



Todd Hallawell, Guitar

## *A Note from Mark*

After hearing Todd's first CD a few years ago, I became another of his many fans. When he visited Nashville that summer, we met and passed the guitar around in Paul Craft's den for a while. Seeing and hearing the Hallawell touch firsthand was an unforgettable treat. Here is a guy who manages to combine the best of several of my favorite players into a style all his own. And what tone! Todd's unerring musical sense keeps your interest because his playing is above all—musical. His crisp attack and solid rhythmic groove are always there . . . the arrangements joyful and conversational. It's no wonder Todd is held in such high regard by the world's top acoustic guitar soloists.

My personal thanks go to Todd for his interpretations of my tunes—your diligence in crafting those arrangements shines through. I knew your approach to "Gladrags" and "All Thumbs" would be right on target—these versions exceed all expectations. This is a wonderful album and I am honored to be included among the composers represented.

*Mark Casstevens*  
*July 2005*

## *Dedication*

Certain events in my life immediately come to mind as turning points. Some have resulted in cherished friendships, some have opened doors, and still others have had a profound effect on how I view myself as an artist and human being. On rare occasions in my life, a single event has done all of these things and more. One such turning point for me was playing guitar for the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society Convention. So, I would like to dedicate this CD to Chet and all the people who keep his memory and music alive.

During the course of making this CD, I've had the pleasure of working personally with some of today's best composers for the guitar: Dorian Michael, Roger Hudson, Howard Emerson and, of course, Mark Casstevens. If you don't already know their work, I hope this recording will encourage you to search for more of their music. Their CDs will be a great addition to your collection.

Like the title track, this CD starts out with a Nashville feel, moves into some unexpected places and ends up back in Nashville again...just like in real life, Nashville's a very hard place to leave!

## Windy Bill

While I was in the process of writing this tune, Nikita Koshkin was staying with us while we worked on his second CD. After playing the first section of "Windy Bill" for Nikita, I admitted that I didn't quite know where to go with it. Without a moments hesitation he said "you should modulate to Bb". Because Nikita is such a brilliant composer, I took his suggestion as a command! I didn't actually end up changing keys but used the Bb chord to launch into a new direction. After that, the piece practically wrote itself.

The name Windy Bill came from Arizona storyteller, Dennis Freeman. He was recording a CD at our studio and wanted me to play music behind the stories. At the time, I had no name for this piece, but since the music fit so perfectly with his story of Windy Bill's first and only parachute jump, the story named the tune.

## Gladrags

This was written by Mark Casstevens and first appeared in print in Fingerstyle Guitar Magazine a couple of years before I recorded it. I remember thinking to myself, why hasn't somebody recorded this besides Mark? Figuring that it was my lucky day, I started to work. After about a month of practice, I started to see the reason. It took two months of practicing the piece just to get to the point where I could play it all the way through convincingly. I was so happy to finally get it recorded because I needed to focus on finishing the rest of the CD. After about a month or so of shameful neglect, Gladrags had mysteriously vanished from my brain. One of these days I hope to get it back into my fingers, but at least it's nice to know that at one time, I could play it! I have proof.

## Steeplechase Lane

It would be hard for me to record a CD without throwing a Jerry Reed tune on it. This is one of my favorites. On this recording, Chris Sexton added a Grapelli-like violin, which gave the tune just the right feeling. This is particularly special for me since Chris was playing my dad's old violin made by Franciscus Geissenhof, Vienna, 1792.

The guitar tuning for this piece is somewhat unusual. It's tuned to a G6 chord (DGDEBD) and is presently the only piece I know with this tuning. I hope to rectify this in the near future.

Sometimes it helps me to visualize scenes in my head when playing music. Because of the title, I always pictured an old-fashioned high-stepping horse and carriage with a couple of riders dressed to the nines. Later, someone told me that Steeplechase was the street where Jerry lived. Nice to know, but a little harder to visualize!

## And Why Not?

This little jewel was written by Howard Emerson and is featured twice on this CD. It's in open C tuning and is as fun to play as it is to hear! When I asked Howard if he had any compositions he wasn't using, (a standard question I ask) he sat down in front of a video camera and recorded a variety of tunes that were all amazing. But my favorite by far was "And Why Not?" You can hear Howard play it on his CD "A Tale to Tell".



## Undersea

I met Roger Hudson at the Walnut Valley Festival (Winfield). I remember sitting in the trailer swapping tunes with him. Everything he played was interesting to me. After a while, we were both thinking the same thing: "We should record something together!" At the time, I was looking for material that would contrast with the other tunes I had in mind for the CD. Roger's "Undersea" was a great fit. After working out the arrangements through e-mail, Roger made the trip from Nashville to record two of the pieces on this CD.

## Slide Fest & 10/8

I met Dorian Michael while he was in Arizona playing some solo gigs. After jamming with him one afternoon, it became obvious that there was something special happening musically. When Dorian and I decided to do some work together, he immediately jumped into it. Within a short amount of time, manuscript after manuscript arrived in my mailbox – all guitar duets that were innovative, exciting, and took every bit of my skill as a guitarist to perform. He even wrote a piece for Brazilian Cavaquinho and Ukelele just because we owned them! We ended up putting pick-ups into the two tiny instruments and performing "Cav & Uke" when we toured the west coast together.

Two of Dorian's pieces are on this CD and were recorded during the time we worked together. He was nice enough to allow me partial credit for writing the intro and ending for Slide Fest, but the body of this piece is pure Dorian. Sometimes it takes me years to write a good piece; Dorian lives and breathes this stuff!

## Heliotrope Bouquet

- Scott Joplin & Louis Chauvin

I've always loved Ragtime music. Like most piano music, it doesn't translate perfectly to guitar and is always more than a challenge to play. Heliotrope Bouquet is no exception. The first time I attempted to arrange this piece was in college. Because of the difficulty level, I only performed it once. For this recording, I decided to take another stab at it. Although the piece is still a little hard to play, the new arrangement is much more in line with my current philosophy: try not to work harder than you have to!

## Rialto Ripples

- George Gershwin & Louis Chauvin

This is another Ragtime piece I've always wanted to play. After trying unsuccessfully to arrange this for solo guitar, I decided to break it into parts. Having the McCollum baritone guitar handy, I transcribed the lower parts and gave the transcription to Roger Hudson for his thoughts. After tweaking the parts, we recorded it. Adding Darrell Muller on bass made it even more effective. It's definitely one of my favorites on this CD.

## All Thumbs

Every rendition of All Thumbs I've ever heard is a little different but mostly based on the Chet Atkins recording. Since I wanted to arrange the piece myself, I contacted Mark Casstevens to see if I could get the original manuscript he gave to Chet. Not only did Mark give me three different drafts, he also sat down in front of a tape recorder and played All

Thumbs and a whole lot of other stuff he thought I'd like! So, thinking like a musicologist, I started to transcribe the piece to be truer to Mark's original ideas. I did this, and then promptly changed a few things! It's a fantastic piece of music no matter what you do to it, and now there is yet another version!

## From Nashville & Back

I was inspired to write this piece after performing at the Chet Atkins Appreciation Society Convention (CAAS) for the first time. I was amazed at the concentration of talent there. The first thing I noticed was how laid back and friendly everyone was. There was Buster B. Jones sitting in his office (the lobby bar) jamming away with his friends. Friends like Nokie Edwards, Thom Bresh, Duck Baker, Tommy Emmanuel, Richard Smith, and the list goes on and on. Just about anything can happen at this convention. By the end of it, our jaw muscles hurt from the perpetual smiles we had on our faces. For instance, as Kay and I were waiting for the elevator, the doors opened to reveal Stephen Bennett leaning against the wall playing his harp guitar. Where else but Nashville can you get live elevator music?

This was one of the first pieces to be recorded and, luckily, it was during the time I was working with Dorian. In addition to his compositional talents, he's one of the best improvisers around.

## Because We Can! (And Why Not? Reprise)

This was a whole lot of fun! At first I recorded my guitar part with Darrell Muller on bass, including a section in the middle for solos. I had a certain sound in my head that I wanted to recreate - like one of those magical moments when you're at a jam and everybody takes a ride at the same time. Kind of like Dixieland jazz. This is harder than it may seem. The first person to solo was Charles Arthur who laid down a resophonic guitar track. Next I sent the guitar and bass parts via the Internet to Pete Huttlinger who added another track. His guitar moved in and out of my rather active background part like a Bach counterpoint, making it sound huge. I then sent it to mandolinist, Bruce Graybill who expanded on the ideas that Pete built and added his own signature. At this point I probably could have erased my track from the recording completely! The final challenge was pulling it all together. I hope you enjoy our remote jam session, recorded in Virginia, Tennessee and Missouri!



**Produced by Soundset Recordings**

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Thanks to Howard Emerson and Mark Casstevens for writing such wonderful tunes. To Dorian Michael and Roger Hudson for contributing both their great compositions and performance talents. To Chris Sexton for making my dad's old violin sing once again. To Charles Arthur, Pete Huttlinger, and Bruce Graybill for working so hard on "Because We Can!". And to Darrell Muller, for all the time spent rehearsing the bass parts he performed so well on this CD.

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And to Dennis Freeman for giving Windy Bill a name.

A very special thanks goes to Keith Andrews and Lee Furr, whose technical advice and support I've relied upon so heavily through the years.

To Lance McCollum, George Lowden and Chris Jenkins for building such incredible guitars.

To Elixir, whose strings I've used exclusively since they hit the market. And to Cedar Creek Cases for making me look so good in airports!

Sometimes in the recording process you need to borrow fresh pairs of ears. There's no better advice available than from someone who is hearing a tune for the very first time. Since this CD has taken so long to make, it would be impossible for me to mention all the ears borrowed. But I would like to mention a few folks whose excellent comments have resulted in changes made to these recordings. At the very top of the list is my lovely and patient wife Kay, who has heard every mix, EQ change, and edit of every tune I've ever recorded. I don't know how I could have done this without her. (That being said, the rest of this list will be in no particular order of importance)

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And last but not least, to my enormously supportive friends and family - thanks for making me feel good about what I do!

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- 1) **Windy Bill** - Todd Hallawell  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 2) **Gladraggs** - Mark Casstevens  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 3) **Steeplechase Lane** - Jerry Reed  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Chris Sexton, violin  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 4) **And Why Not?** - Howard Emerson  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 5) **Undersea** - Roger Hudson  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Roger Hudson, guitar
- 6) **Slide Fest** - Dorian Michael & Todd Hallawell  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Dorian Michael, slide guitar
- 7) **10/8** - Dorian Michael  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Dorian Michael, guitar
- 8) **Heliotrope Bouquet**  
- Scott Joplin & Louis Chauvin  
Todd Hallawell, guitar
- 9) **Rialto Ripples**  
- George Gershwin & Will Donaldson  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Roger Hudson, baritone guitar  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 10) **All Thumbs** - Mark Casstevens  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 11) **From Nashville & Back** - Todd Hallawell  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Dorian Michael, guitar & slide  
Darrell Muller, bass
- 12) **Because We Can!**  
**(And Why Not? Reprise)** - Howard Emerson  
Todd Hallawell, guitar  
Pete Huttlinger, guitar  
Charles Arthur, resophonic guitar  
Bruce Graybill, mandolins  
Darrell Muller, bass