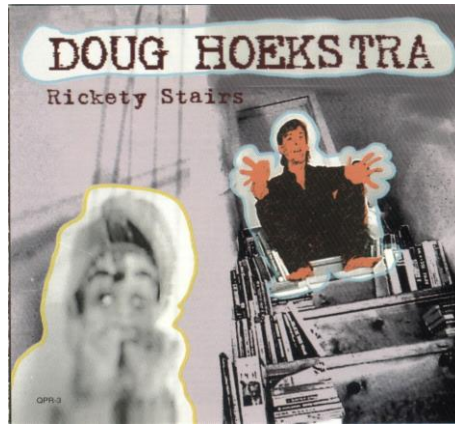
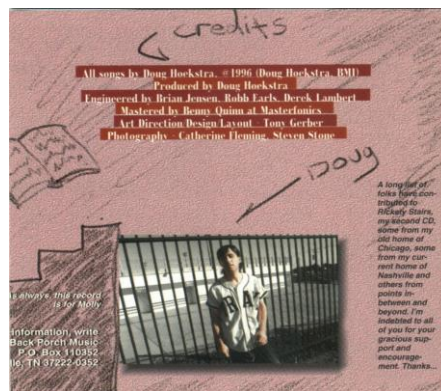


Rickety Stairs (CD #2)



Doug Hoekstra's second CD **Rickety Stairs**, came out on Back Porch and promptly earned him a **Nashville Music Award** nomination for Best Folk Album of the Year (in good company with Sandy Bull and Gillian Welch, though he lost to Ms. Welch). Recording was split between Chicago and Nashville (Robb Earl's Sound Vortex, the studio home of *Tom Ovens*, *Dave Olney*, *Lambchop*, and *others*). Hoekstra went deeper into developing his new artistic voice as he embellished his arrangements with strings, French horn, gospel singers, and other interesting musical touches. Featured tracks include the fragile *Driving to Georgia (what it is, is what it ain't, I don't think anyone was born that great)*, *Dandelion Seeds* (a ferocious rocker featuring Monk-like piano & angular guitar work), and *Cottonwood Tree*, a ballad of a Native American paratrooper trying to balance duty of work with the ways of his heritage. Inspiration courtesy of the New Mexico landscape paintings of Maynard Dixon and the writings of Tony Hillerman.

All songs copyright and published by Doug Hoekstra (BMI), administered by Kobalt Music Services.



Produced by Doug Hoekstra; Engineered by Brian Jensen (Streeterville Studios/Chicago), Robb Earls (Sound Vortex/Nashville); Derek Lambert (Back Porch/Nashville)
Mastered by Benny Quinn at Masterfonics, Nashville TN
Art Direction/Design/Layout by Tony Gerber

Driving to Georgia

I passed a hitcher by the side of the road
The sky was gray, the air was cold
I listened to the wind rush over my car

I hoped he had some kind of back-up plan
I hoped that he might understand
The roads aren't as safe as they used to be
Evasive thinking got the best of me

What it is ain't what it ain't
I don't think anyone was born that great
You can go down to the shoppin' mall
Watch the escalators rise and fall
Show me canyons filled with tears
Rain that's fallen for a million years

I got a friend living where the air is hot
Limestone houses line the block
Hers has a garden 'round the back

Her mother died on a day like this
One last breath, one clenched fist
Like a flower on the vine
Trying to bloom one last time

When I see her out with her son
Her mother's pride and her are one
You can go down to the shopping mall
Watch the escalators rise and fall
Show me canyons filled with tears
Rain that's fallen for a million years

What it is ain't what it ain't
I don't think anyone was born that great
You can go down to the shoppin' mall
Watch the escalators rise and fall
Show me canyons filled with tears
Rain that's fallen for a million years

Doug Hoekstra – guitars, vocal, hand drum, harmonica, percussion
Engineered by Robb Earls, Sound Vortex, Nashville

In a Crowd

In a public square in the middle of town
My private thoughts were bringing me down
The leaves fell slowly to the ground
And I felt alone among the crowd...in a crowd

I saw a squirrel jumping from tree to tree
Gracefully, with a natural ease
Back and forth, one limb to the other
I wondered what he had hoped to discover

Was he looking for something under the sun?
Or a brand-new trick that hadn't been done
I got news for him and news for me
We go round and round endlessly
Round and round endlessly

Folks split up and began to fade
Into another time and place
The sun went down, the squirrel ran away
And somehow everything had changed

Through emerald eyes, she looked at me
The moment planted like a seed
I saw promises built on ravaged dreams
Spinning me round endlessly
We go round and round endlessly

I got a shelf full of books that I ain't read
Plenty of things that I ain't said
Ten years ago awake in bed
I would've never dreamt the life that I've led

In a crowd....

Mark Fornek – drums, percussion
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano
Eric Markowitz – electric guitar
Mike McCurdy – stand-up bass
Creshanna Tabor – vocals

Engineered by Brian Jensen, Streeterville Studios, Chicago

Slipping Through the Cracks

The woods are dark and the city is blue
Both are laced with morning dew
A silver blanket and drops like pearls
Some are stuck between two worlds
Between silky skin or brittle bone
Endless love or life alone
Between a pair of gloves and calloused hands
Patience and on demand

Slipping through the cracks
Slipping through the cracks of time
Thinner than the thinnest dime, I'm
Slipping through the cracks of time

The alarm clock rings and I lift the shades
Look out on the signs displayed
Littering each pair of eyes
That fall upon their painted lies
Where the dollar rules the time of day
And souls are judged by money made
And what you've got is how you are
The clothes you wear, and your make of car

Slipping through the cracks
Slipping through the cracks of time
Thinner than the thinnest dime, I'm
Slipping through the cracks of time

I talk to folks on the phone
I hear voices from the great unknown
Alone, afraid and in the dark
They're looking for a little spark
Or the answer to a question posed
You ask me, cause I don't know
St. Jude be my patron saint
Come and cover me as I wait

Mark Fornek – drums
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano
Eric Markowitz – electric guitar
Mike McCurdy – stand-up bass

Engineered by Brian Jensen, Streeterville Studios, Chicago

Dandelion Seeds

As beautiful as diamonds, sparkling in the hand
Rows and rows of Iowa corn were rolling across the land
The sun shone high above us and the ground heat up below
For a moment I was where I was, instead of where I had to go

Dandelion seeds in the breeze in the middle of July
Dandelion seeds in the breeze, make me laugh and make me cry

I was thinking about the folks that walked this land before
It must have been a paradise for rich and poor
I reached out for you and you for me, as we walked down gravel roads
Looking for a house that used to be somebody's home

Dandelion seeds in the breeze in the middle of July
Dandelion seeds in the breeze, make me laugh and make me cry

There's a church upon the hill where people go to pray
Dressed up in their Sunday best, they're waiting for a day
When the answers are provided and the circles all wind into a ring
But these fields are still divided over a hundred thousand different things

Dandelion seeds in the breeze in the middle of July
Dandelion seeds in the breeze, make me laugh and make me cry

Mark Fornek – drums
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano, Hammond B-3
Eric Markowitz – electric guitar
Mike McCurdy – stand-up bass

Engineered by Brian Jensen, Streeterville Studios, Chicago

Matter of Fact

I was in a second-hand store shopping, admiring a suit
Did the fella die or take a train out east to Syracuse?
She walked in, I heard chimes begin rattling off the door
She whistled a little tune, I listened for some more

Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)
Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)
Where you are is where it's at – it's a matter of fact

It was early morning and clouds were forming, covering the sky
Black and gray added to the day, making it look like night
Her lips were dry and tired, I could see from where I stood
She was handling a frame made of ashen wood

She tucked the frame underneath her arm and headed for the check-out line
I grabbed my suit and followed her and asked her for the time
She said her time was up, but her watch read ten o'clock
And if I wanted to talk about it, she lived right up the block

Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)...

Well, she rode with me, I must admit, I felt like I was in a play
Where everyone had their part down pat, but I didn't even know my name
Her house was on a hill, we drove up a winding road
Rocks bounced off the windshield and the engine gave a little moan

Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)...

When we got there, I turned off the car and took out the key
It sputtered and coughed and wouldn't stop, as if it had to leave
I followed her up the walk, there were chimes outside the door
And we went into a living room sunken to the floor

The walls were covered with velvet art in beautiful picture frames
Paul and Peter, Mother Mary and at least a dozen saints
There was one of Jesus Christ playing poker with some hounds
And Judas in a black beret snapping fingers to the sound

Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)...

There are stars up in the heavens that none of us have seen
And places in our souls that none of us can dream
She came to me so slowly, took my hand and held it tight
And pulled me down a hallway lit by candlelight

Beyond the light, inside a room, curtains billowed like a kiss
She closed the door and pulled the shades and put a finger to her lips
She didn't care for pictures, only picture frames
And the suit belonged to a friend of hers who used to wear it every day

Tell me, what's so wrong with that (matter of fact)...

Mark Fornek – drums
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano, Hammond B-3 organ
Eric Markowitz – electric guitars
Creshanna Tabor & Taketha Cole – vocals

Engineered by Brian Jensen, Streeterville Studios, Chicago IL

Cottonwood Tree

Shadows cover him as he waits
In the bar, the Cardinals play
Ice melts slowly in his Coke
A single thread hangs from his coat
He sets his glass on polished wood
Shifts his weight from foot to foot
Snow is falling on the street
Like leaves coming down off a cottonwood tree

Round and round they swirl around
Floating gently to the ground
On the tail end of a breeze
Leaves coming down off a cottonwood tree

He remembers home as an open sky
Fiery red at harvest time
Flowers brushed against his skin
Bending low in the wind
Cut his face like mountain sage
Drawing lines that betray his age
The sun set slowly in the west
Until there was no brightness left...
Been everywhere there was to go
On these reservation roads

Round and round they swirl around...

It looks like the Cards are gonna lose
And he has to be leaving soon
He drops some change into the jar
Steps outside to check the stars
The base is twenty miles from town
Tomorrow morning he'll touch down
Droppin' from ten-thousand feet
Like leaves coming down off a cottonwood tree

Round and round they swirl around
Floating gently to the ground
On the tail end of a breeze
Leaves coming down off a cottonwood tree

Beth Graham – french horns
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – piano, horn arrangement

Engineered by Brian Jensen, Streeterville Studios, Chicago IL

Standing in the Station

The boy out back throws a ball against the wall
He's only eight years old, he doesn't feel like it at all
There's something on his mind, he's ready to explode
Like a soda when you shake it, but you don't let it go

He doesn't tell his buddies, not even his best friend
He might tell a brother, if he had himself one of them
When he hears his Daddy call, he doesn't say a word
Heading straight for the darkness like it's something he deserves

He's standing, standing in the station
He's standing, standing in the station

From the very first time, Bobby knew it wasn't right
Mama wasn't home, she was working late that night
Daddy didn't have a drink or smack his boy around
He barely made a sound while he took his Bobby down

He's standing (life is playing tricks on me)
Standing in the station (the more I know the less I see)
Standing (why must I always be)
Standing in the station

Bobby went to sleep and he wandered around for days
Walking through a forest where everything was ablaze
He grew into a man and buried the boy inside
Who didn't come to life until the day his Daddy died
The jays at the feeder frighten other birds away
While Bobby's unbelievers shake their heads and start to pray

He's standing (life is playing tricks on me)
Standing in the station (the more I know the less I see)
Standing (why must I always be)
Standing in the station

Tommy Goldsmith – mandolin
Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocal
Jeff Kowalkowski – string arrangement
Susan Marie Smith – vocals
Julia Tanner – cellos

Engineered by Robb Earls, Sound Vortex, Nashville, TN

On This Night

I pulled into town, the sun was shining, I was set for some early dining
A place we used to go. It seemed like it was years ago.
I found Lyndale Avenue, while my tape deck played a mournful tune
Something about time slipping away, I could relate to that this day
I passed right by the Aqua Inn and thought about places that I've been
I thought about Mark and Bill and Steve, and all the tips we had to leave
Maybe we left too much behind – we were men of vision or totally blind
Nowadays, I go where I'm lead and most of the time I look ahead
Most of the time I forget about things like busted vows and rusted rings
Most of the time my friend who died in a drive-by shooting is still alive

On this night. On this night. On this night.
I'm thinking about you all on this night

I saw a boy in a tricycle truck, between the sidewalk cracks, his wheels got stuck
An elderly gent walking by stopped to help and the boy just smiled
The man went on his way again and the boy will follow to the end
Ain't it funny how coincidence makes perfect sense?
Perfect like the willow tree that hangs its head so gracefully
I laid beneath its weeping vines and stared into the open sky
Where clouds were moving across the blue like sailboats painted for the Louvre
I'll paint you if you paint me and we'll sail across this open sea

On this night. On this night. On this night.
I'm thinking about you all on this night.

I wandered into a resale shop, ladders reaching to the top
Where all the treasures could be found, high above the dusty ground
The clerk struck up a conversation and told me about his vacation
Like a pirate showing golden teeth, he talked about the seven seas
He spent his whole life in there, like a first edition from the fair
He loved to talk and I began to guess it was how he masked his loneliness
I left with a copy of "St. Mawr," I'd been searching for it near and far
The inscription on the inner sleeve read "Father's Day '53"
I wondered where the son and father had gone and where do memories linger on?
Give me a minute with my sweet love – she can stop the clock like heaven above

On this night. On this night. On this night.
I'm thinking about you all on this night.

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals, lap steel, bass, percussion
Pat Meusel – electric guitar
Chris Minnis – drums

Engineered by Derek Lambert, Back Porch Studios, Nashville TN

Pieces of Man

I got off the el about five o'clock
Rickety stairs led me down the walk
Papers blew into a cumulus cloud and
A blind man hollered right out loud
He said, "help, me, sir, help me if you can,
I'm an ex-Marine and a homeless man.
I need money for food, corn in a can
God bless you sir, I don't think you understand."

I pitched him a dime and dropped my fate
Between the bars of a subway grate
This blind man with his hollow eyes
He ain't living on the street by design
But in my home, safe and secure
I can hold my baby, I can be so sure
Love trickles down like molasses
Into the canyon between the classes

Has my imagination run amuck?
Or have some run out of more than luck?
Pieces of man, pieces of man
With the water running right through their hands
These pieces of man

Maybe all of us are fractured, bent in half
Veteran's Day just making us laugh
A parade to masquerade ideals
Camouflaging what is real
The broadcast ran from coast to coast
Doublespeak by a handsome host
You can lock your windows, lock your doors
I guess all is fair in love and war

Has my imagination run amuck?
Or have some run out of more than luck?
Pieces of man, pieces of man
With the water running right through their hands
These pieces of man

Well, it soon became a habit of mine to
Look for this man every night
One evening it was ten below
And a cab came sliding through the snow
I slipped, it missed, and I fell down flat
And saw an empty spot where he usually sat
There was nothing there but the cold dark air
And what was left of a blind man's prayer

Has my imagination run amuck?
Or have some run out of more than luck?
Pieces of man, pieces of man
With the water running right through their hands
These pieces of man

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Pat Meusel – electric guitar, second acoustic, bass, backing vocals
Chris Minnis – drums, percussion

Engineered by Derek Lambert, Back Porch Studios, Nashville TN

Untied Shoes

Every since I left I've been trying to forget
Fighting with the power of the pull
What mattered to me once is locked up in a trunk
Like Houdini at the bottom of a pool

What's to gain? What's to lose?
Walking down the street with untied shoes
Untied shoes. Untied shoes.
Walking down the street with untied shoes

I get flashes in my sleep, water ten foot deep
Rising so high above my head
I see a dove above the surface, sailing through the sky
And my eyes fill up with gold and red

What's to gain? What's to lose?
Walking down the street with untied shoes

What starts with a kiss becomes a different kind of wish
Be careful when they all come true

When your dreams come true, tell me, what do you do?
Time will keep on slipping on your hands
If I could only hold you for one more minute
I believe I'd be a happy man.

What's to gain? What's to lose?
Walking down the street with untied shoes

Doug Hoekstra – lead vocals
Pat Meusel – electric guitar, bass, backing vocals
Chris Minnis – drums, tambourine

Engineered by Derek Lambert, Back Porch Studios, Nashville TN

Greater than the Gold

George is on the dollar bill, Hamilton's on the ten
I must admit, I treat 'em like a couple of long lost friends
I'm happy when I see them, I'm happy when they go
I treasure this life's riches, baby
Greater than the gold

There's nothing that I would rather do, than write a song on this guitar
Unless it's sleeping with my girl tonight, underneath a million stars
And when I squeeze her like a spoon, and we let our feelings show
I wouldn't trade it – in a minute
It's greater than the gold – greater than the gold
Greater than the gold to me, it's greater than the gold

A good day in this world, it's a day when I can say
I had enough time to toss a ball back to kids at play
And I see myself in their shoes, and start to lighten up my load
Then I notice everything, that's greater than the gold
Greater than the gold

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitars, vocals
Pat Meusel – electric guitars, bass, backing vocals
Chris Minnis – drums

Engineered by Derek Lambert, Back Porch Studios, Nashville TN

The List

On a hilltop in the country, I saw headstones in a row
Graced with plastic flowers and a single crimson rose
There was a dog running back and forth, like he saw some kind of ghost
I thought about all the folks I've lost and which I miss the most
The trees bent low to greet me, as I headed up the hill
The dog stopped long to see me, and then he sat quite still
Was he looking far behind me, or straight into my soul?
I just put it on the list of things I won't ever know
The list of things I won't ever know

Through gentle rolling valleys, I drove and drove and drove
Behind the wheel of progress, going fast and never slow
I knew I'd cross the river if I made it into town
I imagined when I got there, something lost and something found
I passed apartment buildings with tightly quartered shades
I saw the candles burning, where love was being made
What brought me to this far away, while my lover lies alone
I just put it on the list of things I won't ever know
The list of things I won't ever know

From the hilltop to the valley and back on up again
The beginnings that surround me as I reach the end
I dreamed that I was flying, a dream many people have
Some search for hidden meanings, until it drives them mad
Sometimes I look for language I can barely understand
A long slow kiss, her fingertips pouring water into sand
She spoke to me in shadows and stories left untold that
I added to the list of things I won't ever know
The list of things I won't ever know

Doug Hoekstra – acoustic guitar, vocals
Jeff Kowalkowski – cello score
Julia Tanner – cello

Engineered by Robb Earls, Sound Vortex, Nashville TN