

THE DIXIE THEATER

Venue reopens after remodeling

Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

Willie Bennett's vision of people circulating through the streets of downtown Bryan, drifting from club to club, may slowly be coming true.

Bennett, 3rd Floor Cantina manager, and his partner, John Williams, opened The Dixie Theater Wednesday night after a month of renovating the venue formerly known as the Ford Opera House.

The theater opened last night in a free performance by local alternative band, Ty and The Semiautomatics.

Bennett said he and Williams wanted to open a second music venue because they were running out of nights to book new acts at 3rd Floor Cantina.

"I'm excited because it allows me to do twice as much stuff as we're doing," Bennett said. "There were just not enough shows of the week. We just had a few shows we were having to turn down."

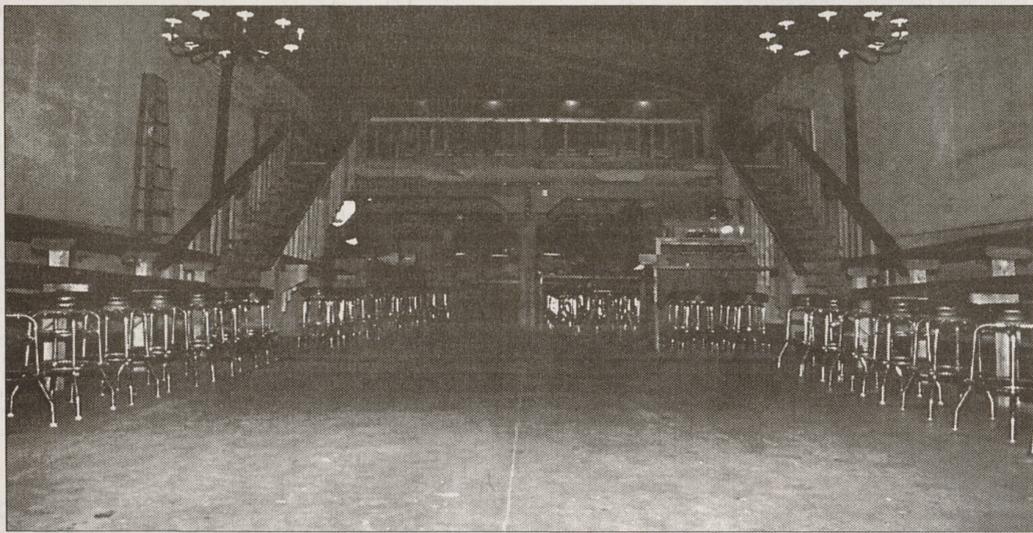
Bennett who books bands to perform at the club and said people expect primarily rock, reggae and country bands, with an occasional rhythm and blues performance.

Since he also books the bands at 3rd Floor Cantina, Bennett said he will coordinate the schedules of the clubs to offer people a variety of musical styles.

"I just want to make sure that I don't have the two venues hurting each other," Bennett said.

Bennett said he plans to sell passes which will allow people to see bands in both clubs on the same night.

A full-time crew has been working around the clock since April 29 when the Stafford Opera House closed, and Williams said many improvements have



Nick Rodnicki, THE BATTALION

The interior additions to The Dixie Theater include more seating along the sides and a new bar.

been made. Increased seating, better sound and air conditioning systems and a new, 20-foot bar have been installed.

"We've completely remodeled it," Williams said. "It's going to be a lot more comfortable and enjoyable to come to. It's not just an open pit anymore. It's going to be a place where people can relax and listen to live music."

Even though the changes to the building are numerous, one thing will remain the same.

"The dance floor is still going to be wide-open if people still want to get at it," Williams said.

Scott Martin, manager of The Dixie Theater, said the atmosphere of the club has improved and they have received a positive response from bands.

"We've always had high expectations of this establishment," Martin said. "We just knew it wasn't being run to its full potential. We have one of the best lineups I've seen in a long time. Everybody wants to play here."

Ty Southerland, lead singer of Ty and the Semiautomatics, said he was impressed with the renovations made to the club.

"It's phenomenal," Southerland said. "It sounds a lot better, looks a lot nicer and there's a lot more places to sit down."

Southerland said the club will be successful because of good management by Williams and Bennett.

"I play all over the state of Texas," he said. "Willie and John have to be some of the best club owners I've ever worked with."

Bennett said he hopes more people will begin to open clubs in downtown Bryan, especially clubs that would make the available musical styles more diverse.

"The more the merrier down here," Bennett said. "I'm all for anyone else opening a club down here."

Bennett said that in time, downtown Bryan may be known across Texas as a place packed with people, clubs and fun. Ultimately, he says he would like to see it become like the music strip in downtown Austin.

"I believe that within the next year or two, it will become a 6th Street area," he said.

Billy Goat opens as first major act at The Dixie

Amy Collier
THE BATTALION

They travel across the United States singing, dancing and even stripping for their audiences.

The six members of Billy Goat have made a name for their band by shock-crowds with expressive performances, often encouraging people to let their inhibitions.

Billy Goat will bring its unique style to The Dixie Theater tonight. It will be the band's first big show since it shut its doors at the Stafford Opera House at the end of April.

Lead singer Mike Baird, Billy Goat's keyboard player, said the band's style of music is hard to describe.

"We take it from the elements of jazz, funk, rock, Latin and funk," Baird said. "I don't have a general sound. We all try different styles. We're not just one thing."

The band was started in 1989 by lead singer Mike Dillon in Deep Ellum, an area of Dallas known for its thriving music scene.

After the band became well-known in the Dallas area, it was signed to Hollywood Records and released *Bush Roaming Animals* in July 1992. Even though the album sold 10,000 copies in six weeks, the record company stopped shipping the album to stores and shut down, leaving Baird without a music contract.

However, this trouble did not stop the band's efforts to establish a name for itself in the music industry.

Billy Goat has released a self-produced album titled *Live at the Swingers Ball*, which is sold only at performances.

The band is currently working on another album titled *Phisic*, which should be released late this summer. Baird said they are hoping to be signed by a major record label before it is released.

Baird said the band performs almost 250 concerts each year and that, although constant travel in a van is tiring, the performances are still rewarding.

"It's the best part," he said. "It's really hard to maintain a normal mentality. The playing and the energy we have on stage is worth it. We are able to communicate musically very well."

Baird said that at concerts the band entertains the audience with liberating lyrics or by doing things band members could get arrested for, like taking their clothes off.

Band members have surprised audiences by stripping when they played an original song, "Take Your Clothes Off," Baird said. This bold move has been met with a positive response.

"They were shocked, and it drew people to see us," Baird said. "It has a lot more to do than just taking off your clothes. It's about shedding your inhibitions."

He said audiences now shed their clothes and expect the band to do the

same. "We're now identified by that," Baird said. "It might have been a mistake. I get tired of always taking my clothes off. It's not what we're all about. It's not all that in there."

The band is stopping in Bryan tonight

on the way to a tour of the West Coast, and will be the first out-of-town band to perform at The Dixie Theater.

"It's pretty cool," Baird said. "I feel honored that a club wanted Billy Goat to be one of the first bands playing there. I hope we live up to their expectations."



Billy Goat

WEEKEND PREVIEW



brainiac

Thursday

Billy Goat, a funk band from Kansas City, will be playing at The Dixie Theater. See related story.

Rage and Eden, a cover band from Austin, will be playing at The Tap.

Stephanie Lynn & High Energy, a Tejano band, will perform at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Ty & The Semiautomatics, a local alternative band, will be performing at Northgate Cafe. Local blues musician Bobby Hall will also perform.

Friday

brainiac, an alternative band from Ohio, will be playing at Northgate Cafe. The band, who has

opened for bands such as the Jesus Lizard and the Breeders, will be on the second stage of Lollapalooza from July 14 to July 19. Local bands, **Radioland Hit Squad**, and **Kneegaskit** will be opening.

Deep Blue Something, a hard rock band, will be playing at The Dixie Theater.

Luck of the Draw will be performing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Miss Molly and The Whips, a rhythm and blues band, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Peeping Tom, a local cover band with a few original songs, will be playing at The Tap.

Vaguely Familiar is performing at Sweet Eugene's.

Saturday

The Bar Nuns, a cover band from Houston, will be playing at The Tap.

Box Box will be performing at Sweet Eugene's.

Guy Forsyth, a blues band, is playing at 3rd Floor Cantina.

Neon Cowboys will be playing at The Texas Hall of Fame.

Townes Van Zandt will be playing with Mike West at The Dixie Theater.

Veil of Veronica, a local alternative band, will perform at Northgate Cafe. Local alternative band Foil will open.

Who's hot... ...who cares?

AMY
UPTMOR
COLUMNIST



People magazine's yearly "50 Most Beautiful People in the World" issue came out recently. For those of you who have not yet purchased this treat, don't waste your money. Not all of the chosen ones are quite as glamorous as cover girl Courtney Cox.

Let's start by being honest — these are not the 50 most beautiful people in the world. They are not even close. Rather, they are a random collection of somewhat attractive people who happen to be in the spotlight, mixed in with a few obscure artists and millionaires.

Unfortunately, the list does not succeed in capturing the beauty of the world. It turns out to be nothing more than a tacky "who's hot now" list.

The cheesiness of this list can be captured in one of the honorees — Jason Frank, who is Tommy, the White Ranger, of the Mighty Morphin Power Rangers.

Who's responsible for this garbage?

A few token categories always appear and whose recipients battle Tommy the white Ranger on the cheesiness scale. For example:

- Token teen idol: Scott Wolf, of Fox's primetime soap, "Party of Five." Past heartthrob winners include Jason Priestley and, believe it, Vanilla Ice.

- Token alternative music stud: Jeff Buckley. Honors last year went to the ever-brilliant Lemonhead Evan Dando.

- Token good ol' boy athlete: Steve Young, who stole this crown, among others, from Troy Aikman.

Not to sound completely '80s, but GAG ME! This list is a farce, a veritable 90210-style tribute to what plastic surgery, money and 15 minutes of fame can do for a person.

It wouldn't be as unbearable if the editors of this publication would attempt to make these people appear as if they have some substance. Why even bother including interviews if they are only going to tell things like how Elle Macpherson likes to run around nude and keeps herself on a steady diet of twigs and dirt?

It's not that some of the people on this list aren't attractive. But People fails to take anything other than looks into consideration when compiling this list.

This issue of People is as bad as high school yearbooks that include "best looking," "best smile" and "school favorite" categories. It's just a big popularity contest, where better choices are overlooked because they are not "in the spotlight."

At least yearbooks have an excuse — they're compiled by high school kids. But this list is compiled by the editors of People magazine. Thank you, People, for stooping down to this level.

Of course, beauty is in the eye of the beholder, and some people probably think this list is great. Everyone in the world would come up with their own list if given the chance. But they aren't.

So we're left with this list, which is neither definitive nor complete. It is not compiled by experts, and it is not in search of true beauty.

And like high school yearbooks, people will probably always buy this famous issue to gawk at some pictures and laugh at others.

And to wonder, "who comes up with this garbage?"