

# TEXAS MUSIC

## EXTRA

June '11

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Okkervil River returned to where it all began for an NPR global webcast. (Photo courtesy www.okkervilriver.com)

## Think Globally, Act Locally

According to frontman Will Sheff, Okkervil River's first performance as a band occurred at an open mic night at the Cactus Cafe on the University of Texas campus. On April 25, as part of NPR Music's First Listen series, the recent Texas Music Hall of Fame inductees made a triumphant return to the UT landmark, premiering their new album, *I Am Very Far*, in its entirety for the venue's first live global webcast. Despite minor tech difficulties – "The ghost of me is coming through your guitar pickup," Sheff remarked to Lauren Gurgio at one point – Okkervil tore through the new album with complicated urgency before settling into the double LP's third side with highlight "Show Yourself," masterfully accented by Gurgio. "I

was watching online just outside the Cactus," venue manager Matt Muñoz said, "and everything sounded great and looked amazing."



## Radio Austin

Real. Austin. Music. Head to [austin360radio.com](http://austin360radio.com) and that's what you should hear – all day, every day – assuming your definition of Austin music is as diverse as the city itself. Launched in May, the Internet radio station features a broad playlist that includes plenty of tracks from Austin musicians and artists with Texas ties. "We think there are countless people in the Austin area – and many more who've moved away – who miss 'the Austin sound' in local radio," says vice president Tim Lott. "They know it when they hear it, and they just don't hear it as often as they used to." Artists heard during the station's inaugural weekend included the Soggy Bottom Boys, Jimmy LaFave, the Mother Truckers, Arcade Fire, Adele and Abra Moore. New tracks will be added regularly. "It's a great mix of Austin and Texas musicians," Lott says, "plus bands that just fit in with the musical culture here – that blurring of the lines between rock, country, Americana and such." LA Lloyd assembled the playlist and is the voice of [austin360radio](http://austin360radio.com),

working from a newly constructed studio in the *Austin American-Statesman* building on South Congress Avenue. Lloyd, an Austin resident, helped launch 101X and spent time as program director at the former Z102 before heading to San Antonio's 99.5 KISS-FM, one of the nation's top-rated rock stations. "This is a great opportunity for me as a broadcaster – to be involved in an endeavor where newspaper and radio can work together in a way that hasn't been done before anywhere else in the U.S. that I'm aware of," Lloyd said. "A newspaper with a radio station ... what a concept!"

## A Toadie Takes Tribeca

Who's one of the most accomplished Texas musicians in the realm of film and television? How about Toadies guitarist Clark Vogeler, long an Emmy winner thanks to his work on the editing team behind TV's *Project Runway*?

And now, the guitarist has added another cool feather to his cap: *Bombay Beach*, the documentary film for which Vogeler served as a contributing editor, was named Best Documentary at the 10th annual Tribeca Film Festival in New York City. The film, about the people living in a poor community on California's man-made Salton Sea, features a score from Beirut's Zach Condon and songs from Bob Dylan. Alas, no Toadies tracks.



A sober George Jones brought plenty of piss and vinegar to Houston. (Photo William Michael Smith)

## Pointed Possum

Call him "No Show Jones" if you want – and he's got T-shirts he'll sell you that declare that – but George Jones showed up at the Arena Theatre in Houston April 29 right on time, seeming sober as a judge. He was especially gracious with his nods to "being back in Houston, where we don't come often enough it seems." He was funny and gracious as he apologized for allergies and not feeling well the previous week, and his best moment of the night was when he asked the crowd what it thought about "new country" radio. After a hailstorm of boos, Jones told the crowd that what's wrong with country radio is they've filtered out all "the cheatin' and drinkin' songs." "Well, I'm just gonna tell you right now," the Possum declared, "we're gonna do a whole lot of them boogers right here tonight," before breaking into one of the best performances of the evening, "Bartender's Blues." Yes, he said "boogers."

# TEXAS MUSIC

## EXTRA

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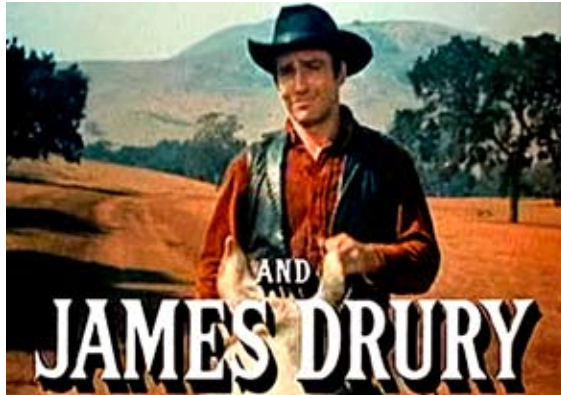
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## Country & Western

The Allen Public Library is mixing old-time western television with Texas music June 10 when veteran actor James Drury joins the Texas Trailhands for an evening of music and nostalgia. The Trailhands will perform their special brand of "Cowboy Swing" and will introduce Drury, who'll discuss his career in western television and films. Most notably, Drury starred in *The Virginian*, the third-longest-running western series in the history of television. He also had roles in *The Rifleman* and *Walker, Texas Ranger*. On the big screen, he appeared in 20 films, including a starring role in the legendary science fiction masterpiece *Forbidden Planet*. The Texas Trailhands, meanwhile, present an upbeat swing experience. "We're not country," bandleader Miss Devon declares. "We're very particular about which songs we do. A song has to pass quite a few litmus tests or it'll limp away broken-hearted." Miss Devon, the Academy of Western Artists'

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click here to read
- [releases](#)  
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*The Virginian* – the first Western to air in 90-minute installments each week – was on NBC from 1962 to 1971. (Photo courtesy [www.thevirginian.net](http://www.thevirginian.net))

2009 Western Music Female Performer of the Year, is also the voice of Jessie, the Yodelin' Cowgirl on the Grammy-winning CD *Woody's Roundup featuring Riders In the Sky* and the follow-up CD for *Toy Story 2*.

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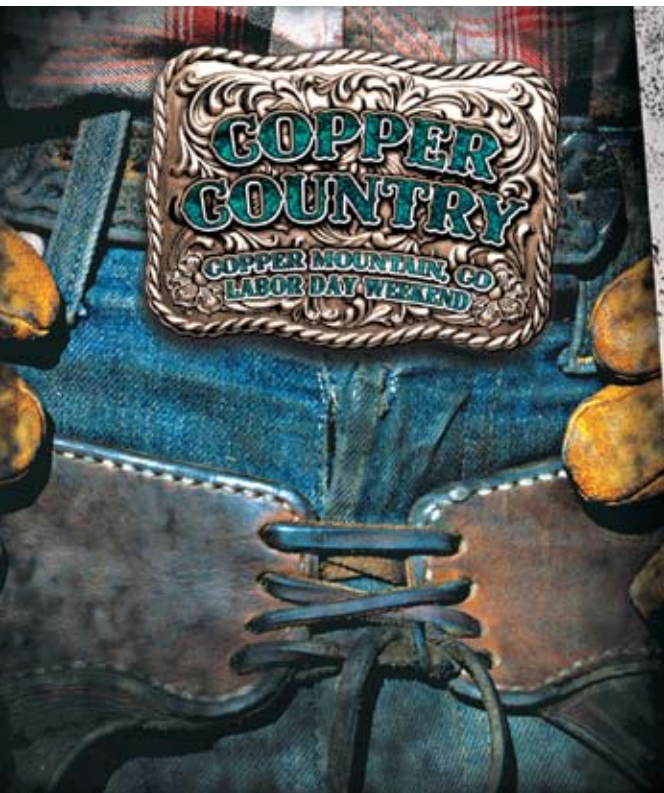
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The year's been maravilloso thus far for Grupo Fantasma. (Photo courtesy www.grupofantasma.com)

## Arlington Nights

2011 started out as a banner year for Latin funk orchestra Grupo Fantasma. Their most recent album, *El Existential*, won the band its first Grammy Award for Best Latin Rock, Alternative or Urban Album. And now, the popular group will bring its 21st-century beat to the Levitt Pavilion in Arlington June 2 as part of the 2011 Texas Power Summer Concert Series.

Memorial Day weekend saw the triple-fiddle harmonies and Bob Wills-inspired music of The Quebe Sisters Band, and the music at Levitt continues five nights a week all of June with such artists as the Austin Lounge Lizards, Mingo Fishtrap, Terri Hendrix, Cas Haley (from *America's Got Talent*), Rick Trevino, Blame Sally, Josh Weathers, Del Castillo and The Killdares. The series concludes July 3 during *Light Up Arlington!* with Del Rio-born singer-songwriter Radney Foster and fireworks to light up the sky above the Pavilion stage.

## Unsung No More

He's the chipper one in the band, the one who wears the iconic coke-bottle glasses and the one who can't get through an entire set without smiling ear to ear and greeting the crowd with a hearty, "Hey, everybody!" But, let's face it, when it comes to the Old 97's, Murry Hammond, certainly as far as songwriting goes, has been cast as the second fiddle to the band's

prolific frontman, Rhett Miller. Shame, too, since recent memory has found Hammond penning some of the more heartfelt, memorable tracks on the band's albums – songs such as "Color Of A Lonely Heart is Blue"



Hammond is being recognized for more than his glasses. (Photo Chris Strother)

off of 2008's *Blame It on Gravity* and the tandem of "You Were Born To Be In Battle" and "You Smoke Too Much" off last year's *The Grand Theatre Volume One*.

Hammond's always been a fine songwriter in his own right, however, something his solo

debut, 2008's *I Don't Know Where I'm Going But I'm on My Way*, showcased, earning rave reviews across the board. Still, underappreciated seems a fitting description of Hammond's talents. So this must come as a nice nod: in this month's music-centric issue of *Esquire*, it's a Hammond-penned Old 97's song – "You Smoke Too Much" – that earned the band a spot on the magazine's list of 50 songs that every man should listen to.

## Americana, Texas Style

The latest Americana Music Association Chart (May 31) has a discernible Texas flavor, as six of the top 10 artists have Lone Star connections. Steve Earle is at No. 3, followed by Lucinda Williams (5), Band of Heathens (6), Hayes Carll (7), Sarah Jarosz (9) and Marcia Ball (10). Waco native Steve Martin holds down the No. 11 spot, courtesy of his second bluegrass album, *Rare Bird Alert*, this one with the Steep Canyon Rangers.

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 6/23 COUNTRY STAMPEDE - MANHATTAN, KS  
 6/25 TEXAS BULL COUNTRY CLUB - GAINESVILLE, TX  
 6/30 MULDOONS - EL CAMPO, TX  
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Los Texas Wranglers perform both Saturday and Sunday. (Photo Sandy Carson)

**Texas Folklife Festival**  
HemisFair Park  
June 10-12 • San Antonio  
[www.texasfolklifestival.org](http://www.texasfolklifestival.org)

The Texas Folklife Festival, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, is one of the biggest cultural celebrations in Texas. Located on the grounds of the Institute of Texan Cultures on the UTSA HemisFair Park Campus, the annual three-day event showcases the Lone Star State's diversity. The festival brings together more than 40 unique cultures, 250 participating organizations, 150 menu items, 65 arts and crafts vendors and several stages of music, dance and entertainment. The festival was modeled after the Smithsonian's Folklife Festival, held in Washington, D.C., in 1968. On behalf of the Institute of Texan Cultures, O.T. Baker attended the first Smithsonian Folklife Festival and returned home with big plans: to replicate the event in San Antonio. Musical entertainment this year includes the Tailpipes, the Bill Smallwood Band, Cedryl Ballou & The Zydeco Trendsetters, Los Texas Wranglers, the Ledbetters, Musicales de Tejas, Last of Our Kind, The Voices of the Mainland and Granvil Poynter. HemisFair Park is in downtown San Antonio at the corner of Bowie Street and Durango Boulevard, just off Interstate 37 South – a short walk from the Alamo and River Walk. Tickets cost \$10 for adults (13 and older), \$5 for children 6-12 and are free for children under 5.

**JUNE**

**2-6**  
**Fest Out West**  
Lajitas  
[www.festoutwest.com](http://www.festoutwest.com)

**9-11**  
**Rockport Music Festival**  
Fulton Harbor Park  
Rockport-Fulton  
[www.rockportmusic.com](http://www.rockportmusic.com)

**9-12**  
**CMA Music Festival**  
Various venues  
Nashville, Tenn.  
[www.cmafest.com](http://www.cmafest.com)

**ROT Biker Rally**  
Travis County Expo Center  
Austin  
[www.rotally.com](http://www.rotally.com)

**10-11**  
**Overton Bluegrass Festival**  
City Park  
Overton  
[www.overtonbluegrass.com](http://www.overtonbluegrass.com)



Jack Ingram will delight crowds at the CMA Music Festival in Nashville. (Photo courtesy GAC)



Guy Clark (right) and Ramblin' Jack Elliott perform in Conroe June 18. (Photo John Carrico)

**11**  
**Texas Blueberry Festival**  
Downtown Nacogdoches  
[www.texasblueberryfestival.com](http://www.texasblueberryfestival.com)

**17-18**  
**T-Bone Walker Blues Fest**  
Music City Theater and Outdoor Stage  
Linden  
[www.tbnewalkerfest.org](http://www.tbnewalkerfest.org)

**18**  
**The Sounds of Texas Music Series with Guy Clark**  
Crighton Theatre  
Conroe  
[www.thesoundsoftexasmusicseries.com](http://www.thesoundsoftexasmusicseries.com)

**19**  
**Girls Rock Camp Austin Concert**  
The Griffin School  
Austin  
[www.girlsrockcampaustin.org](http://www.girlsrockcampaustin.org)

**23-26**  
**Luling Watermelon Thump**  
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**26**  
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FOSSKIT<sup>NO</sup>5



## Fosskit No. 5 Clemency Self-released

Fosskit No. 5 may be a new name on the Austin scene, but you'll likely recognize some of its personnel. Neal Mehta (The Recliners, Halloway, Fair-

light) got together with fellow middle-school teacher Joon-Yee Chuah and producer/drummer John Bush (Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians, Small Stars) to create this textured set of tunes, a melancholy exploration of relationship challenges. Bill Walter on bass and Landis Armstrong (The Guilty Pleasures, Small Stars) on lead guitar complete the

lineup on *Clemency* that conjures the somber pop sensibilities of The Smiths or more recent acts like The National and Arcade Fire. The band's name is an inside reference to a set of popular science curriculum modules, a nod to Mehta's and Chuah's day jobs. And the nerdy science references don't stop there, with tunes that integrate brainy metaphors with relationship disappointments, as in "Molecular" ("Our bond is molecular in nature/even though we try to tear us both apart"). The often moody lyrics, as delivered by Mehta, are layered with the contrast of Chuah's entrancing keyboards and Bush's driving percussion, while deftly exploring the contradictions in modern liaisons. A few tunes are those Mehta has recorded with others over the years, taking advantage of Chuah's keyboard and fiddle skills in new arrangements ("Cabs Won't Stop," "Guess You'll Never Know").

— CINDY ROYAL

## new releases

May 10	Okkervil River	<i>I Am Very Far</i>	Jagjaguwar
May 16	Greezy Wheels	<i>Gone Greezy</i>	MaHatMa
May 17	Sarah Jarosz	<i>Follow Me Down</i>	Sugar Hill
May 17	John David Kent	<i>John David Kent</i>	Self-released
May 17	Calhoun	<i>Heavy Sugar</i>	Idol
May 21	Cody Canada & the Departed	<i>This is Indian Land</i>	Thirty Tigers
May 23	Sad Accordions	<i>The Colors and the Kill</i>	self-released
May 24	Suzanna Choffel	<i>Steady Eye Shaky Bow</i>	self-released
May 24	Zack Walther	<i>Into the Fray</i>	Sustain
May 31	Hadden Sayers	<i>Hard Dollar</i>	Golden Eagle
June 7	The Wooden Birds	<i>Two Matchsticks</i>	Barsuk
June 7	Joe Ely	<i>Satisfied at Last</i>	Redeye
June 7	Scott Boddicker	<i>Icebergs &amp; Oak Trees</i>	Self-released
June 7	Justin Haigh	<i>People Like Me</i>	Apache Ranch
June 14	ZZ Top	<i>Live in Germany 1980</i>	Eagle
June 21	Wheeler Brothers	<i>Portraits</i>	Bismieux
July 26	Jimmie Vaughan	<i>Plays More Blues, Ballads and Favorites</i>	Shout Factory!
June 28	Beyonce	<i>4</i>	Columbia
June 28	Various artists	<i>Rave On Buddy Holly</i>	Fantasy
June 28	Jeremy Steding	<i>I Keep on Livin', But I Don't Learn</i>	Smith
July 5	Old 97's	<i>The Grand Theater Volume 2</i>	New West
July 12	Folk Family Revival	<i>Unfolding</i>	Self-released
July 12	Johnny Nicholas	<i>Future Blues</i>	The People's Label
July 12	Fiery Blue	<i>Our Secret</i>	Doublon

the demigs



cities can wait

### The Demigs *Cities Can Wait* Self-released

Over the past year, Denton's Demigs have endured several personnel changes, greatly affecting the band's post-punk sound. Leader Chris Demiglio is about the only one left from the group that released *Yardling*, the band's full-length debut, back in 2007. In those days, Demiglio's crew was content to pursue an extreme Pixies fixation that nearly resulted in the Demigs being relegated to tribute band status. *Yardling* was a good

Frank Black record, but it lacked an original soul. Thankfully, The Demigs' sophomore effort, *Cities Can Wait*, rectifies that situation posthaste. "Red Palomino" starts things off with control and restraint, two things missing from *Yardling*. Instead of yowling, Demiglio actually sings, and cuts such as "Sophisticates and Sedatives" and "Both Hands Out" benefit from this newfound self-control. There's still plenty of power on *Cities*, but it's a focused energy that allows the angular riffs and compelling vocals to shine through. By scaling back on the aggression and concentrating on the quality of the material, Demiglio has created an impressive and heady set of songs. Instead of sounding like a cover band, the Demigs now have a mature, interesting take on indie rock.

— DARRYL SMYERS

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(Photo courtesy austin360.com)

Since opening in February 1979, the Cactus Cafe on the University of Texas campus has been a jewel in the crown of the Austin music community. When university administrators announced in 2010 that the venue would close because of crippling budget cuts, that same music community rushed to its defense, forcing a reevaluation of the controversial decision. In a move that garnered mixed reactions, the university delegated music programming to its NPR affiliate, KUT Radio, which named relative unknown Matt Muñoz to replace popular longtime manager Griff Luneberg. That was nearly a year ago, so we decided to check in with Muñoz to talk about what's happened and see how things are progressing.

**In giving KUT the reins, the university seemed to believe, implicitly or explicitly, that the Cactus would – in some way – change. Is that how you perceived your role – as an agent of change?**

That's an interesting way to look at it. Inherently, there were a lot of things right with the venue. But behind the scenes, there were things that just didn't work. So it was my job to fix those things that weren't working and get them up to speed. As far as an agent of change ... inherently, at its core, the Cactus is what it is – a listening room, and we're going to keep artists coming in who people want to

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see. We've been mixing in everything from jazz to classical guitar to younger bands.

### What other changes have you made?

Just streamlining all the back-end stuff – the way artists get paid, making sure we're on time with those types of things. And trying to reach out and find newer artists before they play some of the bigger rooms in town. We did a residency with David Ramirez in April, and every week it got bigger and bigger, thanks to the promo with the radio station hand-in-hand with the venue to help this artist grow. I think that's what the nature of the room is. You hear all these stories about how different artists came out of this room, and we're going to continue to try different things to foster that.

### What's been the biggest adjustment?

It's a lot of work and a lot of hours, and it's basically just me and Amy [Chambless], who helps with the paperwork upstairs, and that's about it – although [bar manager] Chris Lueck helps an enormous amount in terms of how we're going to set the room up or what we need to do with lights, etc. I rely on his knowledge and experience in the room a tremendous amount.

### Has the transition to managing the Cactus been a comfortable one for you?

Absolutely. I think once you've been in the music business any period of time, it's really just about relationships and learning how to handle artists and managers and booking agents; those types of things remain the same.

### What was it like working with Griff Luneberg during those first transition months?

Well, to be honest, it was a little awkward. But at the end of the day, he was very gracious and was 100 percent genuine. Once he saw that I'm not in this to elevate my name or raise my profile – but rather I'm in it because I love



Muñoz (left) and Luneberg discuss Cactus details in the sitting area outside the storied venue. (Photo Matt Portillo)

music, I want the room to be around and I've had so many great experiences in it myself – I think he got it. He was a little apprehensive at first – as anybody would be – but I think after a while, we warmed up to each other and became friends and partners while working together.

### I've heard talk about a Griff tribute night or some such – is that in the works?

We've talked about a lot of things. He's always going to be a part of the venue, whether in spirit or otherwise. People love him and respect him because he really was the Cactus. He was the face of the venue for so many years, and it was his life. To be able to be a part of it now ... I'm very humbled by it, and I'll work as many hours as necessary (and I have ... I've maxed out my comp time) to keep that going. To me, it's worth it because I think the Cactus is something a lot of people believe in. And KUT strongly believes that, too.

### How much input does KUT provide regarding who gets booked?

I have about 95 to 98 percent free rein on bookings. They'll come to me when somebody hits them up, but it's really up to me. They want to see how creative I can get. They have an advisory board, and they've got a whole lot of people who have ideas – and there were a whole lot of people who had ideas, as you know – about what should be done with the room. It's about meeting with those people and trying to make the most of those types of things.

Like I said, Chris has lots of suggestions: "Hey, you need to have so-and-so back who hasn't been here in a while" or "Think about this ..." As I get accustomed to the role of being here, I'll learn the history I don't know and about all those artists who love to play the room.

### Have you seen a good profit at the door?

We're a little bit ahead, and our numbers are where they're supposed to be. We're always looking to improve, and we've got some ideas we'll be exploring over the next couple of months to solidify everything. Coming into this, I knew the shows alone aren't going to sustain the room, so we're looking for bigger-picture things, with sponsorships and opportunities for people to be a part of the room – maybe donors and patrons – where we can create a long-lasting, sustaining model, but also have people involved. Eventually we're hopefully going to have a scholarship in the name of the Cactus or Griff or somebody. That was one of my main goals: to reach a point where the room gives back to the university as well.

### Favorite part of the job so far?

Being able to watch the different types of artists we're able to get into the room and watch their reactions to the crowds who come. Last night, we had David Ford from the UK, and we had a guy fly in from Atlanta to see him ... a couple drove in from Waco, another guy drove from El Paso. They couldn't believe they were seeing Ford in that small of a room; he plays big venues in the UK, so being able to sit with 30 or 40 people is a special experience. Fans here are actually able to hang out and talk with artists after a show.

### Final thought?

We don't want to be a Saxon Pub or a Momo's – and don't get me wrong, those places are great – who host an artist every Monday night or whatever. We want this venue, when you play here, to mean something more than the other rooms in town, because it warrants it.

– MATT PORTILLO