

Singer-songwriters gather for birthday show at Uptown

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MARBLE FALLS — Hill Country singer-songwriters will come together May 26 at the Uptown Marble Theater to celebrate the birthday of one of their own, Highland Lakes resident and award-winning performer Mark Allan Atwood.

Atwood, John Arthur Martinez, Kevin Higgins, Mike Ethan Messick and Heath Childs will perform a five-man song-swap 8-10 p.m. at the downtown theater, 218 Main St.

Made popular by the early round-robin style episodes of the now legendary Austin City Limits music show, the song swap is a staple of the Texas music scene, with artists trading songs in an acoustic format.

“I’ve done a lot of these types of shows, but all these guys are my friends,” Atwood said. “They’re all also some of the most talented people I’ve ever known. To share a stage with this much talent at once, honestly, is a little intimidating.”

Since 2005, Atwood, a longtime veteran of the music business, has been back full-time playing venues in Texas and beyond after taking off almost nine years. During his down time, he and his family moved to Burnet.

From the 1980s to the late '90s, Atwood performed original acoustic sets, worked as a sideman in country bands and fronted rock and metal bands. He has returned to his Texas music roots, and after the release of his album “How Country” in December 2009, he was awarded the Texas Music Awards’ Rising Star of the Year in 2010 by the Academy of Texas Music.

A member of the Marble Falls music community, Martinez burst onto the national scene as the runner-up on the inaugural season of Country Music Television’s “Nashville Star” program. He’s been awarded several Texas Music Awards, including Entertainer of the Year in 2006.

As a solo artist and member of the Texas country rock band the Dust Devils, Higgins is hailed by peers and critics alike as a consummate lyricist and performer. The title track from his recent solo album, “Find Your Shine,” won the Texas Music Awards’ Song of the Year in 2010, his second one after 2006’s “Walk On.”

Messick penned Roger Creager’s hit “Everclear.” But he also has become known among his peers for the critically acclaimed album “Bootlegger’s Turn.” His second album, “The Only Easy Day Was Yesterday,” is getting airplay on Texas radio stations.

Childs, a Highland Lakes resident and lead guitarist for several Texas bands, recently recorded an album with Atwood titled “Trading Pains,” currently awaiting release.

Tickets for the show are \$15 in advance for general seating, \$18 at the door and \$25 for limited seating. Advance tickets may be purchased from the performers or at the R-Bar & Grill, 904 Third St.

For more, visit www.markallanatwood.com.