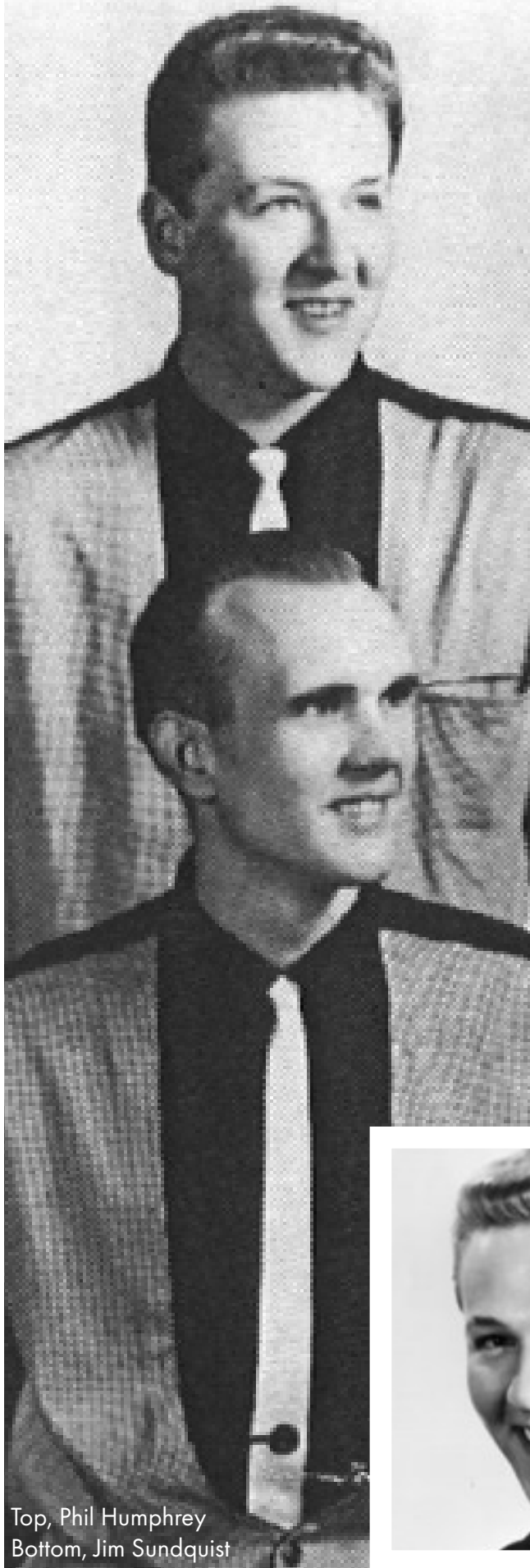


THE FENDERMEN

Phil Humphrey, Jim Sundquist

Phil Humphrey and Jim Sundquist met for the first time in 1958 while attending the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Phil and Jim would only form their duo after meeting again several months later. The pair bonded over their love of Fender guitars and the unusual coincidence that they both shared the same birthday; November 26, 1937. They dubbed themselves The Fendermen and began playing at various clubs and bars in southern Wisconsin.

The two-guitar pair initially focused on standard country and rockabilly songs of the time. While performing at the Oats Bin Tavern in Edgerton, Minnesota, the duo played a rockabilly version of Jimmie Rogers' "Mule Skinner Blues." This novelty, hopped-up rendition of the country standard was exceedingly popular at every venue The Fendermen played. Eventually, the song would catch the attention of Jim Kirchstein, the founder of Cuca Records. In 1959, Kirchstein helped the pair cut a recording of "Mule Skinner Blues" in his basement studio.



Top, Phil Humphrey
Bottom, Jim Sundquist



1997 / BAND

Despite its popularity at venues, the recording did not do well during the first few weeks of its release until deejay Lindy Shannon began playing the song on WKBH's Top 10 in La Crosse, Wisconsin. With this newfound exposure, "Mule Skinner Blues" sold thousands of copies. It was then that they came to the attention of Amos Heilicher of SOMA Records.

SOMA signed the duo, and Heilicher became their agent, landing them a last-minute gig opening for Johnny Cash, Johnny Horton, and Kitty Wells at the Minneapolis Auditorium on May 15. Heilicher had The Fendermen re-record the hit-song at Kay Bank Studios in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and released it on the SOMA label.

"Mule Skinner Blues" entered the Billboard chart on May 23, 1960. By July of that year, the record peaked at #5, remaining on the charts for 18 weeks and selling millions of copies by the end of the summer.

Bassist Denny Dale and drummer Johnny Hauer were added to The Fendermen for their live shows. Following their success with "Mule Skinner Blues," the group toured extensively throughout the Midwest. The duo even made an appearance on Dick Clark's Saturday Night Beechnut Show on June 11, 1960.

Chasing the success of their first single, The Fendermen released several more singles, including "Don't You Just Know It," "Heartbreakin' Special," and "Can't You Wait," even recording and releasing an album. Legal disputes between the Cuca and SOMA Records over the profits of "Mule Skinner Blues" would delay the release of their one and only album until 1962. Nothing they released ever quite amounted up to the success of their first single.

The Fendermen would decide to part ways in 1961, due to failed attempts to follow-up on the success of "Mule Skinner Blues" as well as different musical ambitions. Sundquist wished to perform country music, while Humphrey desired to form a bigger band.

Jim Sundquist died June 4, 2013 in his home in Fairfax, Minnesota of cancer at the age 75. Phil Humphrey died of heart failure in a Minnesota hospital on March 29, 2016 at the age of 78.

Schweitzer's presents
THE JOHNNY CASH SHOW
MPLS. AUDITORIUM
SUN., MAY 15
One Big Show 8 P.M.
featuring
JOHNNY CASH
Direct from
(Tenn. Ernie Ford Show)
JOHNNY HORTON
(Sink the Bismarck)
KITTY WELLS
(Decca Records)
JOHNNY & JACK GORDON TERRY
BILL PHILLIPS
TENN. MT. BOYS
Extra Added Attraction
THE FENDERMEN
(Mule Skinner Blues)
plus WDG's favorite personalities:
BILL BENNETT and BILL DIEHL

ADVANCE TICKETS at
Downtown Ticket Office, Mpls.
and Melody Music, 7th and Hennepin
St. Post: Field-Schlick
\$1.49 in advance
\$1.75 Auditorium
150c Children under 12 yrs.!

BREAKING THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE COUNTRY!
SOLD 100,000 LAST WEEK!
The Nation's Next No. 1 Record's On **SOMA**
#1137
MULE SKINNER BLUES
THE Original
BY THE **FENDERMEN!**
Disk Jockeys: Write for Samples!

IN CANADA CONTACT COMPO
TOP-BANK WORLD WIDE **SOMA RECORDS**

SOMA RECORDS, 119 N. 9th St., Minneapolis 3, Minnesota (PE 3-8261)