

## David Mallett – Bio

David Mallett was born on April 21<sup>st</sup> 1951 in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. By the age of ten, Mallett was performing with his brother, Neil. *"Our first gigs were with a country band. We came out between sets, sang a Kingston Trio song, a Buck Owens song, a Johnny Cash song and a Peter, Paul & Mary song."* In late November 1963, Mallett put pen to paper and composed his first song. The subject? I guess, *Dallas, Texas* and *JFK*, are sufficient clues. Influenced by the music of Paul Simon, Gordon Lightfoot and Bob Dylan, David went on to become a solo performer in local clubs and coffeehouses, and continued writing songs. Following High School, David Mallett studied for a degree at the University of Maine in Orono.

Following university, David decided to pursue a full-time career in music and was soon a fixture on the New England coffeehouse circuit. Although he actively sought a recording contract, a chance meeting with [Noel] Paul Stookey, of Peter, Paul and Mary fame, led to the appearance of Mallett's debut solo recording in 1978. **"David Mallett,"** co-produced with Stookey, was released on the latter's Newworld label. The eleven Mallett originals included "Garden Song" which David had written in 1975, after working in the family plot with his father, an avid gardener. From the outset, Mallett's songs painted an honest, realistic picture of rural American life.

Produced solely by Paul Stookey and featuring a dozen Mallett tunes, **"Pennsylvania Sunrise"** was also a Newworld release. Mallett's songs were originally assigned to Old Road Music, and by the time his sophomore album appeared the Mainer had inked a writing deal with Cherry Lane Music. His final Newworld release **"Hard Light"** was a live recording featuring eight self-penned tunes, augmented by *the spoken rap* "Country Disco," and the 1961 Johnny Horton country hit "North To Alaska." **"Open Doors & Windows"** appeared in 1983, and saw David move to the Flying Fish stable. The first of four consecutive Mallett albums released by the Chicago based imprint the disc was recorded at Blue Jay Studios in Carlisle, Massachusetts, by Mason Daring and Glenn Berger. With **"Vital Signs"** David enjoyed his first taste of working with Nashville studio musicians, and the collection launched a seven-year long association with the multi-talented, Jim Rooney. In addition, and for the first time, David had given way to Dave Mallett. Overseen by Rooney, the recording sessions took place at the legendary Jack Clement's, Cowboy Arms Hotel & Recording Spa.

**"For A Lifetime"** included "My Old Man," a heartfelt tribute to his late father, while "This City Life" undoubtedly directed at his new home, Nashville [Mallett settled there in 1987], hinted at a bitterness that would subsequently fester. A compilation of Newworld recordings **"Inches & Miles : 1977 –1980,"** completed his quartet of Flying Fish releases. During the summer months, Mallett returned to Maine, which remained one of his major performing markets. *"My roots go way deep in the New England rocks. It's different from a lot of places, and my family's been there since they came off the boat."*

Following a five-year silence, during which time Dave struggled to come to terms with the commercial face of Nashville songwriting, Mallett resurfaced on the rejuvenated Vanguard imprint. The label had been a stalwart supporter of folk artists through the sixties. Maintaining an already established theme, the first album was titled **"This Town."** "Old Soldiers," a Mallett/Hal Ketchum collaboration, also turned up on the latter's 1991 Curb debut **"Past the Point of Rescue."** **"This Town"** was Rooney's final studio production for Mallett, and the guest players included Nanci Griffith, Michael Johnson and Kathy Mattea. **"...In The Falling Dark"** produced by Rich Adler and cut in Nashville, included "Daddy's Oldsmobile," a Hal Ketchum collaboration that also appeared on the latter's **"Sure Love"** [1992].

As well as performing regularly through the New England states, Mallett has over the years, performed at premier Stateside listening venues such as New York's Bottom Line, San Francisco's Great American Music Hall and The Birchmere in Alexandria. As for summer festivals, Dave has appeared at major gatherings such as Newport, Philadelphia and Kerrville. In 1995 Mallett began a series of annual Fall UK tours that continue to this day. As for covers of his song, Emmylou Harris closed **"Brand New Dance"** [1990] with "Red Red Rose," and credited it at the time as *"the perfect song."* Kathy Mattea, Marty Stuart, John Denver, Pete Seeger, Arlo Guthrie, The Clancy Brothers and Dolores Keane have cut Dave's songs.

In the late nineties Mallett relocated to Sebec in his beloved Maine. Signing once again with Flying Fish [now part of Rounder Records], he cut **"Parallel Lives"** and **"Ambition,"** both of which were Rich Adler co-productions. During 2002, Mallett reissued the three previously vinyl only Newworld albums on CD, and as Fall approached, self-released his first musical statement of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, **"Artist In Me"** [2003].

**“Midnight On The Water”** was a seventeen song live recording on which Mallett visited his extensive song catalogue, supported by Michael Burd [bass] and Susan Ramsey Crippen [violin, viola].

Discography : **“David Mallett”** reissued on CD 2002 [1978] ; **“Pennsylvania Sunrise”** reissued on CD 2002 [1979] ; **“Hard Light”** reissued on CD 2002 [1981] ; **“Open Doors & Windows”** [1983] ; **“Vital Signs”** [1986] ; **“For A Lifetime”** [1988] ; **“Inches & Miles : 1977 -1980”** compilation [1990] ; **“This Town”** [1993] ; **“In The Falling Dark”** [1995] ; **“Parallel Lives”** [1997] ; **“Ambition”** [1999] ; **“Artist In Me”** [2003] ; **“Midnight On The Water”** [2006] :

### **Arthur Wood**

Kerrville Kronikles 11/03, 12/03 & 08/06.

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