

A&M readies for Twang

Twang's BOOM

By JOHN RIGHTER

Some bands are inseminated in the recording studio, born of gadgetry, gimmicks and tedious production. Others find life within the endless, often fruitless, cycle of club shows.

Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom, Texas' latest band craze, broke out a slightly different way — on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin.

Bypassing the logical, methodical route of lengthy practice sessions and small club prostitution, one year ago today Twang Twang simply packed it up, went to the campus' West Mall and started playing — acoustical and anything, fusing jazz, blues, reggae, funk and folk into its set.

The attracted listeners, including

students and professors, immediately bonded with guitarist David Garza, stand-up bassist Jeff Haley and percussionist Chris Searles' brash, spontaneous playing style.

Haley says the campus performance was a logical beginning.

"We're college age, so playing at college only made sense," Haley says. "There's a natural relation there."

The free outside performances also helped, Haley says.

"People who wouldn't have gone and paid to see us at first," Haley says, "got to hear us for free. They saw we were safe and liked it. We weren't a gamble."

Obviously not, since Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom (the name, penned by Searles, represents the sound of the group's three instru-



Poi Dog II? Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom brings its eclectic beat to Rudder Theater this Saturday night.

Battalion file photo

ments) has replaced Poi Dog Pondering as Texas' musical buzzword.

The most recent sign of the group's bullish success is a second pressing of their tape, *Me So Twangy*, a regional best seller with over 4,500 units sold. Other signs include performances with Red Hot Chili Peppers, Michelle Shocked and They Might Be Giants, as well as a standing ovation at this spring's South By Southwest festival.

Twang Twang's climb is currently teetering on several intense courtships with major labels. The relatively painless rise to their present height has been without the normal heartache and struggle en-

ured by every other new band.

Almost the moment the group declared themselves Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom these new kids (Haley is 20, Searles and Garza are 19) were a rage. In the competitive confines of band-stuffed Austin, their unprecedented rise is both marveled and scorned.

"There's a lot of resentment," Haley says in reference to what Garza has labeled "Austin backbiting." "I haven't figured out yet how to deal with it. I guess if I was in these other groups' shoes I might react the same way."

"It surprises David, cause he's from Dallas and the bands support

each other there. It really doesn't surprise me."

The group's success is actually not too difficult to understand. In an era of over-engineering, sound walls and onstage gimmicks, Twang Twang represents the antithesis of the musical fascimile. The average music fan, whether young or old, orthodox or revolutionary, can appreciate Twang Twang's honesty and originality.

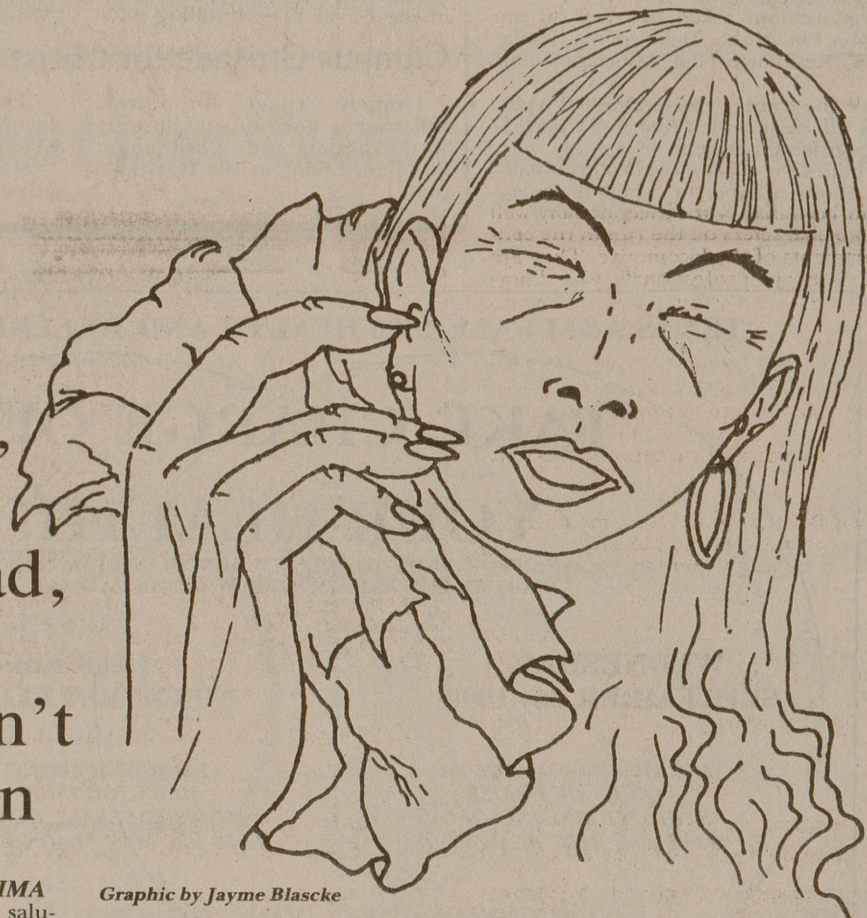
Buoyed by Garza's snappy songs that stir between social conscious and intelligent slapstick, Twang Twang's energetic format and warm audience rapport are the real secret behind its success.

Also, the band makes a genuine attempt to relate to its audience, which in the case of A&M means a trip to Kyle Field for Saturday's football game. For three ex-t-sips, the fan commitment.

Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom will perform Saturday night in Rudder Theatre 30 minutes after the football game. If you desire a Twang Twang taste test, the band will perform a quick stint Saturday in the MSC Flag Room between 2 and 4 p.m.

Tickets for the MSC Town Hall show are \$5 and are available at the MSC Box Office and at the door.

It's the sniffing, sneezing, coughing, aching, stuffy head, fever, so you can't rest season



Graphic by Jayme Blascke

By ERIKA GONZALEZ-LIMA

Do you have the "allergic salute"? You do if you rub an itching nose with the palm of your hand. It causes a crease mark on your nose and dark circles under your eyes.

About 50 million Americans suffer from at least one allergy, an immunological hypersensitivity to a substance. Exposure to allergens may occur through consumption, inhalation, injection or skin contact.

Allergies seem to run in families. A child with one allergic parent has a 30 percent risk of developing an allergy (although not necessarily toward the same allergen), while a child with two allergic parents runs a 60 to 70 percent risk.

Allergens exist in many forms: house dust, drugs, insect venoms, foods, plants (such as poison ivy) and a type of fungi known as molds. Their symptoms depend on which area of the body is affected.

In the skin, hives and eczema (dermatitis) appear. In the digestive system, abdominal pain, constipation, diarrhea and nausea appear. In the lungs, coughing and shortness of breath (allergic asthma) are common.

The most frequent type of allergy, affecting 25 million Americans, is hay fever. Hay fever, also called allergic rhinitis (from Greek meaning inflammation of the nose) can be produced by airborne irritants such as molds, pollen and dust.

Symptoms include sneezing, runny nose, swelling of the nasal passages, watering and itching eyes, itching nose and throat and inflammation of the membranes around the eyelids causing red-rimmed eyes.

Sometimes it's hard to tell

whether a person has a cold or hay fever. A cold or flu lasts about one week, while hay fever lasts as long as the allergen is present.

Testing for allergies involves injecting a small amount of a suspected allergen into the skin. If a rash or swelling occurs within minutes, an allergic reaction is diagnosed.

Another way of testing allergies is to have blood samples analyzed. This method is more costly and is recommended only for people with very sensitive skin.

Unfortunately, there is no cure for allergies. The best way to avoid allergies is to stay away from the offending allergen. When an allergen is identified as a food, drug or animal, this tactic works well. However, for those allergens difficult to avoid, like mild hay fever, over-the-counter medications, especially antihistamines and decongestants, may be helpful.

Antihistamines (Benadryl, Chlor-Trimeton, Allerest) block histamine, a chemical that is released during allergic reactions, but they may cause drowsiness.

Decongestants (Afrin, Neo-Synephrine 12 Hour) dry up secretions from sinuses and watery eyes, but they may cause irritability, elevated heart rate and hypertension.

Allergy shots are another weapon in the allergy war. Immunotherapy requires commitment from the patient to follow the physician's injection schedule and long-term treatment. According to the American Academy of Otolaryngologic Allergy, over 80 percent of the patients who receive

regular allergy shots experience significant improvement after four to six months of treatment.

Immunotherapy may be used under the following circumstances:

- When over-the-counter medicines do not adequately relieve symptoms;
- When the offending allergen is difficult to avoid;
- When allergic reactions occur throughout the year or last four to six weeks at a time;
- When allergies disrupt work or activities;
- When the allergy may be contributing to asthma or other chronic diseases.

Nurses in the Treatment Room of the A.P. Beutal Health Center administer allergy injections for students following specific instructions from the students' allergist. Injections are given Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Students are responsible for bringing the antigen and if they bring their own syringes, there is no charge. Allergy syringes (27 gauge, half-inch Tuberculin) can be purchased in local pharmacies without a prescription, and students can store their antigen and syringes in the Treatment Room. There is a charge of \$1 per injection when the syringe is not provided by the student.

For more information, contact the Treatment Room at the A.P. Beutal Health Center at 845-1567.

Erika Gonzalez-Lima is the Health Education Coordinator at the Texas A&M A.P. Beutal Health Center and a health columnist for *Lifestyles*.



Preston Reed

Battalion File Photo

Guitar virtuoso Preston Reed brings innovative style to B-CS

By JOHN RIGHTER

For music fans who may not be ready for "Twang Twang Shock-A-Boom," guitar virtuoso Preston Reed returns to Bryan-College Station Saturday night at the Front Porch Cafe.

Reed, who performed last fall at the Texas Star Tavern (renamed the Front Porch this spring), is an acknowledged leader of the fledgling fingerstyle for acoustic guitarists. Hailed by *Guitar Player* as a musician of "exceptionally fine...compositional diversity and...guitaristic brilliance..." Reed is acclaimed for his dexterous finger picks and innovative neck-slapping style.

In the past few years, Reed has started receiving the critical recognition he has long deserved. Unfortunately, in the vocal, group-oriented music industry, Reed's solo acoustic set has him at a major disadvantage.

Lack of notoriety, though, has not resulted in a lack of appeal. Playing in a number of smaller cities, and subsequently smaller venues, Reed has worked hard, not only amazing audiences with his six- and 12-string acoustical pieces, but also with his warm rapport that in-

cludes impromptu guitar lessons and standup comedy. (He used to do music relief in comedy clubs, including for Robin Williams and Billy Rafferty.)

In a review of his 1986 release, *The Road Less Traveled* (a road that Reed must know), music critic Clark M. Young named Reed "...my nomination for acerbic one-bull-goose-hero of the acoustic guitar...many people have heard of him because his style is between the cracks: He ain't New Age, he ain't folks, ain't jazz and he ain't rock. Well, then what is he? Very fast. More orchestral than Stanley Jordan. Leo Leo Kotke is probably the closest precedent, so let's call him neo-Leo and start a new genre just for Reed."

Certainly no classification is required to recommend this show.

Reed is a true guitar hero and an expert in the genre of guitar experimentation. Any guitarist who has been compared to Stanley Jordan, Pat Metheny or John Fahey deserves a checkout on those credentials alone.

Reed is scheduled to perform at the Front Porch p.m. For more information, call 846-LIVE.

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