### **The Time of His Life: The Music of David Zajicek**

*“Every life is a story but David Zychek’s life was a melody – with guitar accompaniment”*

### David’s unparalleled musicianship transcends a time span of nearly 50 years from his first plastic guitar to his newest *Gibson Les Paul* added to his collection only last week. His career as lead guitarist began as a teenager with the Austin band **HELIX,** but in 1968 David stepped up as one of the front-runners in rock music with the original band **TEXAS** with **Kyle Pilgrim**, **Ray Ramsey**, and **Clif Breitweg**. With the 1970s bringing David closer to his Central Texas roots, he met lifetime friend and guitarist **San Davis** and formed **tZiah**, along with **Neil Gunn**, **Mack Ward**, and former TEXAS keyboardist **Clif Breitweg**.

### Opportunity rocked in 1973, when **Altec Lansing** in Los Angeles, CA, launched a line of audio products dedicated to professional musicians and hired Texas rockers **MORPHEUS** **FARGO**, David’s newly formed band with **tZiah’s San Davis** and **Mack Ward**, plus brothers **Mark** and **Dan Kerr**. While the band tested sound gear and was showcased in the Altec Lansing Audio Products Catalog, **MORPHEUS FARGO** reveled in the LA music scene and was featured in Altec Lansing’s promotional ads in ***Guitar Player*** magazine.

### Not quite ready to return to Texas, David’s next career move was to Denver, Colorado, to join a regional touring group **HEAD FIRST**, a band that featured David’s guitarist’s dexterities, gaining him the attention of **Keith Olsen**, noted producer of such bands as *Fleetwood Mac*, *Foreigner*, and *Heart*. Olsen’s nod resulted in the formation of a band called **AIRBORNE**, headed up by Dallas native **Beau Hill**, a seasoned studio musician whose production work had been noticed by Olsen. David and Beau, along with new band mates **Larry Stewart**, **Mike Baird**, and **John Pierce**, were signed to **Columbia Records** and **Irving** **Azoff’s** (*Eagles*) **Frontline Management**. David’s entrance into the recording industry in 1979 as a guitarist, singer, and songwriter provided the education of studio engineering and producing — skills he would bring back to Texas in the future.

And bring it on home, he did. David could never stay gone from Texas for long stretches of time. His family, friends, and his deep-rooted Texas rock style kept him in touch with his beloved Lone Star State. Christmas was one magical time to bring out all of his guitar playing expertise and gift it to fans, friends, and, of course, family at the legendary **Tom Sefcik** **Hall**, in the tiny community of Seaton, a few miles east of Temple. Together with his loyal, hard-thumping **bassist San Davis** and the boom of **drummer Gary Pavlica** on his massive set of drums, David created the hard-rockin’, blues bustin’ sound of the **GROOVE KINGS**, possibly the one constant dynamic in his music career. This group of three was once described as *formidable,* probably due to their tough and often strenuous efforts in making a trio sound like a roomful of guitars and rhythms pulsating with a beat that dares all not to dance. The **GROOVE KINGS** dominated the Central Texas music scene in the late 1970s and early 1980s playing their trademark bluesy rock and roll in local clubs, outdoor venues, and always, always at **Sefcik Hall** each and every Christmas. In 1982, the **GROOVE KINGS** toured the state, headlining shows and backing up the legendary **BO DIDDLEY**, who had heard about the three rockers and hired them as his band for his **Texas Tour**. Before slipping out of Texas once again to pursue his interests in Los Angeles, David produced two albums, ***Cause An Effect*** and ***Behind the 8 Ball*** with the talents of **San** and **Gary** although a plethora of studio recordings remain to be released one day.

During the mid-80s, David picked up on the studio scene once again as a session guitarist in Los Angeles. Soon he was back in his element playing with members of the **STEVE MILLER BAND**, among others. Never one to gather moss under his feet, David was eager to travel and play live once more. **Ken Hensley**, keyboardist for the acclaimed U.K’s **URIAH HEEP**, formed his own band, **THE KEN HENSLEY PROJECT**, and hand-picked David to be his guitarist on tour. In between these projects, David would return to Texas, pick up several long-time Waco musicians— **Paul Brown**, brother **Scott Zajicek, Ricky Mathews**, and **Jeff** **Lassiter**— and offer to play his heart out as **THE ZYCHEK BAND** or sometimes simply **ZYCHEK.** These spontaneous gigs were known as some of the best jams in the state, drawing crowds far and wide, especially when the music united a host of lifelong friends on **ALICE** **SULAK’S** stage upstairs at **SEFCIK HALL** in tiny Seaton, Texas. [*Note of interest: For the first time in history, David filled the stage this past Christmas 2015, with a band of all Zajiceks: son* ***Nathan*** *on guitar, 16-year-old son* ***Zack*** *on drums, and brother* ***Scott*** *on bass.]*

In 1993, David teamed up with another Texas musician and multi-platinum selling record producer **David** **Prater**, who had produced highly successful albums for **DREAM THEATER** and won an ***American Music Award*** for “Best New Rock Artist” **FIREHOUSE**, among other awards in the music industry. Prater asked David to help him out on a project for **NIGHTRANGER**, entitled ***Feeding*** ***Off the Mojo*** for Drive Entertainment. While mainly contributing to song arrangement and supplying backing guitar, keyboard, and bass, the band was impressed enough to offer David a place in the band for a year-long tour in support of their record. It was at this time that band member **Jack Blades** was on hiatus with the **Damn Yankees**, so David accepted the offer and traveled the world doing what he loved most, winning over audiences with his phenomenal guitar playing and harmonies.

Well into the 1990s, David Zajicek/Zychek continued to collaborate with **David Prater** on projects around the state, honing his skills in producing, recording, and engineering. In 1998, David was given the opportunity to start his own studio with partner-drummer **Ronny Griffin** out in the peaceful setting of the China Spring area near Waco. **LARGEMOUTH RECORDING STUDIO,** named for Ronny’s favorite fish to catch in area tournaments, became David’s oyster. With the dawn of a new millennium David released his own 11 song album entitled ***New Blood*** under the band name **DEAD HEART BEATING,** produced at **LARGEMOUTH.** Along with David’s powerful guitar, **San Davis** provided extra guitar and backup vocals**, Ronny Griffin** on drums kept the heart beating, along with **Johnny Big** on his six-string bass and singing backup vocals as well. **LARGEMOUTH RECORDING STUDIO** continues to serve bands, local and statewide, seeking out David’s expertise in meticulously producing the sounds unique for the many styles of Texas music today.

Time marched on for David Zychek and his instincts carried him along as he stepped up to tour the world with various artists, even in the country music genre. He collaborated with British singer/songwriter **Deborah Joan Jones** of the band **STEALING WISHES**, providing guitars along with drummer and **LARGEMOUTH** owner **Ronny Griffin**, where their debut album was recorded. Rock hero **Ted Nugent** also called on David to collaborate on his projects since **Nugent** had moved his family to the Central Texas area.

Perhaps the most fun of all the bands for which **David Zajicek/Zychek** has supplied stinging guitar and screaming vocals, the **MOJO ASSASSINS** might just be it. Taking their cues from the rich culture of bassist and lead vocals of **Tony Calhoun**, who has jammed with **Prince**, **Blondie**, **Parliament Funkadelic**, **Buddy Guy**, **Sam and Dave** and even more artists, how can this trio be anything but pure funk and fun? **Ronny Griffin** brings in his own attitude with his love of the New Orleans Jazz Festivals, which ignited the spark and the sparkle of the band. Add the spice of **David Zychek** who always stirs things up with his guitar work and the **Mojo Assassins** bring on the smiles. Their debut album ***Mojo Assassins*** was created nowhere else but **LARGEMOUTH RECORDING STUDIO** and their second album is in the works.

The history of David Bruce Zajicek’s music and recording career is in itself a grand production. Not every detail can possibly be known as David’s fans, friends, and family know—David always had something up his sleeve or under his hat. His works will continue to grow, his voice and guitar will never be silenced. His two most grand productions are his sons **Nathan** and **Zack Zajicek** who have been central in David’s career. How else can it be explained why David kept a beeline in and out of Central Texas? Sure, it was the music but it was more for the love of his sons, his family, his friends, band mates, and fans. Through us all and our love of his antics on stage, his loud, raw solos— up and down the neck of his guitar forever, and his smiling Texas drawl saying, “*Ain’t nuthin’ but a thang*”, David will never leave us, will never be forgotten. He may have ruined our hearing but that’s the price we gladly pay— for the love and the music from our own **Texas Guitarist Extraordinaire**.

*~This tribute was compiled and written by Margie Mashek Davis, under the guidance of David Zajicek in March 2016. They had shared a joke for years that, since she knew about most of his shenanigans, she would write a tell-all book when he became famous “one day”. Just a few days before David passed, she sat by him and they talked about good times. When it was time to go, she teased him again that she was telling his story. With his huge smile and those twinkling blue eyes, he said, “You’d betta!”*