

In the KVET building on Lamar, there is a small recording studio, one of the two quadraphonic studios in Austin. The sound board inside is home-made, but the number of albums and singles decorating the walls testify to its quality.

The man who made the board and produced the records is Bill Josie. With his list of credits, including the first Johnny Winter album, and his deliberate, easy-going air, Josie conveys the impression that he is a veteran of years in production. Actually, he produced his first records in the late 1960's, after a short time in the radio business.

"I was the station manager at KAZZ-FM here from 1964 to 1967," Josie said, "and my son Rim was the disc jockey--his real name is Bill Josie, Jr., but he went by what you'd call his stage name. We did remote broadcasts in those days from some of the local clubs--the Garacen Club, the Caravan Club, the Saville, the New Orleans Club, the Latin Quarter, the Eleventh Door and many of the other so-called folk houses.

"We broadcasted Janis Joplin then, who was at that time a folk singer at the Eleventh Door, playing acoustic guitar and singing. We also did Townes Van Zandt, Jerry Jeff Walker, Don Sanders and a host of other folk singers, including Michael Murphy.

"Then, from the New Orleans Club, we did the Thirteenth Floor Elevators. It was hard to believe how packed it was there; there were about 900 people there, with a capacity of only 350. You know, Rocky had a way about him; he was almost dramatic onstage. The interaction between him and Tracy Sutherland really sparkled."

It wasn't until after Josie had been broadcasting live gigs for a while that he got into record production. "We did performances of the Sweet Tarts, the Lavender Hill Express and a number of other bands, then we came to realize that there was a great deal of talent in Austin. So Rim and I organized Sonobeat and Sonosong while we still had the radio station, and started recording. Starting when KAZZ was sold--it's now KOKE-FM--we made production a full-time affair.

"Our first single was by the Sweet Tarts. It was the first commercial stereo single, and was recognized as such by the trade journals, such as Variety. The lead singer of that band was Ernie Gammage, a significant fact because he also sang on the first quadraphonic single.

"We also did three singles with the Lavender Hill Express and various other groups, including the Conqueror. Although

Bill Josie

their record was only a single, it had a record jacket designed by Gilbert Shelton. We had Gilbert do a lot of work for us; he was very talented, extremely co-operative and wonderful to work with."

The production of albums soon followed as Josie expanded his work. "The first album was done on location at the Club Saville, Crest Heights. The artists were the Lee Arlano Trio. Jim Franklin drew the excellent cover and John Bustin of the American-Statesman wrote the liner notes. Arlano did very well, and is now extremely active out west, based in Denver."

Josie's second album was the one that he has become most well-known for. "I knew two people who used to advertise with us at KAZZ who ran the Vulcan Gas Company, Gary Scanlon and Houston White. They used to invite me to come down, and I really dug all the music that was happening there."

"It was in August, 1968, on a Friday evening, that I saw an albino guitarist on stage there I could not believe. I called Rim and told him to come down, and he said, 'If you can sign him up, sign him up, because he's one of the greatest guitarists I've ever heard.'"

"Progressive Blues Experiment" was a collection of what was then Johnny Winter's best songs. "I requested that he include 'Rolling and Tumbling' on the record," Josie said. "I watched the audience when he played that number and saw that they responded enthusiastically to it."

"To cut the album, I rented the Vulcan out on off nights. I put Red Turner on the stage and multiple miked the drums. Johnny and Tommy's amps were down on the floor. We only overdubbed on two songs; on both of those, he did all the acoustic work. We cut those two at my home. We printed advance copies and singles on Sonobeat, sold a few, and gave quite a few away to friends. Those advance copies recently sold for \$200 each in San Francisco."

"Liberty Records contacted me after Johnny played at the Fillmore West in San Francisco and had become an overnight hit. After that, I recorded 'Wali and the Afro-Caravan,' five black artists who called the album 'Home Lost and

Found.' It was released on the United Artists sub-label, 'Solid State.' They used primitive African style conga drums, including the kalimba, a South African thumb piano. Wali was truly a perfectionist, as well as a scholar of African music. He's in New York, his home town, now, playing in Harlem and the Village."

Josie has recorded a number of other albums which remain unreleased. Advance copies of one, recorded by the Vince Mariani trio, have been printed. "Vince's guitarist, Eric Johnson, was fifteen when we cut it," Josie said. They used various vocalists, including Bill Wilson, who has recorded some material in Nashville due for release in late February or early March.

"Mariani's group played with Deep Purple and Bloodrock in San Antonio. Vince got a standing ovation for his drum solo there, and Eric's playing was excellent. His real strength is phrasing and his control of feedback. Eric is the most exceptional musician I've ever recorded. He's only seventeen now, and he not only plays guitar so exceptionally well, but he also plays piano like you'd like to hear it played."

Josie's involvement with quadraphonic recording has changed his routine. "I got intrigued immediately with quad. I changed the name from Sonobeat to Sonobeat, and recorded a track with Eric Johnson called 'I know why,' with three bass guitars and Eric on lead guitar. This was only half of a single; the first complete quad single was cut, ironically, with Ernie Gammage, who was on the first stereo single, as the singer."

Josie's current plans revolve around a female vocalist--"Just call her Joyce"--who, he claims, is bound for stardom. She's like a combination of Tammy Wynette and Janis," Josie said. "I feel her style of singing--a country-blues feel--will be the big thing for 1973."

In addition to rock, Josie has recorded a diverse number of music styles, ranging from classical to country. "There are differences in how you treat each style," he said. "In country music, the vocalist must sell the lyrics, so you put the voice way out in front. Rock singers, however, are engulfed in the music and become a part of it. Rhythm and blues has a so-called syncopated beat, and you keep the voice and instruments at the same level because the spurts of voice and music don't overlap. I prefer just cutting instrumentals, actually."

"Production is hard to get into. Apprenticeships in radio are certainly helpful, and a knowledge of electronics helps. You probably have to start by hanging around the studios, sweeping up, hanging mikes and so forth. One thing is mandatory, though; you really have to have a love of the music you're working with."

Joe Rowe

In our city, saturated with boogie and neo-Dylan folkies, we may be treated shortly to the playing of Joe Rowe and John Mohamadi, two local musicians who specialize in the music of the Middle East.

Rowe plays several stringed instruments from the east, but when working with Mohamadi, a Persian-born drummer and engineering student, he concentrates on the oud, a North African instrument somewhat similar to the lute.

"I was born and raised in Austin," Rowe said, "but I've lived in California for about seven years. I was in Europe for about three years, and spent three months of that time in North Africa. I was exposed to this music before, though. I've always liked what you might call Oriental music of all kinds after I heard Ravi Shankar years ago."

"In California, I mainly played around San Francisco on the Turkish saz with some belly dancers. One of them, I remember, worked with a black boa constrictor in her act. But when I found out that Hamza El Din was in Austin, I came right back home again. I just couldn't believe that Hamza was teaching in my home town."

Hamza El Din, for those who haven't been enlightened, is the world's most respected virtuoso on the oud. For about two years, Hamza taught at UT, leaving last year for a new teaching job in Athens, Ohio. It is said that one of the reasons for his departure was indignation he encountered from other members of the music faculty centering around his lack of western musical de-

"He's very special," Rowe said. "He's the only Nubian oud player in the world. There are no other oud players like him, in the past or the present, no others. No other oud players can play and sing counterpoint at the same time the way Hamza does. He doesn't work with anyone, although he once told me he would use a Nubian drummer if he could find one."

"His stay in America started with the Newport Festival, where he found there are lots of followers here for his music. Hamza later played at the Woodstock Festival and will probably return to Austin for a final performance this year before going back home."

At UT Hamza taught a number of students in appreciating Middle Eastern music. "There are a lot around who enjoy it," Rowe said, "but I can only think of three Americans here who actually play the oud. One of them is Jeff Mink, who made my oud. I had bought my first one through New York; it was made in Lebanon, and Hamza got it for me cheap. Jeff's is better though. He has a different approach to his music than I do; he's more into making instruments and theory. He's writing a book on the music now, although I don't know who'd read it."

John Mohamadi had met Joe only three days before the interview, but by that time, they had already worked up a number of songs in various Middle Eastern styles. "I was very fortunate to meet John here," Joe said. "He's one of the best drummers in this kind of music. He's really dynamite."

Mohamadi also plays percussion with Vida, a local jazz-rock band. "I play conga drums, percussion--I never played trap set drums, though," John said. "Our drummer said he would teach me how to play them if I taught him how to play my drums, but I told him it isn't difficult to hit a drum with a stick. When you play tampo (a Middle Eastern drum), you have to use every one of your fingers as well."

"I moved here from Houston last fall," John continued. "I was really looking for some people who could play, and it's wonderful that I found Joe. We met at the UT Student Union, and Joe said 'Hey, are you that Persian drummer?'"

There are, of course, many differences between the music of America and that of the Middle East. The use of quarter tones, for example, may lead western listeners to simply think the instruments are out of tune or the singers are flat. In addition, there isn't any harmony, in the western homophonic sense, in oud music; rather, tetrachords, or successive notes grouped together in a sort of linear chord, make up the basis for harmony.

John Mohamadi and Joe Rowe do not recognize these differences as being insurmountable, however. "We don't want to be stuck into a Middle Eastern style necessarily," Joe said. "I'd like to try some combinations of different styles and ideas and see what we come up with."

"It's not difficult to play these different styles," John agreed. "I just put myself inside the music. No matter if it's rock or western or eastern; I'm not only thinking of my native music, because I love all music."

Bob Doerschuk