

# Dave Gunning

## BAND STORY



"There's a song in there somewhere," sings Dave Gunning optimistically on his seventh album *We're All Leaving*, but the Pictou County, Nova Scotia performer is being far too modest. Since debuting with *Lost Tracks* in 1997, Dave has proven he can find a song just about anywhere—in childhood memories, local legends and the everyday lives of those around him—and turn it into something profound, honest and deeply moving. His ability to tell a story in song has resulted in six Music Nova Scotia Awards and three East Coast Music Awards (2008 Folk Recording, Male Artist of the Year for *House For Sale*, 2005 Folk Recording, *Two-Bit World*), rousing welcomes from crowds at festivals and venues on both sides of the Atlantic and the admiration of Canada's finest composers, a number of whom have become collaborators on *We're All Leaving*. Building his career the hard way, through weeks and months spent on the road and tirelessly honing his songwriting and showman skills, Dave earned his first substantial burst of national attention when his Celtic-tinged composition *Here She Comes A Running* from 2000's *Caught Between Shadows* became a favourite clip on CMT Canada. The youthful enthusiasm displayed in the tune soon developed into an ear for human stories rarely heard in song, like *Two-Bit World*'s *Twitter*, about a Pictou County-born clown who went on to tour the world, and *Prince of Pictou* (co-written with guitarist Jamie Robinson), about an illegitimate son of royalty exiled on these shores which was awarded First Place Winner in the Folk category in the 2005 International Acoustic Music Awards and received an honorable



## STATS

Visits	Plays
2,028	143
Streams	Downloads
142	1

## Featured Songs

- 
**Made On A Monday** Folk
- 
**The Colour of Gone** Folk

Awards and received an honorable mention in the USA Songwriting Competition. One recent collaboration, House for Sale's Hard Workin' Hands with master East Coast song craftsman Ron Hynes, was named First Place Winner in the folk category in the 2008 Indie International Songwriting Contest and was honored as a Finalist in the USA Songwriting Competition, International Songwriting Competition and the John Lennon Song Contest. Not only does Gunning work with the best, his honest approach to painting melodic pictures brings out the best in those he works with. On We're All Leaving, James Keelaghan, David Francey and Matt Andersen are among the co-writers who've helped to make every track a well-polished vignette, as well as the musician Dave names as his MVP, guitarist Jamie Robinson, whose resume runs from accompanying Jimmy Rankin's modern folk ballads to the globe-spanning pop/rock of Halifax's MIR. Playing guitar, mandolin and piano, Robinson joined an all-star East Coast ensemble in bringing We're All Leaving's songs to life, including keyboardist Kim Dunn, drummer Adam Dowling and bassists Jamie Gatti and Bruce Dixon, with some vocal assistance from Bruce Guthro and Rose Cousins. The versatile guitarist's ability to mesh modern and traditional sounds was a perfect match for Gunning's desire to take a few steps forward on We're All Leaving, weaving together a bigger story arc of the gradual exodus from the country to urban environments. From the first song Smith's Rock, about the sweat and toil of the pioneering settlers, to the finale Sorry for the City, which personifies its subject as a living entity swollen with the lifeblood of the dreamers and the desperate, Gunning is setting his songs on a broader stage, from the viewpoint of someone "watching these days disappear, like waves rolling out from the shore," as he sings on Something I'm Missing

sings on something that's missing.

Tracks like *Ashen Town*, *As Far as This Town Goes* and the title track, written with acclaimed Scottish songsmith Karine Polwart, are ideal showcases for Gunning's emphatic, heartfelt vocals as he observes the lingering effects of time's sweeping hand. Gunning's musical mind is piled high with song ideas and always able to find the right turn of phrase or melodic twist that makes a perfect fit. One of the new album's sportiest designs is the infectious *Made on a Monday*, co-written with Robinson, inspired by the notion that cars produced on Wednesdays are less likely to be lemons than those that roll off the assembly line at the start or end of the week when the weekend is either exerting its pull or exacting its toll. "It's one of those common sayings that we've all heard over the years," says Gunning. With co-writer, Jamie Robinson, they turned it into a catchphrase for a guy who can't seem to pull his life together. "Plus you've got the automotive industry going down the tubes, so it's something that's on people's minds. It's certainly how I feel sometimes, when nothing's going right, and the pieces just don't fit. Writing the song was a lot of fun, coming up with different ways to describe that disjointed feeling." *Made on a Monday* is indicative of *We're All Leaving's* contemporary approach to the subject of changing times, but Gunning's ability to tell a compelling story is still in evidence. *Big Shoes* is his recollection of the childhood concert experience of seeing John Allan Cameron and Stan Rogers at a local auditorium, while *Before the Morning Sun* is a gripping portrayal of the final moments of a young farmer about to pay the ultimate price for a violent act of desperation. "I loved writing it and I love singing it, looking at things from the perspective of this guy looking at his impending doom; he has to face the judge, then his mom and dad, then the preacher, and then he's on the gallows, facing the nothing but the

the gallows, facing the nothing but the morning sun, and for one last time.” The tune came out of a songwriting workshop with Canadian ballad master James Keelaghan at Cape Breton’s Celtic Colours International Festival, and a desire to write a western ballad along the lines of a Gunning concert staple, The Long Black Veil. The song is the strongest link to Gunning’s past recordings, and yet it was also the biggest challenge, trying to take a familiar story and make it fresh for listeners one more time. And so marks another great success for one of Canada’s finest songwriters. With the release of We’ re All Leaving, Dave will once again be out on the road sharing his touching and rousing musical narratives for a series of unforgettable evenings. A veteran performer, he has toured extensively both solo and with his band, performing to sold-out venues, festivals, house concerts and theatres throughout Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and Denmark. He has shared the stage with good friend and country star George Canyon (on his Christmas tours 2008, 2006, and 2005) and toured with Canadian icons, Ron Hynes, Stephen Fearing, John Allan Cameron and Stompin’ Tom Connors. To commemorate and celebrate their 2008 signature tour, Dave and George released their collaborative Christmas CD, fittingly titled Candles & Evergreens, which follows Gunning’s first seasonal release titled Dave Gunning Christmas, featuring the popular original holiday favorite Daddy’s Beer, which has become a holiday hit with fans and country radio programmers. Engaging and charismatic, Dave’s magnetic gift of captivating audiences by creating a bond through down-to-earth details, homespun humour and seasoned musicianship will be in full display as he continues to tour in support of the latest chapter of a career heading for international recognition: We’ re All Leaving.”

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