

## **Michael's Rock and Roll Posse: All Olivas, All the Time, and Loose Ends at the End of the Year and the Beginning of a New Year**

Due to the schedule I keep these days, I know I have been sporadic in my Posse Postings, but it is not because you are far from my mind. Indeed, I have also recorded six more Law of Rock and Roll shows, and this next Friday, will be doing a CLE in Albuquerque for my NPR station and show, where I will talk about rock legal issues, the show, and other forms of godlessness. (My cuate Ernie Sanchez, fellow former seminarian and communication lawyer will also play in the same sandbox, in a Q and A.) The next afternoon, I will give a lecture on Latinos in the Public Imagination, on film and television issues, at the National Hispanic Cultural Center. I have added information about both events at the end of this Posting, and I hope some of you will come to one or both of the programs. Free CLE credit for NM will be available for the NPR event.

I start with some loose ends for last year's obituaries, especially Leon Russell's passing. The funny thing is that the day he died, but before I knew of it, he had been on my mind. Tina and I had seen the Laura Dern movie **Certain Women**, which takes place in a very small Montana town; in a fleeting shot, the local theater was advertising for an upcoming Leon Russell concert. I told Tina afterwards that it was the most interesting tidbit in a pretty good film, because it shows the meandering life of musicians on the road, who go wherever they have fans and a gig. This accidental and coincidental memory now stands in for my appreciation of Leon, who I saw 3 or 4 times, including a memorable concert in the El Rey Theater, a converted concert venue in downtown Albuquerque, where I used to go to see Cantiflas movies with my grandfather, Sabino Olivas, when I was a boy.

As I have noted in a different venue, most of the old Spanish language movie theaters have died or are on deathbeds: <http://www.somosenescrito.com/2015/09/we-have-talent-but-where-are-roles.html> . Interestingly, many of these that were located in Latino barrios or neighborhoods have been refurbished and reborn (in both sense of the word) as evangelical Christian churches serving Mexican American and immigrant populations. This subject of the changing Spanish language movies and the current Latino entertainment industry will be at the heart of my Saturday talk. Bienvenidos, y nos vemos.

On the subject of recent entertainer deaths, it is almost like keeping up with WWII vets, who disappear at a disconcerting rate. I used this list, which was incomplete [ <http://www.digitalmusicnews.com/2016/12/28/2016-deaths-famous-musicians-entertainers/> ] and edited it with additions and some pruning.

December 30th: Allan Williams, first Beatles manager  
December 28th: Debbie Reynolds, actress and ‘Singing In the Rain’/‘Tammy’ singer  
December 27<sup>th</sup>: Carrie Fisher, actress, novelist  
December 25th: George Michael, pop superstar  
December 24th: Rick Parfitt, singer  
December 13th: Alan Thicke, actor, songwriter  
December 7th: Greg Lake, musician  
November 24th: Pauline Oliveros, composer  
November 13th: Leon Russell, musician  
November 7th: Leonard Cohen, singer-songwriter, poet  
October 2nd: Neville Marriner, classical conductor  
September 8: Prince Buster, singer-songwriter, producer  
August 28th: Juan Gabriel, singer-songwriter  
August 19th: Lou Pearlman, boy band manager and producer  
July 24: Marni Nixon, vocalist  
June 23rd: Ralph Stanley, bluegrass musician  
June 10th: Christina Grimmie, singer  
April 21st: Prince  
March 11th: Keith Emerson, singer  
March 8th: George Martin, producer, composer, arranger, engineer  
January 10th: David Bowie

I have either commented or recorded radio shows about several of these (such as the Law and Business of Prince, and the Law and Business of Bowie, as well as another about the business dealings of the Beatles). It is interesting that the year 2016 had two obituaries as bookends for the Beatles—the deaths of George Martin, their extraordinary producer and arranger at Abbey Road, and of Allan Williams, their first manager—before Brian Epstein, who was recently inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame for his service to the group. I believe Brian deserves some due for catapulting them into their trajectory and for introducing them to television in the US, but he was a very poor business man who never really

stabilized their merchandizing or general business affairs, which plagued them all through their remarkable years together and even after the formal breakup.

Allan Williams' contributions were really more fundamental, as he sent the ragtag cover band (which still included Stu Sutcliffe and Pete Best) to Hamburg, where their natural talent and gifts were developed and honed in the nightly jam sessions, and where they evolved into the ripe Beatles. After the German years, they were tight, more polished, and bursting with their own compositions and style. For a small sense of this transformation, see: <http://nyti.ms/2hF3M1U>. It somehow seems appropriate that Allan Williams died at the end of the year, following George Martin's more celebrated passing in early March.

My UHD service will end in a few months, and I will transition back to the great life as a law professor. This will give me more time to stay in touch than I have had. The Spring will also bring some great entertainment to Houston: Justin Hayward (of the Moody Blues), U2, and Brian Wilson, just for starters. This will fuel my Posse Postings. So, as always, I remain a lucky boy, in your service.

I hope you will be able to attend one or both of next week's occasions. Come see us in Albuquerque,

Michael

**All Olivas, all the time:**

<http://kanw.com/kanw-presents-evening-entertainment-dr-michael-olivas> (KANW fundraiser, radio show, January 20, 2017, 6:30 pm)

The next day's event will be free, with very little overlap for the material:

<http://www.nhccnm.org/event/la-canoa-latinos-public-media-popular-imaginacion/> (National Hispanic Cultural Center, January 21, 2017, 2 pm)