exas rock 'n' roll band defies labels

Flaco does its own thing

By JOHN LEBAS THE BATTALION

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That do Star Trek, ZZ Top and Ronnie James Dio have in common? hey top El Flaco's list of peomeet and things to do. he members of the threece Austin band want to eo on Star Trek as Klingons. laco aims to open for the g-bearded fellows of ZZ Top dine with Dio. Eventually.

or now, says bassist Rob y, El Flaco will keep building n base in Texas until the record deal comes around. band, playing tonight at tigo, tries to visit as many

El Flaco is playing at Vertigo tonight

ege towns as possible bese the fans there are so loyal,

ysaid. That's why we like the small ege towns," he said. "If they it, they'll stick with you." nd what fans can expect to

is Texas rock 'n' roll, he said. We definitely consider our-es Texas rock," Gray said. "We and a 16 share, fo ock 'n' roll with our own peral style. Texas rock is different ere's less influence here from ls, and more individuality." Highs & Low El Flaco, like most Texas s, just does its own thing,

> of musical category. Alot of Texas bands don't fit where," he said. "I think it's whole influence of Texas

said. It doesn't fit into any

ay said Austin helped El get away from ripping off from the bands that influ-

hen you're starting, your inces drive you and you try to them," he said. "Once we

"We try to expand the parameters of ormal rock 'n' foll by doing what ve feel like

> Rob Gray El Flaco bassist

to Austin, we saw all these ell in our heads: We like our inences, but let's take what y've done and put our own



spin on it." El Flaco's classic rock influences, and influences like ZZ Top and Dio, all go into the mix.

Gray said fans seem to like El Flaco's brew. The shows are simple - no theatrics, he said and fun.

"From what people tell me, we all are having a good time, and that lets them have a good time," he said.

Gray said El Flaco is "easily accessible": Young and old listeners alike get into the groove.

And the band is now going all out to be even more accessible, he said. El Flaco has toured on the East Coast and throughout Texas in support of its self-produced album, Thub. But the

road to success can be long and a little bumpy, he said.
Gray and El Flaco drummer Brad Turner were in the Austin band Bouffant Jellyfish until it broke up in 1992. Still itching to bands around us and it rang play, Gray and Turner recruited guitarist Chris Hay and formed El a new CD release, he said.

Flaco later that year. But band members juggle Top will become a reality.

practice, touring and school. Turner recently went to chef school and Gray is currently working on his Ph.D. in psychology at the University of Texas.

"It's been hard, but time management has been the key," Gray said. "It's kind of interesting, because people have this stereotype of what musicians are supposed to be like. They think people in rock 'n' roll are all one way. I put [school and music] together, and it's hard for some people to understand."

But it doesn't really matter to El Flaco what others think, Gray said.

"We try to expand the parameters of normal rock 'n' roll by doing what we feel like doing,

Hopefully, this will continue to attract more of the record label attention the band is already getting, Gray said. It has about 15 new songs that are itching for

And then maybe meeting ZZ



Missile Command

► Former Gals Panic member in new band

By April Towery THE BATTALION

issile Command lead vocalist Jeremy Pollet thought he needed helicopters to get out of Lthe situation he was in this summer.

Stranded onstage at a club in Austin, Pollet discovered the other band members of Gals Panic had different plans for their future. After releasing the debut album *I Think We Need Helicopters*, performing in the movie The Underneath, and spending almost four years of musical coherence with Austin punk band Gals Panic, bassist Cardinal Connor and vocalist Lance Sever parted with the band in July.

"When we got off our last tour in July, Lance was offered an amazing job with an animation company," Pollet said. "He's a good cartoonist and has a degree in graphic design from the University of Texas,

Missle Command is playing

so he chose that career over a career in rock 'n' roll. The bass player had just gotten in a serious relationship with a girl, so he saw this as his opportunity to

Sever and Connor are currently playing shows around Austin with a band called The Playdoh Squad.

Pollet and Gals Panic drummer Dave Keel were not expecting the sudden breakup, but Pollet said that there are no hard feelings between the Gals Panic band members. Now they see it as a "blessing in disguise.

"Dave and I thought we were doing well and were excited about the music," Pollet said. "We want to be even better than Gals Panic. One thing that didn't make the transition so bad was that I had been managing the record label for Gals Panic, so I knew

how to do the managing work.' Keel and Pollet auditioned bassist Craig Shindig,

began writing new music and became the "power three-piece" Missile Command by late August. The band has played four shows in Austin and San Marcos and recorded the album Try Japanese Fast Food on Pollett's label, Pope Yes Records.

Pollet said the album will not surprise

Gals Panic fans.

"It's still bouncypunk music," he said. The vocals are a little gruffer and more half rapping."

Matt Applegath, a senior wildlife and fisheries science major, said he is a fan of the album I Think We Need Helicopters.

"I'm still a complete spaz ... If you're going melodic — people used to say Lance was believed to say Lance was got to give a performance."

Jeremy Pollet Missle Command singer

"I think they're just crazy," he said. "They really go nuts and are totally into the music. It's really fun music, and it does have some meaning.'

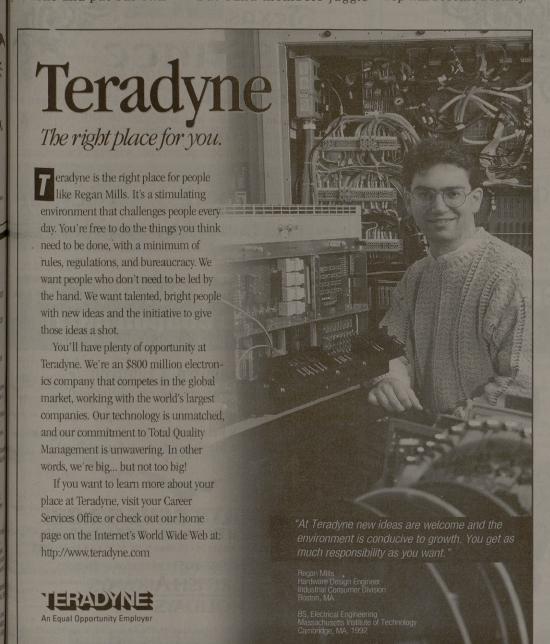
Pollet said it is necessary to put on a show for the audience. He said that when people pay to see a band, they are paying to be entertained as well.

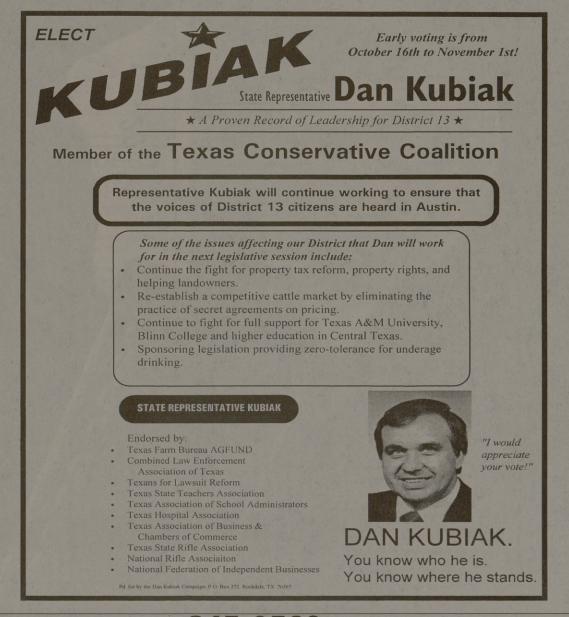
'I'm still a complete spaz," he said. "People will come up to me after a show and say, 'I can't believe you're so confident.' I'm so nervous when I'm up there, but when I get stage fright, I'm too nervous to stand still so I run around like an idiot. If you're going to get onstage, you've got to

give a performance. Now that Pollet has made the transition from guitarist to vocalist, he said he has observed a differ-

ence in space constraints onstage. "When I didn't have to have a microphone in

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