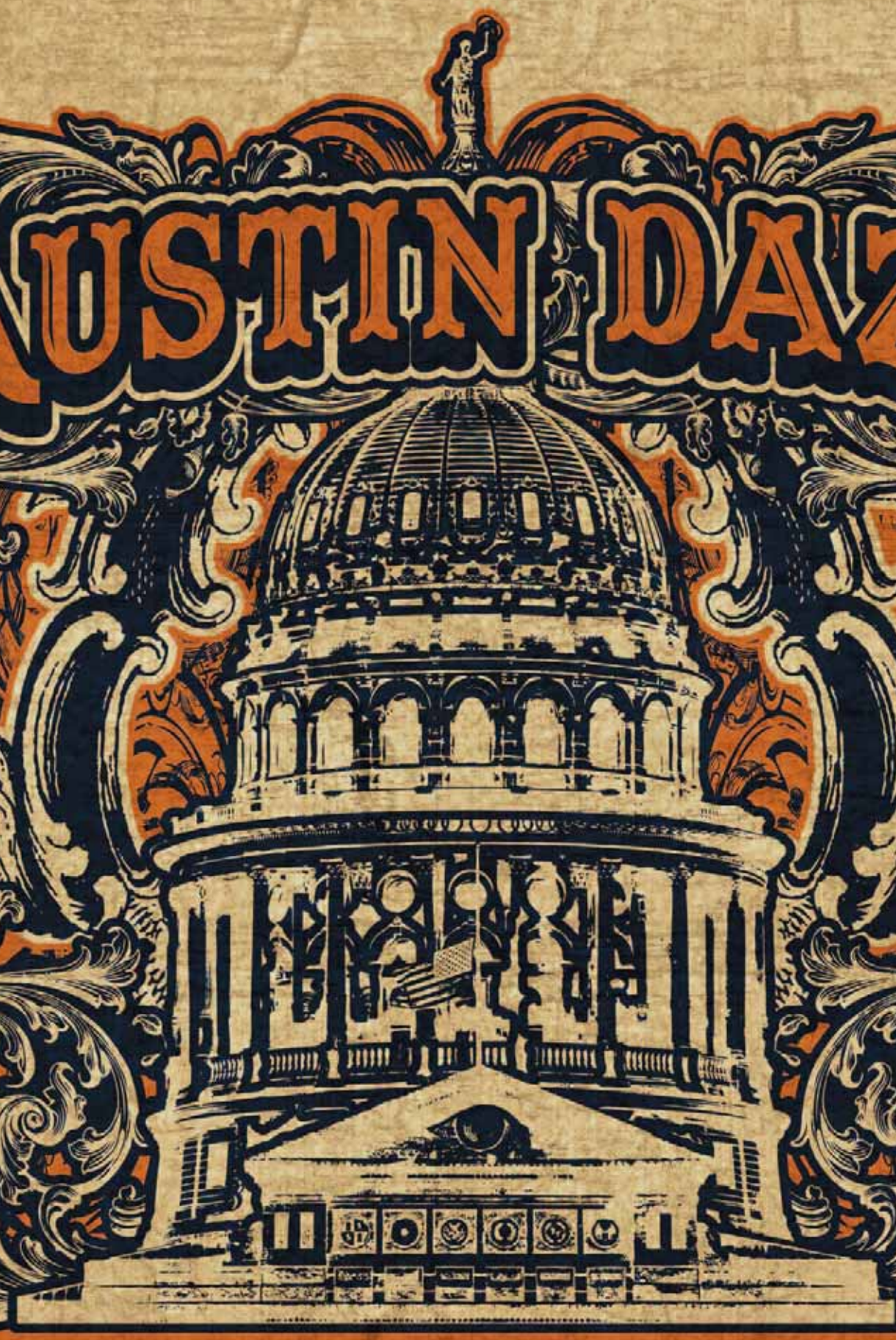
AUSTIN DAZE



ISSUE NO. 65 - STEAL THIS PAPER!

INSIDE: FREDDIE "STEADY" KRC - BILLY BOB THORNTON
OLIVER RAJAMANI - ZAP MAMA
ELDER DAVE COURCHENE JR. - NATIVE ROOTS
BRUCE HUGHES - GHOSTLAND OBSERVATORY
TOM BEE & JOHN WARNER

REMEMBER IT IS COLD SOMEWHERE! MORE OF THE STUFF INSIDE THAT KEEPS AUSTIN AN OASIS!

Welcome to Sixty Five!

65 is here and we are almost at our eight year anniversary--the beginning of our golden years, issue wise. Issue wise, they are all golden years for me. I guess we must be doing something right. Well, we've been doing something.

This is a special one. We knocked off a few local talents and mixed in on some outsiders. Whether from Austin or India, this issue features individuals who in addition to their obvious talent demonstrate a tremendous strength and spirit. Many of these local folks have the talent and means to make a go anywhere in the country and world but wouldn't want to be anywhere else. They say our oasis plays an important role in maintaining that individuality--that it nurtures their sense of self. What a wonderful thing to say about your hometown. For those not living here, they too seem to share a general appreciation of the vibe of this town. It seems that around here, for those that have to leave they always come back. Sometimes you have to part from something for awhile to appreciate what you had. That sounds like crazy talk to me but it's what they tell me.

Coinciding with our 8 year anniversary, we have a cool event coming to Ruta Maya on October 13th. The Bringing in the 8th Fire event (a gathering and musical celebration of Native American culture) comes to Ruta Maya all day on Saturday 10/13/07. I jumped at the chance to share some words with these folks. I have always been intrigued by Native American spirituality and the drive to go on even amidst the most shameful persecutions. I studied many aspects of their cultures in college and have found many answers within their many messages. I hope you too dig their words and come to the event.

We have been going at the booking thing full force and do not expect to let up anytime soon. Some exciting things are on the horizon. Come to some Austin Daze Weekend events. You won't be sorry.

Make sure to drop in on our website and leave us a comment. We do like feedback.

The rain is behind us now so let the heat come on. I will see you at the springs.

Much thanks to everyone that made another issue happen, I am indebted to all and held in awe by the beauty and the magic we have created, again.

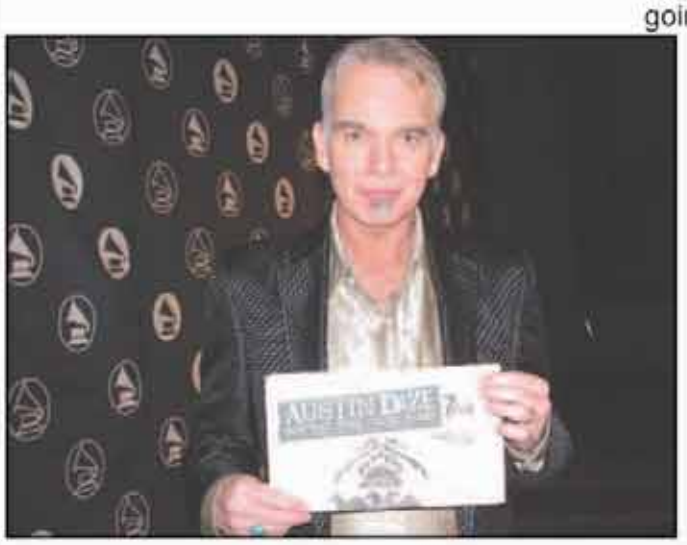
Look for us at the ACL FEST. Hope there will be some cool breezes. If anyone out there can help us get some words with Mr. Dylan while he is here, plz contact me. Thanks.

Until next time...

Namaste, Russ

FEATURES

BILLY BOB THORNTON



AUSTIN DAZE: How did you first get involved with music?

BILLY BOB THORNTON: Well I actually really got involved in movies. I was in music always. You know, from the beginning. I started when I was 9 or 10 years old and that's what I did and what I thought I was going to do. Then I kind of got into a theater group and accidentally became a movie star.

AD: In Tres Hombres, your ZZ Top tribute band, did you have a beard?

BBT: Yeah, but I didn't have to have a long one because I was the drummer. The other guys had to have the beards.

AD: How do you manage to have successful careers in both music and film? Just having one of those is a feat in itself.

BBT: Well, for the last year and a half I haven't done a movie. I simply concentrated on making this record, as well as the next record that comes out next year. I also have three kids—two boys and a daughter—so I'm kind of a hermit. My time is spent either with the kids or recording a record or making a movie. So I just try and schedule it where I can do it all. The recording studio is here in the house, so I don't have to go anywhere for that. It's not too bad. Plus, I love it so much it doesn't feel like work. Making a movie to me is a joy and making records is a joy, so I consider myself a really fortunate person to be making a living and putting my kids through school and doing what I love. I get on my knees and thank the big man every day for what I got.

AD: Do you have to turn one off to do the other, or do they flow together? How does that work?

BBT: Well, I consider it all part of the same thing. I think artists in general love music and movies and painting and poetry and everything else. I just consider it all one thing, so the transition is not that hard. The lifestyles are

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The Austin Daze
"Entertainment paper that supports the Austin Scene"

The Austin Daze is free speech. We are a publication of and for the community. We put an issue together every other month in Austin, TX. We distribute in over 200 locations around our town. We celebrate the uniqueness of our town and we bridge the gap between well known national, international and local musicians, artists, and events. Our interviews are great conversations that the reader is invited to partake in. The Austin Daze exhibits some of the lesser known treasures and mixes them with more well known names, which helps expand our community's interest. The Austin Daze is made up of a well-rounded mix of local, national, international, art, music, interviews, pictures, editorials, politics, comics and humor. We have a nice website: **www.austindaze.com**. You can look at all of our issues on the site. We are always looking for coverage suggestions AND FEEDBACK.

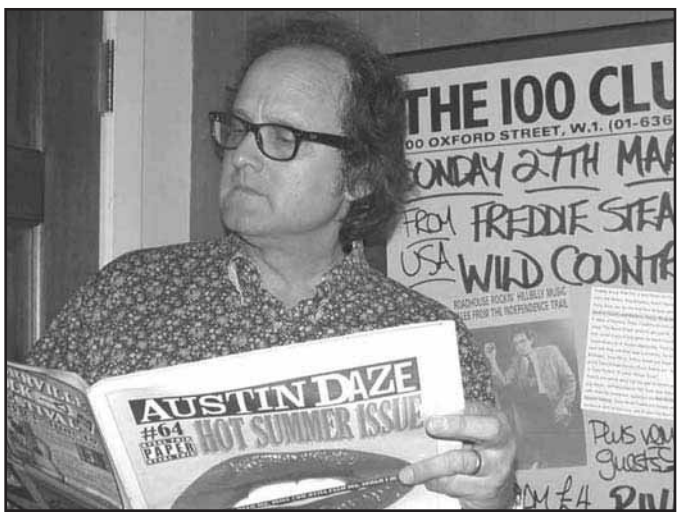
If you want to get involved with us, send us an email at **involved@austindaze.com** or call us at **512-587-8358**. If you wish to find out about submissions, email **subs@austindaze.com**. Or call us. Complaints as well as monkey questions should be sent to **MrJangles@austindaze.com**. Love and good feedback can be sent to the **Editor@austindaze.com**. Contact Wendy at **wendy@austindaze.com** about advertisements.

Our office on S 1st is gone. The sign is still there. We have a secret HQ at the moment. Send all mail , cd's and love letters to: Austin Daze P.O. Box 40425 Austin, TX 78704. Our # is 512-587-8358.

Issue #65 Cast List

Russ Hartman - Editor / Interviewer / Layout and Lover
Wendy Wever - Publisher / Interviewer / Layout
Bree Perlman - Interview Transcriber and Editor
John Grubbs - Photographer & Layout Picture pgs
Dony Wynn - Column
Daisy Riprock - CD Reviews,
John Warner - Cover Art
Magnus Opus - Restaurant Reviews
Big Dave - Inspiration and Motivation
Wendy - Advertising
Colin Clark - Austin Environment Column
Allen Larsen - Mail Department
Outcasters - Website Design
Daniel Szymczak - Advisor
Maslow - 1st Thursdaze MC and Poet
Sweet Snob - Sweet Snob
And Everyone Else We Forgot

FREDDIE "STEADY" KRC



AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us about your new CD. What can we expect?

FREDDIE "STEADY": Well the new CD is called Tex-Pop by The Freddie Steady 5 and the title pretty much implies what the music is. I had my first pop group The Explosives in the late 70s early 80s and then I did some records with my band the Shakin' Apostles in the 90s for a label called East Side Digital--they were part of Ryko Disc. While with them, I made what I thought was my most pop record ever and I turned it in and the president said, "I really love this. We are kind of going in that country direction." And I went, "UH". My point is, that I'm so inspired by the Beatles and British pop and sixties stuff--that's why the stuff is pretty and arranged and melodic--but it still sounds like a guy from Texas doing it. My long time partner, Cam King, who was also in the Explosives, co-produced this record with me and we co-wrote four songs on it and it's kind of, if anybody knows my history, it's kind of like The Explosives but with a keyboard. It's kind of power pop. It's Tex-Pop.

AD: You've had a long musical journey. Tell us about your time in England.

FS: I had made a solo record when I left The Explosives. I went over to England and had an extended stay over there. I started writing again and the stuff I was writing was kind of Americana although the term wasn't really being used then—this was 1986. I was kind of focusing on the music I grew up on--I grew up on the Texas Gulf Coast in La Porte. It was a French settled community and I listened to a lot of Cajun music, a lot of blues down there, soul music along with all the rock and roll stuff and country. Joe Tex was from Baytown just across the tunnel. It was kind of like when you look at a picture closely you don't really get the full scope until you step back. When I was far away from home it was easier for me to see those things.

AD: Did you miss Austin when you were overseas?

FS: Oh yeah. I missed it a lot. In 1986 I was there half the year and that's when I wrote all this stuff and recorded it—it was called Freddie Steady's Wild Country: Lucky 7. A friend of mine's manager, David Sandison, he had been a press agent for the Rolling Stones, loved the CD. He underwrote it. Dave Goodman, the Sex Pistols engineer, engineered it and he was really fun. By the last week he came in and said, "Fred I've written a country song and I want you to hear it." It wasn't very good but he was a really nice guy and great engineer and we had a wonderful time. I almost thought about moving over there. I was getting a lot of work: I did a television soundtrack playing drums and I did some commercials. I did Quaker Oats for France that was recorded in London. I made a record with Roger Waters from Pink Floyd. It was a movie soundtrack for an animated black comedy called When the Wind Blows about the nuclear war. It was a weird time. It was 1986, and everybody in England was using electronic drums. This was like a big bold step to go back to drums.

AD: When you were over there what did you to listen to?

FS: I saw a lot of live music.

AD: When I was over there it was so hard to find the music clubs.

FS: When were you over there?

AD: 2001

FS: Let me tell you man, just like LA and San Francisco it has drastically changed. When I was spending all that time there in the mid-80s it was popping.

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FREDDIE "STEADY" FROM PAGE 3

There were clubs everywhere. But man it has really changed. I was there a few weeks ago and there weren't as many clubs--it was just different.

AD: All I found was djs and "dodgy" pubs.

FS: It's very sad. Do you remember Graham Parker and the Rumour? Martin Belmont the guitar player is a friend of mine and we email each other occasionally and I had emailed him a couple of years ago when I started teaching at the Rock and Roll School for kids and he emailed me back and said, "I'm teaching a lot too because there just aren't any gigs."

There are still plenty of gigs in Austin but London, LA, San Francisco, no.

AD: That's leads us to my next question: so much has changed here. What do you miss the most about the old Austin and what is the best new addition?

FS: You know what? I don't think the music scene has changed. I think the city has changed which somewhat affects the music scene but I've been here since '74 and there are just as many gigs and just as many bands that want the gigs--they are all still here too. What has changed is the economy of the city. God when I moved here, and I know that was a long time ago, I lived off $40 a week. The hard part about becoming a professional musician is that if you have a day job you still got those strings. And I had to not get that day job. There were no cell phones back then. There weren't even answering machines. My daddy would go, "Why don't you go to Manpower and work" and I said, "Well dad because if I'm not at my phone and somebody calls me to work and I don't get it they are going to call somebody else. I have to be available all the time." That first year I played guitar in a barbecue house 5 days a week from 4-6 and I got $5 and a free plate of barbecue. And tips, which I was too painfully shy to ask for—not anymore—but I was back then. I played drums in a Dixieland band—luckily I like Dixieland. A good week that year was $60—that was the most I made. But I could live off of that. That was the difference between then and now. I could stay home and work at my craft and be available for whatever came my way. People can't do that anymore. Everybody has a day job or two. They hope they can keep their band together to go play. Unlike San Francisco for example, last time I was there, it just broke my heart because I couldn't find anything to go see. In the late 70s early 80s when the Explosives were out there a lot there were dozens of clubs and dozens of bands and they are gone. It got too expensive. That's what we need to look at when thinking about this city. That's what we are in danger of. In San Francisco, the artists are gone. Everything that drew everyone there is gone. That could very well happen here. It's happening.

But the rest of it, I don't see any difference. I see plenty of places to play. There are things that are kind of not fair. Like it's always been guys like me that are professional musicians who need to work to make their living and there are guys who are going to college and just want to play in front of their friends. Most club owners don't care. As long as you put rear ends in the chairs and sell beer they don't care who is playing. But that keeps you on your toes. That's what I like about this town. And as far as song writing, it's a very healthy scene because just when you think you may have just turned a good phrase or two, you hear someone else and go, "Ooh, they are pretty good too." For instance I remember being on the road one time and I was in Santa Fe, New Mexico and the guy that opened the show was going, "Well I've written 100 songs." And I said, "Well do you have any records out?" And he said, "No." And I thought, Well if I'd written 100 songs and hadn't gotten any records out or gotten a record deal I might kind of rethink what I'm doing. I wouldn't be boasting that I'd written all this and nobody was interested. That's the difference between being here and in an isolated place. I'm sure there everybody told him how great he was. And that doesn't happen here and that's a good thing. It makes you work hard.

AD: You played drums with Jerry Jeff Walker and with The Explosives. You play guitar also. Do you play any other instruments? Do you prefer one over the other?

FS: Drums is technically my main instrument. That's the instrument I'm most studied on. I was self-taught on guitar but I do ok. I was never interested in being a lead guitar player but I wanted a musical instrument to be able to create songs with. I play a little keyboard and I wish I played more because there are so many different voice-ings on a keyboard—especially for songwriting. I play a little harmonica. I used to play violin but haven't in 10 years and that's an instrument you really have to keep up with. But I mainly play guitar and drums. When I was a high school kid I grabbed an accordion, I got a mandolin, and I got a violin and I was studying all this stuff which I think was healthy and good but one of my drum instructors said, "You know if you really want to do this for a living you should focus on a couple of things and really work hard." And he was right. I really took drums and guitar and focused on those instruments.

AD: I understand you started a label. How is that going?

FS: It's going great. It's called SteadyBoy records and I started it in 2003. I had made that record Freddie Steady's Wild Country over in London and it's been out of print for years so when I got the ownership of the master back I decided to start a label mainly to keep my stuff in print. So it's available; people can hear it. That's how people pick songs for things they want to use. So I reissued Freddie Steady's Wild Country in 2003 and then in 2005, the Explosives stuff had never been released on CD. We consistently through the years have gotten orders for our vinyl. In fact in 2004 an Italian label released a vinyl LP of the Explosives. I released that and licensed it to a label called Wizzard in Vinyl in Japan. That's been doing really well. So I had those two releases and then I got involved with the teenage power pop group Jenny Wolfe and The Pack and I decided to put it out on my label. I released that and then I released a singer songwriter Vince Bell. And then mine is coming out on it.

FREDDIE "STEADY" FROM PAGE 4

out on it.

AD: Do you like having the control of being a label?

FS: Yes. Of course along with that comes responsibility but what has happened is I have a staff publicist and I have a staff accountant and administrator. That takes so much off my shoulders and these are people that I totally trust. I know how to do it. The Explosives had set up a label called Black Hole Records in the late 70s so I got my feet wet doing that. That was in the real early days of indie records and it was so hard to get money out of distributors and I learned how to do all that stuff back then. It's time consuming but I'm happy spending my time doing that.

AD: From a musicians standpoint you can do everything the right way.

FS: Absolutely. And I can offer that to whoever is on the label. The next thing, there is a really fabulous woman, a singer songwriter named Pamela Richardson, from Chicago. I'm going to produce her new record and that will come out this fall. I'm going back to England this September for three weeks. I'm going to do a bunch of gigs and then I'm going to record Freddie Steady's Wild Country Part II. It will be released 20 years from when it was released in England and it will be with all the same guys. It's Wes McGhee who is a singer song writer that I went over there to play drums with. BJ Cole the steel player, he is the guy. He played on "Tiny Dancer", Elton John's song. I saw him play in New York with John Cale. He played with Sting, The Who. Geraint Watkins, the guy I was talking about who plays with Van Morrison. Bob Loveday is a fiddle player who plays with Sir Bob Geldof. It's really going to be fun.

AD: History question: How did you get started in music? When did you know that it was your path?

FS: I'm 53 and I started playing when I was 91/2. When I saw the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, me and a million other kids went, "I want to do that". I did it. I knew from when I was 10 years old that is what I wanted to do for a living and I have come to really appreciate that I was that focused. I thought everybody knew what they wanted to do. I did attend college—I did four semesters in one year. I went one full year straight through. It was stupid but I did it. Since I was 19, since '73, I've been playing for a living. I played in a Holiday Inn band when I first started—I didn't know it wasn't cool, I just wanted a gig. The great thing about that is you would play 4, 5 or 6 sets a night and there was no way than that to get better. I did that for about a year and then realized I needed to focus on original stuff. So then I moved to Austin in January of '74.

AD: I was going to ask what brought you here.

FS: when I quit playing music for a living I moved to Dallas briefly, I still don't know why but I did, and then I moved back to Houston where I'm from. I was playing in a Holiday Inn band locally and I would go to this club Liberty Hall. That's where I first saw B.W. Stevenson and ended up playing with him, the first time I saw Jerry Jeff was there. All the Austin stuff I saw there. I also saw ZZ Top there. It was right on the edge of downtown. They would have two shows and they would sell the first show and then if you kept your ticket you could see the second show. It was one of the only places I have ever been that people went there specifically to hear music. They weren't there to score or pick somebody up. They knew if they went there they were going to hear something good. Those are rare. I remember I went to see Jerry Jeff and started talking to Herb Steiner, who was playing steel, and I said, "I really love this music and would love to get involved in it." And he said, "Well move to Austin. That's what going on." And the light bulb went off and I moved here. The first year was slim. And then I got the gig with BW Stevenson--that was June '75--so I was just barely 21. The next month we are going to LA to make a record. I was such a kid and it's been good since then. I played with Jerry Jeff and then wanted to have a band that was doing my stuff so I started The Explosives in '79. Coincidentally, just a month after the Explosives got started Roky Erickson came back to town and a mutual friend said to him, "You ought to play with these guys because they are really great." We started playing with Roky—in 2 years we did 46 gigs with him. Roky's manager ended up becoming our manager.

I was so excited about the punk and new wave stuff. The 70s rock didn't appeal to me at all. This was more real to me. Then like everything else that got bought up. You went from this really original scene to a flock of seagulls. Duran Duran, is that what I want? That's not what I want. The most I could hope for was to end up with something like that. It got bought and cleaned up to be sold to white middle-America. That's when I went over to England and started really looking at root stuff. Rock and Roll was in a terrible state then.

AD: What's it like playing with the Explosives and Roky today?

FS: It's so cool. I had old footage of us at this club called the Island in Houston from 1980 and we transferred it to digital and did a presentation at the Alamo and then we played. Cam King was the guitar player, I was the drummer, the original bass player, Waller Collie, is not involved anymore--we have Chris Johnson playing with us. We did these shows and they were a pretty high profile thing. About a month later Roky calls and says, "I've been thinking about playing again, would you guys back me up?" It was just like 20 years before. He was a little more tentative. When he came here from San Francisco he was right on the money but he hasn't played in a while. So we worked out 3 songs for the Ice Cream Social that year and that was a big deal. From there we now do a whole set and are playing festivals everywhere. Besides the gigs and the music getting to watch that guy be happier than I've ever seen him is the best part. He got his driver's license. He hadn't had his driver's license since he was a teenager. He's gotten custody of himself back in the courts. He's seen his ex wife Dana. He has a girlfriend. He quit smoking. He walks every day. It's just heartwarming seeing how well he is doing and how happy he is. The guitar player, Cam and I have been best friends for 30 years. He was the best man at my wedding. All the records I made when the Explosives ended except for the one in England he's come and played something on. Now he is playing on the Freddie Steady Five. It's really been great.

AD: What do you think when you hear that Austin is the "Live Music Capital of the World"?

FS: I think that it is but I feel that if you have to make it into a slogan then maybe it's not. Having said that, I love our new airport. I played there last week. They have Amy's ice cream, there's barbecue, Mexican food--I think that's very cool.

AD: Give me some wisdom for hopeful musicians who might be reading this.

FS: I would say obviously work hard. You have to be good at your instrument. Anybody that plays bass, guitar, drums or keyboard if you want to sing please sing. I try and teach my young students that if there are two bass players looking for a gig and one of them is a singer, who is going to get the gig? The more you can bring the better you will be. Be on time. Do what you say you are going to do. You are laughing but I'm telling you it happens. I know I can play but I attribute a lot of my success to being on time and doing what I said I was going to do.

AD: Is there anything else you want to tell Austin?

FS: Come see me play.

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BILLY BOB THORNTON FROM PAGE 2

different. Making a movie, you go away for 3 or 4 months and you are with the same people everyday and when you are going on tour, you are in a different city everyday and it's more immediate. You're actually confronting or interacting with your audience. With movies, I'm making a movie with a crew and I don't get to see the audience's reaction. Music is much more immediate. But it's all storytelling. Songwriting and making a movie, it's all telling a story. Other than it takes a hell of a lot longer to write a screenplay than it does to write a song.

AD: What does your songwriting process look like?

BBT: I tend to write pretty quickly. I'm real lazy and most things I do are real spontaneous, so I usually write a song quickly and we try to record it that night. If I don't I may get onto something else and forget about it, so I have to do everything right then. When I write a screenplay I do the same thing. I'm so lazy about it that it takes me forever to start a screenplay. I'll do anything to avoid it. I'll say, "I guess I should start this script, but Green Acres is on so I'll watch that first." Once I do start writing however, I kind of go straight through. I'm a stream of consciousness writer so I don't map things out very well—I just kind of start going.

AD: This is your second go at music. Is it easier this time because you are so well known?

BBT: Well I think the music business is harder than the movie business in a lot of ways. The music business seems to be more competitive. It's kind of closed off and a little more possessive or jealous or whatever. Being an actor, people don't understand I was a roadie growing up. I worked for the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band and a lot of different people as a roadie. I was in a lot of different bands and opened for Humble Pie and Black Oak Arkansas by the time I was 20 years old. So I was a musician first. Being a popular movie actor has nothing to do with a success in music. As a matter of fact, it's only been a hindrance because people say, "Oh you're an actor making a record." Not really. I'm a musician who is making movies. I went to Nashville for the first time in 1977 to be a songwriter—that was way before I came to LA. And there is that stigma which doesn't go in reverse. If a musician wants to do a movie people don't think anything of it but then an actor is making records…this is my fourth record. It's not some kind of lark. I do it because it's what I love. That's why I love Austin because it is a music town.

AD: There is a lot of cross-pollination of thoughts and ideas here in Austin.

BBT: Absolutely. I grew up as a hippie and Austin is a hippie town. That's why I feel comfortable there. You know, Austin is my second home. There is a house I rent out there, I've made a lot of movies down there, a lot of my friends are from Austin, and I lived there for quite a bit. Even though I was raised most of my life in Arkansas I did spend part of my life in Texas. It's kind of cool, any time we get to come to Austin to play. This time we are coming to Antone's—we've never played Antone's before. We always play at Stubb's. It worked out this time that Antone's was available.

I always hope when I come to Austin that the same good folks will show up and we will have the same good time. They are open to music there. It's my kind of place.

AD: What does Beautiful Door mean to you and what can we expect from this release?

BBT: Beautiful Door is kind of moody record about life and death. We demoed about 25 or 30 songs before we hit the vein we wanted to

BILLY BOB THORNTON FROM PAGE 6

go in. It's really a collection of stories about life and living and death and dying and how important both are. It's got songs like "Carnival Girl" which is about not judging people by their job or the way they look. There is a song called "Rescue Your Soul" which is about suicide, speaking from the person who is left behind. Then there are three anti-war songs on the record, which I hadn't done previously, but this time I couldn't help it—you're faced with it everyday. The song, "Beautiful Door" is specifically about religion being mixed with politics in war and how it seems like the big bosses are not the ones dying. It's about religion. It is saying that each religion has their magical door that you walk through and you get all these rewards for it and they believe that whoever they have to stomp on to get there is fine. The door to me is a pretty watery entrance. The reason the cover of the record is a picture that you can't tell quite what it is—it seems to be some kind of mixed up portal of a light show—is because that door is very unclear to me and that's why I wrote the song. People see this beautiful door you walk through and they think the way to get there is by shutting out everybody else. My way is the right way and I get to go through this magical door to eternity. And I just think that is kind of horseshit.

AD: It's great to have the courage and means to express this. We appreciate when musicians can reach people and get them to think.

BBT: I feel fortunate to be able to.

AD: Of all the shows that you have played, which is your favorite and why?

BBT: I got a real charge out of playing in Dublin, Ireland about 5 or 6 years ago because the Irish are storytellers and my dad was a crazy little Irishman. That was a lot of fun. It didn't matter if I played a rock and roll song or a quiet ballad, they would listen. I always love shows in Austin because, like I said, I consider it my second home and I love the people there. New Orleans is good to play. We did a European tour back in 2000 or 2001 where we played the Cavern Club where the Beatles were discovered among many others. I have to say that was the highlight—playing up on the stage where the Beatles were discovered.

AD: Have you tried painting yet?

BBT: I've tried. I could never paint. I could barely write my name. I'm not exactly what you would call a painter, but I do try it—it's pretty relaxing and a lot of fun to try but painting is probably not my bag. I do black and white photography.

AD: One last qestion: what wisdom can you offer other musicians?

BBT: I would say to be an innovator and an originator. When you are writing songs write what you know about or what you feel rather than trying to write for people. I try to do that in movies too. People want to see or hear what you think—that is what art is about. If people are going to judge you they should judge you based on what you really think and not on what you are trying to manufacture to sell it. I say always be honest about it and do what you feel.

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OLIVER RAJAMANI

AUSTIN DAZE: How did you get started in music?

OLIVER RAJAMANI: Well I started playing music in India where I grew up and I started really young—probably when I was about 5 or 6. My family was really into music--my uncle had a band--so I used to play in the band and I was just surrounded by music. In India, especially back in those days, there was just a lot more live music on the streets. You don't find it as much today. It is still there but you don't find it as much.

Then I went to an International American School in India--that's why my English is without a thick India accent—where I studied western classical music and theory as well as jazz. I was in a rock and roll band. So this was another side to my Indian music. Also, my father was really into country music—it was a big thing over there back then. A lot of people think that I grew up listening to the kind of music that I play but I actually grew up listening to a lot more country because my dad listened to it all the time at home.

Sometimes I play a country song at my shows and they think it's weird but they don't realize that is what I grew up on.

AD: You started playing at 5. When did you know this is what you wanted to do for a living?

OR: For a long time I didn't want to do music as a profession. I wanted to keep it as a side thing because I knew it was a hard life. I knew you wouldn't get paid well enough unless you hit big. Being an immigrant in this country, in the beginning I tried not to do music because of that. I tried and I tried as much as I could to avoid music. I got all sorts of jobs working front desk and offices but music kept coming back to me. It was the only thing I did really well. I was not very good at working in offices. It became more of a living not very long ago—probably 8 or 9 years ago—when I realized I could also teach music to children and adults and use it as a means to not just make money but educate kids; educate people about other cultures. I could show people that everywhere in the world there are children and adults who like to listen to good music and be cared for and loved and eat good food—all that good stuff.

AD: Do you teach different kinds of music?

OR: I do various forms of teaching. One of the main things that I do is I teach a world music course at a high school. They have given me the freedom to construct the course myself so I use world music as a spiritual means. I take the kids through different cultures. We study Indian music; we study African music; we study American folk music. We try to see the history of that culture and how that music came about. Where did the spiritual value of that music come from? Did it come from struggles, did it come from joy? All these kinds of things. I try to help kids see a different side to music than just becoming famous and popular.

AD: How did the live music scene in India compare to Austin's live music scene?

OR: The live music there is slightly different in the sense that they aren't playing in venues and they aren't getting paid. The music is on the streets and people are begging for money. This is an old tradition where different tribes and different castes would play music and this was their family tradition for generations and generations. So I grew up around the music.

AD: Why Austin?

OR: Why Austin. Well I lived in New York for about 6 years. I was born in India and came here when I was 20 years old. I lived in Israel for close to a year then also Greece. I picked Austin because Austin is a very different kind of place. I've been around the globe and there isn't really any place like Austin. It's a small city, you can drive out of Austin into the country and it's beautiful, people are not so competitive here, they help each other out, there is music all the time. There is support for artists here, not only from people but from the city of Austin. They provide health care for working musicians. There are so many things for musicians that you just don't get anywhere else. When I go to the hospital I pay $5 to get all kinds of check-ups done that I would be paying hundreds of dollars for. There is just something about Austin that is very laid back and very artsy. I feel safe here.

AD: How did you find out about Austin?

OR: I was working for the Roma Federation for the Gypsies. They represent the Roma Gypsies at the UN. The history of the Gypsy goes back originally to India where they are said to have migrated around the 10th century or so. When they arrived in Europe in the 14th century, people thought they were from Egypt. So in Old English, supposedly, "Gypsy" meant "Egyptian". The term comes from a Greek term, "Aegyptos", which means Egyptian. They call themselves Roma. They speak a language called Romani which is kind of a dialect of India. In recent times they have done research on the language and the genetics of the people. I was involved in this Federation and the guy who is the UN representative, his name is Ian Hancock and he teaches Romani studies at UT, he told me I should come here; that it was a great place and I could work with the Federation. I had a lot of friends here who told me about it as well.

I didn't know anything about this place. I thought there would be cowboys riding on horses. When I came here I was kind of shocked. There were a lot of New Yorkers and Californians.

AD: We have a pretty eclectic world music scene here in town. Why do you think it can exist in the middle of Texas?

OR: I think it can exist in the middle of Texas mainly because Austin is such a unique place and the people that have settled here are very open minded. It's a very progressive place.

AD: Who have been your influences?

OR: My influences have been quite a lot. Going back to India, definitely my family influenced me in many ways. Musically speaking, I've had so many that I can't really put my finger on the one. I thought about that awhile ago because there was a website that my music is on and they ask you for your influences and I realized I had so many. What I feel now is that there are so many great artists and people that musically have influenced me but the moment I saw music as something to understand the self I started to realize that it wasn't only musicians that influenced me but even people that aren't musicians--animals, nature, when I take a walk. Everything in this world influences me as long as my heart is open to it. When I start to focus

OLIVER RAJAMANI
FROM PAGE 8

myself only on music and I box myself in then I start to categorize it and I say, "Well this guy influenced me."

Really, honestly, truthfully, musically speaking, everyone that has come into contact with me has influenced me in one way or the other. I really do believe that.

AD: That's the best answer to that question we've ever heard.

OR: If you had asked me 10 years ago I would have said this guy and that guy. But really it was their music that influenced me. Music has to do with community, it has to do with nature and it has to do with breathing--what you look at; what you eat. It's not just one person or one thing. It's the universe.

That was a hard thing for me for awhile because I was boxed into certain things and so I saw myself as this kind of musician or that kind of musician. But the moment I was able to come out of that box and realize everything affects you and you can take it and structure it anyway you like I was free. My music has influence of not just India but everywhere--even Texas. I might take a traditional song from India and sing it and you'll never hear that version there. It will have a certain Texas cultural influence to it as well as other countries I've been to.

AD: Things have changed in our little oasis. Tell us what you miss most.

OR: I miss the old Rutamaya. When I came to Austin that was the place I started playing and people would come see me.

AD: That's where the paper was born.

OR: I miss the old kind of ways.

AD: What's an addition in Austin that has affected you personally or professionally?

OR: I like the no smoking thing in music venues. It's great for me because people that never used to come see me in certain places now come see me. It's helped me. I really enjoy that whole aspect of it. For me, I've never smoked in my life so it was always a very hard to go to a place where there was a lot of smoke. That is something I definitely like.

AD: Is Rajamani your given name and what does it mean?

OR: It's my last name. In the beginning I went by Oliver Rajamani and then we shortened it because it was fitting to my music and it was shorter. So I've kind of taken it on. People just call me Rajamani. More people call me Rajamani than Oliver. It wasn't something that I told people to call me, they just did. I like it because it is my family's name and it's different--it stands out--and it relates to the music. "Raja" means "king" and "mani" means jewel. It can also mean "pearl". I take it as "King of Pearls" which is also my birthstone. So my email address is kindofpearls.com.

AD: Any new recordings?

OR: I just released 10 new recordings at the One World Theater recently in May. It went really well. I did two shows. I've been trying to live day to day. A couple of years ago, about 6 or 7 years ago I tried to figure out what would be new for me and it drove me crazy. I started to look into the future and I wanted my life to be like this and I wanted that but it wasn't happening fast. I got a little depressed because I wanted to be signed and touring and I wanted it now. I got a little depressed about it and I went back home. The music industry has their own criteria and the way they operate has a lot to do with money and politics and that's just the way that it is. Getting myself stuck in it and my mind stuck in it drove me crazy. When I went home I realized I always grew up waking up every morning and went to bed every night singing devotional songs with my family. I played music when they sang. This is my first memory of music. This is what I grew up with and this is music. I was so happy to just be playing and not having to show off in front of people or signing my name off for anything. Ever since then I came back and I have no plans. I really don't. My main thing is that I'm trying to enjoy as much of this beautiful life as possible. Sometimes still I do it, where I gripe about things--I don't have this, or this. It's really ridiculous. Life is just way too beautiful and way too mysterious for us to understand. The thing that I really do now is to try and listen to my values in my heart. I do a lot of meditating everyday and so my music has kind of taken that path. I came to this country with very little money and I don't have a lot of money now but I'm comfortable. Yet my mind still goes crazy when I think about that I don't have this or that. But when you sit down and think about I have to realize, wow, I'm doing fine; I'm happy. I realized that all these worries that we created are totally in our heads—it's not real. My life has become that way. It's more about trying to take away the illusions that are in my life.

The funny thing is no matter how much you have the mind is never happy. I've realized that my job is to keep my mind focused. Through that my music will come the way it is supposed to come and whatever will happen, will happen. It took a lot of troublesome times to get there.

AD: Can you give us some wisdom in the music business for hopeful musicians who might be reading this?

OR: There is quite a lot. The main wisdom I really learned is to really believe in yourself. We are easily lead to believe in a certain kind of music because people hang out with that kind of music or certain kinds of places or foods or whatever. What I found was that I tried all these different things, I even tried different kinds of music because I wanted to make myself fit in to this society. I had a hard time when I first came to this country because I was from such a different culture and really at the end what it came down to was that I had to really believe in myself and who I was and what I was meant to be here for. I had to really search for that. There were a lot of times people would come in and say, "Well you've got to do this this way and you have to do that that way". And now it's not that I don't listen to them, it's that I let them speak to me but still follow my heart. It's a hard thing in this culture today. There is so much coming at us. So really the best thing I can say is listen to your heart and believe in that. It's a struggle but the amazing thing is when you see through all these struggles you find this happiness. I've been able to experience that in my life. And all of a sudden you feel like you are part of everybody and everything but you are also yourself.

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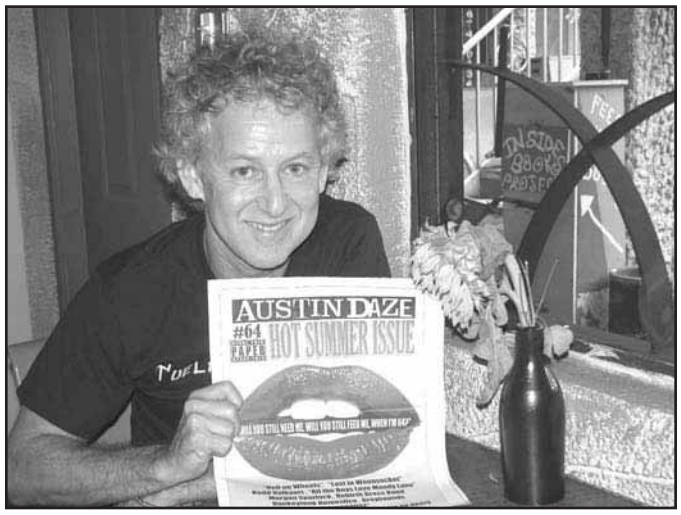
BRUCE HUGHES



AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us about your new solo album coming out.

BRUCE HUGHES: It's called Shorty. It's about 21 songs that are all about 2 minutes long. Some are shorter, there are a couple that are almost 3 minutes, but most of them are really short.

AD: How would you describe the style?

BH: It's all over the map. There are a couple that are me and my guitar, there are a couple that are full production, there are some that are full band, some that are electronica, some that are raw. The whole premise of the record really was the "short song." Not any sort of style or phonetic representation—just as long as it was short it was viable to go on. If it was over 3 minutes long it was cut from the list.

AD: Where did the concept come from?

BH: I like to write and sometimes I write songs that are longish, and this came from a personal exercise to write as many 2 minute long songs as I possibly could. And then once I had a big bunch of them in a basket I figured, Well why don't I just put them out? So it's about 45 minutes worth of music. It should be coming out in September here and everywhere.

AD: What moved you towards music?

BH: I guess I was singing and banging on the piano at a pretty early age, and was encouraged by my grandmother. I have a musical family on both my mom and dad's side. I grew up in Austin, Texas and everywhere that I went there was music always playing—in the street, garage bands practicing in my neighborhood, all my friends' older brothers were in bands—it was just kind of a natural thing. One summer me and my friends were all learning baseball, and the next summer we were all learning to play guitar. I thought every town was like that. I thought every town was littered with musicians and teenagers that wanted to be rock stars. Maybe they did but Austin was a place where that actually came true.

AD: Was it bass,guitar or singing first? When did you know that music would be your path?

BH: Singing first and then guitar. I've been singing ever since I could remember. Guitar: 9, I think. I think bass I learned last—there was piano and then bass—in 6th grade. I already knew how to play several other instruments so I was able to come in and play. At that point I realized I could do anything I wanted to, but I would probably have a better chance at getting a job if I just stuck with the bass.

As far as my path, I'm still not sure if it's the path that I'm going to end up on, but like my friend Stephen Bruton says, "Sometimes by the time you get good at some form of art it is too late to do anything else." And I have found myself in the enviable and lucky position of making a living playing music with a variety of bands and different music styles for the past 25 years.

AD: Did you ever have a day job?

BH: Oh yeah, I went to college and worked all the fringe jobs. I worked in restaurants and started a painting crew. In 1988 I just made a decision that I would never work again, ever. And I never had a day job after that. Some years were pretty skinny but it was Austin, Texas and it was easy to live like a king at poverty level—especially in the 80s. I still do that, I'm still able to live like a king at poverty level because I learned that a long time ago.

AD: What was your secret? How did you end up with so many killer spots in so many bands?

BH: I think it was part talent and part keeping at it and being open to opportunity. There were a couple of times when I was playing in 3 bands and another would come along and I would say, "I don't know, this 4th band really does sound like something is going on." I did make some odd and career killing choices early on in my career where people actually told me, "You'll never work again." I would say, "I'm not going to be able to make this show." And they would say, "Well you're never going to work again in Austin." And I would just laugh and say, "Actually I already have a gig on Friday." I am not going to keep working (day jobs) just because I'm not playing in your band.

I met Frank (Orrall) and Abra (Moore) when they first rolled through town. I was playing in a band called the Seven Samurai and we were basically backing up Ronnie Lane. And Poi Dog came and opened up for us at Continental Club, so I met them that way. Just really odd beautiful circumstantial meetings developed into these really beautiful friendships and musical relationships. The Ugly Americans was the same thing: it fell from a band we were in that was called the Atlantics, and a bunch of the guys from there turned into the Ugly Americans, which turned into the Scabs eventually. So some of it was persistence; some of it was opportunity; some of it was just pure luck.

AD: And the other was talent.

BH: All 4 halves.

AD: When did you start writing songs and why? What is your process?

BH: Pretty tricky question, that one. I tried to write songs immediately—whenever I started learning an instrument. Bass didn't lend itself to songwriting very well but piano and guitar did. It was difficult early on to get people to want to do your song because usually they were musicians and they have their own songs and they want you to do their songs as well. I actually began to steadfastly work on songwriting from about the end of the 80s on. I've become a little bit better at it just because I apply myself to it a little bit more. Sometimes songs stumble out of you, but mostly they take work. You have to invite them in, you have to feed them, you have to sneak around a corner and see if you can catch them off guard, and sometimes you have to just pummel them. My process is different every time. If I have an idea for a melody I'll sit down with that. Sometimes a 4 structure will evoke a melody and I'll go with that or sometimes a turn of phrase or something tickles my fancy and I'll just keep repeating it. Tom Waits says, "If you have a melody in your head and can keep it in your head all day long, that is probably a song worth working on." That's an arduous task, keeping it in your head all day long, especially with all the distraction we have going on in our modern world. So the process changes every time and sometimes for better or worse results. I like to switch things up and work with different instruments and push myself into new, unpainted areas of the room because otherwise I'll be writing the same damn song over and over again and how boring is that?

AD: Music or melody first?

BH: Sometimes lyrics come first but it is doubtful.

AD: How did you get involved with the

BRUCE HUGHESI
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Resentments?

BH: I played and met with all of the fellows—Stephen Bruton, Jon Dee Graham, Scrappy Judd Newcomb, and John Chipman—in various bands around Austin. I'd known them all. I've known Jon Dee since the 80s, Scrappy since the 80s, Steven from the 90s, and John from the 90s. They were the reason why Bob Schneider and the Lonely Land went over to the Saxon Pub. They had such a killer, relaxed, down home presentation that it just seemed like such a beautiful venue for something like that to go on. I would go see them on Sundays because it was hilarious, and musical, and sometimes brilliant, sometimes jarring. I loved those guys and I would see them on Sunday nights and I didn't have any work on Sunday nights so I started bugging them. I was working 5 or 6 nights a week but couldn't get anything Sunday and they had a gig every Sunday and I wanted a gig on Sunday. Finally George Reif took off and the spot became open and they let me slip in, and I've been doing it ever since. I think it's been 8 years now.

AD: What's special about Austin to you?

BH: With all of its rampant and unchecked growth, most of Austin still has a neighborhood feel. Most of the people that live here have a good quality of life and are happy and secure. There are a lot of people working on an artistic path or following some dream goal that they have. Whether it is hanging art in galleries or working in four star restaurants or playing shows 4 nights a week, it seems like people are able to do what they want to do. I love it. I've lived in a couple of other places in the country and I don't want to live anywhere else in the US.

AD: Why do you think it all converges here?

BH: It's a small community, it's centralized—it's not spread out like Houston or Dallas or any other large kind of suburban growth city. It's centered around a central part of the city that houses one of the largest, if not the largest, and certainly one of the wealthiest universities in America. There's between 80,000 and 120,000 students that come in every year and bring fresh blood, fresh energy, fresh ideas, and fresh excitement. And that's an ever changing thing. Also, Austin is a very affordable place to live—it was one of the cheapest places to live up until the 90s. That's why Slacker was made. All of the things that the movie exemplified were true: you could come to Austin, Texas and work a part time job and live very well. You wouldn't have to do very much of anything and still have a fantastic life.

AD: What do you think when you hear Austin is "The Live Music Capital of the World?"

BH: The first thing I think of is, what a lame slogan. Is it meant to attract? The other thing I think is how ultimately true it is. Every night of the week there are 60+ clubs that have live music—usually 2 or 3 acts. Barring New York City and Chicago there is no other city in the country that has that much live music happening every night of the week. And it is music that is enjoyable and different.

AD: What is the biggest lesson you have learned from being involved in music?

BH: Be clear about why you are doing something. There are opportunities that I have taken that were solely for making money and there were opportunities that I have taken that were solely for making art, and then there were opportunities taken solely for the chance to do something that will scare the death out of me. There were opportunities taken to get a lot of attention; opportunities to promote a certain project. I've played music for money. I've gone on tours in order to make a living and I've also lived broke in order to make a beautiful noise with a bunch of my friends. Be clear on why you are doing something. And believe in it. There are a lot of different reasons to do anything, just be sure you know why you are doing it.

I also have to say, don't get too comfortable in what you do. I'm constantly trying to figure out new ways how to be uncomfortable in order to push myself into areas that I would otherwise not have gone. All along the way I've put these daunting challenges in my path in order to see that they are not really that scary. Keep pushing; keep growing; keep writing.

AD: What's next for you?

BH: I think that I will start doing more solo stuff in support of this upcoming release. I'm getting ready to go over to Japan with Scrappy Judd Newcomb—we are going to do a duo series of concerts in Japan next month.

AD: Will we start to see you as a solo act more often? What is the difference between performing alone as opposed to with others or as a member of a band?

BH: When you play alone everything rests on you, which is good. You don't have to wait on other people if they are late, you're not dependent on the whims of other personalities and that can be a terrifically beautifying thing. It can also be very scary because you can't rely on other people to take the heat. You're the focus of the attention. When you are playing with an ensemble, it doesn't matter how large or small, there can be a larger consciousness that you tap into. I've gotten this overwhelming feeling of peace and power playing in bands over the years. It's the feeling that all of this collective energy is being focused and pointed out to an audience. It's a huge thrill to do that and feel that. It doesn't happen every time, but I find that it happens less rarely when you are playing with a group of people as opposed to playing by yourself. It's an indescribable set of circumstances that make it happen and it's an indescribable feeling that it produces, but it's an amazing thing when you are on stage playing with a group of people that are a collective energy and everything is just hitting and flowing and everybody is feeling good. It's an enormously uplifting, religious-type experience and I'm never going to forgo that. It's just a lot of fun to play with people. It's play. That's where the joy came from originally with music—play, playing music, and playing with musical ideas with other human beings who are playing with musical ideas. Being able to trade ideas and conversations, it's just one of the most terrifically fun things we can do as human beings.
***

DYLAN QUOTE

I'd forever talk to you,
But soon my words,
They would turn into a
meaningless ring.
For deep in my heart
I know there is no
help I can bring.
Everything passes,
Everything changes,
Just do what you think
you should do.
And someday maybe,
Who knows, baby,
I'll come and be cryin'
to you.

DAISY RIPROCK'S CD REVIEWS

Hello Darlings…..

I am Daisy Riprock, guiding you through the supersonic universe of freshly pressed music.

This issue brought a lot of great CDs to my doorstep. I was loving getting down to some real old time rock n' roll by a couple of legends, and was blessed to hear some fantastic songwriting and impressive record production. This issue was the hardest to make choices as to what to include in the column, and a lot of great music got left out. With the ability to make an album becoming more available to almost anyone, our ears and feet get to reap the benefit. These are fine times for independent music, my friends.

Hope that all of you are enjoying the cooler weather and remembering to bring your umbrella when you go out.

Bands, please keep sending those CDs, I listen to every one I receive, and try to write about as many of you lovelies as I can.

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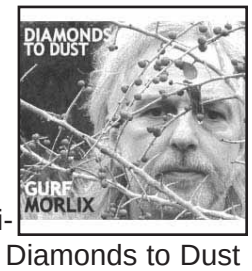
GURF MORLIX –
Diamonds to Dust



Austin seems to be the perfect place for Mr. Morlix, who is a triple threat of songwriting, musical, and production talent. Diamonds to Dust showcases all of these at his finest.

His lyricism paints images of dark and edgy characters you might find late at night in a west Texas town looking either for trouble or way out, whichever comes first. They are at a breaking point, or on the verge of finding out something important about themselves or their life. This results in a potent recording that comes off like a Robert Rodriguez flick.

Patty Griffin's background vocals add an exquisite contrast to his detached vocals, and the moods range from the raw electric blues of "Madalyn's Bones", to the sensitive Warren Zevon dedicated "Blanket."

My ears have been aching for someone to record Bob Dylan's "With God On Our Side" and Mr. Morlix does a fine job with this timely cover. Mix that with the superb songwriting and production, and this becomes a must have for any Austin music fan.

9.5 Daisy stars

Daisy's favorite lyric: "I've been lost/I've been found/now I'm headed for higher ground"

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LARRY LANGE and his LONELY KNIGHTS – Crazy, Crazy Baby

I wasn't around to enjoy them, but the years in the late 1950's and early 1960's seem to have been absolutely killer times to live in America. The cars were the coolest and the gas was cheap. The Twilight Zone was on prime time, Sandy Koufax and Hank Aaron dominated a steroid-free era of baseball, and the country was being introduced to the new craze of rock n roll. Over time all that turned into bulky SUV's, Barry Bonds, and people in suits that call music "product."

The records of that period make you want to shout, kick your heels up, and feel all right, with several exclamation points at the end. Mr. Lange and his Lonely Knights bring you back to that era, when music was about making sure that everybody at the party had a good time, sharing that moment with your special someone, and doing the boogie woogie until the band really had to go home.

Those old records were recorded as live events, having all the musicians in the same room with each other, and captured raw emotion and energy. Crazy, Crazy Baby was made in this fashion, done live in the studio over three days, with no worries of the bass bleeding into the guitar track, or doing fifty vocal takes to patch together one good one. This was all about gassing up that '60 Thunderbird and cutting it loose, creating a CD that is almost as much fun as the dance party that their performances are known for.

Growing up on the Gulf Coast at a time when regional hits were being spun on the local radio, Mr. Lange is an authority on the type of music he plays and does it with such fervor, you can't help but get into it. His love for it is infectious, making it hard to sit still, and brings a smile to this girl's face every time.

As I was waiting in line at the grocery store on my way home from this album's release party, Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" was playing on the Muzak system. I turned to the customers next to me and commented, "Rock n roll never got better than this, did it?" Everyone happily agreed. Here's to this band "playing that sound baby, that sound!"

9 Daisy Stars.

Daisy's favorite lyric: "Everybody's doing that Corpus Christi rock!!!!"

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JANE BOND & CHAD TRACY –
Hell or High Water

I hereby declare Jane Bond as Austin's sweetheart. No one in town is more worthy of that title. Her affable charm can have you feeling like an instant friend when you meet her off stage, and she translates that very well into her performances.

Hell or High Water is the debut from Ms. Bond and her partner in crime, Chad Tracy. Playing their original brand of country rock, they have fashioned their own sound that is both recognizable and unique. Mr. Tracy shows himself to be a formidable songwriter, penning seven of the ten original tunes on his own. He also shows creativity and taste in his guitar playing.

The interplay between the two vocalists add significantly to the storytelling of the lyrics, and makes this CD enjoyable to listen to. Ms. Bond has an evocative voice, which could probably even blend well with my pet hamster, Hendrix. Mr. Tracy's smooth vocals are an exceptional match, however, and this creates a fine setting for the material. I look forward to hearing and seeing more of this duo.

9 Daisy stars

Daisy's favorite lyric: "Tired of falling in love and getting burned/Then the tables turned"

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MR. BROWN –
Boderation

Five must have elements of outstanding reggae music:

1. A loose snare drum
2. A solid and positive message
3. An irresistible vibe that makes your body wiggle
4. A wah-wah pedal emphasizing spicy guitar licks
5. Lead vocals sung in a Jamaican-like drawl, with happy background singers

Kris Brown has built an impressive resume and earned a lot of respect among Austin musicians as a sideman with the likes of Cyril Neville, Shelley King and Patrice Pike. He has now decided to go back to his roots, and do his own thing celebrating the music he connects with deepest. It is impressive to hear Mr. Brown in his element.

While many artists who make solo albums try to show off on the instrument they are known for, the guitar playing on this CD is what you would hear on any well done album in this genre. His work is soulful, understated, and right in the pocket. As a songwriter, Mr. Brown proves very capable with material that is joyous in "We're Dancing" and persuasive, as in the title cut, which deals with racial stereotypes.

This recording has all five aforementioned elements, and features a wealth of accomplished players as a supporting cast including producer Courtney Audain (Timbuk 3, Charlie Sexton and Ian Moore, to name a few). It is a strong debut for this musician who has the rare ability to play exceptionally well in almost any genre he chooses.

9 Daisy stars

Daisy's favorite lyric: "Willow leaves shaking in the spring/Movement so nice, I've got to sing"

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FREDDIE STEADY 5 –
TexPop

With names like Buddy Holly, Sonny Curtis and Bobby Fuller doting the roster, Texas has a rich tradition in pop songwriting. Freddie "Steady" Krc borrows a few pages from such influences, and there is an undeniably Texas flavor in the harmonies, organ tones and rhythms found on TexPop. A few other obvious influences can be found in a couple of garage rockers and in Mr. Krc's 12-string electric guitar a la Roger McGuinn.

Though the sounds of this album may be familiar, the songwriting is fresh and bright, so this fortunately doesn't come off as some watered down retro retread. He finds a way to be creative within a format, seeming to follow a "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" approach to music. My reaction is that this is a lively and fun listen, and I even caught myself starting to twist and shimmy to the rollicking "I'm an Armadillo." No songs clock in at over three and a half minutes, making this truly a pop record.

Mr. Krc is a Texas Music Hall-of-Famer who has played with a record producer's Rolodex worth of talent including Roky Erikson, Roger Waters, Carole King and Jerry Jeff Walker.

8.5 Daisy stars

Daisy's favorite lyric: "What's so hard about love?"

===

ERIC HISAW –
The Crosses

There is a saying around the music business that says, "You're only as good as your last record." For true artists, one of the main goals is to progress and grow, and hopefully the next work will be better than the last. While his last full length CD, Never Could Walk the Line was a solid effort; The Crosses shows that Mr. Hisaw may be one of those cats that only get better with age.

The focus of this recording seems to be on the songwriting. The compositions come across as honest, heartfelt, and delivered with sincerity. Mr. Hisaw truly believes in what he's singing about, and the music comes across as being an actual slice of his life. He brings you into his living room, hands you a cold one and opens up to tell you a few stories.

An obvious perk of this job is that I get a lot of free CD's. Occasionally I wonder, "Why isn't this artist more well-known?" I asked myself this while playing this album. I would put it up against half of the stuff you hear on KGSR and not even flinch. The song "Silence" is a gem that few in the craft of songwriting could unearth.

9 Daisy stars

Daisy's favorite lyric: "I hope you're where you want to be/But I wish you were here with me"

====

DAISY'S RED RYDER BB GUNSHOTS

Josh Koons –EP: This is what I would envision a Beatles and Big Star casserole to taste like. Sonically fun, with big guitars and pleasant harmonies. **8 shots.**

Goliath –More Than Myth: Goliath's second album slayed me with groovy bass and amazing horns. Get down for funk's sake! **8.5 shots.**

We Are Standard –3,000v to 40,000w: Vocals reminded me of that great Vibrator's record I had as a kid. Has all the flavor of British punk, with ear candy on top. **9 shots.**

Wiretree –Bouldin: Kevin Peroni is a one man band and puts together a brilliant album, acting as if he could be Elliott Smith's long lost cousin. **9.5 shots.**

54 Seconds –Postcards from California: Send me one! The first offering from their BMG music deal is a modern pop record that is both original and sweet sounding. Careful, this album could become addicting after a couple of listens. **9 shots.**

Arlo Guthrie –In Times Like These: Mr. Guthrie performs live with the University of Kentucky Symphonic Orchestra, weaving a spell that demonstrates why he's had such a long and storied career. **9.5 shots.**

Diana Jones –My Remembrance of You: No question this woman is the real deal. Solid songwriting and vocals a la Gillian Welch and Allison Krauss. **9 shots.**

AUSTIN ALIVE

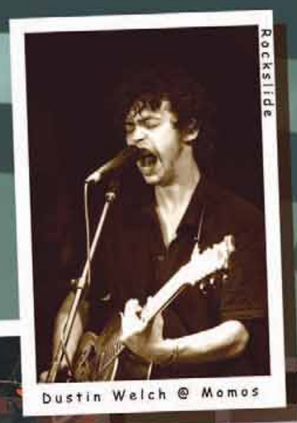
WITH AUSTIN DAZE

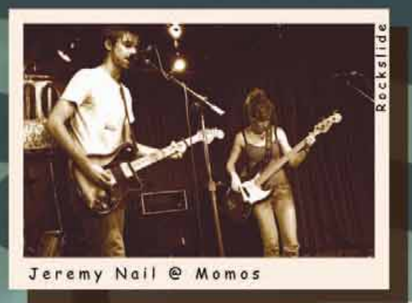

Cam King @ Ruta Maya


Will Sexton @ Momos


Toni Price @ Saxon Pub


Atash @ Ruta Maya


Dustin Welch @ Momos


Jeremy Nail @ Momos


Toast @ Ruta Maya

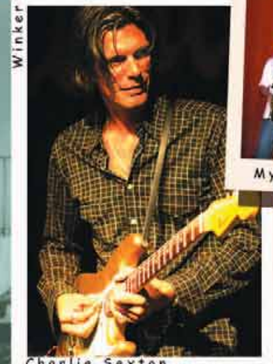

Pete Rodriguez
@ The Elephant Room


djembabes
@ Ruta Maya


Freddie Krc @ Saxon Pub


LZ Love @ Ruta Maya


Seth Walker
@ Ringside at Sullivans

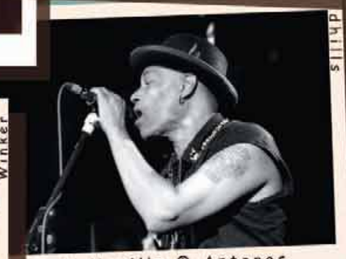

Charlie Sexton
@ Antones


Mystic Roots @ Ruta Maya


WC Clark
@ Central Market


Sick @ Momos


Hudsons @ Waterloo Ice House


Cyril Neville @ Antones


Graham Wilkenson @ Momos


Lannaya Drummers @ Ruta Maya


Del Castillo @ Momos


Rattletree @ Ruta Maya


Skyblue 72 @ Momos


Leann Atherton
@ Saxon Pub


Dertybird @ Momos


Suzanna Choffel @Momos

Photographers:

Rockslide Photography
--John Grubbs
Winker with an Eye
--Don Emmons (aka Winke
Dwayne Hills Photography
--Dwayne Hills
Austin Daze
--Wendy Wever

ZAP MAMA

AUSTIN DAZE: What drew you to music? Was it your first choice for a career?

ZAP MAMA: My first choice as a teenager was to become an Olympic champion. Music was the second love for me because it was so deep inside. I never thought it was possible to get money for this profession, especially with the training that I had. But when I did a trip to Africa it made me realize who the African woman is, who my mother was, and who I could be. I found a part of myself. I realized in Africa there is a huge culture of music that should be known in the western world. That's when I really started to have a new view of music. And then I discovered all the new vocal techniques and harmony and new rhythms. You can't really explain what that is—especially the oral tradition. It has a lot of spirituality and soul that is passed along only from mother to mother or family to family from generation to generation. All this helped me to put together a music group. I put together an acappela group of four other singers to talk about all these sounds and this culture. That was 17 years ago.

AD: Has your sound changed over time?

ZM: The essence, no. The goal of why I'm doing music, no. But there is an addition of feelings that has become part of it. When I started I was teaching music and teaching what I learned from both of my cultures: European and African. Being involved in the music business opened up a lot of other doors. I've been exposed to other genres: blues, rock, hip hop—all the styles that I really love as a European citizen and the styles I love as an African too. I ask myself now, How can I bring the music together? For the third album, I met an American who was interested in the new music and who opened the door to working in the studio and exchanging music with me.

AD: What is your songwriting process?

ZM: It depends. Sometimes it is a sound that inspires me and there is a story that wants that sound. Or sometimes it comes with a beat and I say, "Hmm, I like the beat," and that is what inspires me. Sometimes a situation of life or a dream will wake me up in the middle of the night and I start writing lyrics. It's really many things.

AD: What makes an amazing show for you?

ZM: When all the members of the band are in one direction. They achieve one spirit together—they become one.

AD: What do you want people to take with them from your performance?

ZM: Joy, happiness, and hope. And love.

AD: You're coming back this fall for Austin City Limits. How was your show last year?

ZM: It was problematic. We didn't have time to set up the microphone. The energy was amazing though, so you have to forget about the technical issues. We had a wonderful love fight with water after the show. It was so warm. We had a wonderful time.

AD: Tell us about your new album and what it means to you.

ZM: I chose the title, Supermoon, because it is a reaction of all the systems of the stars. I don't know how it is in the United States, but here there is a really big focus on having to be a super star. My reaction is no, you have to be you, you have to be yourself and happy with what you decided to do. I chose moon, because as a moon you are unique. Not stars—there are a lot of stars in the sky. And when you are yourself, you are unique—you are a super moon. I try to give energy and at the same time I try to tell stories through songs. I don't want to repeat myself as all artists repeat always the same things. All I can say is that I give the maximum amount of positive vibes—as I do always—and sometimes sadness for people who need to release their sadness. There are some songs that are sad and there are some songs to dance to and songs to just keep good vibes around us with. I was true on what I did. I am really hoping that people can receive the real things that I put in.

AD: What wisdom would you offer to a musician starting out today?

ZM: Now it's harder. Don't use too much machines or use too much loop or things. Try to start with an instrument and yourself. Be simple; very simple. When an idea comes in the middle of the night, wake up and record it. ***

GHOSTLAND OBSERVATORY

AUSTIN DAZE: Where does the name Ghostland Observatory come from?

GHOSTLAND OBSERVATORY: When National Geographic would come out with new telescope pictures of space I would always cut out pictures and tape them all over the room. Around the same time we were working on music for a play by August Strindberg called Ghost Sonata. With all that mixed in, one day I was at my former job in the bathroom and it just came into my head. I wasn't even thinking about the band—it just came to me. So I ran back out of my bathroom stall and told my coworkers and they thought it was awesome. There is a guy at work who I would always bounce things off of. He's an older gentleman who grew up in the 60s and he would tell me if something was stupid, and he thought it was pretty awesome. So I was like, "This is banging, let's stick with this." It was an astrological dumping in my mind.

AD: When did you guys form this duo?

GO: We've been together officially for three years. July 4th was our first party.

AD: Is this your first professional music venture?

GO: I used to throw raves in the 90s. I took a break from that and started working on music and just continued, you know?

AD: You guys have exploded onto the scene. When did you know it had hit?

GO: I don't know. We would get a little bit bigger crowd at each show and start to see fans come to our shows. It just kept growing show after show. We didn't put too much thought into it and say, "Oh this is happening." We just kept moving along.

AD: What about your day jobs?

GO: When our touring schedule and our band schedule were interfering too much with our jobs we just had to quit.

AD: You said the new Austin is rising out of the old Austin scene. Does this make it easier to get your new style out there?

GO: I wouldn't say easy. I don't think the critics really embraced it at first. They thought it was this or that and wanted to categorize it. People that actually go to shows and want to have a good time, they enjoyed it. From that perspective it was easier I guess. People were having fun. They still do. They show up and they know it is going to be a party from the time they get there until they leave. I think that is a good thing. You should go out and drink and sweat and go home tired.

AD: What do you think about Austin being the "Live Music Capital of the World?"

GO: It really is. We play every city in the area and it's very hard to go to a city and see numerous genres of music playing at different clubs every night of the week. Even really big cities don't have that.

AD: What makes this town special to you?

GO: It's just our home. It just feels good here. Austin has a really good feeling. Our families are here. It has good food. It is home.

AD: What do you miss about it when you're on the road?

GO: I mostly miss my family.

AD: You guys just did an Austin City Limits taping. What was that experience like?

GO: It was really nice. They treated us well and the staff was really good and they made us comfortable. And our fans were there. It was a really intimate setting. It was a good time—I really enjoyed it.

AD: What do you think about the Austin City Limits Festival this year?

GO: I think it will be great. We are playing on the AT&T stage at night. We get to bring our lasers. It should be fun.

AD: What year is this for you?

GO: This will be our second year.

AD: What's next for you guys?

GO: We have a bunch of festivals during the fall and we are just going to do our very best in the festivals and other cities.

AD: What wisdom would you offer musicians reading this?

GO: Try to be different. For someone who is trying to do music or art or anything creatively, just try to be different. There are so many things out there that are the same. Try and stand out. When you stand out you have the opportunity to be noticed.

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JOHN WARNER

AD: TELL US HOW YOU FIRST GOT STARTED IN POSTERS AND WHEN DID YOU KNOW THIS WOULD BE YOUR PATH?

John Warner: I started making art pretty much right from the beginning, I drew on the walls in the house I grew up in with crayons (to my mothers displeasure) and progressed on to chalk on the sidewalk and coloring books. I really got interested in rock art in the early 80's when I was about 10 because my mom had a large collection of 70's rock albums. I still believe some of the best album cover art in rock and roll history came out of this era. I liked the covers so much I tried to duplicate the art, badly I might add, with anything I could use on paper. I later got into collecting comic books and I started drawing my own comics. By the time I was in high school I was doing freelance sign painting and crude gig posters for local bands in Binghamton, NY where I grew up.

AD: WHERE DO YOU GET YOUR IDEAS? TELL US ABOUT YOUR ARTISTIC PROCESS.

JW: I pick up my ideas form all sorts of places, usually a mood influences me or another artist whose work I'm a fan of but usually I try and work with the customer and give them what they request.

AD: FROM A POSTER ARTIST PERSPECTIVE, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE MUSIC BIZ?

JW: The music biz is in disarray, I think the internet has pretty much killed it, why go out and see a show when you can download it, right? I just think that there is too many people trying to do the same thing and it feels very stagnant and stale. Back in the 80s, poster and record cover art influenced what you decided to buy and see but these days you don't even need an image, just a myspace page and enough friends to come see your show and you'll get booked. Its doesn't matter if its any good or not. I think the biz is more about making a scene then actually releasing quality music these days.

AD: HOW IMPORTANT IS A GOOD FLIER/BAND LOGO?

JW: Again with the internet, posters and fliers are not that important for promotion anymore, they are nice to have and they defiantly set the band apart from the rest but I don't think that they will necessarily help a draw anymore, A logo on the other hand is key having a good logo will make or break your band especially if it stand out on the sea of profiles on myspace.

People will go see what everyone talks about on myspace. I think myspace is the greatest promotional tool ever created my only problem is it has taken the aesthetics away from music.

AD: WHAT IS EVANS INK ALL ABOUT?

JW: Evans Ink has effectively replaced jduballstars as a graphic design source. Jduballstars is still around but I've turned it into a clothing line. I actually have about 12 shirt designs floating around some retail stores here in philadelphia.
Evans Ink is a design and print company specializing in t shirt, merchandise and swag design for bands, clubs, event promoters and anyone else who needs a creative and cost effective solution for their advertising. We run 2 presses and we print anything on any garment. My mother and I are business partners and she runs the production end and the shop in Hop Bottom P.A. and I run the art department and sales out of Philadelphia.

AD: WE KNOW YOU MOVED AWAY BUT CAN FOLKS IN AUSTIN UTILIZE YOUR SERVICES?

JW: They sure can! Just visit www.evansink.net and drop us a line, we ship all over the United States and our prices are very competitive.

AD: GIVE US SOME WISDOM FROM WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED FOR ASPIRING ARTISTS.

JW: Never miss a deadline.

AD: TELL US WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE AUSTIN DAZE, YOU HAVE CERTAINLY DONE A THING OR TWO THAT HAS HELPED US GROW?

JW: I think you guys have come a long way over the years. You guys have put a lot of hard work into this paper and Its paying off. Its good to see my friends succeed.

AD: ANYTHING ELSE?

JW: Yeah, as much as I enjoyed my time in Austin. Its good to be home on the East Coast, things are going really well up here but I'll be back for SXSW. Hope to see some of you.
***

I ♥ VIDEO

REVIEWS

20 Million Miles to Earth

Directed by Nathan Juran

Presented by stop-motion animation forefather Ray Harryhausen

Available for the first time in rejuvenating COLORization, this is a once simple and familiar story of astronautic visitors to Venus crash landing in Venice with a surprising stow away passenger. The Venusian creature, Yamir, created and animated by Harryhousen (Clash of the Titans), comes to terms with this foreign planet earth by creating a wake of destruction for mankind, and Elephant-kind. Granted the atmosphere of the classic 1957 black & white sci-fi staple is completely destroyed by fake real-tone shades of flesh, it successfully creates a completely new cinematic experience for a fresh unfamiliar generation. *Review by Menderic.*

Shooter

Directed by Antoine Fugua with Mark Wahlberg and Danny Glover

Right on the Mark. You loved Wahlberg in Boogie Nights, I Heart Huckabees, and the Funky Bunch. Now he's got a high caliber sniper rifle, and he loves America and nothing can stop him. A high concept espionage film, that might just fill the void of the Bourne franchise monotony. Some nonbelievers might argue that the depiction of the government agencies is inaccurate and disparaging, but the U.S. Government wouldn't allow top secret operations to be depicted accurately in a popular media release, would they? *Review by Menderic.*

300

Directed by Zach Snyder

Gaudy and overly stylized to the max, this diarrhea train charges along like a rhinoceros on PCP. Dominic West (HBO'S THE WIRE) stars as Captain Beelzebub and along with his rough and tumble crew of Maltese he will wipe the seed of the Barbarian Hordes from the face of the planet. 300 is a non-stop bore ride with a running time of nearly four and one half hours. *Review by Chort Hortense*

Tremors 6: The Great Divide

Directed by Ted DiBiase

This one is better than Die Hard 4. Tremors 6 is bursting with spectacular action packed thrill sequences and director Ted Dibiase (Former Professional Wrestler) plays all his cards right. This film is beyond anything you can possibly imagine. Best direct to DVD release of 2007. *Review by Chort Hortense*

Race With The Devil

Directed by Jack Starrett

A high octane Satanic thriller starring Warren Oates and Peter Fonda as two amateur dirt bike enthusiasts that get more than they bargained for when they witness a human sacrifice. Wham bang action ensues. Shotguns, explosions, rattlesnakes, you name it it's here. Native Texas artist Jack Starrett directs this, his masterpiece, with a cool experienced hand. Oates is top notch as usual and Peter Fonda is bearable. Also starring the lovely Loretta Swit of M*A*S*H and MANNIX fame. Don't miss it!
Review by Chort Hortense

Trailer Vittles, Pt. 3
Torchy's Will F#*k You Up

by: Magnus Opus

It all started with those lights. Those enticing, glowing, red, orange, and white globes dangling from the outstretched branches of the trees there. Artfully hung, might I add. Every time I drove past I couldn't take my eyes off the damned things. They were soothing. Appealing. Satisfying in some inexplicable way. Enticing.

Next I saw a trailer on the lot. Then I'd drive by and see people seated and noshing on the banks of the creek, and on occasion, tables surrounding a bonfire. In short, people enjoying themselves. Immensely, it seemed.

Before I knew it I was pulling into the parking lot one day, curiosity ramped up to the levels of "gotta check this shit out". I had no idea what lay in store.

Shit to hell! (Cajun patois for: we are knocked out or bewildered –to the bone!)

Having since partaken of the vittles offered there, I find myself ever thankful for those glowing orbs of 'come hither' as to not be believed. So very indebted. I am now one of the growing legion of those who regularly patronize "Torchy's Damn Good Tacos", a new

South Austin stop on the trailer vittle trail, an anomaly in this weird corporate day and age we exist, but a little fist thrust in the air for quality, originality and personality, all things we need to sustain any quality of life and sense of community and self on this spinning chunk of carbon upon which we exist. Let it be known, far and wide, Magnus says, "Come one, come all, to Torchy's Damn Good Tacos! Your horizons will be forever expanded, your taste buds dazzled, your pangs sated. Uh-huh."

Dig this...

What would it be like if you were in the 1st grade during coloring hour and along came a teacher specifically for this hour, and his name was Picasso? Cool, right? Well, we here in Austin are subject to something on that scale, and damn, are we the luckier for it!

Mike Rypka is the head chef and one of the partners in Torchy's. Not exactly a household name, eh? Well, trust me again, cause Magnus do know, this man is our Picasso.

I'll try and make this as brief as possible, and believe me, I'll be leaving out more than I'll write here: Mike graduated with honors from the esteemed Johnson Wales Culinary Institute in Miami then attended FIU in Hospitality Mgmt. where he earned a Bachelors Degree. Whilst in the area worked alongside Chef Norman Aiken, Wolfgang Puck, and Mark Milatelo. Relocated and was tapped to be Asst. Mgr. then Head Chef at The World Bank in D.C. increasing attendance there by 30% and receiving a standing "O" from the employees upon his departure. No easy feat. Next landed the head chef job on the West Coast with MTV. Led the kitchen for Disney Animation, Universal Music Group, etc.. Catered the Grammy's yadayadayada. Was eventually tapped to be head chef for this fledgling company in Houston, Enron. Functioned in that capacity until their meltdown, then lent his talents to Compaq before finally moving to Austin to take over the Dell kitchens.

We're talking some very high end, demanding palettes here. Mike was far from done.

Next hooked up with the Chuy's group where he oversaw several of their entities. Mike still waxes appreciatively of working with the Chuy's group as he says their commitment to excellence in their food offerings is as good as it gets.

But, like all great artists, there are always new mountains to climb. An incredible climb it's been, too, beginning with giving his divorced mother a helping hand in the home kitchen, then, to spread the wings of independence, fry cooking at Popeye's before meeting his mentor and teacher, Chef Bryan, from the Springfield Golf and Country Club outside of D.C., a man who fired him once for not giving a damn, until Mike came back on hands and knees begging for another chance and luckily Chef Bryan took him under wing, ultimately providing a young pup a grand design along with an unflinching direction in their chosen field.

Around the world in eighty days and now Mike's on South First in a wooded lot offering his creations from a trailer. Has won The Chronicle's Hot Sauce Competition 2 years in a row for his tomatillo sauce. Need I say more? Yep. True story, folks.

Bill Roberts, a landscape architect by trade, an original partner in Torchy's, is the man who helped guide Mike into this new enterprise, so therefore, Bill's obviously on his game, too. Remember those glowing bulbs hanging from the tree limbs? Yep...

Bill, a lifelong Texan, pounded into Mike the idea of selling tacos from a trailer -already owning one himself- and also coming up with the name over a night of imbibing where a lot of great ideas originate, folks!

In Mike's words, after some field research with Bill and several gut checks, the words that finally came to mind were, "F#*k it!" After taking out a loan on his house, he and Bill throwing down in tandem, "Torchy's Damn Good Tacos" was born, opening in October of '06.

Okay okay okay, the vittles.

Everything you sample at Torchy's will be an all new sensation. Trust me, I've ingested countless thousands of tacos the world over,

and never ever ever have I had ANY that have stood this tall with such originality and exquisite, satisfying tastes.

For all you carnivores, you might want to start with the Green Chile Pork Taco, a slab of pork carnita done to a turn, a dab of onions, cilantro, and queso fresco on corn with the light green sauce and a chunk of lime. Have rump on seat when you do. It's a knockout!

Trailer Park ain't nothing to sneeze at either. Crispy fried chicken with hatch green chili's, lettuce, pico de gallo and cheese on a flour tortilla? Yum!

I also had one of the monthly specials shortly after their opening called Crossroads, named after the Robert Johnson tune, as Mike says it was a long and rugged road to arrive where both Bill and he have, so it was a natural for this moniker to attached to their first taco of the month. Since, Crossroads has proven to be such a favorite that Mike is seriously considering adding it to the Torchy's Damn Good Tacos daily selections. Imagine this taste sensation, if you will, smoked brisket with grilled onions, jalapeno, avocado, panella cheese, cilantro, and lime. Again... shit to hell!

There are some vegetarian offerings, as well. The Fried Avocado Taco is a fave rave I'm told: fried avocado, vegetarian beans, cilantro, lettuce and cheese on a corn tortilla. Bam.

They offer build your own breakfast tacos and other more pedestrian fare, too, such as barbacoa, fajita chicken and beef tacos, several meat burritos as well as a vegetarian burrito, and a fajita plate. And there are several tacos of note listed in the Torchy's Damn Good Tacos section of the menu of which I haven't even mentioned, all unique and righteous I'm willing to bet, and I ain't a bettin' man.

There are several sauces from which to choose, all incredibly specific and deelish. And I will say this once, just once... the queso at Torchy's is in a class all its own. There isn't anyone or anywhere that is even remotely in Torchy's league. Nowhere, no time. Dead serious. There is also a selection of sides, too: rice, beans, guacamole, salsa, chips, and pico de gallo.

Good news is, these babies are eminently affordable, especially for what you are getting, ranging from $2 to $3 each.

They got an ice tub out front full of sodas, teas and water, too.

Located at 1207 S. First, Torchy's hours are as follows: Mon. thru Wed. 7AM-10PM, and Thu. thru Sun. 8AM-11PM.

All credit cards are accepted.

Take out is also available. Phone is (512) 366-0537

Torchy's doesn't have a website, but fans have put one up that displays an older menu, http://torchystacos.com, and there are several blogs online that rave about the joint. That should tell you a little how rabid Torchy's followers are becoming. A new chalkboard menu featuring all that Torchy's offers is on prominent display in front of the trailer daily.

Eating well is one of life's greatest pleasures. So do yourself a big favor, stop in, sit down, nosh around a bonfire by the creek, shoot some hoops, relax, get away for a spell and sample the fare of a master. In case one is unknowing, living well is the best revenge.

Thank you, Mike. Thank you, Bill. And thank you to Farrell and Rebecca Kubena, two customers who recently got involved, putting money where the heart is.

"Torchy's Damn Good Tacos" is a welcome addition to the magic that constitutes South Austin.

Folks?

Shit to hell!.....Say no more, say no more...

"PIES TOO GOOD TO THROW"

Hey folks, How you doing out there in sweetland?

This issue, I ask that you accompany me on a journey through the world of pies. A journey that began as a younger man caged inside a dusty storeroom nightmare where endless cans of ACE pie filling threatened to suffocate me in one swift, Jell-O-esque assault to an appreciation of one of desserts' most resourceful and delicious homemade concoctions. The resourceful bit is actually quite impressive: a pie crust can accommodate just about any fruit crop (and some very flexible vegetables) in a given season. This is particularly handy when faced with the excess of an overzealous "pick-your-own" pecan excursion.

For this issue, however, I have chosen to forgo the usual fruit offerings and focus on the ever neutral, pie-for-all-seasons, The Chocolate Pie. Full disclosure: as any SweetSnob Chocoholic will tell you, Chocolate Mousse rests at the pinnacle of the dessert experience and therefore was and always will be my original mission. It was in its absence that I was serendipitously lead to its delightful cousin. In addition to the standard Chocolate Pie, I had the good fortune of sampling (at the first two spots) what is known as The Ice Box Chocolate pie—a truly delectable treat. Some quick poking around on Google revealed that I am not the only one who thinks so. The "Ice Box" part of the chocolate pie has to do with firming the filling by way of chilling it in a freezer or what was back in the day referred to as an "ice box". There appears to be a countless number of recipe sharers out there desperately in search of an "original" ice box Chocolate Pie recipe (it is consider an old fashioned dessert) the most coveted of which is a version created by the now-defunct, short-order chain, Toddle House. Ice Box or straight, these crème filled gems are just too good to throw.

I now give you four spots (that I visited) for the finest Chocolate Pie Austin has to offer:

THREADGILLES: This slice was rich and thick and cried out for whip cream to smooth the bite. This is an item you can order to go but all you need is a taste to finish the plate.

SHADY GROVE: This is also rich but it is lighter than the former. Whip cream is also a must here. For a double dose of chocolate, the chocolate cookie crust completes this pie with a smile.

KATZ'S DELI: By far the largest sampled, this pie is hands down a monster. It is called the 5th Avenue Cream Pie in reference to the candy bar of ole. This pie is flown in from NYC but could have been sent from chocolate heaven—it is that amazing. This is not a light snack. A table needs to share this or plan on taking it home and nibbling at it for a week (not necessarily a bad thing).

WOODLAND: This chocolate cream pie has the cream going on. A thick and light layer hides the chocolate beauty beneath. The sweet cream is just the right touch.

If you have suggestions for me send an email to editor@austindaze.com

See you next time & stay sweet

ELDER DAVE COURCHENE JR.

AUSTIN DAZE: We would like to know, what is the most important and meaningful message you could offer all of us living in these times?

ELDER DAVE COURCHENE JR: I think one of the biggest struggles that we have as humans is trying to understand the fullness of what constitutes our being. According to the teachings of our people and our understanding of our humanness, there are four elements that represent what a human being is: the first is what we refer to as the spiritual, or the spirit of our being; the second part is the emotions that we reflect as human beings; the third part is the physical part; and the fourth part is the mind. I think that as human beings we have evolved in many ways intellectually. I think we have also come to understand more of what our physical being represents in terms of our physical nature. As for the human aspects of our nature I think we've begun to feel as human beings but we don't know how to express the feelings that we have. We do go through a lot of emotions as human beings. We have not been able to handle our emotions in a more balanced nature. The spiritual part of our nature is where I believe we have really failed as human beings. The belief of the Native people has always been about spirit, and the ceremony that we conduct is a continued acknowledgement of our connection with the spirit. I believe our biggest challenge as human beings today is to come to recognize the connection that we should have with spirits. Because out of the spirit world comes visions, dreams, inspiration, and how to reach a greater level of existence as human beings. As Native people, we have always been a people that dream, we have always been a people that have allowed our visions to guide us in our lives. From vision we are given purpose; we are given meaning to our existence. Vision comes to us from a higher power of the great spirits. We don't have the intellectual capability to fully grasp the greatness of this great spirit that we refer to. It is in our belief system that this greater power of spirit is available for anyone that wishes to secure a vision which will offer them purpose and meaning in life.

I believe that the biggest challenge that we have today as human beings is to come to understand the significance and importance of that spiritual reality that exists whether we accept or deny it in our lives.

AD: How can we make it happen?

EDC: I think if we follow all the laws of nature in terms of growth. Things aren't going to change over night, it's going to require the individual to have a strong need to want to know the truth of one's own existence and meaning of life. And it's going, I believe, to take people that have this great urge within themselves to see it through. There is something much more than what we see, something much more than what we have created as human beings. We are beginning to realize that what we have created is not helping to sustain life, that we are damaging the environment, we are damaging our home. We need to derive a way to live as human beings. I would say that the Native people have a model for the way of life that helps people have a link with the spirit world. How we are able to do that as a people is to show the land and show nature. Nature is a reflection of that manifestation of the spirit of life. Many of our people make refer to nature as the faith of our great spirit.

AD: What makes Sacred fire different from regular fire? How has this affected people?

EDC: It's interesting that you asked that question. I think as human beings we have to rediscover the real meaning and power of fire. If we look at the way fire has been used in technology, I believe it's an element being used to destroy. We see it in weaponry, in warfare, in technology—not necessarily things that sustain life. Sacred fire is an attempt of the individual to understand the real essence of the spirit and the real spirit of the sacred fire. Once you light the sacred fire you destroy your own intent, and invoke the spirit of prayer. You call upon the spiritual realm to come and offer guidance and inspiration to you and to the other individuals around that fire. It is our belief system that beyond the cynical human world there is a central council of fire where all the great leaders sit around the fire and watch over the human being. The Sacred fire manifests that council fire into this world to create an opening so that they are able to come forward and offer guidance and nurture that part of our being that we call the spirit.

What makes it a sacred fire is really one believing in the spiritual essence of what it can provide. And by offering the fire to invite the spirit to become a part of the human world, it becomes sacred.

AD: What is the significance of the 8th fire? How is the 8th fire prophecy related?

EDC: The 8th fire is a prophecy that has been handed down to us by the Native people. The belief is that a time would come when the earth would enter into a change. And our people refer to this as the rebirth of the earth because a rebirth would have to take place if we are going to prevent the destruction of our own planet. The 8th fire, according to our people, says that there would be individuals that would come from all different cultures and they would gather in some way to seek greater advice and direction or to collectively seek out a vision that would lead what is referred to as the "new people." The new life will be represented by many different cultures and somehow they would gather to share the uniqueness of each of their strengths and give teachings and knowledge that they have gathered from their cultures. So the 8th fire is the coming of the new people who will somehow find a way to create a new understanding of how we should live and behave as human beings—where we will go beyond the division we've created amongst ourselves. They will find a way of life collectively to prevent the violence we see in our communities, on the street, and in our homes. It would be a spiritual understanding that would go beyond the divisions and the separations that have caused the violence and wars today.

According to our elders that are performing ceremonies, they have confirmed that the new life has arrived. The 8th fire is really a confirmation of the new life that the elders are talking about that has arrived.

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AD: How does music play into the Native culture?

EDCJ: Probably the most significant instrument that we have would be the sacred drum of our people. The sacred drum, we believe, has been given to every culture in the world. And I see, as I travel around the world, that all the different cultures have been given the sacred drum and the understanding of the rhythm. To us the drum has its own protocol for understanding the power of what it really can mean. When we are talking about the way of the drum we are talking about a gift that helps carry the prayers and the hopes of the people. When we say our prayers with the singing of the drum, we are reenacting the first voice we carry when we come into this world as a young child that is being born. We cry out, we give thanks to that greater power of spirit and say, "I have made it and have arrived and I am being given the opportunity to be a human being." The sacred songs of our people are only reenacting that first sign of thankfulness that we have as we are first being born. The drums of our people are extremely important and are going to be even more important as we come into being a part of the fulfillment of the 8th fire. The drums, we hope, will be coming from every direction. The sound is the voice of the natural rhythm of the earth—of our own natural heart beat. The drums will carry the voice of all people. We are hoping that the voice will be heard as the voice of love and the voice of peace for all life. The drum is essential to fulfilling the 8th fire prophecy.

AD: Tell us about the Turtle Lodge—the Healing Lodge—and what's happening there. People are coming from all over the world.

EDCJ: I had that vision about 25 years ago when I was a little younger. I was encouraged to go on a vision quest and it was out of that quest that I was given the vision of this lodge and a turtle. I told the dream to the elders and they were very excited that the spirit of the grandmother turtle had come to bless me and the people of this lodge. And the elders told me I would have to bring this lodge into this world, that I was given a vision and now it would become a mission in my life to manifest that and make that vision come true. In the past five years of course we have constructed that lodge and I was told by the elders that many people would come from all walks of life, and they would enter that lodge. They would come to heal their spirit and the essence of the spirit of the turtle, which is the symbol of truth. The foundation of the lodge is part of the 7 original teachings that were given to our people. There is the law or teaching of love, which is represented by the eagle; the law or teaching of respect, which is represented by the buffalo; the law of courage, which is represented by the bear; the law of honesty, which is represented by Bigfoot or Sasquatch; the law of wisdom, which is represented by the beaver; and the law humility, which is represented by the wolf. They say that the truth carries the essence of all of these laws, that you live these laws once you know the truth. And that's the symbol of the lodge itself. People from all over the world have been able to experience coming into the lodge and feeling the essence of the spirit of those laws. The lodge itself is a place where we are able to experience the spirit in a universal way. It doesn't matter what people are in terms of their religion or the ideology that they believe in. As Native people we have come through some really challenging times: by law we were prevented from having anything to do with anything that reflected our culture. It's only been in very recent times that we have made a return back to our teachings, even though many of them were held underground by our spiritual people. The lodge is even more significant for the survival of and the reclamation of a way of life. But as we reclaim this way of life we are extending an invitation to all people to come and join us as we celebrate our own survival. We extend the invitation to learn the knowledge and wisdom that has helped my people to survive for 250,000 years.

AD: Tell me about the gathering you organized called Igniting the Fire, and the significance of this.

EDCJ: One of our most sacred sites is called Manitou Abi which means, "where the great spirits sat." I was inspired by the spirit to call the people back to that sacred site. Historically our people used to gather at that sacred site and everything would be shared by people that would come from all over North America. They would gather to join and celebrate life in the most spiritual way. And because we were prevented by law from going to these sacred places, people stopped going there. So when we conducted the first gathering last year it was absolutely a miracle that we had finally come back. There were grandmothers that had visions of the ancestors who appeared to offer joy that we have made it back to the sacred site. It is told by our elders that in order to reactivate our own spirit as human beings we have to go back to the sacred site, because they are places of spiritual power. When I say spiritual power I'm making reference to the strong influence of spirits that guide us to greater conduct as human beings. The sacred site itself is very, very important because many of our elders are saying that the sacred site here is the center of North America and the spiritual center also. With all of the sacred sites there is an opportunity to come and receive the ancient teachings that the elders are prepared to offer to anyone.

AD: Why did you feel you should come down to Texas? After all, it's a long way and it's pretty hot down here.

EDCJ: I thought about that and all I can say is that I really felt a strong spiritual influence to go there. I probably will not fully understand all of this until later on, but what I was able to experience so far is the openness in the people that I have been able to meet. I just found that there was something there that lent itself to the message—to the vision—that we carry as Native people. I'm sure within time it will make sense.

AD: One last question: we wanted to know about your name, and what Leading Earth Man means.

EDCJ: First of all I was given that name, Nii Gaani Aki Inini, in ceremony, and according to the elders it was the spirit of the grandmother turtle that came forward to bless me with that name. I still struggle somewhat to be able to honor the name in the way that it was given to me in ceremony. I believe that the name itself also represents my ability to speak on behalf of the earth as much as I am given that opportunity and to share the knowledge that we have of the Native people. I believe that we are a very spiritual people and that spirituality is connected to the deep profound love that we have for the land. Everything, to me, is connected. I think that the name itself represents the work or the vision that I have in my own life to call and inspire my fellow human beings. I live trying to fulfill that name everyday.

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TOM BEE

AUSTIN DAZE: Tell us about your song, "Color Nature Gone." It is very relevant to the times.

TOM BEE: That song appears on an album titled Silent Warrior by a group XIT which I was the lead singer and principal songwriter. It was released on Motown back in 1973. The song was way ahead of its time. About the same time Marvin Gaye put one out called, "What's Going On?" which was also an ecological rant of a song.

We're in the process of re-releasing "Color Nature Gone" as a single. Not so much for a profit—because we're not interested in the sale—but as a musical public service announcement to alert the world and the nation the importance of saving this planet and global warming and all the things that come with it. I feel that "Color, Nature, Gone" is the real true American song with the sound of the bells and the drums. Coming from a Native American group, what better way to express the urgency of the situation then with a song Native Americans call, "Color, Nature, Gone?"

AD: You mentioned XIT and that you were signed to Motown. How did that happen? Seems like an unusual match for a Native American band and an African American record label.

TB: Yes it was very unusual back then for Motown, which was primarily a black label, to have a Native American group signed. What happened was Motown was wanting to break into the rock and roll genre and they had signed a group from the Michigan area called Rare Earth (originally The Sunliners). To make a long story short, Motown formed a label and named it after the band Rare Earth, but the group had nothing to do with the actual label—it was by Motown. That was the imprint that they used to release music by artists that weren't black. The way that we were signed was the band had written songs and put them on 7-inch reels, which is what you had back then, and I left them at several record companies in Los Angeles—Motown being one of them. We came back home and about three weeks later I get a call from Motown saying, "Yeah, you left a 7-inch reel here and it had a song on there that we wanted to do with Michael Jackson and the Jackson Five." They flew out some guy to sign a publishing contract on the song and they heard that I had a music group and they said, "Are you interested in making a record?" And I said, "Well, has the horse gotten that close?" The next thing I knew we were in Detroit recording our first album. We had about 2 or 3 months before they actually flew us there and this was the time that was used to write most of our music. Our first album, Plight of the Redman, was a history lesson in music about the American Indians. That was followed in 1970 by Silent Warrior which included the song, "Color Nature Gone." That's how we ended up on the Motown label.

AD: We've also heard you guys were blackballed by the government. Why and how so?

TB: As far as being blackballed as you know, 1973—the 70s in general—was a time in this nation when there was a lot of unrest and a lot of protesting and different things. It was kind of a crazy time—a crazy, chaotic time. Silent Warrior was released at the same time as the Wounded Knee "uprising." And so basically we were caught right in the middle of it. We also did a lot of benefit concerts for the American Indian movement. In fact, the press at the time gave us the name "Masters of the American Indian Movement." We were caught up in all this political movement that was happening, and President Nixon sent out a letter to all the richest nations encouraging them not to play music from the so called "Indian uprising" because of the unrest that was happening at Wounded Knee and that kind of stuff. So obviously Motown backed off the promotion of the record because they didn't want to get caught up in the political side of it, being a minority owned label themselves. But at that time they had already done so much advertising and promotion that they couldn't stop the momentum and the record still got out there and became huge in the college circuit, the underground circuit, and throughout Europe. We basically developed a cult following which to this day, by the way, continues. Like you said earlier, "Color, Nature, Gone" was released way ahead of its time and right now is very relevant to what is going on.

AD: Is this how you got into selling Native American music?

TB: No. Basically, I never really thought that I would have a record label. That wasn't my intention; that wasn't a goal; it was never a dream. It basically just happened. When we were not signed by Motown, we went through a period of trying to hold the group together. Because of the lyrical content of our music we were starting to find it difficult to find jobs anywhere. We were blackballed from college campuses, and of course a lot of the major college promoters didn't want to use us because of the lyrical content of the album—different things that they labeled militant or radical. It was a joke because it was none of that. By comparison to today our lyrics were Dr. Seuss. All of this disabled our ability to find work so one at a time members started dropping out of the group. I was desperate to try and hold things together and do as many gigs as I could possibly find in Europe or wherever. After our last tour in Europe, I came back home and I felt just defeated and didn't know what I was going to do. I started just doing odds and ends jobs and basically just stayed away from the music business for several years. And then I got like a little drum beat in my heart and I knew I should get back into the business, but I didn't know how to get back into it. I started looking around at the state of American Indian music in general and by that I mean the traditional music—music being produced by Native American artists. At the time there were only a couple of companies doing this kind of music and they were mainly trading-post only labels. It was primarily a cassette only genre. Very little went into the graphics, promotion, or production of it all. What I learned at Motown in 8 years, I decided to put into creating a label that recorded Native American music—both traditional and contemporary—and put the same type of care as any label would put into any type of music, whether it be rock or R&B or whatever it might be. I thought that if we improve the production and the graphics and the promotion we might have a shot at bringing attention to this music and bringing it to the world. And that's what I did. I was fortunate enough to purchase back the master tapes from Motown in 1981—even then I didn't have any intentions of starting a label, I just didn't want these two albums being sold at Kmart for 99 cents. Those two records were what we used to form Sounds of America Records (SOAR) and out of that grew this label. We were not the first label to record Native American music and I do not want people to think that, because I am not saying that—we were not the first label to do that. But we were the first label to take it to the next level, we were the first to put it on CD, we were the ones responsible for getting large chain stores to create Native American sections in their stores and basically take it world wide. We were the trendsetters. We believed in quality of the recording, not quantity of the recording. So with this philosophy SOAR was able to soar. That's how it started.

AD: What do you think about the 8th Fire event in Austin?

TOM BEE.
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event in Austin?

TB: I think it's awesome. I think people need to be made aware and I think people have a lot to say—a lot of spiritual things and thoughts that need to be shared. First of all, we need to garner support from everyone in order to make this happen. We have a lot to share and we have a lot to speak about and I think the 8th Fire is going to do a lot to expose this to people and what the first nation's people are all about. In our spiritual walk, in our spiritual lives, we really have a lot of answers that are just now coming to this earth.

AD: You once said, "If the worst thing ever happened and I had to move to Texas, please let me be in Austin, because they still play live music in the clubs."

TB: I had the pleasure of spending some time in Austin one time during either an independent music convention or a NARN convention. That was the first time I had ever been to Austin—I had been to Texas, but never to Austin—I was just blown away. It's just a really cool place. The culture is alive there. People there respect musicians, they respect songwriters, and they respect storytellers. That's what it is all about. To me, music is such an important part of our lives. It's a universal language and it's so powerful. Most cities don't allow it to flourish the way that Austin does.
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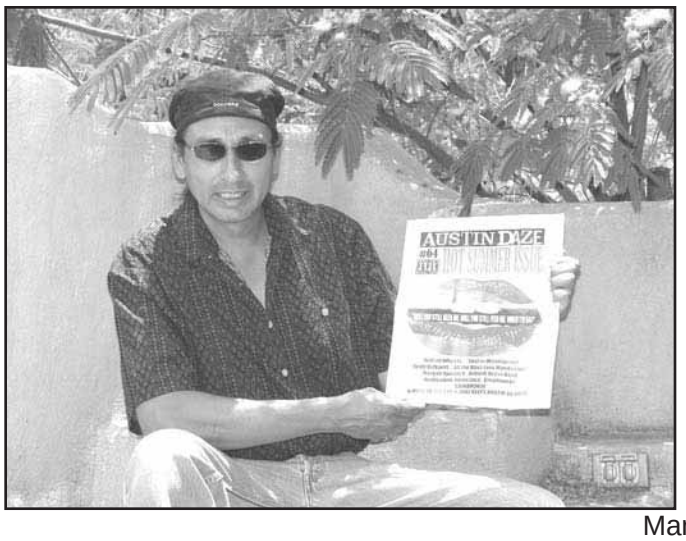
NATIVE ROOTS' JOHN WILLIAMS



AUSTIN DAZE: Native Roots blends both the spiritual philosophies and musical elements of reggae and Native American culture. How did this first happen?

JOHN WILLIAMS: Native Roots is a partnership between me and the lead singer Emmett Garcia. As far as the reggae music, for me, it goes back years and years into the '70s. The Native American movement was real strong in northern Arizona—I grew up on a reservation there—and we just listened to Bob Marley every single night. What he said seemed to relate directly to what we were experiencing. The message was that we needed to lift up and stay strong when everything was pushing us down. That was my first experience with reggae music and Rasta. And then I did some traveling. I played a variety of styles of music and was playing in a band that had a Santana-like sound. We got to go to Europe, and I really found how universal reggae music was. I thought it was just us in northern Arizona that were listening to reggae music day and night, and I found out the whole world was. So when I came back I made a conscious effort to mold my musical focus on reggae music and to do it in the true spirit. I researched about the religion and the philosophy—I did a lot of reading.

AD: How does this message of Rasta work with the Native American message?

JW: There are a lot of parallels: the universal concept of understanding and respect and everyone coming from the same heart and soul—but at the same time standing up for what is right and speaking out against bad things. That's totally how it relates.

A lot of reggae lyrics are positive and deal with celebrating everyday what we have and who we are. The title track of our latest CD is the song "Celebrate." Since I put together all the music and have written the lyrics on several songs, one of the things I try to do is create a variety. We are not trying to imitate note for note, sound for sound reggae music—that is just the way it comes out. I try to create a variety. Sometimes you will hear blues in there, sometimes you'll hear a little Latin line—it's probably not true Latin but our rendition of Latin because we just make everything our own. Like Bob Marley says, "It's all in the feel."

Our last album Celebrate has a little jazz influence. It's been characterized as our best production yet.

AD: What is the main message of your music and what is the theme you hope to communicate? Who is your message for?

JW: Our message is pride in being Native, but also pride in being whoever you are—universal pride. The other message is not to look back to the past but to think about the future in a positive way. That I think is the universal.
Maintaining spirituality; the importance of prayer; the importance of culture; and the importance of respecting one another are also our messages. And if you think about it, that's exactly along the same lines as Rasta. But the thing is we didn't copy Rasta, that's just the way that it is.
All people, all races.

Our song, "Frybread" is a reggae version of a friend's song by the same name. In keeping with the total essence of the song I created this reggae version and people just love that song. It's kind of funny because Frybread is a very unhealthy food, but it is part of the evolution of Native Americans. It's kind of funny because yesterday I got a call from Canada and they were talking about political struggles and they are doing a compilation CD and they are renegotiating trading rights and there are going to be some protests. They are putting together a kind of protest CD. So I asked them, "Well, what song are you thinking about putting on?" And they said, "Frybread." And I said, "WHAT?" Their answer: there has to be love and happiness and humor in every movement. Even in the old warrior days they were laughing. We didn't take anything lightly but laughing and humor was a part of the Native American fight. With that, I thought, it's a very appropriate song to put into a protest CD.

There is something to get a kick out of besides aggression and consciousness.

AD: How is your music accepted within your culture and in other cultures? What are your experiences spreading this music?

JW: The first reggae band that I played with, people couldn't believe their eyes. It was in Arizona and I had three native brothers from Arizona. I was doing the singing and we did mostly Bob Marley. In Native American country it was always rock bands or country bands—that's it. All of sudden these three brothers come out with pure reggae sets, we dropped some jaws in northern Arizona and Houston and it was like, Ok, now finally we have a band that reflects what we have been listening to. It's been widely accepted. The one thing that I would like to say is that reggae music is accepted across all generations. In other words, last weekend we played in a community outside of Albuquerque and we had 6-year old kids buying our CDs. We also sold CDs to people that were in their 70s—pushing 80—and they were so happy and so excited, and they were just holding the CD saying, "We love your music." When I see a 6-year old girl who says, "My wall has Native Roots all over it" and then to see a great-grandma standing there saying, "Which one has "Frybread" on it?" I'm happy. I don't know if that is just Native Americans or what. When we go around to Indian country it's all generations.

AD: What do you think about coming to the "Live Music Capital of the World?"

JW: I'm excited about that. I used to do the music behind Joy Harjo & Poetic Justice—I used to create the music for that project—and we went to Austin about 10 years ago. I got to check out the Austin City Limits studio during the day when nobody was there. It was really cool.
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ENVIRONMENTAL COLUMN - COLIN CLARK

Why do we call extra big, over-sized automobiles "Sport Utility Vehicles" or SUVs? Some marketing genius at a car company or advertising agency figured out a catchy way to re-name "big ass truck" to appeal to the urban, suburban, and rural markets. Sports are good, right? Might as well start to define an automobile by something good and healthy: Sport.

Who doesn't appreciate Utility? It tells you that this three thousand pound behemoth of a gas guzzler is actually Useful. It's a practical car for you. What a great combination: sporty and useful. You're a sucker not to have one, really.

How about we start calling gas guzzlers what they are: Over Sized Autos or OSAs for short? Say "Oh-Sah." It rolls off the tongue like a teenager's word to describe something not cool. As in, disgustedly, "I can't believe you drive an Oh-Sah!"

Take back the lexicon from the people at the advertising agencies. Bill Hicks is dead. Long live Bill Hicks.

Walking into my local HEB, I was thinking about a statistic I saw on a favorite weekly blog of mine, Jim Kunstler's "Clusterfuck Nation." He posted a graph from an industry group depicting the amount of square feet of retail space per person in various countries. The U.S. has a mind-blowing 20.2 square feet of shopping space per person. Sweden, second in the world, clocks in at 3.3 square feet. The United Kingdom is at 2.5 square feet, France at 2.3, and Italy at 1.1 square feet.

My neighborhood HEB is smallish by today's standards, under 100,000 square feet. An unbelievable amount of crap is on the shelves. If every item containing corn syrup were removed, the store would look half empty. How do we have such monstrously large places to buy milk and produce? I think the Big Box phenomenon can be summarized by these three essential ingredients: cheap land, cheap energy, and cheap labor.

Because Austin suffers from sprawl patterns of land development, there's always some relatively affordable land at street or highway intersections with utilities and often tax subsidies in place. In a country like Italy, farmland on the outskirts of city stays farmland but for remarkable circumstances (or bribes). People shop in small stores, and mostly walk to them.

Huge warehouses of shopping are seen as testaments to our industrial efficiency. It is remarkable that goods and products are delivered across oceans and across our large nation and stocked in the shelves of Wal-Marts all over the U.S. But it's horribly wasteful. Think about the amount of energy and labor required to get wine here from Australia or plastic lawn chairs from China or beef from the rainforest in Brazil. Because energy and labor have been relatively cheap, it's been possible for Wal-Marts and K-Marts and Targets to proliferate in a cancer-like fashion.

During World War II, our nation acted collectively in the name of conservation and sacrifice for the greater good. Government advertising encouraged Victory Gardens, reduction of consumption, recycling and reusing of materials, and elimination of waste. "When you ride alone, you ride with Hitler," warned one poster. Enter plastics, cheap oil and gas, and the disposable era. We now go through 3 trillion plastic bags a year. Exit cheap oil in 2007. Even mainstream media are beginning to let the public know that oil is not getting any cheaper. Changes in the vaunted "American Way of Life" are on the way. ***