



A Proud Heart

David Roland Rodriguez was born on January 1, 1952, in Houston, Texas, and was raised there. David's paternal roots lay in Mexico, and his mother's older sister, **Eva Garza**, recorded for Decca Records during the 1950s. At the age of two he contracted polio and as a result Rodriguez has worn a leg brace and walked with a cane ever since. Because his mobility was restricted his parents bought him a guitar. By the age of fourteen David was playing in a Rock band, a year later in a Folk group, and by the close of his teens was the pianist in an avant-garde ensemble.

His early musical influences included **Lightnin' Hopkins**, **Townes Van Zandt**, **Lydia Mendoza**, and **Jerry Jeff Walker**. By his early twenties, David was a law and economics graduate, now based in Austin, where he spent well over the next decade playing music in Texas listening rooms. In 1984 deciding to spend more time with his young family, David gave up playing music and joined an Austin law practice. A political activist, during 1990 Rodriguez ran for a seat in the Texas state legislature, but failed to secure victory. The same year, on May 31, in the now-defunct Austin club, Chicago House, David recorded the self-released cassette *Man Against Beast*. During September the following year, at Anderson Fair in Houston, a club made famous by the **Nanci Griffith** song, "Spin On A Red Brick Floor," Rodriguez recorded his show and self-released it on cassette early the following year as *Avatars, Angels And Ashes*. The recording featured the fiddle playing of David's, then-twelve-year-old daughter, **Carrie Luz Rodriguez**.

Released by the now-defunct, South Texas-based Dejadisc label, *The True Cross* [1992] featured the *Man Against Beast* cassette, plus a bonus live track - a July 1992 live recording from Austin's KGSR radio station of **Woody Guthrie's** "Deportee (Plane Wreck At Los Gatos)" that featured a duet vocal with **Lucinda Williams**. *Landing 92*, a Swiss Brambus label release, was composed of ten tracks from *Man Against Beast* and seven from *Avatars, Angels And Ashes*. *The Friedens Angel*, Rodriguez's second Brambus release, appeared in 1994 and featured ten new studio recordings and four songs recorded live in Chur, Switzerland, during May 1993. *Forgiveness* was a 1994 cassette-only release on World Records and was recorded in Austin. A South Texas-based Brit, **John Conquest's** monthly music magazine, *Third Coast Music*, voted Rodriguez the Best Texas Songwriter for three consecutive years beginning in 1992. Rodriguez decided to settle in The Netherlands in 1994 and continues to live there.

During January 1995, in the Dutch town of Eindhoven, David recorded *Proud Heart* and the collection was produced by Dutch songwriter **Ad Van Meurs** aka **The Watchman**. The disc featured one song by Van Meurs ("Rice's Crossing") a dozen Rodriguez originals, and one by Italy's poet laureate **Luigi Grechi** ("Chitarrista Cieco"). Continental Records Services, the European subsidiary of Rounder Records, released the collection in Europe later that year on the Continental Song City label. The liner credited the recording to Rodriguez. To date (January 2006), David's most recent stateside stage performance took place during the 1995 Kerrville Folk Festival.

In 1998, when **Lyle Lovett** recorded *Step Inside This House*, his two-CD tribute to singer-songwriters who were born or based themselves in Texas, he included Rodriguez's "Ballad Of The Snow Leopard And The Tanqueray Cowboy," a song that first appeared on *Man Against Beast*. The song also appeared on the soundtrack to the Lawrence Kasdan movie *Mumford* [1999]. During late 2004 Rodriguez self-released the recording *The Lonesome Drover*, and the collection was produced by Dutch singer-songwriter **J. W. Roy**. In early 2006, Houston-based Recovery Records reactivated *Proud Heart* by finally issuing the recording in the U.S. In the past decade Rodriguez has rarely toured, although the release of *Proud Heart* and *The Lonesome Drover* at least hint at a willingness to get back into "the game."

Since 2001, Carrie, a Berklee College of Music (Boston) graduate, has toured and recorded with the legendary singer-songwriter **Chip Taylor**. David Rodriguez has shared stages with Nanci Griffith, **Dar Williams**, **Ani Di Franco**, **Eric Taylor**, **Michelle Shocked**, and Lyle Lovett. In addition to Lovett, David's songs have been recorded by **Vince Bell** ("Two Lane Blacktop" on *Live In Texas* [2001]) and **Jeff Talmadge** ("Midnight Flight" on *Blissville* [2006]). **Jerry Giddens** covered David's "Santa Cruz" on an, as yet, unreleased recording.

Discography: *Man Against Beast* fifteen-song, cassette-only U.S. release [1990]; *Avatars, Angels And Ashes* eleven-song, cassette-only U.S. release [1992]; *The True Cross* U.S. release featuring the *Man Against Beast* cassette, plus one bonus track issued on CD [1992]; *Landing 92* Swiss release composed of ten tracks from *Man Against Beast* and seven tracks from *Avatars, Angels And Ashes* [1992]; *The Friedens Angel* [1994]; *Forgiveness* [1994]; *Proud Heart* finally released in the U.S. during 2006 [1995]; *The Lonesome Drover* [2004].

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