

# dave gunning

“Dave Gunning is the next big thing in the True North of Song, an artist as compelling, as assured and attentive to every nuance of the writing process as Lightfoot, Coburn and Stan Rogers before him.” -- Greg Quill, The Toronto Star

There are stories that wash over you like a tide, and then there are stories that grab you by the heart. Dave Gunning has made a point of finding the latter and wrapping them up in song since he broke upon the East Coast music scene in Canada back in 1997. The Pictou County, Nova Scotia born and bred singer-songwriter and working class hero has built up from humble beginnings to a point where his name is regularly included in conversation with artists such as David Francey, James Keelaghan, Ron Hynes, Stan Rogers, Bruce Cockburn and Gordon Lightfoot. Writing from a sonic menu that includes flavors of Irish, Scottish, French Acadian, folk and country musical styles, Dave Gunning transcends genre with songs that fill your senses and touch your soul.

Dave was a painfully shy teenager who might never have gotten on stage if it weren't for his junior high best friend JD Fortune (INXS). Fortune signed the two up for a variety concert where the sound man was none other than country singer/songwriter George Canyon (Nashville Star 2). Gunning backed Fortune on guitar for “La Bamba” before taking the mic for a Buddy Holly cover. Little did anyone know that in that room in a small East Coast school were three future stars. Fortune has shone brightest thus far, and Canyon isn't far behind. But thirty years from now it seems likely that Dave Gunning will outshine them all.

While names like Francey, Keelaghan, Hynes and even Rogers might not mean a great deal to American audiences, together with Gordon Lightfoot and Bruce Cockburn they are iconic across Canada. Parallels in the United States might include James Taylor, Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Randy Newman or Lyle Lovett. Dave Gunning is that sort of songwriter; one who creates images and moments in song that are palpable. Quiet and reserved otherwise, Gunning takes on an almost Garrison Keillor-type storyteller persona on stage, injecting stories between songs that run the range from sweet and touching to uproariously funny. If you're lucky enough to catch a Dave Gunning show, perhaps he'll tell you the one about getting beaten up by a dentist as a toddler. You can't make stuff like this up.

Dave paid his dues supporting other artists over the years, touring with the likes of Stompin' Tom Connors, JP Cormier, John Allen Cameron, Ron Hynes and Stephen Fearing. Since heading out on his own, Gunning has continually stood out in the crowd. Dave has been awarded six East Coast Music Awards out of fifteen nominations since 2003 and took home two 2011 ECMA awards for his recording, ... a *tribute to John Allan Cameron*. Gunning has also been a finalist in the Great American Song Contest, the USA Songwriting Competition, the John Lennon Songwriting Contest and the International Songwriting Contest. All of the hardware and certificates aside, however, it is the personal connection that Gunning's music engenders that is the greatest testament to his craft.

Perhaps the most intriguing thing about Gunning as an artist is his willingness to just accept what the muse might bring. Unlike many artists, Gunning is almost superstitious about not trying to

understand his songwriting process, indicating a fear that if he finally comes to understand it the music will stop. This is the anxiety of a man who has always wanted music as a part of his life and simply wouldn't know what to do without it. Gunning is a family man, with a wife and three sons to sustain him and hold down the fort at home. But if they are his life's blood, then music is the air that he breathes.

It's rare in any realm of popular music (folk included) to find an artist so wholly cut from the land he grew up on. Dave Gunning's humility and talent are both born of a farmer's acceptance of the world around him. Gunning doesn't sit down to try to create grand music. He views the world around him for the seeds of something to grow, and cultivates what he sees into life as stories and songs that will touch your heart; he'll make you think, laugh and cry with classic story songs of underdogs and a world that's perhaps not quite level but well worth the climb. Like Gunning himself is fond of saying, "There's a song in there somewhere."

For more information visit, [www.davegunning.com/](http://www.davegunning.com/) [www.myspace.com/davegunning](http://www.myspace.com/davegunning)

Live performance footage: <http://www.youtube.com/user/davegunningvideos>

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# awards & nominations

- 2011** *ECMA Award Roots Traditional Solo Recording of the Year (a tribute to John Allan Cameron)*  
*ECMA Award Producer of the Year (a tribute to John Allan Cameron)*  
ECMA Folk Recording of the Year Nomination (We're All Leaving)  
ECMA Fans Choice Entertainer of the Year Nomination  
ECMA Male Solo Recording of the Year Nomination (a tribute to John Allan Cameron)
- 2010** ECMA Songwriter of the Year Nomination (Made On A Monday)  
ECMA Male Solo Recording of the Year Nomination (We're all Leaving)  
ECMA FACTOR Recording of the Year Nomination  
*Finalist Great American Song Contest (Before The Morning Sun)*  
Music Nova Scotia Folk Recording of the Year Nomination (We're All Leaving)  
Music Nova Scotia Entertainer of the Year Nomination  
Music Nova Scotia Male Artist of the Year Nomination  
Music Nova Scotia SOCAN Songwriter of the Year Nomination
- 2009** *Semi-Finalist International Songwriting Competition (Before The Morning Sun)*  
ECMA Entertainer of the Year Nomination
- 2008** *First Place Winner Folk Category Indie International Songwriting Contest (Hard Workin' Hands)*  
*Finalist USA Songwriting Competition (Hard Workin' Hands)*  
*Finalist International Songwriting Competition (Cowboy's Dream)*  
*Finalist John Lennon Songwriting Contest (Hard Workin' Hands)*  
*ECMA Award Male Solo Recording of the Year (House For Sale)*  
*ECMA Award Folk Recording of the Year (House For Sale)*  
*Music Nova Scotia Award Studio Engineer of the Year*  
Music Nova Scotia Entertainer of the Year Nomination  
Music Nova Scotia Folk Recording of the Year Nomination (House For Sale)
- 2006** ECMA Male Artist of the Year Nomination  
ECMA Album of the Year Nomination (Two-Bit World)  
The Irish Music Magazine Readers Poll Song of the Year (New Highway)
- 2005** *ECMA Award Folk Recording of the Year (Two-Bit World)*  
ECMA Nomination Male Artist of the Year  
*First Place Winner Folk Category International Acoustic Music Awards (Prince of Pictou)*  
*Music Nova Scotia Award Folk Recording of the Year (Two-Bit World)*  
*Honorable mention USA Songwriting Competition (Prince of Pictou)*

- 2003**      *Music Nova Scotia Award Musician of the Year*
- 2002**      *Music Nova Scotia Award Producer of the Year (Live)*  
*Music Nova Scotia Award Engineer of the Year (Live)*  
*Music Nova Scotia Award Studio of the Year (Riverfront Studio)*
- 2001**      ECMA Roots/ Traditional Solo Recording of the Year Nomination (Caught Between Shadows)
- 1998**      ECMA Roots/ Traditional Vocal Nomination (Lost Tracks)

## reviews

### *We're All Leaving*

*"Truly, Dave Gunning's great track record remains unbroken and unsullied with this recording. It's a great collection from a musician who continues to grow and thrive".*

*Penguin Eggs*

*"Dave Gunning delivers a winner...We're All Leaving is a memorable almost thematic collection of songs, one that will undoubtedly see Gunning reap further Canadian folk music awards".*

*UK Country Music People \*\*\*\**

*"It is that sense of intimacy through his writing, and his performances that makes Gunning an absolutely intriguing performer to watch and listen to".*

*The Newfoundland Herald*

*"The Galaxie Folk/Roots Channel's most-played, high-rotation album releases for December 2009 - January 2010 "We're All Leaving":*

*Galaxie, The Continuous Music Network*

*"There was something about those original songs that led me to believe this somewhat shy, unassuming young man with the easy-rolling baritone voice had some very real talent. There was an honesty and a beautiful simplicity to those early songs. Inspired by people and places in his life that had special meaning to him, they were heartfelt and moving. It's encouraging, all these years later, to see those qualities that first impressed me and many others are still present in Gunning's latest work, We're All Leaving.*

*The Guardian \*\*\*\**

*"It's a star-studded affair, but at the centre of it all is Gunning with his sparse folk sound and crystal clear lyrics that have made him a popular name along the east coast and into the U.S. and Europe over the last few years".*

*eastcoastnoise.com*

*"Dave Gunning is a rising star in Canadian acoustic music. He's the full package".*

*thespec.com*

*"This incredible album contains 11 songs, all of which he wrote with several co-writers. His ability to tell a story in his songs has resulted in six Music Nova Scotia awards and three East Coast Music Awards in the past, and now with this new CD, there will be no exceptions. A number*

*of Canada's finest composers helped Dave to write all the songs and include; Jamie Robinson, John Meir, James Keelaghan, David Francey, Rose Cousins and Karine Polwart”.*

*Atlantic Seabreeze \*\*\*\*\**

*“Continuing in the grand footsteps of other east coast singer-songwriters such as Bruce Guthro, Gordie Sampson and Lennie Gallant, Nova Scotian Dave Gunning scores a winner with his seventh record, We're All Leaving. Resting comfortably somewhere in the territory between folk, country and roots music, fans of Atlantic Canadian music won't be long picking up on Gunning's masterful song writing on tracks like The Color Of Gone, Made On A Monday, There's A Song In There and We're All Leaving”.*

*HereNB*

*“One of the songs closest to Gunning’s heart is Big Shoes, a tribute to legendary performers John Allen Cameron and Stan Rogers....:*

*Chronicle Herald*

*“Dave is one of Canada’s finest songwriter’s: the way his eye sees things upon the land, the way his ear hears the voices of his people, his respect for those who have gone before, and his love of life in the land he loves, is beautifully portrayed in gentle verse and rhyme. He is not a man you meet everyday, he cares, and it shows in his music, both poetic and pointed”.*

*CFCY, the Eric MacEwen Show*

### ***a tribute to John Allan Cameron***

*“John Allan was Dave's first major influence and not only was John Allan's hero, he was his friend. It is now quite fitting that Dave put together many of John Allan's songs on his own CD in tribute to his hero. The CD contains 17 tracks, all done by Dave to perfection. He tried to keep close to John Allan's music as much as possible, although no one can come close to John Allan's distinctive voice, says Dave. Atlantic Seabreeze cannot say enough of favourable comments regarding this fine CD, and gives high ratings for the CD on its rating list”.*

*Atlantic Seabreeze \*\*\*\*\**

*“Move ahead to present day. John Allan has passed on (always remembered and always missed), and the student takes the opportunity to create a tribute to his hero. It’s a CD of some of John Allan’s best know work, lovingly recorded by Dave and his friends, many of whom were also friends with John Allan.*

*Sound The Pibroch, Freeborn Man, The Four Marys, Butterfingers Medley and so on, most carefully recreated but some with newer arrangements, and a few others that may not seem connected until you dig deeper. Dave does the vocals, backed up by friends of John Allan’s like Allie Bennett, JP Cormier, Pee Wee Charles and John Allan’s son Stuart, along with a host of*

*other guests along to pay tribute in their own way. Dave Gunning's A Tribute to John Allan Cameron, is a complete package. If you're either a fan of John Allan's or a fan of Dave's, this CD should be in your collection".*

*The Cape Breton Post*

## **House For Sale**

*"He's become one of my favourite new writers"*

*Ron Hynes, Newfoundland Songwriter &  
Recording Artist*

*"... one of the rising stars in Canadian roots music".*

*TheRecord.com*

*"Gunning's musicality shone in the same way right from the first to the end of the show — always innovative guitar chording to accompany a voice that stood out like a finely-tuned old piano, perfect in pitch, delicate and weathered when called for, but strong and pure, refined in its years of melody flowing through it".*

*The Guardian*

*" While Nova Scotia based singer/songwriter Dave Gunning has been picking up great press in Canada for his consistently excellent writing and performing, this new album 'House for Sale' looks like it will bring him much wider recognition — it's full of well crafted songs and has an effortless folk/country feel that will engage listeners the world over.*

*Like many Canadian singer/songwriters, his work is a mixture of various North American styles, the intelligent lyrics and stories of the East Coast, mix with memorable melodies and there's a subtle Country twang evident in places, it's a strong mix that makes the album immediately accessible without sounding derivative.*

*Most of the 11 songs are based around Gunning's acoustic guitar, and there's a tight and compact band that provide the backing which includes bass, percussion, mandolin, dobro and Hammond. Where the disc excels is in the quality of the writing — he paints pictures both with his lyrics and the arrangements, the title track is full of strong imagery that really adds to the feel of the song, 'Hard Workin' Hands' has a genuine gritty and proud feel that shines through, and 'These Roads' is a classic singer/songwriter 'road song' that explores the writers' relationship with constant traveling.*

*'House for Sale' is a really strong contemporary singer/songwriter album full of well crafted songs and instant melodies, and is an album that with the right breaks, and word of mouth will gain much wider recognition. Highly recommended".*

*Fish Records, UK*

*"The album's lead single, Cowboy's Dream (co-written by Dave Gunning with George Canyon)*

is simply an outstanding piece of songwriting. The song addresses the laments of a rodeo rider... and is reminiscent of Ian Tyson's Someday Soon classic. Gunning's delivery of the song is quite powerful, and country radio has given it some solid airplay".

*Country Music News*

*"This is a lovely CD, relaxed and laid-back, mostly folk in styling but sometimes with strong country overtones and the occasional touch of Celtic. There is enough up-tempo material to break it up nicely, particularly the spirited Colleen Malone".*

*Cape Breton Post*

*"Gunning took the classic storyteller route, singing songs from his fifth album, House for Sale, that were freighted with the folklore of his native Nova Scotia. A gifted guitarist and a witty raconteur, he prompted much merriment as he spun the story of a young boy's Christmas Day, blighted by the mysterious fact that Santa had drunk all his dad's beer".*

*The Times, UK*

*"House For Sale, continues to impress with its honesty and his gently enthralling no-nonsense tales of local legends and historical events as well as his directly-expressed relationship songs".*

*Net Rhythms, UK*

# discography

## ***Dave Gunning***

*a tribute to John Allan Cameron (2010)*

*We're All Leaving (2009)*

*House For Sale (2007)*

*Dave Gunning Christmas (2006)*

*Two-bit World (2004)*

*Dave Gunning Live (2002)*

*Caught Between Shadows (2000)*

*Lost Tracks (1996)*

*Candles & Evergreens (2008) recorded with George Canyon*

## ***Compilations:***

*Atlantic Standards 2 CD (2006) featuring "Here She Comes A Running (from Caught Between Shadows) released by Warner Music Canada*

*Borrowed Tunes 2: A Canadian Tribute to Neil Young featuring "A Dream That Can Last" released by Universal Music Canada*

## ***Television:***

TV show "Trailer Park Boys" playing the role of the forest ranger (summer 2007)  
broadcast on the Showcase Network