

When Swingin' in Texas, It's All About Texas Swing!

Well-known area fiddle player Paul Schlesinger has teamed up, once again, with Lexington's Bill Dowdy to produce yet another award winning CD that is sure to etch in stone the fact that when you're swinging in Texas, you're probably enjoying some good old fashioned Texas Swing!

Paul has spent the last ten years putting together his second CD, entitled "Paul Schlesinger and his Knights of Texas Swing," which features his vocals and a full band, including Bill Dowdy, who plays rhythm guitar on the majority of the songs.

Paul got his musical start at the Lexington Senior Citizen's Center in 1998, where he played almost every Tuesday night until 2006 when he took six weeks off to attend voice acting classes held on the same night.

He plays twice a month at the Lee County Cowboy Church in Giddings with the Second Chance Band, organized by the late Joe Boyd Reynolds. Kevin Mahr of Lexington is pastor of the church. Their float took 1st place in this year's Lexington Homecoming Parade, with Paul playing the fiddle, even though he was identified as Joe Boyd by the parade announcer. He also plays twice a month at the Milam County Cowboy Church in Rockdale.

Paul's first CD, "Our Way," featured fiddle and guitar instrumentals played by him and Bill Dowdy and was first released in 2005. It sold so well, that Paul decided to make another one using the profits made from the first.

As stated above, Bill Dowdy plays rhythm guitar on the majority of the songs on the new CD, and arranged the progressive, western swing chord patterns. Paul explains, "In this context, 'progressive' is not a political ideology. It refers to chords that change with nearly every beat of the music."

Bill also plays electric bass on one song of the new CD, "Golden Slippers," the only instrumental on the CD.

Paul explained that many people have been instrumental in helping him get to this point in his musical career. He explained, "A number of the songs on the CD are from the catalog of Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters, the band from Taylor who had a Billboard Top 5 hit in 1954 on Capitol Records with

"Release Me," sung by fiddler Perk Williams, from Chriesman, TX. In fact, it was Perk Williams who taught me how to play the fiddle in 1993, when he was dying from mouth cancer. Williams and Dowdy played together in the late 1940s, and even recorded a record together with Jimmy Heap's band in 1950."

Paul's latest CD includes new, up-to-date versions of "Haunted Hungry Heart," "This Song Is Just For You," "Ethyl In My Gas Tank," and "Cat'n Around," to name a few. All feature twin fiddles, twin guitars, and Bill Dowdy's masterful chord arrangements. All have been staples in Paul's band's song list for many years.

Another song on Paul's latest CD, from the Melody Master's repertoire, is "Say Y Me Tib," an upbeat Cajun-style tune which the Masters performed in the early 1970s live, but never recorded. Back in 2008 Paul collaborated with the late Cecil Harris of Taylor, the Melody Master's steel guitar player and primary lyricist, to update the words of the song. As a result, Cecil and Paul share the writer's credit and his new CD marks the first commercial recording of the song.

Also on the CD is another song of interest to Lexington area folks. It is "I Guess I'll Just Say I Don't Know," penned by the late Jimmy Hester and June Quinney, both from Lexington.

Jimmy was a vocalist and played rhythm guitar, and spent some years in Houston playing with professional bands. When he retired back to his hometown of Lexington, he continued to perform and sing, mainly at the Lexington Senior Citizen's Center, and other area opy-style shows.

He and June co-wrote many songs together, three of which they registered with the Library of Congress. "I Guess I'll Just Say I Don't Know," is one of those three songs.

Bill Dowdy, a cousin to Hester, arranged the chord pattern, and on Paul's new CD, plays lead guitar, using his vintage Epiphone Olympic archtop, which he purchased in Honolulu, Hawaii in 1942 during WWII.

Other songs on the CD are Texas swing arrangements of tunes made popular by artists such as Bob Wills, Ray Price, Conway Twitty, Ronnie Dove, and Marty Robbins.

The CD has only been out a few months and has already

received some very nice accolades and recognition. Here's what some folks have to say: Leon Rausch, vocalist and leader of the world-renowned Texas Playboys said, "Your CD sure sounds good! Got some of my heroes on it, too ... I'd say without a doubt, that you, young man, are a wonderful talent and we hope to see you down the trail soon!"

Ray Campi, international rockabilly artist and music historian said, "Recently I had the pleasure to hear the latest Paul Schlesinger CD, featuring many of Central Texas' most seasoned musicians from the 1940s and 1950s. Paul's singing and re-creation of the twin fiddle, western swing sound is accurate and fun on every track. Jimmy Grabowske on steel is still great, as are others."

Jimmy Heap Jr, son of the late Jimmy Heap, and drummer for Ernest Tubbs



Lexington's Bill Dowdy

Texas Troubadours and the Drifting Cowboys said, "You have done a great job, not only in honoring Jimmy Heap and the Melody Masters, but also [producing] real country music in general. Keep up the tradition and know that I am proud to say I know you as a friend and fellow musician."

In early June, Paul was notified that someone in the [Western Swing] field submitted the CD for an Academy of Western Artists Award in Western Swing [//awaawards.org].

More recently, Paul was notified that there will be a write up about the CD in the forthcoming July issue of Country Music People magazine [www.cmpcountry.com], which is published in the UK. It's a professional, glossy publication that is also distributed in the States and can be found in Barnes & Noble book stores.

Western Swing DJ Mike Gross of Manchester, CT published a favorable review of the CD in the April issue of Western Swing Monthly [www.wsmmonthly.com], which is published in Austin, and is one of the premiere western swing publications in the nation.

Several songs on the

CD have also received some radio play, particularly on Mike Gross' "Swingin' West" radio show on KSEY-FM in Texas and KTNK in California.

Past broadcasts can be downloaded all month long from the website www.swinginwest.com. The program is one of the preeminent western swing radio shows.

Paul has also been named to several Top 10 lists that deal with Country Swing, including #5 in the Swingin' West June 2016 Top 10 Songs for "This Song is Just for You", ahead of "Navajo Trail" by Asleep at the Wheel, Willie Nelson and Quebe Sisters (Bismeaux). That was up from #8 the month before.

Paul's second CD was also named #4 on the same list for Albums, ahead of Asleep at the Wheel's "Still the King." This was up from #7 in May.

Many more accolades could be said about both Paul and Bill Dowdy, but space just doesn't allow! Three generations of Texas Swing musicians are showcased on the CD! Backing Paul up are official Texas Western Swing Hall of Fame members Bill Dowdy of Lexington, Jimmy Grabowske of Austin, Ray Tesmer of Round Rock, George Harrison of Austin, the late Bill Dessens of Houston (originally from Rockdale), the late Clyde Brewer of Houston.

Other featured musicians are Jimmy Heap, Jr. of Goodlettsville, TN, Kim



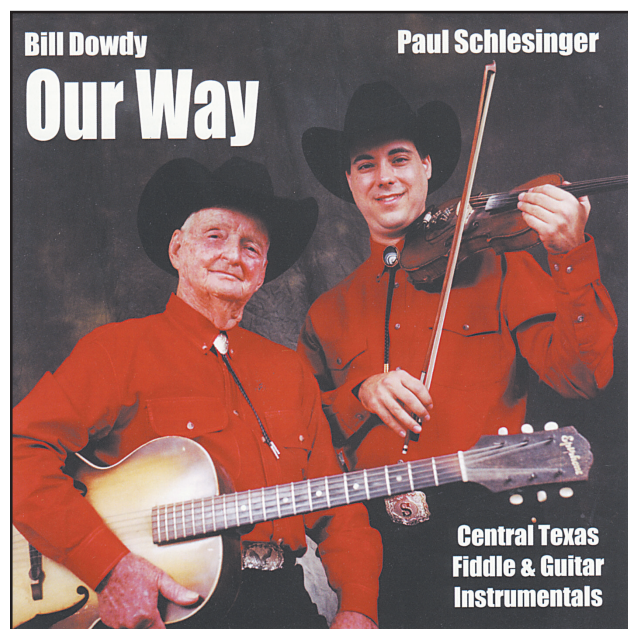
Paul and the late Joe Boyd Reynolds

Cochran, Jr. of Austin, Bud Harger of Belton, and more. The CD can be purchased at The Dowdy House in Lexington, or in Taylor at Friends of the Bride, KRXT in Rockdale, or in

Bartlett at Unique Celebrations. It's also available through www.cdbaby.com/cd/paulschlesinger or at www.paulschlesinger.com.



Paul's ability to entertain goes beyond "playing" the fiddle. He occasionally does some "fiddle tricks: too!"



Paul Schlesinger and Bill Dowdy's first CD was called Our Way and is still available online.