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# 'JUST GET ME CLOSE TO THE SEA'

Galveston serves as muse for San Antonio native

Story by Shannon Daughtry | Photo by Jennifer Reynolds



*"Walking on the Strand, with a cold one in my hand, feeling the sun, feet in the sand, give me the Island. I got the G.I. Blues."*

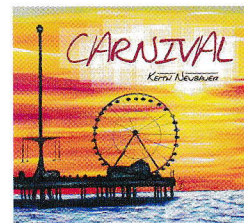
— Lyrics from "G.I. (Galveston Island) Blues"

**K** eith Neubauer's deep and abiding affection for Galveston is obvious as soon as you meet him.

"I just fell in love with everything about it," Neubauer said as he walked down The Strand among a collection of historic buildings. "It's this downtown area, the people — it's everything."

The seaport city has served as much more than an occasional vacation spot for the League City resident. It's where the lifelong musician played countless shows with one of his first bands in the 1980s. It's where he took his wife, Shari, on one of their first dates together. And it's where they married six years ago. Today, it's his escape and a place he one day plans to call home.

But one thing that makes the island particularly special to Neubauer is that it



has served as an inspiration for many of the songs he's composed over the years.

Galveston has even left a mark on the

cover of his latest album, "Carnival," and served as the subject for the first track on the album, "G.I. (Galveston Island) Blues."

The album cover, which features a silhouette of the city's iconic Galveston Island Historic Pleasure Pier in front of one of the island's renowned sunsets, represents many things Neubauer loves about the coastal community, he said.

Neubauer said he has loved music for as long as he can remember. He began playing drums at age 8 and piano lessons at age 9.

"My brother and I did a lot of talent shows growing up," the San Antonio native said.

He also dabbled with quite a few bands in high school.

"In the '70s, we started playing a lot of disco and some rock," Neubauer said. "We got inspiration from a bunch of different genres."

But it wasn't until the 1980s, when he began playing with a band called MC Squared, that he started playing all



around Texas.

The band played both originals and covers. Neubauer remembers the first time he played in Galveston.

"We played on the seawall at B. Jiggers near Stewart Beach," Neubauer said. "I just fell in love with it."

Soon, he moved from San Antonio to the Clear Lake area to be near the water.

"I just always wanted to be near it," Neubauer said. "Just like I said in 'G.I. Blues.'"

Lyrics to that song include: "Don't care if the water's brown or green, it doesn't matter much to me, just get me close to the sea."

Although much of Neubauer's music was inspired by different places and memories, he also is finding a lot of inspiration from other people.

In "G.I. Blues," he began writing from a simple guitar riff, he said.

"Then I wrote the words, played the drums and instrumentals," Neubauer said.

Performing music made up about 30 years of his life. Now, music is mostly a hobby and a release, he said.

"I really just to prefer to write now," he said. "And I have a lot of fun working with different people."

But before solely devoting time to writing and recording, Neubauer worked as a worship leader at Baybrook Baptist Church and played in the worship band at Friendswood Community Church.

"Music has always been a big part of my life," he said. "Now, it is in a different way."

Over the years, Neubauer has worked with a number of other local musicians from all over Galveston County, he said.

Since he began focusing on writing and recording, he has recorded five albums of varying genres and songs.

"There have been Christian albums, country albums, rock albums — it's a real variety," Neubauer said.

But no matter the genre or the musician he works with, Neubauer is hopeful anyone who listens to his music will hear the love and passion behind it.

"I'm lucky to get to do something I love so much," he said. "I'm very blessed." ☺

► [keithneubauer.bandcamp.com/track/carnival-neubauer](http://keithneubauer.bandcamp.com/track/carnival-neubauer)

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