

Steve Earle - Bio

Stephen "Steve" Fain Earle was born on 17th January 1955 in Fort Monroe, Virginia. At the time his father was stationed there and worked as an air traffic controller. Steve is the eldest of five siblings born to Jack and Barbara Thomas Earle, the others being Mark, Kelly, Stacey [also a musician and recording artist], and Pat. By the time Steve was in second grade, the Earle family were living in Schertz, seventeen miles North East of San Antonio, Texas. Earle's family roots are firmly Texan. At the age of eleven Steve began playing guitar, wore long hair, and openly expressed a dislike for country music. In his early-teens he'd leave home and disappear into San Antonio for days at a time, and by the age of fourteen was living in Houston. For a time, he lived with his uncle Nick Fain, a musician [a mere five years older than Steve] who helped him develop his skills on guitar. In *Space City* he saw Jerry Jeff Walker and the late Townes Van Zandt perform, and by the age of eighteen was married for the first time and had begun playing gigs in bars. The following year Earle moved to Nashville, Tennessee and befriended Gulf Coast bred singer/songwriter Richard Dobson. Along with Dobson, Guy Clark, Rodney Crowell, Steve Young and others he turned up in the Christmas Eve 1975 Night segment of James Szlapski's movie "**Heartworn Highways.**" During the day Earle worked as a carpenter, and at night penned songs, and for a time played bass in Guy Clark's road band. He appeared on Guy's debut, "**Old No. 1.**" Earle was supposedly in a crowd scene in Robert Altman's movie "**Nashville**" [1975]. Between 1975 and 1978 Earle had a songwriting deal with RCA subsidiary, Sunbury Dunbar. Failing to make progress with his music career, Steve returned to Texas and went on to live in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico for a time. All the time he continued writing songs.

By the close of the seventies Earle's second marriage had founded, and in 1979 Steve returned to Nashville. Carl Perkins cut Steve's "Mustang Wine," and in 1982 Johnny Lee reached # 14 on the Country Singles chart in May 1982 with "When You Fall In Love" [co-written with John Scott Sherrill]. Married for a third time, and now a father, Earle worked days delivering test pressings and nights washing dishes while continuing to write songs. After recording the e.p. "**Pink & Black**" with help from Zip Gordon and Bullett Harris Jr., he attracted the attention of Epic Records who signed him to a contract. The singles "Nothin' But You" [1983] - # 70 in October, and "What'll You Do About Me" [1984] - # 76 that December, failed to dent the Top 40 Country Singles Chart and Earle was released from his contract. Signed in late 1985 to MCA by Tony Brown, in March the following year "Hillbilly Highway" reached # 37 on the Singles Chart, while the follow-up "Guitar Town" made # 7 that summer. The country rock styled album "**Guitar Town,**" produced by Emory Gordy Jr. [Hot Band] and Brown, topped the Country Chart, and also yielded the October 1986 # 28 single "Someday." Earle was named "Top Country Artist" in Rolling Stone's Critics Poll. In 1986, Waylon Jennings recorded "The Devil's Right Hand" and Earle performed at Farm Aid II, supported by John Cougar Mellencamp's guitarist, Larry Crane.

"Goodbye's All We've Got Left" the final single from "**Guitar Town**" made # 8 in February 1987, while later that year two singles from his sophomore album "**Exit 0**" charted, namely "Nowhere Road," which reached # 20, while "Sweet Little '66" scored a # 37 slot. "**Guitar Town**" saw Earle gain two Grammy nominations, Best Country Male Vocalist and Best Country Song ["Guitar Town"], and he repeated the feat with "**Exit 0**," being nominated for Best Country Male Vocalist and Best Country Song ["Nowhere Town"]. Earle's version of Dave Dudley's "Six Days On The Road," was featured in the Steve Martin/John Candy movie "**Plains, Trains And Automobiles,**" and charted in early 1988 reaching # 29, the final single by Earle to break the Top 40. "**Exit 0**" featured his touring band, the Dukes, at the time composed of Bucky Baxter [steel guitar, vocals], Reno Kling [bass guitar], Mike McAdam [guitars, vocals], Ken Moore [keyboards, vocals] and Harry Stinson [drums]. In 1987 Epic Records released an album by Steve titled "**Early Tracks.**" The Koch label repackaged it almost a decade later, adding four tracks to the previous ten. Earle recorded two more studio albums for MCA, the rock set "**Copperhead Road**" [1988] - Steve donated the royalties from his "Nothing But A Child," the closing cut on the album to the Boston-based Robert F. Kennedy Action Corps, Inc which helps care for homeless children. The album included the Vietnam War anthem, "Johnny Come Lately," which Earle cut with the Irish group, The Pogues. Earle spent New Year's Day 1988 in a Dallas jail after punching a policeman. Presaging his 21st stance as a performer, Earle's next studio set was the socially conscious "**The Hard Way**" [1990], while his final recording for the imprint was the live set, "**Shut Up And Die Like An Aviator,**" composed of recordings made in London, England and Kitchner, Ontario.

Earle found himself in trouble with the law once again in 1992, after failing to turn up for jury duty, plus he was also charged with possession of cocaine. "Honey Don't" a duet with Joe Welch, was featured on soundtrack "**The Beverly Hillbillies**" [1993]. In 1994, Steve was involved in a car smash, began a jail four-month term that Fall and was later transferred to a drug rehabilitation centre, from which he emerged clean. The latter treatment probably saved his life. His first studio album in five years, "**Train A Comin'**" appeared on the Winter Harvest label in 1995. The album was nominated for a Contemporary Folk Album Grammy. The following year, "**I Feel Alright**" saw the birth of his own label, E-Squared – a label owned by Earle and Jack Emerson. It was followed by "**El Corazon**" [1997] – nominated for a Contemporary Folk Album Grammy, while "**The Mountain**" was a collaboration with the Del McCoury's bluegrass band, and was nominated for a Best Bluegrass Album Grammy. The initial print of "**Transcendental Blues**" included a 4 track live CD recorded in Austin, Texas during March 2000, and the recording was later nominated for a Contemporary Folk Album Grammy.

Earle's penned a collection of short stories titled "**Dogwood Roses**" and it appeared in 2001, while his next e-Squared album "**Sidetracks**" was a collection of unreleased songs, rarities, and soundtrack cuts. The politically slanted "**Jerusalem**" appeared later that year and included the much discussed and misunderstood "John Walker Blues," and was followed by the live album and documentary DVD "**Just An American Boy.**" Released in late August 2004, and also a politically fired collection of tunes, "**The Revolution Starts Now**" saw Earle pick up the Contemporary Folk Grammy in early 2005. "**Live From Austin, Texas,**" released in late 2004, captures on CD Earle's 1986 performance on Austin City Limits.

In early 2008 Earle picked up another Best Contemporary Folk Album Grammy for "**Washington Square Serenade.**" In their ongoing release of Austin City Limits material, New West Records issued Earle's 2000 performance on DVD and CD during early May 2008.

Discography [*this discography ignores repackaged collections of Earle tracks, and only features original album releases*]

Solo : "**Guitar Town**" reissued on CD in 2002 with one extra track [1986] ; "**Exit 0**" [1987] ; "**Early Tracks**" reissued on CD in 1997 with four extra tracks [1987] ; "**Copperhead Road**" [1988] ; "**The Hard Way**" [1990] ; "**Shut Up And Die Like An Aviator**" [1991] ; "**BBC Radio 1 Live In Concert**" [1992] ; "**Train A Comin'**" [1995] ; "**I Feel Alright**" [1996] ; "**El Corazon**" [1997] ; "**The Mountain**" credited as *and The Del McCoury Band* [1999] ; "**Transcendental Blues**" early versions included a 4 track live CD [2000] ; "**Sidetracks**" [2002] ; "**Jerusalem**" [2002] ; "**Just An American Boy**" [2003] ; "**The Revolution Starts Now**" [2004] ; "**Live From Austin, Texas**" [2004] ; "**Live At Montreaux 2005**" [2006] ; "**Washington Square Serenade**" [2007] ; "**Live From Austin, Texas 2000**" [2008] : with Townes Van Zandt and Guy Clark : "**Together At The Bluebird Cafe**" [2001] :

DVD's : "**Transcendental Blues Live**" [2000] ; "**Just An American Boy**" [2004] ; "**Live From Austin, Texas**" [2004] ; "**20th Century Masters: The Best of Steve Earle**" [2005] ; "**Live At Montreaux 2005**" [2006] ; "**Live From Austin, Texas**" [2008] :

Books : "**Dogwood Roses**" a collection of short stories **ISBN** 0618040269 [2001]

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