

# Charlie Lucas Band

By Amy Lacey

I met the Charlie Lucas Band at Cypress Saloon in Cypress, Texas, at a CD release party for their new album, *Not Famous (Slightly Notorious)*. Since Charlie was fashionably late, the band and I had some great conversation. Guitarist Josh Kimich, bass player Elvin "Pookie" Burnett, drummer Kenny Dimick and manager Chris DuFour had me rolling with laughter.

They started by telling me stories about being in a band, then quickly asked me not to print them. But the good clean tales were well worth it. Like the time when Roger Creager shaved his head: Pookie sat next to him before a show and talked with him, not realizing it was Roger until he thanked them for opening that night. Or when Josh was on stage playing his heart out with his fly down.

The band reminds me of brothers who pick on each other and embarrass each other as often as possible. I half expected them to start giving noogies and wedgies. As they tried to find an embarrassing story about Charlie, he showed up.

Charlie Lucas began playing guitar five years ago. Following friends who encouraged him, he then played open mic nights at Henry's Hideout in Fetzer, Texas. After a while, Lucas developed a following, and the bar relied on him to bring a crowd every time he played. Lucas met guitar player Kimich during open mic night, too. Realizing they needed more musicians, they found drummer Dimick through a friend and "borrowed" bass player Burnett from fellow musician Donny Waits. They never gave him back.

The guys come from different musical backgrounds. Burnett was a head banger for 15 years before finding his way to Texas music. Dimick grew up on country and 80s rock. Kimich learned his guitar skills while sitting around a campfire playing country music with his dad. Add Lucas's Lynyrd Skynyrd, Stone Temple Pilots and Robert Earl Keen influences and you get The Charlie Lucas Band.

They are a group of down-to-earth guys trying to make their mark on the music world as loud as they can. So loud, in fact, that one of their shows was canceled after a sound check. Surrounding restaurants complained that the band was too loud, so the venue paid the band and apologized. "We got paid to set up, play a song or two, then load everything up and leave. But we got paid!" says Lucas. The band was close to home, so they were thankful they didn't have far to travel. "It wasn't the most fun thing in the world, but we've had plenty of shows that made up for it," added Dimick.

One of their most memorable shows was opening for the Randy Rogers



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Band at Big Texas in December 2008. Rogers met with the band before the show and told them, in a joking, big brother kind of way, "Don't screw it up."

It was their first big show and they were already nervous. No pressure, right? The guys didn't screw it up, and they now call it the time of their life. "That was when I knew this is where we belong, this is what I'm supposed to be doing," said bass player Burnett. Josh chimed in "It was packed in there. Pookie had to calm me down. I thought I was going to be sick I was so nervous."

Playing big crowds doesn't bother them any more. In July 2009, Charlie Lucas Band played back to back shows with Pat Green and Roger Creager in ConCan. "That has to be my all time favorite weekend," said Lucas.

Manager DuFour asked, "You remember it? 'Cause I don't! Everyone laughed." "Yeah, that's one of those stories we can't tell because we don't want it printed," said Pookie.

One story they were willing to share involved Texas favorite Cross Canadian Ragweed. The Ragweed bus broke down on their way to Whiskey River in Beaumont. Lucas and band were off that night, so they drove out and rescued them. "Cody (Canada) was so thankful and promised us a show with them. We know he's a man of his word, and we're ready to open for them. That show is going to kick butt!" Lucas said. Dimick added, "That's what's so cool about being a band in Texas. We all help each other out."

The Charlie Lucas band travels Texas in style. A customized 1992 National El Dorado, lovingly called "The Short Bus," is the envy of many bands. Lucas gives some insight: "I was hanging out with Creager on his bus and he asked, 'Where is everyone?' So we, along with his band, headed to our bus and there's my band with a bus full of girls. Creager likes our bus."

"And don't forget about the 'Wall Of Shame,'" said Dimick. "Everyone who comes on the bus signs the wall."

"We could sell that thing on eBay and make some money!" Josh laughed.

With the release of *Not Famous (Slightly Notorious)* and the current single "Josh's Song" hitting the airways, the Charlie Lucas Band has a big, bright future ahead of them. "The goal is to be able to do this full time, quit our day jobs, and make music," said Lucas. "It's not a glamorous life, being on the road, but we love it. We're happy just hauling across Texas in 'The Short Bus,' making music and living on Bud Light, Jaeger and spaghetti."★

Amy Lacey is a regular contributor to *Best In Texas*.

Photo by Catherine Tabor