

Genuine Original Acoustic Music

# EXACTLY LIKE THIS

DOUG MACLEOD



A 'PROF' JOHNSON 24-BIT **HDCD** RECORDING



## EXACTLY LIKE THIS

On my shows I say,  
"This song is going to go exactly like this."  
Why do I say that?

Because that's exactly what's gonna happen.  
Haven't you felt a little slighted when an entertainer  
says the song is going to go something like this?

What's that mean?

The people in the previous town got  
the real version the other night?

He's a little tired, it's been a long day,  
so it'll go something like this for you.

Then when he got done with the song  
it went exactly like that anyway!

If I break a string, a string goes out of tune,  
I forget to sing a verse

(which I've done on previous albums  
—but I'm not telling which songs),  
it's gonna' be exactly like this.

I record the same way. Oh, the takes are similar, but never exactly the same. So, since I never play the same song the same way twice, you folks listening to this album are the only people in the history of the world that will ever hear these songs EXACTLY LIKE THIS. Or as I would pronounce it — ‘Zactly Like ‘Dis’.

You know, I never really plan a theme for an album. But I believe this album is different. When I was listening to the tracks we recorded I realized that this record is in a way a tribute to many of my musical influences. I heard Louis Jordan, Wes Montgomery, Jerry Reed, Tony Joe White, John Lee Hooker, and even a little inspiration from Duke Ellington!

We recorded this record live with no headphones. There are no over-dubs, no pitch or tempo adjustments. You'll hear what I call grease and big pockets. Big pockets means a lot of room inside the beat for the music to happen and grease means the music can slide around in that big pocket. Now some might say that's not mathematically perfect. But that's good 'cause neither are us humans. I believe songs like to live in the soul and grease helps them to slide in there. Now I know you got to be a human if you're reading this, so I want you to know that fellow humans made this record.

**I was joined by some really fine musicians (humans) at Skywalker Studios:**

**Mike Thompson on piano**

He was the keyboard player in the last incarnation of my band back in 1992 and played Hammond B-3 on *Unmarked Road*. Mike flew in from Columbus, OH after a tour with the Eagles, sat down at the piano, and well...you'll hear it.

**Jimi Bott on drums and percussion (background vocals)**

No one like him. His feels, creativity, and musicality continue to take the music I hear in my head to a place I like better.

**Denny Croy on bass (background vocals).**

I've said so much about Denny on past albums and interviews I'm afraid I'll repeat myself. But maybe I haven't said it this way. Simply put. A rock. A musician's musician. The best.

**And this fella' too. Doug MacLeod guitars, vocals, bootless left foot.**

### ROCK IT TILL THE COWS COME HOME

My mother told me when I was a little boy in my crib that our neighbors would play Louis Jordan's music at night. The walls were so thin we could hear it and my little foot would start moving to the beat. I guess you could say Mr Jordan had to be my very first musical influence. Kinda' cool that this song is starting out the album.

### TOO MANY MISSES FOR ME

In a relationship if you're having a lot of mis-takes, mis-trust, mis-communications, and misunderstandings, you might want to start thinking that there might be too many misses in your relationship. The musical inspiration for the guitar solo? No doubt –Wes Montgomery.

### FIND YOUR RIGHT MIND

You know for some of us it takes a little longer to find our right minds. We've left a trail of enemies that were once friends, broken promises, foolish mistakes, and unnecessary hurt. Tough part is that you can't go back and undo what's been done. The positive hopeful part is that you can make a positive change right now and keep on stepping with that positivity! Just remember, like I say in the song, there's a big difference between late and too late.

## AIN'T IT ROUGH?

When I first came to LA back in the mid 70's I was going to give up blues and go 'legit' to please my family and placate used-to-be friends. Well, that didn't last long. But during that time I played a lot of what I called "I just to got to make some kinda' money" gigs. I was in a hotel lounge band for awhile and played my share of dives just to make that buck. This song talks about some of those experiences. The musical influence here is Jerry Reed. Now some of you might say what's a country type song doing on this album? Well, I've always thought that blues and old time country music were closely related. Honeyboy Edwards told me that he and Robert Johnson listened to country music on the radio. And I've been told that Tommy Johnson got his yodel from country music. So I figure if it's good enough for those fellas...Oh yeah, check out the great background vocals by Denny and Jimi. With no rehearsal, either!

## VANETTA

Musically, John Lee Hooker. Now I used Bastard G tuning instead of open G mainly because it's easier for me to play octaves in Bastard G. And that right there modernized it up a bit. But if Mr. Hooker hadn't put down this great beat, there'd be no Vanetta—at least the song, The lady? Not enough room here to tell you that story, you'll have to catch me live for that.

## SERIOUS DOIN' WOMAN

Tony Joe White is the musical inspiration for this one. The lady in the song? She was an inspiration and she was serious and she was doin'. And that's all I'm saying.

## RIDGE RUNNER

When I was in the Navy I met some fellas who claimed to be from the Blue Ridge Mountains. They talked about Ridge Runners. They told me those were the guys who drove the moonshine down from the stills to where they sold it. I was in the parking lot for the performers on a hill over looking the campus in Wilkesboro NC where they have Merlefest. While I was waiting for the golf cart to take me to the venue I looked out to the west where those mountains are. Something happened. I think the tune got born there. We feature some cool wash-board playing by Jimi and a great upright bass solo by Denny.





### NEW MORNING ROAD

Musically this comes from my early days in Virginia with Ernest Banks. If you're lucky enough to get another morning you'll see a new morning road that waits for you. Know that one day that road will lead you home. How you walk that road? Well, that's entirely up to you. Owl and me in my stocking feet. My boots were just too loud.

### RAYLENE

A rough and tumble woman Miss Raylene. I have known some (let's say) interesting women in my life like the lady this song is about. You'd think I woulda' known better after about the third one!

### HEAVEN'S THE ONLY PLACE

From my time in the mid 60's in Virginia. I wrote this one in about thirty minutes some twenty years later. It just came by, I had enough sense to get out of the way and let it come through.

### YOU GOT IT GOOD (AND THAT AIN'T BAD)

I was driving along listening to KKJZ here in LA when I heard Duke Ellington's "I Got It Bad And That Ain't Good". Now that's about a fella' who lost his girl. But I started to think 'How about if you got a girl and the love just keeps getting better and better?' Like the love I got now. Heck, then you'd have it good and that ain't bad. And in honor of The Duke we begin and end this song with a quote from another one of his songs.

### OH YEAH - ONE MORE THING

In some songs you may hear something that sounds like a squeak. Is that a squeak you ask? Yep it is. You see I brought a stool to the session so I wouldn't have to sit in a chair. Why? Two reasons, when I sit in a chair it's hard for the other musicians to see me. The other reason is my left foot is thunderous when I get going even with my boots off! We did duct tape most of the stool to quiet it some, but we didn't have WD-40 to get all the squeaks. So, that's why those songs sounded exactly like this!



### MY THANKS:

To Sharon, who I talked to at a concert in Poolseville MD,  
and suggested (rather strongly I might add) "Exactly Like This"  
for the title of this album.

To Denny, Jimi, and Mike for being so good at what they do  
and adding so much to my music.

To Keith, Marcia, Jan, Sean and Bill at Reference Recordings.  
Great folks. Thanks for being so good to my music!  
It continues to be my pleasure to be with you all.

To Miki Mulvehill of Heart & Soul artist management for being there,  
caring, the laughs, and good advice.  
Well, good advice for everything except sun glasses!

To Korky Lowry for his fine skills as a luthier and for doing a great job  
of keeping a little bit more from falling off of Lil' Bit.

To my wife, my lady, and best friend Patti Joy.

And of course to you. Because, like I say, if you're reading this,  
I know you put down some hard earned money to be doing so!

Doug endorses National Reso-Phonic Guitars and D'Addario Strings

Doug MacLeod, winner of the 2014 Blues Music Awards for Acoustic Artist Of The Year and Acoustic Album Of The Year (*There's A Time*), the 2013 Blues Blast Music Award for Male Artist Of The Year, and perennial Blues Music Award nominee, is a singer-songwriter in the American tradition. He is a traveling artist who writes and sings original songs that are based on his own life and experiences. He learned from the old masters, lived the music, survived the life and carries forward a valuable tradition. MacLeod is known for his superb songwriting, guitar wizardry, warm soulful vocals, wit and unforgettable live performances. At the heart of this is his knack for storytelling, bringing characters—from the faceless to the legendary—to strikingly real life.



As a youth he overcame abuse and a crippling stutter by turning to music. After he picked up a guitar, and tried to sing, he found his voice.

While he developed his rich, soulful singing style MacLeod also worked out a unique, unorthodox and powerfully rhythmic acoustic guitar style. The rage of his turbulent youth was eventually channeled through his guitar, using his relentless right hand to pound out an insistent, churning beat to complement his intricate bottleneck and finger-style technique. MacLeod's playing landed him sideman gigs with George 'Harmonica'

Smith, Big Joe Turner, Pee Wee Crayton, Eddie 'Cleanhead' Vinson, Lowell Fulson and Big Mama Thornton. Under their tutelage, he learned how to thrill and enrapture a crowd.

Over 29 years, 19 studio albums, several live records, compilations, a blues guitar instructional DVD and a live performance DVD, MacLeod has consistently earned raves. His songs have been covered by many artists including Albert King, Albert Collins, Joe Louis Walker and Eva Cassidy. He has co-written songs with Dave Alvin and Coco Montoya. MacLeod's songs have been featured in many TV movies and the hit show *In the Heat of the Night*. Two of his songs are on Grammy nominated albums by Albert King and Albert Collins.

From 1999 to 2004 he hosted "Nothin' But The Blues", a very popular weekend blues show on Los Angeles' KLon-KKJZ. He has also been the voice for The Blues Showcase on Continental Airlines and contributed his soulful slide guitar playing to the Los Angeles opening of the August Wilson play *Gem of the Ocean*. For ten years he penned "Doug's Back Porch," a regular feature column in Blues Revue Magazine in which he shared his humorous and insightful stories with thousands of readers. He won the Golden Note Award in 1997 for his AudioQuest album "You Can't Take My Blues". In 2006 Solid Air/Warner Bros. released Doug's guitar instructional DVD "101\* Blues Guitar Essentials".

MacLeod signed with Reference Recordings in 2012. In every note he performs and records, MacLeod subscribes to the rule-of-thumb learned from country bluesman Ernest Banks from Toano, VA who instilled in him

to "Never play a note you don't believe", and "Never write or sing about what you don't know about."

Like the old masters who taught him, MacLeod's music expresses life and times via an intangible, elusive quality that may simply be a keen sense of what matters most. There is a philosophic and healing side to MacLeod's music and his stories that has helped others overcome the hardships of their lives.

As Pee Wee Crayton's widow Esther once told Doug, "You have a message and you'll send that message mainly to the people who don't go to church." Amen.



Owl

Bullet

Moon

Lil'Bit

**Jimi Bott** is one of the most recorded, awarded and respected blues drummers in the world. During his 30-year career he appears on more than 70 recordings and countless live performances.

His professional career began in the San Francisco Bay Area while he was still in high school. He went national with Mark Hummel a mere two years later. An audition on his 21st birthday landed Jimi the job of his dreams with Rod Piazza and the Mighty Flyers, the very band that had inspired him to play music. In 1996 he joined the Fabulous Thunderbirds and toured with them for nearly 10 years. He lives in Portland, Oregon with his family where he owns and runs Roseleaf Recording studio.



As a student of two great drum instructors, Forrest Elledge and Murray Spivack, Jimi was the willing recipient their vast knowledge of stick control, musicality, and sense of rhythm. Forrest and Murray's influence flows through every one of his performances. While Jimi's first love is blues, he also excels in many other genres: jazz, soul, country, punk, rock and electric bluegrass, to name a few!

Currently, Jimi is the drummer for famed super-group The Mannish Boy and records regularly as a top session drummer.

He uses DW, Regal Tip, Calato, and Remo.



Bassist **Denny Croy** got his first taste of playing the blues at age 17, jamming with the legendary T-Bone Walker in his living room. His professional career began in 1979 touring and recording with Moon Martin ("Bad Case of Loving You"). Denny has recorded with a wide range of artists, including Lou Christie, Darlene Love, Lesley Gore, Freddy 'Boom Boom' Cannon, Victoria Williams, Mickey Dolenz, The Williams Bros., The Foremen, Big Daddy, Lawrence Lebo, Brian Setzer, Keb' Mo', and of course, Doug MacLeod. He has appeared

on the TV shows *The Midnight Special*, *Mad TV*, *The Tonight Show*, and played on several movie soundtracks.

Denny has played with Doug MacLeod since 1999. Their shared interests in blues, jazz, country, folk and rock, and the mutual commitment to spontaneity brings a unique twist to their live performances and recording.

He has been the exclusive bass teacher at the world famous McCabe's Guitar Shop School of Music for the past eighteen years and head of the school the past four. Having trained with legendary bassist Carol Kaye, Denny is one of a select few bass instructors in the Los Angeles area that Ms. Kaye recommends.

Denny took up playing bass after attending a Jimi Hendrix show and became convinced that being on stage with great guitarists would be his future. He's married to the beautiful and talented singer Lawrence ('Don't Call Her Larry') Lebo, and they have three cats: Cupcake, Twinkie and Starbuck.





**Michael Thompson** is pleased to be back in the musical fold with Doug amid such an incredible setting. The production values of this record are right in line with Mike's organic musical approach. After a lengthy pre-millennial stint in Doug's band, it felt natural to be playing the blues again with Douglas and the boys.

Mike heard a family friend play rag-time and boogie woogie piano as a young boy and was soon studying piano, guitar and trombone. He relocated from San Diego to Los Angeles and found himself continuing his career in the rhythm and blues genre.

He has worked as a pianist, arranger and producer on hugely popular "American Songbook" albums and become involved with many singer song-writers in Austin. Since 2000, most of Mike's time involves touring with the most successful American band of all time.

He is thrilled to contribute to Doug MacLeod's latest album.

Recorded: March 7 – 8, 2014  
At Skywalker Sound, Marin County, California

Producers: Doug MacLeod and Janice Mancuso



KOJ's mic pre-amps

Recording Engineer: Keith O. Johnson

Recorded by: Sean Royce Martin

Mastering Engineer: Keith O. Johnson

Executive Producers:

Marcia Gordon Martin and Janice Mancuso

Design: Bill Roarty

Cover Photo: Theo Looijmans

Photos of Doug: Jeff Fasano

Session Photos: Janice Mancuso

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Please visit [Doug-MacLeod.com](http://Doug-MacLeod.com) for tour information and more.

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