

Best Bets

It's THAT WEEKEND again. That's right, we get to go to Austin so we can get massacred. I hate to be pessimistic, but as a junior, just 36 hours from graduation, I figure it's time I faced reality.

But, hey, it might not be all that bad. Miracles do happen, and there's always 6th Street. A few hours there Saturday night should heal the bruised Aggie egos. Or at least numb them. Take my advice: if we lose (and I'm not saying we will, for sure), go to Jorge's, forget about what happened (if you know what I mean, and I think you do), and think about next year.

For anybody staying in town this weekend — like me — there will be ways to entertain yourselves. Aside from the obvious fun thing to do (reggae group Killer Bees is here, finally), you could always do something Christmas-y. Like go see the Nutcracker tonight at 7 p.m. It's being put on by the new Brazos Symphony Orchestra with the ballet being performed by some local classes. It ain't Barishnikov, but it's still the Nutcracker. It'll be in Rudder Auditorium — call 845-1234 for more info.

If you do want to do something Christmas-y but don't want to (or if you're like me, can't afford to) spend too much money to get into the holiday spirit, there's one last alternative. Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer will be on channel 3 Saturday night at 7 p.m.

As for stuff going on during dead week, the smart thing probably would be to hole up in the library for a few days, but Thursday night think about taking a break. Shake Russell's going to be in town. Russell, who does blues-y, folksy country-type music, probably won't be as good as he was when he and Dana Cooper were together, but he'll still be worth your time.

Le Cabaret

This jazz club offers live entertainment on weekends and occasionally during the week. For more information call 846-1427. Information on shows not available before press time.

Dr. G's

Located on College Main, this club offers a little bit of everything. Acts over the summer have included everything from reggae to punk to rockabilly to folk music and just about everything in between. The club sells beer and wine — no hard liquor — but does provide set-ups for those who bring their own bottles.

Most shows start around 9 p.m. For ticket and other information, call Dr. G's at 846-1812.

Here's this week's calendar:

Tonight — Dr. Rockit and the Sisters of Mercy. Rock 'n' roll.

Saturday — Killer Bees — reggae, from Houston.

Sunday — Open stage night — a kind of amateur night. If you'd like to perform call Dr. G's for more info.

Monday — Monday night football.

Tuesday — Video night. Something new — canned music with some kind of big screen TV set up.

Wednesday — Dance Attack, with Deanna as D.J.

Thursday — Shake Russell.

The Lakeview Club

Country/Western dance club that hosts live bands most of the time.

Saturday — Crossfire. For ticket information and reservations call 823-0660.

The Texas Hall of Fame

Country/Western dance club that hosts live bands most of the time.

The club is located on FM 2818 and shows start at 9 p.m. For more information call 822-2222.

Tonight — Texas Unlimited.

Saturday — Bubba Cox and the Easy Going.

Okay, road-trippers, here's the out-of-town stuff:

Houston:

Neil Diamond — Dec. 10 in the Summit.

For Summit ticket information, call (713)961-9003

Austin:

At the Erwin Center:

Neil Diamond — no date, information pending.

REO Speedwagon with Survivor and Zebra — Dec. 6.

Austin Christmas album full of cheer, surprises

By **ROBIN BLACK**

Staff Writer

When the plain, brown, 12-inch-square package landed on the At Ease desk Monday, I knew it was an album, but I thought "no big deal." We get records up here from time to time, most of them from some pretty obscure groups I've never heard of.

This time, however, I think I have discovered something truly neat. It's the "Austin Christmas Collection, Vol. 3."

It's good, and it's got a little bit of everything (not to mention the fact that it's home-grown).

You've got your traditional songs. You've got your new songs. You've got your songs with a rock 'n' roll flair and you've got your songs done country style.

All eleven songs on the album are performed by Texas artists, some solos and some groups.

The real standout on the album is a song by Ernie Sky and the K-Tels. "All I've Got for Christmas is the Blues," is a great song co-written by a couple of the band members. As much as I love good, sleazy blues and jazz, I never thought a Christmas song done in that style would sound quite right. This one does.

The song is faintly reminiscent of the Eagle's contribution to Christmas music, "Please Come Home for



Christmas," which came out a few years ago. I think that this one is much better.

The other original song on the album, "Mason Dixon's on the Line," played by Jerry Jeff Walker, isn't so hot.

This tune takes a stab at making a sad, sappy "let's get drunk" country song into a Christmas carol. It doesn't work. At all.

The rest of the songs on the album are all traditional (or at least oldies like "Silver Bells"), but most of them have a new twist.

Extreme Heat contributes a jazzed-up version of "I'll be Home for Christmas." The band, which has appeared here several times over the last few months, does a pretty good job (but it is different) with the oldie.

The best new approach on the Christmas album is done by

rock group 14K. This one is really good, but be ready because I promise you've never heard "Ring Christmas Bells" (also known as "Carol of the Bells") done quite like this.

It's got nice vocals — good harmonies — and a really good guitar solo right smack dab in the middle. No, I don't mean acoustic guitar, either. This is a guitar solo in the Eddie Van Halen electric guitar category.

There are two other traditional carols on the album that turned out well.

"The Lord of the Dance" by Arthur Brown and "Rise up Shepherds and Follow" by Lisa Rhodes are both excellent. The strong vocals in both songs are what set them apart.

And, the album wouldn't be complete without something from the red-haired stranger. Willie Nelson does a nice — but somewhat average — job of "Silent Night."

Other artists on the album include The Argyles, Bobby Bridger, Judy Price and Karen Kraft.

Although there are a few weak spots in the album, it is good. And it gives a new twist to some old Christmas songs.

This is the third year Felicity Records has put out the album featuring Texas — mostly Austin — musicians, and it looks like it's the best one so far. It was released Nov. 15 and is supposed to be available all over Texas.



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