

= The Boxmasters =

The Boxmasters is an American country rock / rockabilly band founded in Bellflower , California in 2007 . It features Academy Award @-@ winning actor Billy Bob Thornton playing the drummer and vocalist , with J.D. Andrew on rhythm guitar , Danny Baker (aka Unknown Hinson) on bass guitar , Brad Davis doing vocals and playing lead guitar , and Micheal Wayne Butler on guitars and lap steel . The group has released three albums on Vanguard Records , the first being the eponymous The Boxmasters and the second being the holiday album Christmas Cheer , in 2008 .

Before he started The Boxmasters , frontman Thornton had played in two cover bands , worked as a roadie , and released four solo albums . After listening to " Yesterday 's Gone " by Chad & Jeremy and thinking about covering it in a hillbilly music style , he had the idea of making Americanized version of British Invasion pop songs . During its early days , the band played several live shows in the California area , as well as in Tecate , Mexico . From mid @-@ 2008 to late @-@ 2008 , the group embarked on a tour across the United States , ending in Los Angeles . It also played for the March 2009 South by Southwest conference . The group went on to play in Canada in early @-@ 2009 . In the aftermath of a controversial interview on the CBC Radio One program Q in early @-@ April 2009 , in which Thornton labeled his Canadian audience ' mashed potatoes with no gravy ' , the band stopped its Canadian tour early . It resumed touring in mid @-@ April 2009 in the United States .

= = History = =

= = = Beginnings = = =

Billy Bob Thornton ? credited on the band 's material as W. R. Thornton ? has said that " [he] never intended to become a movie star , it happened accidentally . [...] Music is what I love . " Before his acting career started , he played in cover bands for Creedence Clearwater Revival , ZZ Top , and also worked as a roadie with Nitty Gritty Dirt Band , Johnny Paycheck , Blood , Sweat & Tears , the Statler Brothers , and other bands during high school . He also released a record with a band called ' Hot Lanta ' in 1974 . Over his acting career , Thornton released four solo albums from 2001 to 2007 .

Thornton brought in sound engineer J. D. Andrew to help with his 2007 album Beautiful Door . After jamming together and finding a common sound , they started to record some of their material . Andrew had known Mike Butler " for six or seven years " and called him up to play guitar for them . According to Andrew , after the trio played together , they said " Shoot , this sounds like a band . " The three came up with the name " Boxmasters " after a piece of Southern slang , which they later described by saying " remember the bad boy in high school who got all the girls and left a trail of broken hearts ... and more ? " Thornton had also briefly played in country star Porter Wagoner 's similarly titled band ' The Wagonmasters ' , which he later said had brought chills down his spine .

= = = Early career = = =

The band started in Bellflower , California in 2007 . During its early days , the band played several live shows in the California area , as well as in Tecate , Mexico . Their eponymous first album The Boxmasters was released on June 10 , 2008 with Vanguard Records . It received a mostly poor review from Allmusic , which stated that " The Boxmasters might work live because there will be visuals ; but merely as a listening exercise , it 's best taken in small doses so the novelty doesn 't wear off . " The review also alleged that " Thornton can 't drum to save his life , and he can 't sing " . The Washington Post praised the album , and the paper remarked that listeners will get their money 's worth if they enjoy the music even half as much as the band did during the recordings .

The group resumed touring in July 2008 . It incorporated alongside musicians Bradley Davis on mandolin , guitar , and vocals , Teddy Andreadis on harmonica and organ , and Mike Bruce on

drums . Their tour across the United States ended on September 7 , 2008 when they played at the House of Blues in Los Angeles . The band released their second album , Christmas Cheer , on November 11 , 2008 , also through Vanguard Records . Allmusic gave another critical review , calling the music " an acquired taste " . USA Today music critic Brian Mansfield named it one of his favorite holiday albums . The Boxmasters went on a post @-@ album 12 @-@ city tour with Willie Nelson , playing from November 22 in Enid , Oklahoma to December 6 in Champaign , Illinois . They then embarked on a six @-@ city tour of Texas in March 2009 , which included a March 18 appearance at the South by Southwest music conference .

The band released , through Vanguard as well , Modbilly on April 21 , 2009 . Houston Press praised the album , saying that it " confirms that Billy Bob Thornton 's writing talents aren 't confined to his Oscar @-@ winning screenplays . " Allmusic stated that it " goes on far too long , never changing , never peaking " . Prefix gave a mostly positive review , calling it " for real " and stating that " Thornton ? s distinct voice continues to be a nice fit with the material " . Entertainment Weekly criticized it as " unmemorable " .

The group has covered The Beatles , The Who , The Rolling Stones , The Turtles , and Mott the Hoople in its unique style . It also plays original songs , mostly written or co @-@ written by Thornton based on the " white trash " figures he had seen in his Arkansas childhood . The Montreal Gazette has called his original material " at turns dark and funny , with world @-@ class hooks " . The members play while wearing well @-@ dressed ' Mod ' outfits such as tailored black suits , white shirts , and narrow black neckties .

Aside from playing , Thornton has said that he plans on creating comic books based on him and other band members . Plots would involve the band coming to the aid of townspeople as they tour . He said , " We 're not sure what our superpowers are going to be yet " .

= = = Canadian touring and controversy = = =

In April 2009 , the band was scheduled to tour across Canada , opening for country music veterans Willie Nelson and Ray Price . On April 8 , the band appeared on the national CBC Radio One program Q , hosted by Jian Ghomeshi . During the first half of the interview , Thornton was reportedly " surly and uncooperative " , and responded with " I don 't know " when asked how long the band had been together . When asked about his musical tastes and influences as a child , he gave his longest answer , but it was about his favorite magazine Famous Monsters of Filmland . He also stated that he had " instructed " the show 's producers to not ask any questions about his career as a screenwriter and actor .

Ghomeshi , in introducing the band , mentioned the acting credentials of Thornton , but never based his questions to Thornton about his show business career . Thornton went on to say that Canadian audiences were generally reserved and that the band was used to playing in places where people move around and throw things at each other . He then added , ' it 's like mashed potatoes with no gravy . ' This caused an outpouring of criticism from across Canada and around the world for the star 's behavior .

The following night , the band opened for Willie Nelson at Toronto 's prestigious Massey Hall . A series of boos and catcalls erupted mid @-@ set , with people in the audience yelling " here comes the gravy ! " when Thornton tried to explain he liked Canadians but not the CBC radio host . Before the show , when asked about his " gravy " comment , Thornton claimed he was talking about the radio host . Local reviews of Thornton 's Toronto performance were not positive . Toronto Star called Thornton 's voice a " high , tinny whine " and The Globe and Mail commented that " Nelson could teach Billy Bob Thornton more than a few things " . On April 10 , The Boxmasters dropped out of the tour early , announcing that they would not be playing with Nelson during subsequent concerts scheduled in London , Ontario and Montreal . Thornton said that band members had come down with the flu . Willie Nelson 's publicist had no comment .

The band resumed touring in Stamford , Connecticut on April 14 . In the aftermath of the controversy , Thornton appeared on Jimmy Kimmel Live ! and he said , " The fact that was news was astounding to me ... But it gave humpbacked geeks all over the world something to do for a

couple of days . " He added that he only wants to be perceived as a musician in the context of the band , remarking that " I 'm just in their band , I 'm just one of those guys " .

= = Members = =