

A SOUL TO CLAIM

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A SOUL TO CLAIM



DOUG MACLEOD

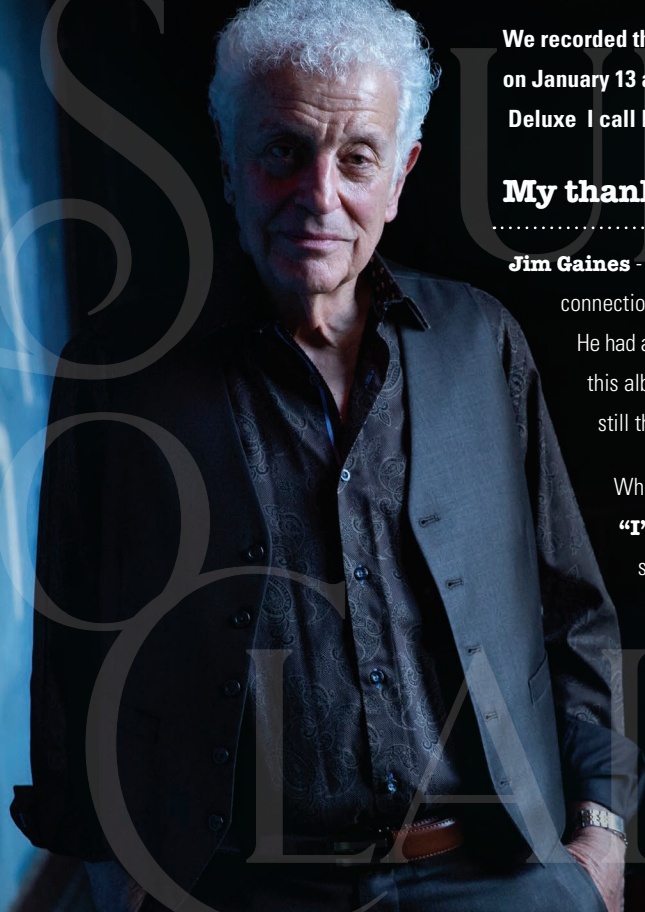
This album is a departure
in some ways from my
previous records.

This album was inspired by
Memphis, TN. I had been coming
to Memphis for years for the BMA's
and I found myself being drawn
to the city with its history,
love of music, soulfulness, and grit.

When my wife **Patti Joy**
and I moved to Memphis, well,
it just felt like we both were home.
We live near the Mississippi River
and as I walked along that river
I could feel a change coming
in me and my music,

“ A SOUL
TO
CLAIM ”

reflects that change.



We recorded this album at Jim Gaines' studio about a two hours drive east of Memphis
on January 13 and 14, 2020. I just used one guitar for this recording, my Waterloo WL-S
Deluxe I call P-Nut with a 1960's vintage DeArmond pickup.

My thanks on the album in no particular order go to :

Jim Gaines - My time with **Jim** was very special. From the moment I met **Jim** I could feel a
connection. A connection to the songs and more importantly the message of the songs.
He had a sense of what the song needed and how to get that. Plus he had a sense of what
this album needed. I remember coming in with a song that I thought was darn good and
still think it's darn good but when I played it for **Jim** he simply said, “ **Nope**”.

When the album came together I thanked him for his care and direction. He replied,
“**I'm just a hillbilly from Arkansas.**” After being with **Jim** I think more folks
should be just a hillbilly from Arkansas. **Rick Steff, Dave Smith, and Steve
Potts** - are some of the best musicians I have ever played with. No rehearsals.

Jim said just play the song for the guys. I did. They wrote their own charts and
even changed the feel on “**Smokey Nights And Faded Blues**”. As we
were cleaning up after the session, I saw a few of those charts and had no idea
what they meant. But as you can hear - they did.

Mario Pronovost my long time good friend from Quebec. His talent to
depict the soul of an album with graphic design is simply incredible.

Miki Mulvehill my manager and good friend. When **Miki** said let's do an album with **Jim Gaines**. I thought that **Jim Gaines** !

She said you two will get along '**fabulously**' (that's Miki's word for sure). Well we did and we do.

Jan Mancuso, Marcia Martin and **Sean Martin** of **Reference Recordings**. This is my fifth album with the folks at **Reference Recordings** and I couldn't ask for nicer relationship. I'm proud to be with them and I'm looking forward to continuing walking down this road together.

My wife **Patti Joy** - My best friend. And a whole lot more. But really, the whole lot more is none of your business. :-)

FINALLY - YOU !

Yes, you because if you're reading this you've put down some money and I sure appreciate that. I sincerely hope the music we made for you makes you think, makes you laugh, maybe drop a tear, **but most importantly I hope our music can make you feel.**

Doug MacLeod

September 3, 2021



A SOUL TO CLAIM

This song is about beating addiction and abuse. Those of us who have been abused or have been addicted know that we come from hurt. We have ways of repeating the same mistakes and perpetuating the negative cycle. This song talks about finally stopping that negative cycle.

BE WHAT YOU IS

After all my years on this planet I've been noticing that many human beings have a hard time being themselves. In fact some are having a hard time finding and accepting who they are. Well, I got to thinking animals don't have that problem. Animals are happy just being what they is. I see a lesson in that, so I wrote this song.

MONEY TALKS

It sure does.

WHERE ARE YOU ?

As you might know I am a veteran, albeit not a combat veteran. But like so many vets I've known combat vets. It breaks my heart to see homeless vets begging for their lives while waiting for our government to be there for them like they promised. And it breaks my heart even more when I think of my vet friend who just couldn't wait any more and left this world on his own. I hope one day we will finally take care of them. They protected us, it's time for us to protect them.

DODGE CITY

Dodge City, Kansas? Nope. Washington DC, or Washington-Dodge City, or Washington D-Ceive if you will. I am fed up with politicians who simply lie to my face with no shame. Politicians who will not give a direct answer to a direct question. They make a flim-flamming used car salesman with one eye not trusting the other look honest.

SMOKEY NIGHTS AND FADED BLUES

Danny Jesser wrote the lyrics and I wrote the music on this one.

Danny got the idea for this song back in the early 80's when my electric band was playing at a club called

Ruebens in Redondo Beach where **George "Harmonica" Smith** and **Pee Wee Grayton** often dropped by to sit in.

ONLY PORTER AT THE STATION

Sometimes we can fall in love with a person who comes to us with a lot of hurt and pain. A lot of baggage if you will. They arrive at the station with all that baggage. You look around for some help, but you are the only porter at the station. So you help with the bags. Love will make you do that.

MUD ISLAND MORNING

We live on Mud Island, a sand bar in the Mississippi River. There's a feeling that rolls along with that river. I've tried to capture that feeling the best I could with this song. A lagniappe for you - some 'Bonus Tones'. You'll hear the chair creaking and my rear end sliding across it.

DUBB'S TALKING DISAPPOINTMENT BLUES

Back in my lady trolling days, I found myself in some rather interesting situations. Now, of course, they weren't quite as interesting as this song depicts... but I got a feeling you'll get the point. As **George "Harmonica" Smith** would say, **"Sometimes things don't always appear to seem as they might be."**



GREASE THE WHEEL

This song comes from a simple truth that can take some of us a long time to get a handle on. If you want or need things to change in your life you got to take charge of your life. You got to grease the wheel.

SOMEWHERE ON A MISSISSIPPI HIGHWAY

Years ago when I was in the Navy I was stationed in Millington, TN which is just north of Memphis. I couldn't get the gals in Memphis to go for me so I decided to head down to Mississippi and give that a shot. I had no luck there either. But one night I fell into a place down around Tunica. I had a great time with some good music and good food. Heck I didn't even miss the gals ! In fact I had such a good time I still can't recall exactly where it was.

THERE IS ALWAYS LOVE

After a first battle with cancer, our son **Jesse** was diagnosed with stage IV melanoma. His only hope, and a slim one at that, was a clinical trial in Los Angeles. I was on tour staying with friends in the Philadelphia area. The Sunday night before my wife **Patti Joy** and **Jesse** saw the doctor to see if he even had a chance of survival was the toughest night of my life. I couldn't sleep.

My friends lived in the country and there was a deck outside the room where I was staying. I went out to that deck that night and talked to the night. What I learned is in this song. The next day they saw the doctor and the doctor said not only did we have a chance but a good chance. Now as I'm writing this, nearly two years later, I can tell you he has beaten cancer for the second time. So I want you to know that no matter how dark things are for you - remember, **There Is Always Love**.

Doug MacLeod proudly endorses :

D'ADDARIO STRINGS | DIAMOND BOTTLENECKS | G7TH CAPOS
NATIONAL RESO-PHONIC GUITARS | REUNION BLUES | WATERLOO GUITARS

HERE IS A PHOTO FROM THE RECORDING SESSION

{ FROM LEFT TO RIGHT }



Jon Mroz, Technical Assistant | **Doug MacLeod**, Guitar & Vocals
Dave Smith, Bass Guitar | **Rick Steff**, Keyboards | **Steve Potts**, Drums
Jim Gaines, Producer & Engineer

© PHOTOGRAPHY : PATTI JOY MACLEOD



DAN FORTE'S LINER NOTES

I first saw Doug MacLeod perform live just a few years ago. Which is odd because, first off, I see blues artists often. I have faithfully since my teens.

Secondly, I had written the liner notes to Doug's **Ain't The Blues Evil** album back in 1991. I had heard Doug's name but not his music.

I listened and was impressed.

But that didn't prepare me for seeing Doug in person, which happened decades later at an afternoon gig in a Sacramento bar. We corresponded beforehand, and in return for putting my name at the door I offered to take Doug to dinner afterwards, so we'd finally have a chance to really meet.

The show was a revelation, and dinner was like a reunion of old friends who'd never met.

Doug has become almost as famous for his onstage storytelling as for his songs and guitar playing. But it was refreshing to see a performer who didn't take lightly his role as an entertainer – something that seems lost on too many blues performers today. Just a sideways glance, a raised eyebrow, a tilt of the head, or a mischievous grin, then a big laugh – he had the audience in the palm of his hand. And his songs ranged from humorous (without being cute) to poignant (without being maudlin).

Over dinner he regaled me with stories about George "Harmonica" Smith and Pee Wee Crayton. We discovered we knew many of the same musicians. And we talked about everything from our favorite barbecue joints

to child sexual abuse – something he addressed in his song "Break The Chain." (What other blues singer does that!)

This was three years before he and his wife moved to the so-called Bluff City. To pick up one's life and relocate in your seventies is not a casual decision. As he says, "It just felt right."

An equally big move was teaming with producer Jim Gaines, whose resume includes names like Santana, Stevie Ray Vaughan, Van Morrison, and Buddy Guy, and runs from John Lee Hooker to Shakira, from "Hip To Be Square" to "Bad To The Bone." From their first encounter, Doug says, "The two of us immediately got along. He said the most important thing is the message of the song. He wasn't going to do an album if he didn't think there were messages in the songs – something to be said."

Doug says, "I like the diversity of this album," and I do too. From the humor of **"Be What You Is"** and downright ridiculousness of **"Dubb's Talking Disappointment Blues,"** there's anger in **"Dodge City"** and activism in **"Where Are You?."**

Doug has rightly won awards for his blues, but colors outside the lines for the heartfelt **“There’s Always Love.”** Likewise, the instrumental **“Mud Island Morning,”** which was inspired by a walk along the Mississippi. “I have a feeling that when you’re born here, the river knows how to speak to you. If you’re not born here, you’ve got to know how to listen.”

And in **“A Soul To Claim,”** the hitchhiker looking for a soul is a metaphor for the devils locked inside us. Maybe that’s who Robert Johnson actually made a pact with at some metaphysical crossroads.

I was almost ready to sign off and let Doug pack for his upcoming tour of Spain, then I asked, “Do you ever think about what you would have done if you hadn’t become a musician?”

Long pause.

“No one has ever asked me that question, not even my wife.”

Another pause.

“Well, if I didn’t have the stutter, I’d try and be a baseball announcer,” he laughed.

“But it was when I started singing that the stuttering stopped. It’s a little scary. If someone would’ve told me when I was 17, playing bass in bands in St. Louis, if a guy had said, ‘This is it. You’re gonna be a musician for the rest of your life,’ I probably would have said, ‘God, I wonder if I’ll always be making 15 bucks a night?’”

That big laugh again. Then, “I don’t know what I would’ve done. I honestly can’t think of anything else. This is what I’m supposed to be doing.”

On stage, Doug always says, **“And it goes exactly like this”** – never something like this, which you hear so many musicians say.

Clearly, this is **exactly** what he is supposed to be doing.

Dan Forte
ASCAP / Deems Taylor Award
winning music journalist

CREDITS

Recorded January 13 and 14, 2020

At Bessie Blue Studio, Tennessee, USA

Producer and Engineer: **Jim Gaines**

Mastering Engineer: **Sean Royce Martin**

Executive Producers: **Janice Mancuso** and **Marcia Gordon Martin**

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Session Photo: **Patti Joy MacLeod**

For tour information and more please visit

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