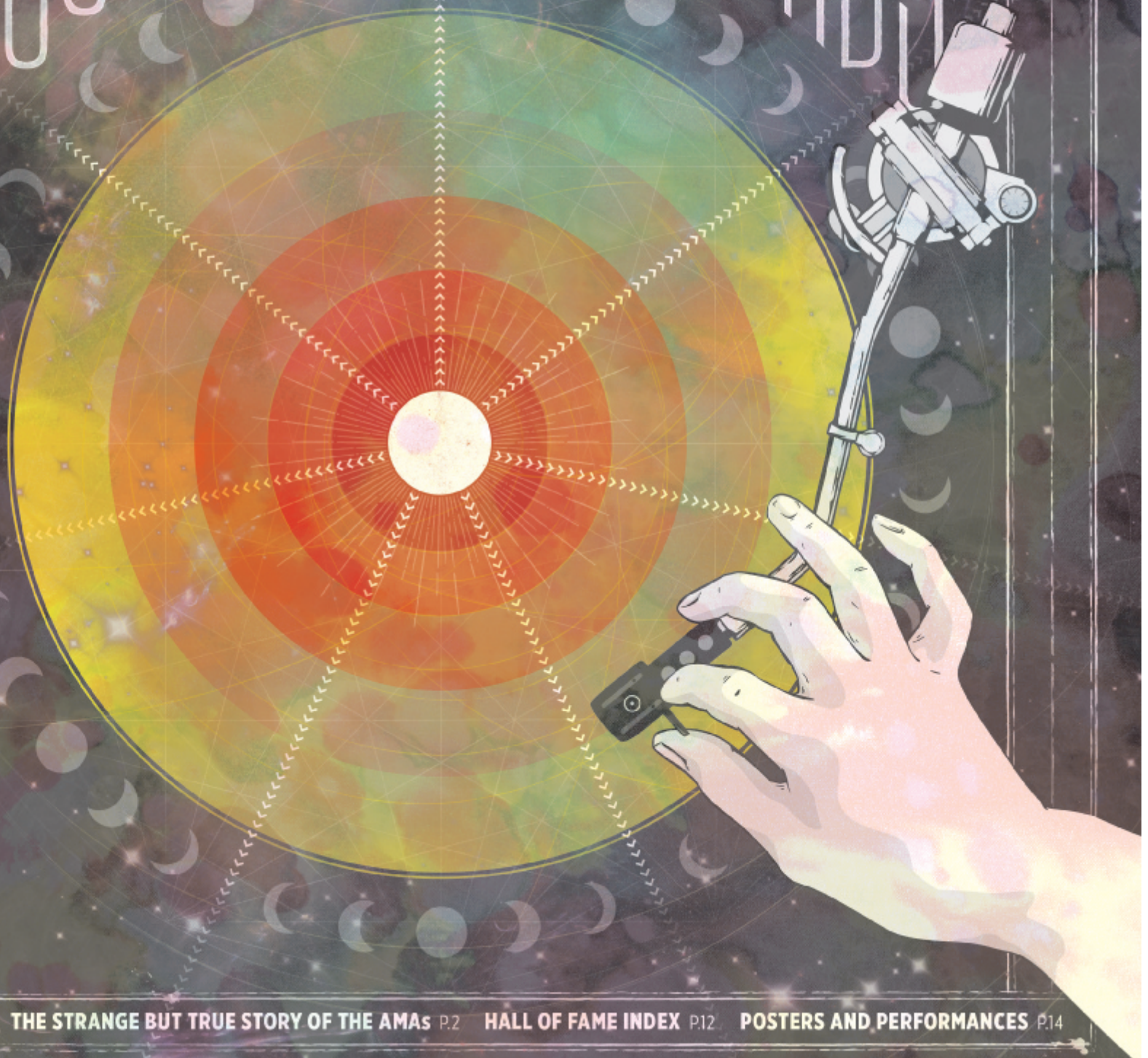


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35 ROTATIONS AROUND THE SUN:

THE
AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS

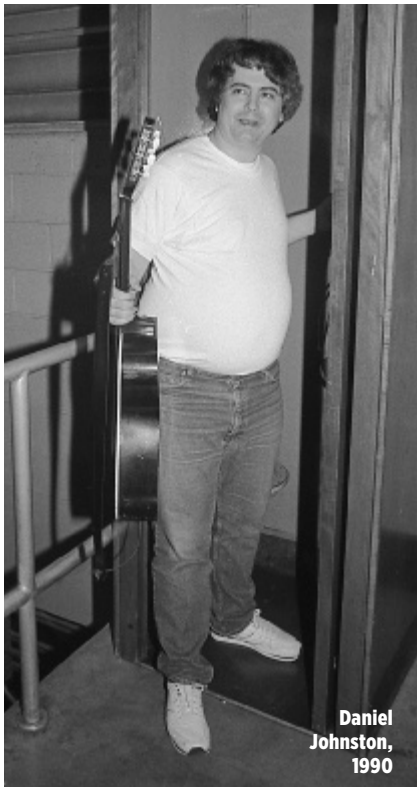


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THE STRANGE BUT TRUE STORY OF THE AMAs P.2 HALL OF FAME INDEX P.12 POSTERS AND PERFORMANCES P.14



Daniel Johnston, 1990



Paul Ray, Stevie Ray Vaughan, and Joe Ely, 1990



Jo Carol Pierce, 1993

PHOTOS BY MARTHA GRENON

Living in a Dream

35 YEARS OF THE AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS

BY DOUG FREEMAN

In retrospect, confrontation seemed almost inevitable. Everyone saw it coming, but no one recalls exactly what set it off.

Blame the Big Boys, whose scathing punk for a classed-up Austin Music Awards show audience visited the genre's desired effect on the era. Blame the security at the Austin Opera House, bikers and ex-Navy SEALs from Willie Nelson's road crew, who typical of the times tried to maintain control through intimidation. And blame *The Austin Chronicle*, which managed to stage one of the most notorious nights of Austin music without knowing what it was doing.

The second annual Austin Music Awards had it all.

From the outset, the event promised a memorable night. With the *Austin Chronicle* Music Poll now in its third year of open balloting in honor of the local scene, and the inaugural Awards Show having proved a success the previous year, 1984's lineup under the guidance of Margaret Moser and Louis Black hoped to encompass the eclecticism of the homegrown musical landscape. The roster came stacked with some of the most distinct talent the Texas state capital boasted.

Fabulous Thunderbirds, LeRoi Brothers, and Angela Strehli guaranteed a fiery showcase for

a genre taking up the gauntlet after Nelson's outlaw country of the Seventies. Then Stevie Ray Vaughan called just prior to the date to ask if his band could play a surprise set. The booking, like the entire evening, transpired so casually that Moser had almost forgotten until Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan walked in with Double Trouble and proceeded to unleash a devastating preview of the former's upcoming sophomore album, *Couldn't Stand the Weather*.

Had proceedings ended there, success would've marked Music Awards No. 2 and its fledgling biweekly publication/sponsor.

Antithesis to major label blues-rock, the Big Boys came to the party as no small get for Moser and Black. Austin's DIY scene, exploding out of Raul's on the Drag, mirrored the upward trajectory of the town's Delta-derived national uprising, one obviously more mainstream than the underground-by-definition punk proliferation spreading throughout the state, country, and world. The Big Boys arrived as two-time AMA winners for Best Punk Band — raw, raucous, physical.

"The whole incident was really the result of two separate generational countercultures

clashing," admits Moser with a mixture of pride and regret at the booking and subsequent melee. "What I remember of the night is that tensions started brewing from the outset between the staff of the Opera House, which was largely made up of older hippies of a Willie Nelson persuasion who didn't take very kindly

to the Big Boys, and the Big Boys themselves, who were just being the Big Boys.

"I really don't remember what set it all off, but something happened."

Thanks to video unearthed late last month by Tim Hamblin at the Austin History Center, there's now historical documentation of

the Big Boys' 1984 AMA set devolving into a maelstrom of profanity and punches.

"We're playing under relative protest," announces bassist Chris Gates at the outset, "because they know what we do, and they asked us to play anyway."

"They said nobody on the stage, and you know what that means," sneers Tim Kerr, before drummer Rey Washam counts down to Randy "Biscuit" Turner's demonic incantation on "The Seed."

"Don't be intimidated," challenges Kerr to the crowd. "We're not."

ANY HISTORY OF AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS SHOWS IS PATCHWORK AT BEST, A TAPESTRY FRAYED BY BLURRY, FADED MEMORIES.

The Big Boys broil through trademark confrontational catharsis, Biscuit spitting beer onto the crowd during "Movies" and ripping open a bag of trash to sling around the stage as the mosh pit gains momentum during "TV."

About 10 minutes in, as the quartet sears into "Complete Control," security charges from the stage wings at the first stage divers. By "Frat Cars," Kerr cusses out the "hippie bouncers," and more fans begin rushing the stage as the guitarist bites out "I Do Care." When a bouncer makes another move amid flying beer cans, he goes into blockade mode and pushes him back offstage. Kerr then unstraps his guitar and slings it at security before storming out (see "Fun Fun Fun," p.4).

The video goes black as bouncers and fans all crash onto the stage, Gates and Washam continuing to keep the rhythm even as the microphones bleed feedback.

"Isn't rock & roll exciting?!" howls Biscuit.

FOR THE SAKE OF THE SONG

Any history of Austin Music Awards shows is patchwork at best, a tapestry frayed by blurry, faded memories. The first decade-plus still eludes the internet, residing instead in an abandoned building in bound, yellowing volumes of the *Chronicle*.

CONTINUED ON P.4



Martha Grenon by Van Wilks, 1986

VISUAL HISTORY: MARTHA GRENON'S AMA IMAGES 1985-2000

The *Chronicle* first published a photo of mine in 1982 — from Graceland, which I'd visited with members of the Joe Ely band. That year began a period where I led two lives: day job, where I earned enough to finance my night job, which was three or four nights a week shooting the music scene. This was back in the darkroom days, so it required a lot more than downloading. 1985 was the first year I got an assignment to cover the Austin

Music Awards, which I continued to do through 2000. Having a pass gave me access to backstage, where all the fun and action was. I was on a natural high, getting close-ups of SRV, the Sexton brothers, Roky Erickson, Lucinda Williams, and my muse, Ms. Margaret Moser. Photography is visual history, and I'm happy I was able to capture these moments in time.

— Martha Grenon

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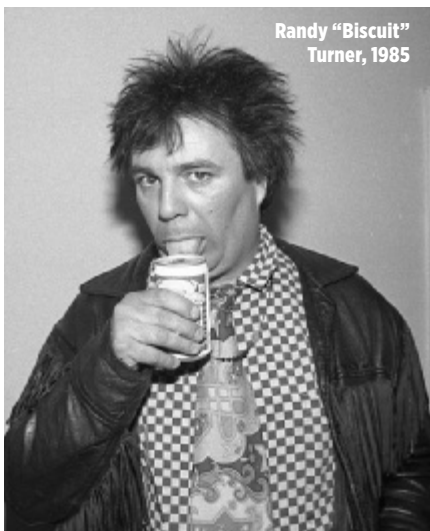
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FUN FUN FUN

Tim Kerr posted the following to his Facebook page after the *Chronicle* asked for comment on the Big Boys' "incident" at the second annual Austin Music Awards show in 1984. Reprinted in full with the guitarist's permission:

In 1984, we were asked to play the *Austin Chronicle's* Award show. At this point we were putting on our own shows and knew that most of the folks that supported the "scene" that we were a part of would not be able to afford the ticket price, much less care to come to something like this. After a lot of deliberation, and we did have friends at the *Chronicle*, we decided to do it.

The stage crew and bouncers for the night were the same ones that had so overreacted at our Fiesta Gardens performance earlier that year. Unbeknownst to us, they wanted revenge and to throw out the small group of people that had come to see us. These people had come up front to participate and to get the candy that Biscuit was handing out.



Randy "Biscuit"
Turner, 1985

At first, these "security" people attacked the audience only when any of them got up onstage with us, but they then quickly turned on the people just trying to get candy as well. I was actually punched by one of the bouncers, and though it was not a very successful hit (I was too close for him to wind back), I realized how absurd the whole thing had gotten. We walked off and did not finish our set. Even people there that had no idea about our scene were asking, "What the hell was up with the bouncers?"

The *Chronicle* at the time never published all the letters they had received after that night, never really mentioned it in their articles, and never apologized.

I was asked this week if I would give a "quick" interview for their article on the anniversary of the awards show. Here was my response: "Considering they did not write about it, post all the letters they received right after the 'incident,' OR even apologize, I doubt what I have to say about it would result in a soundbite that they would even publish now [smile]. Thanks, but I respectfully decline."

Tim Hamblin did this video and part of the footage is taken from the Fiesta Gardens show:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsVjMxOJDHM
www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2ZaV7BqRhs

Pariah, 1993, with SIMS Foundation
namesake Sims Ellison at far right

PHOTOS BY MARTHA GRENON



Lucinda
Williams,
1992

LIVING IN A DREAM CONTINUED FROM P.2

The inaugural 1983 presentation was announced in the biweekly paper only two weeks beforehand, via a small blurb in Margaret Moser's Feb. 18 "In One Ear" column. "PLUGOLO DEPT: As you probably know, the results of the *Chronicle's* 2nd Annual Music Poll are in. We'll announce winners next issue and at an Awards Night at Club Foot on Thursday, March 3. Bands featured will be past and present winners like Angela Strehli and Band, with special guest star Stevie Ray Vaughn [sic], Extreme Heat, the Van Wilks Band, Chinanine, and an all-star jazz group called Concept. So besides the usual celebs and musicians, you'll be able to cheer and razz your favorite critics and writers, most of whom will be there en masse. Black tie and spike heels optional, please!"

That year's poster (see gallery) also misspelled SRV's surname.

THANKS TO VIDEO UNEARTHED LATE LAST MONTH BY TIM HAMBLIN AT THE AUSTIN HISTORY CENTER, THERE'S NOW HISTORICAL DOCUMENTATION OF THE BIG BOYS' 1984 AMA SET DEVOLVING INTO A MAELSTROM OF PROFANITY AND PUNCHES.

The show itself, however, tapped into something unique for the local music community. Inspired by award handouts put on by the upstart publication's precursor *The Austin Sun* in the Seventies, and initially propelled by Moser and Bob Simmons, the AMAs became the physical manifestation of the Austin Music Poll, a rare opportunity to celebrate a diverse music scene all in one.

"It's always about the community," attests Black. "It really is the one time of year the powers-that-be shut up, and it was always a peoples' award. There was so much good

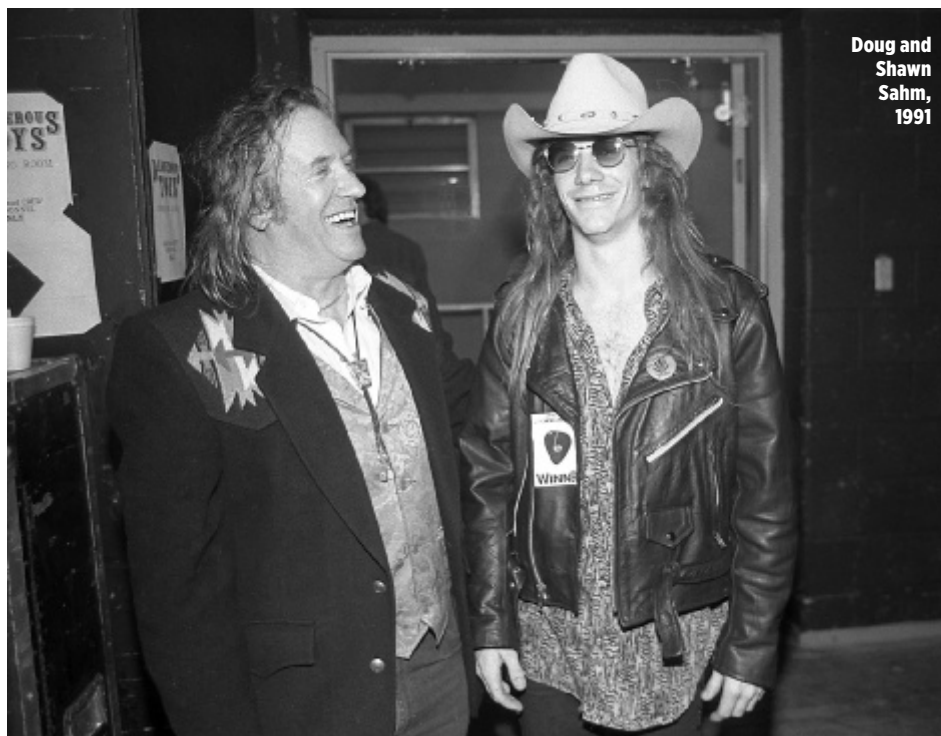
music made, but even more I just liked the whole democratic sensibility."

Even so, the awards ceremony and performances struggled to find their footing early on. Following the Big Boys fiasco, 1985's show barely scraped by as promised headliners backed out. Guitar pioneer Lonnie Mack joined the Supernatural Family Band, and the show managed to survive (see "Having a Riot," p.6).

"We were in way over our heads - way over our heads at the *Chronicle*, way over heads at the Music Awards," admits Black. "But then the [1986] lineup was every living musician we could find. We had some momentum, so it was loaded with special guests. After that, Margaret and I kind of knew what we were doing."

Eric Johnson, Joe "King" Carrasco, and Lou Ann Barton and Angela Strehli teaming with emcee Paul Ray to extol Antone's set the stage for all-star scene representation, but perennial AMA winner Joe Ely with Rolling Stones sideman saxophonist Bobby Keys in tow set the bar. The True Believers then turned said measuring stick into a javelin by backing native son Roky Erickson. The performance proved shambolic, but through the mash-up of Austin's musical past, present, and even future, the AMAs hit on the winning template.

In 1987, a group from the *Chronicle* - Black, publisher Nick Barbaro, and the "unofficial 'music business guy' on the staff," Roland Swenson - partnered with orbiting industry insider Louis Jay Meyers to stage a modest music conference and festival called South by Southwest. Centerpiece of the four-day event fell to the Austin Music Awards, by then a must-attend local gala where, as Moser once quipped in her music column, "the famous, nearly famous, and know-the-nearly-famous all mingle with only minor discomfort to the famous."



Doug and
Shawn
Sahn,
1991

“South by Southwest needed us back then,” remembers Moser. “They originally hung themselves on the Music Awards. After that first year, though, it was clear something was going to come of it. Given Austin’s status, I felt we really had to up our game.”

Small Faces/Faces great Ronnie Lane, newly moved to town, offered unprecedented star power to the show that year, though an unannounced set from Jerry Jeff Walker and David Bromberg garnered more attention. In 1988, Lane returned with the True Believers and Television guitarist Richard Lloyd. The results cast an early spotlight on SXSW’s budding national stature.

“The Music Awards were always the best party of the year, without a doubt,” says Michael Corcoran, who during his 1985-88 tenure as *Chronicle* music columnist won recognition for best critic and worst thing to happen to Austin music. “South by Southwest came along and all of a sudden everyone from all over the world is coming to Austin. There’s all these big names and big money, and all these labels. And right before the storm comes, we’re going to have our little hometown celebration.

“You could just walk down the line and meet everyone in the Austin music scene in one night. It was one of those parties with everyone you wanted to hang out with.”

1989’s show pivoted on collaborations, most notably Lucinda Williams joining Two Nice Girls, but 1990’s more acoustic turn rounded up Townes Van Zandt, Nanci Griffith, and James McMurtry. All that and Daniel Johnston stole the show regardless. Flown in on a private plane from West Virginia, the schizophrenic pop savant came aboard as the ultimate X factor.

“The highlight was Johnston’s brief but beautiful set,” wrote Luke Torn in the *Chronicle* review. “In his first Austin appearance in four years, Daniel beat on his dime store guitar, redrawing the line between artistry and vulnerability.”

CONTINUED ON P.6

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Toni Price and Miss Lavelle White, 1996



LIVING IN A DREAM CONTINUED FROM P.5

On the return flight home, Johnston threw the airplane's ignition key out the window mid-flight in a psychotic episode, leading his father to crash-land in Arkansas and Johnston to be committed to a psychiatric hospital.

SENT BY ANGELS

In August 1990, Stevie Ray Vaughan perished in a helicopter accident in Wisconsin.

Vaughan's band, the powerhouse Double Trouble rhythm section of Chris Layton and Tommy Shannon, regrouped in the Austin Rehearsal Complex, where Doyle Bramhall II and another guitar prodigy, Charlie Sexton, were also working. The four began jamming together to work through their grief. By November, the Arc Angels debuted live.

"We all had a certain connection, but most of the energy we weren't really even aware of," says Sexton, who became music director for the AMAs in 2015. "Maybe it was because of the

temperature emotionally and what everyone was going through, but it was bigger than us."

Arc Angels feted their rallying point at the show, Jimmie Vaughan receiving a Hall of Fame induction that same year. 1991 also established another major precedent for the AMAs: an opportunity for the community to celebrate seminal figures of Austin music recently lost. At the ceremony a decade later in 2000, Doug Sahm, perhaps the soul of Austin music that died the previous November, and Sterling Morrison, founding member of the Velvet Underground who'd quietly made Austin home before passing in 1995, received AMA memorials that reside as pinnacle moments of the yearly pageant. Alejandro Escovedo and John Cale, backed by the Tosca String Quartet, honored Morrison in the night's high-water mark (see "Waiting for the Man," p.8).

As SXSW grew in size and reputation, so did the guests for the Austin Music Awards.



Townes Van Zandt, 1990

PHOTOS BY MARTHA GRENON

The backstage overflowed with music royalty. Quipped Corcoran's successor in the Music column slot, Ken Lieck, after a 1996 set in memory of Townes Van Zandt: "Winner of the 'What is he doing here?' prize at the Austin Music Awards was Steven 'Little Stevie' Van Zandt, who, seen prowling around backstage, was just begging for someone to shout, 'No, Steve, the Van Zandt tribute is for Townes!'"

Celebrities frequently found themselves onstage as well.

In 1993, speculation swirled around the debut of P, a band featuring Gibby Haynes, Bill Carter, and *Donnie Brasco* co-stars Johnny Depp and Sal Jenco. More novel than memorable, the results remain fixed in AMA lore as the first of only a handful of occasions the group performed live despite a self-titled Capitol Records album two years later.

"I think we got together the day before, maybe once or twice, and kind of made some shit up," recalled Carter to the *Chronicle* in

1997. "We had all been here hanging out, so we thought it might be fun to try and play. ... Just the fact that we actually did it was kind of amazing to me. We weren't really [very] good, it was just fun."

More noteworthy that night was the return of Roky Erickson, and an appearance by Jo Carol Pierce, who supported her Album of the Year win by delivering "Does God Have Us by the Twat or What?" from *Bad Girls Upset by the Truth*.

Even as SXSW and Austin hurtled toward the millennium, the Music Awards stayed true to its spirit of community, including not taking itself too seriously. In 1999, the Resentments countered the pomp of the unannounced Grammy presentation to Los Super Seven with a 15-minute jam on Bachman-Turner Overdrive's "Taking Care of Business." The next year, poster artist and performer Kerry Awn declared, "Austin used to be 'Groover's Paradise,' now it's dot-com gigabytes."

"The show really didn't change in the face of South by Southwest," attests Corcoran. "It stayed in the place where you piled up your hair and really was the Austin music prom. It didn't change, which was great, because everything else did."

THE IMPROBABLE RISE OF REDNECK ROCK

New century off and running, the Awards often returned to its roots. 2001 recalled Austin's Eighties, echoed two years later with a set dedicated to "The Hole in the Wall Gang." 2003 also hearkened "The Improbable Rise of Redneck Rock" with Steven Fromholz, Rusty Wier, Ray Benson, and Billy Joe Shaver, inducted into the Hall of Fame by Willie Nelson.

The following March reunited the "Class of '78" with members of the Next, Terminal Mind, Standing Waves, the Jitters, Skunks, and the return of the Big Boys' Biscuit, this time without incident. 2005 and 2006 brought the resurrection of two Austin legends, Daniel Johnston and Roky Erickson both making tri-

HAVING A RIOT: THE CHAOTIC AND BEAUTIFUL BIRTH OF THE AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS



Nick Barbaro and Susan Moffat, 1990

I'm not an "Is the glass half-full or half-empty?" kind of guy. I'm a "That glass is a piece of shit, who bought that glass, it can't even hold water!" kind of guy. I'm a hysteric.

The sharpest upward momentum of our learning curve came the next year, for the 1984-85 show on March 6 at the Austin Opera House. Some major acts verbally committed to play, but, Austin being Austin, each had a favored band that it also wanted on the bill. These acts were lesser draws, but we counted on the big names to draw folks to the show. Then all the bigger names dropped out, so it ended up a musically strong show – just one without enough firepower to attract a large audience.

It is important to understand here that during the first decade of the *Chronicle*, [Publisher] Nick Barbaro never seemed to really worry, while I was worried sick about everything all the time.

Advance sales had been sparse, and walk-up sales were very slow as the show kicked off that evening. In truly typical Nick Barbaro style, he would come up to me as I was fretting myself into an early grave to



Louis Black, Margaret Moser, and Alex Napier, 1987

make one solemn announcement or another, kicking off with, "If we sell another 175 tickets, the *Chronicle* won't have to go out of business." This was followed by, "If we sell another 150 tickets, the *Chronicle* won't have to go out of business," and so on all evening.

Usually this was done in increments of 25, but if my actually visible sweating lessened, Barbaro

was willing to share with me where we stood after as few as five sales. There is no way to remember how many we actually sold, but whatever the number, the *Chronicle* survived.

– Louis Black, March 19, 2010

[austinchronicle.com/
columns/2010-03-19/981864](http://austinchronicle.com/columns/2010-03-19/981864)

umphant returns to the local spotlight. They also reset the AMAs as a central occurrence during SXSW.

"There were probably more people from out of town than in town the year Roky played," says Corcoran. "He hadn't played in a long time, and people couldn't believe they were seeing Roky Erickson, or that he was good again. The same thing happened with Daniel Johnston."

Erickson became a fixture of the local spectacle over the next decade, returning to play with Okkervil River in 2008, the Black Angels in 2009, and Meat Puppets in 2011 (see "7 Roky Erickson Moments," p.12).

2007 also marked a turning point in programming as expectations rose for the uniqueness of the affair. A tribute to the recently passed Clifford Antone provided an emotional core to the night as Jimmie Vaughan, Derek O'Brien, Gary Clark Jr., and James Cotton honored the foundation of Austin's blues scene. Once again, a surprise guest nearly upstaged the native fireworks, when SXSW keynote speaker Pete Townshend joined locally ensconced Small Faces/Faces keyboardist Ian McLagan in celebration of bandmate Ronnie Lane's legacy (see "Take That F**er Back," p.10).

Reunions also became a hallmark of the AMAs. Stones to the Big Boys' Beatles, incendiary punks the Dicks regrouped in 2009, joined by Jesus Lizard howler David Yow, while Monte Warden restarted new country

CONTINUED ON P.8

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Gibby Haynes and Roky Erickson, 1992

LIVING IN A DREAM CONTINUED FROM P.7

hopefuls the Wagoneers alongside Joe Ely. Moser even coaxed Christopher Cross back to the stage, pairing the yacht rock icon with young indie orchestra Mother Falcon for 2012's show. That year's performances were eclipsed by the AMA's most famous 11th-hour addition.

The 30th anniversary convergence promised a headlining set from AMA fixture Alejandro Escovedo, billed with special guests, but even Moser didn't know until the day of the show whether Bruce Springsteen would show up, let alone get onstage (see "Springsteen" sidebar, p.10).

"When news first broke that he would be the South by Southwest Music keynote, I had a crazy thought: What would it take to get the Boss to the AMAs the way Pete Townshend guested with Ian McLagan in 2007?" wrote Moser following the show. "Jump forward to the night of the AMAs this year, when Alejandro Escovedo began his last set of the evening. The operations manager for the show was on one side of the stage printing lyrics to

the Rolling Stones' 'Beast of Burden' by [Springsteen] management's request.

"I texted [former Ken Lieck replacement] Chris Gray, who had to leave early and file for *The Houston Press*, tapping on my unhip BlackBerry, 'We're printing lyrics for "Beast of Burden"!' "

"Chris zinged back immediately: 'Dammit! Don't those two know the words yet?'"

TWINE TIME

Sooner or later, the best live music capital purveyors pass through the Austin Music Awards shows.

Recall Escovedo, Spoon's Britt Daniel, and Grupo Fantasma jamming with the Wild Seeds in memory of SXSW Creative Director Brent Grulke. And Patty Griffin accepting her Hall of Fame plaque by acknowledging, "The last time I came to an AMA, they gave one of these to Pinetop Perkins, so I'm very humbled." One year, Gary Clark Jr. jetted home from Finland specifically to accept his stack of awards and join Bill Carter onstage in pulling

together all strata of Austin music aided by the latter's SRV staple "Willie the Wimp."

And don't forget Shawn Sahn leading his father's Texas Tornados with Jimmie Vaughan, Lou Ann Barton, the Flatlanders, Marcia Ball, and a generational cavalcade of Austin musicians as they piled onstage to play "She's About a Mover" in honor of Moser's final year as director of the show in 2014.

"I had very big shoes to fill from Margaret, and knew I'd never be able to replace her tenured position in our community and the long legacy of work she's done," says Celeste Quesada, who took over producing the AMAs in 2015. "It is a complex cultural fabric we weave with an event like this. There's a ceremony involved where it becomes a sacred space of reflecting and absorbing our history."

Under the stewardship of Quesada and musical alchemy fostered by Sexton, the Awards Show has evolved into some of its grandest ambitions. The past two years have been headlined by star-studded salutes to two Austin icons recently lost, Ian McLagan and KUT/KUTX deejay and *Twine Time* host Paul Ray. Honoring the former, Steve Van Zandt joined Escovedo, Griffin, and the Bump Band onstage, while the tribute to Paul Ray brought onetime local Robert Plant back to Austin to jam on its celebrant's cherished post-World War II R&B.

CONTINUED ON P.10

PHOTOS BY MARIHA GRENON



John Cale

WAITING FOR THE MAN: STERLING MORRISON TRIBUTE 2000

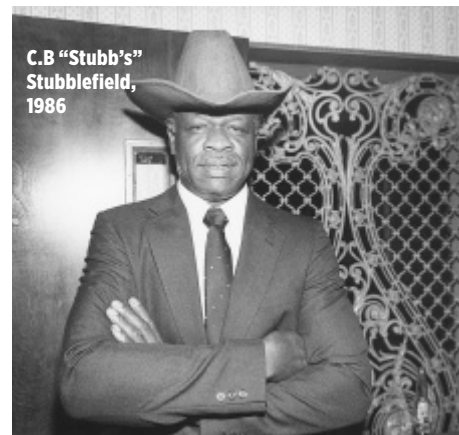
[Sterling Morrison], the Velvet Underground co-founder who moved to Austin in the Seventies after walking out on the seminal two-chord wonder band, was paid tribute by former bandmate John Cale under the guidance of Alejandro Escovedo and the Tosca String Quartet. Opening with Cale on acoustic guitar performing "Amsterdam," the tribute started off slowly, the introspective song bringing the evening's energy level down. Cale taking a seat at the keyboards, he and Escovedo rummaged around Morrison's mood music with a serious, somber tone.

Escovedo's "Tugboat," which crowns his 1996 Rykodisc album *With These Hands*, didn't exactly lighten the mood any, but it brought out the ghosts like a bulldozer in a graveyard; you could almost feel Morrison's surly self stirring. When the band launched into the last song of the set, "I'm Waiting for the Man," he and Doug Sahn must've been grooving together in paradise. Cale still on the keyboard, Escovedo picked up an electric and gave his longtime drummer Hector Muñoz something to pound about, and pound the band did.

That was what the music intelligentsia had come for, and they were not disappointed. The light of the Velvet Underground was blinding in those moments.

- Raoul Hernandez, March 17, 2000

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C.B. "Stubb's" Stubblefield, 1986

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**BOBBY BONES &
THE RAGING
IDIOTS**
MARCH 16



**RANDY ROGERS
BAND**
MARCH 17



CHASE BRYANT
MARCH 18



KENNY ROGERS
MARCH 19



NEAL MCCOY
MARCH 20



JOSH TURNER
MARCH 21



PATTI LABELLE
MARCH 22



OLD DOMINION
MARCH 23



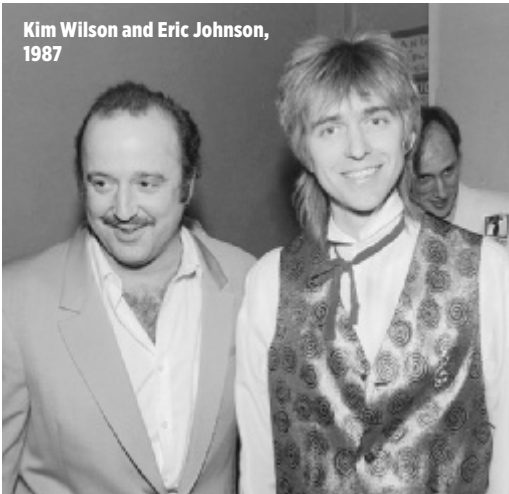
CODY JOHNSON
MARCH 24



KEVIN FOWLER
MARCH 25

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Kim Wilson and Eric Johnson,
1987



Marcia Ball, Lou Ann Barton, and Angela Strehli, 1989

LIVING IN A DREAM CONTINUED FROM P.8

“Ian really did all the work, because everyone loved Ian, and even more so with Paul,” demurs Sexton. “Last year, I actually said that if we can’t honor Paul properly with something that’s really special, then we should just honor him quickly with a video and say thank you and we love you. Then we got a message to Robert, and there was no negotiation. He just said, ‘I will be there.’

“I was just the messenger. Paul’s the one that got him there. All the credit goes to the people we honor.”

This year, the Austin Music Awards show notches its 35th anniversary edition at Downtown’s premier concert venue, ACL Live at the Moody Theater. Once again, the stars – Terry Allen, Lyle Lovett, Steve Earle, Kat Edmonson, Kelly Willis, the Trishas, Grupo Fantasma, Brownout, Jai Malano, Fab 5 Freddy,

and many more – align for typically singular performances. More importantly, the local music community gathers to honor its talent, inspiration, and singularity.

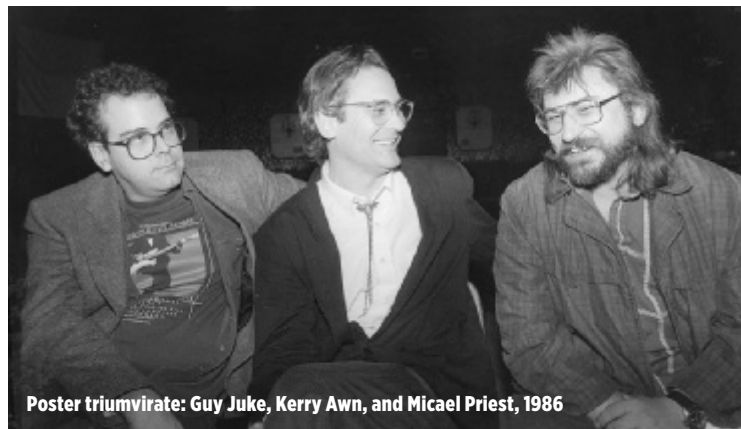
“What was always really exciting was that you’re working with people in every area that really care about what they’re doing,” offers Black. “What always strikes me about Austin: It’s so much about quality. Austin has incredible audiences; their level of knowledge and passion. When you

go to the Awards shows, they’re packed with people playing for their peers.

“So at the end of the day, it’s really just about the music. Loving music.”

The 2016/17 Austin Music Awards turns 35 on Sunday, March 12, in its new home, ACL Live at the Moody Theater. Tickets at: austinchronicle.com/ama

AS SXSW GREW IN SIZE AND REPUTATION, SO DID THE GUESTS FOR THE AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS.



Poster triumvirate: Guy Juke, Kerry Awn, and Micael Priest, 1986



Ed Hall, 1995



Alejandro Escovedo,
Bruce Springsteen,
and Joe Ely

PHOTOS BY GARY MILLER
MARTHA GRENON

DID I KNOW BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN WAS GOING TO PLAY 2012?

Three weeks ago, I interviewed with Russ Hartman, who printed an offhand comment of mine in *Austin Daze*: “Mr. Springsteen, if you’re not busy on Wednesday night before your keynote address, I’ve got a place for you to be, because Alejandro is going to be workin’ it up at the end of the show and you’re not going to want to miss that. Not that you don’t have a million things to do. But remember, Bruce, if you’re not busy: Alejandro Escovedo, Music Awards, Wednesday night before your keynote address.”

It wasn’t as brash as it sounded. I saw two of Springsteen’s shows at the Armadillo, witnessed during my own life-changing era around age 20. That time bled for me in a way only possible when you’re young – suicide, betrayal, breakup, abortion. One performance I remember for the moment his violin player stepped into the lone spotlight and delivered her heart-aching solo, hope in the darkness that I grasped. Nothing in life would be easy, Springsteen reassured, but we have ourselves and each other. I believed him and his music.

Did I know Bruce Springsteen was going to play?

At about 3pm on Wednesday, Alejandro and Garland Jeffreys were hanging around the staff production room, decompressing from rehearsal as Alejandro was nursing a broken rib. I sat across from the two, eyes closed, being made up by Brandi Cowley and listening to them talk. Even though I was just feet away and we were connected by the energy of the show to come, Al and Garland were in their own sphere.

“I really enjoy playing music more than ever before,” the latter enthused, leaning on the door, the joy evident in his voice. He was in high spirits, effusive after singing “Beast of Burden” during soundcheck, hat perched at a jaunty angle on his curly hair. Garland wasn’t saying it for anyone’s benefit but his own.

Alejandro, sitting in a chair below him with his guitar resting on his knees, just nodded his head. “Me, too.”

That’s when I knew. – Margaret Moser, March 23, 2012

austinchronicle.com/music/2012-03-23/dear-diary

TAKE THAT F*ER BACK: RONNIE LANE/TEXAS TORNADOS/CLIFFORD ANTONE TRIBUTES 2007**



Flaco Jiménez, 1995

The Convention Center ballroom began buzzing with anticipation immediately prior to Ian McLagan & the Bump Band’s tribute to McLagan’s Small Faces bandmate Ronnie Lane, who succumbed to multiple sclerosis in 1997. After warming up the crowd with Lane’s “Glad and Sorry” and a less sprightly, more mournful arrangement of “Itchycoo Park,” the big moment arrived when Pete Townshend strode onstage to play “Kuschty Rye.” KGSR’s Jody Denberg looked like a kid in a candy store as he harmonized on the chorus.

At song’s end, McLagan shook Townshend’s hand and Chairman Pete responded by patting Mac on the head. Introducing “Whatcha Gonna Do About It,” McLagan noted that Small Faces guitarist Steve Marriott nicked the song’s solo from Townshend before exhorting Pete to “take that fucker back.” Townshend complied by tearing through a marathon version of the song like it was all in a day’s work. The crowd never left their feet while he was onstage.

No one in their right mind wants to follow such an event, but Shawn Sahm & the Tex Mex Experience kept the energy level high. With accordionist Flaco Jiménez and organist Augie Meyers in tow, they paid tribute to fallen Texas Tornados Doug Sahm and Freddy Fender with crowd-pleasing renditions of “Wasted Days and Wasted Nights” and “Who Were You Thinking Of?”

Although virtually every other award winner gave a shout-out to Clifford Antone, the real tribute came at night’s end, when guitarists Jimmie Vaughan, Gary Clark Jr., and Derek O’Brien joined special guest harp blower James Cotton to play the departed back home to the blues. Physical traces of *Groover’s Paradise* are increasingly hard to come by in today’s Austin, but Augie Meyers’ recitation of Doug Sahm’s famous exhortation, “Don’t take no shit from nobody,” was a clear-cut reminder that the groove lives on.

– Greg Beets, March 16, 2007

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WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15 LISTEN TO AIR SHOWCASE

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3:00pm Night Glitter	6:15pm Warren Hood
3:45pm Otis the Destroyer	8:00pm The National Reserve
4:40pm Leo Rondeau	9:00pm Löwin

THURSDAY, MARCH 16 THE ABGB HOUSE PARTY

4:00pm Christy Hays	7:45pm Palomino Shakedown
5:15pm Wild Bill + the Lost Knobs	9:00pm Ramsay Midwood
6:30pm Little Mikey + the Soda Jerks	

FRIDAY, MARCH 17 SPUNE + BOTTLE SHARE PRESENT DAY TRIP 1:30PM

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2:30pm Cornerstone	5:15pm Mindz of A Different Kind

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7 ROKY ERICKSON MOMENTS AT THE AUSTIN MUSIC AWARDS

1986: The 1985/86 Austin Music Awards took place at the Austin Opera House on March 13. One of my fondest memories of that show was Roky Erickson playing with the True Believers. The set was ending, with Roky singing "Two-Headed Dog." Every time the Believers began to wind the song down, Roky would run up to the mic to sing the chorus again to keep it going. Finally, the band members encircled Roky, trying to keep him away from the microphone by blocking him with their guitars. Still, he made it through a couple more times before they succeeded. — *Louis Black*

1991: The You're Gonna Misunderstand Me Award meanders to whomever it was who decided that Roky Erickson really wanted to play with the Texas Tornados at the awards show. Roky ended up staring at the audience and eventually wandered offstage. — *Ken Lieck*

1993: Roky Erickson is standing onstage, arms folded, singing a chilling version of "Don't Slander Me." An all-star band led by Will Sexton is sizzling with Mike Buck on drums, Speedy Sparks on bass, and John X Reed reminding everyone he's Austin's best-kept guitar-slinging secret. Will is having to shout at Roky, who seems half-reluctant to be there, when it is time to sing the chorus. Then he sings. Arms folded, almost staring off into space, Erickson leans into the microphone and sings and that voice shoots right up and down my central nervous system, pinballing off memory and evoking desire. — *Louis Black*

2006: Then it was time for Roky Erickson & the Explosives to pull a rabbit out of our souls. Kicking off strong with "Cold Night for Alligators" and an extra-fuzzy version of "Starry Eyes," it was further evidence of Erickson's return to musical prowess. Fellow psychedelic traveler Powell St. John joined the band on vocals for "The Right Track Now." Moments later, he added fire to "You're Gonna Miss Me" with a smoking harmonica solo in the bridge. As one of only a handful of Austin songs you really can't get tired of, it made the perfect ending to this charmingly mushy love note. — *Greg Beets*

2008: Then Roky Erickson fulfilled the night's promise, as Okkervil River delivered a cathartic "Our Life Is Not a Movie or Maybe" and "For Real," Will Sheff's bloody howl curdled against the cacophonous crash of keys and guitar. After leading the crowd in clapping through "Unless It's Kicks," Sheff introduced Erickson, and Roky Erickson commenced with its own unsettling roar



Roky Erickson and Will Sexton, 1993

PHOTOS BY MARTHA GRENON

of "You're Gonna Miss Me." Okkervil ripped psychedelic as Erickson blew harp and harmonized on "Starry Eyes" before closing the night with epic "I Walked With a Zombie." If we have truly fallen into a place where everything is music, then everything is looking up. — *Doug Freeman*

2009: As the lights dropped for the night's final set, Shawn Sahm's groove gave way to a barrage of distortion at the hands of the Black Angels. Pounding out the psych rhythms and intensity of "You on the Run" and "Young Men Dead," the Angels bathed in the black light glow of the ages, brought full circle as Roky Erickson stepped to the stage to deliver 13th Floor Elevators' central "Splash 1." With Alex Maas taking up the electric jug, Erickson and the Angels shut the show down with a blistering "You're Gonna Miss Me." A collaboration not soon forgotten, but the music here never is. — *Doug Freeman*

2011: Which left the Meat Puppets warming up that era's "Touchdown King" — Roky Erickson — by opening with Curt and Cris Kirkwood and new drummer Shandon Sahm reliving Nirvana's *MTV Unplugged* in the elder brother's "Plateau," then segueing into the aforementioned football monarchy from final SST LP *Monsters*. As J Mascis watched from the floor, Erickson came on in full lion mane, delivering "You're Gonna Miss Me" and "Starry Eyes" with enough static electricity to make up for an obvious lack of rehearsals. "You know who that was, right?" asked Sahm when clearing the stage, naming Erickson and his late father Doug Sahm to the Top 2 spots of Austin's all-time musical hierarchy. — *Raoul Hernandez*



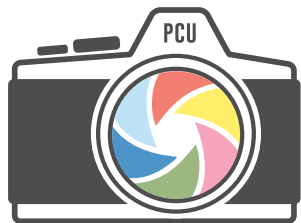
Jimmie Dale Gilmore and Rosie Flores, 1988

Austin Music Awards Hall of Fame Inductees 1983-2016

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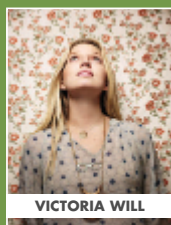
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|---|--------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bill Anderson (04)* | Ernie Durawa (04) | Flaco Jiménez (94) | John X Reed (05) |
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| Clifford Antone (86) | Kent Omar Dykes (86) | Daniel Johnston (98) | Bruce Robison (10) |
| Arc Angels (10) | Joe Ely (83) | Davy Jones (16) | Ted Roddy (00) |
| Asleep at the Wheel (06) | Roky Erickson (83) | Janis Joplin (84) | Doug Sahm (83) |
| Bad Livers (08) | Alejandro Escovedo (97) | Robert Earl Keen (98) | Scratch Acid (07) |
| Marcia Ball (89) | Explosions in the Sky (15) | Tim Kerr (97) | Charlie Sexton (86) |
| Martin Banks (95) | Fabulous Thunderbirds (83) | Killer Bees (06) | Tommy Shannon (96) |
| Stephen Barber (05) | Fastball (14) | Freddie King (85) | Billy Joe Shaver (03) |
| Spot Barnett (08) | Keith Ferguson (98) | Freddie "Steady" Krc (05) | Sixteen Deluxe (12) |
| Lou Ann Barton (92) | Fireballs (06) | Chris Layton (97) | Skunks (08) |
| Roscoe Beck (01) | Flatlanders (16) | Leadbelly (04) | Soulhat (06) |
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| Sarah Brown (10) | Glenn Fukunaga (13) | Tina Marsh (00) | 13th Floor Elevators (05) |
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| Bubble Puppy (11) | Geezinslaws (06) | Delbert McClinton (83) | Timbuk 3 (03) |
| Butthole Surfers (06) | Eliza Gilkyson (03) | Ian McLagan (04) | Tortilla Factory (11) |
| Sarah Elizabeth Campbell (16) | Jimmie Dale Gilmore (89) | Jason McMaster (98) | Mambo John Treanor (02) |
| Ray Campi (84) | Johnny Gimble (04) | James McMurtry (07) | True Believers (09) |
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| | Ray Wylie Hubbard (06) | Gene Ramey (85) | Bob Wills (84) |
| | "Blind" Lemon Jefferson (04) | Ruben Ramos (96) | Johnny Winter (85) |
| | | Shirley Ratisseau (13) | Margaret Wright (15) |
| | | Paul Ray (95) | Danny Roy Young (09) |
| | | Paul Ray & the Cobras (07) | |

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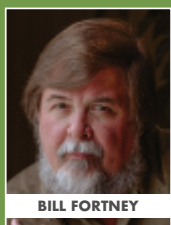
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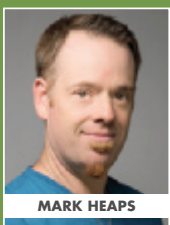
LAURA HICKS

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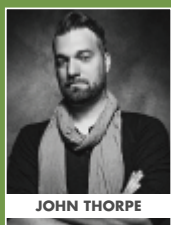
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2011: Meat Puppets & Roky Erickson, Bubble Puppy, Bright Light Social Hour, Mother Falcon, Sahara Smith & Will Sexton, Wagoneers with Joe Ely

2012: Quiet Company, Sixteen Deluxe, Joe "King" Carrasco & the Crowns with Jon Dee Graham, Shawn Sahn, Mariachi Relámpago, Ben Marines, Shorty Ortiz; Ruthie Foster & Carolyn Wonderland with special guest Patty Griffin; Christopher Cross with Mother Falcon and Peter Bay; Alejandro Escovedo & Guests: Amy Cook, Rosie Flores, Dan Dyer, Garland Jeffreys, Kid Congo Powers, Joe Ely, Bruce Springsteen

2013: The Trishas with Raul Malo, Ben Kweller, Bill Carter & the Blame, Brownout, Gary Clark Jr. (unannounced); Brent Grukke tribute: Alejandro Escovedo, Robyn Hitchcock, Scott McCaughey, Susan Cowsill, Britt Daniel, Wild Seeds

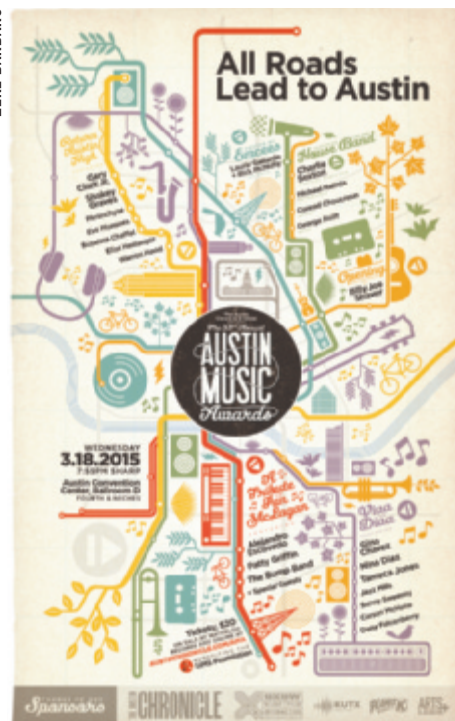
2014: Lucinda Williams, Francis Prève, Minor Mishap Marching Band, Church on Monday with Ray Benson, Alejandro Escovedo with Cheetah Chrome, James Williamson, Clem Burke, and Bobby Daniel; Texas Tornados with Jimmie Vaughan, Lou Ann Barton, Derek O'Brien; Youngbloods Choir: William Harries Graham, David Z, Marlon Sexton, Lily & lo Hickman, Finley Sexton with Jon Dee Graham, Will & Charlie Sexton, Sara Hickman

2015: Billy Joe Shaver; Viva la Diva: Gina Chavez, Nina Diaz, Tameca Jones, Sunny Sweeney, Carson McHone, Jazz Mills, Dana Falconberry; Austin High Revisited: Gary Clark Jr. & Eve Monsees, Shakey Graves, Phranchyze, Suzanna Choffel, Elias Haslanger, Warren Hood; Ian McLagan tribute: Alejandro Escovedo, Patty Griffin, Bump Band, special guest Steven Van Zandt

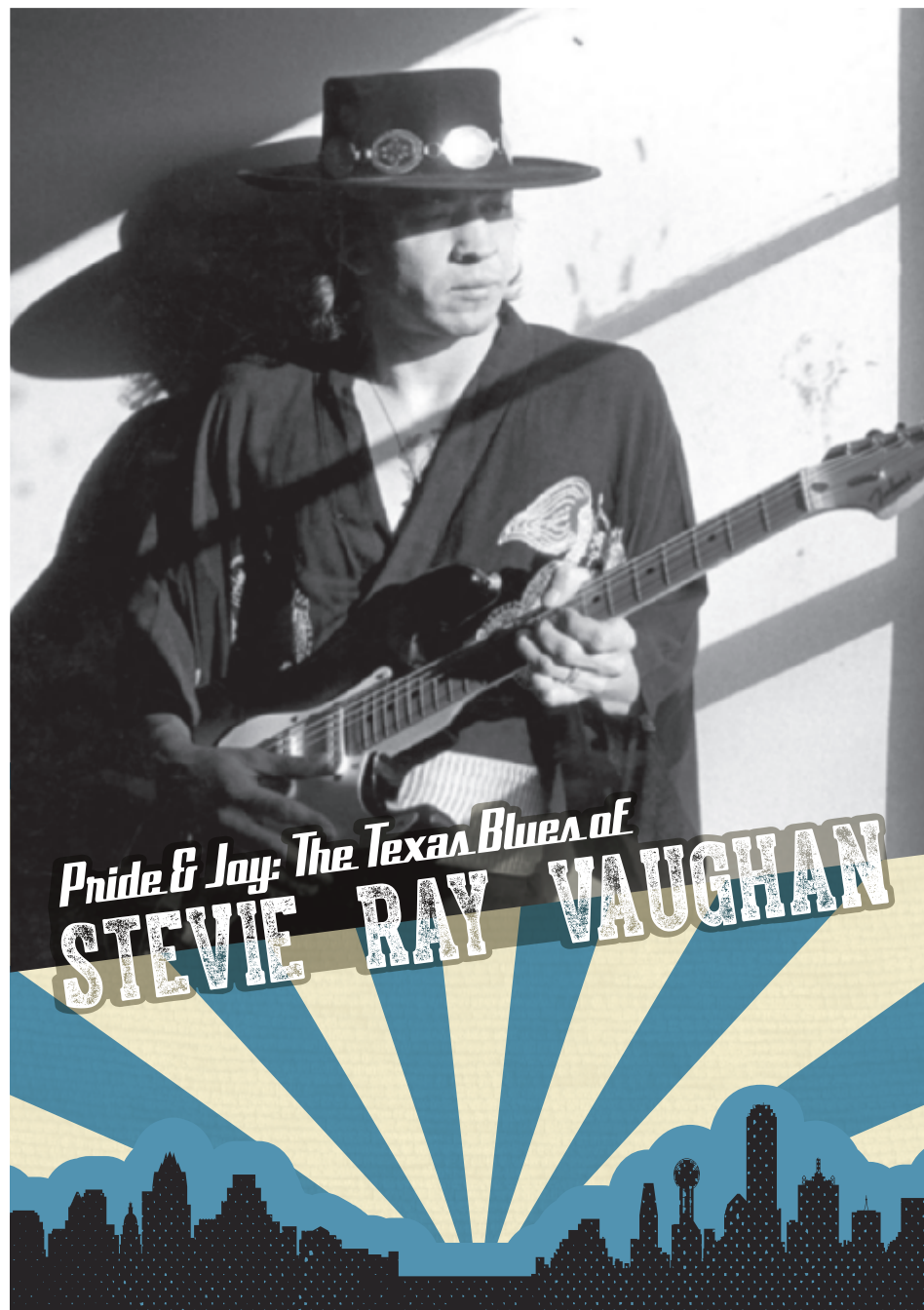
2016: Freaks and Geeks: Peter Stopschinski & Jenavieve Varga, Golden Dawn Arkestra, Mother Falcon; Blazing Bows: Warren Hood, Carrie Rodriguez, Emily Gimble, Alvin Crow, Jason Roberts, Erik Hokkanen; SIMS Celebration: Emcee Renée Zellweger, Doyle Bramhall II, Charlie Sexton & Britt Daniel, Jeremy Nail, the Happen-Ins; Antone's/Paul Ray tribute: Jimmie Vaughan, C.J. Chenier, Barbara Lynn, Lou Ann Barton, special guest Robert Plant



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