

**A Conversation with David Wilcox  
by Frank Goodman (Puremusic 8/2002)**

Late this past May, my girl Annie and I were sitting sidestage at the Kerrville Folk Festival, watching the main stage Saturday night show. Tom Prasada-Rao was going to close the show, but first David Wilcox was up. I was excited, hadn't seen him in many years.

When I first moved to Nashville in '89, he was playing around town. I heard he was managed by Amy Kurland, the owner of The Bluebird Cafe. I saw him a lot in this period. He even did the demos for his first or second record at my friend Jack Irwin's studio (Silverstone Recording Service), so I checked out all that, too. Closely.

Even way back then, his playing and performance were head and shoulders above most any of the singer songwriters one could see. He used a lot of tunings, and his axe was always in tune. He used cut and multiple capos, and was said to file his capos for use on different frets to keep his guitar in tune. (For instance, on the second fret, my high E is sharp, my B is flat, my low E is a little sharp. If I file a little rubber away on my Shubb at the right spots, all three of those problems can be cleared up.)

His repertoire at the time was more love song oriented, these were still his single days. The songs were deeply written and sung, the playing was inspired and very clean, orchestrally lush. He had very complex chords going on in altered tunings, and seemed to be using all twelve notes in the scale between the singing and playing. The songs tended to be on the soft side, but every now and then he'd stick it to you. Jack Irwin once told me something surprising about Wilcox. Jack's a very adept and opinionated rock and roll piano and organ player from Pittsburgh, has a fantastic Chuck Berry band in Nashville. Around the time he was recording David's early demos, he made a typically snide comment about rock and roll after a session. He said Wilcox spun around and stuck a blistering version of "Maybelline" so far up his nose that he never forgot it. Just when you think you got the cat sussed out, he'll take you somewhere else.

All that was the backdrop to the anticipation of a current Wilcox show, now ten years later, and just minutes away. He had become a big folk star, which didn't surprise me. He'd already had contracts with A&M, Koch, Vanguard, and put a couple more out without a major label, ten CDs including the new live one (on What Are Records). I enjoyed watching him get his stage plot together. Special mic stand with a couple of mics on it, a shelf for the tuner, stereo Pendulum preamps, a snake for the cables, some unknown unit with tape over it that must be responsible for those sub frequencies that give the guitar and overall presentation that symphonic hi-fi quality he'd later refer to during our interview.

Oh, I remember, I had seen him play once, at a pickin party at Mike and Kathy Williams' house in Nashville. It was there I first heard the evolution of his intros and outros to songs, that was the huge difference. Somewhere along the road that included hundreds, perhaps thousands, of gigs, he had elevated the drivel most acts call "between song patter" to the art of the cosmic comedian, the inspirational speaker, the enlightening friend. Now it wasn't just his talent that set him apart, it was his actual presence, his gift had become more than just the music.

And that night at Kerrville he completely won the crowd over, and gave them something really unique. I know, because I got it. I was more convinced than ever that Wilcox is one of the finest singer songwriters this generation has produced, and that he's still getting better, a lot better.

**Puremusic:** I think this new record [*Live Songs & Stories*] is fantastic. I'm a longtime Wilcox fan, so I thought it really was about time that the spontaneous essence of your live show got captured.

**David Wilcox:** Yeah, thank you.

**PM:** It was interesting that the album was culled from several years of performances, something that people don't do often enough. You know, they'll say, "Well, we're playing three nights here at so and so, let's just take the best of that." Why not take the best of the last three years instead?

**DW:** Well, it's just that it's a lot of work sorting through everything and seeing how it goes together and all that. But boy, it was worth it to me. There were some inconsistencies in the ambient sound, and I was wondering how that would fit together, but it really turned out great.

**PM:** And you don't hear the different sizes of the rooms or any of that. I couldn't hear that at all.

**DW:** That's great.

**PM:** It's amazing.

**DW:** That's the marvels of digital mastering.

**PM:** Ahh. I know you really are, in the good sense of the word, a real freak on the sound.

**DW:** Uh-huh.

**PM:** L. J. Booth said that when he was on tour with you, every night you'd take the utmost care with the room, trying to get the sound just as perfect as it could be.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** Another thing that acoustic guys don't take seriously enough. Well, we'll get to the sound of things as we move along.

I've been seeing you play since, I guess, what may be some of your early days, '89, '90, around the Bluebird in Nashville, before you started, really, a recording career in earnest. And regardless of how great I found you then, it's been remarkable to see your steady improvement.

**DW:** Thank you. I do feel blessed that I'm working at a craft that's so elusive that I can work at it for a lifetime and still feel like I'm just now beginning to know how to do what I do.

**PM:** Well, to me the part of it that you're really making huge strides in is—the songs have always been really good, but now it's what you're saying that's really amazing. I saw your show at Kerrville, this past festival in May, and it was remarkable to see that, wow, these stories are every bit as important as the songs now. That's certainly how it felt to the audience. Is that how it feels to you, too?

**DW:** Oh, yeah. It's interesting, I realized that when I go to hear music, the memories I take home are probably mostly what people said. And even though I can listen to a lyric and get so much out of it the first time, when it comes to what I remember from hearing thirty songs in a whole night of music, I'll usually remember what people said more than what they sang. [laughs]

**PM:** Right, because it's more snapshotable.

**DW:** I don't know, but, yeah.

**PM:** And they didn't have time to work on it, they just stood up to the mic and said it.

**DW:** Yes.

**PM:** On the other hand, it seems that as spontaneous as you will be, you also will script some of the show so that it has a certain flow and a certain message.

**DW:** I love to figure out what I want to start with and what I want to end with, then let it be up to the crowd in terms of how we get there. I try to sense their energy and move with that.

**PM:** In a lot of the songs and the intros, one could say there's a spiritual message or content. Has there been a significant shift in your spiritual life?

**DW:** In terms of the evolution of how my message gets across in my music, it hasn't been so much that my spiritual life has changed, it's just that I'm better at writing about stuff that's hard to write about. I'm able to sing about the stuff that brings me joy, where before it was that I couldn't really make it fresh. So I'm writing about it more now.

**PM:** Are there any big spiritual guides of one sort or another in your life?

**DW:** Oh, sure.

**PM:** Yeah?

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** Who's moved you?

**DW:** I feel the most important thing about what I do in my music is to tell people that their own heart can be trusted, and that they have guidance in their hearts. I don't want to just speak about what I believe, you know, as if I had some personal authority. But what I can sing about with conviction is that just as my own heart was guided, there is guidance available in everyone's heart.

And so I'd say that they're in good hands, and to trust the yearnings of their heart to start the search. I don't have to tell them where I hope they'll wind up. I can just say that my belief is, from the journey that I've had, that if you're sincerely searching, the truth will be obvious. That's the message of what I want to put out. Because it seems so much more believable and real, rather than just me saying, "Hey, join the club that I'm in," that sort of thing. I think it's much more important for me to get across the message that "I believe enough in the truth that I've found that I believe you'll find it too." You know?

**PM:** Right.

**DW:** Because I believe that as you look, you are looked for.

**PM:** Ahh. Thanks for that.

**DW:** So I didn't answer your question, because what I want to try to say is this: what's more important than my own personal stuff is the message that our hearts are a good design, and the emptiness is there for a reason, and it's there to lead us. And so instead of me sort of preaching, saying "You have to believe what I believe," I'm saying that the truth that I've found and am finding is, I think, looking for me, and if you just trust your own heart and follow where it leads, you're in good hands.

**PM:** That's deep. I appreciate that.

**DW:** I think in some ways it's just very simple, and yet it feels... In order for me to sing with any conviction, I need to believe that what I'm saying is really true, what I'm singing is true. And so for me it's fun to sing about the joy that I've found, and try to make it not just sound like I'm, you know, [laughing] searching for members for my institution or something, or whatever I'm into. But that the truth is much bigger than that.

**PM:** On the subject of joy, it seems that you've put together a great family. Will you share a little bit about that?

**DW:** It used to be that nothing felt as good as a good song did, and it was music that set the standard for how good a life can feel. And little by little, I feel like just by setting that standard for the rest of my life, I have been able to get a life worth singing about. It's been really joyful to have a good, strong relationship and raise our son together. Like anything, you can come at it from the viewpoint of "We just have to get done the work that needs to be done," or if you look at it in terms of the lessons to be learned, wow, raising a child has got just huge lessons in it. It's wonderful.

**PM:** Yeah, and they never end.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** Where did you meet Nance?

**DW:** Through kayaking.

**PM:** And your son is eight-ish?

**DW:** He's nine years old now.

**PM:** For the sake of your fans who would like to know you even better, why don't you tell us something about you that only a friend of yours might know.

**DW:** [laughs] I ride unicycles with my son. He rides a 20-inch one that I got two Christmases ago, and I ride a 36-inch wheel. And that's a really big wheel. So we ride hand-in-hand down the street through the neighborhood, and it's really fun.

**PM:** A thirty-six-inch wheel! [laughs]

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** So it looks other-worldly.

**DW:** It's very strange. And I love the whole balance aspect of it. It's such a huge metaphor for me, you know, because a life in balance is my goal.

Right now I'm out on the back deck, looking at these big trees, hundreds of years old. I love living sort of at the edge of the woods, and you can walk for miles into the woods. And I feel very blessed. And there are times when I really think I've got just the best of everything. Every once in a while—like I was at a photo shoot the other day, and somebody was telling me that to do music at my level is really the best. She was comparing it to other acts that she knows who are so stressed out over all the company involvement in their life, and they don't have a lot of choices, and they're under it.

**PM:** Yeah.

**DW:** And she said that to do it at my level is so much better, because I can be the most connected with the audiences, the most connected with my family, the most connected with reality. What I write about has some truth to it because I'm not up in that rarified air, with the fame and all, disconnected from real life. And also, the huge part to her is that I don't have the distraction of being recognized all over, where I'd have to start insulating myself. She said, "I hope you appreciate that you really have it the best that there is."

**PM:** I really think that's right.

**DW:** [laughs] And that's so wild for me to hear, because a lot of times I'm frustrated, thinking "What did I do wrong?" I mean, most people that I've played for who've never heard me before say, "My God, why haven't I heard this music?" And I understand about how the music industry works according to fashion and all that stuff. And yet, on a sort of objective level, when I back up and look not so much at the How It Works, but more at the Why Is It This Way, I can say to myself, "It seems to me that this music would serve a lot more people, and I'm just curious why that never happened." In frustration I can sometimes say, "This record is going nowhere, blah, blah, blah." You know? And so it's really fun to hear the other side of the argument, which is that if I were any more distracted by attention, it would not serve me at all.

**PM:** It would compromise your family and compromise your freedom.

**DW:** Yeah. That's really wild, isn't it.

**PM:** Because I'm sure it's a solid and a good living now, and yet you really get to be yourself. It's beautiful.

**DW:** I've noticed that. I played last night, and I did two sets. The first set was an hour and fifteen, the second set was an hour and forty-five, with a couple encores. And as I looked through what I played and what I didn't, I realized I didn't play any of the hits, and I played probably half stuff that hasn't even been recorded. And the crowd was right there. I realized that somebody who's famous could never do that. [laughing] The crowd would riot. They would say, "Play the hit or we'll kill you." [laughs] And it was just such a treat, because it was like a conversation. It was like, you know, "Instead of talking about what we talked about last time, let's talk about what's happening now"—all these current songs. And it just felt great.

**PM:** Lately I've been doing some work at my brother's management company by day. And besides Travis Tritt, one of the acts we're handling is Michael Peterson, a country writer but he likes all kinds of music. Your new CD was playing on my computer as he walked in, and he picked right up singing "Start With The Ending" as he came in the room.

**DW:** All right.

**PM:** He talked about what a big fan of yours he is, and that he was thinking of covering "Rusty Old American Dream."

**DW:** That would be great.

**PM:** He also said that a well-known song of his called "Good Slow Cookin'" was inspired by you. He said, "Oh, that's straight up, that's a David Wilcox inspiration, no doubt about it."

**DW:** Hmm, wow.

**PM:** So it's neat to see how far one's reputation can reach, and into how many quarters.

**DW:** Yeah. What's his name again? I'm not familiar with him yet.

**PM:** Michael Peterson.

**DW:** I'll watch for him.

**PM:** He was the Biggest New Male Country Artist of '98. He's got a new album out on Sony, and he was the Most Added Artist at Radio last week with this first single, "Modern Man." He's a quality writer, works really hard at it. You know, he's not a pubescent hat act that doesn't know who Cole Porter is.

**DW:** Uh-huh. But that would be a great band name, "Pubescent Hat Act."

**PM:** [laughing] I'm going to pass that around The Row.

**DW:** [laughs]

**PM:** In terms of influences, are there important guitar figures in your story, people that meant a lot?

**DW:** Oh yeah. But the one that's really floating my boat this week is John Mayer. I just think he's wonderful.

**PM:** God that guy is good!

**DW:** [laughs] He's amazing. He's probably, what, nineteen?

**PM:** Yeah. He's just a kid, ain't he. I walked out of a sushi bar in Nashville recently, right into an Uptown Mix, that concert on the street, and he was playing. We said, "Well, who is this kid? He's great." And we stood and watched him for a while. And then all of a sudden, he was all over the radio.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** That's a beautiful soul there.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** How about lyricists?

**DW:** I think John Mayer writes great, too. I mean, he's young and what he's writing about isn't super deep or anything, but it's really well done. It's wonderful and playful and fresh and just great.

**PM:** All right, I'm making a note. I've got to see if I can get an interview with that guy. He's getting pretty big, though, right now.

**DW:** Oh, yeah.

**PM:** How about a few words on our mutual friend L.J. Booth? [see our review]

**DW:** I've been playing L.J.'s song "Box Elder," which I think is a wonderfully complex song. Simply written, but there's a lot to think about in that song.

**PM:** That's a great song.

**DW:** You know, sort of Jesus from the point of view of Pilate. It's perfectly executed in that song. It just leaves so much room to open, like a gift-wrapped present, and discover it on your own.

I think L.J. has done the right thing. He's been a man. He raised his daughter, and he's done a really wonderful job of being there and being a dad. His daughter just graduated high school, and it's time for him to get more music out. So he's got this new CD. And we were out traveling, and I just love to watch him play. It's always so fresh. And with this kind of music, I love that somebody with that kind of talent can always step back into it. And it's great to see him doing that.

**PM:** And it's beautiful to see him get out there with such an old friend, who's got a great audience, and it can really help him step right back into the middle of things.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** That was a fine gesture on your part.

**DW:** Oh, it was my pleasure. [laughs]

**PM:** I can dig that, too.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** I didn't know anything about Jake Amerding. Could we have a little background on him? He played some really good stuff on the new record.

**DW:** Yeah. He's so great. One gig that got recorded was over at a venue that Charlie Peacock had, sort of an old church, a big old church. And Charlie invited Jake, they knew each other. Well, we had met originally through an improvisation workshop. So Charlie invited Jake down. And when I heard that Jake was there for this gig, I said, "Hey, do you feel like playing? Do you have your fiddle?" And he said, "Sure." So it was really fun playing with him on those tunes. And we'd never jammed together, but I'd heard him play, and I knew he was great. So that was the first time through. And the energy of it was so fun, you can just hear me reacting to it.



**PM:** Oh, yeah, absolutely. That's my favorite kind of playing, too, the first time through stuff.

**DW:** Yes.

**PM:** You and Richard Thompson, to me, have the best acoustic guitar sounds I've heard on the stage.

**DW:** [laughs] And they're so different. They're completely different. That's great.

**PM:** Very different.

**DW:** Richard just plays the Sunrise through the Mesa Boogie preamp, so he gets that sort of electric sound.

**PM:** He plays it through a Mesa Boogie preamp?

**DW:** Oh, yeah, a tube preamp. And it's from the UK, so it runs on 220, and so he's got this big power adapter up there. And it's a very electric sound. It's compressed, and it's got just a wonderful punch to it. And my sound is, you know...

**PM:** So warm and...

**DW:** Sort of hi-fi, comparatively.

**PM:** Yeah.

**DW:** And yet it's bigger in the way that it's got much lower frequencies, and it's got some higher crispier frequencies. And it is gentler in many ways. It doesn't have the same punch. And yet it's so much more...oh, I don't know, *symphonic* I'm thinking. [laughs]

**PM:** Oh, yeah, much more hi-fi, as you said. Because when I saw Richard, I thought he was using that big fat Sunrise preamp on the stage, you know the one that Kaufman makes, that little forty-pound transformer deal.

**DW:** That's an amazing piece of gear.

**PM:** Yeah. When I saw him, he had this one real tall blond guy who did his sound, and he walked in with a Haliburton and inside was the big Sunrise transformer, and he mixed the show. I managed sales for Mesa Boogie for, oh, a decade or so. And so I'm amazed to hear he's playing with a Mesa Boogie preamp.

**DW:** Well, actually, my information is probably a year and a half old, so I don't know.

**PM:** Yeah, mine is older.

**DW:** Oh, okay.

**PM:** Jeez, your rig is so pristine. It sounds so amazing.

**DW:** Thank you.

**PM:** Is it a trade secret?

**DW:** Oh, no.

**PM:** Are there any aspects of it that you might disclose?

**DW:** Sure. If people want to know about my sound, they can just call Greg at Pendulum Audio, and he can send them, in a box, this very sound that I'm getting.

**PM:** Really?

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** Oh, I know Greg. I'm going to call him right up, because I'm a Pendulum Sunrise guy.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** Okay. Well, then we'll just keep that between us.

**DW:** [laughs]

**PM:** Are you using a few or many tunings?

**DW:** Fewer now, actually. I've finally found one that for me does everything I want it to do. And it was a long time coming. But open G with the third in the bass, with a cut capo that lets the bass string pass through. That is such a versatile tuning to me. I can play it out of five different keys, and it's just fascinating. And all the bass notes that you need, the two, four, five, six, they're all within easy reach, so you can stay close to the melody notes, sort of first and second position, and still play all the bass notes that you need. It's just wonderful.

**PM:** Thanks, that's valuable. I'm glad I got that on tape so I can go and figure it out later, all that you said.

**DW:** Yeah.

**PM:** You don't ever play in regular Spanish tuning, do you?

**DW:** It's the weirdest of all tunings! I go there once in a while when I really want to get lost.

**PM:** [laughs] After all the big or medium labels you've been with, A&M, Koch, Vanguard, how did this new partnership with What Are Records come about? What's that story?

**DW:** Oh, they're a fun label. I think they're doing what will probably become more common. It's a very different kind of a record deal, one that takes into account how the industry has changed. Instead of the company taking all the money, basically, they have a wonderful fresh outlook on what a record company can provide. Now that people can make their own records very cheap, and you can deliver an album, you know, graphics done, and enter the contract not in debt, then you can negotiate how much you want to spend for what. There's no hidden cost. And you don't have to audit the record company. What Are Records are just really good at what they do. It's more like having a record company work for you, instead of selling the master to them and...

**PM:** Becoming a slave in the process.

**DW:** Yeah, yeah.

**PM:** I thought it must be that they are a more open book, and a better deal. And part of the story seemed to be that they are dealing rather strictly with artists who have already attained a certain level of notoriety. So for people who are in that category, that's a great thing.

Speaking of open books, what are you reading? And what have you been listening to lately, aside from John Mayer?

**DW:** I just started a book called *Slackjaw* by Jim Knipfel. And what have I been listening to? Oh, let's see... I should have my answers ready for this, because I can never remember. Well, of course, Nora Jones, a couple months ago...

**PM:** Boy, her career really took off.

**DW:** Yeah. I better go look at the CDs just so I can remember. I have such a voracious appetite for music that I will have a favorite CD for, you know, like three or four days, and then move on to something else.

**PM:** Right.

**DW:** So for this last road trip, it was John Mayer. I listened to his CD probably forty times.

**PM:** Are there CDs you go back to again and again, favorites that you return to?

**DW:** In terms of sort of overall, lifetime best CDs, I would say there's the *Apple Venus* by XTC.

**PM:** Wow! I don't meet enough acoustic guys that are XTC freaks like I am. They're so amazing.

**DW:** Oh, my God, just *huge*, wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

**PM:** And never got what they deserved?

**DW:** Well, you know, I have no perspective on that. But I just feel like that particular record, it's basically incredible, the symphonic aspect, and the writing. You can tell the two personalities. One guy is trying to be a little bit cool, and the other guy is so up front, and writes about just very kind of—if you were describing their songs as their clothing, one would be in a fine suit, and the other would be kind of frumpy and smiling.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DW:** The combination is so wonderful. And musically, it's just *so* satisfying.

**PM:** You know, I don't have that particular record, but I'm going to go get it now.

**DW:** It's the best. *Apple Venus*. There's also *Apple Venus Volume 2*. The one I'm talking about is *Apple Venus Volume 1*. *Volume 2* is also great, but it's not orchestral. That, I think, is totally interesting, to hear the way all the parts work.

**PM:** And I think they do the orchestrations themselves, right?

**DW:** Yeah. Okay, here's another CD that you can't live without: Paul Sprawl. You ever heard of Paul Sprawl?

**PM:** No.

**DW:** Okay. The album is called *Blue Suitcase*, and it's on a German label. It came out in '99 and it's wonderful. In terms of the playing, you can really get inside what he's doing, in terms of studying the moves. There's stuff that he does that nobody else does.

**PM:** And is he an American artist?

**DW:** He is probably southern Californian.

**PM:** Do we know that German label? Is the cover right there?

**DW:** Yeah, but I'm not seeing the name. Here's something that says "Intuition, a division of..." and the rest is in a print I can't read. It's blue against black, so it doesn't come across.

**PM:** Oh man, that's a pet peeve of mine, unreadable record covers. I'll go find his website. [check out paulsprawl.com]

Well, I know you're busy. I'm going to ask you one more thing and let you go. Ten albums, it's hard to believe, ten albums into the game, and a sterling reputation made, what goals still lie ahead?

**DW:** What I would love to see is this: just about the time that I'm sort of bored with traveling around, I would love to become more of a writer. I find it kind of interesting that I've never pursued that at all. I mean I've never pitched a demo. I don't even know how to do it. [laughs] And so it would be really fun for me to learn about that, and write songs for other people. I'm good enough now at the craft that I would really love to not just tell my story and do my little quirky songs. But instead to come at song writing with a gracious heart, not trying to copy what the fad is, but thinking that there may be some songs that would really ring true for people that only I could write. And I could offer them up, and people could know them. It would be like, "Oh, you wrote that," kind of thing. You know?

**PM:** Right.

**DW:** And I think that would be a great thing to do. I love the idea of custom-made songs. My favorite thing would be if an artist had custom songs, made to order. Instead of just pitching a generic sort of song, it would fun if, say, some country artist said, "I wish I had a song about the way I fought with my brother, and now we're kind of estranged," or "You know, I really wish I had a song about my Mom dying." And I could make it completely personal, not just a song about a Mom, but put in enough details that I could sing it and know that it's real. And so then it would be like therapy. I could talk to them about it, get the real juice of the story, come back to them with a song, and it would just wipe them out. It would be great. [laughs]

**PM:** [laughs]

**DW:** And then I'd get to hear them do it. And they wouldn't just sing it like, "Okay, this is what I do for a living." They would sing it like, "This is my song, and nobody else can sing it. It was custom made for me." And that would be so satisfying. I would love to do that.

**PM:** I'm starting to move now into the publishing area, and I want to make a pitcher out of myself. So I hope that down the line I'll be talking to artists who voice a need like that, and I'll say, "Well, let me speak David Wilcox about it." And then pitch that song.

**DW:** It'd be kind of like writing for movie soundtracks, where they have the story and you make the emotional underpinning out of the music.

**PM:** Where you can look at the film and see, oh, that's the situation, okay.

**DW:** Yeah. But I love the idea of making it person-to-person. I know this woman who does paintings called Lifescapes, where she will, if somebody wants to give a painting as a gift, they tell the story of what this person has done with their whole life.

**PM:** Oh, my.

**DW:** And she makes a painting that incorporates all these elements, and makes it this beautiful journey. And so I love that same idea of being able to craft a song. Because what I love most about songwriting is that you go hear somebody do their songs, and when you leave, you know

something about them that you didn't know before. And this is a recent thing. I mean, you can listen to every Frank Sinatra record there is, and you don't know anything about Frank.

**PM:** Absolutely.

**DW:** The quirky thing about what happened when Joni Mitchell started doing this, started really telling what it's like instead of trying to polish a public image, was that songwriting became more like writing to a friend, and really confessing and sharing what matters most. And so the singer/songwriter became this genre for a while. But of course the abuses of that are when it becomes like journal writing, too interior for people to really connect with it.

So I think the perfect evolution of that would be for the singer/songwriter to get out of his own journal, and use those skills but use them in this sort of Bodhisattva manner, use them in terms of, "Well, I can write for someone else, and I can write their story. And I can still make it as personal and as real and as wonderful. But instead of just doing self-portraits, I'll start painting other people. I'll start using that eye to look not just inside, but inside someone else's heart."

It's interesting that you asked this, because I've never really talked about this before. But I think it would be so satisfying to write songs that when somebody heard one on the radio they'd think the singer must have written it, because it sounds so true. I would love that.

**PM:** It's a beautiful thing.

Thanks so much for your time today. It's really nice talking to you.

**DW:** I feel the same. Sometimes interviews are, you know, more about the biz, and I'm glad that this was about what matters. Thank you.

