

ISSUE #94

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

AUGUST 2023

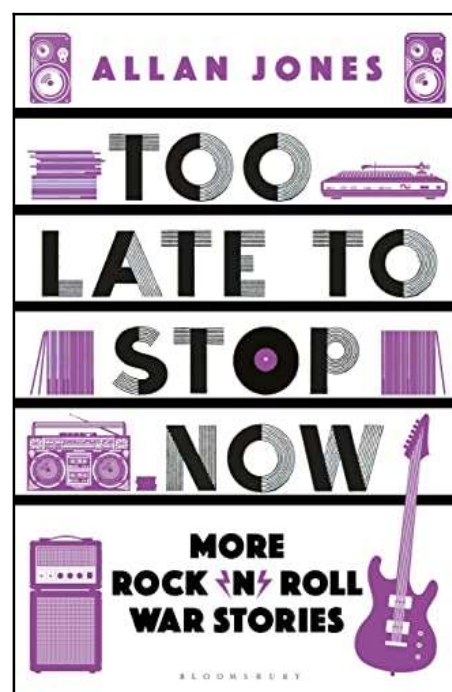
Shelly Heber: Blasters' 1980s Manager 1948 - 2023

Latest News: Shelly Heber, who managed the Blasters in the 1980s passed away on August 5, 2023. **II III** The Third Mind's new album called The Third Mind 2 will be released October 27 on Yep Roc Records **II III** This summer, John Bazz did a one-hour YouTube interview with Mikayla Beyer on a variety of topics, including growing up in Downey and the formation of the Blasters. **II III** BORDERLAND is a new single released by Dave Alvin, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and the Guilty Ones. Dave: "It's on the Americana Charts. It's a Jimmie Dale song that he cut 20 years ago. He didn't like the original version and the production sounded like a demo, so I went to work rearranging the song. It's a great song, so I'm really happy with the way it came out." Dave continues: "The next album with Jimmie Dale should be out in 2024 and will be mostly originals and a few covers. It'll be backed up by the Guilty Ones with a few guests here and there. In January, we cut 3 songs and we're going to do more recording. **II III** The New York Times has put together a project called The California Soundtrack. Subscribers to the California Today newsletter are invited to (((cont. page 2)))



In This Issue: Shelly Heber Interview Part 1 of 3, Dave Alvin's Third Mind second album and the latest news.

Latest News (Continued from page 1) — choose a song that captures “The Golden State’s complexity, abundance and heartbreak.” In the July 4th edition of the paper, Greg Johnson of Irvine, Calif., selected ARTESIA by Chris Gaffney. Greg wrote the following: “This song recalls teenagers cruising through a then-rural part of southeast Los Angeles County and includes the line, ‘Because now when the wind blows from out of Artesia, you can’t smell 1965’ -- a reference to the cows that used to inhabit the area.” Songs on The California Soundtrack can be heard on a playlist, which is available on Spotify. || ||| Dave Alvin performed with Los Super Seven, which includes three members of Los Lobos, on June 16 at a concert in Los Angeles. The show was a benefit for TexasTurnout.org with proceeds going to voter awareness and war relief in Ukraine. A clip of Dave performing FOURTH OF JULY with David Hidalgo on backing vocals and guitar can be seen on YouTube. || ||| Dave did an extended interview with Buddy Miller and Jim Lauderdale for their Buddy and Jim radio show on Sirius XM Outlaw Country. The interview will be aired over three shows starting on June 24. || ||| Longtime music writer Allan Jones will publish Too Late to Stop Now: More Rock ‘n’ Roll War Stories (Bloomsbury Publishing) on July 25. The book, a mix of previously published and new stories, includes one on the Blasters on tour in Texas in 1982. || ||| Dave Alvin is featured in Innerscapes: 10 Portraits of Los Angeles Poets, a 91-minute documentary that was released in conjunction with A Higher Form of Politics: The Rise of a Poetry Scene, Los Angeles 1950-1990 a book by Sophie Rachmuhl published in 2015. The documentary, which Rachmuhl directed, has recently been posted on YouTube. Dave is featured in a seven-minute profile. He discusses writing poetry and songs and reads two poems: MY MOTHER FELL and MEMPHIS TENNESSEE, NOVEMBER 1981. Dave also performs an acoustic version of FOURTH OF JULY in a segment that was filmed around the release of the Romeo’s Escape album in 1987. To find the film on YouTube, search for its title. || ||| Dave Alvin joined Canned Heat in the studio in mid-May. He played and sang on one of his new songs with the legendary blues band. || ||| John Mellencamp recently covered his own song COLORED LIGHTS that he wrote for The Blasters in 1985. John also contacted Dave Alvin for his permission/blessing to dub Dave’s 1985 guitar solo into John’s release. || ||| Dave: “I’m still planning a Dave Alvin album. I can’t have cancer fuck me up! My goal is to get 3 to 5 years before going through surgeries again. My strength is coming back, but I’m not feeling as good as I did pre-cancer. At the moment, I’m doing just two-week long tours. Nothing longer for now.” —**AM**



Dave Alvin, August 5, 2023: My dear friend, ex-Blasters manager and my former solo career manager, Shelly Heber, passed away this afternoon.

Smart, savvy, sensitive, stubborn, a bit wild and very passionate, Shelly loved rock and roll like few others I've known who weren't musicians. Whatever mainstream success The Blasters achieved, Shelly's drive, vision, patience and love was almost as big a part of making it happen as any notes the band played and sang. The daughter of Holocaust survivors, Shelly's no illusions, world-weary optimism (not an oxymoron in her case) was a constant inspiration. She taught me a lot of the hard-earned music business survival skills that she learned running her own successful music marketing/promotion company for many years and her lessons helped to keep me going spiritually at the times when things looked very bleak. I could never thank her enough for that.

Shelly and I had drifted apart over 20 years ago for whatever reasons, but during the last three years, due to both of us fighting cancer, we reconnected and restarted our long friendship. Shelly and I shared the exact same stage 4 cancer diagnosis but we chose different ways of dealing with it. I respect her decision to handle her situation in the way she felt was right for her and she respected my choices handling mine. It's difficult to express how much our later friendship means to me. It's hard to describe how inspired I was by the courage she showed facing her fight and how much courage she gave me as we fought our separate cancer battles together.

Decades ago, in the rough and rowdy old days when she managed The Blasters, Shelly would often get swept up with emotion and abandon during our live shows. She would madly rush head-first in to the blood, guts and beer soaked mayhem at the front of the stage at The Whiskey or The Starwood, where she'd dance in unrestrained joy among all the out of control rockers, boppers and brawlers. That image of her is the one I will keep in my heart as the journey goes on.

Dave Alvin posted this on his official Facebook page

The Blasters 1980s Manager Shelly Heber Exclusive Interview Part 1

Shelly Heber was the Blasters' manager in the 1980s, guiding them through their most successful years, and managed Dave Alvin during his CBS Records major label solo period. She has lived the American dream as a successful businesswoman in many parts of the music industry after coming to the U.S. in 1949 as a child. Her father spent five years in a Polish prisoner-of-war camp and her mother survived a death march. Shelly was born in Germany in a displaced persons camp and came to the U.S. with her parents when she was 14 months old.

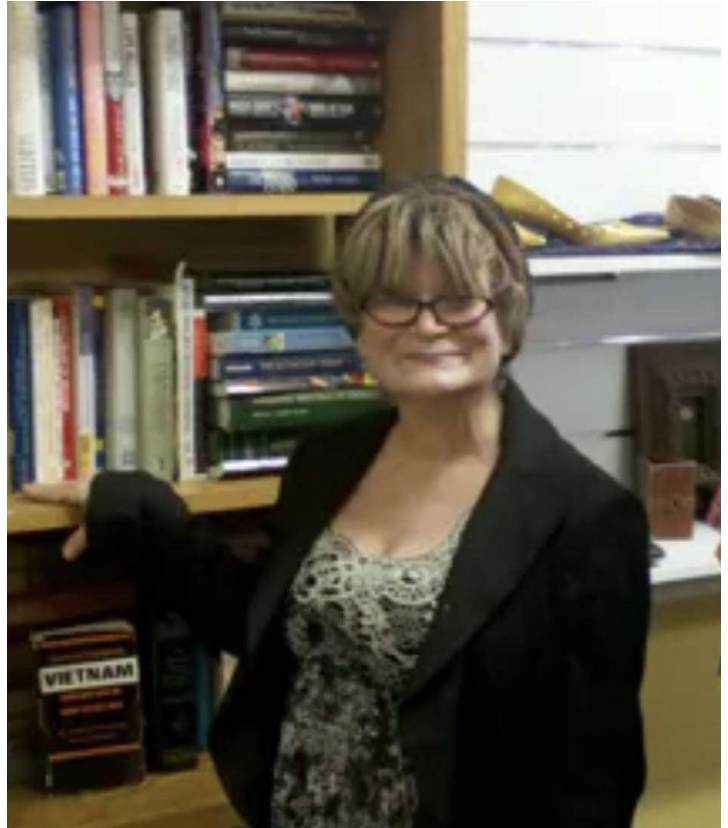
by Billy Davis

Shelly, just passed away from cancer on August 5, 2023. As a Blasters historian, for years I had her on top of my list to interview. She finally granted me an interview by phone which spanned weekly phone calls between April and July, 2023. Shelly had an amazing knowledge of the music business and is such a sweet and nice person. She was such a pleasure to talk to and had an amazing recall and funny way of telling stories. Thank you, Shelly, for sharing your memories with the Blasters fans and we will miss you.

Shelly: I grew up on Ocean Parkway in Brooklyn, New York and went to Lincoln High School. It was a great place for a little girl to grow up who loved music. My mother was very generous and brought me to Alan Freed's Rock 'n Roll Show when I was 10. She sneaked me backstage and we had lunch with Bobby Vee. It was crazy. I loved music. It was a great and amazing time to grow up because it was the intersection of rock 'n roll first happening and then it went into so many zeitgeists so quickly – but to me rock 'n roll was always at the heart of it. When I was 7 years old the local radio station WINS published a top 100 songs and I would memorize it. It was one of the most useless things in the world you could possibly do [laughs]. We moved to California when I was 13 and I had a horrible Brooklyn accent. My mother had died and I wasn't happy in California, I wanted to move back to New York to get into the music business. But it's incredibly hard to get in. So, I started in credit checking with American Express, which is the diametric opposite.

But then my first job in the music business was at Billboard magazine in the chart department. My cousin had a friend who was the vice president at Billboard and got me an interview. The guy couldn't have been more pompous and horrible. At the end he said, we don't have any jobs but I want you to write a five-page essay on why you want to be in the music business. I said: "Okay??" That was strange. Then he called me and asked if I wanted to work in the chart department. I said: "Of course!" So, I quit American Express and went over to meet my bosses. I went completely 'hippied-out' – my dress couldn't have been shorter and my hair couldn't be higher and I couldn't have been more casual about the whole thing. They said they had 10 more people to interview and I thought there was no way I'd get the job, but I did!

The very first day I went to work, Carly Simon came in and then Lou Rawls. I thought this truly is a great job. I loved it! But it was always cold in New York, so I quit and went back to California figuring I could use that experience to get another music business job. I soon found out working for Billboard was not the music business, it's the publishing business. So, at 19 years old I went back to credit checking and being a supervisor. Then suddenly Billboard called and said they were moving the chart department out to L.A. and,



Shelly at the Discovery Bookstore

“Would I like my job back?” I said: “Yes.” That was 1970 until 1972.

I learned something early on about women working in the music industry. I kept getting promotions, but not more money. The last straw was later when I had a job as the director of marketing at 20th Century Fox and I found out my predecessor was getting \$200 more a week than me. How did they validate that? They didn't have to. But in those days women didn't have positions in the record industry other than promotion and publicity. I would become one of the first women to have a marketing position. The abuse of women wasn't only swept under the carpet, but it was tolerated in a horrible way by the women because they desperately didn't want to lose their jobs. I remember being in a marketing meeting with a president of the company and I'd be trying to make a point and he'd say: “You're so cute when you're angry.” They'd never say that to another man, but in their mind, somehow, they thought that was complimentary. I had one boss who would ask, “Did you get laid last night?” If I went to human resources with that, nothing would be done. So, I figured out that women couldn't make success with a man present - they could only do it on their own.

I moved to San Francisco to work for a guy who was big in 20th Century Fox. I was doing radio promotion for Ralph Cashen, who was the only person ever convicted in a payola scheme. The company went out of business because they put everything up their nose. I was then asked to be director of marketing for Dark Horse Records in 1976 (a label founded by George Harrison). But it was a time when Dark Horse was in turmoil leaving A&M distribution to go to Warner Bros. Dennis Morgan, head of Dark Horse, introduced me to Peter Rudge, who was Lynyrd Skynyrd's manager. They hired me to work on their One More For the Road album. Then Elton John's manager called to have me do marketing for Elton's Blue Moves album. I started to think maybe there's a company to be made for this.

I got a call from a famous West Coast disc jockey named Humble Harve Miller. He had just got out of jail for killing his wife. A good friend of mine was writing a national song countdown show for him, but got another job, so she recommended me as a replacement. She said it pays \$300 a week and “it's so easy and you can do it – just don't ask him if he killed his wife” [laughs]. So, he picked me up in his car. He had a great disc jockey voice. I realized I could do it at night after work hours. At that time, I approached a friend of mine that I worked with at Billboard, Leanne Meyers, and said, I think we should start a marketing company. I already had clients and was writing this show. The worst thing that can happen is we'll fail. The best thing that can happen is that we won't fail.

We formed Image Marketing and Media. I had an enormous amount of contacts from the chart department at Billboard. I was the youngest and only woman in charge of the charts department. I carried those contacts over to my other companies. And at that time there was a lot of money in the music business. At first we got a lot of clients who were



Photo: Gary Leonard

Phil Alvin and Shelly Heber 1981

was insane [laughs]. He always said his name had to be higher than the band.

At the time of the Knack's big hit, MY SHARONA, every A&R guy wanted a power pop band for their label. It was the biggest thing happening in 1979. 20/20 looked like they would follow in those footsteps so there was a bidding war with record labels and Epic, which became Portrait, won out. Then suddenly the son of the defense minister of Iran offers to sign them paying each band member a \$500 per week salary and he'll take care of everything. So, they signed with him. But he's insane and the record company couldn't deal with him. A friend at Epic Records called me and asked for help. We figured out a way to extradite them from the contract with the manager from Iran and then Epic suggested I manage them. I didn't have a desire to manage, I was happy doing marketing. But I took them on because I really believed in them.

But it was a big mistake, because boys in bands go on the road for one thing – to get laid [laughs]. Having my sister's boyfriend in the band and finding out things while trying to be indifferent, put me in a difficult position. Then there were other incidents like the lead singer's girlfriend trying to kill herself in front of my office, because he left her. 20/20 had

“curiosity business” and after they signed on, they saw we delivered.

After two years we sold the company to a millionaire because we owed the IRS \$100,000. That was a lot of money in 1980. He paid all the debts and we worked for him. A year later we got the company back, but they wouldn't let us use the name, so we changed it to Image Consultants, which would last until 1998.

Our first acts were Marilyn Scott – a jazz singer - who my partner Leanne had been managing since high school - we called that part of the company Vision Management. I wasn't looking to manage and the marketing took much of my time. By happenstance my sister's boyfriend joined a band called 20/20 so Vision took them on. I heard the demo and thought it was incredible. Now this is the most insane thing you'll ever hear: They were being managed by the son of the head of defense from Iran – a multi-multi millionaire. He could finance anything they wanted, but he didn't have contacts. And they said he

great songs, but it was at the tail end of New Wave. Just too late as music was changing, so they broke up. But that started my managing career.

Leanne and I started a few other companies out of necessity. One was a video promotion company called Vis-Ability that we started because Marilyn Scott had a video that no one was willing

to promote. Then Peter Gabriel's manager wanted someone backstage to manage backstage interface such as meet and greets and so on, so we formed a company called Incite View. My whole business career was based on serendipity.

AM: How did you first come to manage the Blasters?

Shelly: Art Fein knew the Blasters for a long time and was responsible for getting MARIE MARIE to be recorded by Shakin' Stevens which was a big hit in the UK. Art's girlfriend told me the Blasters needed a manager. I listened to the Rollin Rock record and thought it was good for what it was, but I wasn't interested in managing at all. But I did go to see The Blasters the night they opened up for Queen at the L.A. Forum in July 1980 and the same night went to the Starwood club to see the Blasters open for the Go-Gos. I thought: "Who does this? They're working their butts off." I watched them and I remember thinking, I've never seen anything so immediate and real. I thought they were amazing, but I didn't have the vaguest idea of what to do with them. So, I decided to co-manage with Art.

Here's a funny story. The Blasters came over to my house to sign things and we were having a 15-minute conversation and Dave suddenly yells something like, I should be able to take the band into the Coach House and Phil starts yelling at the top of his lungs - and they're screaming back and forth. I just thought WTF? Then Dave looks at me and says: "She's not crying. She'll do." (laughs) I was thinking, Oh my god, do I really want to do this? They staged a fight to test me. It was very alien to them to have a female manager. There were only a few female band managers around at that time. Years before, female managers would exert their authority by being the biggest ball-busters around. I couldn't do that and I'm only 5 feet tall - so I armed myself with information. That's what won Phil over. He said, "I don't know how to deal with it, but she's always right." [laughs]

The Alvin boys were unlike any other people I've met in my life. They were a rural suburban all-American kind of entity that was completely chauvinistic, but brilliant. I went over their parents' house to visit with them and they had bunk beds - twenty-something-year-old men had bunk beds? [laughs] Their room had smoking ashes all over the place and a mess. Their excuse was that their Nana [mother] had not been feeling well enough to clean up [laughs] Their mother still cleans up after them?? [laughs] She was so devoted to them and happily did everything that she could for her boys. A lot of what they were to be-



come was based on the relationship they had with their mother. Their mother stayed central in their lives, yet passive but completely dominant. It was interesting for me to see because I came from an Eastern European Jewish holocaust background with no knowledge of the typical American home. To me it looked like the Father Knows Best perfect TV show scenario. I didn't believe that really existed. To me, an alien culture.

Phil had a girlfriend that he would never let her come to the shows. He said: "In my songs I have to project the sex and if my girlfriend is there with all these women, I can't project the sex." I thought that was so funny. Then his next girlfriend was Christina and she refused to stay home [laughs].

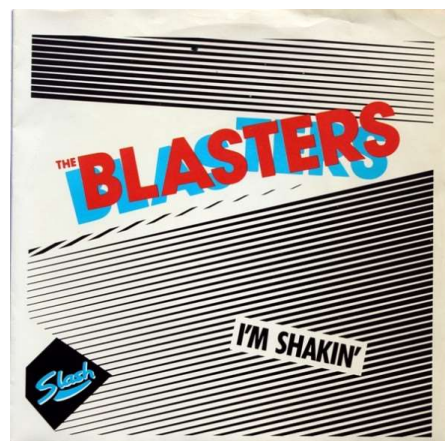
What I had with the Blasters was something that I then thought I could work with. They already had a lot of press and had opened for Queen and had a buzz about them. I knew I could get them on television and good concert opportunities. There was a lot of interest. And people wanted to like them because they were so pure and all-American.

The deal with Slash Records for their record was in place before I met them. I knew I could have gotten them a better deal but I didn't try to delay things to renegotiate – because I thought having product out right away would give them something to get reviews and to tour off of right away.

I remember meeting Slash Records president Bob Biggs for the first time and I was completely alienated. I said the immortal words of: "I know more about the record business in my little finger than you'll know in 20 years." Phil was convinced that Bob was the right person. Then Bob said something to me that made me rethink the situation. He said, he had no interest in music at all. He was interested in changing the culture. I thought that was very interesting, because of course music changes the culture probably more viscerally than anything else. I could see as we went along that he didn't care about the music. He was interested in what the influence would be and what his place would be in it. He really had a historian's view and I liked that. A guy named Mark Trilling, who was the vice president of Slash, made all the business decisions. He practiced law, though I think he didn't go to school for it. He made the deals.

My business partner Leanne Meyers was convinced that I'M SHAKIN' could be a big hit, so she got it on the major radio station, KROQ-100. In those days you would pay for airplay. I think it cost \$50,000, but it made Warner Bros. interested in the Blasters. The single charted at #89. Who would think a Little Willie John song could get on the radio? It was a rarity. I believe that still is the only Blasters song that made it on the charts.

It cost a lot of money to get that single played at that station, but it got Warner Bros. Records' attention so that Warner Bros. made a distribution deal with Slash for all their artists just because they wanted the Blasters. Little did they know



they would be getting Los Lobos as well.

I remember being at a business dinner with my partner Leanne, the Blasters, and Warner Bros. president Lenny Waronker. Suddenly Phil and Dave start screaming at each other. I don't know why [laughs]. I rarely ever knew why [laughs]. The whole restaurant was looking at us. Lenny is meek, but a fabulous person, while the Alvins are towering over him yelling and Lenny was shaking saying: "I hope there not gonna kill me?" I said: "They won't kill you [laughs], their loud, but they're pussycats." Managing the Blasters was a sociological experiment. Each one of them had such interesting concepts and personalities. They had no compunction about at the drop of a hat, to start yelling at each other. They had an amazing stoicism about their personal credos. And it would never end. I saw it from the day they interviewed me to be manager, they staged a fight and then said: "She hasn't cried yet, so I guess she'll do." [laughs]

When we made the deal with Warner Bros., they wanted ownership in perpetuity for the universe over the Blasters. The Blasters were loyal to Slash's president Bob Biggs. But I negotiated that Slash would have the rights to the music for 25 years and then ownership would revert to the Blasters. And it now has. Phil disagreed and said: "We'll love Slash forever!" I tried to convince him that these masters will have value in 25 years. That was before CDs and the repackaging and the trend of remastering and re-releases, so It wasn't difficult to negotiate a reversion of rights even as minimally as seven years. If the Blasters listened to me, I could have gotten it for them earlier. I pushed to renegotiate that, but Phil trusted Bob Biggs of Slash Records more than anyone. I wanted to shoot him [laughs]. But at least the Blasters have recently reacquired control of their masters.

AM: What do you remember about the Blasters recording sessions?

Shelly: I rarely attended recording sessions because they did that between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m. and I had to be at work at 8 a.m. – so there were physical limitations of the other job.

AM: The Blasters did so many television appearances in the 1980s.

Shelly: Yes. The Blasters were really good at doing television, which was great for promotion. There were

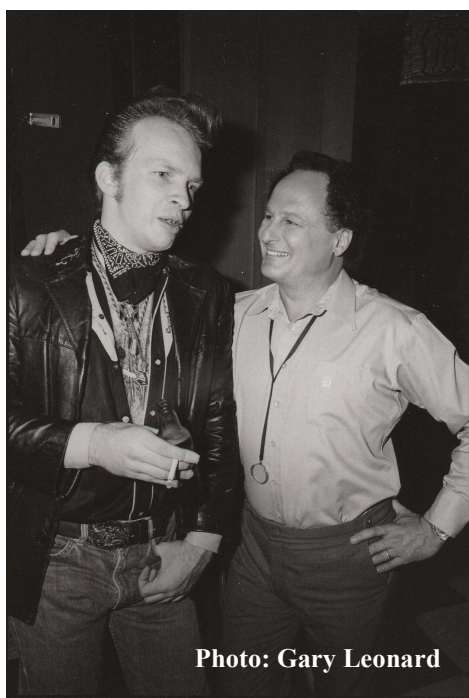


Photo: Gary Leonard



Photo: Gary Leonard

Dave Alvin & Phil Alvin with Evening at the Improv host Milt Friedman

many bands I was involved with who were fearful of it. My angle in the press and TV was that the Blasters are the “true-est thing in the world.” You need to like the Blasters. While the Stray Cats were posers, the Blasters were the “real thing” and they were very visual. Everything I had them do was to get something more or lead to something else.

The exposure of the PBS Soundstage special was enormous for us. We got Soundstage because producer Ken Ehrlich loved them. He was as excited as anyone else to have them on. He was the big producer of all the music shows on TV like the Grammys. He started with wanting a show with Willie Dixon and Carl Perkins on it and then he added the Blasters. It was a linear line of how roots music has survived - If ever there was a love child of Willie and Carl, it was the Blasters.



Photo: Gary Leonard

The music scene at the time was very much punk new wave and heavy metal – all the things the Blasters weren't. But everyone loved them. They didn't fit in any niche. But a lot of people have told me that the Blasters were their gateway into American music and re-discovering those roots. Even though I grew up on rock 'n roll, I didn't know much about the blues and country music - but I learned so much. The Blasters had such respect for their predecessors.

They did three songs on Evening at the Improv and then a show called Fridays which was ABC's take on Saturday Night Live. It was a live broadcast and they did really well on that.

The Mike Douglas Show, which was his last show, was filmed in Las Vegas. What was weird was that they didn't tell Mike Douglas it was his last show. So, at the end they announced this and Mike

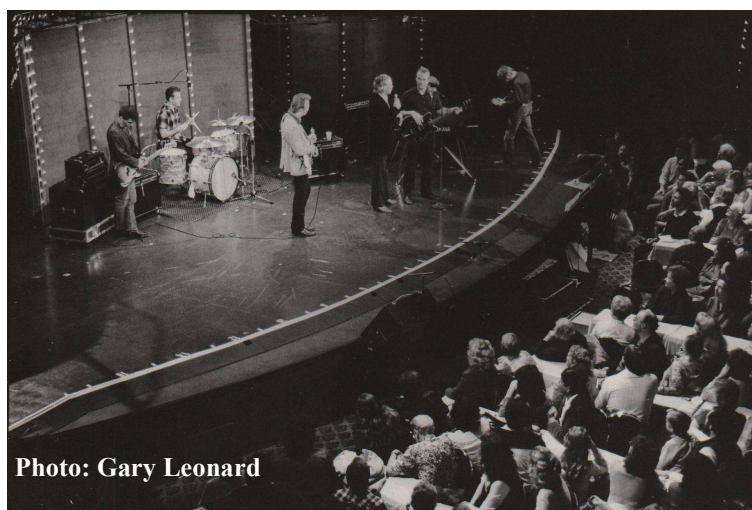


Photo: Gary Leonard

The Mike Douglas Show Las Vegas 1981

was stunned. They thought that if they told him in advance, that he wouldn't do it. Steve Kanaly from the TV show Dallas was a guest and announced the Blasters: “They're gonna be bigger than the Beatles!” [laughs] Liberace was a guest too. I remember going off to play a slot machine and I was up about \$100. Gene Taylor walks up to me with Liberace, who I couldn't stand [laughs]. Gene says: “Liberace, I want you to meet my manager, Shelly. She's your biggest fan!” [laughs] I started talking to him, while losing my \$100. It's funny, those two piano players looked so cute together [laughs].

Like all the Blasters, Mr. Taylor was very fond of his beer. It was at the top of my managerial duties to keep it flowing. We were taping a TV show at a high school in Torrance and in order to appease the band's thirst, the production company rented us a large RV to stay in because the school building was alcohol free. After they performed, they quickly drank all the beer in the RV. Gene started screaming for more. He then took the keys to the RV and threw it in a pitch-black football field – in effect holding them hostage until the beer would arrive [laughs]. They actually recovered the keys about six months later. We got along so well. I loved him so much. But if he didn't get what he wanted when he wanted it, he could go nuclear.

Another Gene story: We were on the road and although I had a very specific drink and food rider for the band, the Japanese restaurant next door brought us a gorgeous fifty-piece sushi boat. Nobody wanted to try any. Gene said, bring it here I'll try some. I left to take care of some business and when I got back he had eaten the entire plate. He said: "I liked it, but the fish would be better if it was cooked." [laughs] I dearly loved him.

There are just as many stories about Phil. We were driving to Canada and right before we were ready to cross the border Phil hands me a lid and says: "Hide this." I said "What!!!!" [laughs] So I hid it where you'd think a woman could hide it. But in front of us was James Brown's tour bus. So, they pulled them over and just waved us by. I told Phil: "That is definitely not in the management contract" [laughs].

Next Issue: Part 2 -- *Shelly talks about American Bandstand, the 1982 U.K Tour, and leaving the Blasters for a year.*



Photo: Gary Leonard



Photo: Gary Leonard

The Blasters and Liberace



Photo: Gary Leonard

Gene and Bill arrive at the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas 1-21-82

Sweet Relief Musicians Fund Needs Our Help

By Tom Wilk



A fund-raising campaign was launched in January to help Phil Alvin pay his medical bills.

Sweet Relief Musicians Fund provides financial assistance to all types of career musicians who are struggling to make ends meet while facing illness, disability, or age-related problems.

The Blasters posted the following message on the band's website in January: "As you know, our leader Phil Alvin, has been suffering with various health issues for some time. He has been in the hospital since January 1, 2023, and his medical bills have been

mounting up tremendously. Insurance will only cover so much. Recently the doctors have given us a great amount of hope. They believe the treatment he is receiving has put him on the right track to recovery and he could return to form sometime this year.

"Mike Rouse of 'X' has set up a link with Sweet Relief to help pay Phil's expenses. We would be grateful and honored if you, the fans, could help Phil with any amount you are comfortable with." Donations can be made at the Phil Alvin Fund. A message on the Sweet Relief Fund site in April offered the following update.

"Phil is currently being treated in a rehabilitation center where he requires full-time care. His health is improving and although it will be a long road to recovery, his doctors overseeing his care say that there is no reason he can't make a full recovery. Phil's family and friends are determined to get him back on stage and doing what he loves most. We want to thank you all for your generous support of Phil during this difficult time."

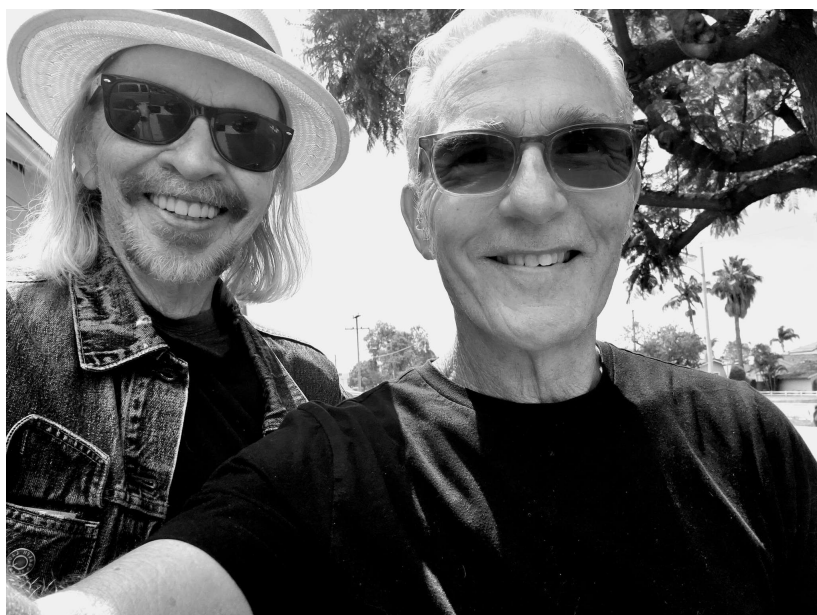
Both Phil and Dave Alvin have been supporters of Sweet Relief. Proceeds from If You're Going to the City: A Tribute to Mose Allison, a 2019 album, went to the

organization. That album featured a recording of WILD MAN ON THE LOOSE by Dave and Phil. It represents the most recent collaboration by the brothers.

Sweet Relief was founded by singer/songwriter Victoria Williams in 1994 to help with her medical bills after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The organization has provided assistance to other musicians, including Jesse Malin, Richie Hayward, and Cindy Wasserman. "Sweet Relief is great," Dave Alvin said in a May interview. "They've raised a lot of money, but they are very strict about where the money goes. No cigarettes and beer [laughs]. The money really helps when musicians get out of the hospital to help them get back on their feet. Phil will need that."

On July 30th 2023, Dave Alvin posted an update on Facebook with a photo of himself and John Bazz: "A couple of Downey boys back in Downey to visit my convalescing big brother Phil. It's always a kick and more than a few giggles to hang with my old hometown neighbor/bandmate, Blasters bassist John Bazz. It was extra nice, though, for the three of us to spend the morning discussing colorful childhood pals, our very mixed abilities playing little league baseball (Phil was a great baseball player - Bazz and me not so much) and other treasured archaic Downey detritus. I love playing music with Johnny and hope we get an opportunity to make some noise together again."

"Phil is back home after months in either hospitals or nursing care facilities and his condition is very slowly but steadily improving. That Phil is able to recover at home is thanks to everyone who has generously donated to his Sweet Relief fund. For all of your love, care and support through this rough time, Phil, my sister Mary, John Bazz and I are eternally grateful. I also love play-



ing music with Phil so hopefully he, Bazz, Bill Bateman and I will get an opportunity to blast the roof off some joints someday in the future."

Phil still needs our help in his recovery. Please consider any donation you can to the Phil Alvin Fund at www.SweetRelief.org

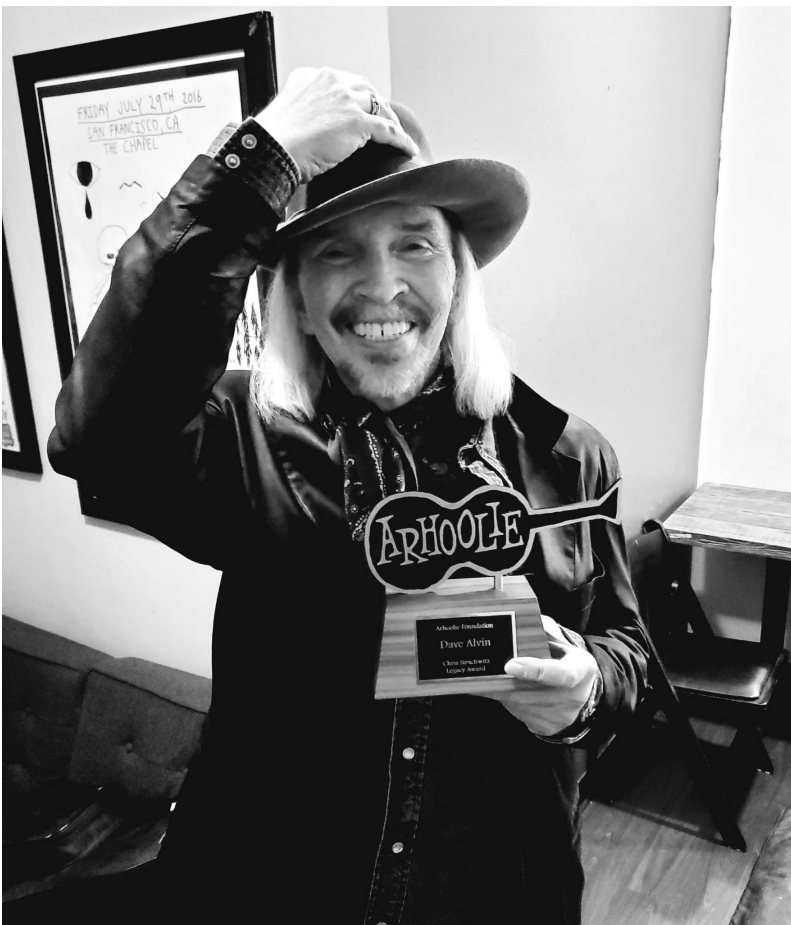
The 5th ANNUAL ARHOLIE AWARDS CELEBRATION CONCERT . . .

featured Dave Alvin, Santiago Jiménez Jr. and Blind Boy Paxton on April 14 in San Francisco at The Chapel. Dave received The Arhoolie Foundation Chris Strachwitz Legacy Award for his songwriting, performing, and promotion of traditional styles of American music over the decades. Video from the concert can be seen on YouTube.

Dave: "I haven't done an acoustic show in a long time. The promoter who invited me to the awards didn't let on that I would be getting an award. He booked me to perform. He told me they were giving awards to Blind Boy Paxton and Santiago Jimenez Jr. Their names aren't as well-known, so they said they wanted me to bring in people. I appreciated the honesty. Those guys are great musicians and I had to play after them. I brought Rick Shea with me. We played EAST TEXAS BLUES, ABILENE, KERN RIVER, DRY RIVER, BORDER RADIO and MARIE MARIE.

They then presented me with The Chris Strachwitz Legacy award and I was side-swiped. I had tears in my eyes. I accepted and said this is for Phil, Bill Bateman, Johnny Bazz, Gene Taylor, Lee Allen and Chris Gaffney as much as it is for me. But I'll take it [laughs]! Then we did a jam session on GOODNIGHT IRENE with Blind Boy and Santiago. It was great."

Chris Strachwitz started Arhoolie Records. Dave: "He got out of the army in the 1950's and was exposed to the blues. He recorded Lightnin Hopkins, Mance Lipscomb, Whistlin Alex Moore, Mississippi Fred McDowell and many little-known blues singers and he would put records out. The label started in the early 60s. Phil and I bought a lot of those records. Chris was a less commercial version of Sam Phillips. He valued the passion over the technical expertise. They were very raw records. Sadly, he just died the week after these awards."



Dave Alvin at the Country Music Hall of Fame:

— Photos by Domenic Cacala —

On April 23, 2023 Dave Alvin appeared at the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville for an interview and performance and in-person viewing of the exhibit *Western Edge: The Roots and Reverberations of Los Angeles Country Rock*. The exhibit features Dave's Blasters-era Fender Mustang guitar and his bandana. Dave: "They walked me through the exhibit which was crazy because there were hundreds of people there. I couldn't really stop and look at everything, but it's pretty neat."

Dave reported on Facebook "The reunion conversation was a little awkward at first. Like running into an old romantic partner in the supermarket except the old romantic partner was my beloved Blasters era 1964 Fender Mustang and the supermarket was the Country Music Hall of Fame's 'Western Edge' exhibit. "So, um, you look great. Ah, so, um, you must be happy with so many other important and



legendary guitars and memorabilia to hang out with here at the exhibit. Are you, um, seeing one of them, you know, regularly?" I said. "Um, no, well, yeah, ah, maybe. Clarence White's Telecaster keeps asking me to go out to Tootsie's Orchid Lounge for drinks and, ah, Gram Parsons' Nudie suit says we'd look good together but I don't know. He's kind of a flirt. Anyway, You know I really don't think it's any of your business anymore actually. I hope you're happy with that, ah, what's her name again? Miss Stratocaster?" She said. "Yeah, that's



her name. But, well, er, um, I miss you and want you to know that after all of our wild, insane times together that I'm very glad you're in a place that appreciates you. Just wanted you to know that. And that I will always love you." "Yeah? Well, you should save that kind of talk for your little Miss Strat. If that's really her name."

Actually, it went nothing like that. It was incredibly moving to finally see my old girl on

display at the Country Music Hall of Fame museum this past weekend. I felt honored and humbled by all the nice folks who work at the museum and by all the kind people who came to see my interview/performance at the museum's beautiful Ford Theater. That day was truly was one of the most moving, important days not just in my career but in my life. Thank you all from bottom of my old blues blatin' guitar basher's heart." Dave Alvin was interviewed at the Ford Theater by Michael McCall and performed 4 songs.

Dave: "It was the best trip to Nashville I've ever had. I got in kind of late and drove over to look at the apartment where I lived in 1990 at the lowest point in my life. I parked out in front and ate a hamburger thinking, Wow I lived here once." Sometimes I wonder, what are we doing here at the Country Music Hall of Fame - but then I say 'Yes, we deserve it.'" —~~AM~~



The Third Mind 2 – The Supergroup’s Second Album Out Oct. 27 on Yep Roc Records

The album features an all-star eclectic ensemble of like-minded musicians: Jesse Sykes (acoustic guitar, vocals); Dave Alvin (electric guitar); Victor Krummenacher (bass guitar/harmonium/mellotron); David Immerglück (guitar); and Michael Jerome (drums/percussion)--

The album reflects the band members’ varied musical histories with a “no safety parachute” recording approach using free-form studio techniques, no rehearsals, no preconceived arrangements, and recording spontaneous group improvisations live in studio.

The six-song set, which runs the length of three LP sides, showcases songs written in the 1960s including, GROOVIN’ IS EASY, WHY NOT YOUR BABY, SALLY GO ROUND THE ROSES, and an original composition, TALL GRASS, written by Jesse Sykes and Dave Alvin for the album. It is available for pre-order on CD, digital and LP formats, and the fourth LP side features The Third Mind Mandala etching by Tony Fitzpatrick. A video for TALL GRASS has been released. Jesse Sykes offers, “‘Tall Grass’ sets out to celebrate the spirit or psyche of place, where the external and internal worlds meet. It’s a midnight serenade, a love song and a bit of a eulogy to the land itself.”

Produced by The Third Mind, the album was recorded by Will Golden at Sir Tiger Studio in Los Angeles and mixed by Craig Parker Adams at Winslow Court Studios in Los Angeles, and mastered by David Glasser at Airshow Mastering. Starting four years ago as a wishful music fantasy, this California based supergroup, has now become a powerful and thrilling sonic reality.



Dave Alvin: “All of the band members are available for a tour in October – so as long as my cancer doesn’t come back, there should be a tour. Jesse Sykes sings all the songs which makes it distinctly a Third Mind record. If I sing, it becomes a Dave Alvin record and I don’t want that. She has such a great voice and on this, she really shines. She and I wrote a really beautiful song TALL TREES, that I’m really proud of. It’s similar to the first album in the way we recorded it – no rehearsals, just deciding what key to play in and then go for it and see what happens. It’s really a guitar album – guitar-a-rama [laughs]. —~~am~~am



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