

THE 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF the Wildflower! Arts & Music Festival, May 19-21, Richardson. Programming includes the United Healthcare Singer/Songwriter Stage featuring **Ruthie Foster, John Fullbright, and the Butch Hancock/Shake Russell/Michael Hearne** trio; Songwriting Workshop by singer songwriter **Joe Crookston** on Friday, May 19. Also performing at the Festival; are **Lynyrd Skynyrd, The B-52s, Night Ranger, X Ambassadors, The All-American Rejects, The Red Rockers, Shooter Jennings, and The Outlaws**. Other happenings: WF Kids, Budding Talent Vocal Contest, Texas Native Butterfly Tent, Battle of the Bands, WF Marketplace, Art Guitar Auction, Strolling Entertainment like Hooplas from Pink, and Face Painting by Faces by Me. For more information visit wildflowerfestival.com

The Big Pines Festival, a celebration of blues music, runs June 2 and 3 at the **Maude Cobb** Convention and Activity Center in Longview. The Friday night performances are free. There's several levels of admission for the Saturday events, and the music kicks off at 10 am. Many familiar names in the line-up, including Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee **Elvin Bishop** and his band, **Andrew "Jr. Boy" Jones** blues band and culminates with **Jimmy Wallace and the Stratoblasters**. Go online to BigPineBluesFestival.com for more information.

Annie Benjamin, Dallas singer/songwriter who is also an actress, won this year's **B.W. Stevenson** contest, hosted and produced for 28 years by **David Card** at Poor David's Pub on Lamar Street in Dallas. Benjamin immediately won \$1,000 in cold-hard cash, and also some other career-enhancing prizes along with that. Of this, she said on her Facebook profile, "B.W. was a very special writer and performer." B.W. (or Buckwheat as he was also known), passed away at the age of 38 in 1988, and his friend, David Card, very soon afterward began the songwriting competition in Stevenson's honor. Placing in the finals, also, were **Fritz Schultz, Rick Babb, and Morgan Alana**.

One of the youngest Dallas International Guitar Show visitors will be 8-year-old **Kane Alverado**. Kane began playing at the age of 5, and has never had a lesson. He plays by ear. He also plays nothing but Fender guitars with strings on them being 11s, and owns more than 20 of them. His oldest guitar is a 1964 Fender Vintage Reverb. This young picker identifies as his influences, **Jimi Hendrix, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Albert King, Los Lonely Boys, Chris Casteneda, and Carols Santana**. Kane wrote his first original song, "Hurricane," which is a blues instrumental, while still in kindergarten. He has his own YouTube channel and Facebook page. Kane and his

parents, **Cheri Garza Alverado** and **Chris Castaneda** (Project) live in Bryan. The supportive parents brought him to the SRV Remembrance Ride in 2016, because he wanted to see and hear Los Lonely Boys.

Radio station KNON has been broadcasting Community Radio in North Texas for 34 years, kicking off on July 31, 1983, and is known as "The Voice of The People." Now, the Texas Musicians Museum is working together with KNON to create an exhibit covering the radio station. KNON represents the music and diversity that is Dallas, the sounds of the lives the city leads. KNON was the first station in Dallas to play Hip Hop, Tejano, Punk Rock, Heavy Metal, Americana, and Reggae. The station is home to the longest running Rockabilly Radio show in America, the second longest running Hip Hop show, the first Gay and Lesbian radio show, the first Grateful Dead radio show in Texas, Dallas' longest running Heavy Metal radio show and North Texas only Cajun and Zydeco show. All by volunteer DJs. To celebrate the opening of this exhibit, they will hold a KNON Music Festival and a Crawfish Boil. This exhibit features live music from **The Relatives, Andrew Jr. Boy Jones Blues Band with Kerri Lepei, Los Kombers**, and more musicians. The Festival, Exhibit and Crawfish Boil starts at 3 pm, May 13, at the Texas Musicians Museum.

Texas singer/songwriter **Davin James**, of Kingswood, probably felt the honor his friends and fans bestowed upon him in the form of more than \$72,000, raised at the **Larry Joe Taylor** Texas Music Festival in late April. James is recovering from multi-by-pass heart surgery, and was due to play the festival. However, though he is recovering, it was still a little early for him to begin playing again, so Taylor used James' time slot on the schedule to raise money to help James and his family through this hard time. It was a live auction, with multiple hunting and fishing trips offered and purchased. Plus, there was one backyard party also auctioned off, with Davin to be providing the entertainment.

Thomas Michael Riley will be hosting his yearly Music Festival on June 9-10 in Luckenbach, and one of the numerous guests on the bill is **Davin James**. Others include Riley himself, along with **Brandon Rhyder, Max Stalling Brett Watts, Jamie Richards, Robby White, Tommy Alverson**, and others of the more-classic-style country music. All the information is on his website, ThomasMichaelRiley.com.

Neal McCoy is now in his second year of daily and publically saying the "Pledge of Allegiance" to the flag, with thousands tuning in each morning to his Facebook page to join in

around the world. Even on the morning of his parent's death, he went outside to start his and everybody's day off with the pledge, then explained to his fans about his parent's having passed away.

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New Releases

Salim Nourallah, Billy Harvey and **Alex Dezen** are teaming up on a debut LP called *And the Devil Went Up to Portland*, due out on May 26. The 11-song LP features a rollicking mix of songs recorded at **Martie Maguire's (Dixie Chicks)** HEK studio in Austin. **NHD**, short for **Nourallah Harvey Dezen**, features all three musicians playfully swapping songwriting, vocal and instrumental duties.

Singer/Songwriter **Rachel Price** acknowledges her heartland roots with her new EP *Home*, set for release on May 5. The first single, "Falling Off The Earth," out now.

Austin songstress **Wendy Colonna's** new release, *No Moment but Now*, comes out May 19, and the first track, "Girls Like Me," is out to radio now.

Austin native and pop-folk songstress **Suzanna Choffel** has premiered her brand new single "Go Forth" with *Texas Monthly*. "Go Forth" is the first single off Choffel's upcoming third album, *Hello Goodbye*, to be released May 12. The CD release party is that evening at *Austin City Limits Live*.

WordSpace presents America's sex-advice columnist **Dan Savage** in an intimate performance at The Kessler on May 11 as a part of their Headliner series. Recognized as one of the most influential columnists of our time, Savage is a pioneer in sex education and social justice activism. His frank and open discussions on topics are what make Savage a highly influential writer notorious for pushing boundaries.

Rodney Crowell Close Ties New West Records

IF AGING HAS DONE ANYTHING for this timeless Americana troubadour, it has only enhanced his powerful songwriting prowess.

Rodney Crowell's *Close Ties*, is beyond a doubt the most intimate as he weaves deep personal stories that expose vulnerabilities and regrets.

From the slide guitar on track one to simple acoustic finger-picking on the last, a story unfolds like a history lesson through the poignant lyrics of each song.

"East Houston Blues" opens with a rollicking shuffle and offers a glimpse into Crowell's childhood. "I learned to drink and drive when I was twelve years old..."

In a dreamscape account on "Reckless," Crowell unveils precarious desires, while "Life Without Susanna," is heavy with bittersweet grief and goodbye.

On "It Ain't Over Yet," a gently triumphant ode to life's ups and downs, his ex-wife, Rosanne Cash and John Paul White, joins Crowell. This song is charting in the top ten on Americana Radio and the video has over 150k views on YouTube.

"I Don't Care Anymore" is retrospective about things that used to matter.

A duet with Sheryl Crow, "Tied to Ya" is an exquisite declaration.

Sorrow bleeds in sad refrain as Crowell reveals regrets on "Forgive Me Annabelle."

The longest song on the album, "Forty Miles from Nowhere," can be interpreted many ways, but the literal lyrics talk about the country where things are quiet and move slow.

"Storm Warning" could be Crowell's opinion on the changing climate around the globe.

"Nashville 1972" ends the album with a star-studded roll call of the

musical luminaries he encountered upon moving to Nashville that year.

Close Ties, produced by Jordan Lehning and Kim Buie, is quite possibly Rodney Crowell's best work to date with wry, straight-as-an-arrow stories about his life.

—JAN SIKES

Reverend KM Williams Solo in Switzerland Independent release

THIS CD, RECORDED LIVE DURING a performance at the 2016 Blues Rules Festival in Crissier, Switzerland showcases the Reverend KM Williams doing what he does best — bringing the truth of Texas Blues to the world.

With his customary raw, unvarnished enthusiasm, KM Williams delivers a captivating performance on these 8 tracks. His robust guitar style is hypnotic in its rhythmic simplicity. And his lyrics are as heartfelt and genuine as his between-song interactions with the audience. There is never any artifice at his shows. With KM, what you get is always honest.

It's hard to tell who is enjoying themselves more: KM or the audience. And that's the key to his popularity: his music is blues, but it is a joyful blues. Music that lifts your spirit; and, physically, moves your body and soul.

Although back home in Texas he often performs with a full band, this CD is a testament to his power as a solo performer. Solo recordings can sound empty, but not one by The "Texas Country Blues Preacher," as he is also known. Whether on 6-string acoustic, electric or cigar box guitar, his accompaniment is always in perfect harmony with his vocal.

Taken from a

soundboard recording at the festival, the project was mastered and the cover designed by Scott Lindsey. Lindsey manages to impart a crispness without losing the warmth of the live performance.

Revered KM Williams: *Solo In Switzerland* is a worthy and important addition to your CD collection.

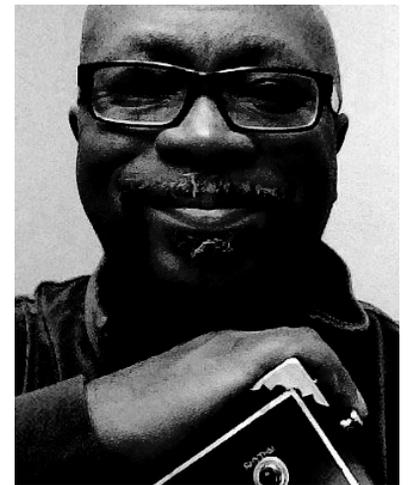
—BLUE LISA

"Live the Life" talks about rolling your windows down and going with the flow. A Cajun flavor comes out on "Bayou Got the Best of Me."

"Keep You Rollin' On" speaks of whatever it takes to keep moving forward regardless of what has knocked you for a loop. "Indian Summer" slows it down with mellowed-to-perfection acoustic guitar work and clever wordplay.

From start to finish, this CD is a dynamic showcase for the red hot Drugstore Gypsies. The writing, vocals, instrumentation and production are flawless. If you love honest rock 'n' roll with a Southern flavor, you'll love this group. Visit their website at thedrugstoregypsies.com for tour info.

—JAN SIKES



KM Williams

Tim Alexander

In Memoriam 1951-201

THE RICH TAPESTRY OF TEXAS music has another gently worn hole with the passing of keyboardist Tim Alexander on April 8. For decades, Alexander played as a legendary fixture in the Texas music scene for his work with pretty much anything with a keyboard, from pianos and organs to synthesizers and accordion.

He is best known for his years with Asleep at the Wheel, where he wrote, played, toured and earned five Grammy Awards for his work with The Wheel. He was a multi-faceted artist as a player, producer and composer. He collaborated with dozens of artists across Texas.

Much of his collaborative work was shared with artists dedicated to renewing and preserving traditional forms of Texas music like Asleep at the Wheel, Don Walsler, Tom Morrell, Sons of the San Joaquin and Red Stegall. His work in that area was masterful, but Alexander's play transcended genre and dovetailed into multiple expressions of Texas music.

Alexander also worked extensively with the Reverend Horton Heat, Eleven Hundred Springs, Elvis T. Busboy and the Blues Butchers, and his friend Jim Suhler of Jim Suhler and Monkey Beat on multiple projects.

Suhler said, "Tim was a gentleman, and a gentle man. I never heard him raise his voice in the 25 plus

years I knew him, and I've never heard a bad word about him. His musical talent and credentials were beyond reproach, but his qualities as a friend and a human being are what made him special."

Fortunately for Texas music world, Alexander leaves a deep impression that will always be remembered through his impressive and eclectic body of work. To get a good feel for his play, the obvious and easy choice would be any of Asleep at the Wheel's work from around 1985 through the turn of the century.

Putting *Eight the Hard Way* by Eleven Hundred Springs or *Live at The Kessler* by Jim Suhler and Monkey Beat on your play list will give you the opportunity to hear some of

his most recent contributions. To pay respects to the full slate of Tim Alexander's prowess; pick up a copy of The Reverend Horton Heat's 2009 release of *Laughin' & Cryin'*, where Alexander produced, played Piano, Accordion and Bajo Sexto on multiple tracks.

Tim Alexander is survived by his wife and soul mate, Jennifer, brother Brian (Yori) Alexander, nephew Kevin Alexander, niece Leslie Alexander, mother-in-law Louise Danna, sister-in-law Sheila Holmes and her husband Mark Ralph. All who came in contact with him whether through family, friendship or music will miss him.

—SHAWN HENDERSON



He earned five Grammy's with Asleep at the Wheel: Tim Alexander

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