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Country Music: Clubs thrive on New Year's Eve

By TOWNSEND MILLER
Special Writer

New Year's Eve in Austin was interesting in many ways. The clubs I visited or had appearances on were jammed, which is great, for musicians and club owners all must make money for live music to survive. And the fans — who, in typical Austin fashion, were more interested in listening, laughing, and loving than in fighting — seemed to be having a great time and I heard no complaints about not getting their money's worth (although I didn't check any of the \$10-to-\$100-per-person spots).

New clubs come and, sadly, clubs go. New Year's Eve was the marked the last night in the crowd, preferably for the beautiful Chicken Ranch Club, which has provided some fine music for the past year. Over the years, the club has been open a club there for her father and has got the Chicken Ranch here up for sale. If interested,

call her at 443-726. The night, on the other hand, marked the official opening of the huge new Silver Dollar dance facility. This beautiful club, with its giant hardwood dance floor, carpeted seating area, fine sound, and capacity of over one thousand, surely is one of the Austin country music scene. Incidentally, these strange looking objects scattered around the ceiling are electronic music removers. Owner George Weems and manager Mike Gumbo had a party for the new club, and the night was great except for a serious shortage of bartenders.

Plan Nelly Nelson's! One sad note to our girls New Year's Eve was that it was the last performance there "nail, spread, preferably for the beautiful Chicken Ranch Club, which has provided some fine music for the past year. Over the years, the club has been open a club there for her father and has got the Chicken Ranch here up for sale. If interested,

without an argument, from anyone the greatest guitar picker in the area, and Ernie Grammage will remain together. During their long string of "final appearances" the past month they acquired veteran guitarist Layton DeVonning to replace Bill Stoner, and now they've added Don Palmer on drums.

The Week In Austin I am keeping an interested eye on the progress of Austin's two new country-oriented clubs in the downtown area, the Roundtacks, operated by Lorraine Dilard and son, and Dejah's, owned and operated by Dejah Wilderford and her son Larry McDonald. The Roundtacks is located just behind the Greenbush station, and Dejah's is in the 500 block of Congress.

A couple of weeks ago a group called Four Crew dropped by the Roundtacks and asked for a chance to play, which was granted. I have heard them, but the report I got was that the fans loved 'em. They'll be back at the Roundtacks Saturday night and also will participate in the regular Sunday afternoon All-Dead Band at the Split Rail.

Popular vocalist Michael James provides the "house band" at Dejah's. Saturday there, for friends Rusty Wier was promised to bring his band

there for what should be a lively jam session. The two clubs are located within a couple of blocks of each other.

Elsewhere, other highlights of a great Saturday night schedule everywhere include Whatfield at Cattle Creek and Doug Sahn, whose new band keeps getting better every time I hear them, at Armadillo World Headquarters.

Tony Dragage and the Strangers come to the Roundtacks Wednesday night. Tony has ingored on the form of gradations with a long string of medium-sized hits for a good many years. New current hit "I'll Could Make It Through the Morning" is skyrocketing on the national charts and shows promise of making him one of these "top overnight sensations."

Master guitarist Roy Buchanan comes to Armadillo Thursday and Friday, sharing a billing with the Frink, a group which has been making quite a hit with Austin fans in recent weeks. Then Thursday through Saturday at Cattle Creek, Tony and Zand will be teamed with his old musical sidekick, Rickie White and James, who will journey from Houston to enjoy Texas for the gig.

Looking ahead, Tuesday through Saturday, Jan. 12-17, Master guitarist Roy Buchanan comes to Armadillo Thursday and Friday, sharing a billing with the Frink, a group which has been making quite a hit with Austin fans in recent weeks. Then Thursday through Saturday at Cattle Creek, Tony and Zand will be teamed with his old musical sidekick, Rickie White and James, who will journey from Houston to enjoy Texas for the gig.

Country Calendar (Compiled from information supplied by musicians, club owners, and agents)

Monday — Robert James Best with special guest, Steve Nye, at Whatfield at Cattle Creek, George Weems at Roundtacks, 1000 Congress, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Tuesday** — Layton DeVonning, Ernie Grammage, and Charlie Price at Whatfield at Cattle Creek, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Wednesday** — Tony Dragage and the Strangers at Roundtacks, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Thursday** — Roy Buchanan, Rickie White, and James at Roundtacks, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Friday** — Roy Buchanan, Rickie White, and James at Roundtacks, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Saturday** — Layton DeVonning, Ernie Grammage, and Charlie Price at Whatfield at Cattle Creek, 10:30-11:30 p.m. **Sunday** — Layton DeVonning, Ernie Grammage, and Charlie Price at Whatfield at Cattle Creek, 10:30-11:30 p.m.

This is a wonderful facility. It's roomy although I'm sure it isn't really the acre it seems, and the ceiling is about three stories high. It is well lighted for the television cameras, and you can see and hear well no matter where you may be in the studio. If you haven't experienced music there, you don't know what you're missing. Now you'll have a chance.

A Raw and Wonderful In the raw and wonderful I've loved. I've heard music in a lot of places, among spots I recall offhand where the sound was the greatest are the Rymal Auditorium in Nashville, former home of the Grand Ole Opry with its fantastic acoustics, the Holstein Pavilion in Houston when the good people lived for the occasion knew what they were doing, and almost anywhere outdoors. But my favorite place of all is right here in Austin. It's the fabulous state of KERN located in the communications building on the University of Texas campus.

I became acquainted with it when ELLN began recording the "Austin City Limits" series a year or so ago for the national Public Television Network. Producer Paul Bower, Director Bruce Seale, and Publicist Ken Waggoner have been kind enough to invite me to each of the eight or ten sessions of the series which have been taped on KX, next Friday night at 8 p.m.

Country Pickin's Graham Leader, who heads up a television filming enterprise called Cision, will be in Austin with his crew for several days starting Saturday. Plans by to tape Townes Van Zandt here and Buddy Edwards in San Antonio. There also is some chance that Gambel Rodgers, who among many local fans with his humorous dialogues and singing at the Bull Creek outdoor concert last spring, may be flown in from Nashville for filming here either Sunday or Monday night (perhaps at the Alliance Waggoner?), so be alert for any such announcements. The crew also would like to tape Allop at

the wheel here, but at prestime the likelihood seemed remote.

The word is that New Year's Eve in Houston with Willie Waylon, Jessi, and Floyd Tillis was terrific, which was easily predictable. The huge Summit Area, presided by Waylon, was a near sell-out, so I'm sure young promoter Dan Jamail was overjoyed.

The Ironcadd, Dallas music columnist, recently ran a cartoon of interest to fans here. It pictured a space ship landing near an Austin city limo sign. From it emerged a strange creature who approached two early hipsters with the usual request to "take me to your leader." The earthlings promptly led the creature to Willis-VanZandt's house.

The rock-country group Dennis is the first to be signed by Moon Hill to a full management contract in more than a year. Moon Hill is extremely selective about which acts it signs, which perhaps is a big reason they have been so fantastically successful with the artists they manage.

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Townsend Miller's country music column appears each Friday in the American-Statesman.

2 More Days
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SPECIAL DOUBLE FEATURE
The original version (1931) of two of the most famous horror films of all time.
Showing Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi
Frankenstein 7:20/10:05
Dracula 1:50 Adults 50 Children
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FOX TOWN
CHILDREN 12-12
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HELD OVER!
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AN AMERICAN MULTICINEMA THEATRE

OUT OF SEASON
he's Sam Spade... and his falcons worth a fortune!

"THE STORY OF O"
1:45-3:45-6:00-8:15-10:30
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Your family has just been murdered without motive...
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Tourism boom likely where revolution began

By NICK TATTO
Associated Press Writer

Americans will travel more in 1976, both domestically and abroad, and the 1976 has brought booming tourism to Williamsburg, Va., Boston, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., an Associated Press check showed Friday.

The AP sampling travel agents, touring clubs, airlines and trade publications in more than 29 cities to find out if Americans, in celebrating the nation's 200th birthday, would visit the areas where the Revolution began.

Some say it is too early to tell how big the boost will be but travel in Washington and New England began to pick up sharply in 1975. Travel agents predict foreign travel would be up slightly over a dozen year in 1976, about 10 percent in 1977.

In Philadelphia, Eugene Power, president of the Convention and Tourist Bureau, predicted 13.5 million visitors in 1976, compared to 12.5 million in 1975.

He said nearly half would stay with friends, the rest in hotels and the average stay would be about three days. "Washington and Williamsburg virtually are off the charts with triple the bookings there for 1976," said John Stachnick, president of Resort Town in Chicago. He said his company booked 3,000 tourists for the two cities for this spring compared to 2,100 in spring 1975.

ON STAGE
"Once More, With Feeling" — Don Ameche stars in this hit comedy from the 1930s, the current production at Country Dinner Playhouse. Doors open at 5:45 p.m. Curtain at 8 p.m. Reservations necessary.
"Deja Revere" — Ken Johnson's nightclub revue continues at Center Stage's new location at 1202 E. 4th. All 8:30 p.m.

INTERSTATE THEATRE
VARSITY
Nobility could robbery is all the more bizarre... because it's true.

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AL PACINO IN DOG DAY AFTERNOON

What's Going On

FIRST RUN MOVIES
"The Black Bird" (PG) — George Segal stars in this spoof of the detective genre as Sam Spide is sent in search of the elusive Malibu Falcon. At the Fox-Town.
"The Endless" (PG) — George C. Scott and Anne Bancroft head an all-star cast in this film which hypothesizes the events which led up to the explosion of the large rocket in 1957 over Lakehurst, N.J. At the Highland Mall Cinema.
"Dog Day Afternoon" (PG) — Al Pacino stars in Robert Royce's film version of an actual attempted bank robbery in which a man tried to secure funds for his male lover's sex change operation and the bizarre circumstances that followed. At the Variety.
"The Image" (X) — porno super-director Ralphy Metzger examines sadomasochism. At the Texas.
"Lucky Lady" (PG) — Stanley Donen's movie about running from Mexico to California during prohibition. Starring Liza Minnelli, Burt Reynolds and Gene Hackman. At the Highland Mall Cinema.
"The Human Factor" (R) — George Kennedy and John Mills star in this tale of a man seeking revenge on a gang of militants who kill his wife and three children. At the Aquarius IV and Northcross 6.
"Huckle" (R) — Burt Reynolds and Catherine Deneuve in a police action drama from director Robert Aldrich. At the Capital Plaza Cinema.
"The Gentleman Tramp" (G) — Documentary on the life and times of Charlie Chaplin. At the Village Cinema IV.
"The Killer Prey" (R) — Action drama starring Fely Salazar. At the Northcross 6.
"The Man Who Would Be King" (PG) — Sean Connery and Michael Caine star in the new work to rule a country in this film version of the Rudyard Kipling classic, directed by John Huston. At the Northcross 6.
"The Story of O" (X) — Continental French, soft porn movie based on the classic erotic novel. At the Northcross 6.
"The Killer Elite" (PG) — James Cagney and Robert Deval star in Sam Peckinpah's film about an independent protection agency assigned to take care of high-risk, top security cases. At the American.
"Out of Season" (R) — Vanessa Redgrave, Cliff Robertson and Susan George star in this tale of a woman and her daughter and the man who returns from the past. At the Northcross 6.

George Segal's bid?
AT 2:15 4:00 6:00 8:00
AUSTIN THEATRE
2120 S. CONGRESS
BIG OFFICE PAPER
"CHINA is the natural successor to Bruce Lee!"
AT 2:15 4:00 6:00 8:00
THE STREET FIGHTER
"YOU GOT TO FIGHT... FIGHT DIRTY!"
KUNG FU... FUNNY OF DEATH!
AT 2:15 4:00 6:00 8:00

FIESTA
Mentelita & Revue
AT 8:45 8:45-10:15
UN MULLATO
LLAMADO MARTIN
AT 8:45 8:45-10:15
AGENTE 00 SEI
AT 8:45 8:45-10:15
BAJOS 373

HIS CIA CODE NAME IS CONDOR. IN THE NEXT SEVENTY-TWO HOURS ALMOST EVERYONE HE TRUSTS WILL TRY TO KILL HIM.
ROBERT REDFORD
3 DAYS OF THE CONDOR
FAVE DUMARNEY
AT 8:45 8:45-10:15
AQUARIUS-4
1:00-1:30-2:00-2:30-3:00

Cuba releases U.S. family
WASHINGTON (AP) — Cuba has released a Wisconsin couple and their three teenage sons who were taken into custody Tuesday after the vessel in which they were sailing strayed too close to Cuban shores, the State Department said Friday.
Spokesman Robert Funseth said the Robert L. Woods family of Waukesha, Wis., was released Thursday night.