

RED HOUSE RECORDS

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GUY DAVIS

Sweetheart Like You

RHR-CD-211 • Release Date: February 10, 2009

The Billboard-charting blues artist returns with his most powerful and personal album to date!

"Talent and charisma...Davis performs with authority."

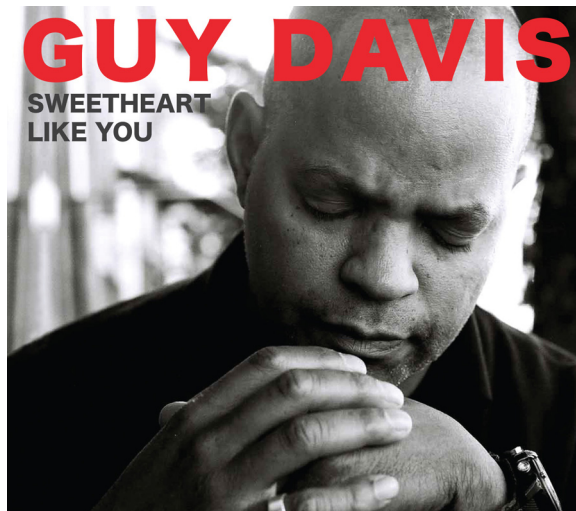
- *New York Times*

"No one puts together a tangier salad from the mixed greens of African American music quite like Guy Davis."

- *Mojo*

"impeccable craftsmanship and lyric vision"

- *Living Blues*



Red House Records is pleased to announce the February 10, 2009 release of *Sweetheart Like You*, the new CD from award-winning bluesman **Guy Davis**. Produced by long-time collaborator **John Platania (Van Morrison, Bonnie Raitt, Chip Taylor)**, it is a classic mix of acoustic blues and soulful originals. The album is his most personal yet and is an impressive follow-up to his highly lauded *Skunkmello*, which earned him **3 Blues Award nominations** and a rare **5-star review** in the jazz/blues magazine *DownBeat*.

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Starting off with his unique take on the Bob Dylan classic "**Sweetheart Like You**," Guy Davis takes you back to his home with songs about love, family and the hard paths life takes you down. He includes unique takes on blues classics like **Muddy Waters'** "**Can't Be Satisfied**" and **Lead Belly's** "**Follow Me Down**." Displaying more than his blues roots, this release features some of Guy's finest songwriting with tunes that are alternately humorous and heartbreaking, from the playful "**Slo Motion Daddy**" to the powerful "**Angels Are Calling**." Deeply personal, "**Words to My Mama's Song**" was inspired by his own mother.

"My mother is a remarkable woman. So much of this song is her voice inside of my head," Guy says. "There's also a little bit of her brother Edward's spirit in that composition." Certainly a familial number, "Words to My Mama's Song" features his son Martial contributing spoken word and funky vocal percussion. It captures the album's theme of hope and resilience despite heartache and hard times. That spirit is never more present than on the album's final moving number "**Ain't Goin' Down**."

Guy Davis will be touring throughout the year in support of his new album, starting off with the **Legendary Rhythm & Blues Cruise**, featuring **Etta James, Taj Mahal, Derek Trucks & Susan Tedeschi, The Holmes Brothers, James Hunter** and more. In addition to this tour in the Caribbean, he will be playing concert dates across North America and Europe and will be showcasing at the **2009 South By Southwest (SXSW) Conference**. Guy will also be returning to his theater roots to reprise the role made famous by his musical hero Sonny Terry in a new production of *Finian's Rainbow*, running in March at the New York City Center. For more information about Guy's upcoming performances, please visit www.guydavis.com.

BIOGRAPHY

Recently featured on **National Public Radio** and CBS' *Late Show with David Letterman*, **Guy Davis** is a musician, composer, actor, director, writer and consummate performer. He's got some Blind Willie McTell and some Fats Waller, some Buddy Guy and some Taj Mahal. He's got some Zora Neale Hurston and some Garrison Keillor. But most importantly—Guy Davis is a bluesman. The blues permeate every corner of Davis' creativity. Throughout his career, he has dedicated himself to reviving the traditions of acoustic blues and bringing them to as many ears as possible through the material of the great blues masters, African American stories, and his own original songs, stories and performance pieces.

Davis' creative roots run deep. Though raised in New York, he grew up hearing accounts of life in the rural south from his parents and especially his grandparents, and they made their way into his own stories and songs. Davis taught himself the guitar (never having the patience to take formal lessons) and learned by listening to and watching other musicians. One night on a train from Boston to New York he picked up finger picking from a nine-fingered guitar player.

His influences are wide and varied. Musically, he enjoyed such great blues musicians as Blind Willie McTell (and his way of telling a story), Skip James, Mance Lipscomb, Mississippi John Hurt, Elizabeth Cotton, and Buddy Guy, among others. It was through Taj Mahal that he found his way to the old time blues. He also loved such diverse musicians as Fats Waller and Gustav Holst. Zora Neale Hurston and Garrison Keillor have influenced his writing and storytelling.

Throughout his life Davis has had overlapping interests in music and acting. Early acting roles included a part in the film *Beat Street* and on television in *One Life to Live*. Eventually Davis had the opportunity to combine music and acting on the stage. He made his Broadway debut in 1991 in the Zora Neale Hurston/Langston Hughes collaboration *Mulebone*, which featured the music of Taj Mahal. In 1993 he performed Off-Broadway as legendary blues player Robert Johnson in *Robert Johnson: Trick the Devil*. He received rave reviews and became the **1993 winner of the Blues Foundation's W.C. Handy "Keeping the Blues Alive" Award**.

Looking for more ways to combine his love of blues, music, and acting, Davis created material for himself. He wrote *In Bed with the Blues: The Adventures of Fishy Waters* — an engaging and moving one-man show. The Off-Broadway debut in 1994 received critical praise from the *The New York Times* and the *The Village Voice*. Davis also performed in a theater piece with his parents, actors/writers **Ruby Dee** and the late **Ossie Davis**, entitled *Two Hah Hahs and A Homeboy*. Of Davis' performance, one **USA Today** reviewer observed that his style and writing "sound so deeply drenched in lost black traditions that you feel that they must predate him. But no, they don't. He created them." Davis' writing projects have also included a variety of theater pieces and plays – *Mudsurfing*, an award winning collection of three short stories, *The Trial* (an anti-drug abuse one-act play that was produced Off-Broadway in 1990). Guy also arranged, performed, and co-wrote the music for an Emmy Award winning film, *To Be a Man*. In the fall of 1995, his music was used in the **national PBS series, *The American Promise***.

Over time, Davis concentrated more and more on writing and performing music. In the fall of 1995, he released his **Red House Records** debut *Stomp Down Rider*, an album that captured Davis in a stunning live performance. The album landed on top ten lists all over the country, including in the *Boston Globe* and *Pulse!* Since then Guy has released 8 albums on Red House, many of which have won him blues and independent music awards, from his breakout album *Butt Naked Free* to his acoustic blues treasure *Chocolate to the Bone*. Recognized for his creative balance of traditional blues and contemporary sounds and topics, Guy's 2004 release *Legacy* was recognized as one of the best of the year by **Rolling Stone**, **NPR** and **DownBeat** (reader's poll). Along with a mix of new and old blues songs, it featured the acclaimed song "Uncle Tom's Dead," a spirited and good-natured musical debate between Guy and his then 13-year-old son, Martial, on the relative importance of rap versus blues. Exploring contemporary Chicago-style blues, *Skunkmello* caught the attention of traditional and contemporary blues fans and was hailed as "the most outstanding blues album of the past few years" (*DownBeat*). Now, with his new album *Sweetheart Like You*, Guy Davis continues to keep the blues current with new interpretations of classics and soulful originals that speak to today's troubled times.

Guy continues to tour across North America and Europe, playing concerts, telling stories and bringing new characters to life on the stage. For Guy's full schedule and more about his work, please visit www.guydavis.com.

RED HOUSE DISCOGRAPHY

Stomp Down Rider (1995) • *Call Down Thunder* (1996) • *You Don't Know My Mind* (1998) • *Butt Naked Free* (2000) • *Give in Kind* (2002) • *Chocolate to the Bone* (2003) • *Legacy* (2004) • *Skunkmello* (2006) • *Sweetheart Like You* (2009)

QUOTES

“Guy Davis perseveres as one of the few contemporary African-American musicians to embrace the acoustic blues...the feel of his originals is timeless.”

— ***Billboard***

“like all of Guy Davis’ albums...a cut above much of what’s coming out these days”

— ***Blues Revue***

“a modern-day blues and roots master”

— ***Sing Out!***

“Guy Davis...incites a frisson of delight in the ear. This native New Yorker is many things to listeners—a curator of black folk-blues, an exemplar of storytelling, an exceedingly sharp singer, banjo, harmonica and guitar player”

— ***DownBeat***

“Davis has a unique, textured bass voice...that draws you in and won’t let go.”

— ***Penguin Eggs***

“If the earthy power of Guy Davis doesn’t grab your attention...you need to make sure you’re still alive.”

— ***Robert Gordon***

(Author of *Can’t Be Satisfied: The Life and Times of Muddy Waters*)

“One of a handful of young blues singers keeping the acoustic tradition vital, Guy Davis combines gravelly vocals, soulful down-home sensibilities and impressive guitar skills.”

— ***Pulse***

“Davis hits all the right notes all the time. An ace on both six and 12-string acoustic guitar, Davis brings a glorious sense of melody to his understanding of the blues.”

— ***Playboy***

“Davis’ tough timeless vocals blow through your brain like a Mississippi dust devil, while the band adds a funky fire that’ll make your soul glow”

— ***San Francisco Chronicle***

“Guy Davis, one of the leading lights in the contemporary retro-acoustic movement, tempers his rootsy earnestness with rock ‘n’ roll passion and pop slickness...Davis growls the lyrics like a gristle-voiced fusion of Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, and Charlie Patton.”

— ***Living Blues***

“What is remarkable about Guy Davis’ picking style and easy songwriting grace is that his songs sound so deeply drenched in lost black traditions that you feel they must predate him. But no, they don’t. He created them.”

— ***USA Today***

“Davis serves as a reminder that country blues was never meant for a sit-down audience. More than anyone else in this generation, he plays the blues to get people dancing.”

— ***Acoustic Guitar***