



Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks: The Countercultural Sounds of Austin's Progressive Country Music Scene

Travis D. Stimeling

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Country music of the late 1960s and early 1970s was a powerful symbol of staunch conservative resistance to the emerging counterculture. But starting around 1972, the city of Austin, Texas became host to a growing community of musicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, and fans who saw country music as a part of their collective heritage and sought to merge it with countercultural ideals to forge a distinctly Texan counterculture. Progressive country music—a hybrid of country music and rock—blossomed in this growing Austin community, as it played out the contradictions at work among its residents. The music was at once firmly grounded in the traditional Texan culture in which they had been raised, and profoundly affected by their newly radicalized, convention-flouting ways.

In *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks: The Countercultural Sounds of Austin's Progressive Country Music Scene*, Travis Stimeling connects the local Austin culture and the progressive music that became its trademark. He presents a colorful range of evidence, from behavior and dress, to newspaper articles, to personal interviews of musicians. Along the way, Stimeling uncovers parodies of the cosmic cowboy image that reinforce the longing for a more peaceful way of life, but that also recognize an awareness of the muddled, conflicted nature of this counterculture identity. *Cosmic Cowboys and New Hicks* provides new insight into the inner workings of Austin's progressive country music scene—by bringing the music and musicians brilliantly to life.

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