

# Dave Elder's Bio

## The long and short of it, and the even shorter



### The Short Version

Folk, rock, blues and country mark the 4 main points of Dave's musical compass, but the listener might pick up a hint of gospel, jazz or even classical flavor here and there. Dave Elder is a dynamic and engaging singer-songwriter-performer with a unique point of view.

### The Even Shorter Version

"Clever original songs, country pickin' and sly wit"

—Godfrey Daniels coffeehouse,  
Bethlehem, PA

### The Long Version

The progressive politics that have always shaped a portion of Dave Elder's performing and recording sets now take center stage as his response to the darker events taking place on the larger stage. While a lighter mood animated his musical efforts in the 1990s, as showcased by his 1996 CD *Country Drivin'* that featured songs like *As Long as Merle is Still Haggard* and *Driving in My Sleep Again*, the turn towards prolonged war and lean economic times at the opening years of the new millenium fueled the heavier and more urgent sense of purpose that finds voice in such songs as *The Sago Mine*, about the West Virginia mining tragedy of early 2006, *Better Them Than Us*, which concerns the increasingly-militaristic direction of U.S. foreign policy, and *Blackwater Boys*, which warns of the dangers posed by a private army paid with public dollars, as evidenced by the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans.

One element that makes Dave Elder a unique performer and singer-songwriter is his standard-tuning slide guitar technique which, to the best of his knowledge, no other slide player uses, and which he developed out of the need to add variety to long solo sets without major retuning between songs. Elder's musical signature also includes an open-ended songwriting method that often steps outside musical phrasing conventions – instead of 8 bars, Dave's next musical phrase might be 7, or 9, whatever feels right. For lyrics, Elder prefers the role of song painter rather than song poet, favoring reflective imagery over clever word-play.

As a performer, Dave Elder brings to the stage a variety of musical influences and styles, with a dynamic range that moves seamlessly from the fast and loud, percussive, flat-picked blues-rock jump to the soft and low, contemplative, finger-picked folk-ballad mode, sometimes adding harmonica to the mix, and keyboards as well. On that quieter side, Dave once again evolved a finger-picking style all his own, based not on standard patterns but simply on whatever sounds good, and that phrase neatly sums up his whole approach – *whatever sounds good*.