

## Mp3 Brian Gladstone - Back To The Dirt



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classic finger-picking and song writing style that reminds one of early Arlo Guthrie... but with Brian's unique way of delivering the goods. He also lays down some very tasty slide work via dobro. 15 MP3 Songs FOLK: Modern Folk, COUNTRY: Country Folk Details: Biography - Brian Gladstone Dec 1999

Toronto singer /guitarist Brian Gladstone is a finger-picking guitar master, a colorful story-teller and an intuitive performer. His debut CD, *Back To Dirt*, is an all-acoustic offering, on which he plays all the instruments. Brian has recently been signed to award-winning independent label Comstock Records and 2001 tour plans include a stint at Valle de Bravo, situated just outside of Mexico City, Ambassador Charlie Ray's Music Festival, an annual east coast music festival and a key showcase for Canadian Music Week, and is again headlining the annual benefit Concert for Earthday Canada. Wolf Hassel, formerly of multi-platinum Canadian pop act Frozen Ghost, who wrote the album's liner notes, calls Brian's songs "new, unique and quite out of the ordinary...a tapestry of feelings, emotions and collective memories. "From the topical fave "Cyberbabe", intriguing fiction "Who Killed Betty Two Shoes", universal secret "Caren42", and socio-political message "Children of the Sun", Brian's songs have received airplay on stations throughout the United States, U.K. Europe, Australia, and Canada. Self-described as "an analogue guy trapped in a digital world," Brian made a point of not using electric instruments on *Back To The Dirt*. In fact, so committed was he to this ethic, when producer/engineer Robert Digioia plugged in the bass for a track, Brian went so far as to yank out the chord. It was just a natural reflex action, he says. "I didn't really have a lot of redefined ideas of how the album should sound. I just wanted a very natural sound. I listen to a lot of folk music, and even when there's electric bass as opposed to acoustic bass, to me, it doesn't sound quite right. I just wanted a very pure unamplified sound. "Recorded at his home studio, Brianworks, the guitar collection employed a variety of his prized possessions on the 15-song

Back To The Dirt, including a Gibson Starburst Elite, Ovation, Martin D35, Silver Dobro and Epiphone. He also employs a variety of other instruments from a wood block and wood flute to shakers and wooden spoons. What's unique about Back To The Dirt is how Brian manages to work within the folk frame, but bringing in an assortment of textures without weighing the song down. "It was a matter of listening and figuring I need a slide here, a banjo there," he says. Although Brian had clear ideas about his songs, Robert's forte was encouraging a stellar performance from this new recording artist. In all the years Brian had been playing guitar - since he was 14 years old -- he had never given a thought to releasing a CD until his son beat him to it. Until then, Brian had been content picking up the instrument and immersing himself in it for several hours a day. "If I don't play, something's missing. My fingers itch. I have to play," he says. Inspired by artists such as Peter, Paul & Mary, Bob Dylan and Gordon Lightfoot, Brian has always written songs, but other priorities directed his life's path. He is actually a magnetics engineer by trade, like his hero scientist Nicola Tesla, the only figure who appears to be making eye contact on the artwork of Back To The Dirt. "At one time, I actually thought I was sent to earth to finish his work believe it or not," he admits with a light chuckle. "I have a lot of inventions and patents that I do." Brian has put that on the back-burner in order to tour behind Back To The Dirt. He gigs regularly at local clubs Silver Dollar Room, Free Times Cafe, Grossman's Tavern, Graffiti's, Kokomos, Indigo Cafe, the Artful Dodger and Studio K's. Brian's CD 'Back To the Dirt' has been listed at Number 86 in November of 2000 on the Worldwide Mainstream Country Charts based entirely on airplay, although he states "he's always thought he was more a folk singer at heart. The CD gets quite good airplay in Europe - they like the picking - some play on the U.S. Folk Radio Organization and acoustic radio shows, and little exposure in Canada. Hopefully the gig at Canadian Music Week and some local festivals will increase Canadian exposure. "Brian is also working on his sophomore CD effort, which is tentatively titled Psychedelic Pholk Psongs and will offer ten new songs, including some exciting live cuts. Key dates are arranged for some European festivals in the summer of 2001, and Brian hopes to book some local gigs at Canadian Festivals this summer. With plans to release Psychedelic Pholk Psongs in the summer of 2001, there's no telling what's in store for this multi-talented Canadian artist. For more information on Brian Gladstone, visit him online at [brian@backtothedirt.com](mailto:brian@backtothedirt.com), and be sure to visit his digital cave wall art at [backtothedirt.com](http://backtothedirt.com). Press Release (November 11, 2000) Comstock Records Signs Brian Gladstone of Canada Award winning independent label Comstock Records of Fountain Hills Arizona today announced the signing of Brian Gladstone of

Toronto Canada to its carefully selected artist repertoire list. Comstock founder and president Frank Fara, voted 'Country Music Personality of the Year' for 1999, a 20 year veteran in the music industry, announced today that Brian's CD 'Back to the Dirt' will be added to their global radio pipeline marketplace next week. A leader in country music radio promotion for over 20 years Comstock Records is one of the USA's most visible and established Independent Country Music Labels. "Comstock's track record speaks for itself," said Brian Gladstone, independent artist who wrote, performed, and played all the instruments on the newly released CD 'Back to the Dirt.' The CD is entirely acoustic, no electric instruments are used in the production, and no sonic or electronic enhancements were made use of in the mix. "The CD spans many genres, defies a known classification, and I would not classify it as country music, but is certainly eclectic in nature. But it's the country stations, which are giving it lots of airplay, and continually appears on playlists with the likes of Bob Dylan, Doc Watson, and Steve Kaufman. Comstock has extensive penetration and depth into global markets, especially Europe, which I would have no way to reach without them." 'Back to the Dirt' started to gather notoriety immediately after its launch in November 1999. Music journalist Karen Bliss wrote, "Toronto singer/guitarist Brian Gladstone is a finger-picking guitar master, a colorful story-teller and an intuitive performer. His debut CD, Back To Dirt, is an all-acoustic offering, on which he plays all the instruments." Guitar Nine featured Brian in its December 1999 edition as the 'Undiscovered Artist of the Month' with the comments. 'Guitarists will appreciate Gladstone's talents for fingerpicking and acoustic flat picking while enjoying his creative and insightful lyrics about modern day topics-- A true acoustic treat." The descriptive phrase 'A Tie-Dye Medicine for Techno-Hicks' was coined by Italian music reviewer Stavros Moschopoulos in his May 2000 review. Before joining Comstock, Back to the Dirt was marketed mainly through acoustic and folk music radio programs in USA, Canada, Australia and Europe. Distribution in Canada is through Indiepool, and in the USA through Efolk. Legendary Texas DJ Eddie Russell featured tracks from Back to the Dirt on his global 'Outlaws for Peace' radio programs, and contacted Brian immediately to advise 'I had a ball reviewing this rustic masterpiece. So much I could say...but love it.. will be airing on my shows. .... you are certainly some fresh air to the mix. .' Then Russell assisted to present 'Back to the Dirt' to his established pipelines of prominent radio people all over the world. "The feedback I got from the radio networks was positive, enormous and immediate," comments Gladstone. "I got emails, phone calls, even hand written letters from the radio community. It was apparent the response was overwhelming, and needed the focus and expertise of a

dedicated label. When Frank Fara contacted me, I was thrilled, and knew it was as a result of seeing my name on playlists all over the world. It was obvious he had taken time to listen and learn the CD, was able to discuss the tunes and sales aspects in good detail, and spoke with experience and confidence about the markets and strategy to place the CD. It seems Comstock is connected perfectly to the niche marketplace to promote Back to the Dirt - our partnership is extremely complimentary." Comstock did not advise particulars of plans for European distribution at this time, and details will be decided in the near future. European tour dates scheduled for the summer of 2001 will be announced when they are available. Fara stated "A label is only as good as its artists and Comstock is proud that it has the best. In 1998 Comstock was awarded Indie label of the year in Europe by the ECMA. In the words of one DJ...Comstock has succeeded because of its quality - it's the Mercedes of Indie labels." Comstock artists previously have won many awards including song of the year, vocalist of the year. Gladstone is now recording his next CD, tentatively titled 'Psychedelic Pholk Songs' and states "Comstock became involved with 'Back to the Dirt' as a mature product. The new CD will allow the opportunity to get involved at the time of product launch." Frank Fara can be reached for comment at Comstock Records, Fountain Hill Arizona. Telephone 480-951-3115, Email fara@comstock-records.com. Contact information for Brian Gladstone is brian@backtothedirtor visit the website at backtothedirt.com. Reprinted From HHGI Guitar Magazine, California, August 2000. By Linda Brady GETTING GROUNDED - INTERVIEW WITH ACOUSTIC FINGERPICKER, BRIAN GLADSTONE "I was fortunate in that I was looking for myself, in the '60's, when the whole folk thing was booming. I started listening to a lot of early Dylan, Phil Ochs, Peter Paul and Mary. But when I heard Doc Watson play the guitar, it just blew me away. It grounded me. I've had a passion for it ever since." So says Toronto native Brian Gladstone about the origins of his hybrid American sound. Even he can't quite pinpoint what to call his style. "Well, it's fingerpicking. I see my playing as being the framework for the lyrics," he says. "Sometimes people call it folk, or blues, or bluegrass. I don't really know how to differentiate it," Brian says. "My CD gets played all over the world - Slovenia, places I've never heard of. I think it would get more play if people knew what to call it. My producer (Robert Digoia) said, 'It's just Brian!' And that sums it up." Brian has a slogan of sorts he uses to describe his musical sensibilities - "An analogue guy in a digital world." He is a bit of a contradiction - to quote his liner notes "an electrical inventor engineer in the hi-tech magnetics realm of research and design" on one hand, an earthy acoustic musician on the other. His debut album, BACK TO THE DIRT, is

loaded with spirited rhythm licks and intelligent lyrics. The fifteen selections on BACK TO THE DIRT wander a path wide in subject matter and inspiration. "Who Killed Betty Two-Shoes" is a story of a free spirited dancer found with her feet encased in cement at the bottom of Lake Ontario. "Cyber-Babe" is a goofy take on Internet romantic fantasy. Brian also delves into dark social commentary, dealing with the homeless issue in "Children of the Snow." He pays tribute to his forefathers with "Hesitation Blues," a Reverend Gary Davis tune, and with the medley, "Lengthy Diatribe, where he meshes songs by Doc Watson, Blink Blake and Mississippi John Hurt. Brian mans all the acoustic instruments, including guitars, Dobro and six-string banjo and acoustic bass. He is joined on some cuts by Bonnie and Lindsey Gladstone on vocals, Daniel Shlagbaum on various percussion instruments and Ralph Hassel on bass. Brian recorded the album in his basement over the course of two years. "I've been putting the home studio together for a number of years, picking equipment at sales here and there. I've been writing my own stuff for years. Doing the CD was more of a whim. Why not record this, I thought?" The record has a crisp, warm quality, and for that, Brian gives kudos to his engineer and producer, Robert DiGioia "Anyone who works with me for two years deserves a mention," Brian says. "Robert was a great asset for many reasons -- but mostly because he believed in me and understood what I was about -- as much as a mortal can unravel my multi-layered complexities! And (he) knew when I could do better. He has previously worked with the likes of David Bowie, KISS, Rush, Celine Dion, Glenn Gould, Chantal Kreviazuk, 54-40, the Cult, Tom Cochrane and many others. I'm lucky that he worked for far less than normal, and for his dedication to BACK TO THE DIRT." Brian uses a rather unorthodox picking style to achieve his lush sound. "It's something I saw watching Jim Kweskin." Jim Kweskin's Jug Band was one of the stalwarts of the Greenwich folk scene in the sixties. "He held the pick as a standard guitar player would, between the thumb and the forefinger," Brian explains. "I use that on bass notes and the bottom three strings, but then I also use the other three fingers - the baby for the high e, middle for the next string, and so on. It's a challenging style to learn, and it takes years to do it cleanly. But once you know it, you have so many notes available to you. You can switch from strumming to fingerpicking to flat-picking without missing a note. Other guys have to stick their pick in their mouth, or palm their pick when they want to switch to fingerpicking. I can do it interchangeably, without stopping. It's a bit restrictive, because you do a lot of lead notes on the high strings, and it's hard to get your fingers up to speed, but you learn to work around that." Brian is now hard at work on his second album, titled PSYCEDELIC PHOLK PSONGS. "I hope it's

out in January. Everything I did wrong on the first one I hope to correct on this one!" He fought a bad case of tendonitis while recording BACK TO THE DIRT, which he felt affected some of the notes. "I should have waited it out, and healed. But I was too anxious to get it done. And, on BACK TO THE DIRT, I played almost everything. It was exhausting - but that was mostly because I didn't really know a lot of musicians into this style." Fortunately, Brian will have some backup on the new CD, in the shape of like-minded souls he met this year at a blues festival. "Their band is called Dark Holler," he says. "They're a bunch of young, energetic, acoustic blues musicians. They played after me at the festival. The lead guitar player (Mike Robertson) came up to me and started asking a lot of questions - 'How do you play this and that? I've been trying to learn that.' And for me that's - whoa - instant friendship." He was particularly impressed with vocalist and keyboardist, Julian Faust. "When I was that age, I don't think I was nearly as good as he is. He looks at me as sort of a mentor. And that's something I want to do, pass on this style. It's grounding." As for marketing, Brian does a lot of legwork. "When I play in clubs, coffeehouses, I try to meet everybody, make one fan at a time. I try and sell the CD, but if they can't buy it, I'll give it to them. I've also spent months, one or two hours a day, searching for radio shows, via the Internet, that plays similar music. I send the music to them, and then keep in touch. And I answer all my mail, everyday. Really, I never stop." Brian's hard work has paid off, too. "The CD is doing better than I expected. I am sort of overwhelmed with its success. But it really isn't about money. It is a passion - if I had done it for money, I would have gone for a much more commercial sound. But fingerpicking, especially, is so grounding for me. "I have a theory. Back in college, zoology class, I think, they talked about what sets man apart from other animals. One defining thing is our opposable thumb and forefinger. And that's what we use to pick with. It's part of our evolution, something that goes back to a cellular level. "Harry Chapin once said, 'If that's your thing, just do it. And even if your mother thinks you suck, just do it anyway. Work on it, and you'll make it a success.'" Brian paused, then added. "That sums it up. Whatever level of success I'll reach, I'll be happy, as long as I keep doing what I love." Top of Page, Dude By Gary Tate, Cover Story To-Nite Magazine, April 2000

Grab a Handful of Brian Gladstone's Back To The Dirt

Brian Gladstone's CD Back To The Dirt is a barrel of contradictions: light, breezy, and fun-loving one moment, then dark, brooding, and acerbic the next. Even the author acknowledges this by prefacing his liner notes with a definition of the word "paradox." He sees himself as a paradoxical soul, in his own words "a package ... of apparently oppositional forces that allows for the creation of something new,

unique, and quite out of the ordinary." Or, as he is fond of saying: "An analogue guy trapped in a digital world!" Back To The Dirt is a mirror of one man's observations, emotions, feelings and memories captured in a basic acoustic setting, no electrical instruments required, no sonic manipulations needed. It's as basic as delving into an old black and white photo album of one's past, which can also be a weird experience. There are 15 tracks of "psychedelic folk music", jam-packed with enough lyrics to cramp up a full 8 pages of liner notes. Brian often provides a running commentary on his writings. So "Tripping Around", originally based on the dismal topic of bagels and lox, was transformed into a more standard theme: the proverbial rabbit outsmarting the fox, thanks to a suggestion from Sister Bonnie. If this guy isn't a compulsive diary-keeper, then my name is Preston Manning! Here are just some of the sundry topics explored on Back To The Dirt: bag ladies, the terrors of driving the Don Valley, cybernetics, the diminishing environment, fetishism, cars, black-bearded wonders, and of course, crazy, hard-hearted women. Ironically, the only instrumental is titled, if you please, "Lengthy Diatribe." Gladstone also manages to cram, both in his written acknowledgements and directly or indirectly within the music itself, virtually all the "people" he has encountered or been touched by during his lifetime, including Johnny in the Basement, his ex-dog Oreo, Queen from another lifetime, Ms. Wrong, Caren 42, the poker boys, and about half of all the recording artists from the 1960's. In all seriousness though, this undertaking is a very intimate voyage of self-discovery, and along with Sister Bonnie on harmony vocals it has a very definite Peter, Paul, and Mary-vibe to it, hardened by a Dylanesque edginess. Brian handles all stringed instruments, including guitar, Dobro, and acoustic bass, and his sure-fire finger-picking style testifies to years of practice. "Who Killed Betty Two Shoes" is a darkly-humoured account of the disappearance of an eccentric dancing lady who one day mysteriously turns up at the bottom of Toronto Harbour, wearing a new pair of shoes suspended in cement! "Children Sleep In The Snow" captures the true horrors of homelessness, while the delightful ballad "Icy Northern Town" draws hope from the chill in the air, perhaps the bright northern lights leading him toward his chosen one in the hinterland. "Rosebottom" is a cleverly-written novelty with florid double entendres: "My but you have a nice rosebottom, I've always wished one like that for me, It must be so neat with a rosebottom so sweet, One that you can leave at home or take in company." Then there's "Caren 42" and it's obvious this lady holds a special fascination to him, verging on obsessiveness. Apparently the number "42" has mystical, even cosmic implications. I once used that number in a computer password, so I too may be part of this zany cast! My opinion: Grab

a handful of Back To The Dirt, and maybe you too will find a part of yourself in this strange world according to Brian! Brian Gladstone appears at The Silver Dollar [B22] Thurs April 20 as part of the Earth Day Benefit Concert. See Daily Listings for details. Audiosyncrazy with an Attitude by Robyn Herzog, August 1999, Freelance Music Journalist The amalgamation of acoustic finger picking, and storytelling sprinkled with an aptitude for the positive side of reality, best describes the music and magic of Brian Gladstone. Born and raised in Toronto, Brian spent most of his adolescent years on the streets of Yorkville Village. A child of the '60's, Brian indulged in the folk music sounds of Joe and Eddie, Phil Ochs, Gordon Lightfoot, Jim Kweskin, and the hard rock and street blues of Luke and the Apostles, Stitch in Time, Kensington Market and the Ugly Ducklings. A survivor of summer of love and Woodstock '69 (although he can't remember), Brian has attended some of the greatest concerts of all time. Some of these include The Beatles, Rolling Stones (pre geriatric), Hendrix, Jefferson Airplane, Byrds, Cat Stevens, Procol Harem, Cream, The Band, Bob Dylan, Yardbirds, Jeff Beck Group, and more. The influence of this '60's musical cannon, combined with the wit and insight of a master lyricist, come together in Brian's debut release Back to the Dirt. There are no electric instruments recorded on this CD, which in essence transcends the medium into the message; as Brian has been known to refer to himself as "an analogue guy trapped in a digital world" .His writing style is lyrically rich and inviting, but it is the sonic red jellybeanishness of Brian's acoustic flat picking and intricate finger picking that interleaves and transports his listeners to the sounds of Reverend Gary Davis, Mississippi John Hurt, Blind Blake, and other masters of the acoustic blues and ragtime guitar. Robert Digoia, producer and recording engineer for Back to the Dirt describes Brian as "Leonard Cohen meets Doc Watson". Brian's influences include these musical masters, but it is his own unique style that delights the ear and tantalizes the mind. Karen Roberts, cover artist and graphic designer describes Brian as "the most creative and intuitive person [she has] ever encountered" and goes on to add that "everyone should meet a Brian in their lifetime". Brian has performed his original material in and around Toronto, including appearances at the Free Times Cafe, Silver Dollar Room, Grossman's Tavern, Graffiti's, Indigo Cafe, the Artful Dodger and a coveted weekly appearance at Studio K's where three cuts were recorded live. Brian's composition 'Don Valley Parkway Blues' recorded by the Acoustics still gets air play on CBC after many years. A highlight in Brian's life is the Knoxville's Bijou theater backstage meeting with Doc Watson, who asked to 'shake hands with his friend from Canada.' Back to the Dirt is a musical mosaic that takes its listener on an acoustic journey.

Brian's music is equally lyrically driven, as it is sonically intricate. Juxtaposed, these elements weave a rare web of music that is both original and traditional. Using the sounds of the 60's fused with experiences of the 90's, Back to the Dirt transcends the senses and peaks the mind.

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