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## Featured Music: Wednesday, July 09, 2008

### The Panthys '08

And the winners of the 11th Annual Fort Worth Weekly Music Awards are ...

By **ANTHONY MARIANI**

We got a lot of votes this year. Almost 20,000, to be exact. Both online and in print. And thanks to our ballot-counters — our three interns and lone marketing person — we were able to announce the winners of the 11th Annual Fort Worth Weekly Music Awards last Sunday night at Rodeo Exchange in the Stockyards.

Were there any surprises? Not really, unless you count perennial runners-up Spoonfed Tribe's taking home not one but two Panthys, for Album of the Year (Public Service Announcement) and best hard-rock band. Which leads me to wonder if we should change the voting format, from chosen nominees to write-ins only. Would it make any difference? Eh, probably not. The more popular bands would come out on top anyway. Another option is to go gold, silver, and bronze. But wouldn't that be like giving the last-place team in Little League a "participation" trophy? Très un-American.

Making everyone happy, of course, isn't the point. Patting local musicians on the back — even ones who weren't nominated this year — is, and losing nominees can take solace in the fact that, while they didn't win, a lot of them still got several hundred votes apiece. That's a whole lotta love.

Oddly enough, only a few winners showed up for the party. Not to say the place wasn't packed — several hundred people took part. But in my six years of doing the Music Awards here, I'd never brought back as many un-picked-up Panthys as I did last Sunday. (Winners are welcome to get their trophies — little growling panther heads, in honor of our city's unofficial mascot — by swinging by the office at 3311 Hamilton Ave. any time during normal business hours.) Maybe some local musos are getting too big for their britches. I dunno. I wish they could've been there.

Rodeo Exchange is pretty kick-ass — it's basically one giant dance floor surrounded by several mini-bars and a stage. We opened the doors around 5:30 p.m., played our Music Awards compilation CDs on the house sound system, and let people mingle and nosh on the delicious food catered by Scampi's and Central Market. At around 6, the first of four nominees for best new artist, the Rivercrest Yacht Club, played a couple of songs — typically, all of the new artist nominees play, but only four were available this year. In between performances — by the Panther City Bandits, Proud Warrior, Telegraph Canyon, and last year's best new artist, The Campaign — we handed out some hardware.

Big winners this year include Black Tie Dynasty, Calhoun, Maren Morris, PlayRadioPlay!, and Spoonfed, all of which won two awards each. Black Tie was voted best rock band, and frontman Cory Watson won male vocalist. Calhoun took home awards for Rock Song of the Year ("Breathe"), and frontman Tim Locke won best songwriter. Morris garnered Panthys for best Texas Music and female vocalist, and PRP's album, Texas, and song, "Elephants as Big as Whales," were victorious in their respective categories: Album of the Year and Song of the Year.

There's no doubt that some bands have locks on certain categories. I can't remember the last time Pablo and the Hemphill 7 didn't win best live band, which also goes for Morris (Texas Music, Female Vocalist), Daniel Katsük (mostly for Acoustic/Folk), Collin Herring (Alt-Country), Green River Ordinance (Artist of the Year), Ridglea Theater (Venue), and Velvet Love Box (Cover/Tribute Band). FYI, our vote-counters informed me that VLB won by a single ballot, beating out co-front-runners Poo Live Crew. Poo People, you all can come on over and hunt for hanging chads if you like. (Not really.)

Then again, there are categories that are always delightfully up in the air, starting with best new artist, a category that serves as a barometer of sorts of the scene in general. Not only were this year's nominees diverse, representing everything from rock to space-rock to disco to rap to punk to old-timey Depression-Era brilliance, but they also were plentiful, with eight nominees in all. The winners, Whiskey Folk Ramblers, were front-runners, for sure, but so were three other bands (based purely on their popularity): Panther City Bandits, Telegraph Canyon, and the RYC, who had to have been (make that, "better have been") pleased with winning another category, R&B/Rap. Whiskey Folk was one of the new-artist nominees not able to play; not that co-frontmen Tyler Rougeux and Jeremiah Christensen weren't thankful for their award. And as far as I could tell, the new-artist nominees who did play didn't feel, you know, slighted.

ROCK  
Black Tie  
Dynasty

HARD ROCK  
Spoonfed Tribe

HEAVY METAL  
Addnerim

DJ/BEATSMITH  
Buddah

LIVE BAND  
Pablo and the  
Hemphill 7

AVANT-GARDE/  
EXPERIMENTAL  
The  
Underground  
Railroad

ALT-COUNTRY  
Collin Herring

TEXAS MUSIC  
Maren Morris

C&W  
100 Damned  
Guns  
ACOUSTIC/FOLK  
Daniel Katsük

JAZZ/WORLD  
Fort Worth Jazz  
Orchestra  
w/Adonis Rose

BLUES/FUNK  
Holland K. Smith

R&B/RAP  
Rivercrest Yacht  
Club

FEMALE  
VOCALIST  
Maren Morris

MALE VOCALIST  
Cory Watson  
(Black Tie  
Dynasty)

SONGWRITER  
Tim Locke  
(Calhoun)

ALBUM OF THE  
YEAR  
Texas,  
PlayRadioPlay!

ROCK ALBUM

The avant-garde/experimental category is usually another pick-'em, loaded as it is with perennial nominees who never win and newcomers who win and then disappear the next year. The Underground Railroad, this year's winner, was an unlikely victor, not just because legendary ax-man Bill Pohl and company haven't been playing much but also because, well, the band is a musician's-musician band — in other words, hipsters don't necessarily flock to UR shows.

There were two pretty clear-cut favorites in that category: Top Secret ... Shhh!, whose frontman Marcus Lawyer also was a nominee in another category, the newly added MVP, and Pfffft!, psych-rock guitarist Ken Shimamoto's new, much-buzzed-about improv project. As mentioned above, second- and third-place finishers were still pulling in a few hundred votes apiece, and Top Secret and Pfffft! were no different.

Another new category is DJ/Beatsmith, and, I'm not gonna lie, the genre is still somewhat alien to me. In fact, I can't recall ever having heard winner DJ Buddah's handiwork, and while I know he/she existed at the time of the ballot's construction, I can't find any trace of him/her now. I hope he/she is OK.

As for MVP, Dave Karnes won, and not to take anything away from the stalwart jazz impresario and rocker, but all of the MVPs — Lee Allen, Andre Edmondson, Matt Hembree, Bart Rose, Adonis Rose, and Lawyer — are winners in everyone's book.

The traditional categories — C&W, Jazz/World, and Blues/Funk — also were actually exciting. Perennial blues winner James Hinkle was (finally) topped by his stiffest perennial competition, Holland K. Smith, and in C&W, relative newcomers 100 Damned Guns bested local pillars Tommy Alverson, Cadillac Sky, and Lost Country, among others. Another relative newcomer, Rose with his Fort Worth Jazz Orchestra, won his category pretty handily, based on vote-counters' reports.

Lastly, as part of the competition every year, we induct a new class of local musos into our Fort Worth Music Hall of Fame. Two of the three new inductees, John Nitzinger and Red Young, were on hand to accept their lifetime achievement awards, and Buddy Whittington's wife Cathy and longtime bassist Wayne Six accepted the legendary ax-slinger's award on his behalf. (Whittington is currently touring Europe with John Mayall's Bluesbreakers.)

No one likes to party on a school night, especially on a Sunday — there's that whole "day of rest" thing that still makes some of us reformed Catholics feel guilty for doing anything other than sleeping, praying, and fasting on "the Lord's day." Long story short: We appreciate every nominee, every musician, and ever voter for helping us make this year's Music Awards our best yet. See you next year.

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**OF THE YEAR**  
Public Service  
Announcement,  
Spoonfed Tribe

**SONG OF THE  
YEAR**  
"Elephants as  
Big as Whales,"  
PlayRadioPlay!

**ROCK SONG OF  
THE YEAR**  
"Breathe,"  
Calhoun

**ARTIST OF THE  
YEAR**  
Green River  
Ordinance

**COVER/TRIBUTE  
BAND**  
Velvet Love Box

**MVP**  
Dave Karnes


**VENUE**  
Ridglea Theater

**NEW ARTIST**  
Whiskey Folk  
Ramblers

[Back to Top](#)

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