

STREET BEATS



Guy Clark's Texas air and wit doesn't have a peg for country radio, so he carries on as a solo artist of unrepentant excellence.

Guy Clark: A man and his guitar

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

If Guy Clark had to buy lunch for all the guests who appeared on his latest album, his wallet would be in a serious state of hurt.

None other than Emmylou Harris, Rodney Crowell and Roseanne Cash offered their assistance on "Old Friends," Clark's critically-acclaimed release on Sugar Hill Records. Unfortunately, his suitcase isn't big enough for everyone to join him on his current tour.

Onstage, it's just Guy Clark and guitar.

"If you add another person, then you need a road manager," said Clark, who will perform Wednesday, April 19, at the Midtown Cafe in Birmingham. "It becomes a geometric progression. Then you have all that bull— that comes with it."

"I used to do that stuff when I toured with a band. It's not for me."

The road, though, is for Clark. The stage is where he puts the finishing touches on his acoustically sparse songs, many of which have been covered by the likes of Willie Nelson, Waylon Jennings, George Strait, Tammy Wynette and the Everly Brothers.

His albums have been critically embraced but commercially ignored.

HIS TEXAS air and wit, not to mention his eclectic style, doesn't have a peg for country radio.

Clark accepts his muse and carries on as a solo artist of unrepentant excellence.

"It doesn't appeal to the lowest common denominator," he said. "I don't really make records in order to second guess that type of market."

It's nothing that bothers me, though."

That typifies an easy-going, tumbleweeds attitude that finds its way into many of Clark's songs. His numbers are known for their detail, their campfire quality.

Much of that can be attributed to his upbringing. Clark was born and raised in west Texas.

"Being born and raised there, you're always trying to get it out of your psyche," he said. "I don't know what it is. It's just the whole attitude — live and let live."

His songs certainly live, especially through the voices of other performers. Clark said he finds it flattering — not to mention financially rewarding — when someone covers one of his songs.

Of all the performers who have performed his songs, an unlikely one stands out — Slim Pickens. The

country 'n' western singer did "Desperate Waiting for a Train."

"He spoke it on record, which I thought was stunning," Clark said.

SUCH TERMS have been used to describe "Old Friends," which Rolling Stone and People have raved about along several other music critics. The singer/songwriter's follow-up will be completed as soon as "I write 10 good songs."

And the club circuit will continue to serve as Clark's songwriting workshop.

"The playing is an extension of the writing, really," he said. "They're not finished until I play them for a couple of weeks on the road."

Guy Clark will perform on 8:30 p.m. Wednesday, April 19, at the Midtown Cafe, 139 S. Woodward, Birmingham. Tickets are \$10. For information, call 642-1133.

Stages finds its stage in the studio

By Larry O'Connor
staff writer

Not to say Stages sounds a tad bitter, but castor oil with a twist of lime might be a sweet drink next to these three guys.

"Have we overstated how much we're disgruntled with the music scene in Detroit?" asked Kevin Shannahan, 18, who is drummer with the Livonia-based band.

Certainly, their gripes have been heard before. You know, clubs that only want them to play covers and no radio play.

So what is a band to do? Well, if you're Stages, you hole up in the studio and release some cassette tapes.

The "Vast Charade" was the band's alternative to playing clubs. The four-song cassette displays a

group in the rough stages of development, but with some definite talent in the area of song writing.

Stages is busily working on the follow-up, which is a concept cassette titled "Last Day of the Sunrise." A release date is planned for the fall.

IN THE meantime, Stages is learning some diverse covers designed to open a few club dates for them. Stages has played only a handful of club gigs, but found the experience dreadful. Instead they cite open-air performances at the Ann Arbor Art Fair and Wayne State University as highlights.

The band has been together for two years, but sound like it's been 20.

"Around here, there's two kind of bands," said Dan Jones, 19, who plays guitar in the band. "There are the manufactured ones that are only interested in making money and

picking up women. Then are the ones who are interested in making music."

Stages obviously considered themselves in the latter category. The band formed two years ago in a Livonia Stevenson High School classroom when Andy Birko and Jones realized they shared a common interest.

Jones and Shannahan grew up together in the same neighborhood. Then Jones met Birko.

"It was kind of odd," said Birko, 18, of Livonia. "We were sitting in musical theory class and I mentioned some bands I liked. Here, I was sitting next to this long hair (Jones) and he said, 'Yeh, I like those bands also.'"

Some of the bands Birko mentioned included U2 and Peter Dinklage. Those influences can be heard as well as those of Rush.

In fact, with Jones' high-pitched voice, comparisons to Rush are undeniable.

"It's that three-man phenomenon," Jones said. "You never hear that with five-man bands."

WITH ONLY three members, supporting their musical habit is difficult. Jones and Shannahan both work two jobs. Jones is a cook at a Plymouth bar and is employed at a record store. Shannahan works for an engineer and at a hardware store. Birko is employed at a drug store.

Money earned goes towards the cassette tape in the works. Their first product cost approximately \$2,000 to produce.

With little money and fan adulation, there's only one reason to make music.

"Self-satisfaction," Birko said. "That's all you can ask for at this stage."

IN CONCERT

● THE GEAR

The Gear will perform Monday, April 17, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First St., Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● KNAVES

The Knaves will perform Monday, April 17, at Rick's American Cafe, 611 Church, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-2747.

● CHARLIE CHAPLIN

Charlie Chaplin, a reggae artist, will perform Tuesday, April 18, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● DELANEY BROTHERS

The Delaney Brothers will perform Wednesday, April 19, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● WHITE TRASH

White Trash will perform along with The Winders, The Crunch and Bleed, Wednesday, April 19, at Blendie's, 21139 W. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 535-0108.

● CHRISTMAS

Christmas, L.R.S. recording artist, will perform Thursday, April 20, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.

● THOSE WHO DREAM

Those Who Dream will perform along with The Deans on Thursday, April 20, at Paychicks Lounge, 2932 Caniff, off I-96, Camp, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8934.

● FUNHOUSE

Funhouse will perform Thursday, April 20, at S-D Dance Club, 1815 N.

Main, Royal Oak. For information, call 589-3544.

● OREGON

Oregon will perform at 7:30 p.m. and 10 p.m. Thursday, April 20, at The Ark, 537 Main, Ann Arbor. Tickets are \$12.50 in advance. For information, call 423-6666.

● NITZER EBB

Nitzer Ebb will perform Thursday, April 20, at Saint Andrew's Hall, 431 E. Congress, Detroit. For information, call 961-MELT.

● DEVOUR

Devour will perform Thursday, April 20, at Blendie's, 21139 W. Seven Mile, Detroit. For information, call 535-9108.

● VICTIMS OF CIRCUMSTANCE

Victims of Circumstance will perform Friday, April 21, at LQI's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck. For information, call 875-6555.

● BOOTSEY X

Bootsey X and the Lovemasters will perform Friday, April 21, at Paychicks Lounge, 2932 Caniff, Hamtramck. For information, call 872-8934.

He will perform along with Kash Phlag on Saturday, April 22, at Paychicks, and Saturday, April 29, at LQI's 21, 2930 Jacob, Hamtramck.

● IODINE RAINCOATS

Iodine Raincoats will perform Friday, April 21, at the Blind Pig, 208 S. First, Ann Arbor. For information, call 996-8555.



The Iodine Raincoats will perform on Friday, April 22, at the Blind Pig in Ann Arbor.

COLLEGE

Here are the top 10 albums receiving air play on WAYN-AM, campus station of Wayne State University.

1. "Disgraceland," Elvis Costello.
2. "Daydream Nation," Sonic Youth.
3. "Tender Prey," Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds.
4. "Radon Acid," Radon Acid.
5. "All Roy See," All.
6. "Inside Out," Inside Out.
7. "Another Planet," Allen Sex Planet.
8. "The Back Pets," The Back Pets.
9. "Back with a Bang," Murphy's Law.
10. "Ultra Mega OK," Sound Garden.

LOCAL

Here are the top 10 songs receiving air play on Detroit Music Scene, heard 4-5 p.m. Sundays (repeated 5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays) on WDRB-FM 90.9.

1. "In Love Again," Shane and the Sirens.
2. "In the Morning," Fly Away Hair.
3. "Today," Don Bery.
4. "This Is John Galt," Figure 4.
5. "Olio," Peter G.
6. "Taking Control," Standing Pavement.
7. "Sine on Love," Plead Eriest.
8. "The Curious Sons," Crime Control.
9. "Vertical Hold," Mondo Jachals.
10. "Don't Tell Me," Media Came.

REVIEWS

LORDS OF LOVE
— Tanjent Image

The leather-clad lads from the eastside have come of age. In a relatively short time, Tanjent Image has suddenly emerged as one of the better up-and-coming bands in the area.

And this comes from a person who was not impressed with the band when he saw them open for in Tua Nua at Saint Andrew's Hall. Tanjent Image apparently has its act together in the studio.

The margin of improvement is tremendous from their debut release last year. For one, "Lords of Love" (Rage) is well-produced (Al Sutton and Brad Fairman) and well-recorded. Too many bands in the Detroit scene, perhaps due to budget constraints, are turning out inferior products. Not so here.

More than that, however, Tanjent Image appears to be a group that has matured as songwriters and performers. The band has toned down the thrashy, spiked guitar (dare we say U2) sound and has gone for more of a pop feel.

In fact, some of the brightest moments on the six-song cassette are when soft acoustic guitars are at



the forefront, such as in the slow-moving "Marilyn Cries." Or, like in the spirited offering "Promises," when the acoustic sound provides texture to the jabbing electric guitar play.

Another element, the keyboards, has found its way into Tanjent Image's music. And while most keyboard-based is the death of many a band, Tanjent Image uses it as a strength.

Some weaknesses, though, are evident. Vocalist Reed Richards does a fine job here, but sometimes he tries to be too hard. His voice becomes overwrought trying to keep up with the fury.

All in all, a good effort from a band that is on the way up.

— Larry O'Connor

SECOND
COMING

— The Dickies

"We were hoping that punk rock would become the next middle-class art form, and we could ride that crest all the way to the bank. We want to be the Ray Conniff of punk at the time," said Dickies vocalist and keyboard player Leonard Graves Phillips.

Yeah, sure.

"The Second Coming" (Enigma) marks the return of the Dickies, an anomaly during the Los Angeles punk phase in the late 1970s. Hidden within the outrageous statements is an album that is so-so.

Sure, anyone can poke fun by covering songs like the Corvilles' "Hair" and Gene Pitney's "Town Without Pity." But what's the Dickies' case, it's some sophomoric material by a rather boring punk band. Try these song titles on for size — "Cross-Eyed Tammy," "Gong Homo" and "Monkey See, Monkey Do." Hey, guys, when do the swirly start?

Like the Dead Milkmen, the Dickies specialize in juke music. And compared to the sterilized music of the late 70s, these guys must have been a real hot. But this is stuff is about as funny as a humor seminar



conducted by Bob Hope, Orson Bean and Johnny Carson.

Musically, the Dickies show little spark. A few guitar lines by Stan Lee and Enoch Hain display some inspiration, but overall this six-man outfit really breaks no new ground.

If anything, it reveals a punk band that has been surpassed in the last 10 years by groups such as Black Flag and Circle Jerks. Even the covers of "Hair" and "Town Without Pity" don't offer a new twist on old classics.

"Second Coming" is an unfortunate case of a group past its prime and not realizing it.

— Larry O'Connor

TANTILLA
House of Freaks

Seldom do four-man bands play with more power and fury than the talented duo of Bryan Harvey and Johnny Holt, better known as the House of Freaks.

Along with Lou Reed's "New York" and Elvis Costello's "Spitz," this second album from the House of Freaks certainly can be added to the list. Blistering acoustic guitar lines and impassioned vocals highlight this disc.

House of Freaks is a product of what certainly is becoming one of the American hot beds for new bands, Richmond, Va. Their first album was well-received by critics. Harvey and Holt prove the first time around was no fluke.

Unlike the first album, though, the House of Freaks sought a little assistance this time. Marty McAvitt provides some organ and piano here.

Sometimes it serves as the perfect foil for Harvey's highly-charged guitar playing and Holt's bare-bones beat, such as on the slow moving "Family Tree."

With keyboards or without, House of Freaks better moments come when Harvey busies loose with a torrent of riveting lyrics. He sings in spasms, but still can take a simple vocal line and wrapped into a tai-



gled ball that still has a bow on top.

"When the Hammer Comes Down" opens this album and displays House of Freaks at a fever pitch. "Flare Bones" has a starkness about it that is haunting, yet quite alluring.

The sheer energy here is enough to impress. The lengths to which Harvey and Holt can take their two-man act is something to behold.

After awhile, a guitar, a drum and a voice would grow old. Not here. For instance in "Big House," Harvey supplies a guitar sound that makes it resemble a Civil War march.

Harvey and Holt combined for some rather well-written songs. When Harvey sings in "Big House" about the exact trials of a convict, he's painting a vivid picture of history.

— Larry O'Connor