

4 Memories of Vaughan's trips to B-CS linger

By JOHN RIGHTER

Legendary guitarist Stevie Ray Vaughan played Bryan-College Station several times in the late '70s and early '80s as an up-and-coming guitarist with the Cobras, Triple Threat and Double Trouble.

Vaughan, who died in a helicopter crash last Monday, began his music career by touring the Southwest, especially Texas, performing a semi-regular circuit of small music venues.

Due to Vaughan's very active touring schedule and his work in several bands (Vaughan was known to sit in on performances of other groups for a show or two), it's difficult to pinpoint the exact number of times Vaughan did play in B-CS.

Most likely, Vaughan performed four times in B-CS before his third band, Double Trouble, was signed by Epic Records in 1982.

Vaughan apparently performed here first in 1977 with Lou Ann Barton and the Cobras. According to former partners, Don Ganter and Don Anz, Vaughan and the Cobras played at the Dixie Chicken when the popular Northgate club was divided between the Chicken and Miranda's, a live music room.

In 1978, Ganter and Anz closed Miranda's, enlarging the Chicken. But, the year before, Vaughan performed twice at Miranda's, according to records and recollections of Ganter and Anz. Vaughan's first listing was with the Cobras in June of '77, and his second performance was with Double Trouble later in September.

The performance with Double Trouble is not believed to be the same lineup that Vaughan formed in 1981 with drummer Chris Layton and ex-Johnny Winter bass player Tommy Shannon.

Ganter and Anz remember the Vaughan shows as electrifying performances, even at a time when Vaughan was only beginning to attract attention.

"The joint was packed," recalls Ganter, owner of the Dixie Chicken. "You couldn't even move. Vaughan put on one hell of a show."

"It was probably one of the last times he played a little rinky-dink joint like (Miranda's). He was right at that pinnacle of stardom. You knew it just watching him."

Anz, owner of Cafe Excel and La Taqueria and Tortilla Factory, recalls, "You knew he was good, although the band he was with (either Cobras or Double Trouble) was also very good. At that



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"There was no doubt, though, that he was a great blues guitarist, and he proved it by being the first to really break through."

Interestingly (and maybe depressingly), the door covers at Vaughan's Miranda's performances were a mere two bucks.

Vaughan performed two years later at TJ's, a defunct bar located at 707 Texas Avenue (Hunan's, a Chinese restaurant, is now located there). Though, it is uncertain, Vaughan most likely performed with Triple Threat at this time.

Rusty Reid, a longtime B-CS resident and active music listener, remembers Vaughan's show.

"I actually knew who he was because I'd seen him a few weeks earlier in Fort Worth," Reid says. "There were maybe three or four people who came to that show. Stevie was really pissed that night. I guess he figured enough of this, 'cause he stopped after his third or fourth song."

"He didn't play long. He was livid. He suffered

the problem that groups here do today — nobody knew what a great musician he was yet."

Tommy Smith, a local musician and fan of Vaughan, also saw him perform at TJ's, and even loaned Vaughan his equipment for the show.

"He had a wreck on the way into town and he needed an amp for the show. I was at the club when they got there and started setting up. So I went over to him and offered him my amp for the show. He said, 'Sure I'd be glad to use it,' and offered me free cover for the show."

Vaughan also performed around this time at the Black Cat Saloon, a former bar at 819 S. Texas Ave. Again, it is believed that Vaughan played with Triple Threat, his band with Barton and Layton, though it is possible that he performed alone.

Brian Lippman, bass player for the Kerouacs and owner of Lippman Music, hopes Vaughan's death opens the eyes of music fans.

"Stevie was an incredible guitarist, an incredible guitarist," Lippman says, "but as unhappy I am to not have him here, I also realize that it shouldn't have taken his death to make people appreciate him like this."

"There are so many good musicians here and elsewhere busting their butt like Stevie to make it. Stevie exemplified the hard work necessary to be a great guitarist and a great musician. There are people here though that deserve to be supported and recognized for their hard work. If one positive thing comes from this tragedy, I hope it's that people realize what is available right in front of them."

Hugh Stearns, manager of the Front Porch Cafe and avid follower of Texan blues, agrees.

"Stevie's death is a tragedy, and he was a great guitarist, but I just hope that people keep his accomplishments in perspective. There are guitarists in Texas right now just as good, maybe even better than Vaughan, that have received minimal recognition."

Vaughan's death was a tragedy for the music world, and especially for Texas, the state Vaughan helped place on the music map. A two-time Grammy winner, Vaughan will be remembered not as a technically-proficient musician, but one who played from his soul. Those fortunate enough to have seen Vaughan perform live, agree few guitarists knew how to make a guitar cry like Stevie Ray.

Jawbreaker taps S.F. underground

By JOHN RIGHTER

Underneath the mousse, leather and makeup of Los Angeles' corporatized music industry lies the scar tissue of San Francisco, a haven for alternative eyes, ears and tongues.

San Francisco is the antithesis of L.A.'s grandstanding and "bandwagon" mentality. L.A. specializes in regurgitated glam groups in the vein of Poison, Ratt and Motley Crue. San Francisco digs deeper into the purgatorial underground, furnishing a nepotism for unknown experimental "sister" groups.

Without the benefit/detriment of major-label action (L.A. is the front porch for major-label packed Burbank and Hollywood), San Francisco has cultivated a slew of young, unknown thrash, rap and "noise" groups.

Jawbreaker, a proto post-hardcore band, blends the posi-preaching of the early '80's D.C. scene with a more modern noise appeal for its melodic barrage, *Unfun*.

Released on S.F.'s Shredder Records, guitarist and vocalist Blake Schwarzenbach, bassist Chris Bauermeister and drummer Adam Pfahler, wage verbal war on typical hardcore concerns such as Nazi skins, social ostracization and self-destruction.

The opening "Want," an infectious combination of catchy melodies and schizo-beat patterns, is typical of Jawbreaker's bridged education.

"Want" is high strung and aggressive in the traditional punk sense, but it also displays an admiration for catchy rhythms, staggered-beat patterns and harmonies.

"Been staring for a hundred hours," chokes Schwarzenbach, "run down a spiral drain, keep mouth clamped, and it isn't right. Three words keep running around my mind, but my tongue is hard to find."



"So now you know where I come from, my secret's come undone, my heart revealed my cause, I'm lying naked at your feet, don't crush the heart that bleeds."

Not the normal narcissistic punk bullshit, Jawbreaker is similar to other post-hardcore bands such as Dinasaur Jr., Sonic Youth and the Rollins Band, in recognizing the importance of human and spiritual contact.

Other stand-out tracks on *Unfun* include the anti-hate monger "See Thru Skin," the positive, open-handed "Busy" and the arsenic-

crushing "Wound," the album's fastest track.

On vocals, Schwarzenbach gurgles and gargles like an American Shane MacGowan of the Pogues. Schwarzenbach's gruff voice is strong on character and surprisingly able to carry through on the harmonies. More accurately, Schwarzenbach knows how to manipulate his throat, and the result is Jawbreaker's dreamy grunge.

Unfun is a raw, passionate album driven by youthful exuberance, the best fossil fuel possible. It's light years away from simple speed metal

or party-core punk, the direction of most thrash retreats.

The direction is still confusion, but the layered noise, punctuated by Bauermeister's heavy bass, fits Schwarzenbach's gruff chokes perfectly.

Obviously, Jawbreaker requires an indoctrination to underground music, especially punk or speed metal. When I first listened to *Unfun* I found it melodic and capable of crossing over to the musically liberal.

But, when I played it for friends, the usual cringing and calls of noise pollution began. So go figure.

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