

Book review

Texas weather explained in a book

George W. Bomar

Texas Weather



By SALLY SCHWIERZKE
Reporter

George Bomar's Texas Weather has everything a weather watcher could want: anecdotes, folklore, precautions and some amazing pictures.

Bomar, a meteorologist with the Weather and Climate Section of the Texas Department of Water Resources, received his master's degree in meteorology from Texas A&M in 1975. He decided to write Texas Weather when he realized little information was available on Texas weather.

"Growing up in Texas, there really wasn't anything in the libraries about Texas weather," Bomar said, "and it is usually the first topic of conversation."

Bomar said he has been accumulating notes on Texas weather for as long as he can remember. Before he wrote his book, however, he spent about three months researching for additional information and statistics.

Bomar's book dispels many popular notions about Texas weather, but it also reinforces some. The last chapter, "Doing Something about the Weather,"

describes preparations and precautions that can be taken during severe weather.

Bomar bought many of the photographs for the book from federal agencies and amateur photographers. The graphs he did himself. The appendixes contain statistics and lists of extremes of Texas weather.

"Texas has seen colder winters in the past several years, but not for such a protracted period of time," Author George W. Bomar.

For example: the coldest weather recorded in Texas, minus 23, was on Feb. 12, 1899, in Tulia, Texas; the hottest day on record is 120 in Seymour, Texas, on Aug. 12, 1936.

Texas Weather is Bomar's first book, and right now he has no real plan to write another any time soon, although he has thought about expanding his last chapter into another book. Since the book was published

last summer, Texas Weather has provided new topics for discussion, such as record low cold and record high barometric pressures.

Other topics included in the book are: fronts, floods, hurricanes, thunderstorms, tornadoes, heat waves and drought, snow, cold and ice and wind. The appendixes include: temperature statistics, precipitation data, hurricane statistics, severe local storm data and weather extremes.

Bomar said this winter's cold weather is not unusual at all. Texas winters have been milder than usual for several decades and may only be returning to normal.

"We tend to have short memories about weather," Bomar said. "Texas has seen colder winters in the past several years, but not for such a protracted period of time."

The weather in Texas is not really that unusual, Bomar said. It is the size of the state that allows for such diverse weather patterns to occur simultaneously.

Music notes

By LOUIS HILGARTNER
Staff Columnist

One of the few hard and fast rules in the music business is: Music is a product of its environment and is constantly changing to fit that environment. The music in today's television soap operas is no exception.

Soap operas have evolved from their humble beginnings in the "Golden Age of Radio" to huge multi-million dollar extravaganzas. Today these "soaps" constitute the majority of programs seen on television. Gone is the melodramatic groan of the stereotypical soap opera organ (you know, the windy old pipe organ that went crazy every time John threatened to leave Marsha).

While checking out what kind of music today's soaps are playing, I was surprised.

Instead of non-descript organ music, I heard a kind of non-descript jazz.

It seems these programs have traded in their organs for one small band that plays on every show. The organ still is there, but now it's electric — after all, these are the '80s.

Naturally there are exceptions.

One of the most notable exceptions is *General Hospital*. This soap has produced more popular music than any other.

Rick Springfield probably is the most familiar actor/songwriter from this series. Springfield recorded a couple of albums and received some recognition for the effort (if you really need a laugh, go to the "male

vocalist" section of your favorite record store and find Rick's albums from five or six years ago when he looked like Keith Partridge), but it was his role as Dr. Noah Drake that brought him national attention.

Since he recorded his *Working Class Dog* album in 1981, Springfield has left the show for the more lucrative world of rock stardom.

A more recent hit from *General Hospital* is "Think of Laura." Recorded by Christopher Cross, this single has risen to the Top 40 in the past few weeks.

According to Soap Opera Digest magazine there is a good deal of controversy surrounding this song.

The magazine says the song was adopted by the show for the character Laura Spencer (played by Genie Francis), and was not specifically written for the show, as rumors have suggested.

The theme for the *Young and the Restless* was a big hit in 1976. That was the year a little 14-year-old Rumanian gymnast named Nadia Comaneci became a household word. The song was known as "Nadia's Theme" for years.

Another theme song that hit big was the theme from *Hill Street Blues*. For a while the show could do no wrong, and in late 1981 and early 1982 the theme song followed in the same footsteps. Its own popularity helped burn it out though, as radio stations from coast to coast played it into the ground.

The theme from the popular evening soap *Dallas* also is a hit. Even the Dallas Cowboys football team has been playing it during home games.

In recent years, soaps have gained a younger audience, causing the shows to change their situations and plots. This also has helped change soap opera music.

In settings where the mild-mannered young doctor sitting next to you is really a secret agent from the People's Republic of Mars, we hear the upbeat sounds of such bands as Men At Work, Culture Club and even Jeff Beck.

Not only are the background tunes changing, but actors and actresses are getting in on the act.

I saw an episode of the *Young and the Restless* and listened to some guy serenade his sweetheart as they danced the night away.

While this is all very romantic, it is another indication of an important change in soap opera's style and music.

CONCERTS:

Heaven ... Monday night ... at Cardi's in Houston. Riding on the success of their single "Rock School" from their album *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, this Australian heavy metal band is turning heads ... then knocking them off.

The Motels ... Sunday, Feb. 26 ... at Night Moves in Houston.

Jazz musician to play here

By REBECCA DiMEO
Reporter

MSC Town Hall is looking for a sellout crowd when it presents jazz artist Pat Metheny in concert Sunday night.

"There's a large underground jazz audience here," said Town Hall Chairman Karen Snow. She said ticket sales were going slowly at first, but as word of the concert spread among fans, things picked up.

Snow said posters placed in the shopping centers and outside Rudder Box Office, along with flyers distributed on campus, should bring out the "underground" audience.

Tickets for the concert in Rudder Auditorium are \$9, \$8.50 and \$7.50. They can be purchased at the MSC Box Office before the concert or at the door beginning at 7 p.m. Curtain time will be at 8 p.m.

After talking to the group's agent, Snow said she learned that the band will play a two and one half hour set without an intermission. No opening group will perform. Cameras without flashes will be allowed.

The audience can expect to hear cuts from any one of the nine Metheny LP's recorded in the past seven years.

Metheny's abilities as a guitarist, composer and guitar synthesizer have led him to a Grammy Award for his album *Offramp* in 1982.

The award highlighted his

career after two other Grammy nominations for *Offramp*, two Grammy nominations for *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*, and one Grammy nomination for *American Garage* album.

Metheny's latest album, *Travels*, was released in May 1983. It is his first live collection and features seven new numbers along with five Metheny group staples on a two-disc set.

"Until this record," Metheny says, "there's been no one single album that has a little bit of everything we do."

Metheny and four others make up the current Pat Metheny Group. Lyle Mays, keyboardist, is perhaps as well known as Metheny himself. The two collaborated on much of the group's early works.

Mays' credits include composing and orchestrating an album while at North Texas State University that became the first college band LP in history to be nominated for a Grammy Award. He received co-billing with Metheny on the album *As Falls Wichita, So Falls Wichita Falls*.

Aznar joined the group as a multi-instrumentalist after appearing on a dozen Argentine albums. Although primarily a percussionist and a vocalist, Aznar also plays bass, guitar and keyboards.