



John Goodspeed: It's Green on Gruene

Feb. 7, 2008

San Antonio Express-News

There are big doings besides the rodeo with **Chris Cagle**, **Gary P. Nunn**, a **Whoosits** farewell of sorts, Valentine's Day stuff and **Pat Green**, who wrote the book on dance halls.

Yes, that's right. The guy who penned songs such as "Take Me Out to a Dance Hall" and "Dance Hall Dreamer" is putting out something that won't fit in your iPod.

Instead, the coffee table is just the ticket for "Pat Green's Dance Halls & Dreamers" (University of Texas Press, \$39.99).

With the book hitting store shelves Thursday, Green will celebrate with a book signing and an intimate concert performing as a trio at 6 p.m.

Thursday at Gruene Hall. If you can't make that, he'll head to Uvalde on Feb. 15 for a show at the Lone Star Saloon with **Small Town Habit**.

Green, who gives his insights on the 10 dance halls in the book, is featured in the chapter on Gruene Hall.

Writer **Luke Gilliam** and photographer **Guy Rogers III** chronicle a variety of artists hitting the halls, including **Robert Earl Keen** at John T. Floore Country Store and **Cory Morrow** at Luckenbach Dance Hall.

Unfortunately, two shut down by the time the book was published — Cabaret Dance Hall in Bandera, featuring **Jack Ingram**, and, with **Wade Bowen**, Saengerhalle in New Braunfels.

For the show, Green will debut a few songs from an upcoming album.

"It's a Valentine's Day show, so there will be some lovey-dovey songs," Green said. "Then there's the book, so I'll talk about that, maybe do a dramatic reading."

That was a joke, he added.

"I really like doing acoustic performances at Gruene," he said in an interview (a Q&A piece will run in Sunday's S.A. Life & Culturitas). Green also recalled the first time he played at Gruene Hall.

The show came about three years into his career, and he knew it would be tough for him to fill so he decided to do a live recording to drum up interest. Gruene Hall management had doubts about sales,

though, and refused to sell advance tickets.

"They were like, this is your first time to play here, sir, and there's not a chance that you're going to sell it out. That's never happened before except for a **Kris Kristofferson** or a big name like that," Green said.

So he put Gruene Hall's phone number on a mailer telling some 3,000 people to call the hall for tickets.

"They just got inundated with calls," he said. "The hall holds like 600-700 people, and about 1,200 showed up. They had to put them in the courtyard.

"They had the biggest beer sales ever for that night. It was kind of a vindication, like I really can do this as a career."