



## Watt calls his music a mix

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Intriguing musician expression sounds like The John Watt Band's forte, even if self-explanation isn't quite as clear.

A first-time listener might guess incorrectly on the band's origin as they sound something like a Southern Rock, latter-day English Merzy Beat cross, but they're all from the Midwest. The John Watt band hails from Council Bluffs, Iowa and one member lives across the river in Omaha, Nebraska.

Gentle, laid-back instrumentation mixes well with a consistent Country-sounding harmony in "Higher," the group's latest CD. The 3:35 lead off song "Fairweather Friend" touches a first-time listener with curiosity for this unique mix.

Laredoans heard The John Watt Band for the first time on Wednesday night at TKO. Watt is also unique as a blind band-leader.

"Rock, Blues and Country all smashed together," Watt said. "Somebody called it Americana. It's definitely alternative to something.

"It's something, that I guess, just happened. I produced the record myself and had a hand in what was played. It's the first record that I've had complete control of."

The John Watt Band's Laredo trip was an extension of a gig in Austin's huge South by Southwest festival last weekend. Watt says the group plans an extended Texas tour in September, including a return to TKO.

Watt says he has also done some writing, publishing a novel, which he isn't pushing too hard now with his music taking a front row seat.

Note: The 5-0 Men plays at TKO on April 8 and 9.



## Talented Watt band plays here Wednesday

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

John Watt and his band play TKO on Wednesday night at 9 p.m., but he won't be able to see how many come to see him play. Watts is blind.

"God never closes a door without opening a window," Watt said, speaking philosophically.

Watt, 40, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, has been blind for more than 20 years after he attempted to take his own life at the age of 18.

"It was simply a case of clinical depression," he said. "I can even remember being depressed as a toddler, though at the time I didn't really understand what was going on."

Watt's blindness did not prevent him from finding a light inside.

"In any case, God never closes a door without opening a window. That window for me was musical insight and artistic vision. Without having lost my sight, I probably would never have picked up a guitar. I might have ended up driving a truck. No kidding."

When he picked up that guitar, Watt found his natural aptitude for the music that would become his passion.

Watt taught himself to play the guitar with little or no outside influence. He also taught himself how to play the piano, keyboards, and harmonica.

"I immediately found out that I was a natural songwriter. Even when I could only play two chords, the songs just started popping out, lyrics, melody, and chords," Watt said.



Courtesy photo

John Watt plays his guitar, and on stage he handles other instruments, too.

For the past 10 years Watt has been recording and producing his own music.

The John Watt Band is currently touring Texas in support of the new release "Higher."