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Category: John Goodspeed/Just Country

Just Country: Americana Jam draws top acts to Gruene Hall

San Antonio Express-News

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Mattson Rainer makes it sound easy to pull together an impressive lineup of talent.

"It's a lot of guys I met over the years, and I think they're really great. So I asked them to play and they said yes," said Rainer, program director of New Braunfels radio station KNBT, 92.1 FM, and producer of the seventh annual Americana Music Jam on Sunday at Gruene Hall.

"They know that every year we do a big fund-raiser, and every February and March I start calling around," he said.

Some 15 acts said yes, including **Reckless Kelly**, performing at 12:30 p.m.; **Cory Morrow** at 1:15; **Houston Marchman** at 2; **Greg Trooper** at 2:40; **Walt Wilkins/Jon Randall** at 3:15; **Billy Joe Shaver** at 4:05; **Pinmonkey** at 4:50; **Kevin Welch** at 5:35; **Jim Lauderdale** at 6:20; **Ray Wylie Hubbard** at 7:05; **Hal Ketchum** at 8; **Pat Green** at 8:45; **Radney Foster** at 9:40; and **Jack Ingram** wraps up things at 10:30.

Trooper, Ketchum, Pinmonkey and Shaver are first-timers to the event.

In addition, the Great American Country cable channel is filming the jam for a TV special. Tickets, \$35, are available only at the door.

"Considering most of these guys would cost \$20 to \$25 on their own, this is a pretty good deal for a whole day of music," Rainer said.

Get there early. Once again, he expects a sellout. But, with a daylong festival, some are bound to leave early. Then more can enter. Doors open at 11 a.m.

With sets about 45 minutes long, the music is nonstop to midnight on two stages — inside the hall and another in the beer garden.

Proceeds will go to Comal County Child Welfare Board, which helps place children from abusive and neglected situations in foster care, and The Institute for Public Health and Education Research, which aids at-risk teens.

The jam has raised more than \$120,000. Call (830) 606-1281 or visit

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Impressive debut

Patrick Glenn didn't cut corners for his first album, "Everything But the Words."

He assembled top-flight, mostly unrecorded songs from writers such as the late **Harlan Howard** ("I Fall to Pieces"), **Jim Lauderdale** ("Don't Make Me Come Over There and Love You") and **John Ims** ("She's in Love With the Boy").

For the producer, he turned to **Benny McArthur**, fiddler and lead guitarist for **George Strait's Ace in the Hole Band**. He helped with the other musicians, including fellow Aces **Mike Kennedy**, **Mike Daily**, **Rick McRae** and **Ronnie Huckaby**; **Asleep at the Wheel** fiddler **Jason Roberts**; **Cory Morrow** guitarist **John Carroll**; and **Clay Blaker/Jason Allen** bassist **Al Quaid**.

The result is one hot album.

"It's going to be hard to top, I tell you," said Glenn, who'll celebrate the album's release with his **Snake in the Boot Band** Friday at Leon Springs Dance Hall. A canned goods donation to the San Antonio Food Bank will knock a dollar off admission.

"It was a shocking experience to be in the studio with these guys," said Glenn, 29, of San Antonio, who's been playing around here for about three years. "Having grown up listening to them, I had to pinch myself to realize I was really doing it."

The album falls firmly on the traditional side of contemporary country.

"Traditional, meaning lots of steel and fiddle, swing and shuffles," Glenn said, adding that five songs were written or co-written by Lauderdale, one of his favorites.

Between gigs across South and Central Texas, Glenn personally is pushing the album to the 70 or so radio stations across the state that report to the Texas Music Chart.

"I've had nothing but good feedback from die-hard country fans," he said.

The album, on Glenn's El Toro Grande Records, was recorded at the Fire Station Studios in San Marcos. For a preview, visit www.patrickglenn.net.

The Snake in the Boot Band is Glenn on vocals and rhythm guitar; **Adrian Rodriguez** of Lubbock, lead guitar; **Albert Espinoza** of Pleasanton, drums; **Charlie Bragg** of Canyon Lake harmony and upright electric bass; **Greg Holland** of Bandera, steel guitar; and **Byron Zipp** of Bandera, fiddle.

Dealing a winning hand

North Texan **Kevin Deal** is packing another CD full of stellar songs on his trip to John T. Floore Country Store on Saturday. His fourth album, like the others such as "On the Breeze" and "Honky Tonks 'N' Churches," hit the Americana chart quickly. After a couple of weeks, it's No. 38 and climbing.

It's called "The Lawless," but Deal really lays down the law on what songwriting and hard-hitting stories are all about.

Writing 10 of the 13 songs, Deal takes a rich and raw-boned look at life, death and love through the eyes of rogues, ne'er-do-wells, gamblers, thieves and killers.

The lyrics slide into a musical palette of rootsy bluegrass, country, folk and rock with help from Lloyd Maines, the producer, and harmony vocals from Terri Hendrix.

Michael Waters opens.

Quick picks

The most popular campground in Texas continues to build on a new tradition — the fourth annual Garner State Park Homecoming Concert. This year's bill includes plenty of Cajun and Western with **Fiddlin' Frenchie Burke** and **Johnny Lyon & The Country Nu-Notes**. Campsites no doubt are gone by now, but there are others in the area. The open-air concert begins at 8 p.m. Saturday Call (830) 232-6132.

If Western swing's your thing, there's plenty of it in San Marcos on Saturday. It's the 16th annual Texas Natural & Western Swing Festival. The first part features crafts, food and music from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the town square. The dance at 7:30 on the banks of the San Marcos River features dozens of legends, artists and 2003 inductees into the hall of fame, including former **Asleep at the Wheel** steel guitar player **Cindy Cashdollar**. Call (866) 839-3378 or visit www.tex-fest.com.

Not any old artist will pair the **Ernest Tubb** classic "Waltz Across Texas" with the traditional Irish ballad "Galway Bay" in the same show. But packing easy-listening hits and country favorites, **Daniel O'Donnell** is not any old artist. O'Donnell, a country star in his native Ireland, has sold more than 5 million albums, 2 million videos and once surpassed the **Spice Girls** in popularity in a survey in England. O'Donnell's North American tour stops at Laurie Auditorium at 7 p.m. Sunday.

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