

Mp3 Ditto Davis - Another Day Another Mile



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Pure americana, these songs - some with humor, some with pathos - take a look at a world that is slipping from living memory into history. 12 MP3 Songs ROCK: Americana, FOLK: Modern Folk Details: I first met Larry Lange, the legendary Austin bass player, in San Antonio in 1968. We both played guitar - me a little, Larry a little more - and over the next few years, became pretty close friends, sharing vices and tunes and, from time to time, various apartments and houses in various Texas cities, until in the spring of 1973 he answered an ad for a bass player to play in a roadhouse country band in Marble Falls. By 1973, the Austin scene we had by then become part of was winding down. A year earlier, we had been in a commune in a filthy and dilapidated - both progressively so during our tenure - mansion in the Castle Hill section of Austin. The commune was running a restaurant in an old house, neither filthy nor dilapidated, on San Antonio Street called the Bo Tree. It was the first health food restaurant in Austin, and we were buying or bartering (nevermind what items) much of our produce from a small group of folks who ran a nascent business called "Whole Foods." Austin's "Progressive country" music scene was just beginning and a lot of the musicians were restaurant regulars. The San Francisco underground comics scene had a branch of contributors in Austin, including Jim Franklin, Kerry Awn and others, and they were also regulars, Kerry, in fact, waiting tables for us. UT professors and out-of-town celebrities also showed up regularly. And the commune folks themselves included future UT Law Review members, award winning journalists, successful artists and musicians, professors and "sold-out" but soon-to-be wealthy businessmen. By Jeezus, we were knee deep in hip. But in the summer of 1972, the Bo Tree closed, and a small group of the original commune members soon opened a restaurant on the Drag called "Soya Wanna Burger," specializing in soy burgers. Throughout the fall of '72 and through the first couple of months of '73, as the new restaurant with the silly name began to thrive, Larry and I and a guy named Ed

put together a little trio with Larry on acoustic lead guitar, Ed on acoustic bass and me on rhythm guitar and lead vocals. We played private parties and didn't have a name other than Larry, Ed and Ditto, but we were sounding pretty good when Larry saw the ad. He borrowed Ed's electric bass and having never played a bass before, auditioned and got the job. \$400 a month plus room and board. I'd always known Larry had more in his head than what came out through his fingers on acoustic guitar, so to me it was no surprise that within a week he was all over that old electric bass. He'd found his instrument. Within a month the band was cooking, and within a few years Larry became one of Austin's premier bassists, eventually achieving near legendary status as one of the Austin old guard and playing along the way with acts like Paul Ray and the Cobras, Delbert McClinton, Butch Hancock, Ray Wiley Hubbard, and . . . well the list goes on. And I stayed in school. For me, trying to be "hip" had been, well, hard work, and by 1973, I was pretty much foundering in narrow straits with disproportionately strong currents - at least that's the way I saw it. So I dropped out of the scene, finished my Bachelor's Degree, and traveled when I could to Mexico. In the fall of 1976, I moved to San Miguel de Allende, a colonial, cobble-stoned town deep in the heart of the Republic where only a few days after I moved, a two-week party known as the Fiesta de San Miguel began. On the first night, the night of the 16th of September, a couple of hours before El Grito and thus the beginning of a fireworks display of rockets aimed at the crowds gathered in front of La Parochia on the jardin, I was with a group of expatriates just off the square in a little bar that had recently opened called Mama Mia's. We were drinking tequila and singing along the best we could with a talented Mexican musician named Octavio, when between songs, a guy from Arizona jumped up and began wailing on a harmonica he pulled from his blue jean jacket pocket. Fred Schumate, a killer harp player, would become my most enduring music partner. When Fred and I finally got to play together over at his place on Santo Domingo some days after that fiesta night at Mama Mia's, it was magic - at least to us. So we put together an act and eventually became regulars at Mama Mia's, which within months of our playing had to expand to accommodate the crowds that were now packing the smoky little bar. The gig was cool and we were polishing our act, but after a few months, we decided we weren't being appreciated - that is paid - enough, so we moved on to another bar a little further off the square, called the Hoja Seca, a bar owned by Roque Caballo and named after his big hit. The crowds followed until history repeated itself and we moved again, this time to a subterranean bar further still from the square with really thick smoke, no ventilation and no PA system, called San Germaine But Fred and I were hot and the crowds continued to

follow, and the two of us belted 'em out every night as loud as we could, dancers being pushed on to the tiny stage by other dancers, and all of us - mostly young expatriates and hormonally interested locals - partying till the wee hours. I put a Willy Nelson style hole beneath the pick guard in my beautiful Guild D50, and to this day it's a cherished souvenir of the abandon of those nights. So here we were, big fish in a small pond, really the only act around, when we hear there's this new guy in town from Nashville who's got some publisher's deal, was really good, and was at that moment over at La Cucaracha, a cantina with lots of history- Neal Cassidy supposedly took his last drinks there- on the square. So we go over to meet him and we find a punk-haired kid talking about a Colt replica he'd just bought and telling stories about Townes Van Zandt. We introduce ourselves, start chewing the fat, and discover that the 60's values Fred and I were big on were probably waning. But the new kid wasn't so bad and we liked the same music and most of the same vices, so we got together and played some tunes. And yea, he was pretty good, so we joined forces, and for the next couple of months we packed 'em in at the San Germaine as Steve, Fred and Ditto. And that's how I ended up in a trio with Steve Earle. By now Fred and I had been in Mexico a year, so it was time again for Fiesta de San Miguel to come around, and the last time I remember playing with Steve was the last night of the festival. San Germaine was loaded to the gills, and so were we, and Steve, Fred, and I spent most of our sets that night in the middle of a screaming, dancing crowd, with us screaming even louder, banging on our guitars as hard as we could trying to be heard above the din, and having a helluva good time. We drank and smoked and played like that for hours deep into the night, and to this day, Fred and I both blame our lousy voices -which honestly were once upon a time strong with range and control - on that night. Steve's voice, of course, can speak for itself. Steve left soon after that, and Fred joined him for a while as he tried to put together a band while living out of a trailer in Wimberly, Texas. Nothing happened, though, as Steve was in one of his over-indulgent episodes, and Fred returned to San Miguel. By then, however, disco clubs had sprung up and though Fred and I still played off and on, we never commanded the scene like we had before, and eventually, flat broke, we moved to San Antonio, where we played in various bands until we went our separate ways. For me, my separate way meant teaching English overseas. Though I occasionally played in some bands and wrote songs - even won some awards - I became as removed as anyone could from any scene. And some time in 1987 while I was living in Korea and watching Entertainment This Week on Armed Forces Korea Network, Leeza Gibbons began interviewing some long-haired guy named Steve Earle. I remember not being sure it was,

you know, Steve, because of his hair and now slightly larger girth, but when some weeks later I heard from Fred that Steve Earle had indeed hit the big time, I felt about as far away from it all as I ever had. And so two years later, I moved back to San Antonio with my beautiful wife and began working for a local college where I'm now a tenured professor. My wife is an architect, and we have three dogs, a 90 year-old house in Alta Vista, and for some, I guess, an enviable lifestyle. I love teaching but also have a lot of time off from it, time to write songs, for example. And as my parents' generation begins to die off, I am increasingly drawn to images of the world they either built or grew up in. So I decided to finally put together, after all these years, a CD - a CD this first time around, dedicated to that world. I was lucky enough to meet, through Fred, a novice producer in Austin named Mike Garcia who believed in the project and gave me his time for free. I've been helped by old friends like Fred and Larry and a talented drummer named Doug Ryniker - a guy I used to sing Beach Boys songs with up and down the blocks of our neighborhood as we performed a silly 30-step dance routine we choreographed during the summer of 1965 - as well as by a bunch of other talented folks who I have known through the years or who I recently met through those same folks. The CD came out pretty much the way I hoped it would, so I guess I can't ask for more - except perhaps that maybe others might like it. And so that's why I'm now trying to get it out there. I've always been more interested in the product than the process or the producer, so what I really hope is that you enjoy the CD. But I know I'm supposed to introduce the artist. So here that is. And there you are.

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