

Schlesinger wins Western Swing Song of the Year

His version of old Melody Masters' song

Fiddler and vocalist Paul Schlesinger of Taylor is the winner of the 2016 Western Swing Song of the Year for the tune, "You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams."

The song is a track on his CD, Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing.

The presentation occurred during the 21st Annual Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists awards banquet on Thursday, March 16, at the Brown-Lupton Ballroom on the Texas Christian University Campus in Fort Worth.

"You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams" was written in 1949 by lyricist Cecil R. "Butterball" Harris and composer Arlie A. Carter, who were band members of Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters from Taylor.

The song was originally recorded by the Melody Masters for Imperial Records, and sung by fiddler Perk Williams of Chriesman.

Williams would later become a close friend and mentor to Schlesinger.

All involved with the original recording are now deceased.

Schlesinger says, "The original recording is a tad slower than my version, and by today's recording standards sounds a bit primitive."

"It sold well enough regionally, but was not a hit in 1949. In 2011, Cecil Harris told me he wrote the song to fit around the heartbreak theme, using a 'hook line' that would hopefully catch the public's fancy. I always liked the song and occasionally performed it live at shows and dances."

In January, Schlesinger was contacted by the Academy of Western Artists (AWA) and informed that his recording of the song was a top five finalist for Western Swing Song of Year.

"I didn't know anything about the AWA and really had no idea the song would ultimately win," says Schlesinger.

"My wife Tara and I attended the event thinking it would just be an



PAUL SCHLESINGER and Perk Williams, ca. 1993, Chriesman.

interesting experience, and we'd never have the opportunity to go again. However, I think she secretly had more faith than me!"

Other award winners at this year's ceremony include national celebrities Rex Allen Jr., for Western Music Male Vocalist, and Roy Clark for Living Legend.

Schlesinger reports that Red Steagall, a giant in the western music field, was in the audience, as was Kenny Sears, the featured fiddler on the Grand Ole Opry, and who is a member of the Time Jumpers, a popular western swing group featured on RFD TV.

In all, there were about 400 in attendance.

Schlesinger says, "I gave my acceptance speech at the podium in front of all those luminaries. Since I didn't think I would win, I had not prepared anything. So I thanked the Lord for setting me on my life path, all the musicians who helped with the CD, as well as those folks who supported me."

The AWA's mission is to promote and preserve America's western past and its contemporary western future.

The album has caught the attention of many country and western swing enthusiasts around the globe, especially those who favor traditional, independently produced country music.

Country Music People, an international magazine published in the UK,

gave the CD a five-star rating in its July 2016 issue.

The magazine also spotlighted Schlesinger's career in its November 2016 issue.

The CD is currently No. 1 on the international Swingin' West radio show, a position held since last September.

Area station KRXT in Rockdale was one of the first to spin the songs.

Perk Williams, who died in 1994, grew up and settled in Burleson County, and is best known for singing on the original top five Billboard hit recording of "Release Me" in 1954.

Williams gave Schlesinger his first fiddle lessons in 1993. Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing band have played for the annual Perk Williams Tribute since 2002.

In addition to his Knights of Texas Swing band, Schlesinger is the music team leader for the Lee County Cowboy Church, and a member of the church's band Second Chance, which includes his wife Tara on piano, and Lexington's Bill Tucker on bass.

He also performs regularly with Glen Collins and the Alibis, and the Milam County Cowboy Church band.

He and his wife are members of the Comal Country Music Show house band in New Braunfels.

Both Schlesinger and his wife were named Entertainers of the Year in December 2016 by the Country Music Hall of Fame in Gatesville.

Second Chance band will be performing at the Burleson County Cowboy Church from 6-8 p.m. on Tuesday, May 2, during the evening service, as part of the annual Cowboy Camp Gathering.

The Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing CD is available at KRXT studios, the Dowdy House in Lexington, and online at www.paulschlesinger.com.

Be sure to visit www.facebook.com/schlesinger.paul, and www.awaawards.org.

SISD set to meet April 12

The Somerville School Board is set to meet on Wednesday, April 12, to approved the stipend schedule for 2017-2018.

The board will also consider a contract for canine detection services, an overnight senior trip and tax resale deeds.

The board will also discuss the new elementary school's ground breaking ceremony scheduled for April 27 at 10 a.m.



PAUL SCHLESINGER (CENTER) accepts award for his song, "You Were Meant to Ruin My Dreams," at the 21st Annual Will Rogers Academy of Western Artists awards banquet in Fort Worth on March 16. Presenting the award was Billy Bowles (left) and Cathy Whitten, DJs of radio station KSSL FM in Slaton, Texas. Over 400 western artists attended the event.

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KEYNOTE SPEAKER:
Rhonda Johnson
Rhonda and her husband David have been in pastoral ministry for over 30 years, currently at New Tabor Brethren church. She is a writer, Minister and most recently, founder of Life of Love Ministries. She will speak on Ephesians 5:1-2.

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Bank will resume with normal banking hours Monday, April 17

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