



## Meet & Greet



Bulletin board



Johanna's Report



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## Real People, Real Instruments & Real Music

### With Tom Faulkner

So last year I came back from an Andalusian discovering fly & drive holiday. By the way this is something you should do one day when you are living or coming to Europe. Wonderful I can tell you! Anyway, when I came home I always first check my mailbox to see what's in it. On the parcel, that I took out, was written Lost in the Land of Texico? My first reaction was "was somebody spying on us when we were in Spain hopelessly lost in Cordoba Mountain area?" It could be because this package came from Dallas, Texas USA. In fact it was my first acquaintance with singer-songwriter [Tom Faulkner](#). Tom did send us beside his debut album "Lost in the Land of Texico" also his new release "Raise The Roof" featuring Dr. John, James Govan and John Hobbs. As curious I was I did listen to both albums immediately. After that it was clear to me that Faulkner's albums were outstanding American Roots music as intended to be. Faulkner's "Raise The Roof" ended up in Real Roots Café's best 10 album Roots charts of 2003. Reason enough to ask Tom to do this Meet & Greet. A better occasion it couldn't be because Tom's CD's are now available via [Luck Dice Music](#) Holland and will be working, from now on, with [Americana Europe](#) to setup some fan base overseas.



### Interview

Real Roots Café:

When did you know that you wanted to be a singer-songwriter?

Tom Faulkner:

When I first heard The Beatles, they just knocked me out. I couldn't wait to get out of school every day so I could go home and put their music on the record player (remember those?). From that point forward, I knew that's what I wanted to do. Many of my friends felt the same way, but as time wore on, they found other interests, but music just kept growing in me. I started writing in earnest in high school and never looked back.

Real Roots Café:

After earning a degree in philosophy from the Washington & Lee University, you settled in Dallas. Can we say that we find some philosophy back in your lyrics?

Tom Faulkner:

Sure. While I was in college my lyrics were fairly horrible... singing about all this ethereal junk that no one could understand. I know I couldn't. So I decided to re-join the planet earth and write about normal life. However, my penchant for delving into the mind has certainly found its way into some of my lyrics.

Real Roots Café:

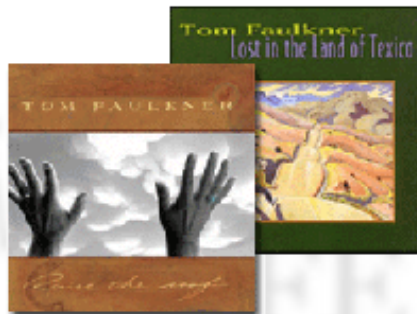
I saw that you were musical influences by The Beatles, Motown, James Brown, The Meters, The Neville Brothers, Jimi Hendrix, Bonnie Raitt, Aaron Copeland and ZZ Top. If you ever wanted to cover a song of these artists what song it would be?

Tom Faulkner:

For some reason, I've never had any real desire to cover other people's music, but if I did, it would probably be "Hey, Pokey Way" by the Meters/Neville Bros. or "You've Got To Hide Your Love Away" by the Beatles.

Real Roots Café:

You moved from New Orleans to Dallas and then to Los Angeles. What did you hope to find there and what did you get?



Tom Faulkner:

Actually, I was born in New Orleans but moved at the age of 4. I was there just long enough to remember the sound of tugboat horns on The Mississippi River and the smell of Creole cooking from kitchens near my open window just off St Charles St. Dallas was and is my home and musically we spit out more Grammy Award winning artists than all the other Texas cities combined, yet oddly enough we don't have a vibrant music scene, so this is not a great place to perform. This will shock you, but Nora Jones, LeAnne Rimes, Erika Badu, the Dixie Chicks, Stevie Ray Vaughn, Boz Scaggs, Kirk Franklin, Delbert McClinton, The New Bohemians, Doyle Bramhall, and Steve Miller, just to name a few, ALL got their start in Dallas before leaving. Go figure! When I was in my 20's I went to L.A. for the same reason everyone else does... to get 'found'. At the recommendation of our publisher, United Artists, our band signed a production deal with a company that went bankrupt right after signing us. However, they still 'owned' us individually, so it was over for our band before we ever started. No record label would even talk to us because they knew we were under contract. I came home quite disillusioned.

Real Roots Café:

Your debut album *Lost in the Land of Texico* is about your memories of your journey over the back-roads of the Southwest. Can you tell us some details?

Tom Faulkner:

I have a passion for traveling... with my family, with my band, by myself with a handheld tape-recorder – makes no difference. I just love getting in a car and driving. The wide-open expanse of the land that starts just west of Dallas-Ft. Worth and goes all the way through Arizona really puts me in a different state of mind. So does Louisiana. So does Mexico. Stress dissipates. Different thoughts start to pour in. I find myself at peace. Emotions are heightened and I tend to see the world differently. Specifically, the people in "Highway Man" are all real. The guys down in Luckenbach were classic Texans. I was with my family just sitting at the picnic tables under the huge oak tree behind the bar, listening to them go on and on about how music today is awful, but there's some incredible radio station that broadcasts out of San Antonio that still plays music with meaning and heart. To hear these two guys talk – it was like being in a movie scene. Their passion for what they were talking about; their body language coupled with that great Texas twang just etched

a picture in my brain.

Real Roots Café:

In the song "Do Bea's Dance" you work with Zydeco and Creole accordionist Wayne Toups (John Hiatt). How did you get hooked with him and what attracted you to involve him anyway?

Tom Faulkner:

I saw Wayne do a show in Ft. Worth at the Main St. Festival and thought he was incredible. A year or so later I wrote "Do Bea's Dance" about a road-trip I took with some friends of mine down into Cajun country. I remembered his great style of playing and just called him and sent the tape over to Louisiana. He listened and said, "Sure come on over to Baton Rouge and we'll lay it down"



Real Roots Café:

Your songs "When You Call Upon The Heart" and "Lost in the Land of Texico" were used in the Sam Shepard's screenplay, "Curse Of The Starving Class" which became a Showtime cult classic in the States. Can you tell more about the songs and what happened with screenplay outside the States?

Tom Faulkner:

I know that it went around the world because I still get publishing royalties for it in many countries. I always tell people that if they're too happy about life in general, just rent that movie, and it will knock all that joy out of them real quick... I wrote "When You Call Upon The Heart" specifically for the movie. The music producers for the film called and said that they were desperately looking for a song with a somber verse and an uplifting chorus. I told them I didn't have one in my hip pocket, but that I could sure try and write one. They sent me some lyrics composed by a black gospel writer in L.A. and asked if I could do something with them in one day. I wrote the music that day and recorded it the next day. Evidently it was what they were looking for as they placed it in the movie the following day... I personally don't like the movie. It's just too depressing and dark. I saw the movie (the director's cut) for the first time at the premiere. My mom's sitting next to me and I have no idea what the movie's like. James Wood gets so depressed that he decides to take all his clothes off and walk around in some field carrying a lamb about chest high, butt naked in front of God and everybody else. I'm sitting there muttering to myself, "Lower the lamb, just lower the lamb...."

Real Roots Café:

Sorry I am a little confused. James Govan's voice (Tony Joe White and Dan Penn) inspired you to write the song "Blues Across America" but you recorded it with Dr. John?



Tom Faulkner:

Actually, James sings on the song also... James is one of the best voices in America. He sings at Rum Boogie Café on Beale St. most nights... probably will until the day he dies. I was sitting there one night and thought, "Man, I should write about what I'm hearing..." The song itself is not really a pure blues song, but rather a tribute to blues. Blues music doesn't get near the airplay in America that it deserves, yet it's such an important part of our heritage. I sing the first verse about Texas. James sings the second verse... the one about Memphis. Dr. John sings the third verse about New Orleans since that's his domain.

Real Roots Café:

Hope you don't mind asking me, but why did you choose to work with Dr. John in this specific song?

Tom Faulkner:

From the moment I wrote it, I always heard him singing that third verse. He was my first choice. The idea of the song is to show how the original blues of the southern states in America has diversified into different regions that are all attached, and to pay tribute to how each region has developed its own style of blues. To me, Dr. John is THE voice of New Orleans. I love the way he sang it, and he was a blast to work with.... So very humble... a great heart.

Real Roots Café:

How difficult is it to paint a picture from each song on *Lost in the Land of Texico* to explain what you mean by Texico? I ask this because a lot of Europeans never seen the surrounding areas of Mexico, Louisiana and New Mexico.

Tom Faulkner:

The song itself, "Lost in the Land of Texico", was written about a trip I took to Big Bend National Park. Because of the way the land looks and smells, you feel like you're in Mexico, but you're still in Texas, hence 'Texico'. I don't know if I painted an accurate picture given the limited time someone has to sing about something in a song. However, I get a lot of emails from people who have been out there and they tell me that the song brings it back to life for them, so I guess it worked. As for the rest of the album, many of the songs sort of tied together in a 'traveling' sort of way, because they're about places and people in around Texas, Mexico, New Mexico and Louisiana, so the album sort of took on a life as "Texico". I didn't really do that, the U.S. media did in early interviews, and we just ran with it. So I put up a map on the website, [www.tomfaulkner.com](http://www.tomfaulkner.com) where you could "Get Lost" in the Land of Texico. (You have to go inside the website to even find the map.) I wrote some short stories (a big hobby of mine), and explained the meaning behind some of the songs. I also tell about some cool places to go when you're traveling through "Texico".

Real Roots Café:

You also did co-write the song "New York City" on Delbert McClinton's latest album "Room To Breathe". How did you get hooked-up with him and why you did write the song with him?

Tom Faulkner:

My publishing company set up an appointment for me to write with Delbert when I was in Nashville on a writing trip in 2001. I went out to his house and spent the morning playing some of my ideas for him. Nothing I had hit him over the head, so

he played the beginnings of this song. We just took off with it and the song was finished in about three hours. Gary Nicholson did a great job of producing it with Delbert to create what ultimately came out on the CD.

Real Roots Café:

Did you ever actually perform with Delbert Delbert MClinton?

Tom Faulkner:

Our band did open for him at The Bedford Blues Fest in 2000 but we had not written the song together yet and we didn't really know each other.

Real Roots Café:

You once said, concerning owning your own studio and producing your own music, "whatever I do next I'm going to do it for me". What did bring you that until so far?

Tom Faulkner:

I have made a good living over the last 20 years writing commercial music for radio and TV. While most commercials, or 'jingles' as they're called in the U.S., can be very corny and bad, I was always known as the guy who would give you a piece of music that sounded like a song. However, making money and being fulfilled is not the same thing. I really felt the need to do what I think God put me here to do... write and sing songs.



Real Roots Café:

By the way I read somewhere that you like to Cook. What would you bring on the table when we decide to come over for dinner?

Tom Faulkner:

Yeah, cooking is one of my big hobbies... I would cook New Mexico Green Chili Enchiladas, street tacos (Old Mexico style), Mexican Frijoles Borrachos (that's "drunken beans" in Spanish...a pot of pinto beans with onion, garlic, peppers, tomatoes and beer) and, of course, Handmade Margaritas. And you're welcome for dinner any time.... Just let me know first.

Real Roots Café:

The last question. Can you tell about the plans of Tom Faulkner concerning overseas touring?

Tom Faulkner:

It's difficult to bring a band without a great deal of exposure because it simply costs so much. However, Adrian, my accordion player, and I really want to come to The Netherlands and perform. We do believe that we offer up something different than anything you have seen, a mixture of blues, Texana, and Mexican music in an acoustic format. If we could get there with the band, that would be even better. They really rock.

Real Roots Café:

Thank you very much.

Tom Faulkner:

I too want to thank you for taking the interest in my music that you have. We have sold quite a few CDs in The Netherlands. I know that is due, in large part, to the kind words by you, and other internet groups like you in your area, have said about

our music. We are most appreciative, and look forward to coming over soon.

## Historical Meet & Greet with:

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- [Kelly Pardekooper](#)
- [Richard Ferreira](#)
- [Wilshire](#)
- [Tom Faulkner](#)

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