

Thanks for your interest in

Austin's Music Scene

Your Guide to the City's Most Iconic Artists and Venues

Highlights:

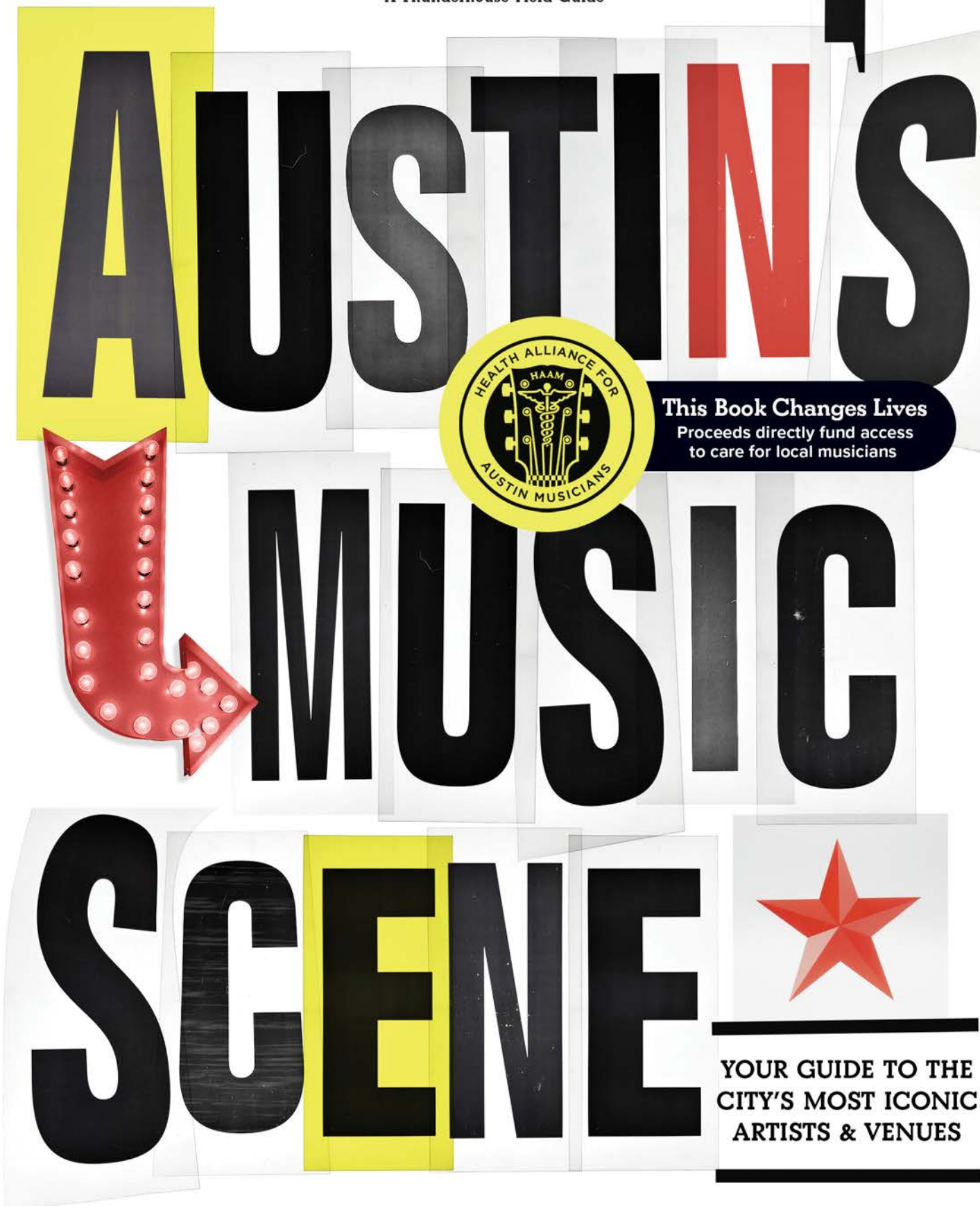
- First-of-its-kind field guide: this is the first book to chronicle the contemporary Austin music scene
- 160+ artist profiles across seven (7) genres: local legends and rising stars
- Iconic venues and hidden gems
- Festival listings and at-a-glance calendar
- Hand-drawn maps to guide planning your live music experience
- Digital bonus content and more
- Most important, half of all proceeds benefit the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM), directly funding care for working musicians across Central Texas.

This is a Partial Advance Review Copy to give you a sense of the book's structure, content and aesthetic. Given its unique design, this book is best experienced in print.

To request a review copy, please email media@thunderhouse.co Include your name, mailing address and credentials.

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A Thunderhouse Field Guide



Austin’s Music Scene:
Your Guide to the City’s Most Iconic Artists and Venues
First Edition

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NOTE: All information on artists, venues and festivals was accurate to the best of our ability at press time, but this is subject to change, as we know. Please check websites and/or local listings to verify current information before making plans.

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On Any Given Night

This isn't a history book. Nor is it a work of music criticism. It's a celebration of Austin's current music scene—the people, places and moments that give heft to the city's bold tagline, “Live Music Capital of the World.”

And there's no way any one book could give you the full picture. We've opted for a curated approach to this first edition. Hopefully we'll be forgiven for any sins of omission and be able to correct them going forward.

Our goal is not to be a compendium or encyclopedia but a guide written from the fan's perspective. I'm a fan. Have been since I first moved to town in 1987 to attend journalism school. I'll never forget seeing bands like The Wagoneers and The Reivers at the Texas Tavern. Poi Dog Pondering busking along The Drag. Michael E. Johnson and the Killer Bees at Liberty Lunch. Back then, it was easy to see a taping of “Austin City Limits,” the seminal PBS show that helped define the scene and put Austin on the global map. Class was just steps away from Studio 6A at the University of Texas' College of Communication.

“Austin music is not a sound. It's a scene,” quipped Sammy Allred of the Geezinslaw Brothers, who gained notoriety in the 1960s for poking fun at country hits. The late Michael Corcoran rightly cribbed this idea for the title of his excellent survey of the scene's first 100 years (for more on this and other must-reads, see the suggestions in our “Visitor's Guide” section). Perhaps this guide can be a sort-of companion to Corcoran's work, for one of the best ways to honor the past is focusing on the present.

To bring these pages to life, we conducted dozens of interviews with artists, venue owners and festival organizers. We thank them deeply for their time and generosity. A common theme emerged during these chats. We're standing on broad shoulders. Kris Kimura nods to Tony Campise. Sue Foley to Albert Collins. Ellis Bullard to outlaws like Willie Nelson. The same holds true for venues and festivals. There would be no White Horse without the Split Rail Inn. No Austin City Limits Music Festival without the barn dances, picnics and Sunday Break concerts of the 1970s.

And here's a secret. There is no Austin music scene today. Not one scene, anyway. It's multiplied. The truth is, scenes are personal. My scene is not your scene. Those

**Here's a secret.
There is no Austin music scene today.
Not one scene, anyway.
The truth is, scenes are personal.
My scene is not your scene.**

die-hards who never miss a Heybale show at the Continental Club may never see a punk band at Hotel Vegas or groove to Africa Night at the Sahara Lounge.

One of the great joys of this project has been taking the pulse of artists working across all genres and trying to capture a certain balance. Austin has always been weighted heavily toward country, rock and blues, but there are equally important talents in other areas such as hip-hop, jazz, Latin, world and electronic.

Another reality the interviews underscored: Genres are for marketers. Creators don't want to be constrained. Indeed, many could fall into multiple categories. But fans need some way to organize their record collections, so we use genres here not as absolute markers, but simply to nudge our discovery.

We begin, then, with an appreciation of “Austin City Limits.” We follow with a section dedicated to the artists in seven genres who are working hard to make the current scene theirs. We profile venues across Austin and in the greater area, what we call “destination venues,” those worthy of a day trip. After a look at festivals, we give you tips for better exploring this ever-changing scene. Here we nod to The Austin Chronicle for its steadfast coverage and the many producers, bookers, podcasters and DJs keeping tabs on the wellspring of emerging talent. And we spotlight the many nonprofits—like HAAM—working to sustain Austin's music community and how you might consider amplifying their impact.

Since the 1970s, Austin's population has doubled every 20 years or so, and its cheap cost of living ballooned to one of the most expensive for a large U.S. city. The

T-shirts and bumper stickers pleading “Don't Move Here” and “Keep Austin Weird” seem more like trite souvenirs than robust advocacy campaigns. Yet the majority of folks we talked to said they're not opposed to change. They're just not sure how to survive, especially given the lack of affordable housing. The Greater Austin Music Census (2022) found that 84% of performers, songwriters and producers said they'd stay in music over the coming years. But when asked if they planned to stay in Austin, that number fell to 64%. Many of the artists we met now live farther afield—in towns like Cedar Park, Buda, San Marcos and Lockhart.

Post-pandemic, the scene has faced other strains. Shifts in behavior (less drinking, less going out, more streaming). Shifts in policy (higher property taxes, more metered parking replacing free spots). Not to mention the constant threat of development. And good lord the traffic. Still, after rush hour, Austin is fairly easy to navigate. And on any given night, fans can find dozens of affordable shows at more than 200 venues. Which is simply unmatched anywhere else in the world.

Whether you're a local who's been on the scene for decades or a first-time visitor planning your trip, this book is for you. Because you make it possible—showing up on a school night, buying merch, putting a ten-spot in the tip jar, telling a friend. You make it yours, and that's what makes it so powerful.

Thanks for supporting the most vibrant music scene in the United States.

Mitch Baranowski
Editor-in-Chief

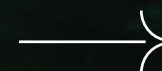


part 1

ARTISTS

Mic check, one two.

Austin's music scene is powered by the artists who call this city home. Living legends, established acts and up-and-comers share more than stages across town. They share a passion that drives the music community to collaborate, innovate and advocate for one another. What you play matters less than your drive, spirit, creativity, your voice. In the pages that follow you'll meet a cross-section of artists from every corner of the local scene. The good problem is this—there's too much talent in this town. Let the journey begin.



COUNTRY^{AND} AMERICANA

FEATURING:

Asleep at the Wheel
The Band of Heathens
Ellis Bullard
Hayes Carll
Melissa Carper
Chaparelle
Rosie Flores
Guy Forsyth
Emily Gimble
Patty Griffin
Weldon Henson
Warren Hood
Erin Ivey
James McMurtry

Lukas Nelson
Next of Kin
Gary P. Nunn
Jake Penrod
David Ramirez
Bruce Robison
Carrie Rodriguez
Bob Schneider
Shinyribs
Silverada
Shane Smith & The Saints
Monte Warden
Dale Watson
Walt Wilkins
Kelly Willis

Twang on. If Nashville is known for polishing country songs to radio-ready perfection, Austin's approach has remained gloriously unvarnished, prizing authenticity over airplay, storytelling over sales.

These values were always there, of course, in dance halls and honky-tonks across the state. But they really took hold in Austin during the Cosmic Country movement of the early 1970s, when artists like Jerry Jeff Walker, Michael Martin Murphey and Doug Sahm proved that country music could embrace everything from conjunto and blues to psychedelic rock. Sahm's rollicking gumbo became a blueprint for the city's boundary-pushing ethos.

But it was Willie Nelson's triumphant return to Texas in 1972 that truly established Austin as country music's creative sanctuary. When Willie fled Nashville's constraints, he didn't just change his address—he changed the arc of American country music. His rebellious spirit was echoed by many—Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark and Lucinda Williams, to name a few. They helped establish Austin as a place where country music could be smart, literary, even experimental, and unflinchingly honest.

This section isn't just about country, of course. It uses Americana to hold space for a cadre of Austin artists drawn to various roots music styles, just like Doug Sahm was doing long before Americana became a term. That's why you'll find the diversity here runs deep. From neo-traditionalists like Dale Watson, Jake Penrod and Melissa Carper to masters of songcraft like James McMurtry, Hayes Carll and Erin Ivey. From icons like Asleep at the Wheel and Patty Griffin to up-and-comers like Chaparelle and Next of Kin. One thing hasn't changed. These artists aren't giving up their outsider edge to win the approval of a focus group. Life is messy and they write about it, not about white picket fences but addiction, joblessness, political disenchantment, divorce, mortality—which is how we fans want it.

Write from the heart. Ignore the rules. And never let a suit tell you how your song should sound. Because you can't auto-tune honesty and you should never even try.



HAYES CARLL

A BARD OF THE BARROOM WHO WILL MAKE YOU
LAUGH BEFORE HE MAKES YOU CRY

Before Grammy-nominated Hayes Carll became linked to Austin's songwriter tradition, he tried selling vacuum cleaners door to door while searching for gigs at night. Two decades later, he is one of the city's most honest voices, balancing humor with heartbreak. Back on the scene after six years in Nashville, we caught up with him about his latest album, *We're Only Human*, and what keeps drawing him back.



Influences:

Kris Kristofferson,
John Prine,
Tom Waits,
Bob Dylan,
Randy Travis

Popular Tracks:

"We're Only Human"
"KMGAM YOYO"
"Drunken Poet's Dream"

Tell us about your latest album's key tracks. The title track, "We're Only Human," is about having grace for ourselves first, and then hopefully that allows us to have it for others. I find that I'm a lot happier with myself when I'm curious rather than judgmental. There's no guidebook for how to do life. We're all just trying to figure it out. This is just a reminder that we're all struggling with stuff, and having some grace for that is important.

"Stay Here a While" is about finding stillness and peace. My brain is so active and I'm living in my own head, disconnected and chasing dopamine addictions. When I'm not present, I have the tendency to just spin out. That song is a reminder that the entertainment and enrichment and connection and joy that I need is within.

You're known for using humor to tackle serious subjects. How did that develop?
I like humor and I'm a bit of a ham. I like being able

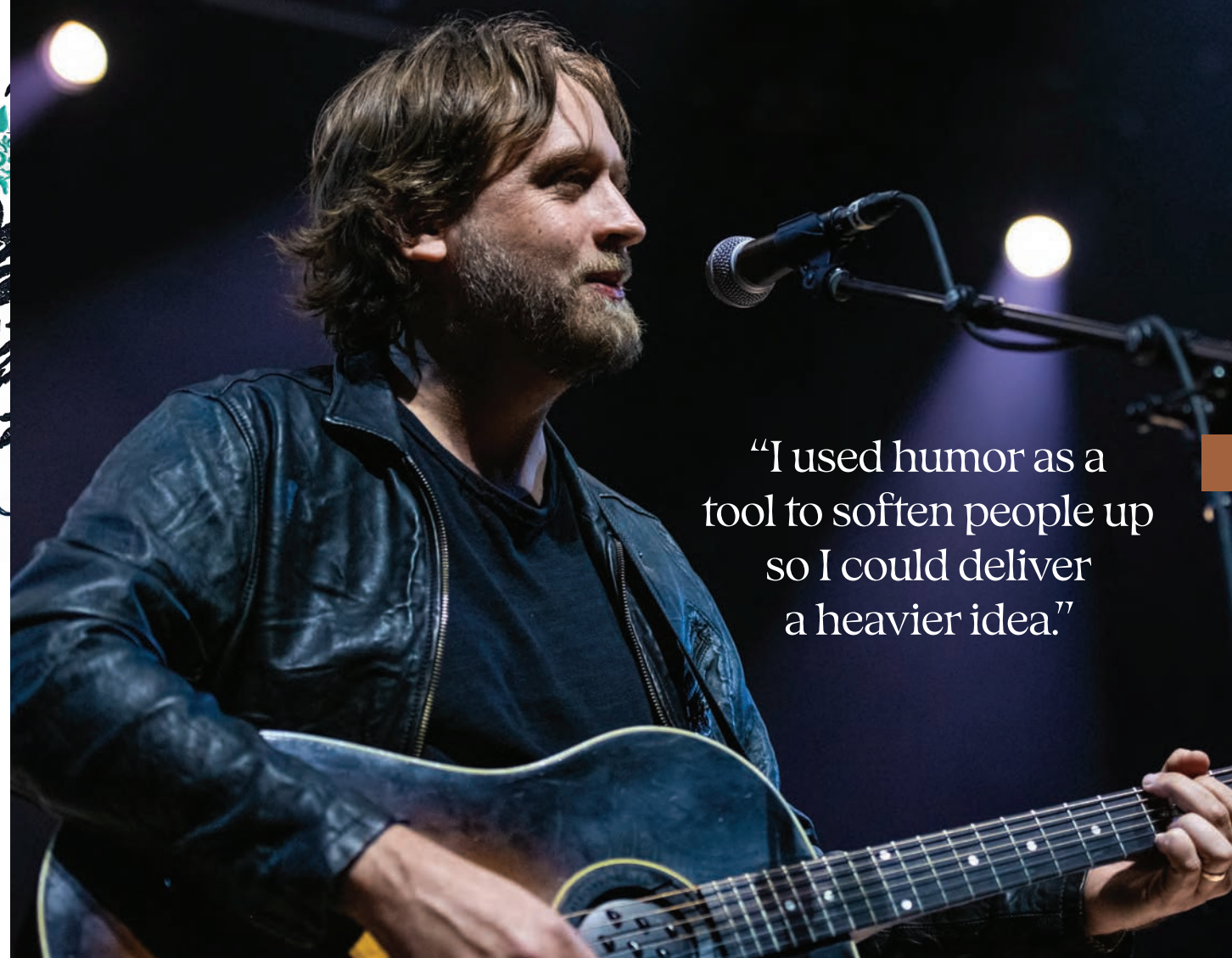
to make people laugh, whether it's through a story or through a contradiction in a song. But early on, I didn't have the confidence to put out something that felt serious. So I used humor as a tool to soften people up so I could deliver a heavier idea. But it also was insecurity—"Let me make them laugh and get people to like me so I won't be judged." My worst fear was putting out any pretentious stuff.

Tell us about your Austin journey.

I'd never lived in a town that had music. I grew up in The Woodlands, a suburb of Houston, then went to school in Arkansas in a dry county, then moved to the Bolivar Peninsula, this remote beach town. So Austin was always the mecca. That's where everybody ended up. I tried in 2000, before I'd even put a record out. It didn't go well—I was sleeping on a buddy's couch, selling vacuum cleaners and had no gigs. I felt lost in a big sea of people. So I went back to the beach, built up a career, put out a couple records, then moved back [to Austin] in 2005. Then I had people I knew, could get work, and had access to this community I desperately wanted to be part of.

What venues were crucial to your development?

I got a call Bob Schneider was on tour and needed somebody to fill in a couple of his Monday nights at the Saxon Pub. I drove five and a half hours from Bolivar to



"I used humor as a tool to soften people up so I could deliver a heavier idea."

play for 10 people. But it was like I had arrived at the big time. Later I had a series called "Enough Rope" where we'd live stream from the Saxon with guests like Charlie Sexton, John Doe, Bruce Robison and Ray Wylie Hubbard. It was this cool opportunity to talk to people I admired and play music with them.

The Saxon is still where I go when I'm in town because there's going to be three or four bands a night. That's remarkable—you can just walk into a place and there's going to be music there. So much of it's just being where my heroes have been. That realization of "I'm on the stage now where these people stood"—that is very validating and exciting.

Why is supporting HAAM important to you?

I couldn't pay for my own healthcare, let alone my band and crew. I was fortunate my wife at the time was a school teacher, and that's how we got health insurance.

Otherwise, I would have had nothing. I was on the road 250 nights a year and it's dangerous, unhealthy, not sustainable. There's not a 401(k) in this. There's not a retirement plan or pension or healthcare. We're just out there grinding and hoping something doesn't go wrong.

I've had bandmates who were beneficiaries of HAAM. So the idea of some kind of safety net, especially a community-driven one supporting the music scene, which is such an integral part of Austin's identity, economy and culture, that all aligned with me.

I travel all over the world and there is no town like Austin. There is no music scene like Austin's. There's no collection of clubs and radio stations and community like Austin's. And there are no organizations that take care of that community quite like HAAM. I just think it's really unique and special what they've been able to turn it into and the effect they have on people's lives. —

BLUES AND SOUL

FEATURING:

Marcia Ball
Lou Ann Barton
Black Pumas
Gary Clark Jr.
Sue Foley
Ruthie Foster
David Grissom
Taméca Jones
Kalu & The Electric Joint
Mélat
Eve Monsees
The Peterson Brothers
Charlie Sexton
Sir Woman
Soul Man Sam
Jimmie Vaughan
Jackie Venson
Carolyn Wonderland



Damn right Austin has the blues. But this isn't Mississippi's Delta lament or Chicago's industrial growl. Austin's interpretation of the blues has always been something else—a restless, genre-bending creature that refuses to be contained by tradition, even though it will sometimes nod to it.

The story begins, as so many Austin music stories do, with an obsessive visionary. In 1975, Clifford Antone had a dream as audacious as it was simple: Create a space where the greatest blues musicians on earth would want to play. His club on Sixth Street became more than a venue—it was a conservatory, revival tent and laboratory all rolled into one. Antone didn't just book legends; he cultivated them, bringing Muddy Waters, B.B. King and Albert King to share stages with hungry young players like Sue Foley and the Vaughan brothers (Stevie Ray and Jimmie), who devoured licks for supper.

But long before Antone brought the blues to downtown, there was W.C. Clark, known as the “Godfather of Austin Blues,” who worked the Victory Grill and other clubs across Interstate 35 on the East Side, in the African-American neighborhood that has seen rapid gentrification in recent years. Clark, a patient mentor to the likes of Charlie and Will Sexton and the Vaughan boys, promoted mixing things up, helping to create the spirit that defines Austin blues more than any single style or sound. It's blues that flirts with funk, soul that embraces psychedelia, R&B that isn't afraid to get a little weird.

You hear it when Gary Clark Jr. channels Jimi Hendrix and Howlin' Wolf through his own modern lens. The way Jackie Venson makes her guitar crackle. How Taméca Jones stirs the rafters. Artists like Kalu & The Electric Joint, Sir Woman and Black Pumas—whose slinky brand of psychedelic soul has earned them Grammy nominations and global acclaim—continue to push the form into uncharted territory.

What unites these and the other voices profiled here isn't adherence to any one influence or template, but rather a shared understanding that the blues, at its core, is about telling the truth, in all its joy or pain, whatever form that requires.

GARY CLARK JR.

THIS STYLISH AMBASSADOR CARRIES
THE BLUES INTO TOMORROW

ONE SECOND IT'S PURE FUZZ. The next it's a squeal. The guitar cutting through the midnight air at Antone's Nightclub isn't just another blues riff—it's the sound of Gary Clark Jr. wielding his six-string like a talisman, creating sounds that magically blur the lines between past and future. In a city where guitar heroes are as common as breakfast tacos, Clark stands as one of Austin's most electrifying ambassadors, a Grammy-winning virtuoso who's carried the torch from Stevie Ray Vaughan straight into the 21st century.

His story? Clark was a 13-year-old kid with an Ibanez RX20 Christmas gift, grinding through gigs on East Sixth Street before he could legally drive. By 15, he'd caught the attention of legendary promoter Clifford Antone, who recognized something special in the teenager's ability to channel decades of blues tradition through a distinctly modern lens. That early mentorship at Antone's shaped not just Clark's career, but his understanding of music as a living, breathing conversation between generations.

Sure, he has flash. And flair. But what makes Clark essential to Austin's scene isn't just his technical prowess—though his ability to make a guitar sing, scream and weep is undeniable. It's his refusal to be boxed in by any expectation. His 2024 album *JPEG RAW* showcases



Influences:

Stevie Ray and Jimmie Vaughan,
Jimi Hendrix, Prince,
Muddy Waters, Albert King

Popular Tracks:

"Bright Lights"
"When My Train Pulls In"
"This Land"

Fun Fact:

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson
proclaimed May 3, 2001, as
"Gary Clark Jr. Day" when Clark
was just 17 years old.

this perfectly, weaving traditional African rhythms, hip-hop beats and psychedelic rock into a cohesive statement that could only come from someone deeply rooted in Austin's anything-goes musical philosophy. Collaborations with icons like Stevie Wonder and George Clinton only reinforce his ability to hang with legends while honing brave new material.

Live, Clark transforms venues into electric churches. Whether he's unleashing the fuzz-driven fury of "Bright Lights" or stretching "When My Train Pulls In" into a 10-minute guitar odyssey, his performances are master classes in dynamics and restraint. His "Austin City Limits"

season 50 taping reminded local audiences why he remains the city's premier guitar ambassador.

Now a part-owner of Antone's, Clark is helping ensure the venue that launched his career continues nurturing future talent with an expansive point of view about what the blues is or, more accurately, what it can be. "Blues will always be my foundation," he told the Nashville Scene recently. "But that's just scratching the surface." Indeed, given all his interests and creative impulses, given his ability to pull from and incorporate so many wide-ranging influences, Clark isn't just carrying Austin's musical torch, he's lighting up a whole new path that's defying genres at every step.



ROCK

FEATURING:

...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead	Me Nd Adam
Being Dead	Mobley
Big Bill	Moving Panoramas
The Black Angels	The Oxys
The Bright Light Social Hour	Porcelain
DAIISTAR	Pussy Gillette
Die Spitz	Rickshaw Billie's Burger Patrol
Alejandro Escovedo	Ringo Deathstarr
Farmer's Wife	Sailor Poon
Fastball	Shakey Graves
Font	Spoon
S.L. Houser	Tear Dungeon
The Jesus Lizard	The Sword
Ben Kweller	Tele Novella
Madam Radar	Think No Think
Magic Rockers of Texas	Urban Heat
Mamahawk	Erika Wennerstrom
	White Denim



Picture this—A young Roky Erickson, barefoot and wild-eyed, steps up to the microphone at a 1966 house party somewhere near campus while Tommy Hall brandishes an electric jug. Yes, jug.

The resulting sound—otherworldly, tilted, impossible—didn't just birth psychedelic rock; it established a manifesto of sorts for Austin rockers. If it sounds too strange for anywhere else, it's probably perfect here. Six decades later, the same beautiful chaos embodied by Erickson and his 13th Floor Elevators resounds across Austin.

In the 1990s, the Red River District became ground zero for a punk explosion that rivaled any coastal scene. Venues like Emo's, Room 710 and Red Eyed Fly fostered a community where aggression and artistry hooked up in the wee hours. Bands like The Dicks and Scratch Acid and later acts like ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead emerged from sweaty clubs where artist and audience ignored boundaries (what stage?) and thrashed together, as one unit. This wasn't punk as a safety-pinned fashion statement—it was punk as cathartic primal scream.

Bridging these eras is Alejandro Escovedo, a punk veteran whose song-writing has matured alongside the city itself, proving that Austin rewards both evolution and authenticity. What makes today's alternative scene so compelling is its hard-to-fathom range. The meticulous infectious indie pop of Spoon. The shape-shifting of White Denim. The wavy intensity of Urban Heat. The genre-bending beats of DAIISTAR. The playful irreverence of Sailor Poon. The high-low heartbeat of Ringo Deathstarr. The art-school inflections of Big Bill. And the compelling psych-rock of The Black Angels, connecting past to future.

Look at the artists in this section and you'll see the scene here doesn't just welcome creative misfits. It's built by them. A genuine refuge for artists and fans who understand that the most interesting music emerges from collisions in the shadows. Erickson is still here in spirit, whispering: Take risks, embrace the strange and never let money corrupt your soul.

ALEJANDRO ESCOVEDO

AUSTIN'S ETERNAL OUTSIDER KEEPS PUSHING BOUNDARIES

Alejandro Escovedo has witnessed Austin's transformation from scrappy music town to corporate playground. The 74-year-old rocker arrived in 1980 to form punk band Rank and File, drawn by a scene where rent was cheap and artists from all walks shared the same stage. From battling racism to watching beloved venues close, Escovedo has always navigated the city's evolution with unflinching honesty. His recent album *Echo Dancing* (2024) reimagines his vast catalog through bold new arrangements, proving that he's still pushing boundaries in a town that sometimes values nostalgia too much over innovation.



Influences:

David Bowie, T. Rex, Lou Reed, Roxy Music, Brian Eno, Cluster

Essential Tracks:

"Bury Me"

"Castañuelas"

"Wave"

"Sacramento & Polk"

What's Next:

Currently working on a memoir and a new album with Britt Daniel and Charlie Sexton producing.

There was Barton Springs, great Mexican food, cold beer. It was pretty ideal. Most bands from Austin didn't really want to tour. Why would you?

Are there better music scenes now?

Absolutely. Denton has the coolest music scene in Texas, if not the whole continental United States. Look at the great bands that have come out of there—Midlake, Slobberbone. We beat our chest with bravado about how great our music scene is, yet the city didn't value it the way it should have. When politicians started allowing places like Liberty Lunch to be closed down and torn away, something was very wrong.

When you arrived in Austin in 1980, what was the scene like?

It was amazing. You had the tail end of the progressive country thing—Townes Van Zandt, Guy Clark, Butch Hancock, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Joe Ely. And Nanci Griffith, Lucinda Williams, Angela Strehli. In the punk scene, you had The Dicks, the Big Boys. The cool part was that everybody played together. You might see a bill with The LeRoi Brothers, Bill Neely who sang like Jimmy Rogers, Rank and File, and The Dicks, all on one bill for maybe \$5 at the door.

What made Austin special then?

I traveled all over the world—there was nothing like Austin, where the community and the artists were really one. They supported each other. Rent was inexpensive. It was a pleasurable place to live. When the students left in the summer, the bands had the town to themselves.

You've been open about racism in the music industry.

When you're born a certain color or come from a certain culture, you're tagged as a target. I've had frat boys ask me to pour them beer—they thought I was part of the concession stand where I was playing that night. I've been refused entrance into clubs because they thought I worked in the kitchen. Radio promoters would say things like, "We already have one Mexican band [referring to Los Lobos], we don't need another."

What advice would you give young musicians?

First, don't have any expectations. Come with a clear heart and open eyes. It's not that easy. There are a lot of great young musicians struggling for the same gigs. Only pursue music if you totally love it and it makes you feel good. If you can use it to help spread love and good vibes in the world, it's the greatest medicine of all. —

"Only pursue music if you totally love it and it makes you feel good."

Farmer's Wife

FORMERLY KNOWN AS SLUDGE, Farmer's Wife has carved out a dreamlike niche with what they call "bubble grunge"—a beguiling blend of Southern gothic elements and '90s dirge rock. Led by Molly Masson's haunting vocals and the dual guitars of Jude Hill and Derek Ivy, alongside bassist Jacob Masson and drummer Jaelyn Valero, the band has grown from backyard shows to festival stages, fueled by their breakthrough single "Greg Abbott's Maxi Pad" (over 1 million streams on Spotify) and winning Best New Act at the Austin Music Awards in 2024. Their latest EP *Faint Illusions* (2025) delivers five twisted lullabies where dream-pop beauty collides with brooding unease.



Fastball

FORMED IN 1994, Tony Scalzo, Miles Zuniga and Joey Shuffield transformed from local grinders—Scalzo worked nights at the Bagel Manufactory—into platinum-selling rockers with 1998's *All the Pain Money Can Buy* and the haunting hit "The Way." Three decades later, they've garnered two Grammy nominations, toured extensively and evolved into a real legacy act with live shows that delve into their extensive catalog. And yet they're still pushing creative boundaries. The Austin Chronicle called *Sonic Ranch* (2024) their "most cohesive and musically mature album to date."



Font

WHEN FONT PLAYED AUSTIN CITY LIMITS MUSIC FESTIVAL in 2023, they had released virtually no recordings and had a near-zero social media presence. Yet they were driving word of mouth thanks to a mind-melting stage presence. It served them well. Driven to experiment, the post-punk outfit—Jack Owens, Anthony Lawrence, Thom Waddill, Roman Parnell and Jacob Silvia—used local shows to refine their unreleased tracks before debuting *Strange Burden* in 2024. Standout tracks include the evocative "Hey Kekulé," which pulses with cowbell-driven urgency, and the darker but engrossing "Natalie's Song."



The 13th Floor Elevators: You're Gonna Miss Me



There's a moment in "You're Gonna Miss Me" when Roky Erickson howls as if to split the difference between ecstasy and madness, a howl that still haunts six decades later.

Born Roger Kynard Erickson in Dallas in 1947, he was raised mostly in Austin. His mother, an opera singer, gave him piano lessons from age 4 and taught him guitar. But when rock and roll hit Austin's airwaves, young Roky would sit at the family piano, intent on recreating Bo Diddley, Buddy Holly, even Little Richard's signature wail.

In 1965, Erickson formed The Spades, delivering straightforward garage rock until he met philosophy student Tommy Hall. Hall had big ideas about expanding consciousness through sound, particularly with his electric jug's cosmic droning. Together they founded The 13th Floor Elevators and re-recorded The Spades' "You're Gonna Miss Me," with Hall's hypnotic jug behind Erickson's unhinged vocals. It would climb to No. 55 on the Billboard chart and take them to Dick Clark's "American Bandstand" in 1966, followed soon by their debut album, *The Psychedelic Sounds of The 13th Floor Elevators*, one of the first widely recognized acid rock records.

Known for their intense live performances and advocacy for LSD, the Elevators earned

a reputation as *the* psychedelic act of the '60s. But the journey came at a devastating cost. In 1969, facing marijuana possession charges that could have meant years in prison, Erickson instead pleaded insanity and was confined to Rusk State Hospital for three horrific years. The experience shattered his career, leading to decades of homelessness and paranoid isolation punctuated by cult-status recordings like "I Walked with a Zombie" that hinted at his genius.

It wasn't until his brother, Sumner, gained guardianship in 2001 that Erickson began to stabilize. In 2005, the documentary "You're Gonna Miss Me" premiered at SXSW. Later that year, Erickson performed at ACL Fest, starting a creative resurgence that would lead to *True Love Cast Out All Evil* (2010), produced by Will Sheff, and a miraculous 2015 Levitation reunion—the band's first performance in 45 years. His death in 2019 marked the end of his prolific songwriting career. A 2021 tribute album—*May the Circle Remain Unbroken: A Tribute to Roky Erickson*—featured artists like ZZ Top's Billy Gibbons, Gary Clark Jr. and Lucinda Williams.

The elevator may have stopped, but the trip continues.



HIP-HOP AND R&B

FEATURING:

Blackillac	Jedi512
Blakchyl	Ladi Earth
Bavu Blakes	Magna Carda
BLK ODYSSY	Alesia Lani
Ben Buck	promqueen
CasinoATX	Quin NFN
Cha'keeta B	Riders Against the Storm
Chief Cleopatra	Ivy Roots
Nubia Emmon	Sertified
Daniel Fears	Grace Sorensen
Geto Gala	Tee Double
Anastasia Hera	The Teeta
J Soulja	NOOK Turner



Prove 'em wrong. Austin's hip-hop scene has always been about denying any doubters. While gatekeepers may insist that real hip-hop only emerges from the coasts, Austin's artists have built something to call their own—drawing on diverse influences and reflecting the unique experiences of Black and brown communities in Central Texas.

CasinoATX knows the history. He traces the scene's evolution in waves. The first wave took shape in the late 1980s and early '90s when MC Overlord brought East Coast sensibilities to Austin's East Side alongside DJ Casanova and Tee Double. The second wave brought Cooly Girls, FloMob, Hip Hop Mecca, MC Fatal, NOOK Turner and the Williams brothers—Salih, Tomar, Ishaq and Karriem. "A lot of people don't know this," CasinoATX notes, "But all the big hits out of Houston in the mid-2000s, those Williams brothers produced them." The third wave brought groups like CasinoATX's Gutta Gang, Basswood Lane and the rise of mixtape DJs—Rapid Ric, Dollars and Cents, Chicken George. And the fourth wave saw artists like The League of Extraordinary G'z, The Teeta, Cha'keeta B, Junior Flexwell, Sertified and Kydd Jones. "You could argue this is the fifth wave happening now," he adds. "And it's exciting."

KUTX's Confucius Jones agrees, comparing the scene to a teenager becoming an adult. "It's starting to gain a little bit of personality," Jones says. Today's wave features established acts like Blakchyl, Geto Gala, Magna Carda, Mama Duke and Riders Against the Storm, all profiled here along with many other local talents.

Austin's R&B artists are also having a moment, pushing that genre's form and function. BLK ODYSSY experiments with psychedelic soul, while Grace Sorensen, Anastasia Hera, Ivy Roots and Sir Woman aren't shy about innovating in their respective ways.

Challenges remain. Some programs might only book one rapper to "check the box." Some venues may favor "safer" acts over raw talent. But the scene is about to go big if we keep supporting it. Aaron "Fresh" Knight, who co-hosts KUTX's "The Breaks" with Jones, says "I think somebody will pop off and become that household name and break through. Either it'll be someone from the city no one saw coming, or it'll be a transplant, someone who loves Austin, who appreciates the scene and what has been done for them."

RIDERS AGAINST THE STORM

THEIR DOPENESS WILL COMMAND YOUR ATTENTION

When Jonathan “Chaka” Mahone and Ghislaine “Qi Dada” Jean moved from Providence, Rhode Island, to Austin in 2009, they encountered a hip-hop scene in decline. Rather than accept the status quo, this husband-wife duo demanded attention through talent and determination. Whether creating anthems for Austin FC, hosting hip-hop parties or launching a grantmaking nonprofit, Riders Against the Storm proves hip-hop doesn’t ask permission—it commands respect by letting actions speak louder than words.



Influences:

A Tribe Called Quest,
Sweet Honey in the Rock,
funk, R&B, house music

Popular Tracks:

“Booty Sweat”
“River”
“Here We Come”

Fun Fact:

Co-hosts of Body Rock ATX
with DJ Chorizo Funk, a regular
hip-hop party at Sahara Lounge.

How did you two meet and decide to pursue hip-hop together?

Chaka: We met on the spoken word and theater scene in Providence around 2001. I had a hip-hop band in college, and we were always hip-hop. After [graduating from] Brown, I stayed in Providence to figure myself out, and that’s where I met Qi Dada. We were just creating—doing guerrilla art, trying everything. In that creative period, I asked her if she wanted to form a hip-hop group together.

What brought you to Austin in 2009?

Chaka: It was very spiritual. We looked at Atlanta and other places, but Austin felt like a release when we visited. We felt like we could stay here and figure something out. We needed affordability since I was transitioning from teaching high school to being a full-time artist.

What was Austin’s hip-hop scene like when you arrived?

Chaka: The larger Austin music community didn’t really care about hip-hop. Everywhere we went, it was like they knew one hip-hop person, and that was it. They

had no knowledge of the incredible artistry that existed in the city on the hip-hop side. A lot of folks had been beaten down by Austin’s resistance to the culture.

But we had energy. We’re new, we got to make it, we got to figure it out. That’s hip-hop in general—hip-hop doesn’t give a f*ck. Hip-hop is like, “I’m dope, you’re going to pay attention. My dopeness is going to make you turn your head.” Everywhere we went, we were like, “Give me the mic.” That’s another reason we started Body Rock ATX after meeting DJ Chorizo Funk. People had to know we were here.

Why is your nonprofit, DAWA (Diversity Awareness and Wellness in Action), is focused on giving back to those BIPOC “frontliners like teachers, artists, healthcare workers?”

Chaka: [When we needed it] people literally gave us car keys, filled our refrigerator, handed us cash. After we got to sustainability, I wanted to give back. I started giving away \$200 a month personally, then doing fundraisers. By 2018, after we bought our house, I was easily giving away \$5,000 to 6,000 a year quietly. I decided to make it public with the DAWA Fund. By now, we’ve distributed more than \$500,000 in grants [to teachers, artists, social workers and healthcare providers].

Qi Dada: There’s an African proverb: If you want to go fast, go by yourself, but if you want to go far, go together. Our mission is steeped in an African understanding that you have to move together and take care of community. It’s not about efficiency; it’s about strength.

“If you want to go fast,
go by yourself, but
if you want to go far,
go together.”



LATIN/ WORLD

FEATURING:

Gina Chavez
Como Las Movies
Del Castillo
Los Desechos
Frederico7
Hard Proof
Grupo Fantasma
Los Kurados
Ley Line
Iluvii
Midnight Navy
Nemegata
Adrian Quesada
Superfónicos
The Tiarras
Vallejo
Zoumountchi



Austin's Latin and world music scenes resist easy categorization—and that's the point.

These labels, while convenient, often prove insufficient when applied to artists who draw from multiple traditions, sing in multiple languages and refuse to be confined by marketing handles. What emerges instead is something far more interesting: a musical ecosystem where cultural identity becomes a launchpad for innovation rather than a limiting factor.

Decades ago legends like Flaco Jiménez—whose accordion mastery bridged conjunto and rock—and pioneers like Conjunto Los Pinkys and Beto y Los Fairlanes, who demonstrated how Latin rhythms could absorb everything from jazz and country to punk, created a template for the fluidity that defines today's scene.

Is Del Castillo a Latin band because they sing in Spanish, or a rock band because that's their primary sound? Does Gina Chavez's proud embrace of her cultural heritage automatically place her music in the "Latin" bin, even when she explicitly resists such pigeonholing? Adrian Quesada embodies this approach, too—his *Boleros Psicodélicos* albums represent just one facet of his much broader output.

Consider the incredible influence of Grupo Fantasma, which Quesada co-founded. Their extended family tree illustrates how Austin's Latin music scene operates like a restless creative collective. The band's offshoots—Brownout's psychedelic funk, Caramelo Haze's experimental approach, Money Chicha's Peruvian-inspired cumbia—prove that cultural influence works best when it's allowed to seed creativity. The other acts profiled here—including Los Desechos, Los Kurados, Iluvii, Superfónicos and The Tiarras—share a similar desire to experiment.

The "world music" designation proves even more problematic—so broad it's almost meaningless. What it usually signals is openness to polyrhythmic complexity, willingness to incorporate non-Western instruments and a worldview that crosses cultural boundaries. Artists like CAZAYOUX, Hard Proof and Ley Line exemplify this approach. Places like the Sahara Lounge, where owner Eileen Bristol has cultivated everything from "Africa Night" to global fusion experiments, demonstrate how "world" music also works best when it ignores labels and focuses on moving the music—and our community—forward together.

GINA CHAVEZ

A LATIN GRAMMY-NOMINATED ARTIST CRAFTING
A CAREER ON HER TERMS

When Gina Chavez first picked up a guitar at 18, she couldn't have imagined she'd become arguably Austin's most prominent bilingual songwriter. Today, the Latin Grammy-nominated artist defies labels while advocating for musical diversity from within—serving as president of the Texas Chapter of the Recording Academy. In what she calls her "seeking phase," Chavez is focused on evolving her craft while staying rooted in the community that shaped her sound.

Can you describe some of your earliest memories playing music in this city? I was born and raised here in Austin, but I wasn't really involved in the music scene until college. My first concert without my parents was Third Eye Blind at Liberty Lunch. I picked up a guitar at 18 after seeing Toni Price at the Continental Club. I used to play a lot at a place called La Tazza Fresca on 38th Street and Lamar—you [would] just go sign up for their open mic. The Cactus Café had open mic nights, too. Those were my early spots. I came late to the party compared to a lot of Austin musicians.

What venues from your early days are you able to still go back to? A big one for my career was Momo's, which doesn't exist anymore. It was above Katz's on Sixth Street. That's really where I started to develop a fan base and play regularly. What I think is gold in Austin is we don't feel



Influences:

Lyle Lovett, Little Richard,
Argentine folk music

Essential Tracks:

"La Que Manda"
"Pitaya Roja"
"Save Me"

Fun Fact:

Chavez serves as president
of the Texas Chapter of the
Recording Academy and has
worked as a cultural ambassador
for the U.S. State Department.

like we're in competition with each other. There's a healthy rivalry where you go see a band and you're like, "Oh my god, they're so good, I have to up my game," but it doesn't feel like you're fighting for space or air time.

How did building your career here as a bilingual artist shape your path, including your Grammy experience? It's been both good and bad. On the good side, it allowed me to stand out—maybe be a big fish in a small pond. But being a bilingual artist, there's not really an industry lane for that. Latin music is basically just music in Spanish or Portuguese. It's not a genre. You can have metal in Spanish, you can have rock in Spanish—Latin music, in and of itself, is kind of like a weird term.

I put out a bilingual record called *Up.Rooted* in 2014 and wanted to submit it for both the Grammys and Latin Grammys, but they rejected it from the Latin Grammys. So when I wrote *La Que Manda* I was like, "Okay, I'm going to write a Spanish-language record so they can't do that." We got a Latin Grammy nomination, but you have to learn the rules to play the game.

What about the current Austin music scene gives you hope? Austin truly is a community that supports music, and specifically supports independent music and songwriters. It's not just that they love music—the Austin community supports original music, and that's incredible. 🐶

"There's a healthy rivalry where you go see a band and you're like, 'Oh my god, they're so good, I have to up my game.'"



V E N U E S



S ALVIN CROW
F DARREL GOLDMAN
T CHAPARRAL
W MICHAEL GOODMAN
T WELDON HENSON

part 2

Austin's reputation as "Live Music Capital of the World" isn't just marketing—it's built on the foundation of hundreds of venues that have helped shape American music for decades. Unlike bars and restaurants, live music venues foster culture and community in unique ways.

We begin with an appreciation of the vaunted Armadillo World Headquarters (1970-1980), then we profile a cross-section of top venues today. Each has its own character, sound and story. From humble beer joints and small listening rooms to historic dance halls, posh concert halls and multilevel rock clubs, the city's musical landscape has something for everyone. And no matter where you go, you're just as likely to see living legends as discover the next big thing while enjoying that cold Shiner.



Antone's



Home of the Blues, 50 Years and Counting

THE NEON SIGN outside Antone's on East Fifth Street glows with the same electric blue that has beckoned music lovers for half a century, though the building beneath it represents the club's sixth incarnation.

Inside, the shotgun bar layout and vintage concert posters tell the story of Austin's most resilient music venue—a place that has survived multiple relocations, ownership changes and even a period of dormancy, yet somehow retained its soul at every step.

Clifford Antone opened his first club in 1975 at Sixth and Brazos streets, creating what would become the epicenter of Austin's blues scene. The young man from Port Arthur had a simple idea: pay legendary blues artists well and give them a proper stage. His club quickly became a woodshed for younger players like Stevie Ray Vaughan, his brother Jimmie and Sue Foley to learn at the feet of masters like Muddy Waters and Albert Collins.

"Clifford felt like we have to do these shows while we can, while these people are alive, because it's going to be lost otherwise," explains current owner Will Bridges, describing Antone's preservationist mission. The club also launched Antone's Records, documenting performances by blues legends and emerging Austin talent. When Antone died in 2006, the club's future seemed uncertain. After bouncing between locations and losing its way during a stint on East Riverside Drive, Bridges and booker Zach Ernst—along with partner Gary Clark Jr. and Antone's sister Susan—brought it back downtown in 2015, determined to restore its cultural significance.

"All clubs are venues, but not all venues are clubs," says Bridges, explaining their philosophy. "A club is an experience. It's curated. And it's intimate." The 400-capacity room features pristine acoustics and what Bridges calls "disproportionate backstage infrastructure"—reflecting its reputation as an "underplay venue," where established acts choose creativity and intimacy over ticket sales.

Ernst, who learned about blues history in Clifford Antone's legendary UT class, brings both reverence and pragmatism to the booking strategy. "I was very naive at the beginning," he admits, recalling early plans to program blues seven nights a week. "We needed to get new people in here." Today, the club honors its roots while also embracing hip-hop, country and indie rock. "Antone's means a lot of things to a lot of different people," Ernst observes. "Maybe you only saw a hip-hop show. Maybe you only saw Bob Schneider and the Scabs. As long as it's got soul, it's the blues."

One thing that remains unchanged is the venue's artist-first culture. "We care way more about it sounding good to the artist," Bridges explains, "because if you make the artist really comfortable, and the artist sounds good to themselves, the performance is going to be elevated."

As Antone's marks its 50th anniversary with special concerts and a box set reissue, the club stands as both historical artifact and vibrant community. Walk through those doors any night and you're stepping into five decades of Austin music history—where discovery remains as important as remembering the greats, and the blues, in all its forms, lives on.



Est. 1975

Downtown

antonesnightclub.com

Genre:
Blues

Fun fact:

The first show at the original location on Sixth Street featured Clifton Chenier and his Red Hot Louisiana Band.



Little Longhorn

The Original Home of Chicken Sh*t Bingo

EVEN WITH THE CONDOS RISING along Burnet Road (pronounced “Burn-it, durn it”), the Little Longhorn Saloon stands out. It’s the only humble cinder block building that resembles a tiny chapel, its white steeple rising sharply above the gabled roof with burnt-orange trim. Immortalized in song by Dale Watson as the “honki-est tonkiest beer joint in town,” the Longhorn has been serving up cold beer and hot music since the 1960s. You can still find former owner Ginny Kalmbach’s rules behind the bar: “No Fussin’. No Cussin’. No Hasselin’. No Wresslin’.” Before she passed, Ginny asked longtime bartender **Terry Gaona** to consider taking the reins. She consulted her husband, David, who agreed they didn’t want to see the bar become something else. “We were so emotionally invested already,” says Terry.

Here are other excerpts from our chat:

How has it been moving from bartending to owning?

It’s been the weirdest thing being an owner. Being a bartender, you can hem and haw and have fun and harass people—all the fun stuff, looser, no responsibility. But being an owner, you have to look at things a little bit differently. You want to treat people how you want to be treated. You want to be respectful, but you also have to be stern. If you’re having a bad day, you can’t bring it to work, because then people will sense it. So you have to have that little balance.

The bar is a real beer joint. What does having a smaller space mean for the experience?

A smaller room means a little more family-like. You’re my neighbor, but now you’re my family because we’re getting close. Sometimes when you bump up next to

somebody ordering a beer, it’s not a bad thing. You might meet somebody—might be your next wife or your next husband, who knows?



Est. 1963

North Austin

thelittlelonghornsaloon.com

Genre:

Honky-tonk

Fun fact:

Original home of Chicken Sh*t Bingo every Sunday afternoon at 4 p.m.

How did Chicken Sh*t Bingo get started?

One day, Ginny’s husband, Don, and a local musician were talking; this musician had been in California and saw cow patty bingo. When he came back, he had this idea. “Hey Don, let’s bring this game to Texas, but let’s do it with a chicken.” They sprung it on Ginny on a Sunday, and she said, “It’s never gonna last.” And here it is, all this time later.

How has the game evolved under your ownership?

We do more tickets per round so more people can play. A \$2 ticket yields a \$114 win, a \$5 ticket yields a \$285 win, a \$10 ticket is a \$570 win, and if we get enough people for a \$20 ticket, that’s over \$1,100.

Every round is a different set of colored tickets, a different purchase. And all the money collected for a set of tickets goes to the winners—none goes to the house.

You get fans from all over the world. What’s that feel like?

I’m humbled every day. I meet somebody new—like a group that just walked in from Europe, you can tell by their accent. I heard some Australians here earlier. It’s this big, huge camaraderie, like an extended family from everywhere. But you get plenty of locals, too. They bring their friends and family.

When you visit, it supports everybody—the bands, us, the patrons. On Sundays, patrons are winning money, but they could really care less if they win or lose. They just want to have fun. One thing’s for sure—once you get here, we know you’re going to come back. 🐔



Owner Terry Gaona



Johnny McGowan

Worth the Trip

Beyond Austin's city limits lie music venues that justify their own pilgrimages — places where stepping through the doors sends you stepping back in time.

At Cheatham Street Warehouse in San Marcos, you'll find the legendary Songwriter's Circle.

Good ole Gruene Hall is the state's oldest continuously operating dance hall. Everybody's truly somebody in Luckenbach, immortalized in song by Waylon Jennings. Poodie's Hilltop Roadhouse began as a place for Willie Nelson's crew to hang out between tours. In Llano, newcomer Sundown captures 1970s honky-tonk authenticity with swinging doors and hardwood floors. These and the other spots profiled here aren't just venues—they're gems where history, culture and characters collide. They are certainly worth the drive.

1

Arkey Blue's Silver Dollar

308 Main St., Bandera

» banderacowboycapital.com/business/arkey-blues-silver-dollar

Live music Thursday–Sunday.

Arkey Blue often plays Saturday at 8 p.m.

2

Backporch Social

309 W. Liberty Ave., Round Rock

» backporchsocial.com

Live music Thursday–Sunday with Chicken

Sh't Bingo every first and third Saturday.

3

Cheatham Street Warehouse

119 Cheatham St., San Marcos

» cheathamstreet.com

Don't miss the Songwriter's Circle every Wednesday at 8 p.m.

4

Cotton Country Club

212 E. Davilla St., Granger

» cotton-country-club.com

Live music Thursday–Sunday.

Sunday dances start at 5:30 p.m.

5

Devil's Backbone Tavern

4041 Farm to Market 32, Fischer

» devilsbackbonetavern.com

Early weekend shows start at 1 p.m.

6

John T. Floore's Country Store

14492 Old Bandera Road, Helotes

» liveatfloores.com

Check website for latest show dates.

7

Gruene Hall

1281 Gruene Rd., New Braunfels

» gruenehall.com

Live music every day, with early weekend acts starting 11:30 a.m.

8

Haute Spot

1501 E. New Hope Dr., Cedar Park

» hautespot.live

Outside chairs not allowed, but bring your blanket.

9

Luckenbach

412 Luckenbach Town Loop,

Fredericksburg

» luckenbachtexas.com

Open Wednesday–Sunday from 9:00 a.m.

10

Mercer Dance Hall

23490 Ranch Rd 12, Driftwood

» mercerdancehall.com

Live music Friday–Sunday, with four cabins to rent if you want to stay overnight.

11

Old Pal Texas Tavern

100 E. Market St., Lockhart

» oldpalbartx.com

Live music Thursday–Sunday.

12

Poodie's Hilltop Roadhouse

22308 State Highway 71 W., Spicewood

» poodies.net

Live music seven nights a week.

13

Riley's Tavern

8894 FM 1102, New Braunfels

» rileystavern.com

Live music Friday–Sunday.

14

Round Rock AMP

3701 N. Interstate 35, Round Rock

» roundrockamp.com

Check website for the latest concerts.

15

Sundown

909 Bessemer Ave., Llano

» sundownhonkytonk.com

Open Wednesday–Sunday, with Chicken Sh't Bingo last Sunday of every month.

16

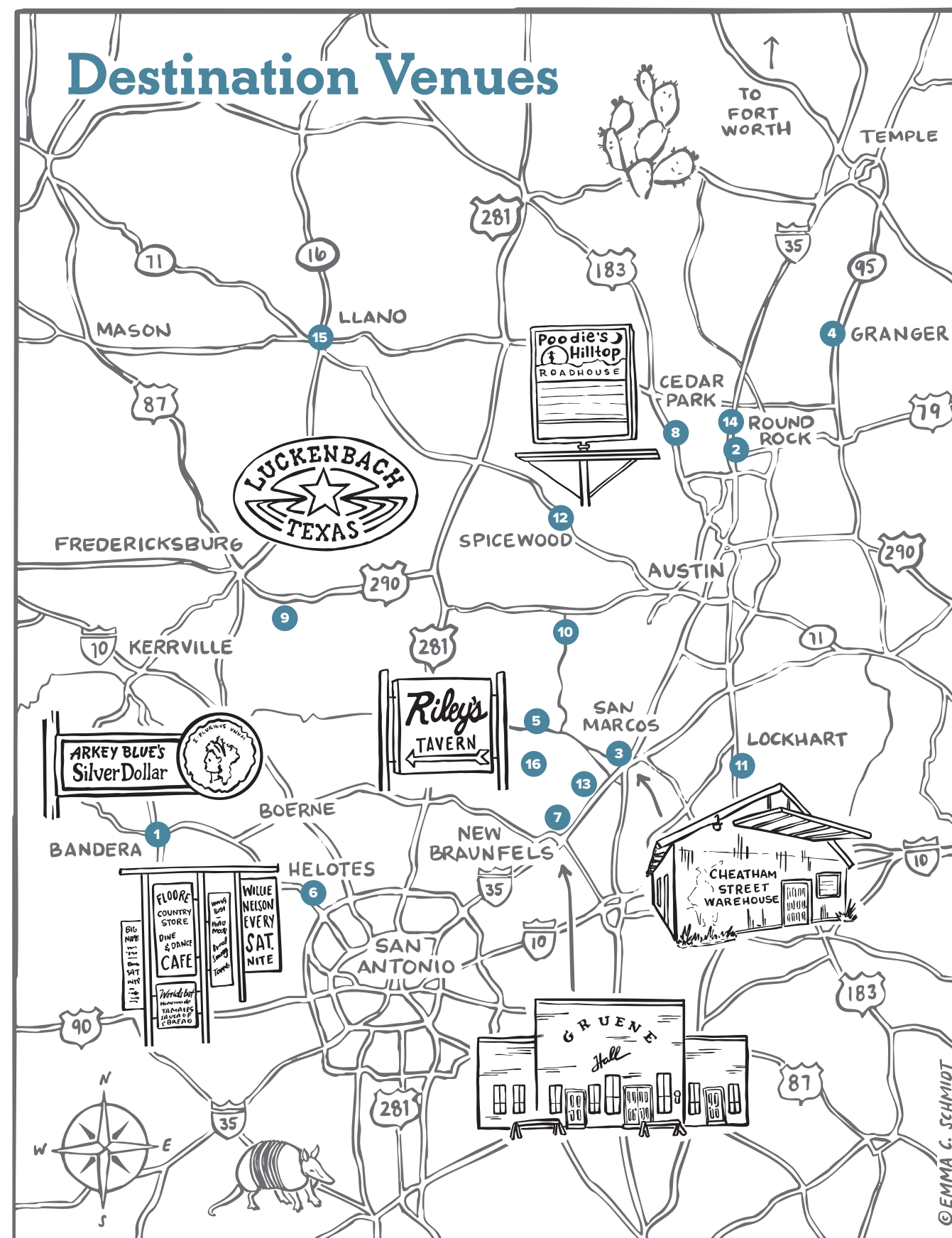
Whitewater Amphitheater

11860 FM 306, New Braunfels

» whitewaterrocks.com

Check website for the latest event calendar.

Destination Venues

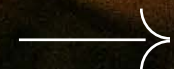


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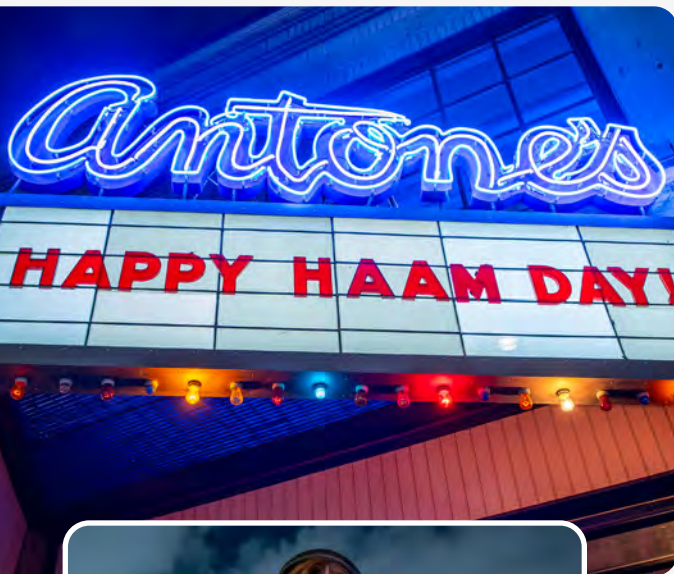
FESTIVAL

Austin pulses with music every day, 365 days a year.

And the calendar of festivals—deep, rich and multifaceted as any bluff of limestone—is a big reason why. Indeed, Austin’s festivals span every season and celebrate every genre imaginable, from the organized chaos of South by Southwest and Willie Nelson’s legendary Fourth of July Picnic to the psychedelic dance trip that is Levitation and the fall spectacle of Austin City Limits Music Festival. This section should help you start planning now. It’s organized by month, with a master list at the end. Check festival websites for the latest dates. The festivals never stop, and neither should your adventure across River City.



HAAM



WHEN: Late September

WHAT: HAAM's largest fundraiser and Central Texas' largest one-day music festival featuring 250-plus performances, 105-plus venues, 300-plus local musicians

WHERE: Citywide—over 100 venues

» myhaam.org/haam-day

Every September, the Health Alliance for Austin Musicians' largest annual fundraiser—HAAM Day Music Festival—turns the entire city into a stage for what has become the world's largest one-day, all-local music festival.

As a two-time winner of "Most Creative Event" in the Austin Music Awards, HAAM Day showcases the depth and diversity of Austin's music scene like no other event: 250-plus performances, at more than 105 venues, featuring 300-plus local musicians in less than 24 hours, creating a musical marathon that stretches beyond the city limits to Round Rock, Dripping Springs, Lockhart, Georgetown, Leander and beyond.

What makes HAAM Day truly special is its accessibility and scope. Music lovers hear live music bouncing off the walls of grocery stores, restaurants and shops; on rooftops; in parks and iconic live music venues—anywhere a performer can play. All performances are free, open to the public and family-friendly, ensuring that anyone can participate in this citywide celebration.



The festival's impact extends far beyond entertainment. In 2024 alone, HAAM Day raised \$890,000 through community partnerships and donations collected at shows. Those dollars translate to more than \$6.2 million in direct healthcare services to the more than 3,200 musicians HAAM serves annually.

HAAM Day Music Festival also represents the best of Austin's collaborative spirit. Musicians contribute more than 240 hours of music, which translates to \$50,000+ worth of live performances donated to serve HAAM's mission. In a city known for keeping it weird, HAAM Day proves that Austin also knows how to infuse heart and meaning into our local live music scene every September.

DAY



»Essentials

Whether you're a longtime resident or first-time visitor, there's always more to explore in Austin's dynamic music scene. Thank goodness there's a robust ecosystem working to keep us informed. This section will help you navigate the network. It also shares how we, as fans, can support the community groups working to sustain the scene.



THE AUSTIN CHRONICLE

austinchronicle.com

All hail this free alt weekly. There would be no scene without it. The Austin Chronicle stands as the definitive voice of Austin's cultural landscape, documenting and shaping the city's music scene since 1981. Its comprehensive coverage has elevated countless local artists while its annual Austin Music Awards have become the gold standard for recognizing excellence across the scene. The Chronicle's extensive archives serve as an invaluable historical record, capturing four decades of the city's evolution and growth. It's easy to find the paper. Most restaurants, clubs and bars will carry a stack near the front door. Or jump online and visit the "Live Music" section for the latest listings.

DO512

do512.com

"Do awesome stuff." Since 2006, Do512 has been helping us discover Austin's best music, parties and events. Created by locals for locals, Do512 is known for sharing a curated point of view on what to do "today," helpful when the listings can sometimes feel overwhelming. Their site also includes plenty of ways to win free tickets to a variety of shows.



KAZI 88.7 FM

kazifm.org

Austin's oldest community radio station, staffed almost entirely by volunteers, was founded in 1982 by University of Texas at Austin Professor

Dr. John Warfield to serve the African American community. Today it appeals to a broader audience with its urban contemporary format. Programming covers many genres—jazz, gospel, blues and soul, hip-hop and R&B, to name a few—and includes talk and independent news, too.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS:

Morning Grind. Weekdays 7:30 to 10 a.m. KAZI's dynamic morning show.

ATX Now in Color. Tuesdays 12 to 1 p.m. Talk show featuring local business owners and fellow creatives.

The Hot Pepper Show. Fridays 3 to 6 p.m. A mix of neo-soul and R&B, hosted by Pepper Thomas.

KOOP 91.7 FM

koop.org

This community radio station shares its frequency with KVRX, broadcasting during daytime hours while KVRX takes over nights. KOOP produces dozens of shows each week that stress local issues and hold space for under-served groups. Frequently recognized by The Austin Chronicle in their annual "Best of Austin" awards, the city finally proclaimed Sept. 17 as KOOP Radio Day (9/17 for 91.7 FM, wink).

NOTABLE PROGRAMS:

Stronger Than Dirt. Saturdays 8 to 10 p.m. Underground rock show hosted by Scott Gardner.

Roots Train. Sundays 12 to 2:00 p.m. Ska, reggae and dancehall music, hosted by Dale Smith.

The Dark End of the Street. Tuesdays 11 a.m. to noon. Down-home Southern soul from the heyday of Memphis, Nashville and Muscle Shoals.

KUTX 98.9 FM

kutx.org

Launched in 2013 as a complement to KUT, Austin's NPR affiliate, KUTX is a full-time music service, broadcasting from the University of Texas, run by self-described music nerds who love great tunes and love connecting you to them. Often voted Best Radio Station during the Austin Music Awards, KUTX pitches itself as "The Austin Music Experience." It delivers on that promise with a diverse slate of programming that includes **Song of the Day**, **Austin Music Minute** to help you make weekend plans, live performances **from Studio 1A**, and the **Pause/Play** podcast about the local music scene and why it matters.

“Growing up in this town’s urban communities, rap was a part of our DNA. Fresh and I have always had the same mentality when it comes to Austin: to build up [the hip-hop scene] and give local artists the recognition they deserve.”

—Confucius Jones, KUTX's “The Breaks”

NOTABLE PROGRAMS:

The Breaks. Saturdays 10 p.m. to midnight. Hosts Confucius Jones and Aaron “Fresh” Knight talk all things hip-hop.

Horizontes. Sundays 7 to 9 p.m. Explores the musical “horizons” of Latin America and beyond.

Soundfinder. Wednesdays 8 to 10 p.m. Host Andrew Brown spotlights the world of electronic music, with a focus on local artists.

KVRX 91.7 FM

kvrx.org

This student-run radio station at the University of Texas takes over from KOOP each night (from 7 p.m. to 9 a.m. on weekdays and 10 p.m. to 9 a.m. on weekends). Its motto—“None of the Hits, All of the Time”—refers to the station's alternative programming, featuring music not often heard on commercial outlets.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS:

Local Live. Sundays 10 p.m. to midnight. Features local and nationally touring musical acts in live studio performances and interviews.

Topless 39. Weekly chart tracking the 39 albums receiving the most plays that week.

SUN RADIO 100.1 FM

sunradio.com

Sun Radio is a solar-powered, listener- and partner-supported network of 11 terrestrial and online radio stations spanning 13,000 square miles of Central Texas. The nonprofit's mission is to preserve the heritage of Texas music with minimal environmental impact. No surprise it's the largest solar-powered radio station in the world, thanks to 125,000 watts of solar panels installed at its studios and tower sites. To date, its Sun Radio Recharge program has provided more than \$300,000 in relief to 1,000 Central Texas musicians, sound techs and roadies.

NOTABLE PROGRAMS:

Blue Monday with Mike Buck. Mondays 7 to 9 p.m. Carries the blues torch following Larry Monroe's legacy.

A Hill Country Saturday with Kevin Connor. Saturdays 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Features good music and conversation from remote broadcasts across the Austin area.

Texas Radio Live. Wednesdays at 7 p.m. Austin's longest-running live music radio program, now in its 14th season, is a weekly fundraiser that supports the Sun Radio Foundation.

»Stream the Songs

25 GREAT SONGS ABOUT AUSTIN

Austin has inspired many artists to set it down in song. Here is an unofficial starter list. More online—just scan the QR code below.



“London Homesick Blues”

Gary P. Nunn (1973)

For decades this was the iconic “Austin City Limits” theme song; written when Nunn was homesick for the city’s counterculture scene.

“Dublin Blues”

Guy Clark (1995)

Opens with: “I wish I was in Austin in the Chili Parlor Bar / Drinking Mad Dog margaritas and not caring where you are.” Nuff said.

“Bottom of the World”

Alejandro Escovedo (2012)

“Austin’s changed, it’s true / Show me what hasn’t.”

“Austin Night”

Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash (2005)

Ah, the moonlit Colorado.
To losing your heart in the heat
of an Austin night.

“Designs on You”

Old 97’s (2001)

A love song at the corner of Sixth
and How to Forget.

“My Hometown”

Charlie Robison (1998)

Sure, it’s about Bandera. But it namechecks Austin, where Robison lived for a time. Still, it’ll make you want to go to Bandera.

“Horseshoe Lounge”

Slaid Cleaves (2000)

Tar-stained heartache (back when you could smoke) at one of Austin’s legendary dive bars.

“Feels Like Rain”

Shinyribs (2015)

Kevin Russell is funkcd up about finding an angel’s face in Austin.

“Travis County”

Gary Clark Jr. (2012)

Rockin’ about an arrest in his younger days: “Travis County took my picture / But no, I didn’t smile.”

“A-Town Blues”

Wayne “The Train” Hancock (2001)

A hillbilly boogie about missing Austin while on the road.

“Dime Store Cowgirl”

Kacey Musgraves (2015)

Stay true to your roots.

“Alleys of Austin”

Michael Martin Murphey (1973)

Is there a line between Austin and heaven? “The bricks and the bottles and the mongrels / Are trying to make sense out of it all.”

“Nights of Austin”

Shane Smith & The Saints (2013)

Will make you want to wander around town.

“Sweet Tequila Blues”

Chip Taylor & Carrie Rodriguez (2002)

A country duet featuring the refrain: “Get me back to Austin, oh damn, I miss that town.”

“Lucifer on the Sofa”

Spoon (2022)

Britt Daniel roamed Austin’s empty streets during the pandemic. This song namechecks Lavaca Street, grackles and even Dale Watson.



Down at the Horseshoe Lounge

Shuffleboard and neon light

Down at the Horseshoe Lounge

Cigarettes and whiskey tonight

Songwriters: Karen Poston / Slaid Cleaves

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“Devil Town”

Bright Eyes (covering Daniel Johnston) (2004)

Bright Eyes covered “Devil Town” because of Conor Oberst’s deep admiration and personal connection to Johnston’s artistic purity and emotional honesty.

“I Can’t Go Back to Austin”

Doug Sahm (1984)

Sounds like Sir Doug got into some trouble at the Soap Creek Saloon.

“Drunken Angel”

Lucinda Williams (1998)

Her tribute to singer-songwriter Blaze Foley, shot and killed in Austin in 1989.

“What I Like About Texas”

Jerry Jeff Walker (1994)

“It’s another burrito, with a cold Lone Star in my hand.”

“Austin (Boots Stop Workin’)”

Dasha (2023)

She’s back to Los Angeles. He’s “drunk, washed up in Austin.”

“Just Outside of Austin”

Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real (2017)

Willie’s son singing about the simple life, with lines about sitting at home, riding horses and writing songs.

“Snake Farm”

Ray Wylie Hubbard (2006)

Yup, it’s a real roadside attraction. “It just sounds nasty,” Hubbard sings.

“Multi-Love”

Unknown Mortal Orchestra (2015)

Features the memorable line—listen for it—“she wants to bury me in Austin, under Uchiko” (the famous Japanese restaurant).

“E. 11th Street”

Jon Dee Graham (2004)

A local classic about returning home to the Velvet Crown.

“Back to Austin”

Jamestown Revival (2016)

From the City of Lost Angels, with love.

"By purchasing this book, you're not just getting an insider's guide to Austin's music scene—you're directly supporting the musicians who make it all possible. Half of all net proceeds will directly support HAAM's mission to ensure that the next generation of Central Texas artists can pursue their dreams without sacrificing their health. Thank you for helping keep music in Austin alive and well!"



Paul Scott
CEO, Health Alliance
for Austin Musicians

"This book celebrates the musicians and venues that have helped Austin become the 'Live Music Capital of the World.' It's no secret that our city has a lot of talented artists and a lot of great music venues. This field guide brings their stories to life through rich photography, exclusive interviews and behind-the-scenes insights. Whether you're new to our city or a long-time Austinite, this guide will give you a new perspective on our diverse, vibrant and resilient music scene."



Mayor Kirk Watson
City of Austin

"Austin's music scene is so rich, so raw and real, and it's so accessible. I want to let you know there's a vibrant music scene here to support. I talk about it on Sun Radio all the time—if you are visiting or planning a visit or just moved here, be sure to go out and discover some local music, support your local artists. We appreciate it, and you won't regret it."



Suzanna Choffel
Singer-Songwriter
and Sun Radio DJ

"Austin truly is a community that supports music, and specifically supports independent music and songwriters. It's not just that they love music—the Austin community supports original music, and that's incredible. That continues to give me hope."



Gina Chavez
Singer-Songwriter

"Walk down almost any street in Austin and you'll hear the future of American songwriting spilling out of clubs, dive bars and coffee shops. There is fearless genre-blending happening here—country storytellers collaborating with indie rockers, vibrant hip-hop artists and singer-songwriters pushing into new territories. Songwriting is thriving in Austin like nowhere else, with artists who understand that great songs transcend categories."



Mitch Ballard
Executive Director Austin-Creative
BMI

"I travel all over the world and there is no town like Austin. There is no music scene like Austin's. There's no collection of clubs and radio stations, no community like Austin's. And there are no organizations taking care of that community quite like HAAM. I just think it's really unique and special what they've been able to turn it into and the effect they have on people's lives."



Hayes Carll
Singer-Songwriter

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