



## David Rodriguez **"Proud Heart"** Recovery Records

This album was released in Europe during 1995, having been recorded that January at Daltoon Studio in Eindhoven, Holland. Released, at the time, by Continental Song City, Rounder Records European arm, and credited to Rodriguez, a decade [plus] on, it has finally been released in the States by the Houston based imprint Recovery Recordings. Following a decade during which Houston bred Texan David Rodriguez has been sequestered in silence, as far as recording work is concerned, he appeared to be about to get back into *"the game"* with the self-release last year, in his adopted Holland, of **"The Lonesome Drover."** The latter recording was produced by Dutch singer/songwriter J. W. Roy, while **"Proud Heart"** was produced by Ad van Meurs, another Dutch based singer/songwriter. In the latter regard, as it does, history has repeated itself – so we are possibly on the cusp of a Rodriguez renaissance in terms of public appearances. The running order of the songs on the remixed Recovery Records release varies from that on the CRS album, but in other respects the contents are pretty much the same [§].

By way of exploring the male/female relationship conundrum in the opening lines of "Out Of Range," the opening cut, the narrator poetically expresses acceptance *"Sometimes I just call you up for coffee, When tea is all you got well that's just fine"* and in subsequent verses reflects, based [I guess] on past experience, upon the price that you pay in a relationship for commitment. "Streets Of Milan" and "Sheffield Hotel" are road songs. In the former, trapped in an urban concrete jungle, the narrator yearns for *"the cornfields and the beauty of a girl,"* while the appearance, respectively, of *"pub"* and *"a poor boy from across the great blue,"* at the beginning of the second and third verses of "Sheffield Hotel" suggest that David [the narrator] is pounding the streets of the northern English city. While a woman obviously inspired *"I remember the place where I first saw your face,"* the "Sheffield Hotel" lyric includes a road warrior's vitriolic, straight from the heart [or is it the hip?], assessment of touring – *"Between the club men who don't like to pay, And this coward for an agent to boot, They treat stray dogs in Texas a lot better than that."* Launched by a Johnny Cash inspired bass beat, Ad van Meurs' lap steel surfaces between verses throughout "Beautiful Rider," as the narrator dreams of *"a Texas sunset when I think about you."*

The album title cut is filled with profound references to finding love and losing it, while the folk/pop concoction "Two Truths" is a song that, across three verses, references the European cities of Munich and Amsterdam. In the third verse the narrator delivers the insight *"I found the girl I want to marry, Thirty miles in from the coast."* "Chitarrista Cieco" [translates as "Blind Guitarist"] penned by Italian musician Luigi Grechi first appeared on his 1979 recording **"Come State?"** [translates as **"Like Been?"**]. In Grechi's song a man who loses his sight in an accident finds that his other senses, such as hearing, become enhanced, for instance when he plays the guitar. The opening verse of David's "Pretty Brechje" follows what is – on **"Proud Heart"** – now becoming familiar content *"I won't lie or be untrue, I come all the way from Texas, Just to meet a girl like you,"* and in a later verse there's a reference to the Lowlands, an area of Europe adjacent to the North Sea and the Baltic Sea that includes part of The Netherlands, while "Simple Things" opens with expressions of friendship and, possibly, the wish that love will result.

"When Icarus Fell" is a paean that focuses on failure, and how one faces up to that eventuality, wherein Rodriguez references God with *"I wish she'd make up her mind,"* and it's followed by Ad van Meurs

"Rice's Crossing," a road song of sorts. The amusing twist, considering the prominent European thrust of Rodriguez's lyrics, is that the Dutch musician's song is set in Texas. Manor [a Texan will unabashedly tell you that it's pronounced *may-nor*] and Taylor are towns located east and north of Austin, while the New Sweden Cemetery and Rice's Crossing, which are also mentioned, can be found on Route 973 between the former towns. "Run With Me" is another "I found love" song set in Holland where *"the wind from across the Noorzdzee [+] blows."* "The Other Texas" is a travelogue about the place of David's birth or so it seems, except that in the fifth verse Rodriguez indulges in biting social commentary regarding Houston's immigrant population. *"But drive that rent car across my hometown, To the streets the maps don't show, And you'll see the children with no future, That's the Texas that I know."* "Michoacan" is a state in Western Mexico [#] that bounds the Pacific, and also the name of the people who reside there. In that regard the sequencing of "The Other Texas" and "Michoacan," the album closer, makes complete sense. David's time related lyric flashes back to his ancestral home with *"For the power and the majesty, Twenty-nine centuries Michoacan"* and brings us right up to the present with *"Twenty-four hours on a railroad track, Crossing through a country with the clock turned back."*

On the rear of the 1995 CRS liner booklet, Rodriguez was pictured on [what looks like] a railway station platform, holding his guitar by its neck. That picture is replicated in the same place on the 2006 Recovery release and also on the rear tray insert. In an "i-spy" world rampant with correctness, the cigarette that hung jauntily from David's lips, circa 1995, has been expunged. Even the manufacturers mark on the headstock of his guitar is no more.....as for the contents of this new/old album they remain pretty much a Texan's love letter from Holland plus a few random memories of home.

**Note.**

[\$] - The Recovery Records liner is a simple fold-over sheet, while the song lyrics were reproduced in the CRS version. Logically, for the U.S., it makes sense that the hidden [15<sup>th</sup>] track, a Hans Sanders song that David sang in Dutch, has been dropped.

[+] – In other words, The North Sea.

[#] – The name translates as "place of the fishermen."

Folkwax Score 8 out of 10

**Arthur Wood.**

Kerrville Kronikles 01/06.