from Oklahoma. . . always had that heavy beat. I always want to accuse Waylon of inventing that disco beat. He came out with that beat before disco came out. I believe that's where it came from. May he turn over in his grave.*

**Well, I appreciate you sharing that with me, Billy Joe.**

One of the most magical evenings of music I ever enjoyed was at the Leon Springs Café in the building that is now Rudy's Barbecue, just west of San Antonio on I-10. I drove over from Austin to watch a friend of mine, Mark Luke Daniels, open for Billy Joe Shaver and his son, Eddy. I'd never seen or heard Billy Joe Shaver before. I was blown away by his music and his personality. Thank you, Billy Joe Shaver for the tale behind that tune.

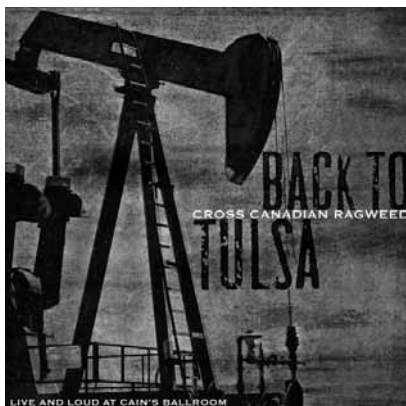
George Bancroft lives in Big Spring, Texas. He has a local radio show called Texas TuneSmith and can be heard at KBST 95.7, Saturday and Sunday evenings, and on the internet on Wednesdays at 8:00 PM (CST) on tossmradio.com.

# BACK TO TULSA

Live and Loud at Cain's with Cross Canadian Ragweed

By: Keith Howerton

Normally I am not a huge fan of live records when compared to the studio versions. I guess it comes from my purist feelings about records and new material. However, no one should have rules that restrict their ability to recognize when something is quality. Live records are best when they capture the vibe of the artist and the live show that they perform without the distraction of the visual element of the show. Therefore, the live records I do enjoy with tremendous enthusiasm are recordings of bands or artists with whom I have enjoyed the live experience. Cross Canadian Ragweed's "Back to Tulsa" is such a record. Additionally, Ragweed's first live record which was recorded at the old Wormy Dog Saloon in Stillwater Oklahoma is one of my all time favorite live records. When I received a pre-release copy of "Live at Cain's" from the Universal South record label I was understandably excited. The 24 track double CD not only captures the intensity of a live Ragweed experience but it spins with a vibe of being in the front row. The record is not over produced as if it was recorded and taken back into the studio where masters of the mixing craft are brought in to fix every mistake. Instead the tracks include a great amount of impromptu showmanship and commentary by front man Cody Canada including Cody calling out a jerk in the front who participated in the all too familiar behavior among some Ragweed fans of throwing a half empty beer at one of the band members. Cody using choice words about calling the a\*shole out made a point that now is recorded for every Ragweed fan to hear. It is not cool to throw beer cans at anyone and people who do it are jerks. It is something that needed to be said and a behavior that has almost stopped this music reporter from going to see one of my favorite bands. Thank you Cody for making the point for all of us to hear. Additionally, Cody expands on the source of the songs and inspirations that led to the melodies and verses. In all, the additional monologues add flavor to the record that enhance the 24 tracks of pure Cross Canadian rock. Disk one opens up with "Dimebag" and disk two finishes with "Lonely Feeling", and the 22 tracks in-between are pure enjoyment to the ears. Two songs not on the record are "Carneyman" and "Boys from Oklahoma" which is fine with me. The band has evolved beyond those anthems and they are on "Live at the Wormy Dog" for those who are determined to have the tunes in their record collection. Cain's Ballroom is a special place for Canada and his great band of Grady Cross, Randy Ragsdale, and Jeremy Plato. Canada remarked that, "Cain's is the oldest, most legendary dancehall in Oklahoma. Bob Wills got his start there, and it's where we cut our teeth. It just feels like home." I like to think that even though Bob Wills sound and songs were very different from Ragweed's modern country rock sound; the king of Texas swing and fiddle would be proud of the sounds and tunes of the present day kings of both sides of the Red River. "Back to Tulsa" is a great live record that includes some duets with friends Wade Bowen and Stoney LaRue. An addition that by itself make the record unique. In all this is a superb live recording that captures a snapshot in time of one of the greatest live performances of the present day Red Dirt rock and Texas music movement. Great job guys, and thank you very much.



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