

Presskit
for
Dave Murphy

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Radio personality John Platt, of WFUV FM in New York City aptly described New Jersey based singer-songwriter Dave Murphy as “the real deal.” During an on-air interview Platt asked Murphy; “being from the northeast, how is it that your music has such a feel of the American heartland?” **Murphy paused...and answered simply** “well John, it’s because I like milk.”

Clearly, Murphy does not take himself too seriously and this trait alone sets him apart from the glut of singer-songwriters out there. But what’s special about Murphy is his gift for crafting songs that touch people in a very personal way. His song becomes your song and he’ll take you on a lyrical pilgrimage through the American soul, whether he’s writing about his own deeply personal post 9/11 experiences in “**Red**” or telling the story of an aging Viet Nam era war widow in “**Chesapeake**,” his songs resonate with honesty, intelligence and a sense of hard earned wisdom. But just when you think things may be getting a bit too serious Murphy belts out “**My Garden State**” his tongue and cheek ode to New Jersey. Murphy strives to peel away the layers and go deeper in search of that place where the truth lives, exposing it, often from a unique and unexpected perspective.

“Up-and-coming singer/songwriter Dave Murphy flavors this diva-dominated genre with the unnerving perspective of a guy, you know, the strong but sensitive type...Murphy is a natural storyteller who uses both image-rich lyrics and compelling melodies to illustrate his tale...Murphy’s music at once thought-provoking and an easy listen, graciously rides the fine folk/Americana line.” - Fairfield County Weekly

Under the Lights, released in 1998 was Murphy’s solo debut album. Honest, intimate and revealing, this collection of original tunes reflected Murphy’s personal journey up until that point. In December 1999 Performing Songwriter magazine selected *Under the Lights* as a prestigious **Top- 12 DIY** pick.

“Murphy sings in a gentle, unaffected baritone that suits his musings perfectly. He knows what he knows and he’s working on the rest. For the like-minded, *Under the Lights* will be illuminating, indeed.” -Performing Songwriter

“The collection’s simple, clean production compliments his bare-bones lyrics and smooth voice. A musical Raymond Carver, Murphy taps the raw nerve so many struggling songwriters can’t seem to find, creating a tight, focused album that delivers everything it promises.” - Twin Cities Revue

Chasing Ghosts, released in 2003 (Murphy’s second album) clearly reflects his ongoing evolution as both a songwriter and performer. Graced by a guest appearance by Grammy nominated troubadour **Steve Forbert**, Chasing Ghosts received significant airplay on Americana and Triple-A radio stations across the country. It was a “**Top 5-most added**” CD on the national “Americana Charts” and it spent over **12 weeks** on the national “**Top 35**” Folk Airplay Charts” at one point reaching as high as number 11.

Chasing Ghosts was produced by **Marc Muller** who has been a member of country superstar Shania Twain’s touring band since 1995 and co-produced Steve Forbert’s latest studio CD. In addition to Muller and Forbert a bevy of talented musicians contributed to Chasing Ghosts including **David Hamburger** (Joan Baez, Freedy Johnston), **Graham Hawthorne** (David Byrne, Paul Simon), **Conrad Korsch** (Rod Stewart, Carly Simon, Joan Osborne), **Neil Thomas** (Five- Chinese Brothers) and **Nicole Atkins**.

“Impressive...finely crafted songs.”- Acoustic Live “

“a masterful blend of Country, Americana and Folk Rock...a wonderful triumph of the human spirit in song.” - Tribes Hill News

In 2005 Murphy’s songwriting talents were again formally acknowledged as he was selected as a **Finalist** in both the prestigious **New-Folk Competition** at the **Kerrville Folk Festival** in Kerrville, Texas and the **Singer-Songwriter Contest** at the **Wildflower Music and Arts Festival** in Richardson, Texas. In May of 2005, he performed at both festivals.

At live shows Murphy most often performs as a solo act or backed by one of his talented sidemen. This allows the song and his warm whiskey tinged voice to be the focal point. Over the last several years Murphy has shared the stage with **Steve Forbert**, **Slaid Cleaves**, **Alejandro Escovedo**, **Mike Doughty**, **Jimmie Dale Gilmore**, **Vic Chesnutt**, **Ray Wylie Hubbard**, **Suzanne Vega**.

Murphy has performed at hundreds of venues including the **Kerrville Folk Festival** and the **Wildflower Music & Arts Festival** in Texas, the **Living Room**, **Postcrypt Café**, and the **Knitting Factory** in New York City, the **Tin Angel** in Philadelphia, the **Acoustic Café** and the **SONO Music & Arts Festival** in Connecticut and the **Outpost in the Burbs** in his hometown of Montclair, NJ.

Murphy is currently in the studio with producer and guitarist **Billy Masters** (Dar Williams, Suzanne Vega, Cry,Cry,Cry) working on what will be Murphy’s third full-length studio album. The much anticipated release is due in late 2006. More fun ahead!

Tribes Hill News / Rick's Picks / CDs of the Month (May 2003)

Though I've had this CD for a couple months, it wasn't until I awoke recently one morning hearing Dave's familiar songs playing in my mind that I knew with certainty what a powerful body of work he had created. Sure, the CD resonated with me on first listen and stayed in my player for a couple weeks. But I lost it somewhere in my chaotic day to day business of life. Yet those damn songs kept calling out to me...find me, if you can... I stumbled through the piles of CDs and found amongst Buffalo Tom and Natalie Merchant a couple earlier CDs by Dave Murphy. Ahhh...these are so good too. I play his earlier CD "Under the Lights"...yes...this is great...hmmm... but where is "Ghosts"? I finally find the CD in the car behind my seat with a pile of others I meant to listen to as well.

Like his title song "Chasing Ghosts" suggests, this CD is both compelling and haunting. The songs are a masterful blend of Country, Americana and Folk-Rock that carry a meaningful message as well as a memorable melody. There is no doubt that Dave's influences include the likes of Steve Earle yet the songs are genuine and personal. He successfully translates his experiences into songs that we all can relate to. Though this is only his second LP, it has all the qualities one would expect from a seasoned artist. The guest musicians include Nicole Atkins, Steve Forbert, David Hamburger, Graham Hawthorne, Marc Muller and Tina Vero. With the help of co-producer and fellow New Jersey native, Marc Muller, a gifted multi-instrumentalist and performer himself, Dave's CD is a wonderful triumph of the human spirit in song.

By Rick Rock

Acoustic Live NYC (March 2003)

"Dave Murphy - Time is Fleeting, but This Time He's Ready"

Flash back to this past January 12th, 2003. It's Sunday at 10 o'clock in the morning. I'm streaming John Platt's City Folk Sunday Morning Breakfast show on WFUV. His "live" in-studio guest is Dave Murphy, a local singer/songwriter from Montclair, New Jersey.

I'd seen him before, at Falcon Ridge Folk Festival. He was playing an impromptu showcase in front of the Outpost in the Burbs booth on the midway. His husky baritone was impressive. It remains impressive and he wasted no time that morning in displaying its power.

Time was a recurring focal point during that show, and the precious regard for its fleeting nature. It hangs over Dave Murphy's recent work. "Red," is the first track, on his latest CD, **Chasing Ghosts**. The second verse goes:

*I spent half my life playing in the rye
I had so many reasons for wasting so much precious time
But everything has changed like the end of a song
I don't know what it was but I know that it's gone*

The song, with it's sense of a recaptured value of each moment we're here on this earth, is in particular, his reaction to 9/11. The first verse delivers us back to that day of stunned shock:

*What would you expect me to do in this state of mind
Stare down at my feet or up at the darkening autumn sky
Come a little closer now and look me in the eye
Twilight has come my friend and I've been crying*

The chorus nails it, perfectly:

*I opened my eyes and it isn't a dream
All I see is red and red is all that I see
Red is the color that we all bleed*

One question posed within the belly of the song asks the listener to examine the daily state of affairs beyond the tragedy:

*You look in the mirror and you're getting older
You say that you love her but when's the last time you told her?*

Dave was born in New York, in Flushing, Queens. During his early years, His family moved around, so he lived in Buffalo, Rochester, Westchester and then New Jersey. His parents moved to Chicago when he was around 20-21 years old, but Dave decided to stay in this area. He made a trip to Florida but then returned to live in New Jersey. As a youngster, he remembers sitting in the living room with his dad, listening to Herman's Hermits on radio singing "Mrs. Brown You've Got a Lovely Daughter," and "Henry the Eighth." His mom bought him a guitar when he graduated high school. He did Neil Young covers in college. He says "It's been a long, slow evolution."

The heartland sound of his work was influenced by listening to country music on WHN in the mid 80's. Along with the country, he'd hear some of the newer "outlaw" stuff from Emmy Lou Harris and Steve Earle. He still marvels at how he got to hear Earle's "Guitar Town" on that station. He had a turbulent two-year marriage. Texas was where she was from, so they honeymooned in Houston. She introduced him to some of the "grass roots" music she liked and Dave absorbed it. There were gains and losses. His ex-wife threw his first guitar out a 3rd-story window after an argument. Win some, lose some.

By his own admission, Dave has several "black holes" in his past. Running around, drugs and alcohol, took their toll and big chunks of time. He stated to John Platt that "you only have a finite amount of time on this wonderful, or not-so-wonderful planet." About ten years ago he decided it was time to take things seriously. One of the black holes was the aforementioned marriage. Dave had married in his early twenties, just out of college. During his college years in the late 70's, in West Virginia he'd partied, and played guitar with friends, learning covers, such as Neil Young songs (always a great learning experience - especially for a novice songwriter). He began writing the odd piece here and there. "Pretty mellow," he recalled. Once the marriage disintegrated he began looking to the guitar for more than just kicks and began writing more. He described coming into New York City in the mid and late 80's to play in open mics and showcases at places like Sun Mountain (now The Baggot Inn) and the now-defunct Speakeasy, where so many now-famous contemporary singer/songwriters played.

As he became more serious about the music. He formed alliances with other musicians and gigged more often. He's opened for artists such as Slaid Cleaves and Ray Wylie Hubbard. He began recording his songs of self-discovery and introspection, finally publishing his first CD, the independently produced **Under the Lights** in 1998. This CD was chosen as a prestigious top 12 DIY (Do-It-Yourself) pick in the December 1999 issue of Performing Songwriter Magazine.

Dave feels that the new CD has a more mature world-view than its predecessor. Less "look what I'm going through," and a more wider range of perception. He certainly showed that in the song "Red." While the new CD has its share of looking back, it combines the wisdom of years of observing himself and the world with an artist's eye and ear to create finely crafted songs. He feels that Mark Muller (Shania Twain Band), his producer had a lot to do with bringing this effort to fruition. He'd started off with a very simple idea for the production, Mark did much more with his material than he expected and he is grateful. - by **Richard Cuccaro**

The Bergen Record, "Dave Murphy's Lyrical New Jersey" (March 7, 2003)

Dave Murphy, "Chasing Ghosts" (Phoenix Night) 3 ½ Stars

North Jersey singer-songwriter Dave Murphy is a master of the telling detail. In his second full-length album, Murphy sings of "the way she kissed me when I was trying to drive" and dancing "naked on the porch so we could feel the evening breeze."

Though sadness haunts his mellow baritone, Murphy is not a wallower. "My Garden State" belongs in the Ode to Jersey pantheon alongside John Gorka's "I'm from New Jersey" and John Pizzarelli's "I Like Jersey Best." Murphy's take is unsentimental: "A thousand miles away and there's sulfur in the air / It smells just like New Jersey but I'm so far from there." There's no doubt, though, where his allegiance lies. "I never thought I'd miss her how was I to know / If I see one more cowboy hat I think I'll lose my load."

Instrumentation tends towards the countrified, with plaintive pedal steel guitar. Twangy baritone guitar, a bit of hill-country mandolin and banjo, and some soaring backup singing from Nicole Atkins and Tina Vero. "Quarter Moon Missing," featuring Steve Forbert's whiskey-tinged support singing, is actually a little hillbilly: "You got my heart and I got the slamming door." In the "Ballad of Rue Lafayette" – a song so good he has recorded it for the third time – Murphy chronicles lovers so at ease that they "slept the day away in Paris / Never thinking about what we might have missed."

Murphy, who co-produced with Marc Muller, has created characters with more than a few miles on the odometer who nevertheless feel salvation is around the next corner. **Chasing Ghosts** is a sophisticated, lyrical work meant for grown-ups, or listeners traveling that road.

- Bob Ivry, Staff Writer

Montclair Times, Music Section (January 23, 2003)

"Guitarist Dave Murphy To Enjoy Hometown Fans In Outpost Show"

"I've lived in Montclair about eight years," said Dave Murphy, tall and bald and quick to flash a winning smile. "It's no coincidence that, for the time I've lived here, I've been really working hard on my music and gigging all over."

Perhaps it's the ambience of the town. Perhaps it's the proximity of Montclair to Manhattan and Hoboken, New Brunswick and the Jersey Shore – beehives of musical activity. Perhaps it's the cups of coffee imbibed at the Starbucks on Valley Road, where Murphy often hangs out, "honing songs and hashing them out."

His insightful, gripping lyrics are delivered in a charismatic baritone, with a shade of huskiness. Often the saddest lyrics are carried along with propulsive enthusiasm on anthems that lay out scenes of sadness and breakdown and then soar into sunlight. He's written numerous down-to-earth songs of avowal and aloneness, boasting well-turned phrases, basted with epiphanies and seasoned with insights.

"You always write from yourself," Murphy said. "But you write from a universal perspective."

David E. Murphy has released three CD's, described on his website, www.murphyworld.com, and he's performed live on WFUV, the preeminent "new folk" FM radio station in the New York City area, which is also playing cuts from his new release, **Chasing Ghosts**. Murphy has opened shows for Steve Forbert, who provided backing vocals on the tune "Quarter Moon Missing," from the new CD;

the Continental Drifters at the Court Tavern in New Brunswick; and twice for Slaid Cleaves.

He has every intention of becoming the headlining act before another year or two passes.

Murphy opens the show tomorrow night at Outpost in the Burbs, performing a bevy of original songs before headliner Ray Wylie Hubbard takes the stage.

It's the third time Murphy has played at Outpost, the musical venue here in Montclair that has become a nationally prominent performance site for acoustic and "new folk" musical artists. He'll be accompanied by Neil Thomas on accordion and harmonica, who also performed on "Chasing Ghosts" and was a member of the band 5 Chinese Brothers. The album's co-producer and multi-instrumental player Marc Muller, who is in Shania Twain's touring group and was in the regional band, the Surreal McCoy's, sometimes joins Murphy for live performances.

While his music resounds with sounds that could have derived from Texas or Tennessee, "My Garden State" from the new CD kisses goodbye to both those states as he voices his affirmation of New Jersey.

He's absorbed music from plenty of musicians, ranging from the Flying Burrito Brothers and Gram Parsons to Wilco and Son Volt. "It's this kind of osmosis," Murphy said. "I grew up on the Allman Brothers and Neil Young and James Taylor. Someone I really love is Steve Earle. Lucinda Williams is right up there with Steve Earle. Maybe there's a little bit of Townes Van Zandt."

Murphy records his music and plays it live on a Collings CJ acoustic guitar an instrument handmade in Austin, Texas, by Bill Collings. "He builds them modeled after the old Gibson and Martin guitars from the 1930's, the golden age of lutherie," Murphy said. "This one's a keeper."

Murphy's fans would eagerly say the same about him.

By Mark S. Porter of the Montclair Times

Fairfield County Weekly, SoNo Arts Guide (August 3, 2000)

Up-and-coming singer/songwriter Dave Murphy flavors this diva-dominated genre with the unnerving perspective of a guy -- you know, the strong but sensitive type. Whether he's weaving a tale of woe over a lost love or simply fondly reminiscing, Murphy is a natural storyteller who uses both image-rich lyrics and compelling melodies to illustrate his tale. With the addition of tight vocal harmonies and creative instrumentation, Murphy's music -- at once thought-provoking and an easy listen -- graciously rides the fine folk/Americana line. **By Terri Lagerstedt**

Performing Songwriter Magazine (December 1999/January 2000 Issue)

"DIY TOP 12"

In his liner notes, Dave Murphy writes, "Most if not all of these songs speak of personal struggle. Thankfully we're all given the opportunity to change." He makes that point much more eloquently in his lyrics: "Something is lost and something is gained/Smile through the sorrow and dance in the rain."

If struggle is the main theme of the bulk of Murphy's songs, he manages to convey it with an easy-to-swallow, folk rock approach. He's also been around long enough to know that the answer to the struggles usually lie within. "I thought that you would save me/But I know I need to save myself" he sings in "Save Me." More hard-earned wisdom informs "The Bottom" as he tells a friend, "even at the bottom there's still a little light." "Planet of Pain" alludes to the fact that most personal struggles are actually universal.

Murphy sings in a gentle, unaffected baritone that suits his musings perfectly. He knows what he knows and he's working on the rest. For the like-minded, *Under the Lights* will be illuminating, indeed. **By Neil Fagan**

Artist Amplification.Com (April 2001)

Equal parts David Gray, Son Volt and Shawn Mullins, Murphy's intimate confessions combined with sparse instrumentation allow the listener to fall into the songs and become one with them. **By Andrew Gesner**

Twin Cities Revue, Minneapolis, MN, (April 29, 1999)

TUNES By Chris Smith

Under the Lights
(Phoenix Night Productions)

Too often, musicians who sizzle onstage are overproduced, sanitized and laminated in the studio. When their fans hit the store to buy a new release, they get a cartoon version of their hero, rather than the raw performance quality they expect. Not so with Dave Murphy. To paraphrase Claude Debussy, this New Jersey local's debut album exemplifies the fact that "the music is the stuff between the notes." Hands-off production and sparse instrumentation leave plenty of room for the listener to fall into the tracks and enjoy the elbow room here, rather than having to fight crowds of horns, bass drums, feedback, and backup singers.

Murphy's pure vocals and intricate guitar work stand front and center on this album. The intimacy of his tales makes common subject matter compelling; even the most worn subjects (say, falling in love) seem surprisingly fresh, thanks to Murphy's gift for uplifting melodies and sparse backing vocals. The extraordinary musicians he's mustered for this album know when to shine and when to dim, depending on the mood of the piece. Their occasional flourishes, often reminiscent of Santana and Blues Traveler, add just enough texture but never distract.

Though it makes the album shine, the stuff between the notes would mean little if Murphy couldn't deliver the goods. The collection's simple, clean production compliments his bare-bones lyrics and smooth voice. A musical Raymond Carver, Murphy taps the raw nerve so many struggling songwriters can't seem to find, creating a tight, focused album that delivers everything it promises.

(Smith)

Westchester County Weekly, Music Section (Thursday January 6, 2000)

Pure vocals and intricate guitar work characterize the work of singer/songwriter Dave Murphy. The key here seems to be simplicity, which is found in abundance on his debut CD *Under the Lights*. Most of the tracks deal with common/universal themes such as love, loss and isolation, but in stark, refreshing ways.

On one excellent track entitled "Planet of Pain," Murphy croons: "your face it appears / more than once in a while / I hold on to the dream / and the thought of your smile / I thought I was through with this time that I've served / but we make our own choices to forget what we've learned." Another tune called "The Bottom" is a powerful examination of addiction. The array of emotions explored on this disc is astonishing, though not heavy handed. **By Susan Polese**

DAVE MURPHY

CHASING GHOSTS

