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RELOAD RECORD COMPANY

AN INDEPENDENT TEXAS RECORD LABEL

"If Music Ain't Got an Edge, It's Dull!"

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News and Background Information for the Media and the Trade

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RELOAD RECORD CO.'S EARL MUSICK AT WORK ON NEW ALBUM FOR 2004 — MARKING 20TH ANNIVERSARY IN THE RECORD-PRODUCING TRADE

FORT WORTH, Texas — As he puts the finishing touches on his next CD album, *Privateer*, Earl Musick reflects on a career that has sustained him for more than 20 years as an innovative composer, guitarist and singer within Texas' competitive and challenging community of roots-music artists.

Mostly, Musick is reflecting on the changes that have brought him to this solo-artist phase, after over a generation's span of near-anonymity as an ensemble player.

"I'd always thought that using the name *Musick* might seem a little pretentious," Music says, "and so I kind of low-profiled myself for a long time as a bandleader operating under the name of the band."

But no longer. As the 1990s gave way to a new century, Musick effectively set aside the band-name — The Unsung Heroes — that had long served as his performing identity and stepped out front as Earl Musick. His first solo album, the Reload Record Co. release of *Done Deal*, has fared sufficiently well to have gone into a second pressing and to have spawned a sequel. At the close of 2003, Musick is preparing *Privateer* for a first-quarter 2004 release.

"It's all over the place, in terms of styles," Musick says of the new project, "but it all boils down to a selection of original songs that must work as purely acoustic pieces — just guitar and voice — before we'll start adding a rhythm section and other layers of instrumentation. This hand-made Texas music that we specialize in covers a lot of

ground: Some of it has a country flavor, some might be called folk, or rock, or blues — even jazz — but it all comes down to songs that tell a story in direct, simple terms.”

In addition to being a prolific songwriter and a versatile entertainer, Musick is also an accomplished left-handed guitar player, utilizing an array of custom-designed, “backward” guitars — right hand on the fretboard, left hand on the string-plucking end — instead of the upside-down configuration that many other left-handed guitarists employ.

The music-review Webzine *Rockzillaworld* has appraised Musick’s *Done Deal* CD in these terms: “I was expecting either a bit of back-porch country or some outlaw tales of hard-won experience. What I got instead was a little taste of D-I-Y done DFW style...

“The songs on *Done Deal* exemplify the cavalier attitude and unique sound this down-home operation revels in. Owing more to Rusty Weir and Simon Stokes than to Hank Williams, Jr., Earl Musick runs the gamut from good ol’ rock ’n’ roll, to Cowtown funk, to progressive country, to Western Swing...

“*Done Deal* is homemade music in the truest sense of the phrase... real music, where heart means more than vocal cords.”

Elsewhere, *Music City Texas Publisher* has weighed in on Musick’s *Done Deal* in these words: “Strong philosophical material, married to a chunky, intricate beat [and] wailing rock guitar.”

The *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* has characterized *Done Deal* as “easily one of the most exhilarating new albums heard in a decade.”

The new surge of activity from Musick is part of a 19th-anniversary venture — with the 20th anniversary falling in 2004 — involving an aggressive new business plan for Fort Worth-based Reload Record Co., a partnership of Earl and his wife, Darlina. Earl Musick also has begun an ambitious touring and performing schedule as half of a newly formed acoustic-duo act with Reload artist John Gómez, whose solo album, *Head First*, was released earlier in 2003.

“Sooner or later, you have to take matters into your own hands.” as Earl Musick tells it. “You can’t assume that a record deal is just going to materialize — especially when you’re a long way from Nashville or New York or Los Angeles.”

The Musicks began living up to this assertion as early as 1984, first with a 45-r.p.m. single release and then with a début album by The Unsung Heroes. The more challenging leap into a steady regimen of album productions occurred during the 1990s and has gathered momentum as a matter of course.

Earl Musick's higher profile is a crucial element of this transition.

"I'd always figured that unity and stability within a band were more important than individual recognition," as he has explained. "But with the record company as it has evolved and grown, we've achieved unity and a stable group of talents by granting each artist that individual recognition."

Reload's business plan involves strategic marketing, continuing development of a core group of artists, live performances and touring schedules in support of the recordings, and an emphasis upon original songwriting.

On the Web: <http://www.reloadrecordcompany.com/>

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