

**Conversations with Travis & Dallas Good of The Sadies**  
**by Frank Goodman (10/2004, Puremusic.com)**

This is the first time that we've reviewed and interviewed an act in the same issue. First of all, The Sadies are worth far more attention than that, and secondly that's just the way it happened. You get carried away with your exuberance for the record and look down and have reviewed it, and then you run into a conversational opportunity.

The Sadies are Dallas and Travis Good, both really fine guitarists, and Dallas is also fiddle adept. Sean Dean is the upright bassist, and the interview reveals him to be the co-founder of the group, originally Dallas and Sean as a duo. Mike Belitsky sings and plays drums. Not a slacker in the pack, The Sadies put on long, blistering, ardent shows.

We've reviewed them before, and are generally way gone on this quartet. They came from punk, their familial roots are deep Canadian Country. Their dad and two uncles are The Good Brothers, just inducted into the Canadian Country Music Hall of Fame. The band is also deeply into instrumental composition and performance that leans convincingly into psychedelia, surf, bluegrass, and more. *Favourite Colours* conjures ambiances that immediately stand the quartet out into the world class realm. Conversely, this record is the singiest of their discs so far, and we hope to hear ever more of the same, since they do the hell out of it.

Their vampirical cowboy look cannot be beat, and they're superb dour showmen. We cover some of their priceless shtick in our two reviews, so be sure to check those out. And do not miss The Sadies when they come to your town, they put a lot of things in a different perspective.

I caught Dallas in the country and Travis in Toronto. They were each a real pleasure to talk to, and completely different. I've said it before, but there's something very inspiring about the Canadian musicians we've had the pleasure to interview. To our way of thinking, they're more right-sized, more music for it's own sake oriented, and they've got a sharp work ethic. And in both Canadian groups featured this month, the greatness of the music speaks for itself. Get into The Sadies, they're worth the trip. Be sure to sample the clips on the Listen page, break out the plastic and buy *Favourite Colours*.

**Puremusic:** Hey, Travis, this is Frank Goodman from Puremusic calling.

**Travis Good:** Hey, man, how are you?

**PM:** I'm fine. How's it going today?

**TG:** It's going good. It's a beautiful day up here. Indian summer.

**PM:** Ah. Today is the first day of autumn, right?

**TG:** Oh, is it? I didn't even know that. It's almost 80 degrees here.

**PM:** How far outside Toronto are you?

**TG:** I'm two hours.

**PM:** Nice. That's far enough.

**TG:** It's perfect. I can get there when I need to.

**PM:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**PM:** So what kind of life do you live out there on the farm when you're home? What's it about?

**TG:** Oh, playing guitar.

**PM:** Yeah.

**TG:** I've got a trailer out back with a little studio in it and all of our gear.

**PM:** Nice. What kind of recording set up do you have out in the trailer?

**TG:** Just an eight track, an old Teac cassette.

**PM:** Yeah. They don't break, I love them. So, man, I saw you with the Jayhawks in Nashville last year. That was a fantastic show.

**TG:** Oh, thank you.

**PM:** It really, really stuck with me, and I reviewed *Stories Often Told* after that. When Angie at YepRoc sent me *Favourite Colours*, I thought it was even better.

**TG:** Oh, you've heard that record. Good.

**PM:** Yeah, *Favourite Colours* is remarkable.

**TG:** Thanks a lot.

**PM:** One is led to believe that it was somehow achieved in the midst of touring.

**TG:** It got started on that tour you saw us on, actually. Was it that tour? I believe it was. We started in Tucson on tour, and then we went back and finished it off at home.

**PM:** Two of the three studios were in Canada, one up at the farm of Greg Keelor, where you've worked before, I believe.

**TG:** Oh, yeah, lots of times.

**PM:** What does Greg play in Blue Rodeo?

**TG:** He sings and plays guitar.

**PM:** I haven't covered them yet. I've got to catch up with them. But it is Canadian week. I was with Blackie and the Rodeo Kings last night.

**TG:** Oh, really?

**PM:** Yeah. Down the street at Joe's Pub. I'm in New York City at the moment, and have been spending the summer in Soho. So how did you come to do the first session for *Favourite Colours* in Tucson? Do you have friends down there?

**TG:** Yeah, Dallas did a record down there, maybe a year or two ago, with Neko Case. That's probably the first introduction Dallas had to Craig Shumacher in that studio [The Wavelab] and everything. And yeah, he came out to a couple shows, that was pretty much the first time I met him. And I've been friends with Calexico for a while, and they make their records there.

**PM:** Oh, I saw them in New York this summer. They're unbelievable.

**TG:** They are unbelievable.

**PM:** My brother lives in Germany. He says they're very big over there.

**TG:** Their rhythm section is from there.

**PM:** Ah, that's the deal. Okay. Have you guys played Europe outside the UK?

**TG:** We did one tour of Holland.

**PM:** And you're about to go again, right?

**TG:** On Monday. We're gone for a month, throughout October. I've been to Holland about 15 times, because I used to tour there with my dad's band.

**PM:** Oh, really?

**TG:** Yeah. He plays in a country and bluegrass band. They're called The Good Brothers, my two uncles and my dad.

**PM:** When I was interviewing the guys in Blackie and the Rodeo Kings, I said I was going to talk to the Sadies and they said to say hi. They mentioned that your family had gotten inducted into the Country Hall of Fame.

**TG:** They played that, actually.

**PM:** Yeah. Pretty cool. So what about the places that you recorded aside from Tuscon?

**TG:** One was Blue Rodeo's studio [The Woodshed] in the city. The other place was Greg Keelor's farm, with a one-inch reel-to-reel eight-track.

**PM:** Wow, that's fat. So what songs did you record on the eight-track? Do you wait for analog to do the instrumentals, or you just do them how they're happening?

**TG:** We do them how they're happening. But the whole thing was recorded on analog. Everything went to tape. Everything.

**PM:** Everywhere. Are you guys sticklers for that?

**TG:** Yeah, yeah. Neko is a real stickler for that. We just did a live record with her, and she spent way more than she had to on tapes, man. She recorded nine nights of shows all on tape.

**PM:** Thousands of dollars!

**TG:** The reels alone are thousands.

**PM:** Yo. And who did the taping of all those shows?

**TG:** This guy from Toronto, Doug McClennan. He was great. He owns a mobile unit.

**PM:** And is the live Neko record great?

**TG:** I quite like it, yeah. I mean, I really liked doing it. I've always wanted to do a live record, so it was really cool.

**PM:** I only got to see her one time, at the Slow Bar in Nashville. And it was the end of the night, it was like 12:30, and they were still charging ten bucks. I said, "Okay. Here's the ten bucks, jeez, you blood suckers." And I went in, and she sang one song.

**TG:** Ooh...

**PM:** And I thought, "That was totally worth the ten bucks. I don't give a shit. That song was so frickin' good, I would have paid twenty bucks!"

[laughter]

**TG:** I was just going to say, Neko doesn't play too, too late, usually. 12:30 is pretty much the cutoff point, I think, for paying a cover charge.

[laughter]

**PM:** Yeah, but that was the best ten-buck song I ever heard.

**TG:** I paid ten bucks one time after last call, in Toronto about 15 years ago, to see Johnny Thunders [the seminal punk guitar icon]. It was ten past, and they said, "Oh, it's a ten dollar cover charge." And I was like, "Man, you guys are closed now." And they're like, "No, he still hasn't gone on. He just arrived."

**PM:** [laughs] He hadn't gone on!

**TG:** And they said, "And we promise you for last call you can order up to six beers, and we'll give you a full hour to drink them." And so I was like, "Okay."

[laughter]

**PM:** My brother Billy, the singer songwriter in Germany, was very good friends with Thunders in his last days.

**TG:** Oh, really?

**PM:** He said Thunders [laughs] would tell him, "You got to have the beauty—and the terror..."

[laughter]

**PM:** He said to Billy, "You got the beauty, but you don't have the terror."

[laughter]

**TG:** Words to live by.

**PM:** So what are your favorites on this new disc? Are there some that just turned out great in your mind?

**TG:** Well, I really like that first song, because lately I've been listening to a fair bit of Clarence White.

**PM:** Oh, yeah.

**TG:** It's fairly obvious.

[laughter]

**PM:** Sure. It's very Clarence-y. But I mean, beautifully so. Clarence would smile.

**TG:** I hope so.

**PM:** Oh, yeah.

**TG:** I hope he would smile and not phone his lawyers.

[laughter]

**PM:** The very first day I got to Nashville, years ago, I walked into SIR [Studio Instrument Rentals, a rehearsal and cartage establishment] and Marty Stuart happened to be in there messing around with a couple of guitars. And somebody said, "Hey, this is Frank Goodman. He's just here from California." Marty goes, "Hey, how ya doin', man? You wanna play Clarence White's guitar?"

**TG:** That is so cool.

**PM:** [laughs]

**TG:** He wrote the liner notes to *Nashville West*, have you ever read that?

**PM:** No.

**TG:** It's a live Clarence record, and Marty does the liner notes. He says he owns that guitar, and he feels that it's basically public domain, and anyone who has interest should be allowed to see it and play it.

**PM:** It was unbelievable. It was sitting right there, the double-body Telecaster.

**TG:** Yeah...

**PM:** I said, "Hell yeah, I want to play it."

**TG:** Does it weigh a ton?

**PM:** Oh yeah. I thought it was a magnanimous thing to say to somebody new in town: "Hey, how you doin'? You want to play Clarence White's guitar?"

**TG:** Yeah, really.

**PM:** So I love the way that you and your brother do your thing on stage. It's so unique and it's so amazing. Have you guys done it right from the top together, like teenagers and all?

**TG:** Oh, no. We never played together until I was probably 24.

**PM:** It's funny how that happens.

**TG:** Maybe I was more like 27, even.

**PM:** You were both playing, obviously, but with different bands?

**TG:** With different bands, yeah. I mean, we're pretty close in age, so we never got along. And then we were playing punk rock music back then, too. That basically was a result of our parents having a really good collection of country records.

**PM:** So then the thing to play is punk, of course.

**TG:** That's it!

[laughter]

**TG:** It wasn't until years later, we were done with school and moved out of the house, that we came back and stole all the records.

[laughter]

**TG:** My Dad always like, "Where the hell is my Louvin Brothers record? Where's my *Hank Wilson's Back?*"

[laughter]

**PM:** That's a monster recording.

**TG:** Oh, man.

**PM:** "Rollin' in My Sweet Baby's Arms," and stuff. Oh!

**TG:** I was telling Keelor from Blue Rodeo about that. Just two days ago we were listening to that, and I was like, "What's funny about this is just the situation of my growing up. *This* is where I first heard a lot of these classic songs."

**PM:** Wow.

**TG:** I hadn't even heard the original before I heard Leon Russell do it. And I was also saying to Keelor that it's not such a bad introduction to the whole thing. Usually, to hear

a remake would be really a bad start, getting off on the wrong foot kind of a thing. But not with that particular record.

**PM:** No. And a lot of the country blues that I grew up listening to, it was the same way: I didn't hear the Willie McTell or the Blind Blake versions until I was full grown. I learned from listening to Ry Cooder, or from Mike Seeger or something. As long as the interpreter you're listening to is good—like you say, you can't go wrong with Leon Russell.

[laughter]

**PM:** Because I mean, when I finally did get to those old records, it was like, "Yeah, it's cool. But damn, that is scratchy."

**TG:** [laughs] Yeah. Oh, I've got to do some name dropping now, just because it just happened last week.

**PM:** Absolutely.

**TG:** I played with Blue Rodeo. They did a show in Toronto, and their opener was Kristofferson. And me and Dallas played with Kristofferson. We did six songs with him. That was pretty cool.

**PM:** I just met him recently in Nashville, just in passing. And his aura—walking up to him to say "Hey, how you doin'?"—loomed pretty large.

**TG:** Oh, yeah.

**PM:** So I can imagine playing guitar next to him was pretty happening.

**TG:** And he's pretty quotable. He walks up to Jim [Cuddy], the other singer from Blue Rodeo. I think they had about 16,000 at this show. And they're all cheering away after the one song from Kristofferson. And Kristofferson walks up to Jim and he goes, "See that, Jim? Sometimes the good guys do win."

[laughter]

**PM:** Classic.

**TG:** And Roy Hawkins showed up at that gig, too.

**PM:** Unbelievable. And what city was that?

**TG:** That was in Toronto.

**PM:** Oh, man. So did Dallas get off on that?



**TG:** Oh, yeah. We were star struck. [laughs]

**PM:** So when was it that you guys started to turn around, got out of your respective punk bands, started getting along and playing some country inflected music?

**TG:** Well, the Sadies were pretty edgy when they first started.

**PM:** Yeah, that's right—I don't have some of those early records. But they were pretty tough, weren't they?

**TG:** A little bit, yeah.

**PM:** I've got to get those.

**TG:** The band started just as a two-piece. It was Dallas and Sean. And it pretty much started when those two guys both got acoustic instruments for the first time. They were both in punk rock bands. And Sean bought an upright bass one day, and Dallas got my dad's old dobro. And then they got a gig offered to them, I think it was that same week, to open for the John Spencer Blues Explosion in Toronto. And the two of them just went up with their acoustics and did all Carl Perkins songs, calling themselves The Sadies.

And then they started to get a little more electric. And then I started to get a little bit of time on my hands. I was playing with The Good Brothers, and I had a little off time, so I started to play fiddle with them. And from there it just got progressively less rock, I guess, a little more acoustic-y.

**PM:** So was there any all-acoustic period?

**TG:** I think just that first show.

[laughter]

**PM:** Right from those days, did you guys find it easier to get along? Or are you traditional brothers in that you duke it out plenty and it's plenty edgy?

**TG:** No, we've learned. We used to duke it out plenty, and we've kind of learned when to cool it. You've got to know when to walk away. And we're starting to really get good at that. We've had the blowout thing, "I'll never work with you again."

**PM:** Right.

**TG:** But then ultimately, two weeks later, it's like, "Well, what am going to do then?"

[laughter]

**TG:** We came to the agreement that we don't want to ever do that again, so we know when to step aside.

**PM:** What do you like best about working with Dallas?

**TG:** What do I like best about it? That's a good question. I've never been asked that. Let me think. Well, one thing, though I would say this more from the listener's point of view, but I guess certainly singing together, brothers have a sound. I'm sure not trying to compare us to anything like the Everly Brothers or any other amazing brother singers, but there is a sound of two brothers, of siblings singing together.

**PM:** There's no question. I mean, it's a matter of DNA.

**TG:** Yeah. I think it really helps, it makes it a lot easier. You don't have to be a great singer, and you can have some great sounds with sibling voices.

**PM:** It's just a question of a blend. And yeah, I think there's a lot of great singing from the brothers on the new record, on *Favourite Colours*.

**TG:** Oh, thank you.

**PM:** I mean, it's way sing-ier than *Stories Often Told*.

**TG:** Way, way. If you listen to the old records, which I'm not necessarily saying you should—

[laughter]

**TG:** —but on Bloodshot records, I mean, the first record I think we probably sing four songs out of twenty. And then on the second one we sing maybe seven or eight out of eighteen.

**PM:** Right.

**TG:** And then progressively more and more, until now there's only a couple of instrumentals on the new record.

**PM:** And the instrumentals on this are just fabulous.

**TG:** Oh, thanks.

**PM:** I mean, "The Iceberg," what an incredible vibe. How did that song come about?

**TG:** Well, Sean had the basic melody for it, and he just brought it in. It was easy to play and learn, it's just that it's pretty trippy, so—

**PM:** Yeah, very.

**TG:** —it was easy to get into that mindset, record it nice and late at night.

[laughter]

**PM:** Right. When it's all perfect.

**TG:** Yeah. That one, when I think back, I remember doing a lot of that with headphones on.

**PM:** Ahh.

**TG:** A lot of times we like to get the sound of the room while we're putting things down. But there, it was trippy. We're probably getting halfway cooked ourselves. I remember sitting around on the couch doing that one with headphones on, it was great...

[laughter]

**PM:** Was that down in Tucson?

**TG:** Oh no, that was at the farm. That would be probably the only place we could have gotten that trippy.

**PM:** [laughs] So Sean brought it in on guitar, or...?

**TG:** No, on bass, pretty much. He's like, "You guys think of anything for this?"

**PM:** Wow!

**TG:** It was like the process on the whole record. We didn't just come with completed songs, we kind of chipped away at it. We went in the studio anytime anyone had an idea. I think that particular day we were working on another song, and then right afterwards Sean just came up with this. And we were like, "Yeah, let's just lay it down."

**PM:** It's funny, you hear that over and over again, that people come in with a shred of an idea. Or like Buddy Miller will say, "I hate to go into the studio when everybody already knows the song. That's no good. You got to go in and you say, 'Oh, yeah, I have this,' and throw one out and no one knows how to play it and you go, 'Ready, one, two, three, let's go.'"

[laughter]

**TG:** Yeah, that's when you can really usually catch the best thing.

**PM:** Yeah, the first take. That's when it sounds good.

**TG:** Yep.

**PM:** Well, now, I'm supposed to call Dallas at six o'clock. So that's our part of it right there, Travis.

**TG:** All right, then.

**PM:** It's wonderful talking to you. I'm a huge Sadies fan.

**TG:** Thanks a lot.

**PM:** And we're going to do an all Canadian cover, with The Sadies and Blackie & the Rodeo Kings.

**TG:** Cool.

**PM:** Because we can't get enough of this Canadian thing, I can't shut up about it. A lot of people in the States don't understand how incredible the Canadian scene is. You just got to get out there and find it.

**TG:** I appreciate that.

**PM:** All right, Travis. Take care of yourself, man. I look forward to seeing you when you're in Nashville again.

**TG:** Yeah. Thanks again. Bye-bye.

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**Puremusic:** Hey, Dallas, Frank Goodman, Puremusic.com.

**Dallas Good:** Hey, Frank, thanks for calling.

**PM:** You bet, man. How's your day going?

**DG:** Oh, it's good, actually.

**PM:** How long you been off the road? You guys just get off?

**DG:** Yeah. We didn't play last night. That was the exception. We were pretty much—

**PM:** "But every other night I can think of, we played."

**DG:** Exactly.

**PM:** Yeah. [laughs] It's funny, your singing voice is so low, or can be so low, but your speaking voice seems like a normal timbre.

**DG:** Well, yeah. It all depends on, I guess—

**PM:** The key I'm in.

**DG:** Yeah, exactly.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** How much fresh air I've had.

**PM:** Yeah, right. [laughs] So I just got off with Travis. I talked to him first.

**DG:** Oh, okay.

**PM:** I like the way Angie set it up. She said, "Okay. You get this guy at 5:30 and this guy at 6:00." I told Travis that I saw you guys open for the Jayhawks in Nashville last year.

**DG:** That was a fun tour.

**PM:** That was a great show. In the review of *Stories Often Told*, I said, in the nicest way I could, that I thought you blew them off the stage.

[laughter]

**DG:** That's what it's all about.

[laughter]

**PM:** And that's what it looked like.

**DG:** I really like those guys, but we've got a job to do. Nothing personal.

**PM:** And you guys just came out spittin' blood, and that's just how it is.

**DG:** That's just how it is.

[laughter]

**PM:** I loved *Stories Often Told*, but *Favourite Colours*, come on! I thought *Favourite Colours* was even better.

**DG:** Well, it was a fun one. We chipped away at it for a long time, just doing a couple of songs here and there over the months.

**PM:** That's a great way to do it.

**DG:** It gave us the chance to really do what we like.

**PM:** Right. At places where you like.

**DG:** There's no crunch time. It's just a matter of getting it done professionally.

**PM:** Yeah, it's not \$700 days.

**DG:** Right.

**PM:** Instead it's like, yeah, you're at your buddy's farm, or you're down at Wavelab, and doing the nice.

**DG:** Yeah, exactly.

**PM:** I was just talking to Travis about "The Iceberg." That's so fantastic.

**DG:** Oh, wow, thank you very much.

**PM:** I mean, that's one of my favorite Sadies instrumentals so far. And you guys are really distinguishing yourself as the best of the instrumental bands and all like that, not that there are very many, but I certainly prefer the Sadies' twist on it to anyone's that come to mind.

**DG:** Man, you saying that right now really means a lot, because of course this record is the first one that doesn't have as large an emphasis on the instrumental music. However, we've been working a lot on soundtrack and scoring music lately, so we've really been working as hard as ever, if not harder, on our instrumental works. And so for you to say that you like that part of what we do, I appreciate you saying it.

**PM:** You know, that was one of the questions on my mind: are the movies picking up on what an incredible instrumental quartet this is?

**DG:** We'll see. So far we've completed one documentary and we're working on another one.

**PM:** Is that the one about Ed Roth?

**DG:** That's the one we're working on now. The one we've completed is a Canadian film that kind of documents America from a Canadian perspective.

**PM:** Let's talk about that.

**DG:** Well, they got Hunter S. Thompson's perspective on it.

[laughter]

**PM:** He isn't Canadian, is he?

**DG:** No, but this guy went down into the States to talk to a cross section of people. So it is what it is, the people make the movie. Hunter S. Thompson kind of makes the thesis and conclusion.

[laughter]

**PM:** As only he could! Oh, that's hella funny.

**DG:** Yeah.

**PM:** So what is that film called?

**DG:** It's still on the working title, I don't think that it would be applicable. But it's a documentary chasing down the America dream. I think that will probably tie it together for anyone who's curious. We own all the music, so we'll end up probably releasing a fully instrumental record.

**PM:** Oh, great. Now did you score to the film at all, or did you just submit some tunes?

**DG:** We scored to the film.

**PM:** Now how did you like that process?

**DG:** Oh, it was easy.

**PM:** It was easy!

**DG:** Yeah.

**PM:** And were you literally, like, playing off conversations? Like I guy would be soliciting somebody's opinion and you get the vibe of the people involved and spin something off that?

**DG:** Well, a bit of both. By approaching us, it was implied what music they were looking for. We knew where they were coming from. And there were examples of our existing music, to show what they kind of hoped for.

**PM:** "Give us something like this."

**DG:** Right. Whereas with this last documentary, we've actually written what we feel hopefully will be appropriate, and the music that we've submitted so far has been totally approved. So on this stretch of our career we're on the right track.

**PM:** Unbelievable. And while you're working so hard on that, you turn out an album that's the singing-est.

**DG:** Exactly.

**PM:** And the vocals are rockin'.

**DG:** I've enjoyed putting an emphasis on writing lyrics lately.

**PM:** Who is writing most of the words, or how did that go on *Favourite Colours*?

**DG:** Well, let's see. We all share writing responsibilities, but Mike wrote the lyrics for one song and Travis wrote the lyrics for one song, and Robin Hitchcock wrote the lyrics for one song.

**PM:** Who wrote "1000 Cities Falling"?

**DG:** Me.

**PM:** That's a tremendous song!

**DG:** Thanks a lot. Well, it was really fun for me to work on that trilogy ["1000 Cities Falling," "Song of the Chief Musician," and "Why Be So Curious?"]. I was watching Much Music, the Canadian MTV. And I turned off the sound and read the close caption for a while. Reading all the lyrics, they were *so* bad, it was hilarious.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** And it gave me so much confidence that I just picked up a pen right away and started working. I'm happy with the way that trilogy came out.



The Sadies have always embraced the storytelling tradition. That's one thing about the traditional country songs that we've borrowed from over the years—like murder ballads have always appealed to us because it's the simple story. I really appreciate that tradition. It's something that The Sadies can embrace, and I hope we'll explore that more. We've recorded a traditional murder ballads over the years and played them live and stuff. This one—well, mine isn't exactly a murder ballad. It was more of a genocide ballad.

**PM:** Right. A mass murder ballad. So you're writing most of the lyrics, then, although Robin Hitchcock wrote some and—

**DG:** Robyn wrote the last song, the lyrics for “Why Would Anybody Live Here?”

**PM:** And that was a very cool lyric, too.

**DG:** Yeah. We just sent him the music. We sent it down to Tucson where he was visiting, and he did it on his own.

**PM:** Wow, he did it “to order.”

[laughter]

**PM:** Yeah, I like writing that way, music or lyrics, where I'm given a whole something, a finished half, and then I say, “Okay, you got to fit it into here.” That's cool.

**DG:** Well, it could have gone either way. And I was fully prepared for him to reject the whole task, assuming that he wouldn't like it. But we've had a pretty good relationship up until now, and similar tastes in music, a lot of sensibilities that we've shared, so I felt pretty confident sending it off to him. And I was so happy to hear what he came up with.

**PM:** That is a beautiful song.

**DG:** It just reminds me of my favorite things about his career, too, so it was really nice that he was able to sort of bend to suit us a little, or vice versa, maybe we bent to suit him.

**PM:** I'm kind of ignorant—I mean, I've known his name for many years, but I don't really know his music. I'm sure it's time to look into it.

**DG:** The Soft Boys was his main band. Sort of punk pop band from the 70s in England. He's very prolific, he's put out so many records. Yeah, you might want to take a look at his website, because there's so much he's done that I don't even know about. I've been drawn to what I know, which was like the Soft Boys, basically, and The Egyptians. The Egyptians was his other band, in the 80s.

**PM:** Right. I'll check out his site. [We've since noticed that Robyn has a new CD coming out today or tomorrow on Yep Roc.]

I meant to ask this of the Rodeo Kings last night, but I didn't—what are some differences that you notice between the American and the Canadian scenes? You've gigged a lot in the States now.

**DG:** Yeah, we sure have. Jeez. I don't feel that there are any blanket statements that could be really indicative of the States as a whole, as a music industry. Let's see—

**PM:** How about this club scene versus that club scene?

**DG:** Okay. In the club scene, I guess there is a larger well to draw from in the U.S. It's a lot more difficult for many touring bands to piece together a Canadian tour. So in that way it's a little different. I feel that something like "a Canadian band working in the States and how they're perceived," it's totally irrelevant because it's all about the music. If you're not good enough, then you're not good enough, period. If people don't hear what you're doing, it's not because they couldn't find it, it's because they probably don't care. And for you to start going, "Well, in my country, I do well," that's just childishness. Having said that, we do better in Canada.

[laughter]

**DG:** That's a wrong choice of words. Canada is a smaller town, let's put it that way.

**PM:** Yeah. And you got known there first, so it's—

**DG:** Actually, not really. Our first record, of course, came out on Bloodshot Records in Chicago. So even in Canada our record was only available as an import.

**PM:** Was it Eric Babcock who signed you there?

**DG:** No. Actually, we missed the days of him. I never got to meet him. But yeah, he's cool, though.

**PM:** Yeah, he's a very nice cat, and so is his wife, Paige La Grone.

**DG:** Right. Forgive me, they're Catamount Records now, right?

**PM:** Right, Catamount.

I really loved the photo that Amanda Schenk took of the band with the trees in the background, the one that's on the *Favourite Colours* cover.

**DG:** That's my girl.

**PM:** That's your girl? Man, I have got to get a frickin' copy of that. Do you think she might sell me a copy of that?

**DG:** No problem. In fact, you can get a really great print of it because the resolution isn't a hundred percent on the CD or on the vinyl, whereas it was taken with a Nikon camera. It's beautiful—the actual shot is. It looked really good.

**PM:** Oh, yeah. And I mean as a portrait, it's ghastly ghostly good. It's tremendous!

**DG:** Too bad she's not within earshot right now. She also documents all of our live performances.

**PM:** Oh, that's cool to have a partner who is shooting every show.

**DG:** Totally. It's been great, because recently my brother and I sat in with Kris Kristofferson.

**PM:** He was telling me. Holy jeez!

**DG:** So I got a bunch of pictures of that, from the side stage. and pictures of Randy Bachman with the Sadies.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** And pretty much all the special shows.

**PM:** So what is the side project, The Unintended?

**DG:** Well, it's a band that started with myself and a guy named Rick White who does a lot of the co-writing on some of the Sadies records, including *Favourite Colours*. He's got a psychedelic band of his own called Elevator. And we began writing together because I play in Elevator as well.

Well, the album [called *The Unintended*], that's the sum total of our first set of demos. We approached the guys, and then ever since we did that, it's become its own entity. We're all equal writers and everyone is completely in the middle of it. Musically it's a little different than The Sadies. It's, I suppose, a little more in the direction of *Favourite Colours* than, say, our first record.

**PM:** Right. [laughs] But it's even more psychedelic, would you say?

**DG:** Yeah, yeah. I play mostly keyboards.

**PM:** Oh, wow.

**DG:** It certainly comes from the folk tradition, still, but there is a lot of space.

**PM:** So is that album available?

**DG:** Well, what we're going to do, because it's not the easiest record to find in the U.S., we're going to send some to Angie to make sure that people like you get it specifically.

**PM:** Great.

**DG:** We're just going to send her a handful, so I'll make sure she gets one to you.

**PM:** Thanks. Because something that comes from the folk tradition but goes toward the psychedelic limit, oh, that's right up my alley, for sure.

**DG:** It's been compared to the 13th Floor Elevators—all my favorite bands it's been compared to, so it's very flattering for me, because of, well, where we're coming from. But then there's lots of country playing. Well, it's still us, right?

**PM:** Right. And so how was Rick White involved in the writing on *Favourite Colours*?

**DG:** On "Why Be So Curious?"—I needed a little bit of help on getting more optimistic.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** Yeah. I called him up, and two hours later—

**PM:** "Come on over here and give me some up-juice."

**DG:** Yes, he literally provided that on call.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** It was amazing.

**PM:** How about that Paul Brainard?

**DG:** Yeah, man. He can play. We met a while ago, but we sort of became reacquainted on that Jayhawks tour. He sat in with us, and the guy just played great. So we flew him up to do a couple of tracks, and as it turns out, we're bringing him to Europe with us next week.

**PM:** Wow. Who ever heard of a guy who plays steel and trumpet, anyway? Whoa!

**DG:** It's perfect. He's an octopus.

**PM:** So I'll ask you something I asked Travis. What is it you like best about working with your brother?

**DG:** Well, there's certainly no limit to what we strive for. We work as hard as we possibly can, and we have the other to prove it can be done.

I think that we have a similar work ethic to our father and his band. It's really crucial to be able to find people you can work on the same level with. And that's something that the four of us have been able to find, just that connection with basically our work ethics, and I suppose our skills as entertainers and what we all have in common.

My brother and I are also civilized enough to realize that this is our profession and we have a responsibility to do it as well as we can, and there's really no room for stray emotions in a situation like that.

**PM:** Wow.

**DG:** However—

**PM:** They occur.

**DG:** Yes they do. And they're by no means a problem or a hindrance because, like I said, we're professionals. It's pretty healthy, I'd say.

**PM:** Yeah. And it looks so healthy on stage. I mean, what you guys are doing goes so far beyond the execution of the music, because there's a vast entertainment factor going on.

**DG:** Well, I appreciate you recognizing that. It's also important to mention that it is incredibly difficult for anybody to travel in quarters as close as a small eight-passenger van, or whatever, for so long. It's illegal to transport animals like that.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** Basically, we know that. It's been a long time, and you've just got to adapt.

**PM:** Right. It's the rock 'n' roll version of Boat People.

**DG:** Yeah. The other thing, though, is that a real bond is absolutely essential for any band to be good. You have to have some link that makes you above and beyond just a bunch of players. That comes partly from being caged like wild beasts, or not even. I think that's also obviously natural if you are brothers. I'm applying your question to the larger scheme of things, because we all spend as much time as we do together.

**PM:** That's right. And I think, too, on stage, there's such a huge and very dry sense of humor going on. I mean, I was laughing so hard at that show at the Jayhawks I thought I was going to throw up.

[laughter]

**PM:** I was just running from one side of the stage to the other, watching this guy, watching that guy. And I just couldn't help myself, because what the brothers were doing, especially, was so funny to me my stomach hurt the next day.

**DG:** Well, we also have very different styles. And that's just a fluke, that our tastes are different in that way. But it's pretty important, because we do play totally differently. We do think totally differently. And I guess that gives us an opportunity to be slightly more diverse than, say, had we been born and bred entirely and solely on the country and western tradition.

**PM:** Right.

**DG:** That's really not going to up the ante at all in the grand scheme of things.

**PM:** [laughs]

**DG:** We do draw from different wells, even if it's the same bloodstream.

**PM:** Well, it's fascinating talking with you. I knew you'd both be tremendous cats. I spoke with each guy for twenty-six minutes, and so I'm going to get off.

**DG:** Perfect. Well, thanks so much. I had a great time talking to you about this.

**PM:** Likewise. And I think we're going to do an all Canadian cover, featuring the Rodeo Kings and the Sadies.

**DG:** Nice. Did you hear that they were recently a part of my father's induction into the Country Hall of Fame?

**PM:** Actually I did, because I was hanging out with them last night here in New York City. It must have made you really proud.

**DG:** My dad was at both of our shows on the weekend. He plays with us, too.

**PM:** He does?

**DG:** Yeah. My mother and father are both on *Favourite Colours*.

**PM:** I knew they were on the CD, and they did good stuff.

**DG:** We brought my mom and dad to England around Christmastime of last year, and so they know the whole set now.

**PM:** [laughs] You guys! That's really something...

**DG:** Yeah, absolutely.

**PM:** So what do they get up and do?

**DG:** Like the whole set.

[laughter]

**DG:** Except for maybe three or four of the instrumental songs, but, no, we got them on—my dad plays autoharp really well, and he plays slide on some songs. My mom will do backups and whatever else.

**PM:** [laughs] Oh, that's beautiful, Dallas. Thanks a lot for talking, man.

**DG:** You bet, Frank, take care.