

Texas Twisters aren't over the hill, just well seasoned

By Keith Spera
REVIEWER

The Texas Twisters know they are not the young musicians they once were, but it doesn't seem to bother them.

"We've been called 'the hardbodies of rock 'n' roll in Bryan-College Station,'" drummer Hank Allen joked after one of their recent shows.

What makes this comment less of a cocky musician's brag and more an instance of a band poking fun at itself is that the Texas Twisters own the dubious distinction of being the oldest rock 'n' roll band in the area, according to their own calculations.

Actually, they're not really over

the hill. Their average age is 34, so the rocking chairs of retirement are a long way away.

But in a town full of college-age musicians and bands, the Twisters do stand out, since they've been playing their instruments longer than many other local musicians have been alive.

In concert, their ages are not what the listener notices — instead, all those years of practice have led to tight reproductions of classic dance rock songs and an energetic show that fills a bar's dance floor.

"We basically have a format that we try to follow, and that's '50s, '60s, '70s, and early '80s dance songs, the easily identifiable stuff that everybody grew up with," guitarist Wade Myatt said.

Allen added, "We do play a few songs almost strictly for listening. We usually play them earlier in the night. They're more difficult to learn. We play them for our own satisfaction."

Because many of their gigs are in Bryan-College Station and many people come to more than one of their shows, the Twisters change their set list for each performance.

On any particular night, the dance songs can include "Hanky Panky," "Good Lovin'," "Mony Mony," "Johnny B. Goode," or ZZ Top's "Tube Snake Boogie."

The more listening-oriented songs, which give the three Twisters a chance to showcase their formidable musical talents, range from Jimi Hendrix's "Foxy Lady" to Eric Clapton's "Wonderful Tonight" through Led Zeppelin's "Dancin' Days" and "Livin' Lovin' Maid."

An original song, "Let's Get Twisted," a rollickingly danceable rock tune written by Myatt and his wife Yolanda, recently has been added to their set. Myatt said the band is re-hearsing another original, a slower song called "When I Think of You."

Those who attend the Texas Twisters shows are a diverse bunch. While college students are there in force, many members of the crowd are older.

"We have a lot of professional people — doctors, lawyers, CPAs, etc., that come out to see us," Allen said.

Illustrating their wide range of appeal are two of the Twisters' future bookings: they are scheduled to play a graduation party in May and a 20-year class reunion in August.

The members of the Texas Twisters are married, well established in the local community, and two of them are fathers.

Allen, 33, is establishing a ranch

outside of town.

Bassist Lee Martin, 39, when not being a musician, is a paramedic in Bryan. Band practices must be worked in around his 24 hours on, 48 hours off work schedule.

Myatt, 30, has a tendency to flick his tongue at the crowd when playing live and to venture onto the dance floor with his guitar to do a Chuck Berry duckwalk. He owns

and operates a custom auto trim business and is a full-time Texas A&M psychology student.

The band members come from diverse musical backgrounds.

"Wade's actually the hard-rocker, I'm more of a rock/blueser, and Lee is more of a country rocker," Allen said.

This diversity is reflected in the bands they played in before Decem-

ber of 1987, when the Texas Twisters was founded: the rockabilly band Four Hams on Rye, the rhythm and blues band High Chicago, and the hard rock band OZ.

None of the guitarists had been fired, but the explosion killed the senior. They discarded the debris left in the earlier rounds. The Navy ordered inquiry and placed firing 16-inch guns the Iowa and its ships, the New Jersey and the Missouri. The Iowa was home port at Norfolk, Virginia. The bodies of the dead military mortuary Force Base in Delaware of the battleship learned whether among the dead. At the White House Sununu announced Bush will attend Monday for the victim. The blast occurred morning northeast the Iowa took part that were part of a fleet and the ship both said the explosion could have red-hot debris from the three-gun turret. But Cmdr. Mat the Navy's Pentagon said later that no three guns had been fired as part of the war had been fired from the ward of the one the No eyewitness

Amateur musician likes idea of fame, image associated with being in band

By Thomas Boylan
ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

They can be found anywhere — amateur musicians who are not part of any formal organization, who do not play for money and who practice whenever they can find the time.

Gary Ash, a freshman business major, is an amateur guitar player. He said he likes "the idea of becoming famous within two years after teaching myself to play."

"More than that is just the idea of being in a band, just the term, 'being in a band,'" he said.

He and the informal group he plays with have never made a public show, keeping their musical talents confined to one of the group member's living room. They have not named their group yet, although they are considering several names. "We've narrowed it down to a few names," Ash said. "Let's see, there's Hack Lizard and the Pap Smears, Four White Boys, and Stand on One Leg and Go Like This."

The group plays a combination of progressive and classic rock, which they write themselves.

Ash is new to guitar playing. He began teaching himself last semester, but he has other musical experience. He played the trumpet throughout high school in an orchestra and symphonic band.

Ash switched to guitar because "it has an interesting sound," he said. "It's not something that you have to have a lot of people around you to play. Like, if you play a trumpet, you have to have a whole symphonic band around to play. With a guitar you can sit down and write a song any time you want to."

He says he enjoys sitting down and just playing. "I get lost," he said. "It will be 6 o'clock, and I'll pick up the guitar, and it will be 10 o'clock the next time I look at the clock."

The other members of the band include freshman Scott Guttormson, keyboards and guitar; freshman Paul Goulden, bass; and junior Ron Chapman, drummer.

Teachers

Not everyone wants to learn to play on their own, however, and teachers are available locally for students of almost any instrument. Sarah Watts of Bryan teaches piano and can start a student on voice, violin or viola. Most of her students are adults, she said.

Practice, the burgeoning musician's byword, is not something she likes to sit and work theory papers — he's going to make a great accountant someday. So I said, "Do you think you could help me set up a schedule for you? Could you see how that works?"

The result was a complete practice schedule, written by the young student and presented to Watts at the next lesson.



Battalion File Photo

The Texas Twisters. From left, Wade Myatt, Hank Allen, Lee Martin.



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By Kelly S. Bro
STAFF WRITER

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