



THE LIVE MUSIC CAPITAL OF THE WORLD PRESENTS

# THE BEAT GOES ON

## A MUSICAL JOURNEY

BY STEVE UHLER

RESEARCH BY CALLIE JENSCHKE & ELIZABETH ROBERTSON

TEST YOUR AUSTIN MUSIC I.Q. Can you identify the artists?

1. Kenneth Threadgill / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 2. Big Joe Williams / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 3. Guy Forsyth / Photo by Mary Bruton. 4. Stevie Ray Vaughan / Photo courtesy Scott Newton. 5. Eddie Wilson / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 6. Ray Benson / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 7. Cory Morrow. 8. Alejandro Escovedo. 9. The Flatlanders / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 10. Freddie King / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 11. Shivas Headband / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 12. Janis Joplin / Photo courtesy David Gahr. 13. Sara Hickman / Photo by Todd V. Wolfson. 14. Willie Nelson / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 15. Mance Lipscomb / Photo courtesy Burton Wilson. 16. Townes Van Zandt. 17. Asleep at Wheel. 18. Jerry Jeff Walker / Photo courtesy Scott Newton



KENNETH THREADGILL

A. R. L.

April 27, 1971

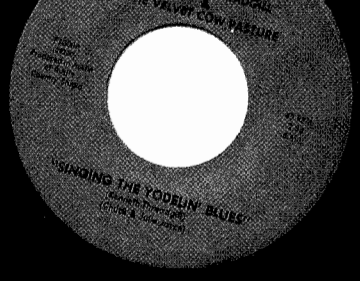


Photo courtesy Burton Wilson

# KENNETH THREADGILL

## HE WASN'T HALF BAD

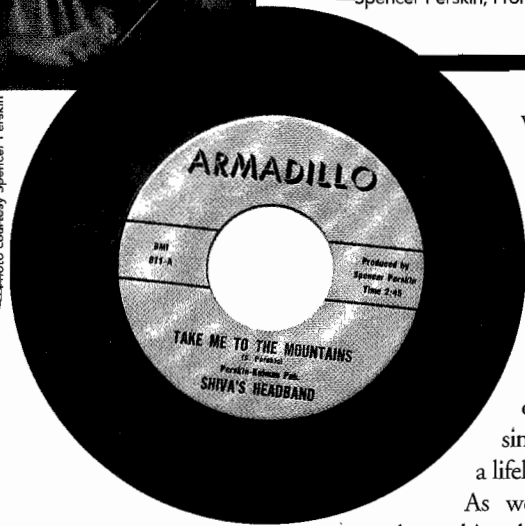
Luckily for him, Threadgill owned a dilapidated gas station on North Lamar, which he converted into a tiny tavern where he could periodically inflict his passion on his patrons, mostly UT students, truck drivers, cowboys and loyal customers from his days as a bootlegger. Also luckily for him, other performers—real musicians and singers from nearby dance halls—began gathering at his place after hours to jam, imbibe and play a little poker.

Often, there were more musicians than diners in the audience, and in the early 1960s, Threadgill began his celebrated Wednesday night hootenannies. There was room for everyone in his cramped kingdom—fiddlers, guitar pickers, banjo plunkers and folksingers—including a young whiskey-voiced UT student from Port Arthur: Janis Joplin. The story goes that Joplin arrived with a busload of hippies one night and

Best known for her number-one hits "Piece of My Heart" and "Me and Bobby McGee," Janis Joplin started her career by singing in Austin bars after she ran away from home in Port Arthur at the age of 17. To many, Joplin was one of the biggest female stars of her time and possibly the finest white blues singer of the '60s.

“We were the first group in Austin to get a major label contract with Capitol Records.”

—Spencer Perskin, Front man of Shiva's Headband  
As told to *Austin Monthly*



was coaxed up to sing a shaky rendition of “Silver Threads and Golden Needles.” By most accounts, she didn’t exactly blow the roof off. In fact, Threadgill jokingly offered her two bottles of Lone Star beer *not* to sing after that, cementing a lifelong friendship.

As word began to spread about this oddball oasis for up-and-coming talent, the tiny venue soon became stuffed with aspiring musicians and songwriters, honing their performing chops and subsisting on Threadgill’s endless rounds of beer. Janis left for the West Coast and switched from Lone Star to Jack Daniel’s.

The hootenany lasted until Threadgill closed the old place in 1974, leaving only a spray-painted sign on the front that read, “Janis Sang Here.” But the musical bouncing ball had started gathering momentum. Other venues began popping up across



Stevie Ray Vaughan lived fast and died tragically at the age of 35, leaving his mark on music in Austin and across the nation. A rare talent on the verge of superstardom, Stevie Ray is gone but not forgotten.



### Getting Down With Getting the Blues

Smoke curls around the edges of the stage spotlights, swaying its slow and lazy dance up to the dark ceiling. A lone bead of sweat slides down, down, down its sloppy and sticky and wet path. Each breath—deep or shallow—tastes salty and damp. Through the floor, the drum beat thuds. And a devastating, tortured, passionate voice intimately dances with the righteous guitar, keyboards and saxophone, wringing out emotion with each scorching stanza. The blues. And baby, we’ve got ‘em.

From the legendary New Orleans Club, Victory Grill and Charlie’s Playhouse to the Continental Club, Antone’s and the Flamingo Club, Austin’s clubs past and present have shone the spotlight on blues for decades. Austin’s “Godfather of Blues,” W.C. Clark, launched the blues scene in 1942, when he first began performing at the age of 13. He played with blues legends back when there was a Vulcan Gas Company (in the late 1960s), until it became the Armadillo World Headquarters and then faded away in 1980.

Blues careers such as that of Jimmie Vaughan, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Angela Strehli, Marcia Ball and Lou Ann Barton have been launched and nurtured by the “Godfather.” And there are blues artists who have shared so much of themselves with Austin that they have become a permanent part of the city—people like Ernie Mae Miller, Mance Lipscomb, Henry “Blues Boy” Hubbard, James Polk, Martin Bank and Tyler D. “T.D.” Bells. Bands like Omar and the Howlers and the Blues Specialists have also insinuated themselves into the psyche of Austin blues lovers. And Toni Price remains a fixture on the scene: Her faithful Tuesday night appearance at the Continental Club can punch you in the face and then rock you to sleep like a baby.

—Alicia Dennis

PICB 20315, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library

1911

Austin Symphony is founded and is Austin’s oldest performing arts group

1933

Willie Nelson and Ann Richards are born

1935

Threadgill’s gas station and beer joint opens

1945

Victory Grill opens as a restaurant and bar for soldiers returning

home after the war

1962

Janis Joplin enrolls at UT and begins developing her singing career in Austin’s clubs

1967

October: The Vulcan Gas Company Opens

1967

Shiva’s Headband storms into the Austin music scene

1969

Vulcan Gas Company closes its doors

1970

August 7: Armadillo World Headquarters opens

1970

October: Janis Joplin dies of a drug overdose in Los Angeles

1973

July 4: Willie Nelson’s first picnic in Dripping Springs  
PICB 12040, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library



1974

June 15: The Cuginis open Hole in the Wall restaurant and arcade

1975

Antone’s nightclub opens

1975

December 6: Liberty Lunch opens

1976

January: *Austin City Limits* premieres on PBS stations across the country with a taped performance of Willie Nelson from 1974

1977

September: Steamboat live music venue opens

1978

February: Asleep at the Wheel wins its first of 10 Grammys

1980

December 31: Kenneth Threadgill plays the last show at Armadillo World Headquarters

1981

January 1: Threadgill’s opens for business as a restaurant



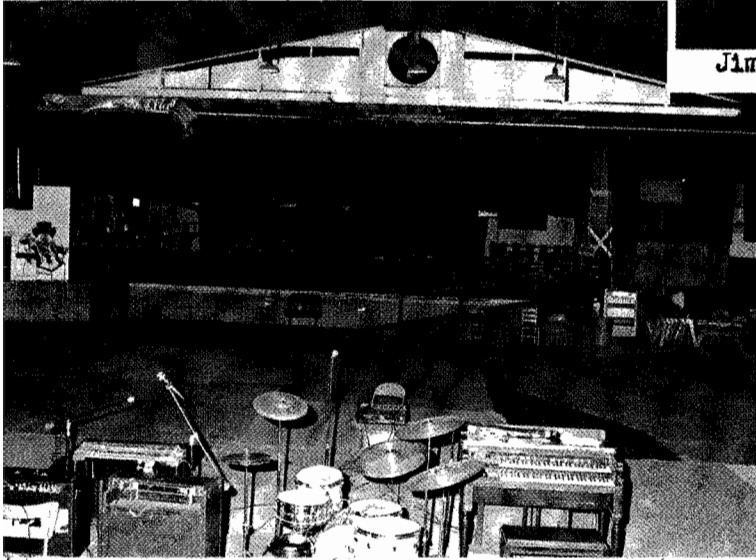
town, including the legendary Armadillo World Headquarters—a National Guard armory turned funky music mecca that opened its doors in 1970. Under the guidance of owner and manager Eddie Wilson, the Armadillo showcased such diverse performers as Asleep at the Wheel, Frank Zappa, Bette Midler, Van Morrison, Kinky Friedman, The Clash and Gram Parsons. Willie Nelson, Jerry Jeff Walker, Townes Van



Jimmie Vaughan  
www.jimmievaughan.com

From the outside, it seemed like all there used to be was progressive country. But we all knew there was something different bubbling under the surface, like Jimmie Vaughan and the Fabulous Thunderbirds. I play the guitar the way I do because of him. He has influenced me just like Willie has influenced my songwriting.

—Lee Roy Parnell, 1994  
Texas Monthly



ARMADILLO WORLD HEADQUARTERS VII AUG. 29, 1972

Thus began Austin's early Texas-sized bragging rights as "Live Music Capital of the World." Anyone who was there back in the '60s, '70s and '80s will sigh wistfully and tell you that those were the glory days, when the Austin music scene blossomed like a field of Texas bluebonnets in April. It was the golden era of the Armadillo. There was the Steamboat, where a young guitar-slinging, poncho-clad wunderkind with lightening-fast chops named Stevie Ray Vaughan began to attract attention in the early '80s. Liberty Lunch, a cavernous oblong box with a notoriously crooked dance floor, hosted everyone from the demented polka group Brave Combo to satirical folkies the Austin Lounge Lizards. Over on South Lamar, the Broken Spoke, a country-western, sawdust-and-beer honky-tonk, helped launch the careers of Don Walser, The Flatlanders and Pat Green.

Zandt and Alvin Crow soon succumbed to Austin's siren song, bringing with them a new musical hybrid variously dubbed "cosmic cowboy," "outlaw music" and, that most oxymoronic of labels, "progressive country."

Soon the rest of the country was catching Austin's herb-scented winds of change. In 1974, *Time* magazine touted Austin as America's premiere music city: "Austin's musicians have evolved a brand-new style of country-rock, and have made the city the fastest-growing music center in the U.S. Nashville, still the Capital of Country, may provide for more regular work. Bakersfield, California may offer the inspirational presence of Merle Haggard and Buck Owens. But from the point of view of new sounds, freedom and just plain musical fun, Austin now definitely ranks as #1."

## AUSTIN LEGEND

WILLIE NELSON (born April 30, 1933)

Known everywhere and by everyone, Willie Nelson has become an icon for Texas music. A songwriter first and foremost, Willie later put his talents to singing and earned the title of a country music outlaw—a rebel with high musical standards. Since his major breakthrough into the music scene with the 1975 debut of *Red-Headed Stranger*, Willie shaped the face of country music as it is today with his incredible songwriting talent and raw musical ability and continues to pave the way for new talent. A timeless entertainer, he wrote such songs as "Crazy" for Patsy Cline and "Hello Walls" for Faron Young in the '60s.

1981

The University of Texas Performing Arts Center opens its first season



1986

January: Austin Lyric Opera is founded

1987

March: First SXSW music and media conference

1990

August 27: Stevie Ray Vaughan dies in a helicopter crash in Wisconsin

PICA 32964, Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



1990

KGSR hits the airwaves with a new format—airing local musicians

1991

Aug. 29, 1991: "Live Music Capital of the World" becomes the city's official slogan by council resolution

1992

April: The Backyard opens for its first season

1997

January 1: Townes Van Zandt dies

1999

One World Theatre becomes a venue to hear great world music

2002

June 30: Hole in the Wall Bar closes after 32 years of business

2002

September: Austin City Limits Festival kicks off



2003

May 16: Hole in the Wall reopens under new owners

2003

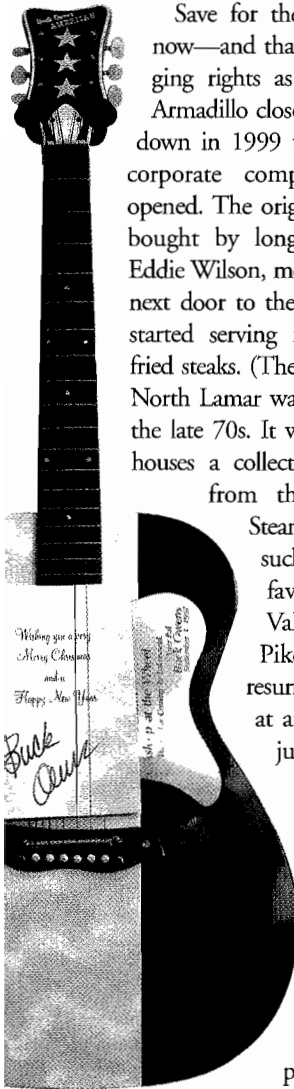
July 4th: 30th anniversary of Willie Nelson's Fourth of July Picnic at Two River Canyon



Photo courtesy: Direct Events

“Musicians never stop paying their dues, unless they quit playing. And I can't quit playing. I don't know what else I'd do. I wouldn't be happy, I know that.”

—Steve Fromholz  
*The Improbable rise of Redneck Rock* by Jan Reid



Save for the venerable Broken Spoke, they're all gone now—and that says something about Austin's bipolar bragging rights as “Live Music Capital of the World.” The Armadillo closed its doors in 1980. Liberty Lunch was torn

down in 1999 to make room for a corporate complex, which never opened. The original Threadgill's was bought by longtime family friend Eddie Wilson, moved its headquarters next door to the old Armadillo, and started serving respectable chicken-fried steaks. (The original location on North Lamar was gutted by a fire in the late 70s. It was rebuilt, and now houses a collection of memorabilia from the old days.) The

Steamboat—home to such home-grown favorites as Sister 7, Vallejo and Patrice Pike—sank in 2002, resurfacing briefly last year at another locale. But it just wasn't the same.

You hear that phrase a lot from old-timers. “It's not the same as it was” . . . “You should've been here back in '75 . . .” “There is a palpable nostalgic haze that permeates Austin's musical heritage.

“Originally, Austin started out as a cheap, easy place to live where regular working people loved to go out and party and hear the music,” observes longtime local blues singer and Armadillo alumnae Mandy Mercier. “A lot has changed, it's no longer cheap or easy to live here. But a core group of artists were drawn here

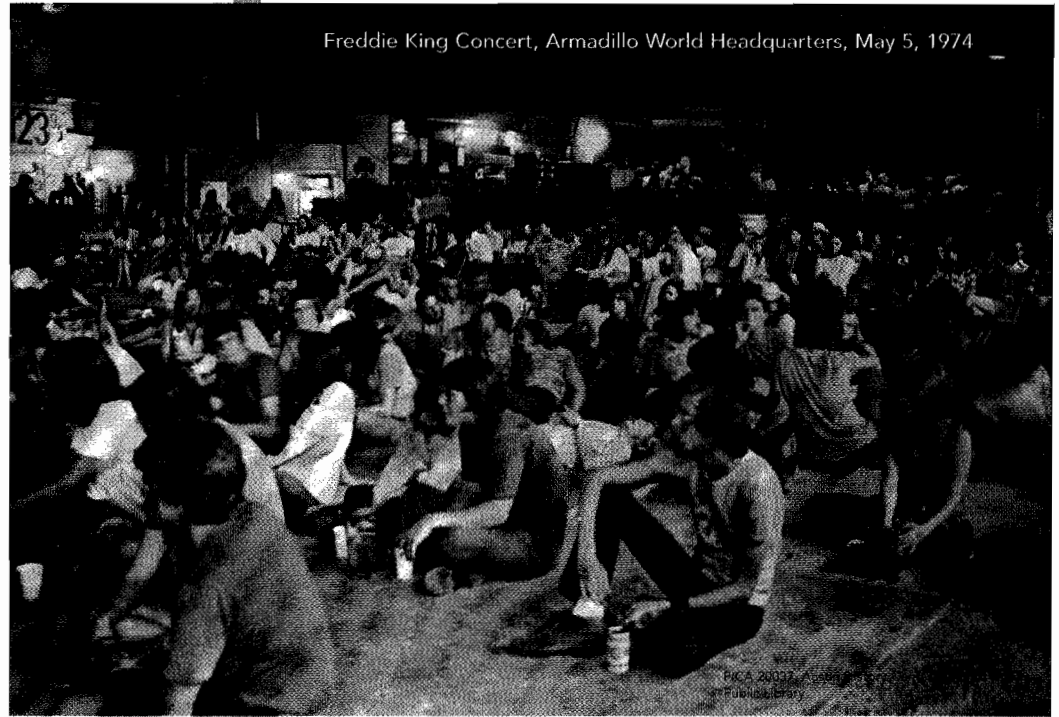
in the '70s and '80s, and the atmosphere of support, creativity and appreciation of each other which arose is what keeps the scene as vital and exciting as it is.”

“I got here in November of '74,” recalls Austin Lounge Lizards member Tom Pittman. “I think it began being a major music center because of the enormous student population and the relatively loose attitude towards beer and marijuana. The Willie Nelson picnics gave it some national publicity, and *Austin City Limits* had to have helped with national exposure.”

**Just where did it come from, this impressive marketing slogan of Austin as 'Live Music Capital of the World'?**

In 1991, Austin blues musician Lillian Standfield was driving home from a gig in Houston and passed a city limits sign. The thought occurred

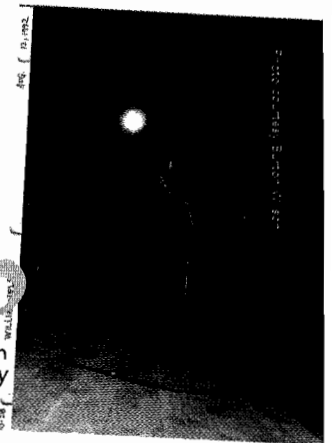
Freddie King Concert, Armadillo World Headquarters, May 5, 1974



to her that Austin could use a sign to promote its live music scene. She took her idea to the city's Music Commission, with the idea of promoting Austin as the “Live Music Capital of the USA.” Researchers discovered that Austin had more live music venues per capita than such established music hotbeds as Nashville, New York City, Las Vegas or L.A. After stumbling across such impressive—if dubious—data, a council member

“Western swing was just about the only kind of country music you could hear in the state of Texas until Hank Williams came along. Western swing was jazz, any way you want to look at it.”

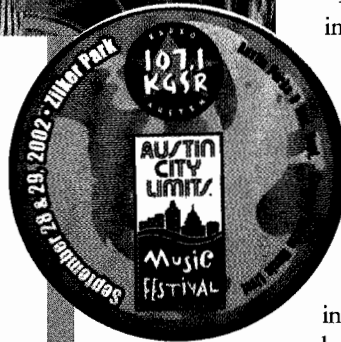
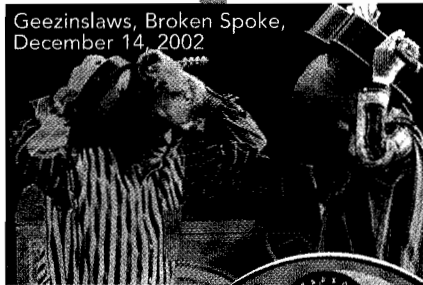
—Willie Nelson  
*Willie: An Autobiography*



As an original member of the “outlaw” progressive country scene that made Austin home in the '70s, Jerry Jeff has had many hits, including “Mr. Bojangles,” “Sangria Wine” and his version of Guy Clark's “L.A. Freeway.” Though he wasn't born in Texas, Jerry Jeff has remained a major figure in Austin's live music scene since his arrival in 1971.

suggested, with typical Texas swagger, that Austin be declared the "Live Music Capital of the Universe." Since there was no documented information on venues scattered throughout the rest of the galaxy, a compromise was reached, and on August 29, 1991, a resolution was passed officially declaring Austin as "Live Music Capital of the World."

How authentic is that boast? Like a lot of things about Texas, there's a little truth and a lot of self-congratulatory hype. New Orleans and Chicago can legitimately lay claim to Jazz Capital, Nashville has more live country music per square inch than River City, and, let's face it, on any given night, New York dwarfs Austin in any category except bluegrass. But if New York is the Big Apple for musicians, then Austin can lay claim to the Big Luby's—a veritable musical cafeteria where you can find everything from blues to baroque, folk to funk, classical to conjunto, country western to Middle Eastern, Goth rock to gospel, reggae to



Born into a prominent Fort Worth oil family, Townes turned his back on wealth to pursue his now-legendary songwriting talent. Somewhat of a recluse, Townes composed intensely poetic and profound songs. Penning country classics like "Pancho and Lefty" and "If I Needed You," Townes made a lasting impression on the world of country music.

roughly 1,500 music acts, spread out over an ever-changing landscape of clubs, bars, dance clubs, restaurants and coffee houses. In fact, it's sometimes hard to find places that don't have live music. "What other town has live music at the grocery store and airport?" asks longtime Austinite and Red Dawg bandleader, Danny Britt.

Austin businesses have a tradition of supporting native talent. Such major local establishments as Schlotzky's Deli and Mr. Gatti's Pizza are well known for featuring local musicians in their TV and radio commercials, and countless Austin eateries boast live music nightly. Art Blondin, owner of Artz Rib House, is both a longtime musician and employer: "We opened a restaurant called 'Artz Caboose' on West 5th Street in the mid-'80s and hired mostly musicians to work there. When we opened Artz Rib House, we continued the trend. We first started having live music on the patio, but due to the Texas weather and concerns for our neighbors, we moved it inside. Now I couldn't imagine the place without it."

The uncontested Ground Zero of the live music scene is 6th Street, a ragtag, rococo collection of ever-changing clubs, bars, tattoo parlors,

rock, jazz to jump blues, hip-hop to hillbilly, Tejano to Texas two-step.

"There's an audience here for just about every type of music, and they're really expert audiences. They expect something unique and different," observes award-winning singer-songwriter Tish Hinojosa, who arrived in Austin from New Mexico in 1988. "I think that was really, really helpful to me when I first moved here. 'Cause I had just started writing my own songs, and I was in a great place to start."

Austin doesn't have a 'sound', per se, but it does have an attitude—and that's one reason so many musicians find it conducive to their lifestyle. The term "musical community" pops up often among the musicians who call River City their home base. "That's what makes Austin special as a music town," says popular singer-songwriter and longtime Austinite Sara Hickman. "The fact that almost everyone is willing to support each other. We all want each other's music the best it can be, for the music's sake. I'd say it's all about the beauty of the beast, not the ego."

"The musicians are supportive and accepting of one another," agrees local tunesmith Jimmy Lee Hannaford. "They leap at the chance to play together." Longtime musical friendships are forged here, and when a local musician finds him or herself in dire medical straits, they're likely to find a lineup of their compatriots passing the proverbial hat at a benefit concert to help cover medical bills.

According to the Texas Music Commission, Austin is home to



Photo courtesy: Burton Wilson

When Mance Lipscomb was brought to perform at Threadgill's [in 1963] by the young folkies, the color barrier was broken in North Austin.

—Eddie Wilson

*Threadgill's: The Cookbook* by Eddie Wilson

## 12 AUSTIN-BASED ACTS TO HIT THE BIG TIME

- 1 STEVIE RAY VANCE
- 2 JANIS JOPLIN
- 3 ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL
- 4 PAT GREEN
- 5 FASTBALL
- 6 DOUG SAHM (SIH DOUGH)
- 7 LUCINDA WILLIAMS
- 8 SHAWN COLVIN
- 9 THE DIXIE CHICKS
- 10 THE PLAYBOYERS
- 11 CHRISTOPHER CROSBY
- 12 COMMANDER GODY

... And 4 who didn't (but should have)

- 1 **BLAZE FOLEY** – the troubled troubadour immortalized by Lucinda Williams in "Drunken Angel." Affectionately known as the "Duct Tape Messiah" for his penchant for adorning himself in duct tape, he wrote Willie Nelson's hit, "If I Could Fly." Foley was killed during a scuffle while helping a friend in 1989.
- 2 **ROKY ERICKSON** – former lead singer for cult psychedelic band from the '60s, the 13th Floor Elevators. One of the all-time great rock vocalists, he was busted for marijuana possession on Mount Bonnell in 1969. Rather than serve a short prison term, he plead insanity and was committed to a state-run asylum for the criminally insane, and subjected to electroshock therapy and liquid Thorazine. He was released in 1972 and is currently being cared for by his younger brother, Sumner.
- 3 **AL GRIERSON** – beloved bearded rogue in overalls, "the official poet laureate of Luckenbach," who could turn a verse into vespers. He died in November, 2000 washed away in a flash flood while trying to negotiate a water crossing in his truck after a sudden rainstorm.
- 4 **TOWNES VAN ZANDT** – the local-legend-in-his-own-lifetime who inspired a virtual musical generation of followers and disciples, few of whom could approach his prodigious songwriting talents. His composition "Pancho and Lefty" is the quintessential sentimental outlaw ballad. Revered in his home state, he is little known outside of Texas.

— Steve Uhler



Photo: Greg Gorman/PhotoDisc

headshops and coffee houses—a sort of miniature Greenwich Village with a Texas twang and slacker ambience, stretching from Red River, past Congress Avenue, and spilling over to Lavaca Street. On any given night music fans can find the musical brew of their choice at such popular clubs as Antone's, Emo's, Stubb's, La Zona Rosa and dozens more. The nearby Warehouse District caters to a slightly more upscale clientele, with such clubs as Cedar Street Courtyard and Miguel's La Bodega. Extending north, on the other side of the Capitol building, lies "the Drag," a stretch across the street from the UT Campus, home of the once and future Hole in the Wall.

Austin's live music perimeters extend far beyond 6th street, occasionally threatening to devour the entire city. Every March since 1987, the annual South by Southwest music fest—aka SXSW—showcases over 1,000 acts from all over the world, each elbowing for their 15 minutes in front of an industry PR rep at one of over 50 official showcases (not to mention the "Guerrilla Showcases" that coincide with the event, "South by South Congress," "South by So What?," et al.). And recent additions like KGSR's Blues on the Green and the Austin City Limits Music Festival keep stoking the festival fire. Factor in assorted street fairs, fiestas and holiday celebrations, and it's hard to find a quiet corner within the city limits.

And let's not forget Austin's other "longhair music": The state capital is also home to the Austin Lyric Opera, the Austin Symphony, and such eclectic ensembles as Glover Gill's Tosca (prominently featured in Richard Linklater's *Waking Life*).

In an era where mega corporations have all but devoured local media, Austin is one of the few cities that actually gives local artists substantial airtime. Progressive rock stations KGSR and KLBJ often host such stellar talent as Lucinda Williams, Ray Wylie Hubbard, David Garza and Alejandro Escovedo in their studios on such shows as *Local Licks*. Country station KVET helped break through such

homegrown talents as Asleep at the Wheel and Pat Green. But probably no station has done more to nurture local artists than KUT-FM, located on the UT campus, where musicians find exposure on such widely heard programs as *Eklektikos* and *Live Set*. *Eklektikos*, especially, lives up to its moniker, showcasing local purveyors of folk, blues, gospel, jazz, classical, lounge, pop, Celtic, Indian, African, you name it. Host John Aielli observes that: "I feel we have an opportunity to enhance our programming by playing local musicians and acts... to help them gain recognition in the community, and to make our programming more exciting by having excellent live music presentations on a regular basis."

Austin musicians are well represented on TV, too—most notably on

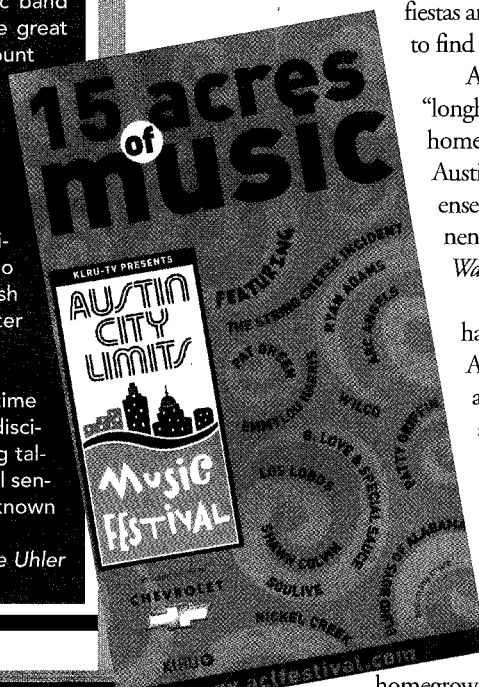
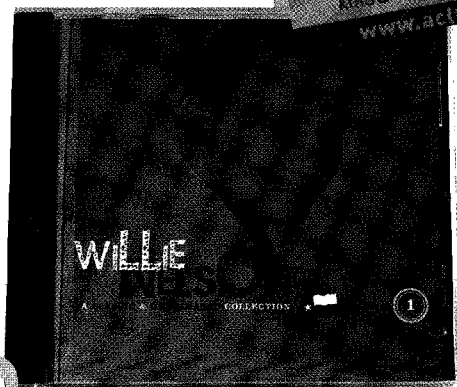


Photo courtesy Ray Benson

“There was a strong Austin to San Francisco axis in those days. The towns reminded me of each other. If San Francisco was the capital of the hippie world at the time, then Austin was the hippie Palm Springs.”

—Willie Nelson, on Austin in the early 1970s  
*Willie: An Autobiography*



*Austin City Limits*, one of PBS's most popular music series. For over 25 years, *Austin City Limits* has showcased such prominent performers as Nanci Griffith, Norah Jones, and Willie Nelson. Another unique Austin phenomena is the Austin Music Network, also known as AMN, Time Warner Cable's 24-hour-a-day Austin Music channel. Subsidized by the city, AMN underwent an auspicious makeover with a full-time staff and impressive studio facilities a few years ago, but has recently found itself foundering, relocating like a squatter in various new locales, the latest being the old Robert Mueller Airport.

It goes without saying that Austin attracts musicians from all over the world like fire ants to a picnic, but new arrivals expecting a musical all-night bacchanalia are often in for a sobering morning after. The stats and stories can be discouraging: Longtime Austin acts are entrenched in club residencies, blocking the new talent out; there are five venues for every 100 groups, the pay is sparse to nonexistent, and the political powers-that-be are often self-defeatingly unsupportive. Musicians are issued parking tickets trying to unload equipment along 6th Street; overly strict noise regulations frequently quash parties; buskers are harassed and sometimes hauled away; too many club owners renege on payments.

"I'm always embarrassed when friends from out of town ask me to see about getting them a gig here," laments Tom Pittman. "I hate to tell them what they can expect to make here. There are so many great local musicians playing here that folks don't feel the need to risk much on an unknown group from out of town."

"A frustrating thing about this town is there's almost too much . . . the sheer wealth of riches, so much to choose from on a Friday or Saturday night," says Tish Hinojosa. "There's just a lot of stuff going on, people are going out less, and there are more bands competing for fewer audiences."

"Ironically, what makes this town so good is exactly what makes it so bad," concurs longtime local rocker Beth Galiger. "Numbers. Sheer numbers of venues every night, numbers of players, diversity of styles. This creates a buyer's market in which no one is paid much 'cause there are always a dozen bands ready to play that room for free."

And despite its reputation as a musician-friendly town, the competition among the artists themselves can be cutthroat. Deb Yager of Deb Yager and The Boys remembers, "I was brand new in town and could barely play guitar and started gigging . . . One woman in particular who had been playing for 20 years and was having a hard time getting booked acted like my friend and got all my info. I was really naive. She went to the three places where I had regular weekly gigs and told them she'd play for half of what they were paying me!"

For performers, it can be daunting to keep things in perspective. "I think the scene here needs to be viewed as a type of grad school for the music biz," reflects Beth Galiger. "If you come here expecting to be discovered, or to start making money in music, you get disappointed. If you come here ready to learn every detail there is, you'll be wealthy beyond measure. This isn't the place to get anal about success; this is the place to learn the ropes and then to relearn to just plain love the music."

But, like a literal game of musical chairs, for every disillusioned, departing artist or band, another arrives to take their place, and the cycle begins anew. And through it all—feast and famine, boom and bust—Austin's live music mythos persists. Like a phoenix, Austin keeps rising from its own ashes.

In the classic Western, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*, a journalist comments, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." The legend of Austin, the "Live Music Capital of the World," endures. And the beat goes on. ★

## WHAT'S THE MOST MEMORABLE SHOW YOU SAW IN AUSTIN?

"Definitely would be Jeff Buckley at Electric Lounge. It was stunningly perfect. I have never been that moved by a musical experience. Gosh . . . also seeing Neil Finn at La Zona Rosa . . . playing with Nanci Griffith at the Paramount . . . Brave Combo at Antone's . . ."

—Sara Hickman

"Seeing Don Walser in his prime at Babe's around 1996."

—Slaid Cleaves

"The first one that comes to mind is Caetano Veloso's remarkable concert at Bass Concert Hall four years ago. By far the worst thing I've seen is Nina Simone's concert where she performed a year or so before she died, and the continued performances of the Austin Symphony are always a treat."

—John Aielli (Host of KUT's *Eklektikos*)

"I was lucky enough to see Willie Nelson with just Leon Russell and Mickey Raphael for two nights straight in July 1997 at Antone's. An incredible, intimate performance, and I was just 10 feet from Willie the first time, close enough to read the signatures etched into his old guitar."

—Jimmy Lee Hannaford

"The Thanksgiving show in '72 at the Dillo, with members of the Grateful Dead, Leon Russell, Doug Sahm and a bunch of locals. It was a free, word-of-mouth show that lasted all afternoon, when we were scheduled to be closed."

—Eddie Wilson (former owner/manager, Armadillo World Headquarters)

"I remember the Armadillo very fondly. It was in full swing when I got here, and

it seemed like they would have all the groups that I could only dream about hearing back in North Carolina and Georgia. I saw Emmylou Harris opening for Commander Cody on a Friday and Saturday, then have her own show on Sunday. It was free, because she was an unknown at the time. I also recall going to see Fats Domino at Antone's on 6th Street. The cover was—twice what I had ever paid to see anybody."

—Tom Pittman (*Austin Lounge Lizards*)

"The first time I saw Rosie Flores play. To me, she was a big star—I'd heard her records growing up and heard great things about her, and I got the chance to go see her at the Cactus right after I'd moved here. It was so cool to me that I got to see someone I admired in country music so much."

—Tish Hinojosa

"I watched Eric Johnson perform outdoors at Stubb's BBQ while I was standing on the balcony above. I had a bird's-eye view of his flowing fretwork and his pedal FX."

—Jeff Tveraas

"Seeing Stevie Ray Vaughan live in small clubs, and getting to hang out with him. One night he asked me to introduce him to Booker T. Jones, when I brought Booker out to Antone's before Stevie's first album came out."

—Mandy Mercier

—Steve Uhler

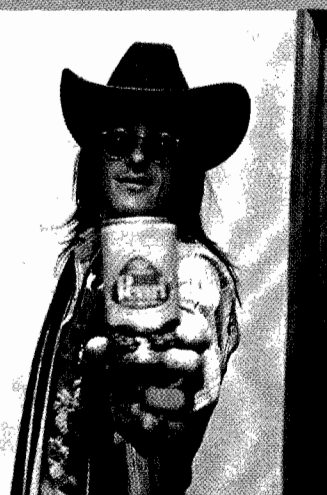


Photo courtesy: Barbara Wilson