

Larry Mahan plans Saturday birthday bash

"Less is more" and "Too much ain't enough" are phrases that describe last weekend for me. Friday, I went to Fort Worth to attend an evening with Texas songwriters (who now live in Nashville) Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt. Saturday I drove back down Highway 16 to Kerrville and back up to Luckenbach for another evening with Guy and Townes. This time to enjoy introducing Carrie (from Ohio, remember?) to some great writers. She's held up in the Hill Country writing poetry and finishing a novel at the age of 22. Sure, she needed to meet these guys.

The experience in Fort Worth, thanks to Neal Brown and Old West Productions (he had the front row tickets), was one of those diamonds — all edges sharp, crystal clear and shining. Commander Roy (KNON mainstay) ran perfect sound. Scott Theatre was elegant in silence. Townes took the stage first.

In a way unique to Townes, he told stories and jokes (?) while reminiscing. "I was born here in Harris Hospital," he explained. (I had just visited my Dad after neck surgery

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there earlier in the afternoon.) "I attended my first rodeo at Will Rogers when I was about two. Look, I've made it 100 yards in 46 years." The Scott Theatre is in the same complex with the rodeo arena.

Townes taps a deep well with his writing. His song about the woman, green eyes blazing, in a deep, dark cave is the stuff that kept Joseph Campbell busy for a lifetime. The answer in the song: "Embrace the god of love."

"We've all got holes to fill. Them holes are all that's real. Some fall on you like a stone and some you dig yourself."

"I'll be bringing back the melody

and the rhythm that I find." Some of my favorite Van Zandt lines.

Clark came out with his son Travis, on bass, and songwriter Verlin Thompson on guitar. This trio did the writing of Guy Clark more than justice. "Less is more," Guy says. "Understated." "Leave space for the listener. Leave some holes." He did. Travis was intense of an acoustic bass, leaving space. And Verlin carried some leads, again leaving space.

We heard the classics, and we heard cuts from his new album "Boats to Build," on Asylum Records/Nashville. Again, less is more, for the simplicity of the musical backing underscores Clark's brilliant craftsmanship.

His song, "Ramblin' Jack and Mahan," tells a story of a backstage gathering after Jerry Jeff's birthday bash. And Guy Clark can tell stories. But it also captures the essence of the outlaw spirit. Guy uses the specific incident to get at a universal truth. The closer he looks at something, the more we can see.

Mahan, Larry — that is — is having his own birthday bash this Saturday at the San Antonio Rose Palace/

Scenic Look at Boerne Stage Road. Jerry Jeff Walker and Tony Joe White will provide great music, and the event serves as a benefit for the Brighter Days Horse Refuge, Inc. — an organization that takes care of mistreated and unwanted horses. Dan, who cats hay and occupies a space in my back pasture, may need a friend for the winter. Yes, I plan on attending the event.

The festivities include a horse show at noon, Mahan's training clinic follows, then a bull riding exhibition, hunter/jumper exhibition, dinner followed by Jerry Jeff, an auction and a final dance from 9:30 'till the cows come home. Call 512-755-8782 for tickets and information.

We had less sound at Luckenbach than Guy wanted so he ended the evening there by getting out in the middle of the packed house and performing, with his group (Townes joining by drumming the back of his guitar), acoustic. Imagine, a still house at Luckenbach, listening to "Desperados Waiting For a Train." The band snake-danced their way back to the stage at the end of the



Larry Mahan and Guy Clark at Luckenbach. (Photo by Kathleen Hudson)

evening. Too much is never enough for Guy Clark and Townes Van Zandt. Or for Kathleen Hudson.

Happy Trails. Kathleen Hudson is executive director of the Texas Heritage Music Foundation and teaches English at Sulzweiner College.