**A glimpse into Bottom of the World**

The incredibly diverse and multi-talented Terry Allen offers thoughts on his first CD and vinyl release in several years by Dana Jones, photos by jamesbondland

"MY WORK COMES IN STAGES, MAYBE with music and drawings," Terry Allen says. It's a glimpse into the creative process of how this Texas icon approaches most of his works. Music is one of his many talents, and fans are excited about his latest endeavors.

Allen is about to return to Lajollas and release his first new CD in several years in conjunction with a new suite of prints he's done with Las Placitas Press. Allen, a credibly diverse and multi-talented Allen is warm, welcoming and friendly. Much like each project of Allen that evolves, I didn't really know what to expect speaking with him. Like each project, this one was a pleasant and interesting experience.

Allen is one of those artistic souls that spent a lot of his growing up years in Lubbock, Texas. He's not just a songwriter/recording artist—he's been published, and Allen's been a part of a multitude of musical and theatrical performances. He's done painting, mixing, editing, video, and installations using any and all of those media. Allen's works of art have been exhibited both nationally and internationally. He's won numerous awards and garnered acclaim for his work on every aspect of his artistic senses. Yet, he's managed to maintain his essence of remaining a down-to-earth sort of fellow. It may be in part due to his longtime companion and lovely wife, whom he speaks rather fondly of.

He and wife Jo Harvey Allen recently celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in Europe. She is a multifaceted artist as well and is probably best known for both her film roles and one-woman shows. They've been working together in many projects, often in theater pieces and radio shows. They currently live in Lubbock, TX, attending the same Junior High School in Lubbock. They were good friends in high school, but really didn't start going together until their senior year. Marriage, children, grandchildren, and still they are together. She'll be found alongside him during his upcoming Texas tour.

Allen began writing songs in high school, with the explosion of Rock and Roll. "We did a lot of playing instead of just writing, it was something to do other than wiggle to the music." He spent a semester at Texas Tech, and then headed for Art School in Los Angeles. It was there he was in the Blackwall Blus Quintet. "I wrote some, but the band didn't really cover. In fact, it got really serious and was always making words, music and pictures. We were all the same necessity."

When told I'd planned to ask him a few questions in a magazine interview, he had no hesitation in responding. "It's like asking which of your five senses is the favorite. They all operate and inform one another together." I felt I was beginning to understand how his works relate to one another even better than I thought I did.

Bottom of the World, Allen's first CD in several years, debuts on January 26 for his live performance at the Kessler Theater. It will go nationwide in February, and the limited-edition vinyl version will release in March.

For this project, he brought in fellow Lubbockites Lloyd Maines and fiddler Richard Bowden, along with son Bukka Allen, cellist Brian Standerfer, and even his daughter-in-law to sing back-up vocals.

The concert will include Allen with his son, Bowden, and Standerfer. His plans to feature the new album in the first act. "There are 11 songs on the new one. Several are older songs," Old

**WHEN ONE SITS DOWN TO TALK WITH Big Gus, one better be prepared to listen in a hurry, that's the way he talks. Big Gus, or as his mother named him, Gus Samuelson, has so much musical background, history, and influences that have affected his musical lifestyle, it seems they all have to spill out at once when he starts talking, or when he starts writing a song.**

Allen and Samuelson are both veiled Jimmies Hendrix and Allman Brothers albums, and "verbatim" his natural style of playing.

He went on the road with Hussard and Bonne Owens and the group Swampadelic, talked about all the influences that personality peer while remains starting a song. Those influences date back to his boyhood in Louisiana. His mother, a country and another a new Americana/blues song.

He has given Jimi Hendrix and Allman Brothers albums, and "verbatim" his natural style of playing. He was given Jimi Hendrix's gear and was taught how to play the guitar. He learned how they could be veteran as a musician, he needed to learn who influenced his influences. So he studied, learning that Robert Johnson influenced Duane Allman, and "I had to find out who Robert Johnson was.

"When somebody asks me, 'When you write a song, what music do you listen to?' I can explain that and people look at me like I'm a nut."

"Pen in hand these songwriters or their influences come to him, and the songs just come out the way they come out. I make a point to remember and respect all the gifts given to me as far back as it goes." When it comes to respecting the musicians, Samuelson, whose calls his night-time KHYI radio show "Long Star Underground," says, "I can point out that it isn't the mega artists who can be called the "fibers that keep country music together. Not the name in the top of the charts. It's the Tony Dowles, the Curtis Potters, David Housely's and Lee Boys, you keep them alive. They started it all." And those, in all genres, are the ones who get theogn. That's where the passion of the music is, and for some reason, I've been able to retain and translate it into songs. Samuelson, continues, "I can write anything and that's why I have a trombone and a fiddle in the band. It's a musicians' band and I leave the door open. That music is just music that comes through it. More of that."

"I can see what's in my brain. If there is history, we'd discuss, but it made composer. He took Allen's words, the altered version, and turned them into a song. That's what music means to me, it's his open mind that lends to such creativity."

Tatarene likes to sit down, go through all his music, and then he makes the continuity of a soundtrack.

Certain images and sounds point the direction of the project. Having Allen discuss Tarantino was not anything I'd expected we’d discuss, but it made complete sense.

Allen’s approach to his work seems to be much the same. I enjoyed our conversation immensely. And while we await the result of the project he’s currently working on, I was introduced to Tony Douglas and the new Bottom of the World CD and a January concert to savor for a while.

**On a quest to discover who influenced his influences**

Big Gus & Swampadelic’s first CD, Parlangua, was released in September by Mary Jane Farmer

A Ford on drums, and Greg Patillo on fiddle. Sometimes Chris Slotzhauer joins him on the steel guitar and Chris Bonne Owens shows up with his trumpet. Often, there are more people sitting in to play or sing, or to record something with the band.

Swampadelic’s first CD, Parlangua, was released in September 2012 on Dinosaur Records, a label included in Texas Music Scence's Best Albums of 2012 and a song on it made Dallas Observer's Top Country Songs list. Ready Samuele has most of the songs ready for the second CD, one stone-cold country and another a new Americana/blues song.

He doesn’t work from forcing himself to believe there are some basic elements that make a good song. “You don’t want anything longer than three minutes, and in that first 15 seconds, you better throw that hook in there, give it to them.”

A good bottom line is a good song is a good song. It doesn’t make any difference how it’s played, whether it goes soul or blues or country, if it’s a good song, people will like it. "Those guys (the committee in charge) Big Gus head when he writes) did all the work. I respect what they gave and what I didn’t do. I have my own taste, too, for the history of music, whether it be country or blues or jazz or whatever. I’m grateful that I have the freedom to do what I want to do," said Samuelson, the song writer.