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Life As We Know It Songs by Dave Hickey

"I write love songs for people who live in a democracy."

– Dave Hickey

Dave Hickey's long-lost album of pop-country-jazz-inflected songs has been remastered to celebrate the 30th Anniversary Edition of his canonical book on beauty, *The Invisible Dragon*.

Life As We Know It had its genesis in 1987, when Hickey built a fully-outfitted studio in the attic of the house he shared with Susan Freudenheim in Fort Worth, Texas. The result was a suite of eight songs written as the soundtrack for an exhibition of photographs by artist Nic Nicosia.

The album opens with the frivolity of "What Did You Do On Your Summer Vacation." Highlights include the languid stylings of "Spur of the Moment" and Hickey's rockin' paean to a new generation, "Flaming Youth." Natalie Maines, lead of the Chicks (previously the Dixie Chicks), can be heard singing background vocals on Hickey's satirical "Baby Vampires" when she was 12 years old. The melancholia of "Put It Out of Your Mind" contrasts with the quirky love song "I Don't Need a Picture." Hickey's songs include rhyming lyrics in traditional verse / chorus / bridge structures. Surprising hooks give musical form to the prose stylings that longtime readers of Hickey may recognize from his essays.

A ninth song, "The Ballad of Billy and Oscar," has been added for this release. It's a rip-roaring tale of the outlaw Billy the Kid and the effete Oscar Wilde traveling in concert through the Wild West. Billy and Oscar visit a whorehouse, smoke French cigarettes, seek love, and call out assholes, bureaucrats, critics and cops. The self-revelatory ballad may best sum up Hickey's personality and reputation, tying together his music and prose writing. The telling lyric: "Now Billy and Oscar, the wicked and dead, / Have rented this duplex inside of my head."

Life As We Know It is being released to provide a fuller picture of the creative output of the MacArthur Foundation "genius." Hickey is known for his lyrical writings on art and culture. Less known is his lifelong stint as a songwriter and music journalist. In 1972, Hickey was Booker for the Dripping Springs Reunion at Hurlbut Ranch, Texas. In the mid 1970s, Hickey was Staff Songwriter for Glaser Publications in Nashville, where he was instrumental in defining Outlaw country music. Under the moniker Dave's Everyday Songs, Hickey wrote "Cooky and Lila"

(performed by Dr. Hook), "Calgary Snow" (performed by Bobby Bare), "We Don't Go Together (But We Do)" (with Marshall Chapman), and "Used to Be an Itty Bitty Baby." Hickey also published notable profiles on Hank Williams, Waylon Jennings, Emmylou Harris, Dolly Parton, Lou Reed, and others for *Country Music*, *Rolling Stone*, *Village Voice*, *Creem*, *Oui*, and *Penthouse*.

Life As We Know It was recorded by Factory Girl Music at Caldwell Studios in Lubbock, Texas and produced by Nic Nicosia, Dave Hickey, and Lloyd Maines. The songs were written and arranged by Hickey with Mike Wafer.

Dave Hickey plays guitar and sings on the album. At last, fortissimo!

Life As We Know It: Songs by Dave Hickey

42 Minutes

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