

Dana Cooper – Bio

Dana Cooper was born circa 1945 in Independence, Missouri. By the age of sixteen Dana was performing in Kansas City clubs, such as The Sign and The Vanguard. Although he enrolled at Art College, Cooper later quit his studies to pursue the life of a travelling musician. Landing on the West Coast, during the early seventies he signed with Jac Holzman's Elektra Records who, during 1973, released Cooper's self-titled debut album. The session players included Russ Kunkel [drums], Leland Sklar [bass] and Jim Horn [sax].

After meeting in San Francisco to write some songs together, Cooper formed a partnership with another Missouri born and bred musician Shake Russell – they had met as music mad teenagers in high school - and by the late seventies the pair were working out of Houston, Texas. **“Songs On The Radio,”** released by the local Old No. 7 label, was ostensibly a Shake Russell solo album, credited “with Dana Cooper,” and the songs included their collaboration “When Are You Comin’ Home?” and the Cooper penned title track “Song On The Radio.” In 1981 the Shake Russell/Dana Cooper Band appeared on two recordings. Released by Twin Dream Records, **“Comin’ Home”** was a collaborative project by Houston musicians, that featured a couple of Cooper originals plus a reprise of “When Are You Comin’ Home?” Apart from the Russell/Cooper Band the contributing musicians were the late John Vandiver [b. 1945 d. 1985] and The Michael Marcoulier Band. The same year MCA/Southcoast Records issued an eleven track, self-titled, self-produced set by the band. The latter disc included two Cooper originals and three co-written songs including one with Marlin Greene. In 1972 Greene had recorded an album for Elektra Records, titled **“Tiptoe Past The Dragon.”** Leaving the Russell/Cooper Band, during 1983 in Houston, Dana formed Dana Cooper's DC3 with Al del Gigante and Tim Davis, and the trio went on to cut two self-released recordings. Changing the band name to the Nuclear Family in 1987, the same year the band released a self-titled album. In 1988 Cooper released his sophomore solo album **“Complicated Stuff.”** Recorded in Houston, and reissued on CD during 1996, the contributing musicians to this ten song, acoustic recording included Russell, plus Ezra Idlet and Keith Grimwood [Trout Fishing In America]. Cooper eventually relocated to Nashville, where he continues to be based.

Cooper's struck something of a purple patch during the nineteen-nineties, a period that marked the appearance of **“Stone By Stone”** [1992] on Jalapeno Records [who were also releasing Russell's solo and duo recordings], the acoustic collection **“Roughly Speaking”** [1994] like its predecessor recorded at No Mountain Studio in Midland, Texas, and **“Miracle Mile”** [1997] which was released by the then fledgling Nashville label, Compass Records. **“Miracle Mile”** was later nominated for a Nashville Music Award as “Best Pop Album.” As for Cooper's other recording projects that decade, teaming with Shake and his long-time duo partner, Jack Saunders, the trio cut **“The Thrill Of Love”** [1993], and five years later Dana and Shake produced **“Love's Bright Campaign,”** both recordings were issued by the Jalapeno imprint. **“The Thrill of Love”** won the “Album of the Year” award in the Houston Press/KLOL Music Awards, Cooper having previously won the “Best Songwriter in Houston” title.

Cooper's songs have been covered by numerous musicians, including Maura O'Connell, Susan Werner, Christine Albert, Trout Fishing in America, Pierce Pettis, John Smith and Shake Russell. So far in the 21st century, Cooper has recorded two solo collections **“Harry Truman Built A Road”** [2001] for his own Dog Eared Records - the cut “Bony Man” being Dana's tribute to the late Townes Van Zandt, and **“Made Of Mud”** [2005] released by the Nashville based King Easy label, while **“Island Nights : Live In Port Aransas”** [2004] featured Dana and Shake in concert on the south coast of Texas.

Apart from regularly touring in North America, Cooper has recently undertaken tours of Denmark, Ireland, Sweden and Germany.

Discography :

Solo : **“Dana Cooper”** [1973] ; **“Complicated Stuff”** reissued on CD 1996 [1988] ; **“Stone By Stone”** [1992] ; **“Roughly Speaking”** [1994] ; **“Miracle Mile”** [1997] ; **“Harry Truman Built A Road”** [2001] ; **“Made Of Mud”** [2005] :

with Shake Russell : **“Songs On The Radio”** a Shake Russell album, credited *with Dana Cooper* [1978] ; **“Love's Bright Campaign”** [1998] ; **“Island Nights : Live In Port Aransas”** [2004] :

with Shake Russell/Dana Cooper Band : **“Comin’ Home”** also features John Vandiver and The Michael Marcoulier Band [1981] ; **“The Shake Russell/Dana Cooper Band ”** [1981] :

with Jack Saunders & Shake Russell : **“The Thrill Of Love”** [1993] :

Arthur Wood

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