

Celebrating 50 Years!

# BUDDY

SPRING 2023

*The Country Music Magazine*

## MIRANDA LAMBERT

**FROM TEXAS BARROOMS  
TO VEGAS SHOWROOMS**



**WALLACE-STACY  
JOINING FORCES FOR  
POWERHOUSE ALBUM**

**JIMMIE VAUGHAN  
RESURRECTING ROME INN VIBE**

**CES 2023:  
THE BUDDY REPORT**

**FREE**



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## SPRING 2023

## BUDDY

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2023 is already looking to be another busy year for **State Fair Records**. In late January, **Jackson Scribner & Billy Law** are playing the **Kessler Theater** together to commemorate their European Fall Tour they did together in Sweden. This show was presented by KXT and proved to be a memorable evening.

**Matt Hillyer** is kicking off the New Year in style at the **MusicFest** in Steamboat, CO and then he heads off on a West Coast Tour supporting **Dale Watson** from late January into February. His solo album **Glorieta** is due for release on Feb 25th on both vinyl / cd and all the streaming services and he's confirmed for a show at The Kessler Theater on March 25th. 2023 will definitely be a busy year for Matt as he will continue to tour around Texas and the Southwest promoting his solo release.

**Nathan Mongol Wells** from the cowpunk band, **The Ottoman Turks** has also been busy recording his first solo album with **John Pedigo** of **The O's / Pedigo's Magic Pilsner** whose engineering and producing

the album along with Nathan. The Turks will continue to play regionally throughout the year as well, but look for news on Nathan's solo release later this winter.

**John Dufilho** from **The Deathray Davies / CLIFFFS / JDJR** amongst many other bands and projects he's involved in, has yet another musical guise to add to his long list of creative endeavors. He'll be releasing a solo album under the moniker **John Buffalo**. This will definitely be a musical departure from anything he's released before, so be on the lookout for that later this year.

**Jackson and Levi Scribner** are going into **Consolvo Studios** in East Dallas with the Grammy-winning engineer, now Austin-based, **Stuart Sikes (The Walkmen, White Stripes, Loretta Lynn)** to record his self-titled follow up due out later this year.

Lastly, the offshoot program **The State Fair Records, Singles Club** has a stocked roster for 2023. **SFR Singles Club** is designed to champion local and national artists who aren't on the label but that we want to spotlight as true talent. "We just want to release songs and shine

a light on these artists who are producing amazing music," said State Fair Record's **Jeff Ryan**.

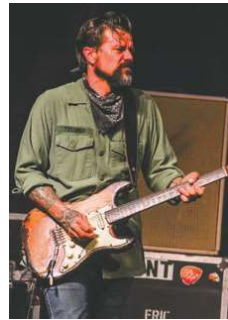
**The Longhorn Ballroom** is kicking off its long-awaited grand re-opening with **Asleep At The Wheel** on Thursday, March 30. Other upcoming shows include **Old Crow Medicine Show** with **Joshua Ray Walker**, Friday, March 31, **Morgan Wade** and **Lucero** with **Kaitlin Butts**, Saturday, April 1, **Ween** on April 25, and **Emmylou Harris**, Saturday, April 22nd.

From our vault of "missed items of note" that occurred during the **BUDDY Magazine** pandemic leave, **Mouse and the Traps** released a fantastic set of tunes entitled, **Walking In Dylan's Shoes**, a tribute to **Bob Dylan**. It features 14 Dylan covers, with tunes like "Just Like Tom Thumb's Blues," "Highway 61 Revisited," "Like A Rolling Stone," and many others.

**The Nervebreakers** have just a few copies left of their limited edition vinyl release, entitled **Face Up To Reality**. It is a beautifully packaged disk on thick red vinyl, and sounds as great as it looks...

Music journalist and music historian **John Lomax III** (of the famed Lomax music

family) is going out on the road, performing a one-man show about his family, and



**Eric Tessmer**  
Zoe White/Sweetazurephotos

giving life to songs from the past. He has released a new album by **John Lomax Jr.**, entitled **Folk - Live**. There are 18 tracks, and each song is aptly described in historical detail.

**Marcus Jones**, drummer and founder of the band **The Found**, says they are currently recording, with plans to release new music in the Spring. He also says they are planning to play more performances outside of their long-standing Thursday night gig at **The Free Man**. For the last seven years, **BUDDY Magazine** publisher **Rob Garner** has been telling anyone who will listen that **The Found** is hands-down one of the best bands in Texas.

It was an axe-fest at the **Granada Theatre** last January 6 with **Eric Tessmer** and **Chris Duarte**. Photographer **Zoe White** of **SweetAzurePhotos** was on hand to capture all the action. Check your socials for more great shots from **Sweetazurephotos...**

**MCA Nashville** released 70's era **Joe Ely** recordings on vinyl on February 17. They include **Joe Ely**, **Honky Tonk Masquerade**, and **Down on the Drag...**

**BUDDY Magazine** Publisher Emeritus **Ron McKeown** will be inducted into the 8th annual **Dallas Songwriters Association Hall of Fame**. The ceremony will be held on April 15th, 2023 at Love and War in Plano. McKeown is being honored for decades of service to the Texas music community.

Beloved Oak Cliff guitarist, **David Brown**, died November 12, 2022, at the age of 70 in Lodi, CA. Best known for his years with **Texas Rock and Brownhawk**, David was a consummate showman who played with so much joy. "David was a great friend and one of the best guitar players I had the pleasure to know," said **Rocky Athas**.

David was "one of the most beautiful souls I've ever known," **Bart Campi** recalled. "He would always tell me, 'When you see Stevie, tell him I'm gonna take him to Kiest Park and whoop his ass.' And Stevie would always say the same back, and grin."

Garland native **Cedric Moore** picked up a Japan tour with **Marcus Miller** last September. He joins an elite group of drummers to fill that chair for bassist Miller, who is nothing short of contemporary jazz royalty. You can catch Moore playing around North Texas with the **Funky Knuckles**.

**Ginny Mac** has been tearing up the road with **Asleep At The Wheel** for the last few months. We at **BUDDY Magazine** believe that Mac joining AATW is the one of best things to happen to Western Swing since it became our official "State Music of Texas" back in 2011...

As we went to press, we heard the sad news that Dallas guitarist **Michael McCullough** has died. A March 31 Memorial is planned. The fleet-fingered **BUDDY Magazine Texas Tornado, Class of 1997** was a dear friend and will be sorely missed. ■

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# Miranda Lambert: From Texas Barrooms To Vegas Showrooms

By Kate Stow

Twenty years ago, Texans knew that Miranda Lambert was the queen of country music. It didn't take long before the rest of the world knew it, too.

With ten studio albums under her belt and dozens of awards, the 2022 ACM Triple Crown Award winner is now performing the ultimate gig: Las Vegas. Miranda Lambert's residency at the Velvet Rodeo at Planet Hollywood Resort & Casino kicked off the first of 24 shows on September 23, 2022, and runs through 2023.

"It has been a really cool journey putting together this show. It's something very different from touring and very creative. I loved getting to do more production than we ever have on the road," Miranda recently told *BUDDY*.

**"My manager and I have great communication when it comes to big career decisions – and also personal ones – that is key for any team"**

## The Journey

The journey from Lindale, Texas to Vegas has taken Miranda all over the world and landed her as one of the most awarded country music artists in history. The 2022 ACM Entertainer of the Year has achieved much more than the young lady from Lindale could foresee.

In a 2005 interview

with *BUDDY*, 21-year-old Miranda said "No matter what I'm singing, I want to say something that makes people think. I want people to hear my songs and feel something. I want to be appreciated as someone whose music is real. I want to be thought of as a true artist, not just as an 'entertainer.'"

As the most decorated artist in the history of the Academy of Country Music, Lambert has earned 37 ACM Awards, including the current ACM Entertainer of the Year title and a record-setting nine consecutive Female Artist of the Year Awards, 14 CMA Awards, three GRAMMY Awards, the Nashville Symphony Harmony Award, ACM Gene Weed Milestone Award and the ACM Song of the Decade Award.

It all started when her dad, Rick Lambert, gave 14-year-old Miranda a guitar. She had the fire even back then, practicing four hours a day. Rick – at the time, an undercover Dallas narcotics officer – played on the weekends with his group "Contraband," and his daughter often came along on gigs to sing with them.

She soon had a band of her own, called "Texas Pride," and was singing her own songs. Parents Rick and Bev recorded her 2001 self-titled CD and bought an old camper to travel in while promoting it.

## Nashville

Miranda moved to Nashville in 2002 and was on the Nashville Star TV competition, where she placed third out of 8,000 contestants. Shortly after signing a contract in 2003 with Sony, she started working on her first studio CD, *Kerosene*.

"I always say that *Nashville Star* saved me from five more years in the honky-tonks. But I was still scared to death to sign that recording

contract," Miranda told *BUDDY* in 2005.

Since that first release, Miranda's fans have tracked her moods by the songs she writes. Through the years, her loves, losses and rebounds have told her tale, seemingly with her finger on the pulse of the world. Even if you know nothing about the lady, she has at least one song you can relate to.

From the raunchy, no punches pulled, forceful drive of *Kerosene*, to the woeful, heartbreaking *Tin Man*, Miranda Lambert's songs say something. Indeed, she has achieved her original goal of making listeners "feel something."

Sometimes those feelings aren't conventional sentiments – sometimes they are awkward and – well, human. Songs like "Ugly Lights" and "Vice" that speak about "the Monday morning walk of shame" and "some place where my past can't run me down," give women permission to be unapologetically flawed – and they love her for it.

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut the live entertainment industry down, Miranda took advantage of that time to rest, write and enjoy life. After the years of constant touring, crisscrossing the nation that started in 2006 opening for Dierks Bentley, she deserved the time off.

## Balance and Happiness

"I have learned balance in my life finally," Miranda said. "Taking time to live and experience things instead of working non-stop is so important." I do think 2020 helped with that lesson for sure."

Miranda's fan club, called "Ran Fans," have noticed a happy lilt in her music since marrying Brendon McLoughlin in 2019 and becoming a stepmother to his young son. Wildcard,

released the same year, includes the song "Settling Up"; the accompanying video features the happy couple together.

The happiness continued with 2021's *The Marfa Tapes*, which features only Miranda, Jack Ingram and Jon Randall. The album *Palomino*, released in April 2022 has all the familiar feels that Miranda's music invokes – sentimental, happy, sad, funky and spunky (the single "Geraldine" is a pleasant earworm).

"I think I am a little of each song on *Palomino* right now," Miranda remarked. "I spent a month on the road this summer with my husband traveling in our Airstream and got to live out some of the adventures we wrote about on the record."

That extended Airstream vacation was spent with Miranda's backup singer, Gwen Sebastian. "She and her husband Louis (Newman), who is also a musician, are so easy to be around and it helps that we have the same schedule most of the time," Miranda said. "We both took the Airstreams out west this summer and had a blast wandering around together."

Gwen has been singing with Miranda for a decade, so it's no wonder the two are comfortable with each other's company on and off the road. "...we are the only

two girls in the band, so we are pretty much inseparable," Miranda explained. "It's fun to have a gal pal out on the road to go do things with, and also during our off time we still spend a lot of time together."

## The Team

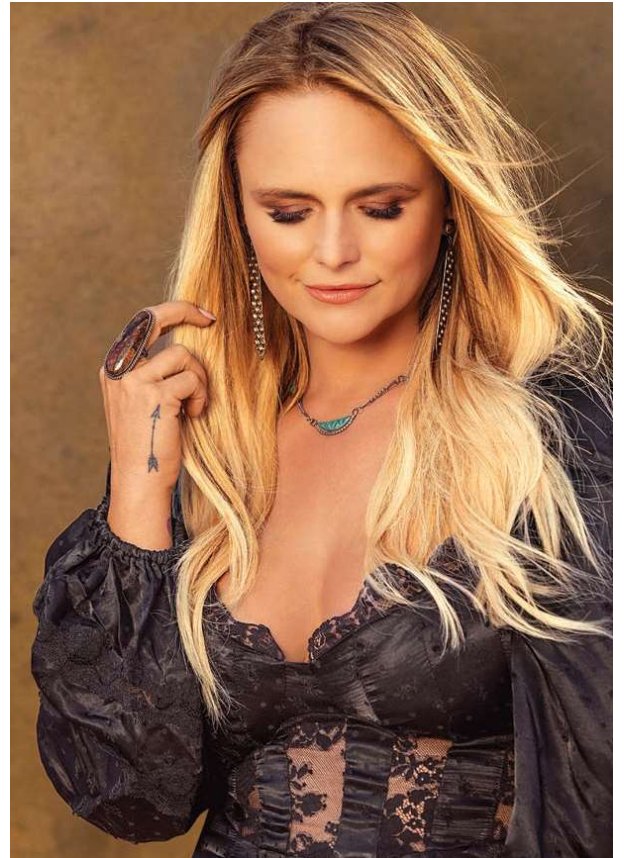
Miranda is tight with every member of her team – from the band to her wardrobe and hair stylists. Every decision is discussed in advance. Right before the live 2017 ACM Awards show, Miranda felt that she should perform alone, even though her band was backstage ready to go on. The team echoed her feeling, and the result was a flawless acoustic performance of "Tin Man" to a silent, packed room.

"I am very lucky to have the team I have around me. I have had the same manager, Marion Kraft, since I was 19 and we built this thing together. I have also had the same business managers, Duane Clark and Joel Shideler, and my booking agent, Joey Lee, since I was

19. It has definitely been a group effort to build this career. My publicists, Ebie McFarland and Janet Buck, are newer team members, but they fit right in and round out the perfect team. I have an amazing road family as well that keeps the show on the road," Miranda said.

"My manager and I have great communication when it comes to big career decisions – and also personal ones – so I think that is key for any team: to listen to each other and make the best judgment call for the situation, like singing "Tin Man" last minute because it was the right thing to do. I'm glad we talked it out beforehand and all felt good about it," she added.

Managing the world of Miranda Lambert does truly take a whole team; besides her own music, she is a member of the trio Pistol Annies. She also has her own clothing line, boots, The Pink Pistol Boutique in Lindale, and a winery (Rick and Bev run the store and Red55 Winery, also in Lindale).





## Roses

In 2015, Certified Roses, Inc. named a pink hybrid tea rose after Miranda and pledged a percentage of sales to her MuttNation Foundation, a 501(c)(3) Nonprofit. The honor is usually given to members of royalty or other dignitaries.

To be counted among the likes of Queen Elizabeth

and Jacquelyn Kennedy Onassis is, Miranda says, "pretty dang cool. Being from East Texas (Tyler is the Rose Capital), roses have always been a part of our household. I love that MuttNation Foundation can benefit from something else that makes people happy. And pink is my favorite color, so it's fitting."

Another big boost to

the Foundation will be the \$1.00 per ticket that Planet Hollywood is donating to the nonprofit that Miranda and Bev founded in 2009 to ensure that as many dogs as possible can have a safe and happy place to call home.

"I'm just very happy that the platform I have can be used for something

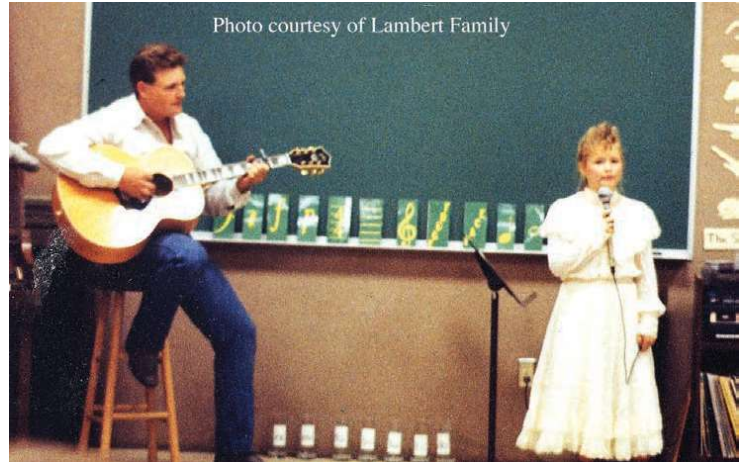


Photo courtesy of Lambert Family

as near and dear to my heart as shelter animals, and that I can be an advocate for them," Miranda remarked, adding a list of her furbabies. "We currently have five rescue dogs, three cats, six horses, two mini horses and two goats."

While she makes her home in Tennessee these days, she visits her hometown of

Lindale a few times a year. "My favorite thing to do is hang in my mom's backyard and see old friends," Miranda said. "I also love Petty's restaurant. It's a meat and three and it tastes like home."

For the Ran Fans who can't make it to Las Vegas to see their girl in concert, Miranda has encouraging words. "I think

I will always tour to some degree, so yes we will be back roaming after the Velvet Rodeo residency ends, but I'm happy to be in Vegas for now."

*Photos: Left, Miranda and dad Rick pose on their porch at home; above, Rick accompanies young Miranda. Photos provided by Rick Lambert. ■*

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# Wallace-Stacy: A musical match made in...Grover's

By Kate Stow

A chance meeting during an all-star jam at Grover's Bar and Grill resulted in a collaboration that will, no doubt, be considered legendary one day. It was there that Rachel Stacy's rich bluesy voice caught the ear of Texas guitar legend and 1982 *BUDDY* Texas Tornado Jimmy Wallace.

While Rachel has performed in many genres, she has most recently used her classical violin training to give her new country music a bluegrass flavor.

"Rachel has been concentrating on her country

sound, but there are many ingredients in Rachel," said Jimmy. "She has a remarkable natural blues sound that goes along with what I'm doing."

Together with Jimmy's Stratoblaster drummer Mike Gage (1987 Texas Tornado), the two have been busy in the studio recording a much-anticipated album, scheduled for a Spring release.

"People use the word 'album' loosely these days, but we have recorded a full-blown album in a professional studio with professional musicians and engineers," explained Jimmy, whose first studio

experience was with his high school band, "The Mint," who appeared on the 1971 LP, *A New Hi* that featured Oak Cliff high school bands, including "Cast of Thousands," which featured Kimball student "Steve" Vaughan.

When Rachel and Jimmy discovered how well their sounds meshed, the collaboration was a no-brainer. "We literally flipped a coin to decide whose name comes first," Jimmy explained.

While Rachel has been busy promoting her *Trouble* CD, Wallace stays busier than a cat in a room full of rocking chairs. Besides running his Jimmy Wallace Guitars store in Garland and gigging with The Stratoblasters, he is also the CEO of the Dallas International Guitar Fest (DIGF).

This will be the 45th year for DIGF – scheduled for May 5-7 at the Dallas Market Hall. While there are many other guitar festivals and markets in the world, none are as big or as well-attended as DiGF. The three-day affair offers several stellar performances by big-name talent, and features a contest for young pickers and strummers – the "10 Under 20 Contest." Many of Texas' best performers – such as this month's cover girl, Miranda Lambert – have won that first-place

title. Other winners include Maren Morris and 2022 *BUDDY* Texas Tornado Ally Venable.

Rachel has recently performed with Texas legends Ray Wylie Hubbard and Guthrie Kennard.

The trio met up at the Zone Recording Studio in Dripping Springs and collaborated on four tracks of her 2021 album, *Trouble*: "The Ghost of Lishe Jackson," "Take a Little Time," "Trouble" and "The Night."

The video for "Trouble" was produced at Lizzy Gator Studios. The wardrobe team of Elizabeth Duncan and Torrie Wallace designed a denim dress for Rachel just for the shoot. Set in New Orleans, the video includes snakes, gators and a voodoo witch.

"That song and shoot was awesome," Rachel exclaimed. "We had a great team that came together, and it magically worked – it was good energy."

That wasn't Rachel's

first trip to the recording studio, though – her previous records were released in 2005, 2008, and her 2015 album, *Full Circle*. In 2017 she released "Boomerang," which reached No. 30 on the Music Row Chart – the only independent single to do so.

There's a good reason why Hubbard, Kennard and Jimmy Wallace are putting their money on her.

Calling her career "a curse and a blessing," Rachel insists she is not trying to be a star. "I'm trying to spread the love through music: stay strong, stay fast, do it sober."

Add "relevant" to the list of things Rachel is

not trying to be. "I'm just trying to do what I do," she explains. "I'm a survivor, I'm a worker, and I love what I do."

Considering the level of talent that Jimmy has performed with over the years, it speaks volumes about Rachel when he says he is "excited" about their partnership. The veteran guitarist counts among his collaborators: Bugs Henderson, Rocky Athas, Todd Rundgren, Johnny Winter, Willie Nelson, Albert King, Eddie Van Halen, Ted Nugent, Keith Richards and George Lynch.

With the Wallace-Stacy album almost ready for its debut, you'll likely get a taste of it when they take the DIGF stage this May. ■

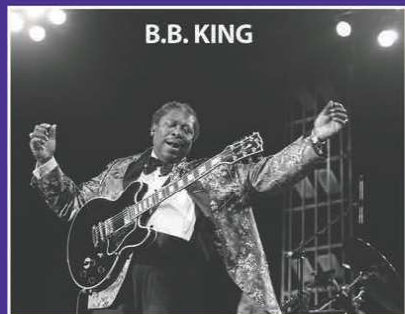


Photo courtesy of SEVENpillarsphotography



Photo by Robert C. Maxfield II

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# BUDDY Magazine's 2023 CES Roundup

By Rob Garner

The 2023 Consumer Electronics Show returned to Las Vegas on January 3rd, after a brief pandemic hiatus. Past attendance for CES was between 200,000 to 250,000, but this "smaller" comeback show had an estimated attendance of 100,000, which has been touted as the largest indoor gathering in the USA since the pandemic began.



High-tech Buddy Holly styled smart glasses. Photos by staff.

This year's show featured a newly constructed West Hall of the Las Vegas

Convention Center, adding to the already massive convention complex. Three **BUDDY** Magazine staffers each walked about 20 miles per day at the show, checking out literally hundreds of new products and displays. Perhaps the biggest show-stopper was seeing the large-scale hologram technology. The **HYPERVSN** booth provided a "phygital experience" for non-stop throngs of wide-eyed gawkers. One platform featured a 2-story hologram of Mark Cuban, giving a truly larger-than-life talk. We would place our bets on seeing much more of this tech rolling out on the strip in Las Vegas in large scale form, while making deeper footprint into branding and advertising in the

not-too-distant future. It is absolutely stunning to experience in a live setting,



Hologram of Mark Cuban CES 2023.

and pics and video do not do it justice.

Here are some of our other top finds at the show.

## Fuse Audio Vertical Turntable

<https://fuseaudio.net/>

Though this turntable

was released a couple of years ago, it was one of our favorite pieces of hardware at the show. Making a vertical turntable that actually works efficiently and accurately is an engineering feat in-and-of-itself. Regarding the physics and design on the turntable, Fuse Audio's Aaron Thompson gave us this run down:

"We use a variety of measures to ensure a smooth playback that minimizes wear and tear on records. The biggest factor that affects our players is the reduction of the force of gravity. To offset the reduced gravitational force we counterbalance with (several different) mechanisms. (The) platter angle is set to 85° instead of 90°. This ensures that even if a record has a wobble, gravity can assist with keeping the tone arm in position and reading the vinyl. We use a large spring-loaded counterweight as our anti-skate mechanism. This is a larger weight than would

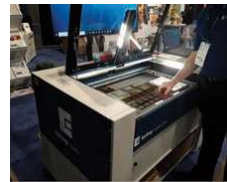
be used for a traditional turntable. A tracking force of 4g keeps the needle in the groove. By removing most of the gravitational force that is applied to a traditional turntable's tone arm, a higher tracking force is required to ensure consistent playback. This tracking force is within recommended specs for the Audio-Technica AT3600L needle cartridge. A magnetic clamp is used to mount/release vinyl to/from the platter mat quickly. This keeps vinyl stabilized and ensures proper vinyl playback speed.

We have played our Bob Marley vinyl over



Fuse Audi Verticle Turntable, spinning some multicolored Bob Marley vinyl

a thousand times with minimal wear on the record."



On-site machine used for many different musical instrument engraving applications. Engraving machine starting prices: Approximately \$10,000 for entry level units.

Amazon Price at time of pressing: \$219.99

## Epilog Laser Engraving Machine

[www.epiloglaser.com](http://www.epiloglaser.com)

Epilog is the etching machine of choice for many musical instrument manufacturers, including Rickenbacker, Deering Banjos, Schecter, and Grover Jackson Guitars. It can etch on glass, metal, wood, and other surface types. It is commonly used in the instrument industry for custom pickguards, fingerboards, and inlays. An Epilog rep told *Buddy*

# Longhorn

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## A LEGEND RETURNS 2023.



that Taylor also uses their machine for cutting the spruce reinforcements used in some of their acoustic guitar bodies.

#### Audio Technica ATH-M50xSTS StreamSet™ Headset For Digital Creators



[www.audio-technica.com](http://www.audio-technica.com)  
Audio-Technica debuted the ATH-M50xSTS StreamSet™, designed for digital streamers and content creators, which combines the studio sound of the ATH-M50x headphones, with the clarity of their 20 Series microphones. The ATH-M50xSTS is equipped with

a cardioid condenser microphone, and two distinct ear pad styles to be utilized according to preference. MSRP: \$199.00

#### Audio-Technica Sound Burger Turntable Re-Release

In commemoration of their 60th anniversary, Audio-Technica also released a limited-edition Sound Burger portable turntable in November, over forty years after its original debut. An Audio-Technica representative told *BUDDY Magazine*, “The Sound Burger sold out globally in two days, before we started our promotion of it. We are going to bring this back as part of our standard line in spring of this year. It is a serious piece of audio equipment.” The Sound Burger is an entry-level machine in terms of both features and price. With Bluetooth

and USB-C connectivity, Audio Technica says the Sound Burger is useful for parties, outdoor gatherings, and that it fits in well with smaller living spaces. It connects to Bluetooth headphones or speakers for up to 12 hours of wireless record listening. MSRP: \$199

#### Roland 50th Anniversary Concept Piano

Roland USA featured a stunning organically-modern piano with their 50th Anniversary Concept Piano. It was showcased with drone speakers – yes, flying drones – that hover above the keyboard, and can conceivably fly over an audience or listener to literally find the sweet spot in any room. They were unable to demo these speakers inside the conference hall, however, due to restrictions by the Federal Aviation Administration, which regulates drone airspace – indoors, or out.

Here is how Roland describes the speaker design built into the concept piano:  
“The key was a 360-degree speaker, a “speaker ball” capable of firing sound in any direction. By placing them in critical areas of the piano - namely the lid and top edges – Roland Piano General Manager Takahiro Murai could reproduce the sound of any piano. To

achieve this, they needed an unprecedented number of speakers. “There are 14 general 360-degree speakers,” (said Murai), “seven on the right and seven on the left. This unique 14-speaker array can recreate a three-dimensional sound space not achievable with conventional stereo speaker systems found on digital pianos.” Roland also says

“the new system could faithfully reproduce the immersive sound fields of acoustic vertical pianos or grand pianos. This completely changes the breadth of the sound and the width of the expression. Ultimately, it doesn’t sound like listening to speakers. The experience is closer to being surrounded by natural piano sounds.” ■



Photo by Kate Stow

On February 4-5, KNON and the Trinity River Blues Society held the 23rd annual Bluesfest at Poor David’s Pub in Dallas. Performers included: Anson Funderburg, Christian Dozzler, Hash Brown, Leo Hull, Jim Suhler, B’Nois King, The E Flat Porch Band, Shawn Pittman and more. To read the complete story and see more photos, go to: [buddymagazine.com](http://buddymagazine.com).





# Jimmie Vaughan: Reliving the “Old Austin” Vibe

By Kirby Warnock

Upon arriving in Austin, the self-proclaimed “live music capital of the world,” most newcomers hear a common refrain: “You should have been here in the 70s/80s. You really missed it.”

This usually follows a listing of now-defunct nightclubs that once held sway, such as The Rome Inn, Soap Creek Saloon, The Armadillo World Headquarters, The One Knite and Castle Creek. Yes, to most folks there is the belief that the good old days are gone forever, and the “new” Austin may be shiny, hip, and cool during SXSW, but it’s really a bit sterile.

As former *Austin Chronicle* writer, and blogger, Michael Corcoran wrote: “Just as there are two SXSWs, there are two Austin’s. What you loved about this town when you first moved here is still there, you just have to look for it.”

And nowhere does that statement ring truer than at C-Boys, a little club down on South Congress, in the shadow of downtown. Owned by Steve Wertheimer, who used to run the legendary Rome

Inn, C-Boys is named after the black man who used to manage that club. His real name was Louis Charles Parks but he got the nickname C-Boy because he was a cook in the Army.

The Rome Inn became legendary because of its two “residencies” - that is, bands who always played on a certain night of the week. On Sundays, it was Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble, but on Mondays, it was The Fabulous Thunderbirds, the hottest band in Austin in the late 70’s.

With Jimmie Vaughan on guitar and Kim Wilson on vocals and harmonica, Monday nights at the Rome Inn was the place to be. Major rock stars like Bob Dylan, Dickie Betts and Billy Gibbons could be spotted in the crowd on Blue Monday. Billy Gibbons even wrote a song about it for ZZ Top’s *Deguello* LP, “Low Down in the Street.”

Sadly, the Rome Inn was sold and eventually became a bakery. To

add insult to injury, the building burned down a year ago.

But for those still looking for the heart of a Saturday night in Austin, you can find it at C-Boys, where the Mike Flanigan Trio featuring Jimmie Vaughan plays regular gigs on Fridays and Saturdays, whenever Jimmie is in town.

Yep, when he is not on the road with Eric Clapton, Steve Miller or fronting his Tilt-a-Whirl Band, Jimmie can be heard playing with the Mike Flanigan Trio on the small stage at C-Boys.

band, Storm, and later the T-Birds. It’s a strange experience to stand on the dance floor, only three feet from Jimmie just two nights after he was playing Madison Square Garden in New York City, but that’s part of his appeal.

“I like to keep my chops up,” he explains nonchalantly (as if after 57 years of performing he still needs to practice). Plus, it doesn’t matter where I am, on Friday night I’ve got a gig somewhere.”

The crowd is a mix of “old Austin” (I saw Gretchen Barber there the night I



The band usually starts up around 10:30 pm, throwing down the clean, Texas blues that Jimmie made famous with his early

attended) and 20-some-things, newcomers who have no idea what the Rome Inn was, or (and this may be blasphemy) who Jimmie Vaughan is. But they cram the small dance floor to shimmy and shake to the righteous Texas blues as only Vaughan can play them.

At 71, Jimmie has become the stand-in for the older blues men who used to attract a youthful crowd. I was lucky enough in my younger days to see some legendary blues men like Freddie King, Muddy Waters, B.B. King and Lightnin’ Hopkins perform in person. In an odd sort of way, you can experience that by seeing another



A 90's era portrait of Jimmie Vaughan.  
Photo by James Bland

living blues legend playing at C-Boys.

The Fabulous Thunderbirds’ first album was appropriately titled *Girls Go Wild*, and on this Friday night on South Congress Avenue, there is a new generation of 20-something girls vibrating on the dance floor. Vaughan and Mike Flanigan lay down a raft of standards, including “Can’t Sit Down” and “Scratch My Back” that gets your feet to moving, but it’s when he goes into “Texas Flood” that you see what made his younger brother, Stevie Ray Vaughan, pick up the guitar.

It is not lost on me that Jimmie lived the first half of his life with everyone referring to Stevie as “Jimmie’s younger brother” and today Vaughan is known (rightly or wrongly) as “Stevie Ray Vaughan’s older brother.”

As Bobette Riner wrote in *The Houston Press*, “We know the Vaughan brothers’ hits, together and separately, and their status in the R&B firmament in Dallas, the home of the King. But until now, the *hoi polloi* has been largely ignorant about the older Vaughan brother, who

opened for Jimi Hendrix at age 15, and later took a sabbatical from his own long-time career to cut a record with Stevie Ray.”

With Stevie’s tragic death in a helicopter accident in 1990, Jimmie has not only had to carry on the family name but live with the constant comparisons to Stevie. It’s an unfair standard, because they each had their own distinct styles, but it’s Jimmie who has had to bear the burden.

But if there was any melancholy about carrying that mantle, it wasn’t shown on Friday night. Jimmie had the crowd in the palm of his hand, and they shared the love, dancing, shouting and just having the time of their lives.

There are other, nicer clubs in Austin, and some have a VIP status, but if you want to really enjoy yourself and hear the music that made this town “the live music capital of the world” you need to check the C-Boy’s calendar and catch the Mike Flanigan Trio featuring Jimmie Vaughan one Friday or Saturday whenever he’s in town.

You won’t be sorry. Trust me on this. ■





# Space Opera

By George Gimarc

It can take decades to have an imprinted bit of data become useful. That happened to me recently when I was archiving some materials that came from the estate of producer Phil York. Among them, was this reel, nearly totally absent from any identification EXCEPT on the back of the box. "1/4 track 2nd Part Delbert & play."

Well, I know that Phil worked a lot with Delbert McClinton in the early days - perhaps it's something from that. But alas, when I finally got it to spin up, it was obviously not Delbert. It was a 50 minute live tape, recorded on a 1/4 track deck (one channel only) and at a really low level. Even so, I was able to do my typical restoration work and got a nice dub. Now - who was the band?

A few minutes into the show, comes a song. It's the very song that I had heard a 40-second clip of back in 1981. It appeared in the middle of a 1973 KZEW commercial that Jon Dillon

had cut for Gertie's. "I'm in love, that's no lie

You don't need to ask me why. 'Cause I'm high, high, high, hiii-igh."

It was exactly what I heard on the mystery tape. The band was Space Opera and the song is called "Country Max." Mystery #1 solved. But why did a progressive rock band like Space Opera have a tape in Phil York's pile-o-stuff? You gotta dig into the roots, and I don't mind doing that.

At the real roots of the 1972 debut LP by Space Opera, you find Scott Fraser and Edd Lively in a teenage garage band called The Mods. In 1966 they cut their only recording, a 45 with their original tune "Days Mind The Time" paired with a little known Lennon-McCartney song "It's For You." The single provides the big clue - Phil York was the sound engineer on the session, probably recorded at Sound City in Fort Worth.

By 1968, the Mods were updating their sound and had been joined by two

more key musicians, David Bullock and Philip White. Knocking around exploring new ideas spurred by the rapidly changing musical landscape of the times, they recorded some tunes with 20-year old T. Bone Burnett producing. Again, recording in Sound City, where Phil York was one of the owners. The result of the sessions was an LP called *The Unwritten Works of Geoffrey, Etc.* The band was hidden under the name Whistler, Chaucer, Detroit, and Greenhill, and the LP, which was lost in a sea of other releases by UNI Records, disappeared without a trace, but it showed they were no ordinary quartet. These guys had some fresh ideas.

Pressing on, Fraser (guitar, vocals), Bullock (guitar, vocals), and White (bass, vocals) dreamed up new ideas and in the spring of 1969 met jazz drummer Brett Wilson, who actually went to high school with all three. The new group came up with a better name, and launched themselves into the local scene as Space Opera. They played all the usual spots and sounded like nobody else. They rose

through the ranks quickly enough they were invited to play opening spots for big concerts which put them on the same stage as the Byrds and Jefferson Airplane - two bands that had obviously exerted a great influence on Space Opera.

For several years, they crafted their unusual sound. A little country rock, a bit of jazz, toss in some Zappa and whatever else, and they were gaining fans. But still, no vinyl to show for it all. Since DFW was a place where local music was turning to national fare, Space Opera was 'discovered' by Columbia Records, and trekked up to Toronto to cut their debut album.

The group wove together a complex tapestry with threads of psych, prog, Bryds-ish country, jazz and pop with gorgeous harmonies and unexpectedly joyous guitar solos. Judging from the number of times their songs have been streamed on YouTube nearly 40 years later, the top of the stack is "Holy River" 24K, with "Country Max" 16K and "Over And

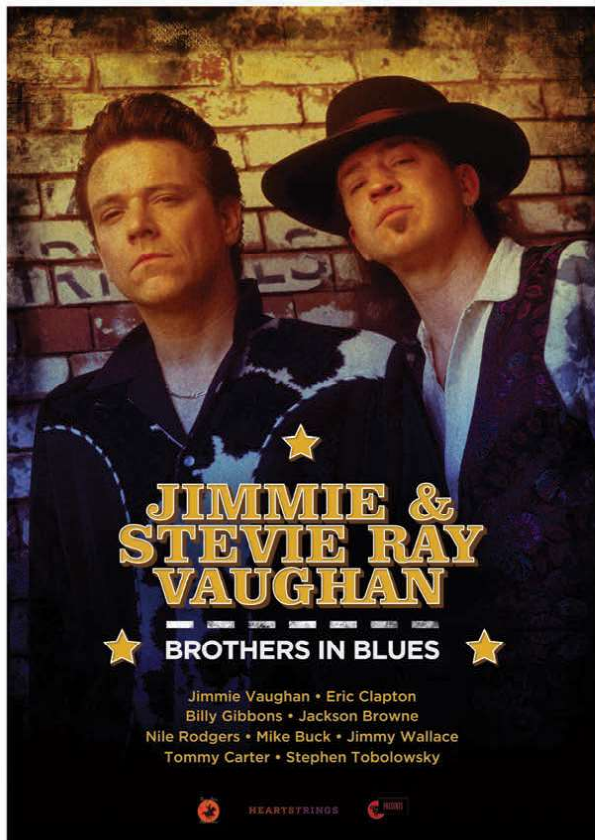
Over" close behind at 15K. "Outlines" is at 3.9K, and "My Telephone Artist" at 3.8K. These are only some of the thousands of streams of songs that haven't been available in any form since the mid '70s, and with rave reviews in the comments.

Emerging from long sessions, and months away from their home base, it was then that the complex nature of Space Opera took its toll. The band spent a long time recording and mixing. In order to replicate the complex LP in a live setting, they needed some new, custom gear, and that takes time and money. With all this while away from DFW and playing live, the band started to fade. The LP *Space Opera* hit shops in the spring of 1973 and the band played a few shows, but it just wasn't the same. They soon split up.



Despite that, the band's vinyl legacy endures and in the decades since, has become quite the collectible, and when it turns up, it could fetch \$40-\$100.

So what was the mystery tape? It is nearly 50 minutes of a live show. The venue is unknown, the date as well. But you do get to hear eight songs, five of which were not part of their album. Perhaps this is something that needs to be shared as part of their continued legacy, and that might have to see a return to vinyl as well. After all, Space Opera was not like everyone else, so why should this lost tape's return be anything typical? More to come. ■



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