

INTERVIEW WITH SANDRA DUDLEY -- OCTOBER 1994

*Singer Sandra Dudley was born in December, 1960 in Buffalo, New York. Both she and her husband Bruce received their masters' degrees from Eastman School of Music, and work as freelance musicians and private teachers. Sandra played numerous gigs in Houston with Dave, and on October 5th, 1993 they recorded Dave's composition **Little Prayer** at San Jacinto Community College. The tune is the heart of the 1994 CD **Last Night When We Were Young: The Ballad Album** (Classical Action 1001.) Since the time of this interview the Dudleys have moved to Tennessee where they are teaching in a university setting.*

Bruce and I moved to Houston from Buffalo in the fall of '91. We'd been used to moving different places as musicians and we were used to knowing how to get around and fit in, and the best way to get to know musicians in clubs is to go there and be heard. So we did that. We came down here in the first place because we had one child who was a year old, and being freelancers we had to pay up the wazoo for insurance and we were sick of doing that. Bruce wanted another teaching job and he landed this job with San Jacinto Community College through a bass player we'd known from Eastman School of Music. I believe he was the first one who told us about Cezanne, because he knew about a lot of the clubs around town.

I remember the first night we went to Cezanne was a Tuesday night, and Dave had this Tuesday night open jam-session. We were like, "Oh, we've got to go check it out," so we got a baby sitter and went out. The minute I walked in the room and saw Dave--I didn't even know it was him--I just saw this very handsome guy. I'm a looker, and he was very cute and very energetic. I'm a very energetic person too; I think that's why we loved each other so much. As soon as I saw him I said, "I like that guy over there!" I said, "Bruce, I bet that's Dave. I bet that's him," because we had heard about him. We'd heard he was this energetic, incredible player and that he had this thing going over here. He was on a break, I'm sure, because he was running around in his usual crazy way, schmoozing and going over to people ... "Does it sound OK? How do you feel out there? Is it OK? Is the balance alright for you?", and dat da da dat....

I think I just went up to him with Bruce and said, "Hey, we're Bruce and Sandra Dudley ..." "I've heard a lot about you guys ..." He'd heard more about Bruce, because I hadn't played a lot in town yet, and Bruce had done a few gigs already. He said, "Oh man, you've gotta sit in!" Dave really didn't know that much about me, but as soon as we shook hands he gave me that smile, and right away we just knew there was going to be something there.

I think it was the same night we were sitting in the audience, and he called Bruce up to play. I remember Linda, his manager was there, although she might not have been his manager at the time. Dave called Bruce up, and I think after the first tune or something he said, "Well, now we'd like to bring up Bruce's wife, Sandra Dudley!" And Linda sat there thinking, "Oh God...here we've got a husband/wife deal, and she's gonna sound like shit..." That's what she thought! And I went up there and blew the place apart. I'm pretty sure I was playing with Bruce the first time and I'm not being arrogant or anything, but apparently it was like Linda couldn't believe it, that I had this voice and that I could swing and scat and all this stuff. Dave too, he couldn't believe it. When you go through this wife/ husband thing which I had to go through for years--being Bruce's wife--it's like you always have to prove yourself, that you can really do it. Well Dave knew right way that I could and then he sat in the next tune, and we just had a great time. We did *All of You* by Cole Porter. That was the first tune I did with Dave, and it was just magical. We just hit it off right away. So that was the first meeting. After that we tried

to go every Tuesday night at least, to go sit in and stuff. That was really the first meeting with Dave over at Cezanne, his other home--almost his first home--because I saw his other home and Cezanne was definitely a nicer home for him!

He wouldn't let me come over to the garage apartment for quite a while. I think he was really self-conscious about it in a way--that he had to live like that--for someone of his personality and talent and everything. I remember first going up there and going in there and just going, "Oh man, this place is tiny!" He goes, "What do you mean it's tiny? I've got everything I need!" He had his piano which took up almost all of that one room, and then he had all this computer stuff and his phones ... There were a million phones! He had three phones--I swear--with three different answering machines attached to them, and they'd be going off ... "Oh, excuse me." "Oh, let me listen to that." "Oh no, I don't want to get that one..."

So I didn't meet him until three years ago when he was still going strong. He hadn't been debilitated yet by the disease. I didn't even know he had anything. He looked very healthy to me. I didn't know Dave was gay even. I thought he was just very good-looking. As a matter of fact most of my best friends have been gay men, so I wasn't shocked or surprised or anything when I found out. This was like, "Hmmm..." Sometimes I can almost tell when someone is gay, and with him I couldn't. So it was kind of interesting.

The first conversation we had about him being gay and being HIV+ was at a gig we did in January of '93. We did this incredible gig at a hotel. This was after he had booked me in the club a few times and we had played a few times. We got this gig at a hotel called the Colombe D'or, like a wedding gig. It's this really small room, and we had Carl Lott and David Craig, and Dave was on piano, and I sang. That was the first time besides him hearing me at the club that we really did a real gig together and *played*, and he could never stop talking about that gig and how much he loved it. It was like it first opened his eyes to me--that I could really sing--and we had such a good time together, and the group sounded great. Every time he saw me after that he'd go, "Boy, I really liked that gig at the hotel!"

After the gig was over we sat down at a table, and I remember I didn't have to be home or anything--I only had one kid then--but we sat down at the table and he just told me everything. I said, "How long have you known you were gay? Did you always know it in your soul?", and he goes, "Yes. Since day one." I was kind of fascinated by this. I'd had a lot of gay friends but it seemed like not a lot of them really wanted to talk to me about it. So he was the first one that I ever really chatted about it with, how he felt about it. He used to go out with girls but he always had this feeling that it just wasn't right, that it just wasn't natural for him. I can't recall all the things I asked him. But anyway that was the first time we really talked about some things, and that he was HIV+. There was a rumor going around that he was, but he came right out and told me that night, at that gig. He was real private about it as you know, whereas like Fred Hersch isn't; he's really out on the table about it, which I think is good. But Dave was real private and so for him to open up to me like he did that night, I just knew our friendship was growing closer and that he could trust me. I'm that kind of person. People know they can talk to me.

He was trying to not show me, I think, the pain of finding out when he did and what he was really feeling about it. He still didn't know me that well, enough to admit that he was really down about it, or maybe he had already been through that stage in his process by then; because he did seem so positive all the time to me. Sometimes I got the feeling that our relationship was growing closer and closer, but it never got close enough for him to really let down his guard all the way with me. He did with Linda, I know. With me I know he wanted to and he would have had we had more time. So I could only go so far in those discussions. I'd say, "Well how do you feel about having AIDS and HIV?", and he'd, "Well ..", and

just try to always go to the positive. "Well, I've known now for such and such time and I have to just keep positive about it and not let it get me down ..." He'd say things like that.

It was amazing. There were maybe two conversations after that until the day he died that he seemed depressed, where he would call me and go, "Sandyyy ... I need a joke or something ..." He'd call me in the mornings. Dave called everybody, but he'd call me in the mornings and we'd just have these really wild conversations. There was this one experience we'd had--I want to tell you this one story--and he'd say, "Sandy, tell me the story again about when we went in the ditch in the car..." Then I'd tell him that story and we'd just laugh and laugh, and he needed it.

The story was ... I had gone to his place one day in the spring. I said, "Dave, we've gotta get together. I just want to see you", and he said, "OK, why don't you come over?" So I went over, and he was still in this little apartment and he'd gotten this little dog named Freddie. He named it after Fred Hersch and he never wanted me to tell Fred about it. Freddie's this cute little dog that he had just found on the street, and that's the reason he wanted me to come over; he wanted me to meet the dog. So I came in, and the dog was really cute but it was itching like crazy. I don't like animals that much. I'm just not a dog-person, so he had to really convince me that this dog was going to be a good idea. As soon as he'd told me on the phone that he'd found it, I went, "Oh no...", because he was talking about moving into the other apartment with Barry and Scott and Barry's dog and this dog, and I was like, "This is a mistake! No doubt about it." And he went, "No it's not! Get out! I love this dog!" I said, "Dave, it's really cute, but look, it's itching and stuff ..." And he was like, "Oh, he's just got a little excema, but I took him to the doctor and he's going to be fine!"

I remember Dave saying, "There's something I want to do tonight." I said, "What?" He said, "I want you to meet my older sister." I said, "Oh, where does she live?" He goes, "Only forty five minutes away", and this was already 10:00 at night! I went, "Oh man, are you sure she wants us to come?" He said, "I'm going to call her right now." So he called her, and I could tell on the other line that she didn't want us to come because Dave's going, "Oh come on, I just want Sandra to meet you. We'll stay ten minutes, tops ..." And you knew it wouldn't be like that. Then I guess she had to call him back, and I said, "Dave, no. Stop this. We're not going to go. She doesn't want us to go..." "Oh yeah, she's just being like that. She doesn't mind, really." He was really pushing it.

So finally she called back and I knew she was saying, "It's really not a good night...", but Dave goes, "Alright, we'll be right over!" He puts the phone down, and I go, "Dave..." I felt terrible about this. I said, "OK, should I drive or should you drive?" He goes, "Can we bring the dog with us?" I go, "No. NO! I don't want that dog in my car with all the fleas and all that stuff." So he said, "Alright, I'll drive. We won't bring the dog," because at that point Scott's going, "Leave the dog, Dave. Sandra doesn't want to be with the dog. Can't you see that?"

So we get in his car, this big huge boat, and we're going. He's got the directions--I have them in my hand--he's never been to the new house that they have. So I say, "Are you sure these are right?" "Yeah, they're the right directions." So we're going. We get over these railroad tracks. We're about ten minutes from her house I guess, and we made a wrong turn. We were supposed to turn by these railroad tracks. I was reading the directions and I said, "Dave, I think we were supposed to turn back at that railroad tracks," and he says, "Oh really?" So we're going straight, and there's no lights... We're all of a sudden on this country road in the dark. So Dave goes, "Well I've got to turn around." I said, "Why don't we just wait for a driveway?", and he's like, "No, no... I'll turn right here." He goes off the road, and it had rained a couple of nights before,

and before you know it this huge car is in a ditch. And I'm talking it's not just a little in a ditch. We're all the way over. The car is facing down, going down, down, down into the mud.

Before that I had told him, "You better watch out! We're going to go in a ditch!" I was just kidding, and then we really got in one! Now I'm really paranoid about the back streets of Texas. I'm thinking, "Alright, this is it. We're S.O.L. There's no doubt about it..." Dave goes, "Oh, shit!" We were laughing at first, and then I was going, "Dave, this isn't funny. Look at where we are." He goes, "No, we can work this out..." So he gets out. He goes, "Sandy, get out." So I get out. I open the door and all his cassettes fall out of the car and into the mud. He's going, "My cassettes! Aagghh!!!"

Anyway he had these little flags and he's trying to be real calm because I'm hysterical. I was taking off my earrings because I looked kind of nice and I was worried I'd look like a hooker or something. Dave goes, "What are you doing?" I said, "I'm taking off my earrings. I just don't want to look very good!" I was messing up my hair ... "If someone comes by, I don't want to look good." He said, "Would you stop!" So meanwhile this car comes by, and it's these two young kids and they were definitely on drugs. They looked like they were stoned out of their minds. Dave goes, "Uh well, you can see that our car's in a ditch and we need some help. Do you think you could try to push us?" They had this tiny car and they tried, but of course they couldn't do a thing; his car was too huge. So he went over to them and said, "Do you think we could maybe get a ride?" I'm trying to signal to Dave, "No. No. *NO!* Please don't! Don't ask those guys for a ride. I'm not going..."

So anyway we stood out there maybe a half hour longer and then a nice lady with a Bible in her back seat came by--Mrs. Smith or something--and Dave said that we were maybe about ten minutes from his sisters', and she took us over there. It was very nice. I met Dave's sister. I liked her a lot. She was real down to earth. I met his sisters' husband, who was this big guy who had a big truck with chains: "I'll go pull you out!" At that point I knew we were going to be fine. So that was the story, but we'd just crack up every time... We would just really laugh. The other thing about that story was that on the way there we talked more about our relationship, and it was sort of like we were both saying, "We're really going to be great friends." It was almost like we were just then saying, "We really love each other. We have so much in common. We're going to be great friends." That was neat. It was just a special night.

Dave would just... He thought things so fast. He never slowed down. Even when you were talking to him, it's almost like he didn't hear you sometimes. He'd be on to the next thought. I was someone who'd say, "Dave, just shut up! Do you hear what I'm saying?" I wasn't afraid to do that kind of stuff, and he liked that in me; the way I could just shut him up sometimes. We were like poisons. I'm very Italian. I think Dave liked me because he didn't have to talk about anything he didn't want to. I was like his little relief from stuff once in a while. We liked humor. We liked to do nutsy things, and I think that took him away sometimes. If that brought him some happiness, I was really happy about that.

There were some other funny things. In November of '93 we did this gig called the Clear Lake Jazz Festival. It was the biggest joke you've ever seen. I was supposed to be opening up for Ahmad Jamal, right? OK. Dave was going to play. So we go to do this thing. It was outdoors. They'd never had it before. "The First Annual..." Number one, the weather was terrible and cold. All the scheduling was all screwed up. It was horrendous! People who were supposed to be playing were sent home because they didn't have enough time to play. It was just awful. So Dave comes all the way from downtown. We get there. I don't know if they were having a cold spell or something, but it was *cold*. It was really cold for some reason.

Then everything was really unorganized, so there ended up being about maybe twenty people in the audience when it got to be Ahmad Jamal's part. Now I was supposed to play right before Ahmad, and what happened was all of a sudden the organizers came over to Dave and said, "No one can play on this piano!" They had a big 9-foot whatever it was, and I had cleared all of this before with them, saying, "Now there's not going to be any problem with the piano right? We're going to be able to play on the piano..." They said, "Oh yeah, no problem." I signed a contract and everything, and right before our spot: "You can't play on this piano!"

Dave was furious. We ended up arguing up on the stage with the organizers in front of all these people. All the people; there was hardly anyone there! So then we're trying to get a call in to Ahmad to make sure that he doesn't mind that Dave Catney--we've got a great pianist here, he's got two albums out and whatever; he's professional--and they kept coming back, "No, you can't do it. You can't do it." So Ahmad comes to the place finally, and it was just in like this dump of a place; it was awful, really ugly. So he comes over and he looks at the situation; he won't play. He decides not to play and leaves, blaming it on cold fingers. I don't blame him for not playing at all.

So these twenty people are out there freezing, and Dave and I are looking at each other. The other thing was that if we didn't play, they wouldn't pay us of course. I looked at Dave and said, "Dave, there's twenty frozen people out there. Let's go out there and give them a show." Dave goes, "You're right. Let's go." So we went out there and we played like an hour. I was freezing. I had my coat on. And my gloves! It was fantastic. The people gave us a standing ovation. And then Dave wrote this huge letter ("Nightmare on NASA Road One") to Tim Carman at the Houston Post, totally denouncing the entire festival. So that was one thing, and we still laughed about that a lot. "That goddamned Clear Lake Jazz Festival! What a joke..."

But he wrote this very clever letter. Dave was very good at writing and communication. Very creative. He sent us this really crazy letter one time just for the fun of it with this nutsy stuff, like this picture of a dollar bill with Warren Sneed's face on it, and all these fill-in-the-blank things with questions like "How many torpedoes does it take to down a building in L.A.?" So he sent us that and he sent us this crazy letter about a trumpet player whose head blows off when he goes to the high note. Just this weird stuff, but it was funny. It was great. It was Dave.

Dave called me a couple of days before the Houston Jazz Festival and he said, "I've got this song that I've written, but look, the festival is in two nights so you have to memorize it and get it done. Do you think you can do it?" I said, "Well, I'd love to do it. Let me hear it." So he played it and sang it to me right over the phone, and I said "Oh my God. I love it!" It was *Little Prayer*. I just loved it. "It's perfect for me Dave. I can't believe you asked me. This is great!" So I said, "We've got to rehearse it. We need to get together and rehearse it," and he said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah!" So like the next night I went over to Cezanne, and we rehearsed it. It was the kind of tune that I almost didn't know which way he wanted me to go with it. "Do you want me to go real jazz with it or kind of pop or..." He goes, "Just the way you're doing it is fine." So I kind of had a feeling about how I wanted it to go, and I guess it was right.

A couple of days later the festival was on and Fred Hersch was going to be in town, and I just never thought the song would do what it did, number one, to Fred, and number two, to the audience. So I go out and we played the tune. I was really nervous because whenever I just learn a tune I'm worried I'm going to forget the words. And I did one teeny flub at the end but I'm really good at smoothing it over, and after the tune the audience just went nuts! It was just so beautiful. It was magical, and the audience knew it. Then I did another tune, a real up-tune and it was really good. This was a big

audience, like a thousand people or something. To me that was big. I hadn't played to too many big, big audiences like that.

So anyway then we came back offstage, and Fred gave me a big hug. I knew Fred because Bruce, my husband, had gone to school with him at New England way back in the '70s or something. I'd only met Fred one other time but as soon as I heard his recordings I made it a dream of mine to play with him someday. Fred and I had hit it off right away personality-wise. I remember when Dave was out there playing, Fred was standing by the door looking out on the stage as Dave was playing, and I was leaning on him--this was before I even went out and sang--and we were just going, "Isn't Dave great? He's such a great guy..." And we were both going, "Yeah ..." We were almost in tears, because he was playing this ballad and it was so beautiful.

Then when Dave and I did the song, I came back and Fred was practically in tears. He just said, "Wow. I really like that." Fred isn't one to generally say things right away. If he has something in his head he thinks about it for a while first. And I can't even remember if he told me, or Dave told me that Fred wanted it on the record that he was doing. For me that was the most exciting thing I've ever heard because, for me, it would be my recording debut, it would be a wonderful project, it would be Dave's song ... You know. I was tickled.

So Fred said, "Can you get in the studio right away and record it, because I need it." So we went in. We did it at San Jac--Bruce's school--which has a state of the art recording studio. Les Williams was the engineer on the project. He's also the recording technology teacher over there. He's a great guy, a super guy. I'd recorded in there before, and he said he'd do it for free because he knew the proceeds were going to AIDS and he knew Dave had AIDS. So we went in, and he had invited like two of his recording classes to be in there. Now this is a very intimate song, and we didn't know that all those people were going to be standing in the studio, so it kind of added a little bit of tension at first to our performance.

We did a few takes after a while, and I just wasn't "getting" it. So I went over to Dave--this is really important in my relationship with Dave--I went over to him and said, "Dave, is it OK? Am I doing what you want? I mean is it alright? This is your song, and I really want to do it well..." He's like, "Sandra ..." He goes, "It's a love thing." I said, "What?" He goes, "It's a love thing. Don't think about anything but love when you're singing that song. And that's all I need to tell you." And I said, "Yeah. It's a love thing. You're right." And I went back, and the next take was the one we took. It was unbelievable. Even with all these people there I just blocked them out, because when you record there's people in there, and it bugs you. It's one thing to be in a concert when you know you're performing, but when you're in a studio you really like to block things out and you kind of get into another plane. But we took that take. We both were really happy with it. That was it. We knew it. So that was a really incredible experience.

We sent Fred a tape of it. When he heard it he left me a note on my answering machine. He just went nuts. He said "This is the most beautiful thing I've ever heard!" Dave and I were both excited to know that Fred liked it so much and that he was going to use it on the project. *Little Prayer* is such a simple tune. That's what I loved about it. In the recording I didn't even do anything to it. I just wanted to sing the melody the way it was originally planned and not really do too many little creative things around it. I'm a real melody person.

I've sung *Since Then* with Dave. There was another one he wrote called *I've Got a Secret*. It's a real departure from his other things because it's kind of old-fashioned. But he used to sing it really well. We kind of fooled around one day and put that on tape too.

When Dave was planning his memorial service of course he didn't want me to have to sing *Little Prayer* live, and I was really relieved about that. He wanted just to play the record, that cut. What he wanted originally was to play *Lost in the Stars* after that, and Linda kept saying, "No. No! There'll be too much crying." I think that was a good decision, not to play that afterwards. I still can't even listen to that.

One of the things I really wish we could have done was do more singing together. We did do it although we never sang in public together. But when we were goofing around at his house and we came to my house one time too we goofed around singing a little bit. Our voices matched pretty nicely which was kind of the funny part. I wish he had sung more. I thought he was good. I think Dave really had talent there. I don't really know what he felt about it. One time I told him, "You should do more singing on some of your records", and he kind of shrugged it off, "Oh I don't know..." I don't know if he was nervous about doing it or what.

After *Little Prayer* we lived off our happiness about doing that whenever we'd talk. Once in a while when he'd have a friend come over and he was listening to it he'd call me and leave a message on my machine. One time there was a really special message from him where he said, "I was playing that *Little Prayer* for a friend, and it just was such a powerful performance. And I really, really love you and I'm really glad you sang it...", and stuff like that. So it was nice. I feel that one song is the one thing that we'll always share together, Dave and I. I'm just so happy about that, and so fortunate that we could enrich our friendship with such a great musical point.

We played a few more times together, not very often, because then he was starting to get more sick. I remember calling him one day and saying, "I really want to get in the studio with you again. We should do more things." I remember just being panicked one day that he was going to get weaker. He was talking about his eyes going and stuff and feeling funny about his eyes getting real dried out. I just started getting scared thinking, "God, we've got to get in the studio," and we never did. We never got back in, because it just seemed to go so fast then.

After the recording and then the record came out I just pretty much went to see him as much as I could. Although he wasn't playing very much, whenever he was playing I tried to go. Dave was doing a tremendous amount for Cezanne all along, sending out the flyers to all the people on the mailing list and setting that up on his computer, booking all the dates and going over there and making sure everything was set up all the time ... I mean he just lived over there and it was starting to wear him down, and we all knew it. Then every time he was at the club, people would just bombard him; "Oh Dave, Dave, Dave ..." They just had to go over to him all the time because he was just so lovable, and I guess the bunch of us who knew he was getting weak just tried to not do that so much--to give him space--and tried to get him out of the club to breathe fresh air. Cezanne is a very small club which only seats fifty or sixty and it would get real smoky, so he'd have to go out in the side room and just sit down. He didn't like people to see him do that. Dave wanted to always appear that he had all this energy. Even at the album release party for *Reality Road* he looked great but he wasn't. That was April of '94. He was really dressed up, he looked nice, but by the end of that party he was pretty bad, pretty exhausted.

Then we talked a lot on the phone, and he would tell me different things. Like I said, there were only a few times that he ever really admitted to me that he was down, that he was getting down. He would call me every once in a while, like "Oh, this drug was working but it's not working anymore, and now I've got to take this other thing..." He'd get kind of mad. "I've got to take all this crap. These pills are making me sick." He told me all about his eyes, all this technical stuff. He was trying to explain to me what was happening with his eyes with the CMV. He knew exactly what was going on, to the detail. He was right on it boy, he knew every little test they were doing on him. They had to inject needles into his eyes, and he didn't have enough insurance money to cover any anesthetic so it would hurt and he just had to go through the pain, which I thought was extraordinary. Then he'd call again and be real mad that something wasn't working or that he was feeling sick about the drugs that he had to take... I remember telling him, "You know Dave, you're still really sexy and attractive", and all this, and he was like, "Aw Sandy, I really needed to hear that!" He told me, "I just feel so ugly and everything," and I said, "You're not. You're not! Really. If you were healthy and I wasn't married I'd jump in the sack with you in a minute!"

Slowly he started calling me a little less. In June of '94 we went on vacation, so I hadn't heard from him for a few weeks, and when I came back he was in the hospital again. After that we only talked a few more times. One of the calls was just incredible. This was probably the last time I spoke with him. He called to tell Bruce and I about the Houston Press Awards. He was calling from his hospital bed and he was coughing a lot and he was really weak but he was telling us just how happy he was about the Awards. He was just overjoyed that Rick Mitchell did that speech. He was really happy. I know he was disappointed that he didn't win the award but he was still just raving about what Rick Mitchell did for him. It was great.

After that the only other call--this was the last call--and it was funny, Bruce was gone, the kids were running around and I had to get them ready for bed, but I was really trying to listen to what he was saying. He was real weak but he called me and said that a real spiritual thing had happened to him. I said, "Well what do you mean?" He said, "Well, I was coughing up all of this crap out of my lungs and everything." He said, "I just felt real cleaned out, just really released from pain and stuff." And I said, "Wow." He said, "You know I've never been a religious person but I've always been spiritual somehow, and now it's really strong." He goes, "Sandra, I'm getting out of here tomorrow." I said, "What!" He said, "I am. I'm going home."

And he did. He went home the next day. I was really happy he called me and shared that with me. "I just feel really like part of me has been healed." That's what he said. I went "Wow"; I was just blown away by this. What I thought it was part of him just kind of letting go. You know the old saying "Let go, let God?" He was letting go and letting God start to take him. That's what I felt it was. I didn't really think he was getting healed in a physical sense. He was getting healed like he was getting ready. And then he told me, "I've let go of the guilt I feel about things", and he just really let it out. It was great. It was so healing and so wonderful, I was crying. I was just, "Oh Dave, God..."

So then he went home for a week after that and he got worse and worse. The worst thing he could have done physically was go home because he didn't have the twenty four hour medical supervision. Linda and Scott were running around with their heads cut off trying to do everything for him, but it was a disaster. He had to go back in, and I was talking to Linda all this time after that. I didn't dare call him when he was home. I wanted him to call me if he had the energy to. But he went back in the hospital and it was four days after that that he died.

Linda called me the morning he died. It was a very short call. Oh man, I just didn't even expect it. It was so weird. I was just la-de-da-de-da... and I had been thinking about him, but see that's the thing; you thought he was going to last forever.

He was so positive the night before he went home and he felt really good. The day Dave died was one of those days when just the baby was home, because my other four year-old goes to school. She was sleeping, and I just pulled out some of his records and my tape and I just had this little memorial of my own and just kind of cried all day. I tried to get it out as much as I could.

It's unbelievable. Sometimes I just cannot believe that he's dead. We have this thing in our family where we believe in dreams. I believe that people who are dead come to you in your dreams. I had been waiting for, say, two to three weeks after Dave died; I had been waiting for him to appear in one of my dreams, and finally he did one night. It was very special. He was saying goodbye to me. We were having another huge ceremony for him with tons of people and we were in this huge church, which was kind of funny because he never went to church, I don't think. But we were in a church, and he was all dressed up in a suit and he was sitting next to Scott who was also in a suit. They were sitting together, and everybody was singing *Glory Halleluia*, which had been the final song at Dave's memorial service. We were all singing it, and somebody was bringing a mic around, letting different people sing into the microphone. So this guy came over to me with the mic, and I kind of ended the entire song; I went "Glory hallelu-u-u-ia..." Something like that. I ended the whole thing, and people are all talking and all this, and I saw Dave over by his car. My mother-in-law came running over to me and said, "Is that Dave? Is that him?" She came up and hugged me and was crying, which is very uncharacteristic of her, and I said, "Yeah, that's him."

Then Dave kind of gestured me over towards him, saying, "Come here, come here Sandy," and I went over to him. He stood by me, and I go, "So whad'ja think? Whad'ja think of my singing?" because I used to do that, and he'd go, "Oh Sandy, it was great, but that darn microphone; you know, they don't have a good sound system in there ... " He was always real technical like that. And he goes, "You sounded great." And then he said, "Well, I'm going to say goodbye," and I said, "OK." I gave him a big hug and I looked at him and said, "When am I going to see you again?" And he just kind of smiled at me--he didn't say anything--he just smiled and kind of shrugged his shoulders like, "Who knows?"

It was so vivid I woke up and just cried and cried, and Bruce just held me and I cried and cried. I never wake up and cry like that, but it was instantaneous, just as if he was right in my room. But I was so happy because I knew he had come to me to say goodbye because he hadn't been able to before that. Only a few people have ever appeared in my dream like that, so I knew it was real. I knew it was him. It didn't scare me or anything like that, and he hasn't been in any dreams since. Linda and I have discussed some dreams that she's had, and in talks to Linda, Dave would say, "I'm going to come to you in your dream. I'm going to be talking to you in your dream ..." If you really believe that, it will happen.

I think about him a lot. For me, if someone dies and they're not laid out and you can't actually go and take part in kissing their hand or whatever, then I sometimes find it hard to believe that they're really dead. That's what happened with my grandmother on my mother's side. I was living in Nova Scotia when she died, and she came to me in a dream too. She was the only other one.

Now I'm dedicating songs to him whenever I perform. I sing his songs. I plan to get a record deal at some point in my life. It doesn't have to be now. I had a real close call. I almost got an instant deal out of Chesky Records in New York when they heard *Little Prayer*. The problem was that I didn't have more of those kind of songs. They loved *Little Prayer* so much. They thought it was so fresh and new and that it fit my voice perfectly ... I've been doing a lot of standards, and they already had a standards girl so they wanted me to do more of these things, and what I'd like to do--along with Fred's help--

is definitely do a record of Dave's stuff; things he used to sing like *Lost in the Stars*, and do the ones he wrote and write some of my own songs too. So I have some ideas of things I'd like to do and even if I did a standards record I would dedicate it to Dave. No doubt about it. It's around the corner, and I just wish that Dave and I could have recorded more. We would have done a great record together and we wanted to. He really wanted to, and we just never got the time. It just went too quick. And I didn't really get to know him until it was too late, because we would have had a lasting friendship and a lasting musical experience I think.

It hurts. It's just very painful, but musicians always rejoice in other musicians, and what I really learned from Dave is to persevere no matter what. You've just got to go for it, because that's how he was. Nothing could stand in his way of what he wanted. But he did it the right way. He didn't do it by stepping over people. He did it by loving people, and you could tell--just by going to his memorial service--how much he touched people. And that's the important part to me because I'm a real down-to-Earth, love-y kind of person and I won't sacrifice people's feelings for what I want.

Bruce and I love to chat about different musicians and what they do and what we learn from them and what turns us on about them and stuff. So a lot of my feelings are felt and seconded by Bruce as well, and when we first heard Dave, he knocked us out with his energy. We couldn't believe that he could play that fast with his fingers and play the whole night like that. When we first heard him I guess we used to say, "Well he plays a lot of notes." We were really wowed by him but we thought that there was something there that was agitating him. We used to think, "I wish he'd settle down just a little bit." And maybe--that being three years ago--that's when he started to experience some health problems. Maybe we saw that. I just felt like he was almost angry at times when he played. He'd lose himself in the piano and he'd bang and he seemed tight to me. But it was good--very good--it was just tight. Then it seemed like over the next few years as he calmed down or got tired--either one--we heard his most remarkable playing. Toward the later part of '92 and into '93 and up to the last times we heard him play he didn't have the energy to be mad about it and so he ended up playing for the sheer beauty of it. His love for the music really came forward.

Sometimes he would play and he was just having so much fun. In a lot of ways Dave was a lot like me. When I perform sometimes I have to learn how to balance between getting away from the kids and getting in the club and just going, "Yes! I'm free! I can do this! YEAAAAHHH!!!" Sometimes I just want to sing my brains out and I can kill my voice doing it. Bruce used to say, "Sandy you've got to calm down," and I'd say, "I know. I'm having fun. I'm having too much fun ... I've got to calm down." And Dave was like that too. He could go nuts, and you could tell sometimes he was just trying to bury himself, bury all the pain in his music. And then in like '93, that whole year he was playing so well. I really felt he was playing himself, his emotions, his feelings, his love for things.

The other thing I really liked about his playing was the way he harmonized melodies. He wasn't afraid to play real pretty. Some musicians are afraid to play pretty. They want to be so technical, so perfect. That's something I like about Fred's playing too; it can be downright pretty. And what the heck is wrong with that? See, that goes against the macho, hyper-male kind of playing.

Dave had a really nice way of harmonizing. He had very good timing. For a vocalist he was a terrific accompanist because he would leave enough space. He could mix the accompaniment around real nicely so that it would coincide well with what I was doing and would make a nice texture. He was just superb in that way, so I really enjoyed playing with him. I thought he was a really great musician, and not afraid to try new things either.

The first night I ever sang *Wouldn't it be Lovely* was when I did a duo gig with Dave at Cezanne, and he said, "Why don't we try *Wouldn't it be Lovely* as a ballad? He later recorded it on *Reality Road*, where he plays it real slow. But he wanted me to sing it, and I did, and it's been a big hit every time I do it. But Dave would always do that with me: "Let's try this ..." A whole different way, but it always seemed right. It would just work, and that comes from experience. It comes from really knowing tunes and having good instincts about what can be right with a tune. Because some people can't do that; they'll take a tune and kind of screw it up, and it just won't feel right. But he seemed to be able to turn a tune around and do it a different way, and it was right. So that was another facet of his exceptional talent.