

TEXAS MUSIC

EXTRA

Nov. '13

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Strait was honored as Entertainer of the Year for the first time since 1990. (Courtesy CMA Awards)

CMA Awards, Texas Style

King George – Strait, that is – was reinstated as Entertainer of the Year, Miranda Lambert took home another Female Vocalist of the Year trophy and Kacey Musgraves won New Artist of the Year at the 47th CMA Awards in Nashville Nov. 6. Strait's win came as something of a surprise – he hadn't won since 1990 – but seemed a fitting way to honor the country legend, now enjoying his farewell tour, something his fellow nominees echoed enthusiastically following his victory. The win was

the 61-year-old's third in the category. "This blows me away," a clearly shocked Strait said. This means the world to me. I appreciate it. Thank you." Not surprisingly, Strait's win was the most talked about moment from the show on Facebook, according to official stats.

Lambert (below) showed off a slimmed-down frame on the red carpet before receiving her fourth consecutive Female Vocalist award. "I've been working out a lot," she said. "Working out and drinking juice and just running, running around." And the motivation



for the new exercise regimen? "I'm going to be 30 in a few days," Lambert added, "so I thought, 'Well, if I get a little healthier before I turn 30 maybe I can get ahead of the game.'" One person was particularly impressed with Lambert's look: her husband, Blake Shelton, who won Male Vocal-



Musgraves earned New Artist of the Year honors and some attention from the ABC censors.

ist of the Year (also for the fourth consecutive time). "My wife is so hot it's ridiculous," he tweeted during the event. Upon receiving her award, Lambert said, "I really didn't think this was going to happen this year" before thanking each of the other nominees.

TEXAS MUSIC EXTRA

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Musgraves, meanwhile, found herself a tad too progressive for mainstream television as she performed "Follow Your Arrow" from her breakout album *Same Trailer Different Park*. ABC cut her mic each time the chorus of the song came around to the line, "Roll up a joint." When asked about the network's move afterwards, Musgraves said she found it ironic. "I guess for some reason people feel the need to censor that word," Musgraves said, "but they leave 'crack' in." Indeed, Musgraves' lyric, "But if you lose too much [weight], then you're on crack" cleared the censors. Still, the fact that an uplifting, life-affirming song with an edge made it onto the CMAs at all marks a milestone in a show that typically plays things close to the vest. And Musgraves had the last laugh, besting the favored Florida Georgia Line in the New Artist category, the night's biggest upset.



Strait (right) and Alan Jackson paid tribute to George Jones by performing "He Stopped Loving Her Today."

One of the highlights of the event was Strait and Alan Jackson – two of country's greatest living traditionalists – paying tribute to the late George Jones by duetting on Jones' classic, "He Stopped Loving Her Today." Jones received the Willie Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award, an honor he shared on this night with another legendary Texan, Kenny Rogers, who, in a refreshing change from how such tributes usually work, was right on stage with those saluting him. "It's been a hell of a month," said Rogers, who was also just inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame. "I can't wait to see what next week brings!"

Memorialized

A Lubbock-raised guitar hero, a pair of local gospel legends, a 1950's Tejano bandleader and saxophonist, and Willie Nelson's longtime stage manager are the new inductees to the Austin Music Memorial. To be eligible for the recognition, the honoree must have passed

away at least three years prior to induction, which led to 1950's singer Joyce Webb being scratched from the list when it was discovered she's still living in Wimberley. Jesse Taylor (pictured below) is best known as the guitarist for the Joe Ely Band that toured with the Clash. But he was also the musician

who started the famous Sunday night jam sessions at the original Stubb's BBQ in Lubbock. Ermant "Ju-



nior" Franklin, the son of famous East Austin preacher E.M. Franklin, was a member of the Mighty Clouds of Joy, while A.C. Littlefield of Clarksville sang for the Bells of Joy, the first gospel group to sell a million singles ("Let's Talk About Jesus"). Nemecio Carmona was a sax player whose 10-piece band was one of the hottest in Austin in the '50s and '60s. And Poodie Locke was the lovable Nelson Family member who opened Poodie's in Spicewood so he and the gang would have a place to hang out when they weren't on the road.

Oh, yeah, you'll love the sound of this.

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Kell's Bells

A day after revealing she'd tied the knot with fiancé Brandon Blackstock, the new Mrs. Kelly Blackstock – also known as Kelly Clarkson – shared a wedding video from their special day. Clarkson, 31, tweeted the nearly two-minute video of gorgeous foliage and scenery from the location of their quiet wedding, Tennessee's Blackberry Farms. "I'm officially Mrs. Blackstock," Clarkson tweeted. The "Catch My Breath" singer wed her talent manager husband in an intimate ceremony attended only by a few close friends and family, including Blackstock's two children from a previous marriage.



(ArchetypeStudioInc.com)

Channeling Janis

With her fiery red hair, equally fiery guitar playing and sultry power vocals, Carolyn Wonderland invites comparisons to famed



female rock stalwart Janis Joplin. It's a comparison, the performer says, that can be both a blessing and a curse. "If you're a non-opera-singing woman from Texas, you'll get saddled

with that comparison," Wonderland says in a new interview. "I used to think it was just lazy journalists – Texas plus girl plus singer equals Joplin. Turns out, it's a universal reference. I can think of far worse things to have said about oneself, but nobody can ever live up to such expectations." Nevertheless, Wonderland found a way to incorporate Joplin's work into her repertoire. "I avoided doing all things Janis until covering 'What Good Can Drinkin' Do,' for my *Peace Meal* album" she says. "Growing up in Texas, young girls learn to sing Janis' songs only in private. In public would be silly. I decided that even though I couldn't do it better, I'd like to try to do justice to one of the songs – to walk in one of the songs she wrote."

Texas Musicians Museum

The Irving City Council has approved a development agreement that will bring the Texas Musicians Museum to the Downtown Irving Heritage Crossing District. The museum, which was previously located in Waxahachie's historic Rogers Hotel, is part of Irving's push to revitalize its historic downtown area. The museum, which will house a memorabilia collection, will host a number of concerts on indoor and outdoor stages, including the Lemon Blues Festival, Texas Crawfish Party & Music Jam, Texas Tejano & Conjunto Festival and Texas Music and Arts Festival. The museum is expected to open in 2014, though a date has not yet been announced.

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Lincoln Durham plays at 9 p.m. on Saturday.

ARTWALK ALPINE
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www.artwalkalpine.com

Live Music is an integral part of Alpine's annual ArtWalk, which this year celebrates its 20th anniversary. One block of 5th Street in downtown is closed to traffic, and the Budweiser stage features free performances Friday and Saturday. This year's lineup includes Texas legends Billy Joe Shaver and Ray Wylie Hubbard, along with fellow Lone Star performers including Bonnie Bishop, Lincoln Durham, Matt Skinner, the Anthony Ray Wright Band, Trevor Reichman and Los Pinche Gringos. ArtWalk began as a small grassroots organization in 1994 to showcase the region's art. Now, the event has grown to a point where it funds an art scholarship at Sul Ross State University and provides funds to public and private school art programs. This year, ArtWalk paid tribute to the residents of the Big Bend region with a gift of public art: a downtown mural depicting the area's vibrant Hispanic heritage.

DECEMBER

1-7

Mariachi Vargas Extravaganza

Lila Cockrell Theatre & Henry B Gonzalez Convention Center
San Antonio
www.mariachimusic.com

6-8

Dickens on the Strand

The Strand National Historic Landmark District
Galveston
www.dickensonthestrand.org

11

Gary and Francine Hartman Benefit Concert

Antone's
Austin
www.calfishconcerts.com

15

Snowball Express Talent Showcase

The House of Blues
Dallas
www.texasmusicproject.org

17-24

Armadillo Christmas Bazaar

Palmer Events Center
Austin
www.armadillobazaar.com



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new releases

Oct. 15	Rodney Parker & 50 Peso Reward	<i>The Apology: Part 2</i>	Smith
Oct. 15	Kathryn Legendre	<i>Old Soul</i>	Self-released
Oct. 22	Lincoln Durham	<i>Exodus of the Deemed Unrighteous</i>	Self-released
Oct. 22	Tyler & the Tribe	<i>Born</i>	Self-released
Oct. 29	Sam Riggs & the Night People	<i>Outrun the Sun</i>	Vision
Oct. 29	Kelly Clarkson	<i>Wrapped in Red</i>	RCA
Oct. 29	George Ducas	<i>4340</i>	Loud Ranch
Oct. 29	Boz Scaggs	<i>The Essential Boz Scaggs</i>	Columbia Legacy
Oct. 29	Randy Travis	<i>Influence Vol. 1: The Man I Am</i>	Warner Bros.
Oct. 29	Chasca	<i>Bedtime for Bedlamites</i>	Self-released
Nov. 1	Davy & Amelia	<i>Norah June</i>	Self-released
Nov. 5	Billy Joe Shaver	<i>Shaver's Jewels</i>	New West
Nov. 12	Michael Martin Murphey	<i>Cowboy Songs V</i>	Red River
Nov. 12	Chris King	<i>Native</i>	Classic Horse
Nov. 12	Kevin Fowler	<i>How Country Are Ya?</i>	Self-released
Nov. 19	Cody Canada	<i>Some Old, Some New, Maybe a Cover or Two</i>	Underground
Nov. 22	Jolie Goodnight	<i>Say Goodnight Gracey</i>	Self-released
Nov. 25	Norah Jones and Billie Joe Armstrong	<i>Foreverly</i>	Reprise
Dec. 3	The Nightowls	<i>Good as Gold</i>	Self-released
Dec. 17	Eliza Gilkyson	<i>The Nocturne Diaries</i>	Red House
Jan. 21	Los Lonely Boys	<i>Revelation</i>	LonelyTone
Jan. 21	Jason Eady	<i>Daylight and Dark</i>	Old Guitar
Feb. 4	Scott H. Biram	<i>Nothin' But Blood</i>	Bloodshot
Feb. 11	Erin Ivey	<i>Whisper of the Moon</i>	Self-released
Feb. 11	Robert Ellis	<i>The Lights from the Chemical Plant</i>	New West
Feb. 11	Michelle Williams	<i>Journey to Freedom</i>	Light

HalleyAnna

HalleyAnna

Self-released



HalleyAnna Finlay's dad might not be as famous as Paula Nelson's, or maybe even Colin Gilmore's. But as not only a performing songwriter but also the proprietor of San

Marcos music landmark Cheatham Street Warehouse, Kent Finlay's done his part to give rooted yet inventive country artists and singer-songwriters at least one good friend to turn to. HalleyAnna's talents can stand on their own, but a little context is helpful when figuring out how an artist this young not only found her way to this sound (the influences of Loretta Lynn and June Carter Cash loom large) but became fluent in writing and singing it, too. Despite having a breathy, natural twang, she's not necessarily stuck in retro – her 2011 debut, *The Country*, successfully dabbled in the rockier edge of Americana, and it remains an undercurrent here – but she wears it well, sounding weary beyond her years (“Walk Away”), knowingly romantic (“Nothin’ At All,” “Out of the Blue”) or sweetly liberated (“The Bee”) as the song demands. Bringing in Australian country music vet Bill Chambers as producer proves to have been a wise move, too: his ever-present lap steel licks make the good tracks great and the occasional lesser tracks serviceable, and his pleasantly weathered duet vocals on a cover of Susanna Clark’s “San Antone Rose” wrap things up on a sweetly cross-generational (and cross-hemispheric) note.

– MIKE MESSICK

Birdlegg

Birdlegg

Dialtone



I once ran into Birdlegg following a blues jam at Antone's in Austin. On stage, the man has all the sparkling charisma and elusive nuance you'd expect from a 40-year veteran of the blues, and

more intriguing (to a budding harp player like myself, at least), his style borrows heavily from postwar country harp players like Sonny Terry and Sonny Boy Williamson II – that's an odd thing, as you'll find most harmonists take their lead from the likes of Little Walter. In an effort to mine any loose nuggets of wisdom, I struck up a conversation with him on technique. He mentioned his Wednesday night residency at Sixth Street mega-bar Maggie Mae's, and I joked that we should swap solos sometime. “I don't know,” he countered. “Most people who play harp, they suck.” His mouth curled into a wry grin. “They don't know you just got to breathe.” Among harp players, that's a joke-cum-adage as old as time, but because Birdlegg tells it so well, you have to smile. His self-titled release is something like that: replete with 12-bar shuffles and rewarmed blues cliché, it's nothing you haven't heard before. Still, it's a solid release from a respected local bluesman. Standout tracks on this live-recorded album include the slow-burning “Restraining Order Blues,” on which his full band really gets a chance to stretch out, and the Bo Diddley-inspired “San Pablo,” which shows off his rhythmic chops.

– KEVIN ALLEN

Danny Malone

Balloons

Self-released



Danny Malone recorded each track of his second full-length release, *Balloons*, in a different room of Denmark's sixteenth-century Engelsholm Castle, so be forewarned: there are ghosts

in these songs. Themes of mania, addiction and betrayal pepper layers of winding basslines and haunting homemade percussion – hushed voices, handclaps, pool cues and piano lids – to create an eerie but magnificent electro-folk atmosphere. Thirty-eight seconds of whispers and strings segue into the crisply plucked guitar, electronic bass and steadily beating breaths of hypnotic standout “Spiderlegs,” in which Malone muses on his struggles with substance abuse: “it's hard to find a problem that I can't resolve / by doubling the dosage 'til there's no resolve.” Sarcastic yet sunny-sounding follow-up track “Sugarwater” tells the story of a sweet-talking hypochondriac with enthusiastic bop-shoo-wops, while “Wait On Me” offers up an earnest lover's plea: “Every day this weight on me, this weight on me, this weight on me / Every day is heavier to lift / And you don't have to wait on me, to wait on me, to wait on me / That would just be so nice if you did.” Although the weight of past hurts is evident, Malone is never bitter – and, as the record's title promises, he always finds ample opportunity for escape, as in the hopeful refrain of “Fly in the Window”: “Oh, life can be lovely / Just write a new story.” – ALLIE ESSLER

Gary Graves

Till the End of Time

Self-released



Gary Graves' voice is like no other. Critics have made tenuous comparisons to the ethereal timbre of Jeff Buckley's voice – and I admit, Graves' vocals smack of something otherworldly – but his

withdrawn, self-conscious delivery contrasts sharply with Buckley's confident croon. A nervous tension pervades these head-in-the-clouds musings on love. Lyrics come out in frantic yowls, as if by stream of consciousness (or bleating of goats); at best, his words are arresting in their naked honesty, but they often overwhelm and wear down the listener. His first album in seven years, *Till The End of Time* finds Graves garnishing his usual guitar and vocals with some piano, percussion and guitar overdubs, which is a generally welcome addition. For the most part, these sparse, reverby arrangements complement Graves' celestial tenor, although there are a few moments when the rhythmic weld between the instruments fractures. For example, opener “If I Told You” strikes a hypnotic balance between open-hearted passion and nervous restraint, until an off-kilter tambourine comes in and collapses the song into a nervous wreck. Graves' latest album offers frequent glimpses into an enchanting musical world that's never fully formed.

– KEVIN ALLEN

Q&A Kinky Friedman



Outside of Willie Nelson, 69-year-old singer-songwriter, author, entrepreneur, cigar connoisseur, salsa maker and wild-card politician Richard “Kinky” Friedman may be the most recognizable person in Texas music. A member of Bob Dylan’s Rolling Thunder Review, a favorite of Nelson Mandela, the subject of a play about his life, and oft-times a pariah to both the Democrats and the Republicans for his maverick runs for Governor and Agriculture Commissioner, Friedman remains an intriguing figure across the state.

On Oct. 15 Friedman announced from his ranch near Kerrville that he’s running as a Democrat for Texas Agriculture Commissioner in 2014. He also announced that his main campaign issues would be the legalization of

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marijuana and the revitalization of the industrial hemp industry in Texas. (At the time of our interview, Friedman was unopposed on the Democratic ballot.)

In a 2006 run for governor as an Independent, the University of Texas graduate and former Peace Corps volunteer drew 12 percent of the popular vote and was thought to be a potential spoiler in the race between Republican Rick Perry, the eventual winner, and Houston Democrat Chris Bell.

We caught up with Friedman at the Texas Book Festival in Austin in late October.

Why do you want this fight over marijuana right now?

Mainly because I’m the only person with the guts to do it – it doesn’t look like anyone else is willing to take a chance.

But the Agriculture Commissioner can’t introduce legislation.

I’m going to present my campaign as a referendum on legalization. A vote for Kinky Friedman is a vote in favor of legalizing pot. If I win the election – and I think I’ve got as good a chance as any Democrat in 20 years – I don’t think it will take long for representatives to introduce a bill. Remember, most career politicians tend to follow voter trends, not get ahead of them.

Why do you want to legalize marijuana?

The latest Gallup Poll shows that 58 percent nationally are in favor of legalizing it. Texas is about the same percentage-wise. The President has already spoken out by telling Congress that this is going to have to be looked at sooner than later. Everybody sees it coming.

But on a practical level, I’m proposing it now because legal marijuana for adults can be the key to a huge economic engine in this state. NORML already estimates that illegally grown marijuana is the sixth-largest agricultural cash crop in the state. So I’m saying what



most forward-thinking people have been saying: legalize it, control the production and sale of it, and tax it. And then use that tax money to take care of some serious problems we’ve been ignoring for 20 years now. We need to improve our school system. We need mass transit for the future. We need water conservation and development. We need drought remediation.

Do you see Texas adopting an approach similar to that of Colorado and Washington?

Basically, yes. Legalize it for adults, and set limits on where it can be consumed and by whom. Those states have already set limits for driving similar to blood alcohol limits for drinking and driving. Models are certainly in place that we can copy or modify.

You also favor medical usage, I assume.

We have the No. 1 cancer center in the world at M.D. Anderson in Houston, yet we aren’t having the world’s top cancer researchers and physicians looking into this? It’s insane. Twenty states already have some form of acceptable medical marijuana usage. Are we going to be the last state dragged crying and screaming to a sane position on this?

What other positives do you envision if pot is legalized?

It will be just like the end of Prohibition. Legalizing pot will knock the legs right out from un-

der the Mexican cartels. It will be just like the gangsters in Chicago. Once it’s legal, there’s no turf to fight over, no markets to hold. It’s gone – game over for the cartels.

What else will you campaign on?

Revitalizing the industrial hemp industry and legalizing casino gambling. What hemp we use now we import, mostly from Canada. Texas should be exporting hemp, not importing it. And legalizing casinos is the biggest no-brainer of all. Right now, we’re just waving goodbye to our money and letting Louisiana and Oklahoma have it. Keep Texas money at home where it helps Texas.

With Gov. Perry not running again and the ascendance of Wendy Davis as a viable Democratic candidate for governor, do you worry that you could be a negative for Democrats in statewide elections next year?

I was considering another run for governor, this time as a Democrat, when Wendy Davis announced. I’ll fully support Davis in the election. She and other Democrats may feel a need to distance themselves from my campaign, and I’m fine with that.

The marijuana issue aside, why should people vote for you for Agriculture Commissioner?

Because at my age, I’m the one politician that can’t be bought. Monsanto can’t buy me, the Mexican cartels that are really benefiting from marijuana prohibition can’t buy me, and the Democratic establishment doesn’t want to buy me. It may sound cheesy, but I actually want to do something for my state and leave a legacy that matters beyond just being Kinky Friedman, the entertainer.

Do you smoke marijuana?

I haven’t smoked in more than 20 years. Except on Willie’s bus, but that’s just a matter of etiquette. – **WILLIAM MICHAEL SMITH**