

Russell band sparks Basement crowd

By STEVE LEE
Battalion Staff

For the second time in two weeks, it attracted a really class act. As if St. Elmo's Fire wasn't enough the week before, the coffeehouse decided to go up against

Town Hall Friday night by bringing in The Shake Russell Band, while England Dan and John Ford Coley played just across the street. Russell and his band also played Saturday night.

Now, this may have forced a tough decision for some concertgoers here Friday, but there was never any doubt where I'd be this night.

Shake Russell has been pleasing folks in this area for some time now. He's been packing them in most every weekend at various clubs around Houston, usually playing two performances the same night.

Review

And to go see Russell play is fast becoming the thing to do on a Houston weekend.

But he decided to take a break from the club circuit this weekend. "I wish we could play here every weekend," he said to the crowd Friday. "No beer bottles." He grinned and backed off, as if dodging bottles tossed his way.

Russell's band has an unmistakably unique musical style. In fact, it's somewhat hard to pin a label on it. You can call it country, progressive country, rock or country-rock, but Russell himself calls it, simply, "funk."

That pretty well says it all. The band is versatile. In fact, guitarist Dana Cooper threatened to steal the show with his mean harmonica playing. And his voice! His range is unreal. His most effective moment was during "Dream Darlin'," a beautifully tender love song, where he sang with no accompaniment, other than soft backing vocals and a light guitar. In this song, he reached the low and extremely high notes equally well. And, of course, he was the star on "Song On The Radio" and "When Are You Comin' Home," two songs that appear on their album.

Next in line is guitarist-bassist Michael Mashkes, known on-stage as "Marcello Marconi," a name Mashkes made up. He drew laughter from the crowd on "Pretty As A Picture," a humorous tune in which he and Russell exchange lead vocals.

The best example of versatility in the group is probably drummer Jim Alderman, who also played electric piano, accordion, percussion and did backing vocals. His accordion on "You've Got A Lover," along with Cooper's harmonica and Russell's vocals, was priceless. He's also one hell of a drummer.

The fifth, and quietist member of the group, Peter Gorisch, played lead guitar and bass, with occasional backing vocals, and did each very well.

Then there's Shake Russell. He would get the audience moving on foot-stomping tunes like "You

Wouldn't Know Me," "Going Down Judah," "Troubles," and "Hard To Find A Smile," only to counter with soft spine-tingling love songs, like "You've Got A Lover," "Deep In The West," and finally "Two Silver Hearts."

His voice is unique, gruff and yet strong and clear. And when he and Cooper harmonize, it comes out as one.

Russell's band was well-received — the crowd stomped, clapped, danced and sang along. And I found it awfully hard to keep my right foot still.

Russell said the band has a new album in mind, but is waiting to attract a larger label. He said they eventually plan to go national, but for now, they are content to play clubs and universities in the area. I, for one, hope they stick around here for awhile.



Battalion photo by Lee Roy Leschper Jr.

SHAKE RUSSELL

18 honored for preserving spirit of west

United Press International
OKLAHOMA CITY — Several Hollywood stars joined representatives of the Cowboy Hall of Fame to honor 18 individuals for their contributions toward preserving the spirit and color of America's western heritage.

Celebrities on hand for the annual Western Heritage awards dinner at the city's National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center Saturday included western film star Ben Johnson and Marty Robbins, who shared as masters of ceremonies.

Other entertainers present were Beau Bridges, Katherine Ross, Slim Pickens, Robert Conrad, Gene Autrey and Luciana Paluzzi.

Awards were passed out in several categories and four men were inducted into the Hall of Fame. J.B. Saunders and the late Chief Wasakie were inducted into the Hall of Fame of Great Westerners, while actors Gregory Peck and Hoot Gibson were inducted into the Hall of Fame of Great Western Performers.

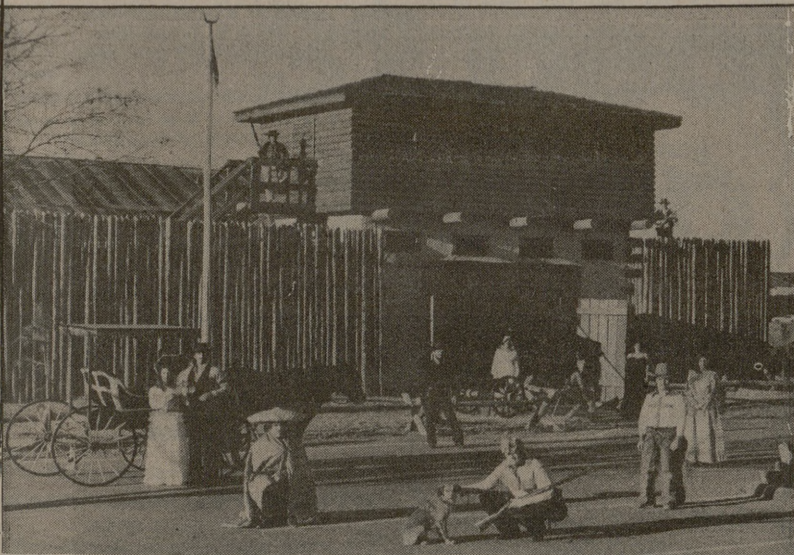


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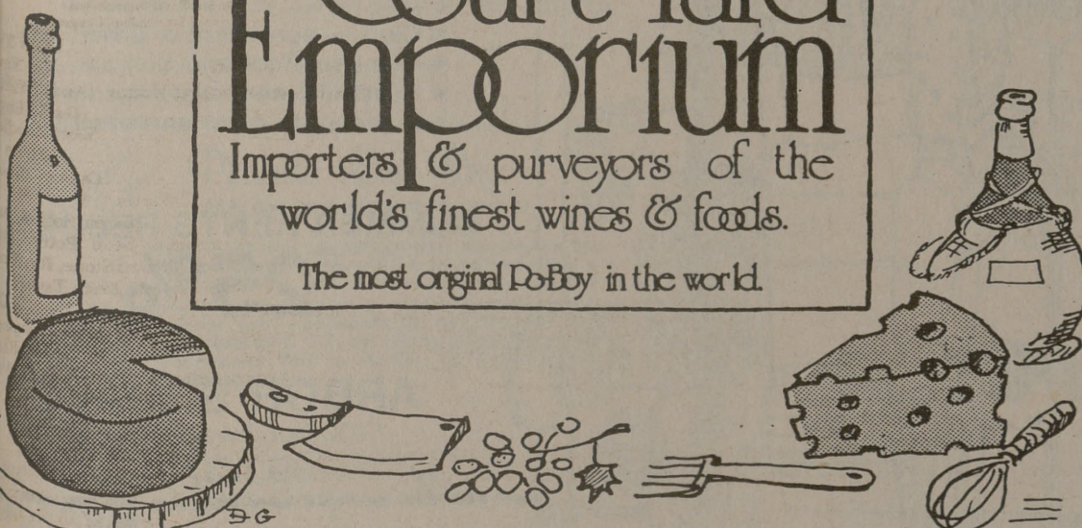
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