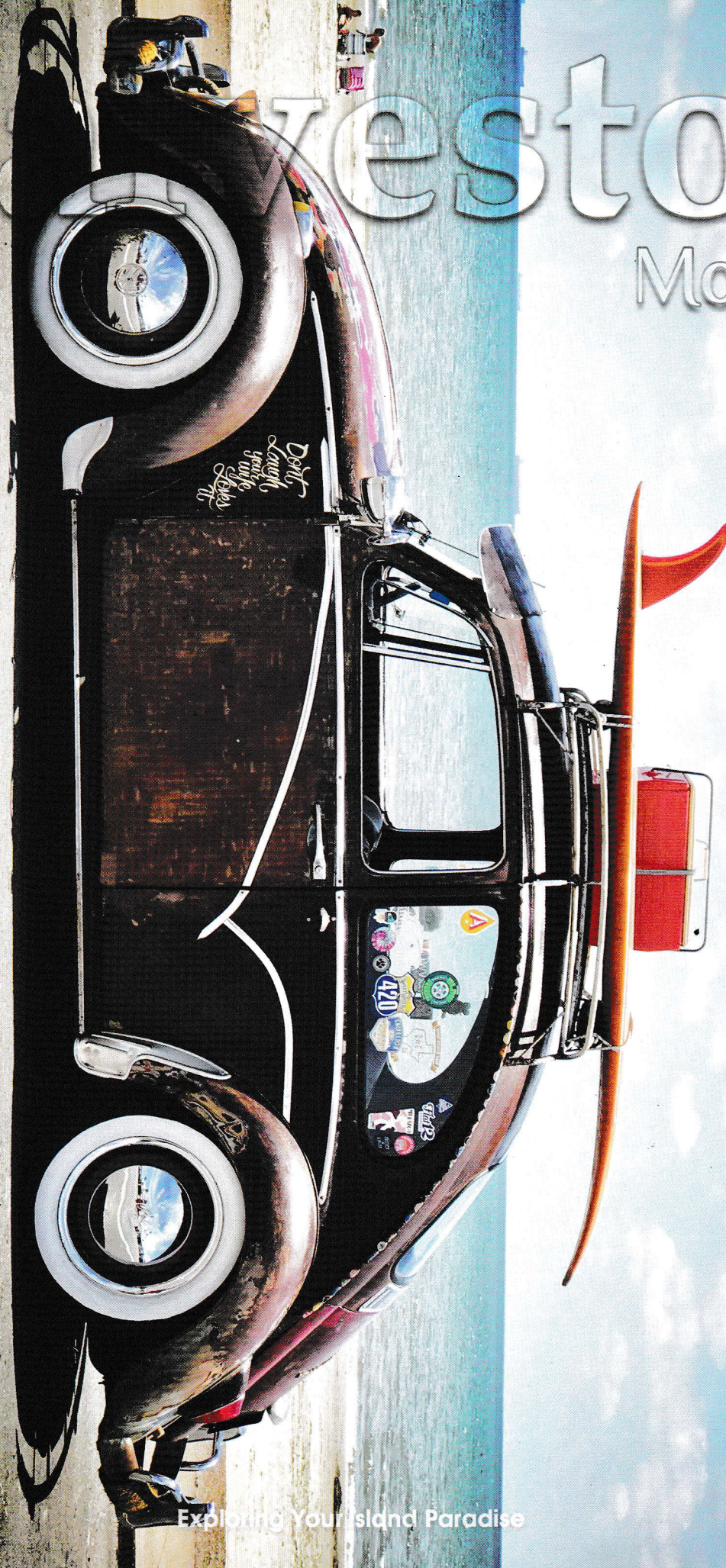


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Monthly

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Complimentary



Exploring Your Island Paradise

“The people in this town are strange,
That’s why I really love these people (Yes, I do!).
Not a single one’s the same,
Wouldn’t have it any other way.”
--from the song “Blame it on Galveston”

THE NEUBAUER PROJECT

WOULDN'T HAVE IT ANY OTHER WAY

By Kimber Fountain

Nearly every young adult of the 1980s remembers that earth-shattering day in August of 1988 when MTV debuted the music video for Rick Astley’s hit single, “Never Gonna Give You Up.” Wide-eyed and open-mouthed audiences all over the world stared at the screen in disbelief—no way was this scrawny, red-headed kid in high-waisted, acid-washed jeans the source of that sultry, booming baritone.

That same shock and awe might also be experienced by anyone who has the pleasure of meeting Keith Neubauer and then hears him sing. While his jovial and uplifting personality certainly shines through his performances both live and recorded, his quipped, staccato speech falls away when he steps up to the mic, giving way to a smooth and rapturous wailer of a voice with a sound that conjures the presence of someone twice his size.

Undoubtedly, this transformative experience is the mark of an authentic artist who uses his innate talent to find divine beauty in all things from the heartwarming to the heart-wrenching and everywhere in between.

Keith Neubauer attests that his rock-and-roll father, who played for a popular but short-lived San Antonio band called Bo Jangles, was not much of a role model, but he did give him something even better - a proclivity for music. Keith’s natural penchant for all things musical first evidenced itself when he chose for the foundation of his artistic education, the foundation of all music - rhythm.

He started playing drums at the age of 8 and then began taking piano lessons with his brother when he was nine. Those only lasted a year and a half, however, which was how long it took the instructor to realize that young Keith was not learning how to play the piano, because he already knew how. Keith always made his brother go first at their lesson, and he had been learning the music not by reading the sheet, but simply by watching his brother play.

Since then, his love for music has never faltered, although it has taken many different forms. Keith played all through high school, both on school grounds in marching band and

off-campus with friends.

His first band, formed in 1985, was called MC². “We did well,” Keith remembers, “We played all over Texas, even a big gig on South Padre Island.”

After the group disbanded, he joined a band called Popkorn which enjoyed local success and earned standing gigs at the Nasa Bay Hilton and B. Jigger’s, a popular Galveston nightspot. “The Line Up used to come watch us,” laughs Keith, referring to the local cover band that is now a beloved favorite and resident act at B. Jigger’s.

Keith later redirected his talents to ministry and served as a worship leader for ten years, during which time he recorded two original Christian albums. His total recorded output numbers an astonishing six albums, and he is about to release number seven.

As with any lifelong artist of any medium, later works often have a texture and depth previously unrealized, formed from the coalescing of all the previous works as well as a lifetime of experience.

Thus is the multi-faceted album, Keith’s latest, The Neubauer Project, where a diverse musical history merges with a community of contributing artists to create a tribute to life and loss, layered with a spectrum of musical genres as varied as the emotions they are used to represent. The collaboration is simultaneously Keith’s first independent album recorded apart from the rigid group dynamic of an official band.

“I really wanted to get away from all of that. Now, I’m doing it for me, and it is a lot more fun,” Keith says of his twice-monthly, live performances played either solo or with one other musician.

“But on the album, I still wanted to work with great musicians, and it was good to be able to do that at my own pace.”

The orchestration of The Neubauer Project began back in January. Keith first recorded his piano and vocal tracks in a private studio he built in the storage area of his loft building on the Strand. The recordings then traveled via computer



over to other collaborators, including Bruce Brown, a local guitarist who Keith has played with for over a decade, a duo called Amy & Me, and guitarist Charlie Daughtry.

The album was mixed and mastered by Daniel Dennis at Prime Cut Studios in Nashville, which is also where the ethereal voice of Marion Grace joined the roster. The Nashville backup singer recorded background vocals and the lead tracks for two songs that Keith decided were more suited to a female perspective.

Grace's performances include both a haunting and mysterious rendition of Keith's "Buffalo Jane," a storied song that harkens back to the old, black-and-white Westerns, and a sweetly done lullaby written for his daughter called "Sweet Rebekah."

Keith's family inspired other album tracks such as the deeply personal "Sober" and "That's When I Knew" about his wife Shari. It is beautiful ditty of a surf song a la Jack Johnson, complete with ukulele and whistle, contrasted by Keith's vocals that add a touch of that Bob Dylan-style yearning.

"That's What Friends Do" is a schoolhouse rock ripe with nostalgia, the lyrics for which were compiled from Keith's own friends, and the story told in "Scared Me Home" was inspired by another friend of Keith's who moved to Florida and got a job as a barback. However, when he discovered a storage room where sat his boss's airplane full of cocaine, he said humorously that it "scared me home."

Two of the album's most powerful pieces are musical interpretations of friends' poetry. "Forgive Me, Oh Lord," is a tear-jerker written by Cliff O'Quinn when a severe birth injury to his granddaughter first made him angry, then revealed to him the unlikely blessings found in dark places.

"The Tree" is an anthem to aging penned by Jeff Riley and sung by Keith's niece, Shelby.

One of Keith's favorite pieces is a heartwarming tribute to Galveston itself, called "Blame it on Galveston."

"We started coming to Galveston when we started dating 12 years ago," says Keith's wife Shari. "And we knew we were going to live here someday." Keith adds, "we have such great friends here, and the community is so amazing." Keith is hoping that this song will be the new Galveston anthem, written not by an artist merely passing through town, but by one who holds a deep affection for the island and its people.

On Saturday, August 24, Keith Neubauer will bring to life The Neubauer Project in a multimedia spectacle hosted by Island East-End Theatre Company (2317 Mechanic St.). Doors open at 6:30pm and the show starts at 7:30pm.

"I wanted something different," Keith says of his decision to host a more formal album release party. "Instead of a bar where everyone is just wandering around, by having it at the theatre, people can sit and really connect with the music."

And instead of selling CDs, tech-savvy youngsters will be on hand to guide listeners on how to download the album through Spotify. Presented in a storyteller format with accompanying visuals, the live debut of The Neubauer Project promises to be a unique musical experience featuring some of Galveston's best local talent.

Can't make the show? Keith Neubauer performs live twice monthly in Galveston. Find him at Blu Boutique on 25th and Strand from 3-7pm on the first Saturday of every month. On the third Saturday of every month, Keith performs live at Three Doors Down (inside the Peanut Butter Warehouse, 20th and Strand) from 8-11pm. 