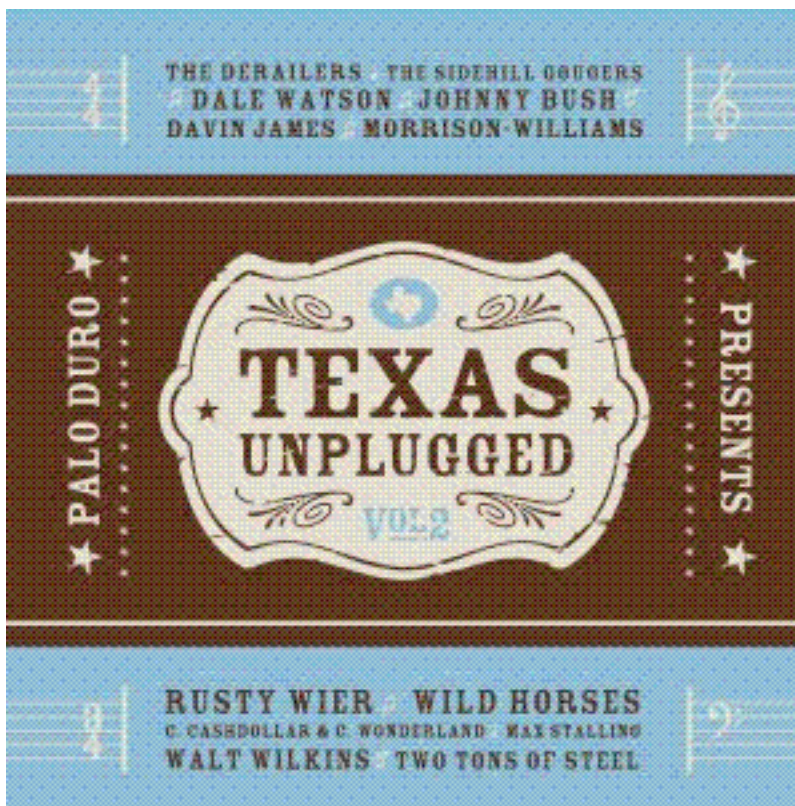


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## Texas Unplugged Volume 2

By: **George Peden**, CSO Staff Journalist



They're small, innovative and inspiring. It's the Texas label Palo Duro. With an ambition to bring the best of country music to the fans, the label, over a short period of years, has assembled a vibrant and talented roster. Now with a secure line-up including Dale Watson, The Derailers and Darryl Lee Rush among others, the label keeps its fan promise by releasing *Texas Unplugged Volume Two*. The album follows the successful *Texas Unplugged* debut from 2004.

The aim is still the same, and the music is as exciting as ever. Label founder and this album's producer, Chris Thomas, has brought together 12 Texas regional acts. With tunes only produced for the *Unplugged* series and all stripped down

and acoustic, the series is a primer for those who want more from their music than just a catchy hook and something to hum. Here you'll find substance. Here you'll discover singers and songwriters, tunesmiths, who contribute to their art in a positive, honest, shared and revealing manner.

Many of the names are already known. Many others should be.

The reformed Derailers open the set with melodic heartache on "I'm Still Missing You". The SideHill Gougers, with "One Tiny Sin", add some fiddle and Dobro flavor to engaging three-part harmony. "Turtle Bayou Turnaround" is instrumental artistry at work courtesy of Cindy Cashdollar and Carolyn Wonderland, while humor and the profound benefits of "Duct Tape" come shared by a couple of good ol' boys from Dallas, Morrison-Williams. Listen out also for Belton, Texas, locals Wild Horses. "You And Me And San Antone" is a perfect showcase for Angela Rae's spirited and driving lead vocal.

Hank Williams 111's favorite country music savior, Dale Watson, offers thanks to the honky tonk on the whiskey-inspired and beer-drenched "As Long As The Bottle's Full". As always, Watson delivers. It's a knockout tune. Rusty Weir shines a lyrical spotlight on compelling patriotism in "Texas Love And War", while Davin James gets bluesy on the slap bass primed "Dog Days Blues". Jumping jive arrives with Two Tonnes of Steel on "Car Seat", while respected performers Max Stalling and Walt Wilkins enjoy welcomed appearances.

If you're finding your way to Texas music, both these albums are the needed signposts. Raw and real, with inspired lyrics and performance – a fan's dream realized.

I wrote a review on the debut Volume One some time ago. It's included below. Check these albums out and do yourself the favor. And when you do, you'll understand more fully why when it comes to labels, in the words of chart-climbing Joe Nichols, size matters. Smaller is better.

Various: Texas Unplugged Volume 2

Track listing:

- 1: The Derailers: I'm Still Missing You
- 2: The SideHill Gougers: One Tiny Sin
- 3: Dale Watson: As Long As The Bottle's Full
- 4: Johnny Bush: Rio Grande Runs Red
- 5: Davin James: Dog Days Blues
- 6: Morrison-Williams: Duct Tape
- 7: Rusty Weir: Texas Love & War
- 8: Wild Horses: You And Me And San Antone
- 9: C.Cashdollar & C.Wonderland: Turtle Bayou Turnaround
- 10: Max Stalling: The Rodeo Song
- 11: Walt Wilkins: The Path To Your Door
- 12: Tw o Tons Of Steel: Car Seat

## Various: Texas Unplugged Volume 1



After listening to this solid roundup of 12 tracks from the best Texas has to offer, I have only one thing to say – roll on Volume 2. I can't wait, as Volume 1 is a fine introduction to talent reliant only on stripped down instrumentation, good voices and even better tunes.

As the label rightly asserts, this is country music with Texas spirit. From the opening strains of TC Taylor's "Don't It Make You Wanna Dance," you know this is something special. Again, like Ed Burleson's album, he, incidentally, appears here with "The Way You're Treating Me," there are no disappointments.

On an album sprinkled with Dobro, guitars, slapped bass, snare-brushed drums and other minimal musical interruptions, these singer songwriters come to the microphone with treasured tunes. They're tunes that, if given a receptive ear, are sure to win fans to an often overlooked genre – that being, the singer songwriter.

On an album of highlights, listen out for a killer song from Deryl Dodd, "Old Time Sake". It's not the pearl snaps which claim the attention here; rather, it's an old guy with a love for the music of bygone days of Hank and Lefty. A guy captured in all his aging innocence by the gentle simplicity of Dodd's album offering.

Brian Burns brings humor with a perilous tale of culture clashes in a border town.

The lyrical high jinks involve dietary resolve and the art of staying in the saddle, as heard on the aptly-named “Bicycling In A Border Town”. It’s a standout tune. Terri Hendrix wins with her banjo-led TV tales of Springer and other annoyances on “Clicker”. Eleven Hundred Springs engage the rockier elements of acoustic playing on “Kick Me When I’m Down,” and Texas stalwart Larry Joe Taylor impresses with the inviting “Welcome To Paradise”.

If you’re looking for musical magic, you’ve just found it. The unplugged mix of tried and tested Americana, country, and blues is a ready-made gift for the discerning lover of Texas music.

Songs:

Texas Unplugged: Vol 1

01. TC Taylor: “Don’t It Make You Wanna Dance?”
02. Mike McClure: “My Sweet Lily”
03. Becca Dalrymple: “No Man’s Land”
04. Ed Burleson: “The Way You’ve Been Treating Me”
05. Houston Marchman: “Dark Black Irish Eyes”
06. Deryl Dodd: “Old Time Sake”
07. Sisters Morales: “Even the Rain”
08. Terri Hendrix: “Clicker”
09. Eleven Hundred Springs: “Kick Me When I’m Down”
10. Larry Joe Taylor: “Welcome to Paradise”
11. Brian Burns: “Bicycling in a Border Town”
12. Tommy Alverson: “Texas Woman”

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