

Townes Van Zandt

Back in the late '60s, the good years of the folk movement, a banjo picker named Butch Ritter was a regular performer in this area. He played a number of excellent original tunes as well as songs by people he had met in his travels, including Len Chandler and Josh White Jr.

But there was one performer he spoke of with a special reverence, a performer with the unlikely name of Townes Van Zandt. If Butch hadn't been able to produce several of Van Zandt's albums, no one would have believed such a person existed.

Over the years, I have collected several of Van Zandt's records and have been totally captivated by his music and poetry. His 1973 effort, *The Late, Great Townes Van Zandt*, sparkles with light-hearted humor and plunges to the depths of depression and despair. Hope and failure exist in Van Zandt's world as equal partners, yin and yang without conflict.

Townes Van Zandt, despite the title of his '73 album, will appear with **John Lee Hooker**, on May 1 at **Gilly's**. There will be a \$5 cover at the door for this one-night show. It might be the best spent \$5 in a long time.