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Vol.1 No.3

The Texas Music Magazine



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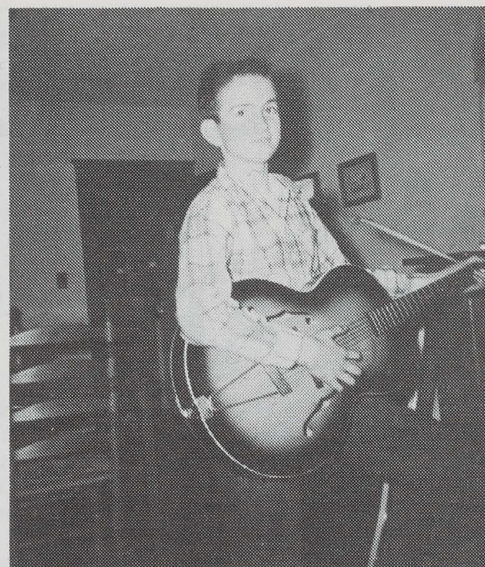
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Well, here we are again! I'm sure that this is as much of a shock to many of you as it is to me! Doesn't seem like it's been five years since issue #1 but it has, guess this is the only fanzine around that only puts out three issues in that length of time. Everyone has my apologies for the long lapse between issues and I promise (again!) to not make you wait so long for the next one.

I'm not gonna say that I hope you'll find this issue was worth the wait but, I will say that I think you'll enjoy it. There's lotsa photos throughout and, believe me, they were hard to dig up. The J-Beck/Mouse/Josefus are the main features but the Stereo Shoestring/Reasons Why/Larry&Blue Notes are equally interesting to me and, I hope, to you too. In the future I'll probably get into more of the obscure '60s Texas bands as the better known groups become well documented. There are many areas of Texas music I'd still like to touch on to one degree or another like some Tex-Mex, more '50s rock and, who knows, maybe even alittle country. It's all in the future anyway so we'll just see what happens. In any event the goal of NFA will always remain the same: Texas music past and present - the obvious and the obscure. Thanks to all of you for your support and I hope you like this issue. - D.H.



The Editor as Carl Perkins.



Number Three

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BACK ISSUES

NFA #1 - \$5 each, very few copies left.
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Cover Photos: Mouse and the Traps - 1966, Zakary Thaks - 1967 and Josefus - 1978.

CORRECTIONS AND ADDITIONS

Here's some additions to our Sir Doug discography in the last issue that have come to light:

45s

Harlem 116 issued as Cobra 116 - Sapphire/Just A Moment.
American Pla-Boy 1980 - El Paso Train/Ain't Nothing Wrong With You.

45s with Sir Doug involved

Big Guitar Sonny & The El Paso Ramblers - Reprise 961 - Catch The Man On The Rise/So Much To Say.
Jr. Parker - Blue Rock 4067 - Lovin' Man On Your Hands/Reconsider Baby.
Roy Head - Mercury 72848 - Lovin' Man On Your Hands/Ain't Going Down Right.
Louie & Lovers - Atco 6902 - El Paso/If You Ever Say You Love Me.
Rene & Rene - East Bend 209 - El Mexicano/Really Hurtin' This Guy.

MOUSE AND THE TRAPS

Mouse (Ronnie Weiss) and the Traps have become Texas legends for their high-quality '60s rock&roll. This interview should answer some of the questions and shed some light on the history of this famed group. Mouse is a good ole East Texas boy and I appreciate his taking the time to do the interview.

NFA: I guess the thing to do is start at the beginning. Where did you grow up?

Mouse: I was born in Dallas. I lived with my granddaddy during the summer, he was a pharmacist at drug stores and various places, then my parents moved to Tyler, my dad got a job there and we moved out into the country. He was from around Waco, played guitar and bass; all his family did. His brothers played fiddles and had bands and stuff, so he brought a guitar home one day, I had been playing since the 5th grade....

NFA: Now this is in Tyler?

Mouse: Yes, I started playin' trumpet and he brought this guitar home one day, I picked it up, and that was all it took.

NFA: How old were you?

Mouse: How old are you when you're in the 5th grade, 6th grade? I kinda started fooling with the guitar then. I never could read very well but I could play it if I heard it. And it came real natural, playin' did. But I wanted to play the guitar worse than I did the horn....

NFA: That's the same thing I went through, only it was a coronet then the guitar.

Mouse: I was real rhythm oriented 'cause of my father, I believe. That's really coming out now, drummers and bass players, they all like the rhythm patterns themselves.

NFA: What was your first band?

Mouse: Let's see.....I played with a guy named Joe Whitfield for awhile. We just played things, exchanged things in high school.

NFA: Around Tyler?

Mouse: Yeah, you remember a disc jockey, he just recently left KLIF but has always been in this area, Randy Robbins?

NFA: No.

Mouse: And I'll get to Jimmy Rabbit later. Well, Robbins played drums and Robin Hood Brians played piano.

NFA: In this group?

Mouse: No, they were just different musicians. All the musicians were just starting to come into their own about the time I graduated from high school. From '56-'57 until '61-'62, there was alot happening in music down there. Robin was building his studio....

NFA: What year did you graduate from high school?

Mouse: '60, and I started really playin', you might say professionally right after that, you know workin' regularly for a fellow named Steve Wright, he later got a recording studio down there and put out a record on Dot. I'm tryin' to remember the name of it....

NFA: I can't remember, I do remember Robin Hood put out a



'50s record called "Dis A Itty Bit". It's a real good Jerry Lee Lewis style poundin' piano rocker.

Mouse: Randy played drums on that.

NFA: Randy....

Mouse: Robbins, this guy I was tellin' you about. We went to school together all through junior high and high school. He played drums and David Stanley was the bass player and his brother had a band. They played around at all the joints. There were joints over in Kilgore and Gladewater and Longview, Tyler always had the private clubs and they were more white shoes, double-knits....you know.

NFA: Yeah, white belt, white shoes.

Mouse: Ray Charles had "I Can't Stop Lovin' You" goin' at the club scene....live bands were really starting to happen. So along about '65, I was playin' in a band called Jerry Vee and the Catalinas, my band. I didn't like to sing all those top 40 songs, I'd just do the ones I liked to do and doing them my way, so to speak. I could get by with it 'cause I had somewhat of a style by then.

NFA: This was Jerry Vee and the....

Mouse: Catalinas. I just hired this guy to sing. And in the band was Jerry Howell who was the organ player. He's a Baptist preacher now, so Jerry and I were playin' and so was David (Stanley) in this band. So, when Knox Henderson and I wrote the words to "A Public Execution"....

NFA: Now, let me ask you something, did this Jerry Vee and the Catalinas make any records?

Mouse: No.

NFA: So you never made any records before Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: No, I just played in Robin's studio there. I was kinda one of the staff guitarists.

NFA: You did studio work for Robin Hood....I guess there's

Left: The original Mouse and the Traps - 1966.

Right: The group in 1967.



probably awhole lot of stuff you played on?

Mouse: Oh yeah. I played on some Joe Stampley stuff, John Fred's and some of Stan's (Paula Records). Stan was cutting alot...and Jon Abnor's account was down there, the Five Americans and....

NFA: You played on some of their records?

Mouse: Not until Rabon had left, I played on some of his stuff.

NFA: There's one LP I've always seen your name on, Kell St. Camp Meeting on Paula....

Mouse: Was it a kinda gospel sounding thing?

NFA: Yeah.

Mouse: That was alot of fun, we cut that in about 6 hours. It sounds like it too....(laughter). I was playing with Joe Stampley at the time, this was in about '70 I think, or '71.

NFA: We're gettin' ahead of ourselves here....

Mouse: There was just so much happening from where you're wanting to start.

NFA: Yeah, I know, that's....

Mouse: 20 years, you know.

NFA: So, this Jerry Vee and the Catalinas evolved into Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: Buggs (henderson) had his own band, the Sensors.

NFA: I remember them.

Mouse: So, I wanted his drummer and himself. So when Knox and I wrote the words to "A Public Execution",....well, I had gone over to Robin's and cut it, and used Buddy (drums) and Buggs (guitar) on it, the band that I wanted. Of course the other two bands kinda knew what was happening. But, we were really startin' to do good at this club we were playin' at, the Ranch House. We were making, you know probably about twice as much money as any band around there. We had a good band in there, and people were comin' to hear it. Most joints, you started at 8 and played 'till 1 with 10 minute breaks and stuff like that. When we got to where we were drawin' crowds, we told them we were in the union and that we couldn't start 'till 9 and couldn't play 'till 1....(laughter). We were taking 20 minute breaks and doing all this. The guy wouldn't argue with us 'cause the crowd would be there, they

would come at 7:30 just to get a chair.

NFA: This is in Tyler?

Mouse: No, this was in Longview.

NFA: But this was the Catalinas band?

Mouse: Yeah, this was like in '64. So when I came out with that record that started doing real well in Dallas, and you know close around here, "A Public Execution"....

NFA: When that record came out there really wasn't a Mouse and the Traps? You guys still had two different bands that...

Mouse: We were still working. We all kinda talked about it, and I said well if it takes off enough to justify putting it together, we can all do it. We didn't have any real ties, nobody was tied down that much.

NFA: The bands could reform into Mouse and the Traps.

Mouse: Yeah, back then you could start a band in a week.

NFA: Let me ask you, who thought of the name, Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: Randy Robbins, the disc jockey friend of mine, just kind of gave me that nickname....I used to really enjoy and listen to Freddy King, of course like all guitar players, you worked at "Hideaway" and "Sensation". Buggs really got into it....he's such a serious instrumentalist, and I started going away from the pickin' and more into rhythm. I like to play and play lead but I like things worked up and worked out. I'm not that much of an instrumentalist like he is..... he's such a good guitar player.

NFA: He is, just great.

Mouse: I love to work with him 'cause I like the way he plays. Well, anyway we decided to stick the band together. I quit that club and Robin started booking us.

NFA: About these early stages, the single came out on Fraternity, was that because Robin Hood had a tie with them?

Mouse: Yeah.

NFA: Was there anything unusual about the session when y'all cut "A Public Execution"? Did you cut any other songs at the same time?

Mouse: We cut that song three times, it was hard to get. Because it was, we did alot of....experimenting? Whatever you want to call it.

NFA: Everyone that's ever heard it, they always notice the Dylan influence.

Mouse: I can't lie, Dylan did influence me. I mean, I really like his words, the way he came off with them. I know a slew of Dylan songs. But, I think I take them a little bit further musically than he does 'cause I think I do his songs better than he does them. But he wrote 'em, you know.

NFA: Yeah, he's always been the writer.

Mouse: He's still, you know, fantastic but I go back and listen to Highway 61, and I can't believe how out of tune it is. And I listen to my old stuff and it's the same way, I don't like it. I'm better than that now, I don't like to hear it.

NFA: Just to jump ahead a little bit, that "Public Execution" showed up on the Nuggets album when it came out in '72 or '73. You know that collection, did y'all get any compensation for that?

Mouse: No. It was rereleased about a year ago, or two years ago.

NFA: And they still haven't made any compensation to y'all.... (Mouse laughter).... never heard nothin' from them?

Mouse: Naw.

NFA: I have yet to hear of a band that was on there that ever got any money out of the deal.

Mouse: They had in there that I was from Austin.

NFA: I know, 'cause when I first read that I said, "What!?" I thought I knew all the Austin people but I never remembered you being from there.

Mouse: I played down there a lot but I was from Tyler. The band ran from about '65 to '70.

NFA: Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: Yeah.

NFA: Well, jumping back a little bit....the single came out and did real well, like a national hit. Y'all started touring I guess.

Mouse: We played and toured.

NFA: Now, who was the original line-up for Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: David Stanley on bass, Jerry Howell on organ, Buggs (Henderson) on lead, "Nardo" - Ken Murray on drums and me.

NFA: So, when y'all put the band together and the record was a hit, did you immediately hit the road and start touring around the States, or Texas?

Mouse: Yeah, we started playin' quite a bit, but it was mostly....we never did go out of the state for more than a couple months. We started playin', like everybody did back then, a lot of colleges and things like that.

NFA: Did y'all go on tour with the Elevators or the Moving Sidewalks or any of the Texas bands?

Mouse: No....we played different shows with them. We did one show with the Elevators, boy, they blew me away!

NFA: I would've loved to have seen that show, you guys and the Elevators....

Mouse: We hadn't really developed that good yet. We weren't there, you know, we didn't have enough of our own stuff right at first.

NFA: The band was just gettin' started.

Mouse: Yeah. By '67, late '66, it was starting to get pretty hot.

NFA: Where was that place you played with the Elevators?

Mouse: It was in Ft. Worth. The Elevators, the Byrds and us.

NFA: Was that at the Panther A-Go-Go or something?

Mouse: No, it was in the Will Rogers Coliseum, also did a show in Dallas with the Yardbirds.

NFA: What a show that must've been, wish they had taped those things.

Mouse: We did a lot of tours in Ohio too.

NFA: Ohio?

Mouse: See, the record company was based out of Ohio.

NFA: Yeah, Cincinnati - Fraternity Records. Did you get around on the East Coast or West Coast much?

Mouse: That is my biggest regret.

NFA: Y'all didn't tour that....

Mouse: We should have gone to Seattle, San Francisco, even L.A. "L.O.V.E. Love" was out by then and had done well up there.

NFA: Yeah, y'all did a bunch of singles. What about overseas sales? I heard they sold real well over there.

Mouse: I get some royalties every once in awhile, Sweden and different places. By '68 or '69, I believe, we had out about 11 singles.

NFA: Yeah, I've got a list of them all here. The one after "Public Execution" is "Maid Of Sugar - Maid Of Spice", that is a great record.

Mouse: That is a killer that did not go....that record did not sell shit.

NFA: That is my favorite record after "Public Execution".

Mouse: We cut that whole song in an hour and we were feelin' no pain the day we did that.... (laughter). I never will forget....everybody was just high on life at the time. I remember Buggs and David, they were standing on stools and we cut that track.

NFA: "Maid Of Sugar" is a great record, one of the best Mouse songs.

Mouse: It was a real deceiving beat. People were still dancing along about then and there was something about it that even though you thought it was fast it wasn't, 'cause I guess being in about a half-time feel. It really had....

NFA: It's got the punk sound.

Mouse: Almost disco.

NFA: Maybe disco in the rhythmic sense, but the whole overall feel is what is now considered one of the best punk records of the '60s. The '60s are the real punk golden years, some guys are tryin' to revive it today but it can't be redone like you guys did it....

Mouse: It's just timing. That's something I've learned, that after it's all gone down....when I broke up the band in '69 or '70, it was the fall of '69, I had completely run out of money. And, we were at our ropes end, and between record companies. We really didn't have any tapes cut that we could mail around, and I had tried a thing with Bell.

NFA: Yeah, now that is another great record.

Mouse: But it didn't work. They didn't push it. So (Dale) Hawkins comes up with this idea for the Rio Grande thing.

NFA: And that's another good record....I don't think anything you've ever been involved with has not been good. It's just the timing like you said, the Rio Grande album, if you would have done that two years later, it would have been....

Mouse: You see, in like '68 I started tellin' the band that, hey, there's a lot of country in me that is not coming out. I was already telling them that there was going to be country-rock, there was going to be a steel guitar in a rock band, and they're going to bring that into rock & roll. Well, Poco was the first, and it just killed me when that came out, 'cause I just knew....

NFA: They did it.

Mouse: They did it. I'd kinda been....it disappoints me that they didn't do better. They're so goddamn good, and they've never gotten the recognition, 'cause there were really some players in that band. Not only could they sing, like they compare them with the Eagles, and there's no comparison as far as playing ability to me.

NFA: Yeah, that Eagles' drummer was from Texas....what was the name of that band? Shiloh or something....

Mouse: The Felicity I think.

NFA: They ended up out in L.A. and got into the Eagles.

Mouse: That's what I was saying awhile ago about my own

regret at not going to the coast with it and not hitting the L.A. part of it. I tried so hard to do it out if here, and I still am.

NFA: With all the success y'all had I can't believe some promoter didn't drag y'all out there.

Mouse: We just didn't have the promotion.

NFA: Who was the manager? Was Robin Hood doing the managing?

Mouse: For the first period, and he just couldn't do everything. And he was tryin'....

NFA: He was doing the studio, the band and everything else?

Mouse: He was doing everything, he just had too big a load.

NFA: Who picked up after him, did you have another manager?

Mouse: Naw, we really never had a manager.

NFA: It was either you or....

Mouse: I would just book it myself, and fool with some agents.

NFA: Well, the singles list here....

Mouse: After "Maid Of Sugar" what do you got?

NFA: "Would You Believe/Like I Know You Do".

Mouse: Now "Would You Believe" is the kind of song we were forced to do, you might say. That was one of the ones I don't like to say I did.

NFA: Yeah, there are some of the records that are not as good as the others.

Mouse: They were more of what the record company wanted as opposed to what I wanted. It was that conflict there that deteriorated it, that was the beginning of the end when it got like that.

NFA: What was Knox Henderson's role in the band?

Mouse: He was a friend of mine and a friend of all the players around there. He's a songwriter and lyricist.

NFA: He didn't actually play in the band?

Mouse: Oh no, he wrote the words to "Sometimes You Just Can't Win". Where do you got that one?

NFA: It's somewhere down here, oh yeah, number 7, "Sometimes You Just Can't Win/Cryin' Inside".

Mouse: See, John Fred cut that song. I already had a track cut on it, my voice and the whole thing, Robin played it for John Fred and, at the time, John Fred had just had "Judy In Disguise" I think, and then the follow-up to that. He kinda needed one and the song knocked him out so he wanted to do it. Of course Robin had the publishing on it and he called me up and asked me if I would be offended, and I said, "Hell yeah, I would!", (laughter).....so he let him cut it. I have no hard feelin's toward him, it was just the way it went down.

NFA: The song writing.....from looking at all the records, it was spread around. Like you wrote some songs with Knox, Buggs and David Stanley....

Mouse: Yeah, we've continued to write together throughout, even tho' the band broke up, and I started playin' with Joe Stampley. Buggs came back up here and put his own group together and jobbed around a little bit. He kinda got with Nitzinger, I think.

NFA: The family tree gets so involved, it's hard to keep straight.

Mouse: There were so many players from Tyler, you would not believe how many....

NFA: Even Robin Hood did some writing, I remember seeing his name on some of the records.

Mouse: He wrote the music to "Sometimes You Just Can't Win".....that Chris St. John thing....

NFA: Yeah, what the hell is that all about, Chris St. John?

Mouse: That's right after "Would You Believe". They wantedthis Mouse thing I think was hurting them, like the name was repulsive or something....

NFA: Was this the record company's idea? 'Cause that record doesn't sound like anything else, obviously it was intended not to.



It's cold outside! The picture sleeve photo with Bobby Delk, Mouse, Ken Murray and David Stanley.

Mouse: They wanted to try putting the record out on a name, pick out a name. Someone came up with Chris St. John....

NFA: So, it was really Mouse and the Traps.

Mouse: It was really Mouse and the Traps doing it. It was something that I didn't want to do, but I did.

NFA: This guy from Germany told me about it, it's amazing how those guys know this stuff, like I'm sitting right here in Texas, and I didn't even know about it. And he was tellin' me, "You know, that weird Mouse single, Chris St. John". I was going, "What the hell are you talking about?"..... (laughter). So, he told me who it was and I said I would find out.

Mouse: I was a babe in the woods, I'll tell you that. You run into that with just about everybody in that era.

NFA: You were really fortunate in alot of ways.

Mouse: It didn't hurt me, though at the time I felt like it did.

NFA: If you saw the Elevators and what happened to them after what they went through. Everybody had some tough row to hoe, but the Elevators, they had one of the toughest....

Mouse: Are they getting back together?

NFA: Oh, I doubt they will. Roky is tryin' and Tommy Hall he's gone somewhere, that's the trouble with most of the bands, they went too far and they've got nothing to show for it. Their record company was far from the best. I assume Fraternity paid you guys some kind of royalties....

Mouse: I never did get into them, the studio time, the promotions, what they cost....

NFA: You never saw a breakdown of here's how many records sold, how much your royalties are?

Mouse: Back then bootlegging was real hot, they did alot of our records. Harry was an honest man though.

NFA: Harry?

Mouse: Harry Carlson, the owner of Fraternity Records. He was capable of getting you a hit record, if you had one but it had to really be strong. He started Kitty Carr, Bobby Bare, and he had Lonnie Mack, did the Casinos. He just put that record out, and it was a million seller. That was the kind of records....our stuff just didn't fall into those categories. It was stuff that needed to be promoted, more of an act than it was a hit record.

NFA: I get the impression that they didn't know what to do with y'all or how to handle you.

Mouse: And we didn't know what to do with ourselves. 'Cause, really you weren't supposed to, show me a musician that was a good manager of business. There's a few who are but they usually have somebody behind the scenes that are taking care of it for them.

NFA: Pulling the strings and making the connections....

Mouse: You just can't be concerned with that, that's why I broke the band up. I was 9 months behind on my rent at one time....

NFA: You were trying to do it all, managing and booking the band along with writing and playing....

Mouse: Holding the band together was like babysitting, 'cause everyone had their own personal hassles going down at the same time. And they had their ideas about how to run it. I shared what money we made, I didn't make anymore than anyone else....

NFA: Y'all didn't see a lot of money from the record company, most of your money was received from the tours?

Mouse: Well, we made good money. But yeah, we saw it from the other side - the booking angle. We made more money (Mouse laughs) in a night than I make in a week now it seems like.

NFA: The next thing after Chris St. John was "Cryin' Inside/Ya Ya".... then "L.O.V.E. Love/Lie Beg Borrow and Steal", now that's a pretty good record. Are there any of these singles I've mentioned that were unusual about the way they were done?

Mouse: Buggs played a banjo on the front of "Lie Beg Borrow and Steal".

NFA: Banjo, I don't even remember hearing it.

Mouse: That's a real wierd sounding introduction. We just did it for the hell of it. None of the songs were really unusual when we first cut them, 'cause we were so used to playing them, and in the studio we would just go in and do it.

NFA: Would you go in and do one song, or do several?

Mouse: There were times when we would cut a bunch of stuff, some of the tunes we did, we never did anything with 'em. Like songs we would just play that were other people's songs, and we did them in our style. We did a version of "Ooh-Poo-Pah-Doo" I wish you could hear, boy, the solo that Buggs took in that.

NFA: I can see Buggs playin' the hell outa that one.

Mouse: He really did, wish I could hear some of them old tapes.

NFA: Me too,.....I was going to finish up with these singles, the one that had a picture sleeve, "Sometimes You Just Can't Win", it had "Cryin' Inside" on it again. That's the second time that song showed up on a record, they thought it was a hit and wanted to give it another chance maybe?

Mouse: No. The other tunes we had when we cut "Sometimes", and I'm not sure what they were, they felt that they may have been A-sides too. We might have cut "L.O.V.E. Love" at the same time, or something like that. They probably said, "Well, let's just put 'Cryin' Inside' on the B-side".

NFA: To save another A-side for later....

Mouse: Yeah....I never could talk them into coming with an album. Harry was wanting a hit before an album....

NFA: I've talked to guys that swear they have the Mouse and

the Traps LP, I say "Man, send me a picture 'cause I know it don't exist".

Mouse: They're talking about the Rio Grande thing.

NFA: Yeah, I always think they confuse it with that, but I used to think there was one 'cause there were so many singles.

Mouse: The Rio Grande thing was really a disaster as far as I was concerned. We had to do it so fast. The majority of the songs....I mean people say they like it and say they enjoy it, but I know how it could have been had we gotten the time. We did the whole thing in like 14 hours.

NFA: Let me finish up on this part of it and we'll get into Rio Grande.

Mouse: OK.

NFA: "I Satisfy/Good Times", that's a good record, it's like the next to last one you did on Fraternity, which was "Requiem For Sarah/Look At The Sun". Now again that sounds a whole lot different....

Mouse: That's the one I had part of Gladstone playing with me, before they evolved into Gladstone. H.L.Voelker, Doug Rhone....

NFA: Now, how many times did you change people, did Mouse and the Traps go through that many personnel changes?

Mouse: David and Ken, the bass player and the drummer, they were always the same. Buggs left, and I played the guitar myself for awhile, then I hired Doug Rhone to play guitar for awhile. Sometimes we were just four pieces, but we always had a keyboard, the keyboard players are the ones that changed the most. I went through Jerry, Bobby Dale, and I had a guy named Dirty John play awhile, he didn't last long. Then Buggs came back and it was two guitars, bass, and drums....yeah, it changed some from after '67, or '68.

NFA: So you were a four-piece at the low and then you would go up to five.

Mouse: We started with five and went to four, then to five and back to four....(laughter).

NFA: That "Requiem For Sarah", you were tryin' something different I assume....

Mouse: Yeah, I just sang part on it, we had hired H.L. just to sing with us. Again, I would use him to do some of the other music, mostly just for booking purposes. Of course, vocal background was nice then, 'cause H.L. and Doug were playin' with us for awhile.

NFA: It's not a rock and roll record, that one. It was....

Mouse: It was kind of a jazzy thing, almost.

NFA: Now, the next thing....how did the Bell record come about? Obviously you ended your deal with Fraternity....

Mouse: With Robin, we kinda terminated that thing, it was time. We were all kinda tired of each other, I think. So we tried it with Dale (Hawkins) 'cause all of us had played on projects of his that he had brought down....

NFA: Yeah, he had worked with Robin a lot bringing deals in off and on, I guess.

Mouse: From Shreveport, and from Abnak, Jon Abnor side of it....the Dallas scene.

NFA: Did Dale take you to Robin's studio and cut this Bell single, or did you go over to some other studio to cut it?

Mouse: We cut one over at Steve Wright's....but that's about the time I had written "Before My Time", and that was the beginning of the Rio Grande thing, because the band had broke up then.

NFA: Now, you're talking about when the Bell single came out, there was no band?

Mouse: No, the band was still together then, but it was....

NFA: Disintegrating?

Mouse: It was going....if we didn't do something pretty quick, which we didn't, we could see it was over.

NFA: The Bell single is such a strong rock and roll record, either Dale or y'all decided you would take a shot at a hard

rocker. Was it '69 when that came out?

Mouse: '69 or '70.

NFA: To me it's like.....it's as good as the first single, it's the same high standard.

Mouse: You can see the sidetrack we had gotten onto, for one reason or another.

NFA: Yeah, you kinda hooked over and....

Mouse: Tried to come back, but it just didn't.

NFA: It's a classic record though. "Wicker Vine/You And I Believe" are just great songs....

Mouse: Yeah, with Buggs....

NFA: And David and you and the keyboard player.

Mouse: I can't remember who the keyboard player was.

NFA: It was a four piece band at that point, wasn't it?

Mouse: Yeah.

NFA: Bell didn't do much with the record, did they?

Mouse: They just never did come with it, they did nothing.

NFA: They had a hit, they had a hell of a hit if they had worked on it. That's funny how the record companys are sometimes, did Dale know somebody at Bell and tell them....

Mouse: He was working for Bell.

NFA: Oh yeah, he had a LP on Bell called "L.A., Memphis and Tyler, Texas".

Mouse: Yeah, it was a bunch of crap.

NFA: Like you play on that album, don'cha?

Mouse: Yeah, he had done some stuff.....I don't remember whether maybe Bruce Channel was on Bell back then too.

NFA: Yeah, that's right.

Mouse: 'Cause we had played on some tracks that he'd cut, "Bus Driver" or what not, that did real well.

NFA: Yeah, that's a great song, love it.

Mouse: And "Keep On" I think, we cut it too.

NFA: I remember it.....so, after the band broke up, everybody just kind of went their own ways?

Mouse: We wound up in a honky-tonk down on the Kilgore strip, but we would scare the honky-tonk people to death, 'cause here we had just come off 5 years on the road. Like I said, we were inbetween record companies and we didn't have any jobs at the beginning of the summer, and I discussed it with the band and said, "Look why don't we sit down in this joint for awhile, then we can concentrate on getting some more tapes together, and just making a living. We can exist here."

NFA: This is in Tyler?

Mouse: In Kilgore, about 20 miles away, it's like a strip over there and we made it for the summer, and that was about it.

NFA: Was that like '69?

Mouse: The summer of '69. In the fall they wanted us to start playing for the door, but I just couldn't see how we could make enough money. So we just decided to blow it off and everybody go their way and maybe get back together later. So, I even thought about a straight job for awhile. Getting back caught up and writing again.....and Joe Stampley called. He wanted me to start playing guitar with him and the Uniques. So, I took the job and played with them for two years, we played all over the place and I enjoyed that. But, in the meantime, he had started fooling around and dabbling some in country. So following two years later, late '72, he quit booking that band. I was in good financial shape at the time so the club just up the street from where we had just disbanded two years earlier, wanted me to put a band together. I got one of the organ players that had worked with me in the original band, well, I say original, I went through 4 or 5 keyboard players in 5 years.

NFA: This is how Rio Grande formed?

Mouse: No, I never did form Rio Grande.

NFA: But, you were putting a band together to work at the club?

Mouse: When I was with Joe Stampley, Dale Hawkins told me that RCA wanted a Texas country-rock type thing. So while I



Rare German picture sleeve of the group in 1968.

was working with Stampley, that was a project I did that was strictly studio.

NFA: You just did that on the side....

Mouse: Yeah, so they put that out.....and I didn't put a band together quick enough. I just couldn't see anyway to do it at the time, so I played about another year with Stampley. Anyway, in late '72 I put another band back together just to work in a club. The original drummer, Ken, and the bass player came back to Tyler to go to work for me, and I had a 5 piece band, which went immediately to 4. We started playing the Abbey Inn.

NFA: Were you called Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: Yeah, I was trying it again. (Mouse laughs)

NFA: You played the Abbey Inn here in Dallas?

Mouse: Yep, we were kinda the house band, we swapped out with Gladstone, played through about '75.

NFA: Now the Rio Grande thing, you never went on the road as Rio Grande?

Mouse: Strictly studio. Though we tried later, after this band booked around for awhile and we were just playin' to exist, Stampley called me again and wanted me and the bass player to come play with him. So, I went back with him and played almost a year. He decided he wanted to move to Nashville and I didn't, so I came back to Dallas. Lynn Groom and I got with David Stanley and Glenda, and a steel player by the name of Ray Austin. And tried to put Rio Grande together.

NFA: As a touring band?

Mouse: As a touring band.

NFA: This was after the album was already out.

Mouse: Oh yeah, this was just a couple years ago. So, that didn't work since we couldn't book it enough to make it worth while. So, we have since backed off and the last few years I've just been kinda jobbin', played with Delbert McClinton for about 6 months.

NFA: Yeah, that's how I finally got in touch with you....

That Rio Grande album got alot of good reviews....

Mouse: It was a good album.....but most of the songs were

done in keys that were too low. We cut it all at once, just sat down and played, we really hadn't spent that much time with the songs between the time that I had written them and actually recording them. I mean, it was like two or three days later.

NFA: If it had come out a few years later on, it probably would've had a better reception.

Mouse: Yeah, the country angle to it....

NFA: They did release a single off it....

Mouse: "Before My Time".

NFA: Really? 'Cause the one I have down is "Wish I Could See You Again/Nice And Easy".

Mouse: That's the other side.

NFA: I thought the other side was "Nice And Easy".

Mouse: It could've been. There could have been two.... a dj and.... in fact, I think you're right.

NFA: Yeah, must have been another, I'll check on it.

Mouse: Sometimes I feel ashamed, and sometimes I don't care, 'cause I don't like that stuff anyway, don't even have copies of it.

NFA: How about your old Mouse singles?

Mouse: My wife's got two of them, "Public Execution" and "Sometimes", she told me the other day....

NFA: You don't dislike the Mouse stuff, do you?

Mouse: Oh no, I like them. I would just like to redo them all, especially "Sometimes", that was such a good song.

NFA: Well, the '60s and the way it was, it's not ever going to be that way again. The Elevators, you guys and all the other bands that came out, it's like everybody's looking back and saying, "We didn't realize how good everything was then then".

Mouse: Oh yeah, I know. I'm just starting to realize where I'm at....

NFA: The Kenny and Kasuals thing, see, that album sold like it was a new LP 'cause people are aware and not looking at it as an antique, but looking at it as a piece of music, whatever time period it came from.

Mouse: The last two years, like I say from the last time I tried to put a band together and it didn't work, I was beginning to wonder.... maybe I ought to get out of this shit. I don't know.... there's something there.

NFA: For sure!

Mouse: My idea of a complete band now is about 7 pieces.

I want two chicks over there singing background, with a 5 piece band, 'cause then you can be complete, you're just too limited with 4. You can't play the fills and the rhythm at the same time, and then sing the song. So I want another guitar player, and a hell of a keyboard player. I could put the band together tomorrow, but where would I play with it, I have no idea. Not to keep it together, not with the type of money it takes today for people just to exist. You go on with some band and try to play at some joint, and they want to hear Bee Gees....

NFA: Disco fever, some of that stuff is such garbage.

Mouse: Well, it's just.... I don't know how to word this... but I hate to see music used. You know what I mean?

NFA: Like with disco?

Mouse: It's just the thing.... they're not really listening to the music.

NFA: I see what you mean.

Mouse: It's a means of getting to do something else. It's not the main center of attraction like it used to be.

NFA: That is what alot of this New Wave punk stuff is making it possible for you and all the other guys in Texas to focus on it and make it a current music thing, not in a nostalgic sense, but just as music from whatever period it was done, from today or many years ago.

Mouse: It's definitely got to come back 'cause everything does.

NFA: Yes, it does.... let me ask you about the Positively

13 O'Clock, "Psychotic Reaction" record....

Mouse: That was the Mouse and the Traps band with Jimmy Rabbit singing.

NFA: I had always heard it was you guys.

Mouse: It was, see, Rabbit and our band were just so close. Like when we came to Dallas we always stayed over at his place. He played our records on KLIF and helped us alot.

NFA: So he was singing in front of Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: He wanted to put out a record. He said, "Man, this 'Psychotic Reaction' is going to be a hit, I can feel it. Let's cut a track." So he made a deal with Robin and we played over it, me and Buggs, David and Nardo (Ken Murray).

NFA: Well, that's a good record, a hell of a good record.

Mouse: I thought it was better than the one that hit, though all it did was make the one that was out hit, 'cause it wasn't doing anything until Jimmy came out with his. But they couldn't get his record, it was on that....

NFA: On Hanna Barbera.

Mouse: Yeah, that comic strip thing.

NFA: Yeah, that label had a bad distribution deal.

Mouse: They didn't have nothin', and people would just go ahead, after the second trip into the record shop, they'd just say, "Well, just give me the other one".

NFA: The Count Five's "Psychotic Reaction".

Mouse: Yeah, Jimmy was right there in it, and could check it out, you know jockin'. He's out in L.A. now, playin' some, not being a dj.

NFA: He's made some good records. There were some other '60s records he did, pretty good rock and roll records.... This picture sleeve of y'all on "Sometimes You Just Can't Win", was it taken in Tyler, looks pretty cold?

Mouse: Yeah, that's snow in the background.

NFA: I didn't know it snowed in Tyler.

Mouse: It did that day, that's why we took the picture.

NFA: They just decided they needed a picture of you on one of the records?

Mouse: They just decided to come out with a shuck, it tickled the hell outa me.

NFA: I think it only came on radio station copies, like the stock copies I don't think had them.... now, there was a bunch of material that was recorded and not issued?

Mouse: Yeah.

NFA: That would be great to put out half an album of the singles and the other half of unissued songs. That would be something to work on with Robin 'cause it's pretty easy when it's already recorded material, a good profit involved too.

Mouse: I won't need it or anything like that... (laughter)

NFA: Yeah, none of us do. I hope something like that happens out of this.... did you ever play Austin as Mouse and the Traps?

Mouse: Yeah, the New Orleans Club.

NFA: Oh, the Elevators used to play there all the time too. They've renovated the place now, it's a historical monument. I think it was the best club during the '60s, all the good Texas bands played there.

Mouse: It was a neat old club.

NFA: I heard the guy who ran the place used to tape all his shows, don't know if it's true or not, but if so he might have got you on tape.

Mouse: He could've possibly, but probably after we played there.

NFA: Yeah, since most people didn't tape shows in the middle '60s. Y'all played there more than once?

Mouse: Oh yeah, it was a good job, one of the places we played kinda regular.

NFA: Did you know any of the Houston/South Texas bands, like the Sidewalks?

Mouse: No, I knew of them, you know, the Hill brothers.

NFA: Rocky and Dusty.

Mouse: One of them used to play in a band that played with

us at Lou Ann's in Dallas.

NFA: The American Blues?

Mouse: I think so, that was the first time I ever saw anyone light up a joint at a club.... (laughter) There was a cop about 15 feet away! (laughter)

NFA: When you saw the Elevators back then, did you talk to Roky or any of the guys?

Mouse: No....we just played with them that one time, and then we were supposed to play with 'em that next night, and that Byrds thing was so....everything was kind of a turmoil. I never did get together with them then, the next night we were supposed to play, and every member of my band got so screwed up, I don't know if we could have played if we would have had to. We were supposed to open a club and, boy, we were lookin' forward to it, was one of those really neat jobs. Right at the last minute, the guy couldn't get his liquor license so the club never opened. But, I doubt if we could have played the job anyway.... (laughter)

NFA: Do you ever play "A Public Execution" anymore, say, in the last few years?

Mouse: Oh yeah, I like to change it up now and make it alittle alittle more funky. I've gotten alittle more funky, and alittle more country at the same time. But I still like to rock and roll.

NFA: Amen.

Mouse has been playing around Dallas quite abit, frequently with Lynn Groom's band and a "best of" Mouse and the Traps LP seems likely to see the light in the near future (at last!).

MOUSE AND THE TRAPS DISCOGRAPHY

Fraternity 956 - A Public Execution/All For You.
Fraternity 966 - Maid Of Sugar-Maid Of Spice/I Am The One.
Fraternity 971 - Would You Believe/Like I Know You Do.
Fraternity 973 - Do The Best You Can/Promises, Promises.
Fraternity 989 - Cryin' Inside/Ya Ya.
Fraternity 1000 - L. O. V. E. Love/Lie, Beg, Borrow And Steal.
Fraternity 1005 - Sometimes You Just Can't Win/Cryin' Inside.
Fraternity 1011 - I Satisfy/Good Times.
Fraternity 1015 - Requiem For Sarah/Look At The Sun.
Bell 850 - Wicker Vine/And I Believe Her.

related records

Rio Grande - LP RCA 4454
Rio Grande - RCA 0486 - Wish I Could See You Again/Nice And Easy.
Rio Grande - RCA 0548 - Before My Time/Nice And Easy.
Chris St. John - Fraternity 983 - I've Got Her Love/As Far As The Sea.
Positively Thirteen O'Clock - HBR 500 - Psychotic Reaction/13 O'Clock Theme.



Record Rack

Albums

Freddy Fender & Sir Douglas Live - Crazy Cajun 1103 - \$7. (great!)

Don Goldie with The Sir Douglas Quintet - Crazy Cajun 1095 - \$7. (instrumentals)

Best Of Sir Douglas Quintet - Crazy Cajun 1003 - \$7. (reissue of Tribe LP)

Papa Link Davis - Big Mamou - Crazy Cajun 1004 - \$7. (classic LP)

Joey Long - Flyin High - Crazy Cajun 1049 - \$7. (good LP)

Joey Long - The Rains Came - Crazy Cajun 1027 - \$7. (another good LP)

Johnny Winter - Early Winter - Crazy Cajun 1009 - \$7. (his early '60s recordings)

International Artists #13 - Epitaph For A Legend - \$16. (2 LP set)

Kenny Wayne & Friends - Bored With The Blues and Raised On Rock n' Roll - Amazing 1002 - \$7.

Omar and the Howlers - Big Leg Beat - Amazing 1003 - \$7. (blues-rock)

Sir Douglas Quintet - Live Love - Texas Re-Cord 1007 - \$6. (live reunion LP 1977)

Sir Doug - Way Back When He Was Just Doug Sahn - Harlem 1005 - \$6.

Delbert McClinton with The Ron-Dels - LeCam 404 - \$10. (limited pressing)

Delbert McClinton with The Ron-Dels Vol 2 - LeCam 505 - \$10. (limited pressing)

Singles

Roky Ericson & BleibAlien - Two Headed Dog/Starry Eyes - Mars 1000 - \$3.

Josefus - Hard Luck/On Account Of You - Hookah 78009 - \$3.

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J-BECK CEE-BEE RECORDS

This is the story of perhaps the best Texas '60s record label: J-Beck/Cee-Bee. It's impossible to find a company that had better rock&roll, consistently, during the '60s. The label's story is at the same time the history and evolution of three great bands: the Bad Seeds, the Zakary Thaks and the Liberty Bell. The man behind this amazing company was Carl Becker. This interview was taped with Carl, Mike Taylor (vocalist with the Bad Seeds) and Chris Gerniottis (singer for the Zakary Thaks and later with the Liberty Bell). Three very fine people who I want to thank for taking the time to do this interview.

NFA: Carl, how did you get into the music business?

Carl: Well, I always loved music, never played an instrument, but I could always tell the hits, whenever I'd hear a song I could tell if it was gonna be a hit. So I started working for a jukebox operator in Corpus pickin' the hits for him and I got to know a local DJ called Charlie Bright. He suggested that we start puttin' on shows in Corpus 'cause they were goin' over real good and he couldn't do it since he was working for a radio station. I thought it sounded good so I said OK what'll we call ourselves, he said, "I dunno, anything... call it J-Beck Productions", so that's what it was. We put the shows together, I signed the acts like Sir Douglas, Gene Thomas, Sunny and the Sunliners and admission was \$1 a head. So, like these shows came off like a champ, my cut of the first show was \$1200 in one dollar bills, my wife just couldn't believe it! Anyway I was working full-time for the airline and my brother-in-law, Jack Salyers, was working there too. He saw me counting all this money out there one day and he said, "Where'd you get all that money", so I told him from that show I had. So Jack said, "Hey I wanna get into business with you", and he wanted to handle all the money, book better shows and start a corporation. That sounded alright to me, I never was that good a businessman with money, if I had \$100 in my pocket I'd go out and spend \$150.... (laughter).... so we formed a corporation and called it J-Beck, we each owned 50%. We started throwin' more shows and more shows, and each time we'd bring in bigger and bigger acts, hell, one time we had like \$12,000 tied up in just deposits for a show, we had the Paul Revere and Raiders show, Dick Clark Caravan Of Stars and we'd bring 'em to San Antone, Corpus and McAllen....

NFA: You booked outside of Corpus then?



The Bad Seeds, from the left: Rod Prince - guitar, Mike Taylor - guitar&vocals, Henry Edgeington - bass and Bobby Donaho (top) - drums.

Carl: Oh yeah, so meanwhile little bands started callin' us and sayin', hey you oughta come see us, and me and old Jack we'd drive out to see 'em, that's how we saw Mike Taylor...

NFA: At the Surf Club with the Bad Seeds?

Carl: Right, we went and listened to 'em one night and found out they had a couple original songs, so we'd drive down to Jimmy Nicholls' studio in McAllen. We'd save up our money from our shows and every Sunday morning we'd take 4 or 5 carloads of guys down to McAllen.

NFA: You had to drive all the way to McAllen to record? (150 miles)

Chris: Yep, and it was a two-track studio!

Carl: We'd leave at like 6:00 in the mornin', before daylight, 'cause we'd get the studio for little or nothin' on Sunday. So everybody J-Beck had recorded in McAllen at least 5 or 6 times, anyway we took the Bad Seeds down there and cut their first record, "Taste Of The Same". It got some airplay in Corpus, McAllen, little stations in South Texas and pretty quick the Bad Seeds had a good name, they played all the proms, any good gigs in Corpus they'd automatically get 'em. They started buyin' better equipment, we kept recordin' them and anytime we had a big show we'd put them on as the opening act. So they became very popular, in fact they got so popular that some of 'em who'd never had girlfriends before, started havin' girlfriends.... (laughter).... and on account of the girlfriends they didn't practise as hard as they used to practise.... (laughter).... so anyway I started hearin' about this other little group in Corpus called the Zakary Thaks. A guy named Jim West, DJ at KEYS radio in Corpus, was managing them and he'd always be tellin' me about 'em, so me and Jack went down to the Carousel Club one Sunday to hear them. Now this place had a battle of the bands every



The Zakary Thaks, top row: Rex Gregory - bass, Pete Stinson - rhythm and John Lopez - lead. Middle: Chris Gerniottis - vocals. Bottom: Stan Moore - drums.

Sunday and every teenager in South Texas would show up, just pack the place. So we went to hear them and....we just couldn't believe it, they had homemade amps, the worst equipment you can imagine and came up with the damnest sound, just great and we decided we'd have to get hold of 'em before Jim West locked 'em up....

NFA: Chris, was this the first time you saw Carl?

Chris: Yeah, in fact we were on stage at the Carousel and Carl walked up and gave me his card, told us to call him and we were really excited....

NFA: Now how did the Zakary Thaks get together?

Chris: Well, we were first called the Marauders which was a very surf-oriented group, then it was the Riptides, then, in about.... March of '66 we officially became Zakary Thaks, we had a different drummer but it was basically the same group when we met Carl.

NFA: Mike, how did the Bad Seeds start up, I know Rod Prince was your guitar player...

Chris: I know Rod's first group was called the Titans....

Mike: Yeah, and my group was the Four Winds. We were playin' at the Teaky Teen Club in Corpus and the manager told us we'd have to get a new drummer 'cause the one we had couldn't keep time, so nobody could dance, he'd speed up - then slow down.... (laughter).... but Rod's group broke up so me and him put together the Bad Seeds, we had Henry Edgeington on bass and Bobby Donahoe on drums, Bobby was in the Titans with Rod and a real good drummer but kinda hard to get along with....

Carl: I think all drummers are that way.... (laughter)

Mike: They are, they're a real pain in here too, they never been in a studio before and they know everything about re-

cording.... (laughter)

NFA: The Bad Seeds were the first real rock band in Corpus weren't they?

Mike: Yep, I guess we were, I remember when we played Kingsville we had to send a guy in with a hat on to see if we were gonna be able to go in and play.... (laughter)... those cowboys didn't like that long hair!

Carl: Yeah, McAllen, Beeville, Rockdale.... there were alot of places like that back then.

NFA: Did you record any other places besides McAllen?

Carl: Well, we recorded in Houston later on but we did try to do something with Abe Epstein in San Antone once....

NFA: He was the guy with all the labels, Jox, Cobra, Beckingham....

Carl: Uh-huh, we were playing a gig in San Antone with the Thaks and he came by and said, "You guys gotta come see my studio, you're wasting your time in McAllen, I've got a 8-track studio", so we said OK, went over there and he had 8 different tape recorders.... (laughter).... he'd try to hit 'em all at the same time! (laughter)

NFA: It sounds like the Bad Seeds were the band around Corpus for awhile then Zakary Thaks came along....

Carl: Right, let me tell you the big story, me and Jack were the managers of the Bad Seeds and we knew that they had to start practicin' very hard or this young group would knock 'em off, hell, Chris was only 15 at the time, the Thaks were a very young group. So we finally had a showdown at the Carousel Club with a battle of the bands, I figured we'd take the Bad Seeds down there and blow these little kids off. Well, we went down there and the Bad Seeds were playin' as best they could, which really wasn't that good....

Mike: Yeah, we were havin' alot of internal problems....

Carl: They were havin' alot of problems and they sounded like hell but most of the people didn't hear anything....

Mike: We just turned up real loud....

Carl: They had a big following and most of the fans didn't notice, so when they got through, the spotlight went over to this young punk group with these funky guitars and homemade amps. I saw 'em and told Jack that they just weren't gonna cut it, well, the Thaks blew the Bad Seeds so far off the stage that the Seeds and me and Jack knew their days were over. So immediately I got hold of the Thaks and we kept Mike as writer/producer and later on as an artist....

NFA: Now the Bad Seeds all proke up after this?

Mike: Yeah, but they reformed as the New Seeds with Rod Prince, David Frasier, Roy Cox, David Fore....

NFA: Did they make any records as the New Seeds?

Mike: No, but they ended up as Bubble Puppy later on and moved to Houston.

NFA: Now you made some records as Michael around this time....

Mike: As the Fabulous Michael! (laughter)

Carl: Back then whenever you introduced somebody as the Fabulous Michael you knew it had to be terrible. (laughter)

Mike: They started puttin' me on for real with that Fabulous shit.... (laughter)

Carl: So anyway we started playin' around with the Fabulous Michael and cuttin' some of these records and whenever we took the Thaks to the studio we'd take Mike along and he'd put together a song, the Thaks would back him up....

NFA: So the Michael records have the Zakary Thaks playing backup....

Chris: I think so, on most of 'em.... then later on he went out of town with us every weekend for about a year, so actually he was the sixth member of the group....

Carl: The Thaks hired Mike to kinda keep 'em out of trouble on trips and Mike'd end up in more trouble than any of the group.... (laughter)

Mike: That group was impossible, they'd steal flags from

motel walls, one time they stole this huge Mexican flag from a motel and the manager kept jumpin' on me about it sayin' the band had been seen stealing it and I didn't know nothin' about it, the band all swore they didn't have it but as soon as we got in the car everybody starts laughin' and Lopez pulls it out of his britches.... (laughter)

Carl: That was at a gig for the Governor's daughter's comin' out party, boy, these guys tore up more motels. I put 'em on the Paul Revere and Raiders show in San Antone and their road manager, Skippy, was always moanin' to me about what the band had done, so in San Antone they stripped him and pushed him out of the motel room in broad daylight.....

(laughter)....and locked the door on him.... (laughter). Paul Revere's manager called me up and said, "This group of yours ain't ready to go on the road, they're causin' all kinds of trouble at the motel, they've got one of their equipment men naked out here in the swimmin' pool".... (laughter)

Mike: At 12:00 noon! (laughter) Skippy was always catchin' it.

NFA: To backtrack a little, how did Tony Joe and the Mojos come about?

Carl: Well, we had Tony Joe right at the first along with the Bad Seeds. We used Tony's own group which was just three guys - Tony, a bass player and a drummer. We added a rhythm guitar player later on... and anytime we took the Bad Seeds to record we'd take Tony. Same way with concerts, we'd just put Tony on before the Bad Seeds, but he'd get booed off stage alot, the kids just didn't like him. He was more of a nightclub act than anything else, concerts didn't work for him. 'Course later on he got real popular, I helped him get to Nashville 'cause I couldn't do anything for him in Corpus as everything was rock&roll at the time, but he was one of the most talented guys I've ever met, an incredible musician.

NFA: The first Zakary Thaks 45 was picked up by Mercury, how did that happen?

Carl: Well, we cut "Bad Girl" down at Jimmy Nicholls' studio in McAllen on his two-track. In fact we'd do it all at once on one track and only use the second track for a harmony vocal, that gave the recordings a "live" sound, made it more real. So we had that record on J-Beck for about a month and I got a call one day from a guy at Mercury Records. He said he'd heard we had a hit record and he wanted to sign the group. I told him that the oldest guy in the band was 17 and the lead singer was only 15 which made for a tough legal problem in signing them, but he said he'd check with his lawyers and let me know what he could do. So we set it up so I'd be the legal guardian of the band.... it took us 6 months to go through the courts and set up trust funds for them, insurance, and.....

NFA: This was all done for the Mercury record, so that Mercury would be legally satisfied?

Carl: That's right, so anyway Mercury got it out real fast, in fact they bought some of my records and put Mercury labels on them so that they could get 'em out to DJs quick. But then they pushed the wrong side, "Bad Girl", if they had promoted "I Need You", I think we would've had a smash hit, as it was it didn't do much....

NFA: How did the record do on J-Beck in Texas?

Carl: I think we sold more records than Mercury did, 'cause we had a big following all over South Texas.

NFA: When did the record come out?

Chris: I'd say, the summer of '66, about July.

Carl: I used to have hell with these guys, one time we bought the Thaks a new Buick station wagon and a trailer, and Skippy, the road manager, would drive for them. I'd get 'em out of school Friday at noon and they'd take off to a gig, so they'd put their hands over Skippy's eyes goin' about 80 or 90 and he'd go off the side of the road and that trailer

just beat the hell outa that station wagon.... (laughter)

NFA: The Thaks was a young band, while the Bad Seeds were a little older, how young was the Thaks?

Chris: Well, I was 15, Pete was the oldest at 17 and Stan, Rex and John were 16.

NFA: That's something that's pretty rare these days, a group that young. Just don't see it happening as much as it used to.

Carl: That's right, but if you listen to these old Thaks records, Chris' voice is just unbelievable for a 15 year old, in fact nobody could believe he was that young....

Mike: There's just no incentive for bands today, if they play their own material they can't get a job anywhere.

NFA: True.....what about the "Face To Face" 45, that was a big hit for the Thaks....

Carl: Yeah, biggest record I had on J-Beck, we really got into the guitar feedback on that record and the others too. We got known for having alot of feedback on our records, think we got it from Jeff Beck....

Mike: Yeah, he showed it to us when the Bad Seeds played with the Yardbirds in Corpus, he had this distortion box that worked great. Smitty down in Corpus made our fuzz boxes for us.... after we saw Jeff Beck's and told Smitty what it was.... Beck said someone in England was makin' them and they weren't even on the market yet....

NFA: Smitty didn't have anything to work from, just the idea?

Mike: Right, we just told him Beck had a box that made the guitar distort at any volume, so he made one for Rod. He'd work on it awhile and get us to try it out, it wouldn't be quite right so he'd work on it some more....

NFA: This all came about because Beck had one when you guys played with the Yardbirds?

Mike: Yeah, he had his guitar plugged into one and I asked him what it was and he said, "A fuzz box".... so Smitty finally perfected it and started selling them for \$15.95....

Carl: Another thing Smitty did was fix our amps, everytime the Bad Seeds would go somewhere we kept blowin' amps, I mean blowin' the hell outa them too 'cause we were turned way up plus the constant feed-back. So Smitty wired up some overload lights, they'd light up before the speakers would blow and anytime you saw the amps lightin' up it was time to cut down.

NFA: Great idea....

Carl: Later on the companys started building the lights into the amps.

NFA: Did the Thaks or Bad Seeds always open for Corpus shows like the Yardbirds?

Carl: Always, they opened for Eric Burdon and the Animals, the Byrds....

NFA: Was there anytime the Thaks and the Bad Seeds played on the same bill?

Chris: Just that one time at the Carousel Club battle of bands....

Mike: We wouldn't play with them anymore after that.... (laughter)

NFA: How many records did "Face To Face" sell?

Carl: I'd say several thousand copies, it was the last record I had anything to do with on J-Beck 'cause I left right after that. Chris will have to tell you about the records that came after that....

NFA: What happened that caused you to leave?

Carl: Well, me and Jack Salyers had a fallin' out. We'd been givin' the KTSA DJs (Ricky Ware and Bruce Hathaway) a low rate for Zakary Thaks gigs 'cause they helped get us started by playin' our records. So Jack wanted to charge 'em more and I didn't as KTSA had helped us all over South Texas, they were a hot station, anyway Jack bought me out and I left.... I told the Thaks that it was Jack's show now.

Chris: Then Jack brought in Lofton Cline as a partner, who



Early shot of the Bad Seeds - 1965. From left: Bobby, Rod, Mike and Henry.

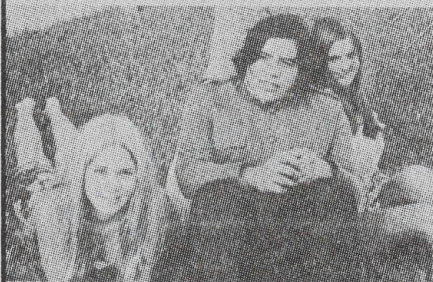


Zakary Thaks live in 1966.

From the left: Chris, Rex, Stan, Pete and John.

ZAKARY THAKS

have big day as hosts of beach club



JOHN LOPEZ, lead guitar for the Thaks, lounges near the Beach House with Diane Kirkmeyer and Kathy Rapier.



STANLEY MOORE, drummer for the Zacs, and winner Diane Kirkmeyer pose for the KEYS camera.



ZAC BASSMAN REX GREGORY and Bonnie Gaines enjoy being face to face in the tradition of the Zakary Thaks recent hit single entitled, "Face to Face."



ZAKARY THAKS Line up for the KEYS SCENE cameras. The popular fivesome include Chris, John, Stanley, Rex, and Pete.

The Beach House, a private teenage club, was the scene recently of a party thrown by J-Beck Productions for their hot group The Zakary Thaks and five pretty girls who were the winners of a contest held by KEYS to find girls to pose with the Zaks for an album cover.

Jack Sellers, president of J-Beck, and the staff of the Beach House acted as hosts for the affair. The Beach House is a private club open to anyone who wants to join. Dances are held regularly at the club located on Ocean Drive.

The Zakary Thaks have had several state-wide hit releases including "Bad Girl," "Face To Face" and "Please." The group recently signed a recording contract with ABC Paramount Records for national distribution of their songs. They previously recorded for Mercury and more recently appeared on the J-Beck label.

The group is made up of Chris Gemettis, lead singer; John Lopez, lead guitar; Stanley Moore, drums; Rex Gregory, bass; and Pete Stinson, rhythm guitar.

From Keysscene magazine (Corpus radio station) July 1967.

was one of the original Pozo Seco singers. He had these big production idea's and started spending alot of money in the studio but it didn't work out....

Carl: We used to bring in a Thaks record for \$500 and these guys started spending \$1500-\$2000, and the results just weren't the Thaks....and it broke Jack too.

NFA: So the last three J-beck 45s were almost a different company?

Carl: Yeah, different people with different ideas.

NFA: Now the Young Society came in that period, who were they?

Carl: Another reason why me and Jack broke up.... (laughter) They were a bunch of pretty harmony boys from Kingsville, right down Lofton Cline's alley. I just didn't like them.

NFA: I imagine those last J-Becks didn't sell too good.

Chris: Right, they sold very poorly.

NFA: Did the Thaks break up after the J-Beck singles?

Chris: For a little while, but we reformed in a few months as a four-piece group without Pete, who was off doing something else, then we recorded "Everybody Wants To Be Somebody" on Cee-Bee.

NFA: Now Cee-Bee was Carl's label?

Carl: Right, the Thaks came to me 'cause J-Beck was no more and they wanted to get back together and do a record. So we came to Walt Andrus' studio in Houston and cut the single. I think we even leased it to ABC but they never put it out....

NFA: Now that was the last record on Cee-Bee, how 'bout the other records by the Liberty Bell?

Carl: Well, right after me and Jack broke up I didn't feel like doin' much so I sat around for awhile, then this band, the Zulus, called me up and wanted me to manage them but they didn't have a good singer, so I told 'em to get one. Now the battle of the bands was still goin' on down at Six Points (Carousel Club), and the guy runnin' it, George Herro, told me about this band that had a good singer from Port Aransas named Ronnie Taylor. I went down there to see him and talked him into joinin' the Zulus. I got them to change their name to the Liberty Bell and we started lookin' for material to record. They didn't have an original song at the time so we decided to cut "Nazz Are Blue" as I'd always liked it. Now right at this same time Lofton Cline is bringin' the Thaks to Houston and spendin' all kinds of money to record and we didn't have hardly a dime so we went back to Jimmy Nicholls' studio in McAllen. Al Hunt was lead player for the Bell and he got the feedback goin' while the rhythm guitar player (Richard Painter) wore out his fingers.... (laughter). So our record came out at the same time as the Thaks' "Mirror Of Yesterday" and our's sold alot better.

NFA: The Liberty Bell sounded alot like the early Zakary Thaks....

Carl: In a way they were alot like the Thaks. The Bell had always looked up to them and wanted to be like the Thaks as much as possible.

NFA: When did the record on the Thak label come out?

Chris: We did that after J-Beck went out of business and before we did the Cee-Bee 45 with Carl. It was done all on our

THE LIBERTY BELL



THE LIBERTY BELL, one of South Texas' hottest groups, are currently hitting the charts with their song "Nazz Are Blue". Pictured above are (standing, l. to r.) Wayne Harrison, Allen Hunt, Carl Aebly, (kneeling) Ronnie Tanner and Richard Painter.

The newest recording group to hit big in South Texas is the Liberty Bell, whose song, "Nazz Are Blue", rides high on charts throughout this area.

Formerly known as The Zulus, the group consists of Ronnie Tanner, Wayne Harrison, Allen Hunt, Carl Aebly, and Richard Painter.

The Liberty Bell have been together for several years with the exception of lead vocalist Ronnie Tanner, but it was only recently that their popularity began on the up-swing following the release of their record. The credit of their popularity increase rests with the promotion of their recently acquired manager, Carl Becker. Becker, veteran area producer, had long been interested in the group although he felt that they were in need of a stronger lead singer.

Ronnie Tanner came on the scene to solve this problem and Becker immediately signed them to a recording and management contract. Weighing several offers from major record labels, Becker doesn't want to jump before he inspects each offer thoroughly. "I remember jumping at an offer I had from a major company when I managed the Bad Seeds. The company bought the song then shelved the record prior to release. I'm not going to let it happen to The Bell," Becker explains.

The next release planned by the Liberty Bell will be of original material written by members of the group.

From Keysscene
magazine (Corpus
radio station) July 1967.

own.

NFA: Was that in '68?

Chris: Yes, 'cause I started singing with the Liberty Bell in early '69.

NFA: What records of theirs did you sing on?

Chris: The two Back Beat 45s....

NFA: Did the Back Beat singles do anything?

Chris: No.

Carl: I got to know Don Robey (Back Beat owner) through some concerts he put on in Corpus and when I was looking for a label for the Liberty Bell he wanted them. So I flew to Houston and went to see him and I noticed that there wasn't any white folks around his place....

NFA: I don't think he had very many white groups....

Carl: No, he didn't, I think Roy Head was his only white singer at that time. So we decided to cut some sides with him 'cause the Liberty Bell was hot at that time, anyway this staff producer for Robey thought Chris was the best white singer he'd ever heard and he wanted to produce the group. We did a session and he was so drunk that it came off terrible, we just looked at each other like what the hell are we doing here. He didn't like our stuff, said it was all junk, and came up with a song he wrote called "Naw, Naw, Naw"... now if the Liberty Bell could've ever made it, this song here killed 'em....

Chris: Yeah, it was soooo bad.

NFA: I remember it, the song doesn't sound at all like the Cee-Bee singles.

Carl: We shouldn't have ever done it, we got into an area that he didn't know a thing about...., we forgot more about the rock field than this guy ever knew.

NFA: Mike, what were you doing during this time?

Mike: Well, I started doin' some producing and then Carl opened a studio and I worked with him....

NFA: Was the studio in Corpus?

Carl: Yeah, it was called Studio B. I started another label after Cee-Bee called Spearway and we had Sam Neeley on it, later we had Chris' group, Kubla Kahn. Mike wrote alot of songs and we recorded these with Neeley.

NFA: How did Mike's Roulette single happen?

Carl: We were sendin' out demos of Mike's songs that he did to get people interested in them and a guy called me back from Roulette and said, "This tape is great". I told him, yeah it was a good song but he said, "No, this is a good singer!" So I said oh yeah he's great too.... (laughter).... and he ended up puttin' it out on Roulette.

NFA: You did a record on Albatross....

Carl: In Studio B but on their label, also I did Eric Quincy Tate, Sam Neeley while he was in Buckle, all of 'em from Corpus.

NFA: Now when the Thaks came back to record "Everybody Wants To Be Somebody" with Carl, was it the same group as the Thak label single?

Chris: Just the same except for Pete....

NFA: That record sounds alot more like the old Zakary Thaks,did the group stay together very long after the record

came out?

Chris: No, we weren't together very long at that time but we did get back together once more for about a month in May of '69.

NFA: The Cee-Bee record came out shortly before that?

Chris: Yes, in early '69, and after that I started singin' for the Liberty Bell...

NFA: How long did the Bell last after you joined?

Chris: Not very long, in fact, I think we broke up while doing the Back Beat 45s.

NFA: The Corpus scene during the mid '60s seemed very intense, alot of action going on. We used to go down there to surf and saw some of the bands....

Carl: It was one of the hottest scene's in Texas I think, 'cause of the Bad Seeds and the Thaks, the concerts..... anytime you have alot of competition your product gets better.

NFA: True, also the beach scene drew alot of kids from all over Texas and then the clubs were there in great locations, like the Dunes on Padre Island....

Carl: Right, I think that's why the Zakary Thaks name spread so fast, Corpus is a resort town and kids would come down for the summer and when they went home they'd tell all their friends about this great band they saw on the beach.

NFA: Did the Bad Seeds play around much, like Austin....

Mike: Some, we played in San Antone.... gigs for Ricky Ware so he'd play our records.

NFA: The Bad Seeds broke up well before the "summer of love" arrived, right?

Mike: Yeah, in fact the last song we learned before the break-up was the Beatles' "Paperback Writer", it was #1 when we broke up, we had only played it acouple of times.

Carl: They used to do the Stones stuff alot, really good too. Rod Prince could play the leads exactly like the records.

NFA: "King Bee" was an early Stones cover song y'all did really well.

Mike: Yeah, and we did a great version of "Have Mercy", I remember we played a New Years dance at the Country Club and got over \$800, man that was big money back then, over a hundred apiece.... anyway we played 'till two a.m. but these old cats didn't want us to quit, they asked what'd it take to keep us playin' for 2 more hours and man, we were tired! They ended up payin' us another \$500 for 2 more hours and, man we were tired! Rod said, "I don't wanna play no more, I don't even care about the money", I said how about \$500 Rod and he said "OK, let's play...." (laughter)

NFA: Chris, when the Thaks started playin' around, didn't y'all play Austin alot, sometimes with the Elevators....

Chris: Right, we played there alot....

Carl: They played Austin more than anyplace I'd say....

NFA: More than Corpus?

Chris: Oh yeah, we played there almost every week for the frats....

NFA: How about the New Orleans Club?

Chris: We played there too but mostly it was frat/houses.

NFA: They paid the best money back then I guess.

Chris: Yeah, we used to average \$450 - \$500, which wasn't bad for a few hours work, we played Friday nights and sometimes Thursdays....

NFA: How 'bout the gigs with the Elevators?

Chris: We only played with them two or three times I think, once in Kingsville at the Knights Of Columbus Hall, once in Austin at Round-Up and one other time, I can't remember where....

NFA: Mike, how about the Bad Seeds, did y'all ever play with the Elevators?

Mike: No, don't think we ever did. We sat in with them once at the Dunes, me and Rod.

NFA: Y'all knew the Elevators pretty well I guess....

Mike: Not real well, not like we knew, say, the Laughing Kind. I knew Roky alittle bit, but they were all pretty spaced

out back then....

Chris: Right at the first, before they got drugged out, they were a great band, just incredible....

Mike: I think they could've been a big national group.... shoot, the first time I ever smoked any weed was with them guys down at the beach....

Carl: Yeah, they upset all of South Texas, these freaks comin' down there and livin' on the beach, smokin' stuff....

Mike: We were scared then 'cause Rod told us the narcotics agents had radio controlled flies.... (laughter).... spyin' on us!

NFA: Let's see, the Bad Seeds were playin' in '65 so y'all were already goin' when the Elevators started.

Mike: I think so, I remember we were playin' around when they got goin', we thought they were pretty good....

NFA: Now, the Thaks went from the Beatle period to the psychedelic era....

Chris: Right.

NFA: How 'bout the Bad Seeds?

Mike: No, we never even heard of a strob light, didn't know what it was.

NFA: How did y'all come to use "Tried To Hide" by the Elevators and call it "All Night Long"?

Mike: Rod liked it, he'd been playing a version of that guitar lick that wasn't quite like they did it, so he changed the lyrics up some and we recorded it as "All Night Long".

NFA: Did anyone ever play a fiddle in the Thaks, 'cause I saw a band once at the Dunes Club with a fiddle player....

Carl: That was the Lingsmen, guy named Bennie Thurman played fiddle.

NFA: Yeah.... he ended up in the Elevators later on...., Carl, did you ever have any dealings with International Artists back then?

Carl: Some, when Bubble Puppy had "Hot Smoke and Sassafras" out I was in England and I took a copy by Apple Records. I played it for a guy there.... he used to have a group, Peter and Gordon....

NFA: Peter Asher?

Carl: Yeah, so I played the Bubble Puppy single for him and he said, "that's a hit!".... I told him it already was in Texas so anyway he wanted to lease it, but I didn't know what IA wanted for it so I went back to the hotel and called Rod. Told him what was goin' on and that Apple wanted their record..... and IA wouldn't take a lease on it!

NFA: They were nuts.

Carl: Can you imagine what would've happened to Bubble Puppy if they had got on Apple Records at that time?

NFA: They would've been a big act.

Mike: See, International Artists figured they could distribute it themselves....

NFA: Same old story, little record company tryin' to collect from the big distributors.... I'm sure you know that story Carl.

Mike: The distributors ain't gonna pay 'em.... why should they, they know IA will only have one hit, probably never have another one.... they'll pay Columbia or Apple but they ain't gonna pay International Artists from Houston, Texas.

Carl: Never did pay 'em.

Mike: I heard the record when I was in Canada with the Pozo Secos, couldn't believe it, the Puppy finally got a hit, and when I talked to Rod later he said he hadn't gotten a dime.

NFA: Bubble Puppy reformed awhile back and played around some....

Carl: I'd like to get the Zakary Thaks back together if I could ever get 'em all in one place.

NFA: Where are all the members now?

Carl: The only one I really know where he's at, is Chris.... (laughter).... John Lopez was around here for awhile....

Chris: John moves around alot, Stanley's in Corpus, Rex is in Hawaii....

Liberty Bell live
at the Corpus
Coliseum - 1967.

From the left:
Wayne Harrison -
bass, Ronnie
Tanner - vocals,
Al Hunt - lead,
Carl Aeby - drums,
Richard Painter -
rhythm.



NFA: Are they all still in Music?

Chris: Yes, except for Pete, he's workin' construction in California.

Carl: I saw John playin' with Bubble Puppy when I first came to Houston and, man, he just gets better, he was always a great lead player but now he's tremendous.... I just couldn't believe it when I saw him. I'd sure like to get all of the band back together sometime.

NFA: It's a good idea, and it's worked pretty well for Kenny & Kasuals, especially in Europe.....you know, one thing that has always knocked me out about the Thaks was how young you guys were, and put out such great records.

Carl: It was amazing that a band that young could come out with what they did at that time.

NFA: Really, and it makes you wonder about the 15 year olds today, 'course it's alot different doing something like that now, those were different days, different times....

Carl: Definitely different, like gettin' your record played.... all you had to do was drive by a radio station, give 'em a record and before you'd gone 10 miles you heard it on the air, nowadays you have to have four lawyers and \$20,000..... (laughter)

NFA: Tight playlists these days, but maybe it'll change back.

Carl: If it ever does, I'll get back in the record business.

J-BECK DISCOGRAPHY

- 1001 - Tony Joe & Mojoes - Bad Mouth/Someday.
- 1002 - Bad Seeds - Taste Of The Same/I'm A King Bee.
- 1003 - Bad Seeds - Zilch Pt. 1/Pt. 2.
- 1004 - Tony Joe - Sundown Blues/Down The Road I Go.
- 1005 - Bad Seeds - All Night Long/Sick And Tired.
- 1006 - Zakary Thaks - I Need You/Bad Girl.
- 1007 - Michael - My Last Day/I'm Nobody's Man.
- 1008 - Michael - Gotta Make My Heart Turn Away/People IV.
- 1009 - Zakary Thaks - Face To Face/Weekday Blues.
- 1101 - Zakary Thaks - Please/Won't Come Back.
- 1102 - Young Society - One Lonely Teardrop/Hey Do You Want.
- 1103 - Zakary Thaks - Mirror Of Yesterday/Can You Hear Your Daddy's Footsteps.

CEE-BEE DISCOGRAPHY

- 1001 - Liberty Bell - The Nazz Are Blue/Big Boss Man.
- 1002 - Liberty Bell - For What You Lack/That's How It Will Be.
- 1003 - Liberty Bell - Al's Blues/Something For Me.
- 1004 - unreleased.
- 1005 - Zakary Thaks - Everybody Wants To Be Somebody/Out-print.

related records

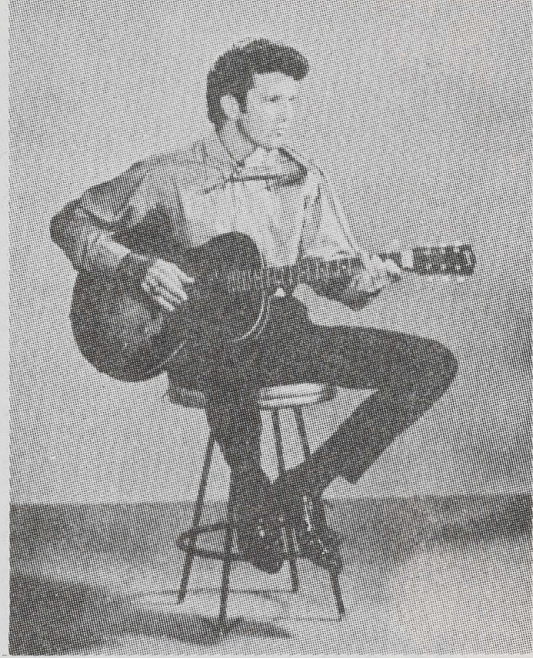
- Liberty Bell
- Back Beat 595 - Thoughts And Visions/Look For Tomorrow.
- Back Beat 600 - Naw, Naw, Naw/Recognition.
- Zakary Thaks
- Thak 1001 - My Door/Green Crystal Ties.
- Kubla Kahn
- Spearway 2 - Bad Side Of The Moon/Out In The Country.

Since this interview was done a Zakary Thaks LP has been issued on the Moxie label that contains all the group's singles. A J-Beck/Cee-Bee best of collection including some unreleased material should also be out fairly soon on J-Beck.

**NOT FADE
AWAY**



Mike Taylor as "Michael" on J-Beck. Mike is now an engineer with Mickey Gilley's studio in Houston.




Tony Joe White when he was on J-Beck.



Above: Early Liberty Bell live. Ronnie Tanner at left and Richard Painter at right,

Right: J-Beck's booking sheet in 1965. They put on many shows in the Corpus area.



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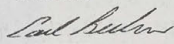
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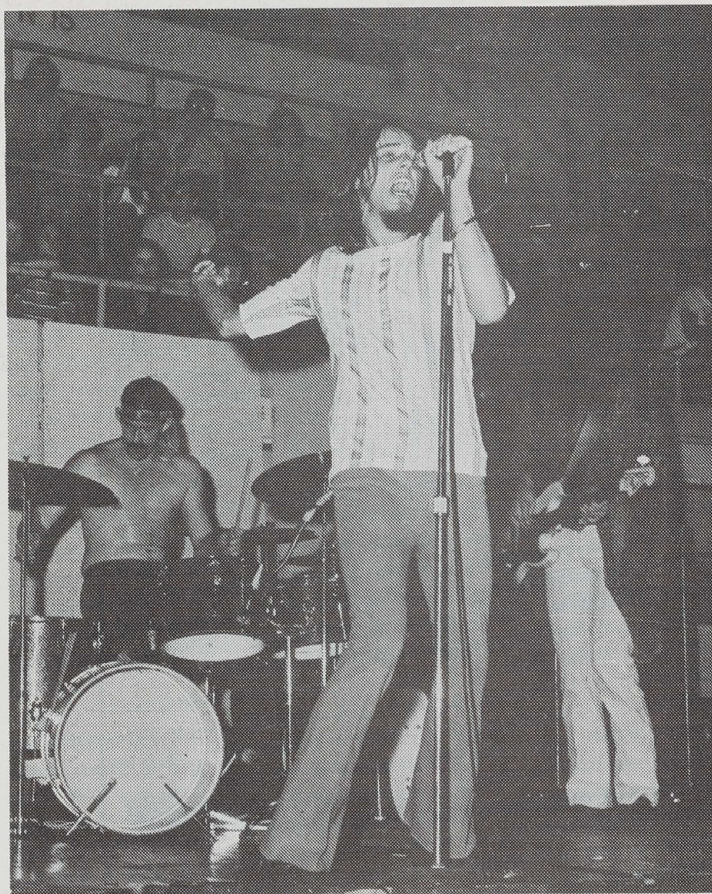
Early Josefus in Milby Park, Houston - fall, 1969.

JOSEFUS

At the end of the 1960's, Texas bands, like groups everywhere, started switching over to hard rock from their previous psychedelic/punk stance, though even in doing harder rock the local bands still retained a distinctive Texas flavor. Among these Texas groups were ZZ Top, Bloodrock, Nitzinger and others but perhaps the best example was Josefus.

The group formed in Houston in September 1969, some members coming from another Houston group, United Gas. Original members, Pete Bailey, Dave Mitchell, Doug Tull and Ray Turner played their first gig at Love Street in Houston. The band was well recieved and played many concerts in the area at places like Jubilee Hall, The Gallery and University of Houston (with Shivas Headband). Their first break came when they opened the ZZ Top/Grand Funk shows in Houston and Austin during November 1969. They attracted the attention of record producer Jim Musil, who invited them to Arizona to do some recording. He convinced them to change their name to "Come" as he had a possible deal cookin' with Frank Zappa's Straight Record label. The promotion idea was: Come on Straight Records!?! At any rate the deal fell through but a 45 was released in a limited amount on Musil's Dandelion label.

The band returned to Houston and reverted to the Josefus name. After playing the local shows again, which included a Quicksilver/Grateful Dead concert, they decided to finance their own LP and returned to Arizona to record it. Though not happy with Musil, they did like the Audio Recorders studio in Phoenix and thought it the best place to do their recording. The LP, Dead Man, was recorded there in December 1969 and released in early 1970 on their own Hookah label. The album sold very well around Texas, particularly in Houston, and a total of several thousand copies were sold but the group had trouble getting paid by the distributor, as usual. They did get alot of publicity and quite a few bookings due to the LP - A show in San Antone with Ten Years After, concerts in Corpus, Beaumont, Austin, Ft. Worth and the Devil's Bowl Pop Festival in Dallas, but still didn't get out of Texas.

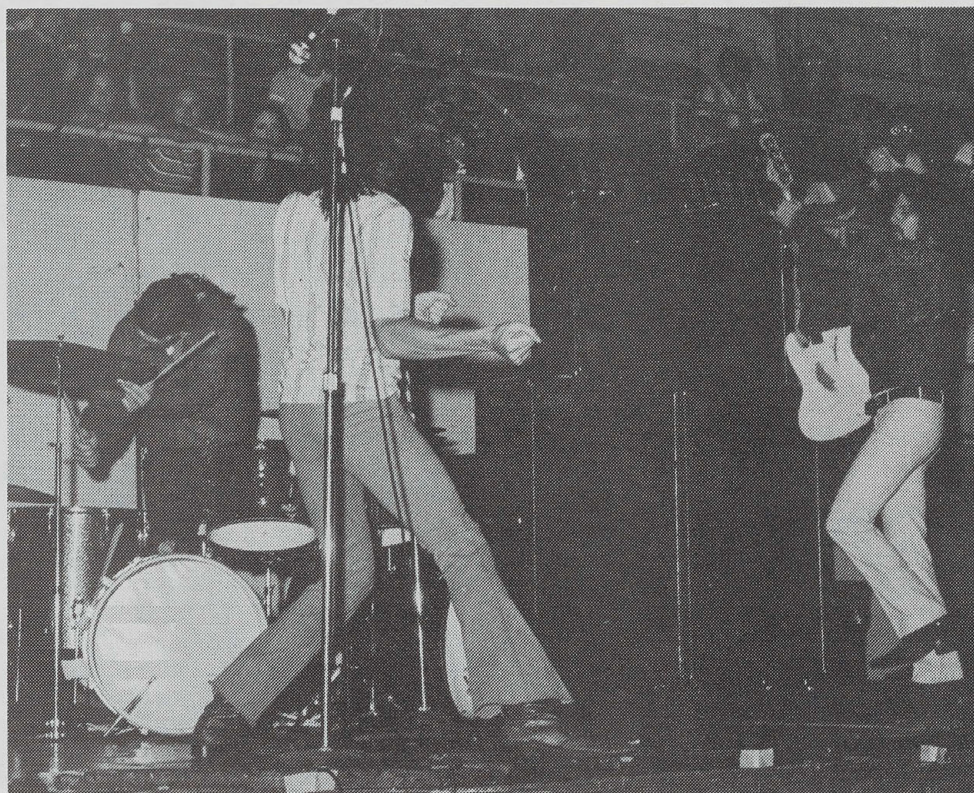


Pete in action - Sam Houston Coliseum, Huntsville - 1970.

As a result of their album sales and shows, Bob Shad of Mainstream Records contacted them. He signed the group to a short term contract for one album and they went to Criteria Studios in Miami to record in August of 1970. Due to problems Mainstream was having, the release of the album was delayed until late fall and then it's distribution was erratic. Consequently the album sold poorly except, of course, in Texas. Mainstream issued a single of the group's tribute to Jimi Hendrix, "Jimi Jimi/Sephus Blues", but it too disappeared without a trace.

At this time the band was more popular than ever in Texas and were playing alot of concerts but, due to their disillusion with the record companies and their failure to break out of Texas, the group decided to call it quits. So even with their increasing popularity Josefus split up in December 1970. Two of the group, Ray and Pete, formed another band, Stone Axe, which played through the summer of '71. While together they recorded a single on Rampart Records, "Snake Bit/Slave Of Fear", engineered by Linden Hudson of Glory (see NFA#2).

The main members of Josefus, Pete and Dave, stayed inactive for several years after this. Pete had throat problems and couldn't sing while Dave didn't play except for one cut on the Guitar Orchestra EP which some friends put out in 1976. But in July 1978 both musicians decided to reactivate Josefus and recruited new members. They played a few gigs around Houston and a couple in Austin, and recorded and released two new singles on their original label, Hookah. Their plans are uncertain at present but they do hope to issue a new LP, partly new live material and part reissue of the Dead Man album. I hope they continue to play and record for many years to come and, take it from me, they still do a great version of "Louisiana Blues".



Again at Sam Houston Coliseum.



In Houston - 1970. Pete at left (on the floor!) and David at right.

THE REASONS WHY

with JOHN SCHWERTNER

Formed in Temple, Texas in 1965 by Frank Kalenda, John Inman, Donnie Dolan and Ronnie Miller, they were joined shortly afterwards by John Schwertner. The group grew to be very popular in the Temple area and were signed to a management contract by a Waco businessman, Carl Sachs.

"Carl thought he was gonna have the next Beatles or something, he wanted to be for us like Epstein was for them. He was a real hustler. He booked us at one dance at Walker's Auditorium in Waco and arranged for a live radio broadcast. Well, the only people in the place besides us were a couple winos and hookers, so to make the radio show sound good Carl made all this crowd noise and had the DJ interview him like he was a fan, you know, 'Boy, this is the greatest group I've ever seen!' (laughter)".

Sachs arranged for a recording session in Ft. Worth with Soundtrack Records. The single that resulted was "Melinda", a forgettable ballad, and "Don't Be That Way", a great Elevators style raving rocker.

"We had finished the A-side, 'Melinda', and the engineer asked us if we had anything for the B-side. We had been working on 'Don't Be That Way' in practice but it wasn't finished so I adlibbed some more lyrics and we cut it. It was an Elevators inspired song as we liked them and we even did 'You're Gonna Miss Me' in concert."

The record was released in the summer of 1966 but, in spite of Carl Sachs' efforts, it did little due to poor distribution and a small pressing. Around this time Ronnie Miller left and was replaced on bass by Tommy Langford. The group did grow more and more popular with their stage appearances and played all over Texas plus a few out-of-state gigs.

"Sachs booked us into a dance in Fayetteville, Arkansas that was a real experience. For \$200 we had to drive all day and night to get up there in a VW van that wouldn't go over 50 mph. It was really cold out and we stayed in a motel that didn't have any hot water. The Hawks (later The Band) were stayin' in the same place and we all just froze. Didn't make much money on that show."

The Reasons Why played many places in Texas: Fat City in Kilgore, Catacombs in Houston, Lou Ann's in Dallas, Pussy Cat in San Antone and the New Orleans Club, Swingers A-Go-go and Jade Room in Austin. One of the best places though, and a real hot club in Central Texas, that they played was the Beyersville SPJST Club. Beyersville is a tiny town between Austin and Temple and the SPJST is a Bohemian fraternal organization that has clubs in many small Texas towns.



Top: Frank Kalenda, John Schwertner.

Bottom: Tom Langford, John Inman, Donnie Dolan.

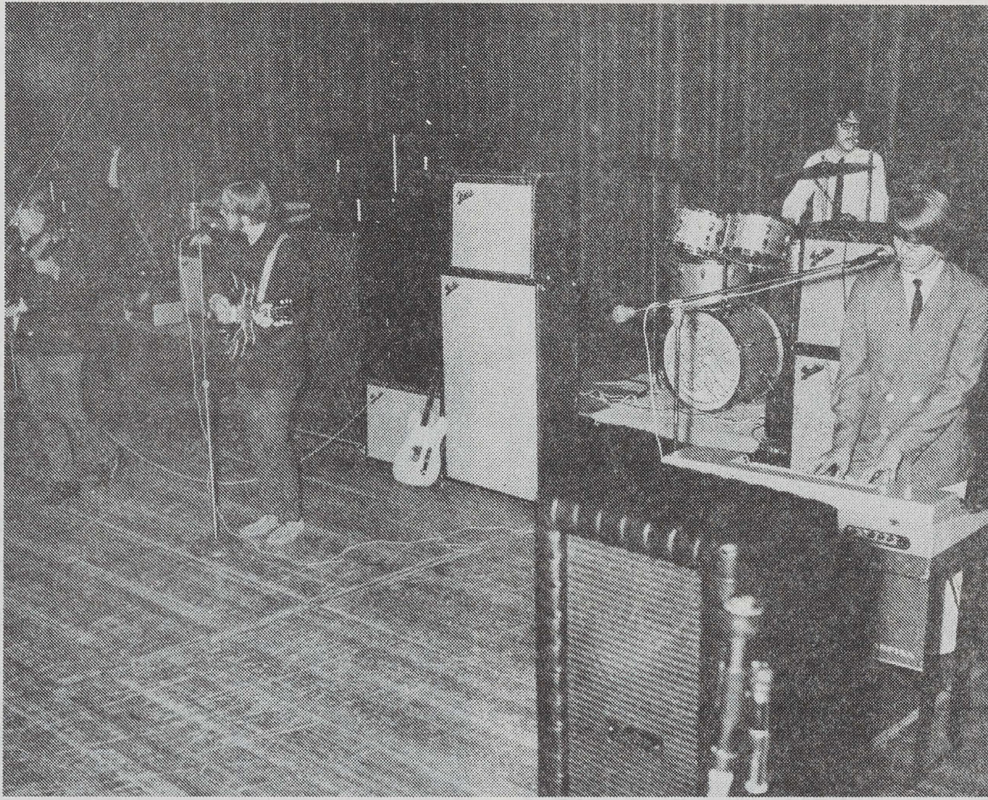
"The Beyersville SPJST was a great club, all the bands from Austin and Temple would play there; the Wig, Baby Cakes, Elevators, just everybody, and all these kids from all the little towns in the area would pack the place. Being out in the country we'd get a lot of cowboy redneck types and sometimes things would get pretty wild. We'd be up on stage playin' and the dance floor would be packed, then all of a sudden this whirlpool would start in the middle of the floor. It wouldn't be just a few guys from Taylor fightin' a few guys from Rockdale, it'd be everybody from Taylor fightin' everybody from Rockdale. Sometimes we'd be playin' along and the dance floor would empty real fast 'cause there'd be a fight outside. It got pretty crazy back then even down in Austin. One time we were playing at the Jade Room there and this cowboy picked up this hippy and threw him through the plate glass window in front!"

The group played a lot of frat partys in Austin and became quite popular. They were helped out somewhat by the legendary Baby Cakes, one of the earliest and best Texas bands who sadly never recorded.

"We had always looked up to them 'cause they were the first band I remember to play English style rock and roll. A real scruffy looking band, sort of the Texas Rolling Stones I guess. They helped us get some bookings and they'd come to our shows and tell us how to improve our band, really helped us a lot. They started up about the same time as the Elevators I think."

The Reasons Why played through the summer of '67 and were at the Aqua Festival Battle Of The Bands in August. They did some more recording at Robin Hood Brian's studio in Tyler but nothing was released. The band finally broke up in the fall of '67 when Frank Kalenda left and John Schwertner was approached to sing for the newly formed Lavender Hill Express. The rest of the group played as a blues band for awhile called Feast Of Stephen then evolved into another group, South Canadian Overflow. Schwertner went on to sing for Plymouth Rock after LHE, along with Donnie Dolan and John Inman. Inman later played with the popular Lost Gonzo Band in the mid-70's.

Few Texas bands went on to influence so many other groups as the Reasons Why did and, though other good recordings resulted, their initial record is Texas punk at it's best.



Reasons Why at the Battle of the Bands '67 in Austin.

From the left: Tommy, John Inman, Donnie and John Schwertner.



WITH THE ANSWERS—"The Reasons Why" are another of the skilled rock groups that will participate in the big Battle of the Bands Thursday, Aug. 10, in Municipal Auditorium. The event is part of the annual Austin Aqua Festival. From left to right are John Inman, lead guitar; Donnie Dolan, drummer; Tommy Langford, bass guitar; and Johnny Schwertner, organist. The boys have been playing together for more than a year.

**Visitors To Compete
Battle of Bands at Auditorium**

The Aqua Festival '67 Battle will play while the judges are to present the winners with their; and the fourth, \$50. of the Bands produced by Mike making their tabulations based prizes. Along with the titles of, The Mustangs will play until Lucas is ready for full scale on talent and stage presence. being winners in the Battle of the new winners can set up; a e i t o n. The preliminary) The new Miss Austin Aqua the Bands, go cash prizes. The then, the '67 Battle of the eliminations left eleven Victor; Beatty, who was chosen only first place band receives \$100; Band's Champions will rock the who will compete in the final; half-field encounter at the Municipal Auditorium on Thursday, August 10 at 8 p.m.

Austin bands in the finals are the Eternal Life Corporation, the Georgetown Medical Band, Leo and the Prophets, Scott and the Sensational Webbs, Ronnie and the Ferrells and the Strawberry Shoemaker.

Out of town finalists are the Chaynes from San Antonio, the Dissenters and the Reasons Why from Temple, the Spidells from San Antonio and the Liberty Bell from Corpus Christi.

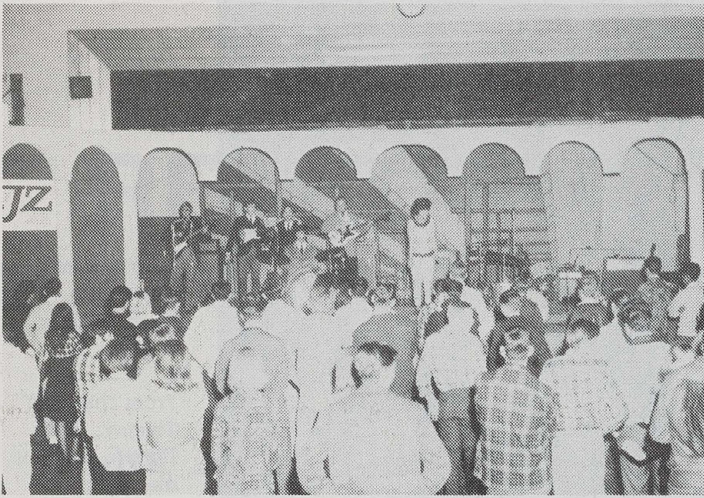
During the Battle, each group will have 15-20 minutes for its presentation. Following all the bands' performances, last year's champion band, the Mustangs acting as house band,



"THE REASONS WHY"—This group of Temple young men has been playing together for seven months. They were recently selected one of the top four bands in the Central and South Texas area at the Aqua Festival of the Bands in Austin. Playing rock and roll, folk rock, blues and jazz, the group is currently negotiating with major record companies for a recording contract. The group includes, left to right, Frank J. Kalenda, a Temple Junior College student, John Inman, a student at Temple High School, Ronnie Miller, a TJC student, Johnny Schwertner, a freshman at TJC, and Donny Dolan, a TJC freshman.

Pre-show publicity for the Battle of the Bands '67. Check the competition! The Spidells (later Swiss Movement) won.

Above: The original group. The newspaper caption is wrong, from the left: Frank, Ronnie, Donnie, John Schwertner and John Inman.



LARRY AND THE BLUE NOTES

One of the best bands in the Ft. Worth area during the '60s, these guys also had one of the longest lasting Texas groups. Starting in 1962 and going through 1968 they covered the entire '60s musical spectrum from the Ventures to the Yardbirds.

Larry Roquemore and Larry Slater formed the band in '62 and remained the key members throughout the group's career. They recorded their first single for the legendary Major Bill Smith in '65 and hit paydirt immediately with "Night Of The Phantom". It made #3 on the local charts and was picked up by 20th Century Fox for national release, but not without a little controversy. It seems "Night Of The Phantom" was originally recorded as "Night Of The Sadist" but 20th Century thought that "Sadist" might offend someone so they had the band overdub "Phantom" on the single.

Their next record was the first of a couple brief name changes the group underwent. "She'll Love Me" was issued on Major Bill's Charay label as the Mark Five, then reissued as Larry and the Blue Notes with two different B-sides: "Everybody Needs Somebody" and "Talk About Love". (Major Bill's tendency to swap out the A and B-sides of his releases on many of his artists has always made for very confusing discographies and Larry and the Blue Notes are no exception.) The success in 1965 of "Everybody Needs Somebody" led to another name change as Epic picked up the single and released it as The Bad. The band used this name for awhile around Ft. Worth but eventually reverted to Larry and the Blue Notes. Major Bill had them do a cover of Herman's Hermits "Mrs. Brown" for Guyden Records as, at the time, the song was only an LP cut but as soon as Larry's single came out so did the Hermits' and that was it for the Blue Notes version.

In 1966 their best single was released, "In And Out", a superb rocker that resulted, in part, from the Blue Notes exposure to a Yardbirds show in Ft. Worth. "In And Out" also had the distinction of being issued at least five different times with various A-sides. Major Bill kept trying different songs but none clicked except on a local basis. The band

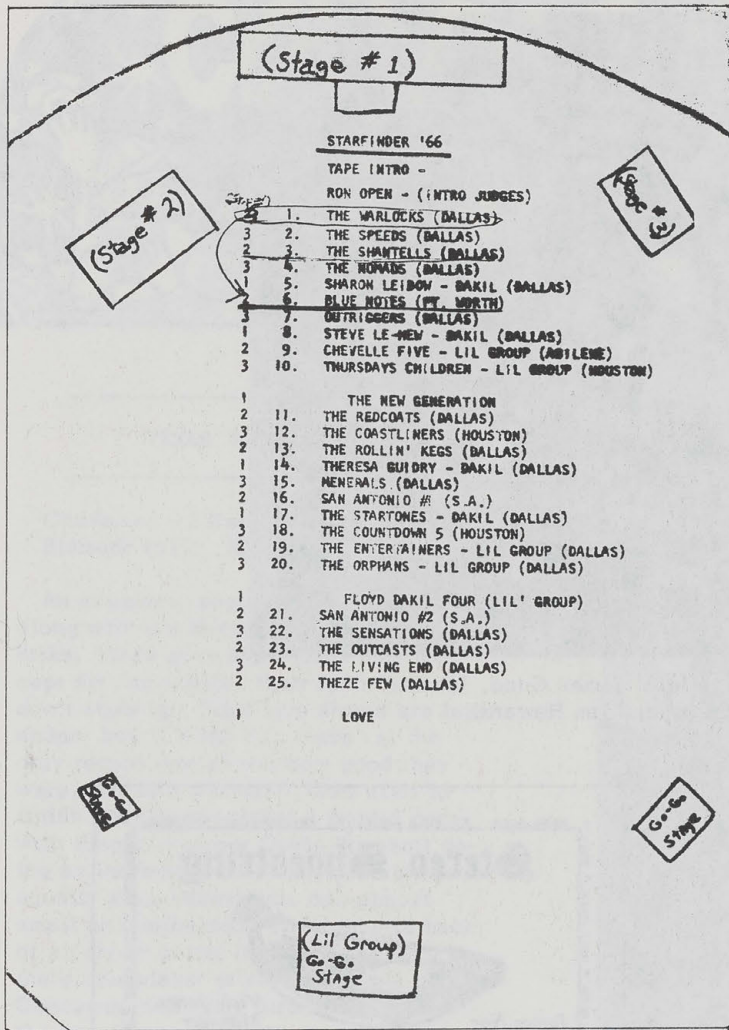


Above: Larry and the Blue Notes - 1965. Larry Slater at left and Larry Roquemore at center.

Above left: Larry and the Blue Notes at the Action A Go Go in Ft. Worth using the drummer in front line-up. Check out the Go Go girl!

had little control over what came out, they attended many recording sessions at Major Bill's studio and at various times some of these songs would appear on singles. It's interesting to note that, though Major Bill had them cover many songs, it was the group's own choice of material that sounds the best today ("In And Out", "Everybody Needs Somebody", "Phantom", "Talk About Love").

The band toured quite a bit in the mid '60s and played the New Orleans Club in Austin, appeared on the Larry Kane TV Show in Houston and were on the legendary Starfinder '66 battle of bands in Dallas. But their most interesting road experience is also one that sheds some light on a longtime Texas musical mystery. When the Sir Douglas Quintet was popular in the mid '60s many people complained that the bands they saw at various shows were not the real SDQ but some other group posing as the SDQ. It seems that one of these other SDQs was Larry and the Blue Notes. They were approached by a booking agent who told them that Sir Doug was in jail (possibly his '65 pot bust) and that he had all these dates booked and would they help him out for a few weeks. The money was right so the group agreed and embarked on a four state tour as the Sir Douglas Quintet. They learned "She's About A Mover" and some of the other SDQ songs and the tour took them to Texas, New Mexico, Colorado and Oklahoma. The only trouble on the tour came in Roswell, N.M. when, after the show, the local radio station insisted on an interview! They pulled it off by saying Sir Doug was sick and



The Starfinder '66 Battle of the Bands, just look at that line-up, must've been a great show! The Chevelle Five won the prize: a trip to L.A. and a recording contract.

cutting the interview short so they could get out of town. The next day a taped SDQ appearance was aired on American Bandstand and the radio station recieved some irate fans who had noticed the difference in the two groups but the Blue Notes got clear and vowed never to do it again!

In 1968 Larry and the Blue Notes effectively ended although both Larrys formed a show band, Soul Purpose, it was not at all like the old group. While the Blue Notes were around they were among the best Texas bands as their records show and I'm sure they made a hell of a good Sir Douglas Quintet!

(Larry Roquemore and Larry Slater currently have a new group in Ft. Worth called Street Life with a jazz-rock style format.)



Top: Larry and the Blue Notes after they signed with Epic Records as The Bad. From the left: Randy Cates - bass, Larry Slater - guitar, Larry Roquemore - vocals, Mike Griffin - drums and Jack Hammonds - keyboard.

Bottom: Larry and the Blue Notes - 1963. From the left: Buddy Bates, Larry Slater, Mike Griffin, Larry Roquemore and Dan Fletcher. The matching jackets were won in a Battle of the Bands around Ft. Worth.

LARRY & THE BLUE NOTES DISCOGRAPHY

- Tiris 101 - Night Of The Phantom/All My Own.
 20th Century Fox 573 - Night Of The Phantom/All My Own.
 Charay 20 - The Phantom/She'll Love Me (as Mark Five).
 Charay 20 - Talk About Love/She'll Love Me.
 Charay 20 - Everybody Needs Somebody/She'll Love Me.
 Epic 9871 - Everybody Needs Somebody/She'll Love Me (as The Bad).
 Charay 44 - In And Out/There's No Other(Like My Baby).
 Charay 44 - In And Out/I'll Be True To You.
 Charay 44 - In And Out/You Cheated, You Lied.
 Charay 44 - In And Out/No Milk Today.
 Charay 44 - In And Out/Love Is A Beautiful Thing.
 Guyden 2124 - Mrs. Brown You've Got A Lovely Daughter/Just Stay (as Larry Roquemore).



The Stereo Shoestring, from the left: James Coco, James Noe, Richard Lalor, Steve Schultz and Jim Howard.

Stereo Shoestring

This Corpus Christi group turned the English Invasion around somewhat by "borrowing" material from one of the best English bands, the Pretty Things, and improving on it in the best Texas punk tradition. The Stereo Shoestring released one of the strongest records of the 1960's Texas punk scene on, naturally enough, English Records and, though marvelous things are expected of any band called the Stereo Shoestring, these guys didn't let anyone down.

The group formed in early 1968 with James Coco - vocal, Jim Howard - lead guitar, Richard Lalor - rhythm guitar, James Noe - bass and Steve Schultz - drums. All had played in previous bands including the Clockwork Orange that had Richard Lalor and a friend of his, Ashley Johnson, in it.

Ashley was a long time record collector, starting in the mid - 60's, and he became spiritual advisor to the Shoestring. He bought a lot of records through the mail from Heanor Record Service in England including a non-LP single by the Pretty Things, "Defecting Grey". When the band decided to record a single they turned to Ashley who suggested some records including the Pretty Things 45. The Stereo Shoestring liked "Defecting Grey" and decided to "borrow" it for their own record. They reworked it somewhat and christened it "On The Road South". The band went to Houston with Ashley to record it and the resulting single is a masterpiece of Texas punk, though owing a bit to the Prettys. The B-side was even quite good being a nice version of the Zombies' "Tell Her No".

The group released the record and continued playing the Corpus area. The single had the usual distribution problems and didn't sell very well. Towards the end of '68 the Shoestring decided to call it quits. Though later four members (James Noe, Jim Howard, James Coco and Steve Schultz) formed a new group, Red House, which recorded a single in 1969.

The Stereo Shoestring wasn't around for very long but they will always have a place in the Texas Punk Hall of Fame for their great name and record (with a special thanks to the Pretty Things!).



The Clockwork Orange, Richard Lalor on the left and Ashley Johnson second from the right.

COLLECTORS' CORNER

TEXAS PUNK 45s

Chessmen - I Need You There/Sad.
Bismark 1012. (Dallas)

An extremely popular Dallas group, along with the Kasuals, Exotics and Briks, these guys were great but, except for one single, their records just don't show it. Their live shows are legendary but "I Need You There" is the only record that shows how good they were, and it's a killer! From start to finish the Chessmen set a frantic pace with singer/drummer Doyle Bramhall doing an incredible job. The lead break is equally stupendous, you can almost smell an overheated Fender amp in back of all those guitar licks. Not sure who the guitar player is on this single as the Chessmen had many different people in the group at various times, could be either Robert Patton or Jimmy Vaughan (now in the Thunderbirds). Sammy Piazza (later with Hot Tuna), Billy Etheridge, Johnny Peoples and Tommy Carter are some of the others who were in the Chessmen.

The B-side, "Sad", is a typical slow number but then anything is going to sound real tame after "I Need You There". It's too bad they didn't make more singles like this one but if ever a group's reputation had to depend on one record, this is the one.

S. J. and The Crossroads - Ooh-Poo-Pah-Doo/This Love Of Mine. Salmar 101. (Beaumont)

One of the most popular bands in the Golden Triangle (Beaumont-Port Arthur-Orange) of East Texas, these Beaumont boys played every club in the area. All of their records are good but the best one, and one of my all-time faves, is "Ooh-Poo-Pah-Doo". Ernie K. Doe might not even recognize his song from the rave-up version that the Crossroads do of it. The intro is a touch of genius on someone's part with party noises: laughing, talking, beer cans clinking,

going on and then - whamo - these guitar chords cut right through everything. The party noise stops and S. J. & co. start rockin', the vocalist comes in and is joined by a great Farfisa organ. At the break the guitar player takes off on an excellent lead as the crowd noise comes up briefly. They finish off the way they started with the party pickin' up again, simply a great record. Everything that makes for classic Texas punk is here, and it all works to perfection.

The flip, "This Love Of Mine", is

even a decent ballad using the good ole Farfisa to it's best advantage. These guys definitely get my vote for the Texas Top Ten.

Fanatics - I Will Not Be Lonely/Be Mine. Gina 1118. (Houston)

This is Neal Ford's first and best record. After this single Neal took first billing in calling his group Neal Ford and the Fanatics but maybe he should've



just stuck to the Fanatics - period - 'cause they never sounded this good again.

"I Will Not Be Lonely" is a great cut, sounding like the Kinks meet the Kingmen - Texas style. Using a "You Really Got Me" riff throughout the song with some punked-out screams and a good guitar break, this is easily a Texas classic. The flip, "Be Mine", isn't bad either, sort of Neal Ford's version of Del Shannon, somewhat punked up.

Sure wish Neal had stayed with this groove on more of his records.

Iguanas - I Can Only Give You Everything/Leaving You Baby. Iguana 101. (Houston)

This is a strong single, one of the best versions of "I Can Only Give You Everything" that I've heard. These guys were obviously influenced by the Elevators as so many bands in Texas were, but they are the only ones I've heard that go so far as to imitate the 'Vators electric jug, and they do it with a vocal track! Really works too with the "jug" sound mixing with good fuzztone guitar work and a nice vocal to create an excellent record in spite of the poor recording quality. The other side, "Leaving You Baby", is good too but sort of... a...uh...punk recitation!? Just a guitar and vocal that builds and builds but never quite takes off, kinda interesting though.

Not too surprisingly the producer of this single is Gordon Bynum who also did the Elevators first 45 on Contact, and one member of the Iguanas, Al Melinger, went on to record with Endle St. Cloud for IA.

Heard - You're Gonna Miss Me/Exit 9. One Way 0001. (Longview)

As long as we're on the subject of Elevators influenced bands, this record fits right in. Any Texas band that covers a 'Vators song, especially "You're Gonna Miss Me", deserves some attention. It's simply incredible that any local group would attempt to redo such a hit but perhaps these East Texas boys covered "You're Gonna Miss Me" while it was on Contact and before it became a huge hit for IA. They do a real good version but of course no one can equal the Elevators own style. Although the Heard doesn't really have the jug sound on the record, the bass player makes a decent attempt at it, maybe they were like so many other people who just couldn't figure out what that "weird sound" was.

The other side, "Exit 9", is the group's own composition and a great one.

The song starts off with a good guitar lead and the words: "Collision Course - Exit 9!". The lyrics are right out of the Dope-Mystic College of Musical Knowledge and the vocal/guitar work follows suit. Again a Elevators influenced song that comes off very good and makes this single a real double whammy two-sider.

Cicadelics - We're Gonna Love This Way/What Can I Do?. Psychedelic Sound 1001. (Angleton)

Now you just know that any group and record label with this name has got to be good, and these boys don't disappoint you. "We're Gonna Love This Way" is a good punker with nice fuzz guitar and Farfisa organ back-up. The organ gives it a somewhat Tex-Mex punk flavor, ala Augie Meyer, that works real fine. Alas, the B-side is not so hot, it's not bad just the usual slow number that's good for them snuggle-up dances. Even if this record weren't so good it'd still be worth having just for the name.

Oedipus and The Mothers - How It Used To Be/Lonesome. Beacon 1001. (Austin)

Here's another group with an equally great name and record. This Austin band had a pretty strange style, using soul and punk mixed together. The A-side of this single, "How It Used To Be", is a good punker, all fuzzed out with that Elevators influence lurking in the background, while the B-side is just flat wierd in contrast. It's a sweet soul ballad called "Lonesome" with a saxophone purring along in the backup, it sounds just unbelievable after hearing the other side, might as well be a different group on each side of the single. The singer sounds like he could be doing the vocals on both sides, if so he certainly was a versatile performer.

Knights Bridge - Make Me Some Love/C.J. Smith. Sea Ell 105. (Houston)

This 45 is one of the most psychedelic punk rockers done in Texas. "Make Me Some Love" starts out as a medium rocker and works up to a great psyched out break. The singer is tremendous, going from a slow beginning to a wild screaming crescendo of "Make Me Some Love" at the end. The band is really good with some wondrous spaced-out sound effects throughout the record.

The flip, "C.J. Smith", is also good though a slower song, along the lines of the Kinks' "Well Respected Man" in lyric content. Don't know much about this band other than their record company was

based in Houston. The company had a few other singles but, I'm sad to say, nothing like this record.

Sherwoods - I Know You Cried/If I Could See. Newsound 1001. (Houston)

Another in the long line of great '60s Texas records, this group has everything going for them: great band, great singer, great song. "I Know You Cried" is similar to some of Mouse's best efforts with lotsa fuzztone, wild screams and a heavy guitar break. But, though the whole record is as good as it gets, the ending is my favorite part as it's probably the best of any '60s rocker I've heard. The band builds up to a climax, then you hear one guitar start to feedback, it gets louder and louder 'till it all ends with a big explosion! Sounds like the amp, maybe the whole studio, blew up, wonderful ending. The other side is the usual slow song, not much noteworthy about it.

Again I don't know much about these guys other than they were Houston-based but whoever they were, they were good.

Mag Plugs

Here's some plugs for my favorite fanzines, if you like NFA you'll surely like these:

Bam Balam, Brian Hogg, Castellau, Dunbar, East Lothian, Scotland. Sample issue - \$2. '60s coverage - European and U.S.

Future, Gerg Prevost, 53 Fairway Dr., Rochester, N.Y. 14612. Sample - \$1.50. '60s coverage - mainly U.S.

Hot Wacks, Bert Muirhead, 16 Almond-bank Terr., Edinburgh, EH11 1SS, Scotland. Sample - \$2. '60s, '70s, '80s - European and U.S.

A Bucketfull Of Brains, Nigel Cross, 25B Ridge Road, London N8, England. Sample - \$2. '80s - coverage European.

Comstock Lode, John Platt, 51 Bollo Lane, Chiswick, London W4, England. Sample - \$2. '60s coverage - European and U.S.

Gorilla Beat, Alfred Hebing, Hatzper Str. 239, 4300 Essen 1, West Germany. Sample - \$2. '60s coverage - European.

The good old Who Put The Bomp should have a new issue by now that I understand will have more '60s coverage. That address is Box 7112, Burbank, Calif. 91510. Also in plugging publications, a must-have for all Texas fans is David Shutt's "Journey To Tyme". An excellent discography and quality rating for '60s Texas punk records. \$6 U.S. and \$8 overseas from David Shutt, 6123 Wagon Bend, Austin, Texas 78744.

 TEX-MEX 45s

Sonny Ace and the Twisters - Wooleh Booleh/Chili Pepper. Cobra 224/Atlantic 2364. (San Antone)

This is a super record by the San Antone legend himself, Sonny Ace! He does a terrific version of "Wooleh Booleh" in spanish and his group, the Twisters, is excellent. I've often wondered whose version came first, Sonny's or Sam the Sham's, as Sonny's recording is so good it sounds like it must be the original but, I think, Sam and the Pharaohs did it first. Whoever it was, I like Sonny's version best, the song is such a natural for a Tex-Mex band with that pumpin' beat and Sonny has a great sax solo in the break that just fits wonderfully. Top it off with the spanish lyrics and you'll almost forget anyone else ever did the song. Atlantic Records liked it enough to pick it up and release it on their label in the mid 60's which shows their good taste! The flip side, "Chili Pepper", is a traditional-type Tex-Mex ranchera instrumental that's nice but nothing like the other side.

Johnny Canales - Johnny B. Good/I Am Sorry. Penco 116. (Corpus)

This is the best example of straight Tex-Mex rock I've ever heard. Most Tex-Mex includes organ and/or horns but not this single. It's a raw, pounding version of "Johnny B. Good" with that recorded in the garage quality. The band isn't the best and Johnny's Mexican accent is so heavy that it's hilarious at times, but all together it works marvelously. A true Tex-Mex classic and maybe the best example around of the Texas musical/cultural mixing-pot. "I Am Sorry" is more what you'd expect in Tex-Mex, a nice ballad with horns and all, a real contrast to the frantic pace of "Johnny B. Good".

Alfredo Mendieta - Chicken Run/I Got Something On My Mind. RR 1001. (Corpus)

This guy is the Tex-Mex Link Wray, just a tremendous guitar player. He takes one of Wray's songs, "Chicken Run", and makes you forget the original version. Alfredo does it faster, louder and better. He turns way up and it's fast fingers/full speed from start-to-finish. The bass and drums manage to keep up with him but he's virtually a

one man band with his guitar. An amazing single. The B-side is Rene Guajardo doing "I Got Something On My Mind", nice slow wailer, and Rene has a good voice, similar to Freddy Fender's.

Harley Davis - World's Unknown/One Fool In A Lifetime. Renner 222. (San Antonio)

This early '60s pounder is reminiscent of some Elvis records except it has that San Antone sound: a great wailing horn section with a sax honkin' away at the break. Harley starts off "Worlds Unknown" with a countdown of 5-4-3-2-1 then blasts off with:

"Don't need no supersonic jet plane,
Don't need no rocketship,
Don't need no flyin' saucer,
To make this trip.

A-all you need is a sweet little girl
of your own,

To go to world's unknown."

Wonderful lyrics and a good rocker. The other side is the good ole slow dance number.

Outside of this single, the Traits, Sir Doug's and a few of Denny Ezba's records, there weren't many rockers on Renner but the ones they did have were good. Harley made an earlier record on Wildcat but it's nothing like this one.

PLUGS and REVIEWS

Everything comes to he who waits (including NFA), and Roky Erikson's new LP sure fills that bill. After several years the new LP has finally been issued in England and it's good. Not as good as it could be, but after several years of anticipation any LP would be a bit of a let-down. The production on the recordings takes away some of Roky's raw edge and makes him a bit too smooth for me, but it's still good. The 45 that was released at the same time is also a must-have for the non-LP B-side, "The Wind And More".

Also in the long-time-comin' category is the new IA#13 LP collection. It's finally out and interesting enough, but missing some of the groups/recordings that I would have included. More of the better non-LP singles (Thursdays Children, Lost&Found) would have fit nicely in the collection and perhaps some other unissued material, if any more exists, like the Chapparrals' "I Tried So Hard", terrific cut. Still the acoustic Roky cuts are very good and the

LP set is a must for any fan of Texas music.

The Elevators Live Avalon '66 LP that was only available in a limited Italian edition has been re-released on Lysergic Records (great name) at a more reasonable price. There's also a slim possibility that some of the live Elevators recordings from Austin in '65/'66 may see vinyl soon. Joe "King" Carrasco's long-awaited second LP is out and is very good, less Tex-Mexy than the first LP but more like his live show. So far it's only out in England but should see release in the U.S. shortly. Huey (The Legend) Meaux has been busy releasing albums, some new material and some from his archive of past recordings. The live Freddy Fender/Sir Doug LP is quite good (with Roky on guitar) as are the two Joey Long LPs. Huey has dozens of albums out ranging from country to blues and the forthcoming releases will include a Sir Doug LP with some unissued material. A local Austin band, Flight 23, has a new single out with a nice '60s sound.

The Amazing Record Co. of Ft. Worth has released a new LP by Kenny Wayne (formerly of Kenny&Kommotions) with Buggs Henderson playing on it. They also have a new LP by Omar and the Howlers but the big news is they plan to issue a new LP by the Legendary Stardust Cowboy on their Luna label, all new material!

There's so many new bands around Austin that it's hard to keep up with 'em but one of the better ones I've seen is the Headhunters, hope they get to recording real soon. Marsha Ball's new band has been recording and the tapes sound real good, nice R&B, hope there's a record before too long. There's also many new clubs around town but one old-timer, Armadillo World HQ, will be gone by early '81. After 10 years of good times and good music it will be sorely missed.



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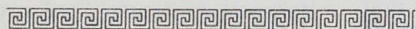
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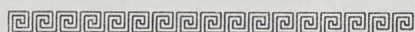
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