

# Precious metal: San Antonio band Wyzard's 1984 EP sells for \$1,000s — if you can find it

The teenage musicians in Wyzard captured the spirit of the 'Heavy Metal Capital of the...

---

By René A. Guzman

Sep 13, 2021 09:00 AM · 7 min. read · [View original](#)

---



Members of the former San Antonio metal band Wyzard, John Alvarado (from left), Michael Valenzuela and Buster Grant, display their rare 1984 EP “Future Knights,” which now sells for a few thousand dollars a copy.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer



The original members of Wyzard, an '80s metal band in San Antonio, were John Alvarado (from left), Rene Cox, Michael Angelo Valenzuela and Gilbert "Buster" Grant. Cox died in 2017.

Courtesy photo



The album "Future Knights" by the San Antonio metal band Wyzard was recorded in 1983 in San Antonio and released in 1984. Only 100 copies were pressed.

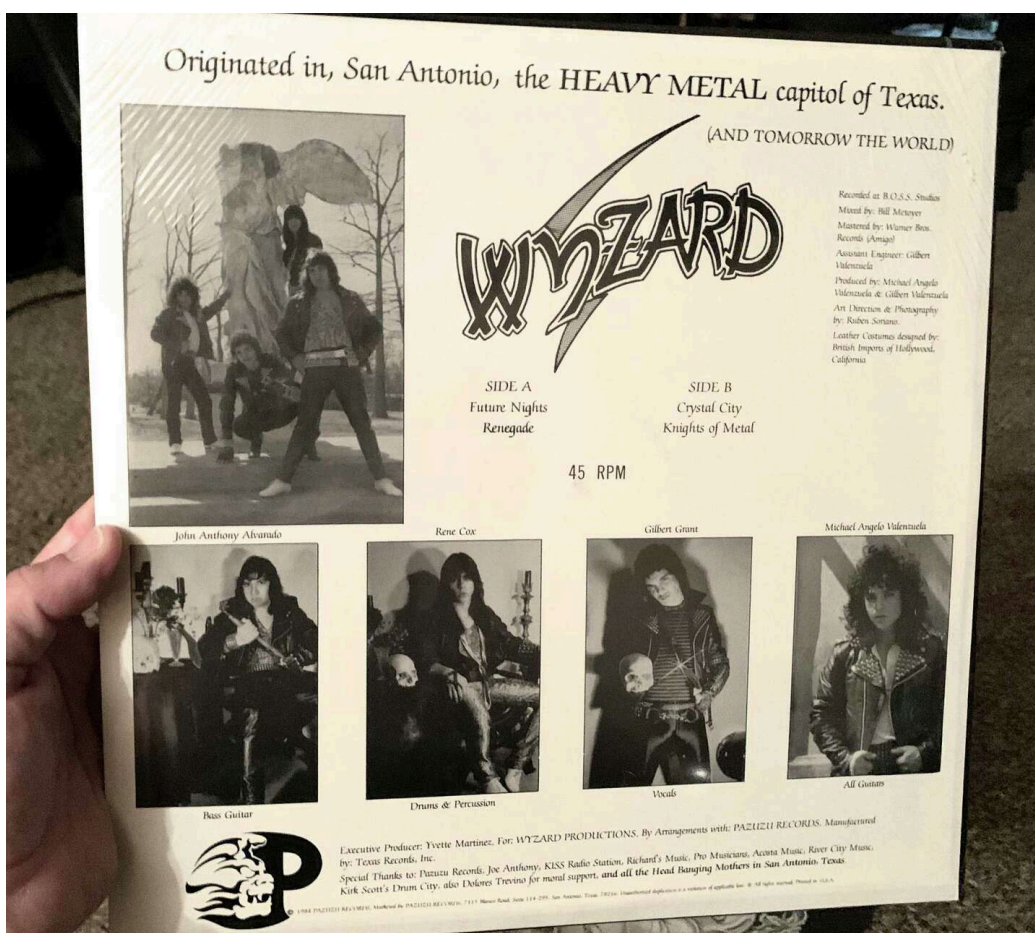
Billy Calzada /Staff photographer





Wyzard's first EP was later rereleased in 1984 as "Knights of Metal." About 500 copies were pressed.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer



The back cover to Wyzard's 1984 EP "Knights of Metal," featuring photos of the band.

René Guzman /Staff





John Alvarado first played bass for the San Antonio heavy metal band Wyzard back in the early 1980s when he was 18.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer



Michael Valenzuela first played guitar for the San Antonio heavy metal band Wyzard back in the early 1980s when he was 19.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer



Buster Grant picked up a microphone for the first time at age 19 when he joined the San Antonio heavy metal band Wyzard as a singer in the early 1980s. Grant has been singing, writing and recording ever since.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer

For a few years in the mid-1980s, Gilbert “Buster” Grant and a few neighborhood buddies made amplified magic as Wyzard, a South Side band that helped San Antonio live up to its reputation as the “Heavy Metal Capital of the World.”

The group’s only recording “Future Knights,” an obscure 1984 EP later renamed “Knights of Metal,” was made just a few weeks after Grant screamed into a microphone for the first time, back when he and his bandmates were just in their late teens.

Only about 600 copies were ever made. Nearly 40 years later, the EP is making some serious noise in the collector’s market.

Grant said he’s seen the record listed online for anywhere from \$2,800 to \$5,000. Former Wyzard guitarist Michael Valenzuela sold a copy two years ago to a collector in Germany for \$3,200 and another last year to a collector in Switzerland for \$3,500.

ValueYourMusic, an online archive of music auction sales, shows the Wyzard EP sold for \$2,250 last November and for \$1,825 and \$1,650 in March.

Call it a coveted piece of San Antonio heavy metal history.





Members of the former San Antonio metal band Wyzard, John Alvarado (from left), Buster Grant and Michael Valenzuela, display their rare 1984 EP “Future Knights” and its same-year rerelease as “Knights of Metal.” Both versions of the album now sell for a few thousand dollars.

Billy Calzada /Staff photographer

In the '80s, the Alamo City was ground zero for America's heavy metal explosion, hosting and promoting bands large and small, from Iron Maiden to S.A. Slayer, when most of Texas and the nation was just waking up to all the headbanging.

And judging by what some are willing to pay for this little-known record, that metal alchemy is as timeless and it is priceless.

“Wyzard never toured Europe, never played out of Texas,” said Grant, 57, who has since been in more than a dozen bands and shared the stage with the likes of Kiss, Blue Öyster Cult and Joan Jett. “But (our album is) one of the most expensive collectibles you'll ever try to purchase out of Texas metal.”

Wyzard formed in 1983, when San Antonio bands such as S.A. Slayer, Byfist and Seance, along with Austin's Watchtower and Houston's Helstar, were laying the groundwork for Texas's burgeoning metal scene one brain-bleeding scream and guitar solo at time.

When Valenzuela and Grant hit on the idea to jam together, the longtime friends from the Palm Heights neighborhood

teamed up with bassist John Alvarado and drummer Rene Cox, fellow friends who lived just a few streets away.

“We all grew up in the same neighborhood. This wasn’t North Siders. This was Mexicanos, Indios,” said Grant, who was born Gilbert Guzman.

The foursome pounded out raw metal in Grant’s garage, where sunlight through a hole in the ceiling mingled with incense to make the perfect spotlight. Grant wailed falsettos like Danish rocker King Diamond, while Alvarado and Valenzuela kept up with whatever drum tempos Cox banged out that day.

Valenzuela’s cousin Yvette Martinez liked what she heard and became the band’s manager. Soon Wyzard was playing keg parties that clogged the neighborhood streets and rocking downtown venues such as the Villa Fontana and Cameo Theatre.

After a trip to California, Martinez came back with a record offer. In the summer of 1983, Wyzard recorded a handful of songs at B.O.S.S. Studios, which once rocked Broadway right across the street from Kiddie Park.

Wyzard initially released its four-song EP in 1984 as “Future Knights.” It featured the title track and the songs “Renegade,” “Crystal City” and “Knights of Metal.” “Future Knights” original pressing was 100 copies, 25 of which went to radio stations and other promotion.

A few months later, Wyzard’s management re-released the record as “Knights of Metal” with the same four songs and cover art. “Knights of Metal” was slated for 1,000 copies, but only 500 were made. Between it and “Future Knights,” fewer than 600 copies of the EP exist.

Ruben Soriano, now a photographer in Austin, whipped up the cover art, a drawing of a skeletal knight astride an armored steed. The back cover features solo shots of the leather-clad band members along with a photo of the group around the headless winged statue still standing at Miraflores Park.

The back cover's grand proclamation: "Originated in, San Antonio, the HEAVY METAL capitol of Texas. (AND TOMORROW THE WORLD)"

At least one metal expert agrees with that assessment.

"That record represents what has become really this kind of national phenomenon of '80s Texas metal," said Robert Chavez, host and creator of the San Antonio-based video show ["Robbs MetalWorks,"](#) now in its 25th year.

A few years ago, Chavez moderated a panel about San Antonio's metal roots with Grant and a few other local musicians at the Institute of Texan Cultures. Chavez said Wyzard's lone EP, which a friend gave him 20 years ago, still resonates with old-school metal fans, both as nostalgia and a good record.

"If the songs sucked then people wouldn't care," he said.

Other factors contribute to the Wyzard album's collectibility. It has the cachet of being mastered by Warner Bros. and mixed by Bill Metoyer, who has worked with bands such as Slayer and Armored Saint in the early days of Metal Blade Records.

And then there's Wyzard's own short but storied history.

After hitting the studio, Valenzuela said, Wyzard went from playing for about 500 people to opening for W.A.S.P. with 4,000 fans in attendance. The band toured Houston and other Texas cities. Back at home, Wyzard got airplay on 99.5 KISS, a hard-rock haven overseen by Joe Anthony and Lou Roney, and staff recommendations at Hogwild Records.

But the spell was broken once the music became more about business and less about fun. When Wyzard tried to march out on its own, management yanked their gear, claiming a breach of contract, Valenzuela said, literally pulling the plug on the band the night before Thanksgiving 1985.

"As a band, we were almost like family," said Valenzuela, 56. "When the managers came along, for them it was



business. And we never saw that aspect.”

The Wyzard family has lost two of its members. Cox, the band’s drummer, died in 2017 at age 52. And Valenzuela’s brother Marc Anthony Garcia, who briefly played guitar with the band after its EP release, died in 2019, also at age 52.

Today, Grant is going on four decades of hard rock singing and recording. He just wrapped a new EP with his latest project, *Livin’ Dark Daze*.

Meanwhile, Alvarado, 56, still fires up the frets in a Mercyful Fate tribute band, though he spends most of his working hours as a truck driver. And while Valenzuela reunited with Grant about eight years ago in Grant’s band *Age of Reason*, he also focuses on his own auto-related day job as a finance manager for a Mercedes-Benz dealership in Boerne.

Incidentally, you can still experience Wyzard’s lone record without the four-figure price tag.

Grant sold his only copies to other labels to make reissues, which average about \$25 per CD on eBay. He also offers a digital copy on his website [bustergrantmusic.com](http://bustergrantmusic.com) for \$3.99. And it can be found online, too.

But if you want that original vinyl sound, you’ll just have to dig deep for a copy on the secondary market.

Valenzuela owns the EP masters and said he has no intention of repressing the record or selling the masters. He also won’t part with any more copies, despite being offered as much as \$20,000 for his remaining stash of 50-odd “Knights of Metal” records. He fears flooding the market, so to speak, would just diminish the value and mystique of this rare EP.

“So I’m just trying to hold on to them for as long as I can,” he said.

And who would want to mess with that kind of magic?

rguzman@express-news.net | Twitter: @reneguz

