

WOMEN IN TEXAS: STORIES AND SONGS

BY KATHLEEN HUDSON



Patricia Vonne came to the Texas Heritage Music Foundation coffeehouse on the campus of Schreiner University years ago, visited my English class, and left promising me castanets from her next trip to Spain. The castanets came in the mail — and she will be back up in my classroom at Schreiner March 5 and playing that night at the coffeehouse.

A journey through her videos on YouTube reveals a sensuous woman singing in both English and Spanish, dancing and weaving around the stage, the seductress of Texas rock 'n' roll, as she flirts with danger, while pointing to everything that will “Rattle my Cage.” We walk slowly across desolate land with her, and we are invited to think about the rebel bride in all of us.

“Traeme Paz,” used in her brother Robert Rodriguez’s film, “One Upon a Time in Mexico,” is a sultry invitation to try danger and peace. She always is alluring in her presentation. Robert LaRoche accompanies her on guitar, often being the male energy to match her sultry female presence. Together, they can bring down the house. I saw it happen at her CD release in San Antonio last fall at Casbeers. She visited with the audience before the start of the show, and when she took the stage, she owned it. We were on our feet, and we could not sit down. She rocked the house. After the concert, she took time to talk to all her fans. She makes me want to go home, put on more eye makeup, and get some tight jeans. Yes, she brings out the female in all her female friends. I can’t speak for the impact on male fans, but I can see the impact as she strolls and struts through a crowd.

Her website is complete and up to date, with samples of all her work. www.patriciavonne.com Her YouTube presence reveals the variety of her songs and the one strong dark thread of her presence in every performance. In case you can’t tell, this woman is muy fuerte in many ways.

Susan Gibson is another strong woman in the Texas music scene. A tall blonde with long blonde hair, a seeming opposite of Patricia Vonne, Gib-

son is still traveling in her goodtime van, now with four dogs. She makes regular trips to the mailbox for that “Wide Open Spaces” check, but she is humble and compelling in her performances on the road. The Bandera Emporium showcased her at the Art and Lisa show on Sunday in February at the Blue Coyote Theatre. These Sunday shows can be heard live on Banderaradio.com. After a great set of songs, we talked with Susan by the coffeepot. “I am about ready to cut this hair and donate it to a good cause,” she explained as several of us women envied the waist-length golden mane. Susan has also visited my creative writing class and performed at the Texas Heritage Music Foundation coffeehouse. Two women on the road, each carrying a unique story to the world. When Susan sings, “You Came Along,” we also get sunshine and snake oil as she describes the allure of someone who comes along at the right time. She makes me wish I were sitting right by that guy. And when she sings “Happiest When I’m Moving,” I watch lots of heads nodding along with mine. Patricia takes us on a winding road through nowhere to find out who might come along, bringing danger for sure. I love listening to both of these women, both living in separate realities and both part of the huge universe of that distinction called “Texas Music.”



Susan Gibson