

All-star group does right by Texas musical legend Doug Sahm at Paramount Theatre tribute show

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Augie Meyers, left, and Shawn Sahm of the Texas Tornados perform at a Doug Sahm tribute at the Paramount Theatre at SXSW on Saturday, March 21, 2015. (JAY JANNER / AMERICAN-STATESMAN)

John T. Davis was the Paramount Theatre on Saturday night for the Doug Sahm tribute show and shares this report:

Here's all you need to know about Doug Sahm: On Saturday night, it took scores of musicians onstage at the Paramount Theatre to duplicate what the multi-faceted "Texas

Tornado” could accomplish on his own on any given night at Antone’s or Soap Creek Saloon.

If it was played within the confines of the Lone Star State, Sahm could rock it: blues, Western Swing, swamp pop, horn-driven R&B, straight-up country, psychedelica, Tex-Mex rock ‘n’ roll, conjunto and anything else that crossed his wide-ranging musical radar.

Sahm, who died in 1999, has been the subject of tributes before, both live and recorded, but Saturday’s event had a special valedictory feel to it. Not only was the San Antonio native and Austin musical godfather being honored onstage, he was also the subject of a new documentary, [“Sir Doug and the Genuine Texas Cosmic Groove,”](#) which had its premiere at SXSW Film.

“You can talk about Doug,” said journalist and the documentary’s director Joe Nick Patoski at the top of the evening, “but hearing his music is where it counts.”

And with that, a memorable evening of music commenced.

Sahm’s career was bookended by two hit-making groups decades apart: the Sir Douglas Quintet in the 1960s and the Texas Tornados in the ‘90s, and both eras, and all the marvelous musical jumble in between, were well represented.

Freda and the Firedogs, the country rockers with the long ‘n’ tall “girl singer” named Marcia Ball, were reunited for the first time in God knows when and took a quick trip through Sahm’s country catalog, including the homesick lament, “Beautiful Texas Sunshine” and “Wallflower,” the waltz Bob Dylan penned for Sahm’s first solo album.

After the Bizarros romped through Austin’s unofficial anthem, “Groover’s Paradise,” an all-star house band that included guitarists Charlie Sexton and Denny Freeman, keyboardist Michael Ramos and drummer Mike Buck backed up an array of performers

the included Freddie Krc, David and Hector Saldaña of the Krayolas, Patricia Vonne, Rosie Flores and more.

There were some outliers as well: Luluc, the folk duo from Australia, crooned a sun-drenched version of one of Sahm's hippie head trips, "Sunday Sunny Mill Valley Groove Song," and C.C. Adcock and the Iguanas, both from Louisiana, put down some swamp pop and bordertown Cajun/Conjunto markers.

One of the night's standouts (in a night of standouts) was Robert Rodriguez's transformative take on the national song of San Antonio, "Hey Baby, Que Paso." With his band Chingon, the filmmaker transformed the cheerful sing-along into a sweeping cinematic soundtrack drenched in dramatic musical flourishes.

Steve Earle, a fellow San Antonio native, called Sahm "my own hometown personal rock 'n' roll hero," before rolling out "The Rains Came" and his own "San Antonio Girl."

Then it was off to the races as Shawn Sahm, Doug's son, brought out the reconstituted Texas Tornados, featuring SDQ alumni Augie Meyers and Jack Barber, along with the West Side Horns and a slew of musical guests. Roy Head killed with his 1965 hit, "Treat Her Right"; Joe "King" Carrasco romped through the Tex-Mex roller rink pop of "Adios, Mexico"; Doug's other son, Shandon, sat in on drums for a romping version of the Quintet's irresistible "Mendocino" ("where life's such a groove you blow your mind in the morning...").

The whole thing wound up with, inevitably, the entire cast onstage leading a delirious audience through "She's About A Mover," the infectious, organ-driven hit that sent the Sir Douglas Quintet shooting up the charts in 1965.

But Doug Sahm was never just about the hits; the groove was his muse. And the groove was in the house at the Paramount on Saturday. Doug would've dug it.