

DAVID LEE

gifted musician, writer, singer & teacher

BY ERNIE ALTGELT

For most of us, the sum of our lives can be characterized by the many varied experiences that make us who we are and ultimately, who we become. These experiences can inspire, motivate and shape our very existence hopefully resulting in accomplishment, satisfaction and, in the best of cases, the betterment of those we encounter along the way. For Spring Branch's gifted musician, writer, singer and teacher David Lee, it has been the power of song (with all of its diverse associations) that has, and continues to define so much of his appropriately-lauded life – a life that's touched so many in its emotive melodic wake.

Born in Wichita Falls but nurtured within several North Texas communities, David was blessed with a family imbued with the musical spirit. As he recalls, "My grandfather was a performing guitarist and singer in the 1930s. After he died at an early age, my father took up the guitar. Eventually becoming good enough to earn a living through his music (that required gigging at diverse venues in a variety of genres), it was in the honkytonks where I became smitten while watching him on stage." David was not yet a teenager when he realized that he also wanted to devote his professional life to music.

Penning his first song at age 12, the young man continued to write and perform throughout his early years wowing crowds who came to appreciate David's stirring compositions rendered, as he matured, in a smooth, comforting Texas baritone. However, even with a following, as he recalls, "Touring and singing my songs in bars could be a lonely, soul-crushing experience depending on the audiences encountered. I finally decided that a move to Nashville was in the cards. I wanted and, more importantly, needed to be around others working and writing for the greater music industry."

With \$300 and an understanding new bride, the 24-year-old headed to Tennessee full of hope, energy, determination and, most importantly, talent. In a few short years filled with a lot of writing and a little luck, David inked his first publishing deal with the Mark Hill Direction Company. Remembering this seminal event, he offers, "I was only paid \$200.00 a week but, I was now a pro!"

Shortly after that signing his first song was sold, a tune called "This Old Heart," which was recorded by the popular Terri Clark. The next year, Lee Ann Womack made his "Now You See Me" a top ten hit. With these successes and the recognition garnered, David began to enjoy some of the personal and emotional security he initially sought when he first made his decision to go to Nashville.

Eventually moving over to larger representation firms, his creations began turning up on multiple media playlists earning kudos from audiences across the nation and, of equal importance, from his fellow professionals – singers, studio musicians, producers, agents and many others.

Examples of his acceptance as an exceptional writer include numerous Top 10 hits ("Letters From Home," "Lucky Man"), a number 2 "song of the decade" ("19 Something") and even a Grammy nomination when



David Lee. Photo courtesy David Lee.

Faith Hill and Tim McGraw dueted on his heart-felt "I Need You."

David's expertise in masterful composition continues to be showcased by country artists across all spectrums as additional songs come on line. To date, his published songs number in the hundreds.

But fortunately for those of us in the Hill Country who have missed not having him close, after 24 fruitful years in Nashville, David "came back home" settling near Spring Branch just off his much loved "Highway 281 South" which he calls the "best place to be in Texas."

Following decades of primarily writing and working "behind the scenes" in Tennessee, now he's performing again and his rabid fans are loving every minute. Still writing, producing and recording new material (not to mention encouraging and nurturing new talent), today David Lee and his Jose Armadillo Band can be found playing the same (as well as many of his old favorites) at venues across his home state.

If you're one of the few not familiar with him and/or his incredible work one visit to his comprehensive website will reassure that David Lee is truly a Texas treasure and, the next time he's in your neighborhood, not to be missed. Yep, with such a pedigree as his, David Lee's life really can be defined in song and the listening is pretty darn sweet too. Thanks for the melodies, Mr. Lee!

For more information about David Lee, his music, current albums and calendar dates, visit the website at davidleemusic.com.