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“I want to tell you about Texas Radio & the Big Beat. It comes out of the Virginia Swamps, cool and slow, with a backbeat, narrow and hard to master. Some call it heavenly in it's brilliance, others, mean and rueful of the Western dream. I love the friends I have gathered together on this thin raft....we have constructed pyramids in honour of our escaping for this is the land where the Pharaoh died.”

If Jim Morrison, brilliant lyricist and frontman from legendary group The Doors had ever met Phil McIntyre, lyricist and songwriter for local band Texas Radio & the Big Beat the two would had shared some really cool imagery. It was these words of Morrison's that McIntyre adapted for his band's name and the similarities between the works of Morrison and McIntyre run deeper than just a simple band name or song title, and that's not to suggest that Texas Radio is a Doors cover band, although that mistake has been made before, mostly by people just judge everything by a label....what was that old saying about a book and it's cover? Well it applies to Texas Radio. Pigeon-holing this three piece would be a mistake. One only needs to listen to a few tracks from their debut eponymous album to

appreciate the complex imagery that lists vividly upon the simple musical core that Texas Radio produce. Elements of reggae, blues, rock and even punk blend together in this guitar, bass and drum combination that plays all too irregularly around the live venues of Newcastle.

McIntyre, who cut his teeth playing guitar in a Taree band called Boris & the Karloffs, is a man passionate about his music. It's probably the reason why he has laboured so long and hard over his debut CD, and is the reason he is still willing to have a chat about the LP even though he is flat out on his back, caught in the ravages of the killer flu that has been making it's way around the throats and lungs of the Novocastrian people this winter. It's definitely the reason why there is a lack of quotes in this story. How can a journo expect his simple tape recorder to decipher McIntyre's softly spoken words between the occasional coughs and splutters associated with this illness? But the memory is pretty vivid and the story goes something like this.

Music had always been a strong element in McIntyre's life, he would suggest maybe even *the* driving force as exemplified by his hand-made guitar, lovingly textured when he was just a youngster and the numerous nights he spent lying in

bed listening to his wireless through his pillow, as not to wake anyone else up, more than often he'd fall asleep that way. The next significant period was when he first heard The Saints *Stranded*. For a lot of young guitarists this was a song with great impact. For McIntyre, it changed his whole aspect of songwriting. It's kind of ironic that all these years later McIntyre got the chance to support The Saints (at least Chris Baileys 90's version) at The Cambridge Hotel in February of this year. From the influential punk chords, McIntyre has taken a generation of influences as varied as The Police and managed to mould a sounded crafted just as lovingly as that afore-mentioned guitar. But Phil, modest in most of his ways will tell you that Texas Radio is more than just him. Bassist Joe Williams, and drummer Dave Carruthers play integral roles in the band and although McIntyre has penned nearly all the tracks on the album it was not without the influence and input of the rhythm section that the songs became the way they are.

As I mentioned before the CD seems to have taken a long time coming together. In actual fact recordings were a few years apart. The first tracks were put down at the old Skyhigh studios at Jesmond with local legend Mark Tinson. The rest of the CD recorded later at Adamstown's

Forefront studios and Tinson's Overhead studio in Cooks Hill. The first single *Wasteway* made an appearance on the 2NUR-FM produced *Cat in the Hat* compilation CD. It's cruisey overtones fittingly more than nicely between the hard rock grunge and punk chops of other Novo bands and left astute listeners wanting more. Well now they have it in the finely tuned debut CD that also has in it's credits a cool guitar solo from Aussie rock legend Bob Spencer and the maestro of mastering himself Mr Don Bartley.

Reactions to the CD have already been promising with radio play on quite a few stations including high rotation on 2BOBFM's breakfast show, and the word from Phil is a video, put together by qualified movie maker Williams (bass players never fail to mystify) will feature some rare NASA footage. It's all part of Texas Radio & the Big Beat. Surprising, familiar, comfortable and cool or probably better put by the lizard-king Morrison "I want to tell you about Texas Radio and the Big Beat, slow driven, slow and mad like some new language."

Texas Radio & the Big Beat is out now at all good record stores. Gigs are few and far between so catch them when you can.

**Straight From the
Horses Mouth**

