



One of the greatest compliments an entertainer can pay another entertainer is to call him an entertainer's entertainer. Big Red Goad goes beyond that: He's a truck-driving entertainer who entertains truck drivers. And I'm proud to call him my friend.

My name is Dickie Joe Reed. You probably know me best as the lovable part-time rodeo clown who acted as the "comic relief" for the Big Red Goad Travelin' Haystack Wagon Revue from 1965-1977. I'd black out my teeth, play washboard, and make funny faces while Red sang his "songs of the road." We didn't make much money in those days, but we had more fun than boll weevils in an underwear factory. As Big Red once told me as we headed for a show in Chattanooga, "Dickie-boy, if I had a biscuit for every one of my fans, buddy, I'd have a whole lotta biscuits. I'm a simple man who sings songs, smokes cigarettes, eats meat, drinks coffee, loves women, and drives trucks. Could life be any better?"

When Big Red Goad performs, it's as if the whole world is driving a truck. His affection for the truckin' life is evident in every note he sings. He always addressed his audiences with unmistakable pleasure and directness. He is a singer of unusual range, with uncommon taste in his material, and a performer of magnetism and excitement.

He brings to his songs a wealth of firsthand experience, a funnybone full of humor, a heart full of warmth, and a soul overflowing with human emotion. His is the lament of the weary; the story of the vagabond; the prayer of a sinner; the blessing of friendship; all the joys and sorrows, the loves and lusts that have touched all our lives at one time or another.

Big Red Goad is an orphan of the road. He quit high school at age 16 in order to drive a truck. The story of how he got the name "Big Red" is very unpleasant and largely unprintable. Suffice it to say that he's dropped loads all over the USA.

His singing career didn't start until long after he had established a reputation as one of the fastest coast-to-coast long-haul truckers in America. His first single was "Let's Go Berry-Pickin'" (b/w "Ooh Doggy") for Portland's Hot Chassis Records in 1965. Tragically, all traces of that recording have vanished. Then came a critically acclaimed series of 45 RPM singles between 1967 and 1973 on Woodpulp Records in Camas, WA. Those were Red's golden days, back before the Horny Lumberjacks broke up. Back before the lawsuits and the arrests and the five divorces and the stints in rehab, all of which have been exaggerated by a sensationalistic tabloid media.

When the trucking industry became desegregated in the late 1970s, Big Red Goad's brand of big-rig hillbilly brashness quickly fell out of fashion. Until very recently, Big Red has been bitter and almost entirely forgotten, living a reclusive existence in the tall timber of the Pacific Northwest. He's been surviving on government disability checks since the crippling truck accident which led to the amputation of both his legs in 1979.

His landmark 1973 album, *Truck-Drivin' Psycho*, has recently been re-released on CD by Discriminate Audio in Denver. The album's lyrics present a piquant, poignant portrait of a picked-on and pushed-around profession, backed with a subtle and colorful orchestrating palette. But it's more than fine listening, it's a fascinating emotional experience. Add 'em all together, and you have a trucker's album by a trucker's trucker. How could he miss? If your toe doesn't tap when you listen to that album, then friend, you don't have one.

This summer, after nearly 30 years since his last live performance, Big Red Goad will be touring the country as the supporting act for Hank Williams III. And the music world lets out a huge, warm, loud diesel blast of appreciation.

BIG RED GOAD

A TRUCK DRIVER'S TRUCK DRIVER,
AN ENTERTAINER'S ENTERTAINER

by Dickie Joe Reed

Big Red Goad, backed by Power of County, will open for Hank Williams III at Dante's in Portland on Friday, July 26th and El Corazon in Seattle on Saturday, July 27th.

