

Comic Refrain

Dave Little, omnitalented music man and jokester, is about to stand up and deliver a new CD

| By Steve Carter |

| Photography by Nick Prendergast |

How does one begin to succinctly describe, er, OK, make that pigeonhole, the job title of a singer-songwriter, stand-up comic, commercial actor, improv master and ubiquitous boulevardier of the restless Dallas night? If the person in question is Dave Little, enjoying a late breakfast of migas at the AllGood Café, it's a difficult question. "I don't know really," he winces evasively. "I mean Renaissance man is so Thomas Jefferson, and I

don't even know what it means. I think maybe I'm just a lot of hyphens and slashes, very hyphen-oriented." The deadpan-everyman-troubadour has been putting the finishing touches on his third CD, the self-deprecatingly titled *Back By Popular Dismay*; it's destined to loiter with intent in a Dave Little musical/comic lineup that began with his *Another Leggy Supermodel* CD in 1999, and continued with 2007's *Uncomfortable Moments*. "The awkward moments are the ones that are precious to me," he notes, "where you're feeling emotions and everything, not just walking through your routine of life. It's not the 'oh and then today I watched *American Idol* and then I had toast'...It's more like the traffic jams, the gas leaks... the ones that don't kill ya, those are the fun stories. That's why I love a gig that's going bad, because I know I'm going to be able to take something from it—maybe very little money, but a story, or something in a song or whatever. That's the treasure, you know?"

Growing up in Plano, the high school Little was a fan of Rickles, Newhart, the Smothers Brothers, *SNL*'s Bill Murray and the comic stalwarts who frequented the shows of Carson and Letterman. He also wrote poems and songs, without any sense of what he might do with them. Four colleges later, he eventually graduated from UNT in '84 with an English degree, and apprenticed as factotum-performer at Bowley and Wilson's legendary club for three years. Stand-up, improv, voice work, married life and fatherhood all followed, but with *Back By Popular Dismay*, the 50-year-old Little proves he can thread the tricky needle that stitches together his musical and comic gifts without compromising either. The electric-folkish outing, produced by Salim Nourallah, features Little's wry observational vignettes of 21st century suburbia, (*Big Balls*, or the outré, *Grandparents' House*), as well as nakedly poignant moments (*Don't Be Sad, Then You're Gone*), the latter

MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

Singer/songwriter/
comedian Dave Little.

a reflection on the passing of his musician friend Carter Albrecht. Buttressed by some of the city's finest, including Albrecht, Chris

Holt, Don Cento, Trey Carmichael, Rip Rowan and Chad Stockslager, *Back By Popular Dismay* is a crazily symmetrical work, Ping-Ponging precariously between the ridiculous and sublime. Balancing his singing and comedy lives is a high-wire act; when he started performing his music at clubs, he struggled to segregate Dave Little the singer from Dave Little the comic. "I just wasn't myself," he says. "But now if I'm singing and I want to say something funny, I'll say it; I'm the same person. I might be doing a mix of funny and serious songs, but I've learned that you can't not be yourself." ■

Keep track of Dave Little at lovedavelittle.com, myspace.com/Davelittle and myspace.com/section8comedy.

