

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

JUNE 2005

Blasters shows

(Phil, John, Jerry, Keith)

- 6/24 Enviken Swe, Klockarnas festplats.
- 6/25 Skutskær Swe at, Holmarnas Park
- 6/29 Steninge Swe at Gostas Café.
- 6/30 Umeå Swe at Droskan.
- 7/3 Ockelbo Swe at Marknaden TBA.
- 7/5 Uppsala Swe at Fredmans.
- 7/6 Skövde Swe at Husaren.
- 7/7 Västeraås Swe at Power Meet
- 7/22 Gijón Spain at Crossroads fest

Dave Alvin shows

- 9/18 Chicago at Old Town School (solo)
- 9/24 Austin TX at ACL fest (Guilty Men)
- 10/- California tour (Guilty Men) TBA

Knitters shows

- 7/19 San Francisco CA at G.A.M.H
- 7/20 San Francisco CA at Slims
- 7/22 Seattle WA at Showbox
- 7/23 Forest Grove OR at McMenamin's
- 8/2 Minneapolis MN at First Avenue
- 8/3 Madison WI at Luther Blue's
- 8/4 Chicago IL at Park West
- 8/5 Detroit MI at Magic Stick
- 8/6 Cleveland OH at Beachland Ballroom
- 8/7 Toronto Ontario at Lee's Place
- 8/10 Boston MA at Paradise Rock Club
- 8/11 New York City at Irving Plaza
- 8/12 Alexandria VA at The Birchmere
- 8/13 Philadelphia PA at the Trocadero
- 8/14 Baltimore MD at Rams Head Live

The Blasters 4-11-44 CD out in the US on 8-16-05

Latest News: The Blasters 4-11-44 album, released last year in Europe, is now being released in the USA by Rainman Records on August 16, 2005. The packaging will be different than the European release and there will be some enhanced features. -- The Modern Sounds of the Knitters is due to be released on Rounder / Zoe records on July 12, 2005 -- Hootenany Records has released a new DVD tribute to Joe Strummer. Footage from the annual Irvine, CA, music festival includes performances by Dave Alvin, The Blasters, James Intveld, John Doe, The Paladins, and many others. It can be ordered on line at <http://www.merch.com/newitems/index.html> — Andrew Hardin's new CD Blue Acoustic is a collection of 17 instrumentals, including two performances and co-writes with Dave Alvin: EL CAJON and MEXICALI CHINATOWN. In his liner notes, Andrew mentions that he recorded both numbers at Dave's home in California and that Dave played

his National ResoPhonic Steel Body Guitar on the songs. -- On January 25, 2005, DTS Entertainment (DTSE,) released a second version of The Blasters' Live: Going Home, DVD in 5.1-channel DTS Digital Surround sound. This surround music disc was mixed by the renowned engineer Mark Linnet. The packaging is different from the Shout Factory release. This one is in a CD sized box. -- Dave Alvin's DVD is tentatively scheduled for release in the Fall. In June '05 Dave taped interview segments and will begin work on a live companion CD which will be an exclusive available only on the road or via the Yep Roc web site. The DVD will mainly consist of a live concert taped in California earlier in the year. -- Dave Alvin recorded a song FAILED CHRISTIAN for a Nick Lowe tribute record. The 2-disc release called Lowe Profile: A Tribute to Nick Lowe will feature 30 artists. Chris Gaffney

***This Issue: Dave Alvin's history of Guitars, Dave Alvin's acoustic
Ashgrove Tour, and the Blasters Scandinavian 2004 Tour Diaries Part 2***

will also have a track on there called CRYIN IN MY SLEEP as will James Intveld, Rick Shea, and Christy McWilson. -- Dave recorded a song called ON THE WAY DOWNTOWN for a Peter Case tribute CD. www.hungryformusic.com -- Dave recorded a surf instrumental for a movie called Camp Burlesque. -- Dave and John Doe as the Knitters did an interview for the United Airlines magazine. -- Dave will be recording a track exclusively for Uncut magazine. Uncut offers a free CD with each magazine. A future issue will be themed to recreate Bob Dylan's Highway 61 through other artists. Dave will record the title track. -- Tough Company, Tom Russell's book with a foreword by Dave, is now scheduled for release July 4, according to the Mystery Island Press Web site. Tom has written a new afterword for the book. ~~ *AM*

Bill Bateman Launches Bateman Drum Company

Bill Bateman, of the Blasters, has launched his 100% handmade, vintage style, drum company. A set is currently on display in the showroom of the world famous, Professional Drum Shop, in Hollywood, CA. (854 N. Vine St.)

According to John Bazz of the Blasters: "I've seen them and they are beautiful, very traditional looking drums that sound as good as they look." All of the drums are hand made and finished by Bill, with the hardware custom made for him by various artisans from around the United States.

Bill started the company out of frustration and necessity, "I realized that I can't go out and buy a new drum set, for any amount of money, that I would be satisfied playing. I want drums to sound the way that old Ludwig and Slingerland drums do."

Every drum is hand made to order by Bill himself, "I make the wood shells, hoops, and rings. The counter hoops and reinforcement hoops are constructed out of solid hard wood, the shells are hand made using my own unique method, and the hardware is custom made according to my specifications."

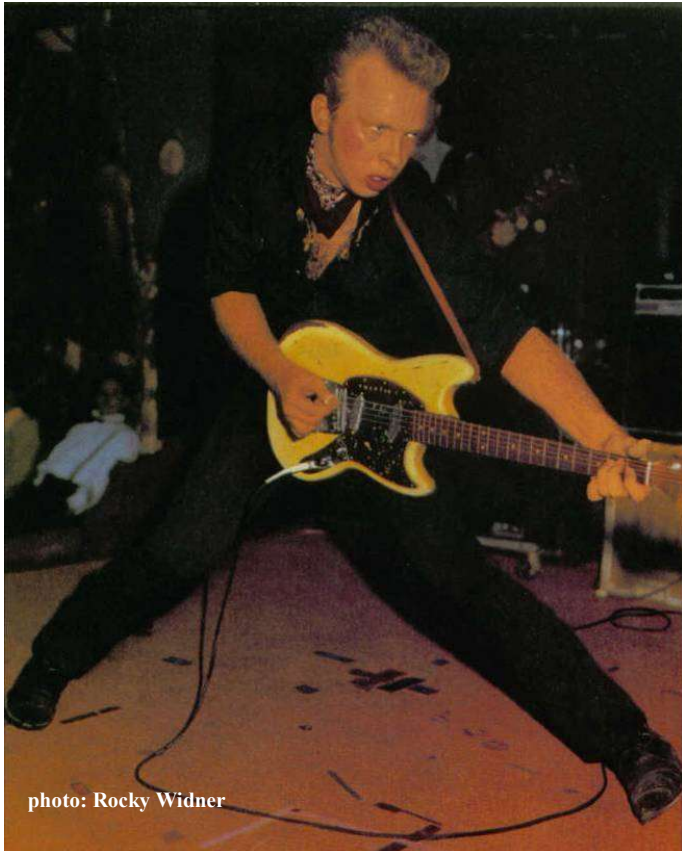
The Bateman Drum Company is giving other musicians the chance to finally find the vintage drum sound that they have only dreamed of.

Bateman Drum Company drums are currently being offered on a made to order basis. Inquiries can be made at billbtmn@yahoo.com. Look for the Bateman Drum Co. website to be on-line soon.



Dave Alvin's Guitar History Interview

-By Billy Davis



The '64 Fender Mustang

AM: Why do you use heavy strings on your guitars?

DA: I tended to play on heavy strings because I was used to it. Phil and I grew up with a 1941 Epiphone in the house. It had flat wound heavy gauge strings on it. Phil bought it in a pawnshop when he was 14. So the nature of growing up playing heavy gauge strings made it real difficult to play slinky strings. In the Blasters I was playing 14's and I've now gone down to 12's. Those are still heavier than most guitar players use.

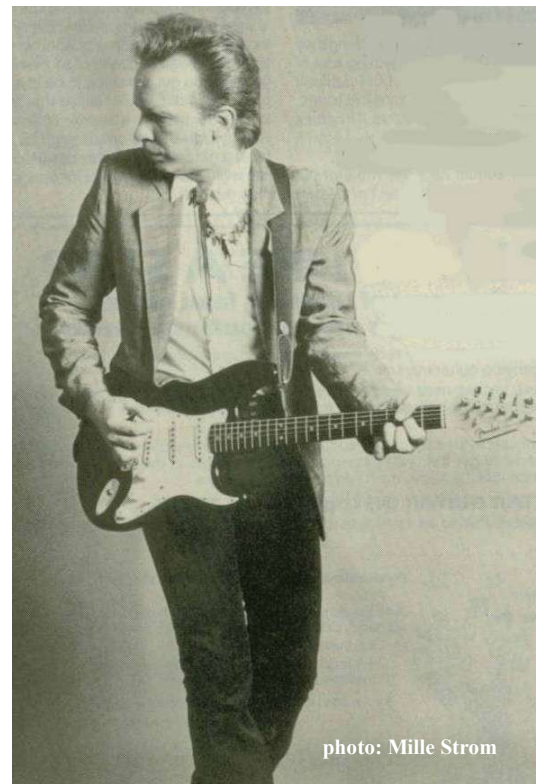
One of the reasons I use the heavy strings is because I use a thumb pick, and I break slinky strings real easy. On most guitars I can go about 20 songs before I break strings using heavy gauge. So I change strings every show.

I like being able to use my long fingernail on my

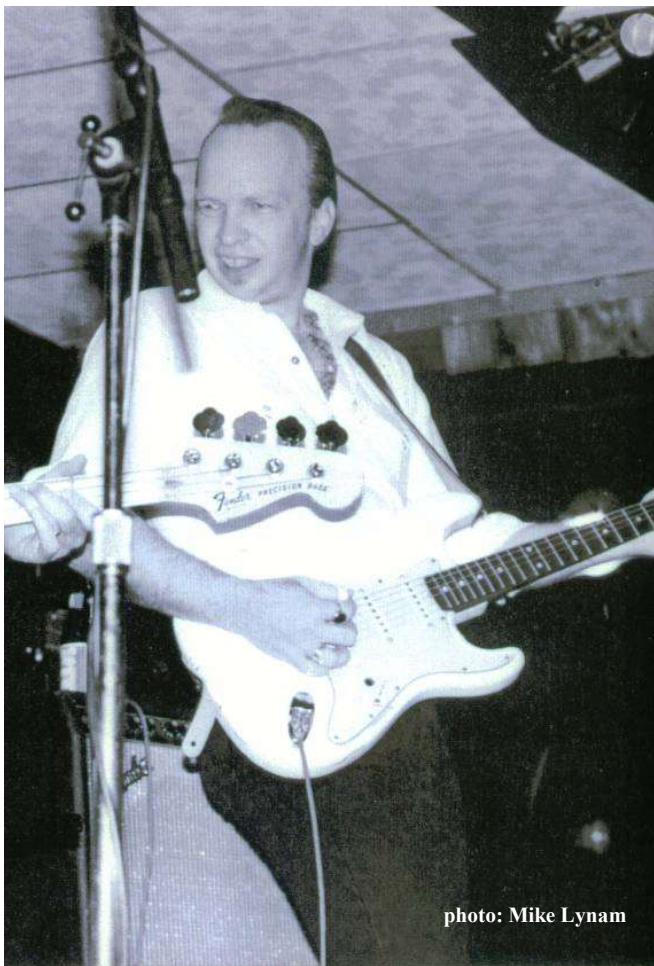
AM: Tell us about the famous Fender Mustang guitar you used all through the early Blasters years.

Dave Alvin: Around the time we (The Blasters) recorded our first demo (1979). James Harman bought my first electric guitar in a pawn shop in Santa Ana for \$70. I'm not sure if Phil was with him. It was a 1964 Fender Mustang with Schecter pickups and a strange neck. Someone told me that they thought it was a Stratocaster neck that was adapted. It definitely is not a regular Mustang neck. I got that guitar around the time that James recorded our first demos, (1979).

On (American Music, 1980) the Rollin Rock records album, I'm playing a 1961 Fender Stratocaster that James Harman lent me.



The '65 Fender Stratocaster



The '61 Strat acquired in Norway

index finger to alternate between single string runs and two-finger picking. That opening riff on AMERICAN MUSIC is best played [with] fingerpicking. Then I use the thumb pick like a flat pick for single-string playing during the solo.

AM: Tell us about the Johnny Cash acoustic guitar you played on American Bandstand in 1984.

DA: There was a great guitar store called California Guitars in the San Fernando Valley. They only carried old Fenders, Mosrites, and rare guitars. This acoustic guitar had a beautiful mix of purples, blues, and grays and Johnny Cash's name on the neck in mother of pearl. It cost \$1000, which was a lot. It wasn't a great guitar, but I wanted it because Johnny Cash owned it. It had cigarette burns in the tuning pegs. I played it a little while, but basically it hung on the wall. When we did American Bandstand the second time, I

figured: 'hey, we're lip-synching. It doesn't matter what guitar I use," so I played the Johnny Cash guitar. After RED ROSE, Dick Clark did the interview thing. He said to me: "Dave, I have to ask you where you got that guitar." I said: "Well, Johnny Cash and I were hitch-hiking across the country and we got a train outside Little Rock, Arkansas, and at some point Johnny turned to me and said 'Dave, I want you to have my guitar.'" Phil interrupts: "No, No, No, Dick, that never happened. That's not true Dick; he was never on a train with Johnny Cash." I was just having fun.

AM: Why did you change guitars to you're now famous yellow Stratocaster?

DA: I wanted to be a better guitar player, and the Mustang's neck is limited in what you can do. You can't play like Albert King. The Mustang made it on a few records, but generally I was using borrowed vintage guitars. Like on the first Blasters album, I borrowed a Les Paul from James Harman; on Hardline, I used a 50's Telecaster that was borrowed.

I found it in Valley Arts Music shop in Studio City, CA; the place has since burned down. I picked up that guitar and I knew that was it. The Strat was the

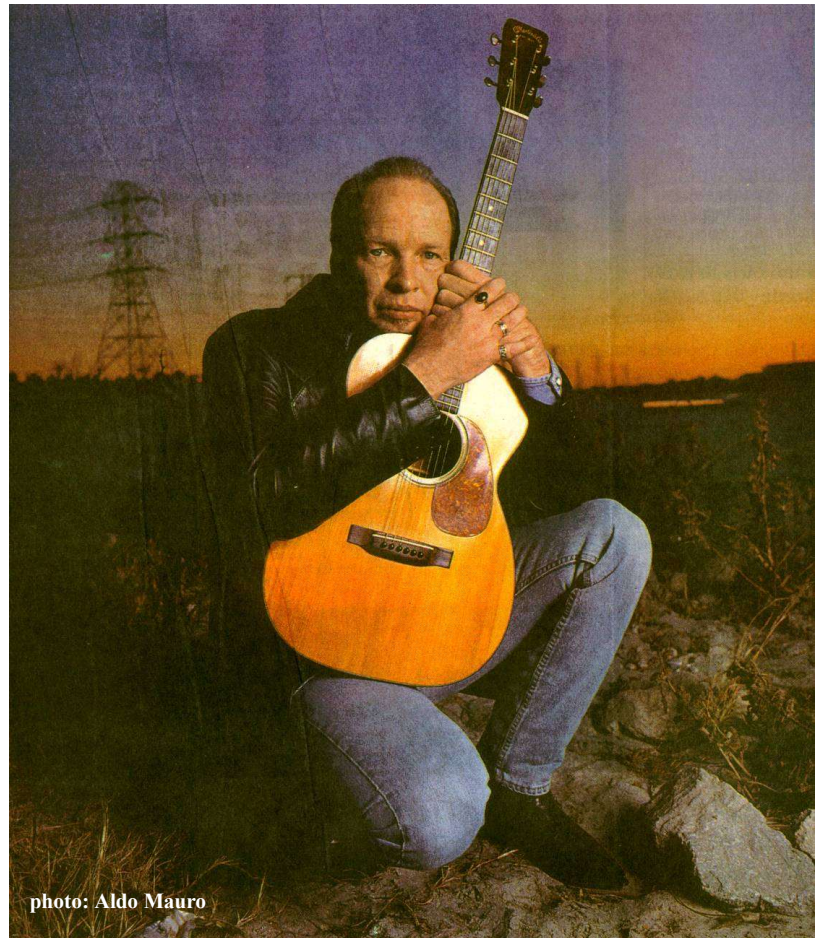
same year as the Mustang, same color pick guard and exact same yellow color. I figured it was meant to be. I paid \$1,200 for it and thought that was outlandish. It's now a 10 or 12 thousand dollar guitar. I think I bought the 1964 Stratocaster in '83 or '84. I recall using it on the tracking of **COLORED LIGHTS** and **JUST ANOTHER SUNDAY**. Those two songs were cut months after the rest of the Hardline album. I may have been reticent to bring it out on the road because it was an expensive guitar (ED NOTE: Dave started using it on live shows in the summer of 1985). It was a stock '64 Strat. The only things I ever changed on the guitar was a bridge and fret replacement about every

year and a half. I still use it for all the touring with the exception of Europe. I won't take it on planes anymore because I can't chance it being damaged in checked baggage. In 1987 I was filling in for Hollywood Fats in the Blasters and brought a '65 Strat to Europe. In the Rome airport, the guitar got destroyed. I play that guitar in the **BAREFOOT ROCK** video and used it when I was in X.

So I'll only use my '64 Strat on driving tours. When I fly, I use a black '61 reissue fender Strat that I bought last year. I brought it to a guitar guy and said, "Make it sound as close as you can to my '64." He grouted out some wood to make it lighter.

AM: Do you own any other electric guitars?

DA: I also have a '61 Strat that I got in Norway. I swapped a 64 'Strat that was pretty beat up that I used as a back-up. I didn't really like it; It was heavy and very trebly. At a gig in Bergen, Norway, I broke a string and picked up the back-up for the rest of the set. A guy came up to me afterwards and said, "I want your guitar." I said, "Yeah right. You're dreaming. You're not gonna get my baby." He said, "No not that one, the red one." It had a homemade paint job of red. He offered a '61 white strat, which also had a homemade paint job. I said: "Well, my



1957 Martin 00018

guitar is heavy and very treble sounding.” He said, “Well, the ‘61 is too light and very bassy sounding.” It was perfect for a trade. The next day we spent two hours in the hotel playing each other’s guitars. I took it out with the Skeletons in ‘91 and ‘92. I recorded a lot of Museum of Heart (Hightone 1993) on that guitar. The neck is real thin, good for single string runs. I keep that at home now.

I had a ‘72 or ‘73 Gibson Everly Brothers guitar that I liked a lot. I first saw the model on the cover of the Everly Bros. Interview record. I also had a 60’s John Lennon model made by Gibson.

I had a great 6-string Fender bass from 1962 with a whammy bar. I got it in Rockaway Beach on Long Island at a music store for \$300. I used that on my first solo record and on the X record See How We Are. I played it as if it was an electric guitar - it’s basically a baritone guitar. When I was broke in the late 80’s, I sold most of those guitars.

I recently bought a Jerry Jones Baritone guitar and played it on the Knitters new record. I’ll be bringing that out on the Knitters tour.

AM: It sounds like you’re collecting guitars again?

DA: After having to sell my guitars in the late 80’s, I was reticent about collecting guitars again. Musicians are always looking ahead to be working in a gas station. So I still have a thing about owning too many guitars. So I still borrow for recording.

AM: You have used a number of acoustic guitars over the years on your tours. Can you give us details?

DA: The first great one I had was the Martin Shenandoah. I bought that between King of California and Black Jack David. Then I switched up to a Martin B16 on the road, which Gaffney is now using in the Hacienda Brothers. Now, I’m using a Martin DC Aura and that’s a pretty good guitar. At home I have a few recording guitars: a Martin 1954 D 18 that I used on Public Domain and Ashgrove and a 1957 Martin 00018 (pictured on the cover of the NY Times article) used on King of California. Last year I did an acoustic gig (Neighborhood Church) here in California where I used all my rare guitars, but you have to sit down and worry about the guitars. I also have a ‘34 National Duolian Steel guitar. A fan sold that to me and I got a good deal. It’s on Public Domain, Ashgrove, The Knitters, and the Christy McWilson records.

AM: Any other guitars that you always wanted to own?

DA: At some point, I would like to get a Gibson hollow body like T-Bone Walker had - but for now, more guitars are not in my future. —Am

Dave Alvin's Ashgrove Acoustic Tour



Dave Alvin spent April 2005 on the US east coast doing a bunch of acoustic dates with Chris Miller accompanying him. It was interesting to hear acoustic versions of the Ashgrove songs. It was also the first time for Chris Miller to play an extensive tour with Dave Alvin as an acoustic duo. Chris Miller played electric guitar the whole set except for pulling out the lap steel for DRY RIVER. Dave Alvin played acoustic and only occasionally took a solo.

BLACK JACK DAVID or KING OF CALIFORNIA were the opening songs of choice on the tour. On Dave's last few acoustic tours, he has played standing up. Dave always moves around and displays a lot of body language while playing the guitar. When he used to play sitting down, he almost seemed confined, so there's more energy when he plays standing.

Chris Miller proved how good a guitar player he is, especially when he played slide on BLACK SKY.

Dave did a wide selection of new songs from Ashgrove and some of his regular standards. A new up-tempo acoustic version of MARY BROWN was featured each

night near the end of the set or in the encore with Chris Miller playing some hot choppy rhythm guitar. Dave Alvin, who has always played interesting segues, drew cheers from the crowd when he merged MARY BROWN into OUT IN CALIFORNIA. The combination made for a great finisher.

BLUE BLVD is a favorite song of mine, so every time Dave plays it, the show becomes a special one for me. Sometimes Dave plays the song and explains to the audience the song's connection to his cousin Donna. Other times he turns down the request with an excuse (like on this tour): "I don't play it often because I wrote it in my brain. I always heard Del Shannon singing it. Every time I sing it, I realize I don't have Del Shannon's voice, so I feel I failed miserably." Dave is so wrong about failing. It's his typical modesty. I couldn't imagine anyone else but Dave singing it and really meaning it. I was lucky to see the second from last show of the tour in Pawling, NY, where Dave decided to sing the song.

Surprisingly, the few songs on Ashgrove that were meant to be played on acoustic (MAN IN THE BED, EVERRETT RUESS, and NINE VOLT HEART) were rarely played on this tour.

Dave always threw in a Blasters song each show--alternating between HELP YOU



photo: Billy Davis

DREAM and TROUBLE BOUND.

Dave had a funny intro. for OUT OF CONTROL: "By the way, if you go see the sequel to Citizen Kane called Miss Congeniality 2, you will see 17 seconds of this song in the movie. I have to say that I think Sandra Bullock is the most perceptive, talented actress of our generation because she produced the movie, she chose the songs, she paid me, I love her. She's a great American."

For most of the shows, Chris Miller played lap steel only on one song - DRY RIVER. Chris is an exciting player and brought another level to the song through his playing on the song.

On at least one occasion, Dave answered a request for BLUE WING. Chris Miller played the lap steel on the song beautifully. It was one of the best versions of that song I've heard.

Dave has gained a lot more courage in choosing songs in his acoustic sets. ROMEO's ESCAPE was a closing song in at least one show that worked perfectly. In previous tours, Dave would hesitate before playing a full-on electric guitar song on acoustic. What a cool surprise.

Hearing the Ashgrove songs in an acoustic setting was a treat, but Dave admits he can't wait to get out on the road again with the Guilty Men so he can play his electric guitar. . —Am

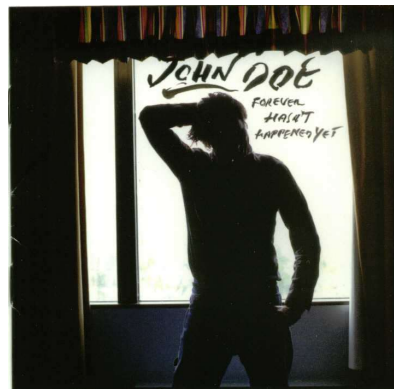
Highly Recommended New Releases

John Doe

Forever Hasn't Happened Yet

John Doe of X has found time away from the Knitters to release a fine solo album called Forever Hasn't Happened Yet on the Yep Roc label. Dave Alvin plays guitar on the first three songs: THE LOSING KIND, HEARTLESS, and MAMA DON'T. Ex-Blasters guitarist Smokey Hormel plays on THERE'S A BLACK HORSE.

www.yeproc.com



— update —Last Issue's Blasters Newsletter Contest — We Have A Winner

Randy Felton from Ravenna Ohio won a Keith Wyatt autographed Blues Guitar Instructional video. The Question was: Name 6 Guitar players who have been Blasters members over the years. Correct answers were Dave Alvin, Keith Wyatt, Greg Smoky Hormel, Hollywood Fats, James Intveld, and Billy Zoom.

AMERICAN MUSIC

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BlastoScand'04 Tour Diaries Part 2

The Blasters September 2004

Tour of Scandinavia

--By Billy Davis

Monday September 20, 2004 Malmö, Sweden at KB

The previous day was a travel day from Steinkjer Norway – a 14-hour drive to the 350-year-old city of Gothenburg, Sweden where we stayed the night. We arrived at 1 AM last night. The guys spent the day in the bus reading, listening to music, or napping. Phil Alvin wanted to have some fun and worked on a drawing of the tour bus with the whole crew packed in a bus that was called 'BlastoSardines.' There's a big Sardine who says, "Let my people go." Phil's artwork sat in the windshield of the bus for the next week.

This morning we drove a few hours from Gothenburg to Malmö. We had little time in Malmö, which is the third largest city in Sweden. We arrived at the club called KB and it was raining lightly. This was a big rock club that had posters advertising Motorhead coming soon. We set up the stage and didn't bother with much of a sound check. Phil stayed back at the hotel to rest his voice.

A band called the Buckaroos opened up the show. They sounded good and are a well-respected band in Sweden. They opened for the Blasters on their 1991 tour in Sweden as well. There wasn't much of a crowd – about 300 in a place that fits 700 people. Because it was a Monday and there was a big soccer game being played between Malmö and Djurgården that night.

The Blasters came to the stage and had their first technical difficulty of the tour. Keith Wyatt's guitar sound was silent. Before I could get to the stage, John Bazz wheeled over a spare Peavey guitar amp we keep on stage for emergencies like this. It still didn't work. Phil meanwhile tried to stall the audience. Jerry yelled: "Tell another joke." But Phil instead played a little bit of ST. LOUIS BLUES on his guitar and then recited some Edgar Allan Poe poetry.

I got to the stage and immediately checked Keith's effect foot pedals; they can often be the culprits. That was it – a battery went dead and was cutting off the signal. I removed that pedal to go and find a spare battery while they started the set.

They started with ALL YOUR FAULT and as Keith was still distracted by trying to fine-tune his sound - or was he changing his amp back because he preferred playing a Fender Twin reverb here in the large clubs. They began RED ROSE but not smoothly and the tempo seemed slow. By the third song, 4-11-44, the Blasters were back in full gear and the crowd was enjoying the show. Lars Frederiksen and one of his band mates from the punk band Rancid were at the show dancing around in front. They dropped by backstage before the show to say hello. In DADDY ROLLIN STONE Phil changed the lyric to: "Big Lars may be twice my size but he don't know as much as me." These guys are big Blasters fans. They do a few Blasters cover songs in their set and recorded MARIE MARIE on Lars last solo album.

There were a few fans right in front of Phil who were requesting some odd song. Phil said to them: "I can sing it to you if you come backstage." Of course they yelled, "We'll be there!" Phil responded: "I'll make sure you get back there." Later on





they did get backstage and sat down with Phil who pulled out the harmonica. One of the guys started singing OH SUZANNA, but way out of key. Phil said: "Wait a minute. I'll straighten you out." Phil began playing the song on harmonica, in the correct key. The two guys said they owned a club called "The Piss-hole" and promised the band they would have a night of blues if they came to hang out there after the show.

The guys came out to the tour bus after we finished packing up and asked who was up for going to 'The Piss-hole.' Only Phil was up for it, we all wanted sleep. Phil went off with them and later told us they stayed about an hour playing guitars and drinking, and then Phil went back to the hotel for some sleep.

Set list: all your fault, red rose, 4-11-44, I'm shakin, border radio, dark night, dry river, rebound, boneyard, so long baby goodbye, slip of the tongue, daddy rollin' stone, blue shadows, american music, marie marie, Encore: long white cadillac, one bad

stud. Beer: Budweiser.

Tuesday September 21, 2004 **Helsinki, Finland at Tavastia**

We woke up in Malmo and drove across the Oresund Bridge into Denmark. The Oresund Bridge is the world's longest single bridge carrying both road and railway traffic, it's 16 km long. On the other side is Copenhagen where we were flying towards Finland.

The show at Tavastia was highly anticipated. The Blasters were always well received there and in 2000 had a show planned that was cancelled. The Blasters have a big following in Finland, which has a solid fan base of American Music fans.

The Blasters minus Phil came for sound check and played a few instrumentals. Keith Wyatt was trying out a new Guitar Amplifier called Mad Professor (www.custom-sounds.com). A rep from the company named Harri Koski brought the amp and set Keith up to use it for the evening. The big amp had all kinds of extra features like multiple gain stages. It might have been more than is needed for a Blasters show. The amp also hummed very loud when not being played through.

Before the show we all had dinner in a restaurant next to the club. It was Jerry Angel's birthday. We celebrated with a birthday cup cake with one candle. Happy Birthday Jerry! Some of the Blasters went back to the hotel, which was a few blocks away. There was a big construction site in the middle, so when Phil made his way to the club, he attempted to cut through the construction site and got lost inside. He made it, but I bet he has some stories.



When the Blasters hit the stage, the club was very crowded – a big crowd for a Tuesday night. It had been 13 years since the Blasters were here last and the crowd knew it. The Blasters opened strong – sounded great and looked great. The sound and lighting in Tavastia is top notch. Phil sounded fine, but commented: "I went into a barn and came out a little hoarse." Next, Phil took on one of his more challenging vocal songs – I'M SHAKIN. He said: "We'll cross our fingers on this one." Phil sounded just fine on it. Everybody loved the show.

The crowd was really into it, yelling requests and dancing around. I even heard someone yell: "Bring out the reindeer." When Phil dedicated SO LONG BABY GOODBYE to Lee Allen, the crowd cheered very loud. Lee was always a big favorite in Finland and the fans always appreciated



seeing him perform.

Keith Wyatt has really stepped up on this tour. He seems much more animated coming to the front center of the stage to take his solos and jumping in the air at the end of ONE BAD STUD. This was a great show, the best of the tour so far.

Set list: all your fault, border radio, red rose, 4-11-44, dry river, rebound, I'm shakin', precious memories, trouble bound, dark night, boneyard, blue shadows, so long baby goodbye, slip of the tongue, long white cadillac, american music, marie marie, Encore: daddy rollin stone, one bad stud. Beer: Karhu.



Thursday September 23, 2004 Haverdal, Sweden at Göstas Cafe



Wednesday was a travel day to get back to Sweden from Helsinki. We flew into Copenhagen and drove to our hotel in Halmsted, Sweden. On Thursday afternoon we drove to the gig in nearby Haverdal at The Göstas Café for sound check. The venue looked like a roadhouse but is a small restaurant right against the road. We pulled the tour bus behind the building. We were right next to the Black Sea - a very scenic view.

The wall of the Café facing the ocean was all glass so you could see the ocean from the seats inside.

The room was very small, only seating about 100 people. The band set up in the corner of the restaurant right on the level floor. We had to move a lot of restaurant furniture to make space for the band's equipment. Strange to play a small place after playing our last show in a big

hall like Tavastia. But I expected it would be interesting to hear a loud rock n roll band in an intimate setting.

As we set up, the owner, Ulf Sandberg, played a bunch of old 50's rockabilly records like Charlie Rich's earliest recordings from Memphis. The all glass side of the restaurant faced the setting-sun on the Black Sea. The band sound checked with a blaring sun on them. Phil sat down with an acoustic guitar that was lying around the restaurant and worked out a few ideas from Blasters songs with Keith. Next the full band got up and played BIG BOSS MAN.

Not much sound checking was needed. There was a small PA and though the drums were put through the PA, they would be loud enough to be heard over the PA sound.

We sat down for dinner with Ulf. Dinner was great. After that, he brought out his acoustic guitar and played and sang us a Swedish folk song. Phil countered that with an acoustic version of THE MOUNTAIN DEER and then AIN'T THAT CRAZY, which brought a lot of laughs.

We drove back to the hotel for some rest, but couldn't help being tourists. We stopped along the way to take a few photos of a beautiful windmill. We never got a photo of an IKEA store in Sweden.

The Blasters opened up their set with a song rarely played from the first Blasters album on Rollin Rock Records - LOVE 24 HOURS A DAY. Phil apologized for being a little hoarse in the first song. Phil told a fan after the show: "It's all that driving around that takes its toll, ten hours to Norway and eleven back and well, I just can't shut up." It's true, when driving in the bus, Phil would sit in the front seat while the band sat at a few chairs around a table in the back engaging in conversation. Phil hardly could resist the temptation to turn around and add to whatever subject was being discussed. Sometimes we had to half-jokingly yell at him to keep quiet. Phil would, but he al-



ways finished making his point.

Phil's voice cleared up after a few songs and by I'M SHAKIN,' which is a tough one on the voice, he sounded good. Phil dedicated Charlie Rich's REBOUND: "To Ulf for playing us all those Charlie Rich records." Then later in DADDY ROLLIN STONE Phil changed the lyrics to say: "Big Ulf maybe twice my size but he don't know as much as me." Everybody liked Ulf.

Phil dedicated JUST TO BE WITH YOU to me, because I had been bugging him all tour to play that one. It's the only song on the new Blasters 4-11-44 album that Phil plays harmonica on.

Keith Wyatt was getting big applause for his guitar solos. The people here really appreciated his guitar playing. By show's end, Phil was drenched in liquid. Now, that isn't all sweat. Phil gets over-heated and douses himself with water to cool off.

It was a great show. After, the band hung around to chat with the fans, sign autographs and have a few drinks. A few of us took the opportunity to explore the shoreline of the Black Sea by moonlight. Near the shoreline there is a jetty made of stone that by the AM hours that night was uncovered by the low tide. It was cool being able to walk so far of the shore. It was a beautiful view of the stars and the endless sea to the west.

Supposedly, Ulf the owner was enjoying the music so much, some people were sneaking in for free that night and we also heard drinks were free. We were told that this might be the final live music show in 10 years at Göstas. They lost their license to sell liquor. But what a way for Göstas to go out - with a Blasters show.

Set list: 24 hours a day, all your fault, border radio, rebound, 4-11-44, precious memories, dark night, red rose, i'm shakin', your kind of love, dry river, boneyard, so long baby good-bye, just to be with you, slip of the tongue, blue shadows, daddy rollin' stone, long white cadillac, american music, marie marie. Encore: trouble bound, one bad stud. Beer: Pripps Blue

Friday September 24, 2004

Gislaved, Sweden at Gisleparken

Today we drove a few hours to Gislaved and stayed in a hotel in the center of town. Down a walkway of shops there was a community bulletin board that had a poster advertising the Blasters show that night.

At about 6 PM the crew and Jerry Angel (in order to set up his drums) drove to find the venue on the outskirts of town. It was hard to find the venue. It turned out to be a community center in a park. There was a big room with a stage that appeared to be a banquet room with a dance floor for weddings. We were playing in a smaller room on the side.

At sound check we met up with Jake Labotz from Los Angeles who was going to be the Blasters opening act on the next 4 shows. Jake does solo country blues.

The Blasters came to the stage and the size of the crowd was a little disappointing. It was a weird venue and even





weirder crowd. It seemed no one there, except two people I met who knew who the Blasters were. One guy kept asking Phil Alvin to play songs as if they were a cover band. Phil would just say: "Sorry, I don't know it." The Blasters played well, and Phil sounded in fine voice. After the first song, Phil announced: "We got a new record out next week. If you leave me your phone number, I'll call you to make sure you picked it up."

John Bazz broke a bass string on DRY RIVER, which is unusual, because it's not a hard driving song that would normally eat up bass strings. At one point I yelled out a request and Phil said: "Yeah, Billy, that's a good idea." They played LOVE IS MY BUSINESS for the first time on this tour.

A lot of people danced in front of the stage, but got a little rambunctious pointing in the face of the band members and one guy kept getting in the face of Phil

Alvin. A good portion of the crowd seemed drunk before the show even started.

They played for 70 minutes and left the stage after MARIE MARIE. Phil, John and Jerry exited stage right and went towards the dressing room, which was a few minutes' walk across the other side of the complex. Keith walked off stage left and hid behind the PA speaker waiting for his band mates to come out for the encore. I thought the crowd cheered loud enough to get another song so I ran backstage and told Phil they were calling for more. Phil didn't want to come out and said he thought the crowd was weird. He has been in show-biz long enough to know when the crowd vibe isn't good. The only problem was that Keith was stuck out there. Eventually the crowd calmed down and Keith escaped.

Set list: all your fault, border radio, trouble bound, red rose, dry river, I'm shakin', rebound, love is my business, 4-11-44, blue shadows, dark night, boneyard, so long baby-goodbye, daddy rollin' stone, long white cadillac, american music, marie marie. Beer: Carlsberg

Saturday September 25, 2005 Jössefors, Sweden at Folkethus

We drove north into the countryside not far from where we started the tour (Enviken) to Arvika where we were staying in a nice small hotel called Jenny's Hotel. We met up with Jon, the promoter, a cool guy who owns an original Blasters 'Rollin Rock Has Got The Sock' T-shirt. That's a super rarity from 1980. I was drooling.

On to the sound check. The Folkethus was a big concert house. It's a real nice place with a decent size stage and a big dance floor area. We started loading in our equipment and had a lot of help from a few guys in 50's haircuts. We had a good feeling about this place. The promoter Jon was already was a buddy of ours. Somebody from the venue tried to impress us early by putting two cases of Zeunerts Beer in our way on the stage. That was a nice greeting.

These people really appreciated Americana. Two load-in helpers were bidding on my vintage Texaco Gasoline jacket. They offered up to \$500, but I didn't have the heart to part with it.

The Blasters sound-checked on BONEYARD and RED ROSE and we're served a nice dinner of Swedish meatballs. The band went back to the hotel. I decided to hang around the club, because it was such a cool place. A local teenaged rockabilly band played first. They were really good and energetic. Jake La Botz did his set next and asked me to announce him to the crowd. I said "Ladies and gentleman, from Los Ange-



les, Evangeline recording artist Jake La Botz.” Jake played a good set of country blues that was very well received, considering that the crowd was filling up with mostly rockabilly kids.

I took a look out the window and was surprised to see a bunch of American 1950’s cars pulling into the parking lot. As the blasters headed towards the stage we could see there was a big crowd. This was gonna be a great gig. John Bazz stopped behind the backstage curtain to play the opening rockabilly bands’ standup bass just for fun.

The Blasters opened the show to an enthusiastic crowd with ALL YOUR FAULT Phil said: “I had a Swedish girlfriend back in the United States but she done throwed me down.” They did TROUBLE BOUND and Phil and Keith have an ongoing joke about the song being too fast, so each show they go back and forth telling each other, “not too fast.” Phil dedicated RED ROSE to: “The guys who came out from Oslo. There are some drunk Norwegians in the house.” About four songs into the set, a fan yelling to Phil for MARIE MARIE, started asking Keith for MARIE MARIE. Keith just passed the buck and kept motioning that the fan should tell Phil.

Phil responded to a fan that kept yelling “One More Time.” Phil gave a generic answer not knowing what the fan was talking about. He said: “I promise I’ll do it more than one more time.” The MARIE MARIE fan finally got through to Phil. Phil said, “I promise we’ll do MARIE MARIE.” After a pause he responded to the fan again in the mic: “Three times you want me to do it?” The rest of the band laughed. Phil said intriguingly: “That’s an interesting request. All right, we’ll maybe do it three times. You wanna hear it once now?” The Fan yelled: “Yeah,” and Bazz yelled: “Yeah.” Then Phil said: “Then once again later? (Laughs) You’re making my job easy you know.” I don’t think the band took Phil seriously until he turned to them and said: “Let’s do MARIE MARIE.” Bazz just looked and Keith and cracked up laughing. Then they went into it. As it finished “Phil pointed to the fan and said: That’s one. I’ll stick a few more in between.” MARIE MARIE is the big finishing song so you know they still have to do it a second time.

Some fans were asking about the availability of T-shirts and CDs on this tour. Phil started off LOVE IS MY BUSINESS with some sarcasm: “I didn’t bring any T-shirts or CDs because I’m a business man.”

After BONEYARD the fan yelled MARIE MARIE loud enough that you could hear it in the back of the hall. Phil said: “Keith, the customer is always right. Et toi, bon temps rouler; for the girl in the red shirt.” That’s a little French intro that Phil always uses before MARIE MARIE. It translates to ‘Let the Good Times Roll.’ They went into MARIE MARIE again. The rest of the Blasters couldn’t help smiling. It’s probably the most fun they have ever had playing their most-often-played song.

After AMERICAN MUSIC Phil said : “Et toi, bon temps frigen rouler; I guarantee.” That meant MARIE MARIE for a third time! The girl in the red shirt got up on stage, started dancing around Phil. Phil just gave her a strange look and then she returned to her spot in the audience. The Blasters left the stage and the crowd chanted loudly “We want more, We want more.”

Phil came back and said, “I’ve got to do this song for Jon





who put this show on. We have not done this song for many years." The last time the Blasters did STOP THE CLOCK was when Smoky Hormel was in the band on guitar. It was a regular song on the 1989 tour set list. The band did a good version - a little slow - but great to hear such a rarity. Before the show, I walked into the backstage area and saw the four Blasters sitting in a circle with Phil teaching the song to them. John remembered it, but Jerry and Keith had never heard of the song. It went over just fine and I'm sure Jon was happy. ONE BAD STUD finished the show and the girl in the red shirt was still yelling for MARIE MARIE.

After the Blasters set, another rockabilly band called 'Snake Bite' played a set. That was good because the venue wasn't closing, so we could hang around and party for a while. Back-

stage the Blasters invited anyone to come back and they signed autographs and posed for photos. We met up with a few of our friends who traveled from Oslo, Norway, just for this show. Frank has a club in Oslo called "The Wild Bunch" and has been trying to book the Blasters in there for some time. It sounds like a wild place.

Set List: all your fault, trouble bound, border radio, red rose, I'm shakin', precious memories, marie marie, 4-11-44, love is my business, dark night, bone yard, marie marie #2, long white cadillac, daddy rollin' stone, so long baby good-bye, blue shadows, American music, marie marie #3. Encore: stop the clock, one bad stud. Beer: Zeu-nerts

Sunday September 26, 2005 Stockholm Sweden at Akkurat

We made the long drive across to the east side of Sweden to the country's biggest city, Stockholm. The club was located in the middle of the city. The band didn't bother to sound check. Phil stayed back at the hotel to rest his voice. Jake La Botz opened the show and as a bonus, Jerry Angel sat in on drums with Jake.

By the time show time came, the small club was jam-packed. It was difficult to get back and forth to the stage. I had to set up the guitars on stage, drinks, water, towels and check that the amps were on. The Blasters friend Drac from Helsinki was back stage visiting the Blasters as well as promoter Micke Finnel.

The Blasters started their set very strong. The crowd was enjoying it. For the third song, Phil made a dedication: "For Drac." The song COUNTY FAIR was recorded by the Blasters on Phil Alvin's County Fair 2000 album (HighTone Records 1994). Drac from Helsinki had made that song his request for the tour and had asked Phil a few times to do it. That was a treat because it's another one that the Blasters haven't played for a few years. In REBOUND, Phil broke a guitar string. Changing strings on Phil's guitars was one of my jobs. But I'm not a good string changer because it's always in dark place, the band is so loud and you can't hear if you're close to tuning the correct pitch. Then if you use an electronic tuner, it has to have a light because of the dark. And of course there's the pressure of needing it done fast. The tightly packed audience made things even more difficult to get from the soundboard to the stage to change the string. By the time I got to the stage, they were almost done with the next song. I started working on the guitar while Phil pulled out his second guitar - a Fender Stratocaster - for TROUBLE BOUND. As the song ended, Phil said to the crowd: "Guitars can't take it." Oh, oh? That meant that Phil broke a string on the Strat as well. I was still working on the first guitar as Phil turned around and said to me, "I have to have that guitar." I thought quick and said to him, "Do a harp (harmonica) song." He nodded his head in agreement and played JUST TO BE WITH YOU, one of my favorites. That song gave me time to restring both guitars and then everything was fine.



A funny moment happened in RED ROSE when Phil's guitar cable fell out of the guitar. He didn't notice for a little while that he wasn't plugged in. I guess it's loud up there, and he couldn't hear his own guitar.

There were a few technical difficulties that only the band and crew noticed like in the instrumental BONE YARD; Keith uses an alternate tuning where he drops his E string down to D. He must have mis-tuned because as soon as the guitar was heard, it was way out of tune. Keith tried to play the notes on different strings as to avoid that mistuned string, but it wasn't working. By mid-song there is a pause / break where everything stops then starts up again. Jerry Angel appeared to be giving up as if he didn't want to continue the song. Keith quickly retuned and called for Jerry to finish the last half of the song and that part sounded fine.

The band was in fine form, Phil sounded great, and it was a very responsive crowd. It was satisfying to have a great show on our last night in Sweden and Scandinavia.

Before the last song, Phil said: "We've been driving all over Sweden - I mean all over the place. And I have to send this song out to Göran, our driver. Göran if you're around, this goes out to you. He's the Iron Man." Then they went into ONE BAD STUD.

Set List: all your fault, border radio, county fair, dry river, rebound, just to be with you, red rose, slip of the tongue, bone yard, long white cadillac, precious memories, love is my business, so long baby goodbye, dark night, blue shadows, american music. Encore: marie marie, daddy rollin' stone, one bad stud. Beer: Heaven, Hell, and Fallen Angel.

Wednesday September 29, 2005

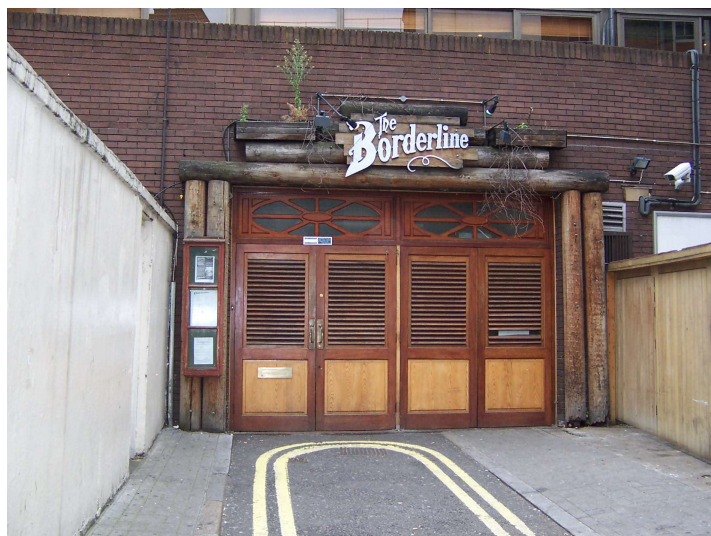
London England at The Borderline

It was nice to have two days off in London. Lots of stuff to see and record stores to visit. Phil Alvin had a few interviews to do. One with Maverick Magazine and another with "The Independent" Edition where he picked his top 10 roots music songs.

This would be an important show because the soon to be released Blasters 4-11-44 album was being put out by London-based Evangeline records. They set up this show. We arrived at sound check fresh. The band played a few songs concentrating on DRY RIVER as Phil explained some changes in the arrangement to the rest of the band. Next, they did RED ROSE and then CRYIN' FOR MY BABY, which was never performed on this tour. We ate dinner and the band went back to the hotel.

The décor was interesting in the club. It was darkly lit with swirling lights on the back of the stage. The crowd was smaller than we figured because it was a Wednesday night. Jake La botz played his set and sounded great. Soundman Rick Brown played some great old R & B music between sets. The Blasters came out and sounded solid. DADDY ROLLIN' STONE was a high point of the night. The band seemed to push a little harder and the crowd felt it.

Some clever and new Phil Alvin dedications tonight. Phil dedicated PRECIOUS MEMORIES: "To Johnny Paycheck, who paid his last bill" referring to Paycheck passing away last year. For the instrumental BONE YARD, Phil said: "Here is a song I can take a cigarette break on, because cigarettes are gonna send me to the Bone yard." Phil dedicated I'M SHAKIN': "To any of you guys who were at Dingwall's last year. I hope you're out of the hospital." Phil referred to the Original Blasters July, 2003 show at Dingwall's. The temperature in the club was so hot, the band members almost fainted. They had to cut the show short.





After 4-11-44, Phil announced that the new album was coming out on October, 4th and that members of the record company were in the audience.

The Blasters finished their set with MARIE MARIE and said: "See ya next summer." For the encore, the band came to the stage and waited for Phil. Keith Wyatt took the opportunity to entertain the crowd with an instrumental version of Hank Williams HEY GOOD LOOKIN. The crowd enjoyed it and clapped along. Phil came to the stage with an excuse, "I had to look for some ice."

Carlos Guitarlos, a musician and friend of the Blasters from Los Angeles, had just arrived in town and walked into the club. Carlos was playing the Borderline the following evening. Carlos never misses a chance when the Blasters are in town to join the Blasters on stage for ONE BAD STUD. Phil spotted him coming in and playfully said: "The devil himself has entered the house." Phil invited Carlos Guitarlos on stage to finish with ONE BAD STUD. Carlos took a solo and Keith did his full solo. The song ended, Phil grabbed his jacket, kissed Carlos on the cheek, and said: "Good night. We're the Blasters."

After the show, the record company supplied us with copies of the new CD. It was finally in our hands. We all went back to the hotel for a drink. But not long after, everything was closing (pubs close at 11 PM in London), so it had to be a short night and tomorrow we would all fly home.

Set List: all your fault, border radio, rebound, daddy rollin' stone, precious memories, I'm shakin', 4-11-44, dark night, red rose, bone yard, your kind of love, dry river, so long baby goodbye, slip of the tongue, american music, marie marie. Encore: trouble bound, one bad stud. Beer: Budweiser (brewed in England with a higher alcohol content) —Am