



HE'S NOT LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE

RAY DAVIES, THE PERPETUAL OUTSIDER, HAS BEEN OUT OF STEP SINCE THE BRITISH INVASION

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When Ray Davies was shot in the leg two years ago in New Orleans, the initial shock at almost losing him soon gave way to dark humour. Once the story sank in, the chief Kink's brush with death seemed straight out one of his songs: the protagonist's girlfriend is robbed, he gives chase to recover her purse and, for his troubles, finds himself having a bullet extracted from his thigh.

If the girl had later run away with the mug-

ger, it would have been perfect Davies.

Left-behind, often glamourless figures – the neurotic who has trouble leaving his house, the English boy who wins a disappointing holiday in Waikiki or the overspending bon vivant who's forced to put his most exclusive residence on the market – have always seemed a source of fascination for Davies, 61, who performs here Wednesday for the first time in 23 years.

"I tried to write about what I knew, and that was the neighbourhood I grew up in," Davies said recently during a teleconference interview with a group of North American news-

papers, including The Gazette. "All those songs were inspired by characters who lived, probably, 100 yards away from me. But they also pick up on a kind of wistful and ironic facet of English culture. English people are a little bit wistful and mundane – and I like the people that have little quirks in their lives and low-achieving people. I think they're worth writing about. And I don't think I've lost that. It's something to do with the English culture and dark humour and the way we look at the world." Davies said he still lives in North London, not far from where he grew up.

In a pop culture so often defined by larger-

than-life icons and a star system that encourages boorish self-promotion, the Kinks were always proudly out of step. If Mick Jagger and Keith Richards were – and are – the perennially adolescent bad boys, and Pete Townshend was the spiritual seeker with the big themes, Ray Davies's persona was the middle-class man with the sore back, raking up the leaves in the yard before heading to the corner pub for a pint. Even in his mid-20s, he wrote like he was already looking back on his youth.

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