

Hill Country Picnic 2010

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[0:00:07] Hart states his name and says that he is a member of the following bands: his solo group, Alvin Youngblood Hart's Muscle Theory, the South Memphis String Band, and Loose Shoes.

[0:00:43] Hart asserts that his eclectic sound (including elements of rock, country, blues, and reggae) was not shaped by the fact that he frequently moved as a child. He feels that his sound was more shaped by his early years growing up in the San Francisco Bay area. He remembers listening to local music with his friends and looking at Bill Graham's Fillmore posters when he was a child in the late 60s. Hart reminisces about the diverse acts that Graham would book at the Fillmore. He chalks up his eclectic sound to a "general appreciation for good music."

[0:01:36] When asked how was influenced by the Hill Country sound, Hart asserts "I'm not...I just play music. I kind of grew up in the Hill Country on and off, myself. Whatever it is that's in the water...in the blood." He goes on to say that he doesn't think the Hill Country Picnic is a "blues festival" so much as a "regional festival" with "extended family of general knuckleheads...with Kenny Brown on down to the Burnsides and Kimbroughs, Jimbo Mathus, and the Dickinsons, me."

[0:02:48] Hart attributes the general decline in popularity of the blues to the genre "eat[ing] itself," because of people who are "over zealous" about the blues and caught up with defining, "what is and what's not the blues, blah, blah, blah." Hart asserts that he "stopped making blues records a long time ago. I just started making music records with people before me like Gatemouth Brown and Doug Sahm...they didn't pay any attention to any kind of genre segregation... [they] played the music that was inside them."

[0:03:54] Hart explains how he taught himself how to play when he had "lots of time on my hands" going to three different high schools in three different time zones. He says that he really didn't have anywhere to go, so he just practiced the guitar. Hart says that he was influenced by music from the 20s to the 70s and lists artists and bands as Blind Lemon Jefferson, Lead Belly, Howlin' Wolf, Jimi Hendrix, the Rolling Stones, Humble Pie, Thin Lizzy.

[0:04:51] When asked how blues fits into his repertoire, Hart says, "I don't know, again...it's all part of the same thing...Is George Jones the blues, yes...It's all there. Is Jimmie Rodgers the blues, yes. You know, I did a record a few years ago. I wrote this little western swing ditty...Maybe one of the guys who wrote for *Living Blues* or something refused to review the record, because [in a higher pitched, pretentious imitation:], 'That western swing is not the blues'...Where does it end? A lot of the blues societies, the festivals, I think they just kind of scare the young people off. When I was a young person, there was something a little bit underground [about the blues]...it had seen its golden days and the resurgence of golden days with the English guys. Then it went underground again. You got to hand it to John Belushi and Dan Akyroyd for bringing a lot of people into it. And it's amazing, I find,

actually, people who were not into it that I know from high school...are into it now...It just has a tendency to eat itself, because of the stuffiness and turned up nose that goes along with it.”

[0:07:01] Referring to the diminishing numbers of black people listening to the blues, Hart asserts that his friends always say that “white people’s music has always been evolution...the blues were the hip-hop of the 40s and 50s, the outlaw thing, ‘Hey stay away from that’...It’s just an evolution. Twenty years from now...hip-hop [will be] that old stuff. If people want to get into museum pieces...it’s their own thing. When I was a kid, man, I heard Freddy King and I said, ‘I like that, man. I wanna get some more of it.’”

[0:07:29] Interview ends.