

ISSUE #24

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

AUG 1999

DAVE ALVIN TOUR DATES

With The Guilty Men

8/27 Reno NV at Rollin' On the River
8/28 Las Vegas NV at Clark County
8/29 Phoenix AZ at Rhythm Room
9/3 Yosemite CA at Strawberry fest
9/4 San Francisco CA at Slim's
9/11 Los Angeles at Roxy
9/12 San Diego CA at Street Scene

Richard Thompson -Dave opening

Solo Acoustic

9/22 Denver CO at Ogden Theatre
9/23 Lawrence KS at Liberty Hall
9/24 St. Louis MO at Mississippi Nights
9/25 Chicago IL at Park West
9/26 Madison WI at Barrymore Theatre
9/28 Minneapolis at MN First Avenue
9/29 Milwaukee at WI Shank Hall
9/30 Indianapolis at IN Vogue
10/1 Columbus OH at TBA
10/2 Cincinnati OH at Bogarts
Acoustic duo tour (w/ Rick Shea)
with Buddy and Julie Miller opening
10/14 Annapolis MD at Ram's Head
10/15 NYC at Bowery Ballroom (The only
show with the Guilty men)
10/16-17 Philadelphia PA at Tin Angel
10/20 Alexandria VA at Birchmere
10/22 Carrboro NC at Art Center
10/23 Charlotte NC at Neighborhood the.
10/24 Charleston WV at Mountain Stage

BLASTERS TOUR DATES

11/20 Long Beach Ca at The Blue Cafe

“The New Guilty Men” Joe Terry - Rick Shea Interview Issue

LATEST NEWS: — Rumors have circulated that The Knitters will reform for 2 benefit shows at Slim's in San Francisco on September 13 and 14. Watch the news for the official word. The Knitters are Dave Alvin on guitar, John Doe and Exene of X on vocals, DJ Bonebrake on drums and Jonny Ray Bartel on bass. They released an album called Poor Little Critter On The Road. (Slash Records, 1985) -- Bloodshot Records will be releasing a Knitters tribute album on October 5. It will follow the sequence of the original Knitters album, but by all different bands. Included: Robbie Fulks, Old 97's, Whiskeytown, and a lot more. It will also include an unreleased Knitters song recorded for a movie but was never used. Dave finished producing Katy Moffatt's Loose Diamonds CD in May. He describes it as, “A cross between Blackjack David and Patsy Cline.” Due out Oct 5 – In September, Dave will do an acoustic tour opening for Richard Thompson. – The Blasters have been rehearsing for a new album. -- Dave and Tom Russell each recorded a song for Ramblin' Jack's new HighTone album The Long Ride. Release date: Sept. 14. Both Tom and Dave will be writing liner notes for

the album. -- The Derailers' new CD Full Western Dress (Produced by Dave) is due out 9/21. – You can now access the Blasters/Dave Alvin web site by entering WWW.DAVEALVIN.COM -- The Blackjack David Japanese CD pressing has two bonus tracks, HOW YOU WANT IT DONE and RAILROAD BILL. The disc is in a standard jewel case, and includes the lyrics in English and Japanese. It can be purchased at www.musicimports.com. — The Little Milton tribute album on Malacco Records which includes Dave's duet with Milton, is due out in September. -- John Bazz and Jerry Angel have been playing around L.A. with “The Mike Eldred Trio.” They recorded an album, and Mike Eldred is now mastering it and looking for a label to release it. — **Press:** The June and August issues of Tower Records Pulse! Magazine contains quotes from Dave about Country Music. -- Look for a Dave Alvin interview in the July 16, 1999 issue of Goldmine, with The Ventures on the cover. In the corner of the cover is an inserted color picture of Dave. It's a reprint of Dave's interview from 10/98. -- Tom Wilk reports that the Philadelphia Daily News ran an unlikely announcement in its June 25

In This Issue: The new Guilty Men interviews: Rick Shea and Joe Terry. Blasters Q&As, Dave Alvin at Book Soup, Dave Alvin No. Cal acoustic tour, and tour photo galleries.

issue: "Sax great Lee Allen will perform with the Duprees at the Trump Plaza casino in Atlantic City." Tom called the Daily News and informed them that Lee Allen died in October 1994. It turns out that the Lee Allen performing in Atlantic City is a comedian, not a musician. The News ran a correction, but did not say that saxman Lee Allen was deceased. — Smokey Hormel was featured in a 2-page article in the September issue of Guitar Player Magazine. He is currently out on the road with Tom Waits — A book titled The Early Days of L.A. Punk contains references to the Blasters important role in L.A. punk, and a picture of the original Rollin' Rock album cover. **Radio:** Dave's interview on the American Routes show aired in June and so did the E-Town radio show. — **Miscellaneous** — Austin City Limits has announced this was the last season to be part of PBS' "select programming" deal, which charges stations extra to carry ACL. Now all PBS stations will carry the new ones and repeats. So watch for repeated airings of the Dave Alvin episode. Also licensing deals are being worked out to release the ACL shows on video. — Bruce Springsteen, ever the Blasters fan, has been playing LONG WHITE CADILLAC in his taped pre-show music in Europe. — Chris Gaffney is releasing a CD in August of his first EP from 1986 and some live bonus tracks. Dave and Chris plan to record Chris's next High-Tone album's basic tracks Sept 5-11. The Guilty Men will be playing on tracks with Chris's band. More recording will follow later. Dave says, "We'll go back in later and record some Mexican songs with real Mexican musicians." — James Intveld is in the process of recording two separate albums. — Buddy Blue's album is due out in September. Dave: "I do a guitar solo that is one of my favorites. We did an electric slow blues thing and then an old time rag."—In early August Dave opened acoustic for Boz Scaggs at three gigs. —Am

THE JOE TERRY INTERVIEW. KEYS MAN.

***The 'New Guilty Men' Interviews:** Joe Terry is the new keyboard/piano player in Dave Alvin's Guilty Men arriving in 1998 for the Blackjack David tour. As a long time member of the Missouri based band, The Skeletons, Joe has been playing with Dave off and on for 8 years. Now as a full fledged member, he gets the interview grilling in Philadelphia somewhere around midnight on 7/14/99. Joe is one of those regular guys, who simply describes himself this way: "I live in Springfield, MO, with my enchanting wife Jane and children: Joe, 10 and Sally, 8."*

By Billy Davis

AM: How did you start playing the piano?

Joe Terry: We had a piano in the house, but my next door neighbor's father played really good, as did his eldest son and another son my age. Between my piano and their piano, I was playing all the time. I felt I had a natural affinity for it.

AM: What style of music were you listening to, and what were you playing?

JT: I was playing real primitive forms of boogie-woogie. His father played mostly jazz-type stuff. I was listening to whatever my brothers were listening to. I'm the youngest of 6 boys and one girl. One of my brothers is a singer in San Francisco; he had Temptations' records. We listened to Elvis and the Beatles and maybe some Ray Charles records. Later on, we were getting into the



Photo: Billy Davis

psychedelic era and what ever was popular. This was the late 60's. There is one basic boogie bass line that I was taught, and it all stemmed from there. It's all rooted in the blues.

AM: When were you in your first band?

JT: I grew up in St. Louis. When I was twelve, we had a driveway band. I remember I had somebody's little combo organ, and we played HEY JUDE over and over. When I moved to Springfield for college, I bought a piano, but I would go over to the school to play in the practice rooms. One day this kid comes in and asked me, "Do you wanna be in a band?" He was in a band that was playing REO Speedwagon and stuff. I played with them for 4 or 5 months and did one gig at a high school; then I decided to leave. Soon after, I was playing in the practice room when a guy came in saying he was making a 45 and wanted me to play on it. His name was Joey Skidmore. He was known pretty well around Springfield for putting out a bunch of his own records. He had a record deal in France and he has had songs played on Dr. Demento. I played on a few of his records after that.

Then it might have been at another practice session that a guy named Jay Floyd asked to form a band together. That's where it really started. I was about 19 or 20 and Jay was real into rockabilly. This was about 1979, when the Blasters were new at it and the Stray Cats were new. We were younger than everybody else; we were primitive. We had a sax player

JOE TERRY SESSION DISCOGRAPHY

Joey Skidmore all 70's-90's releases.
Eric Amble Roscoe's Gang 1988
Skeletons In the Flesh 1988
Jonathon Richman Jonathon Goes Country 1990
Skeletons Waiting 1992
Scott Kempner Tenement Angels 1992
Box Car Willie Rocky Box: Rockabilly 1993
Brewer & Shiply Shanghai 1995
Syd Straw War and Peace 1996
Robbie Fulks Country Love Songs 1996
Five Ring Circus self titled 1996
Skeletons Nothing To Lose 1997
Robbie Fulks South Mouth 1997
Uprooted The best of Roots of Country 1998
Robbie Fulks Lets Kill Saturday Night 1998
Rudy Grayzell Let's Get Wild 1998
Jono Manson Little Big Man 1998
Backsliders South Lines 1999
Bottle Rockets Brand New Year 1999

and a girl drummer, who was in a band called The Debs that were legendary in Springfield for a while. We started practicing and I bought a Farfisa organ. We hauled around an upright piano to all the gigs we did. It was really fun and cool. We called our selves "The Midwest C.D.s" or just "The Couch Dancers." The name came because we were known for our parties where we would pick up the furniture. If you came in at 12:30 at night, you

would see all the furniture uplifted for dancing, and it all would be wrecked. We did that for a year or two. We played a lot of Gene Vincent or we would do something like Hank Ballard's THRILL ON THE HILL – stuff like that.

AM: Any recording?

JT: Yes. Jay's Mom paid for us to record a three-song demo of Jay's songs. Another time we went into a warehouse with somebody's 8-track. We recorded about 16 songs. One I sang was Joe Ely's I KEEP MY FINGER-NAILS LONG SO THEY CLICK WHEN I PLAY THE PIANO. I sounded horrible.

AM: What was the next band?

JT: Next a guy named Randy Chowning who was an original Ozark Mountain Daredevil. He wrote COUNTRY GIRL and co-wrote IF YOU WANT TO GET TO HEAVEN. He had me try out and then asked me if I wanted to join the Dare Devils. I thought I had hit the big time, because they were playing theaters and clubs. I traveled with them for a year and a half, we did a small arena tour with the



band America, and then gigs got sporadic. We did some demo stuff, but not in a proper studio. It wasn't released. The gigs got fewer and fewer.

Next, I was asked by Donnie Thompson to join the Morells. They were legendary around Springfield. At that time they just got a four-star rating in Rolling Stone. The Morells were Donnie (D. Clinton Thompson) on Guitar, Lou (Whitney) on bass, Lou's wife Maralee on keyboards, and Ron Grempp on drums. Shake and Push (1982) was their big record.

The Morells started way back when Lou and Donnie were in a band called The Symptoms. They also formed an earlier version of the Skeleton's with Lloyd and Randy Chowning of the Dare Devils -- which was in the 70's. They were doing Skeleton's bar gigs, and Steve Forbert tapped those guys as his backup band. After coming off the road, that's when Donnie and Lou formed the Morells. The Symptoms put out a record that

now is highly collectible going for \$70 or a million, something like that (laughs). It's on all the collector's lists.

Anyway, they wanted to add more vocals, so they asked Bobby Lloyd (Hicks) and I to join. The second keyboard was a "Why-Not?" kind of thing. We did that for a few years and then the crowds just weren't there so, The Morells went their separate ways except me, Donnie, and Ron Grempp who hooked back up with my old friend from The Couch Dancers, Jay. We called the band The Cousins. We thought that the combination of groups and their popularity would achieve a level of roadies and good guarantees, recordings and all that kind of thing. We did it for a year, and things just fell apart.

Then for a year I played in cover bands around Springfield. I tried moving to San Francisco for a summer to get something going with my brother. We did a few gigs. It didn't quite pan out and I missed the mid west. So, I went back. It was about 1989, and Donnie approached me about starting the Skeletons again. I said, "Yeah let's do it." So we hired Kelly Brown, a local keyboardist; I guess we wanted an organ and piano attack. We did the Skeletons for a couple of years. The Skeletons get compared to NRBQ all the time. They call us the baby NRBQ.

The first time we met up with Dave, the Skeletons played at Maxwell's (Hoboken, NJ) and it was a great moment. Dave was playing an acoustic show, just two people. We got on stage, but not together and rocked the house big time. It was so cool!

AM: How did The Skeletons wind up as Dave's everyday backing band in 1991-92?

JT: We had a manager named Rich Neeson. He knew Dave Alvin's manager and someone got the idea for us to back up Dave on one of

his tours. Dave came to Springfield, and we rehearsed. I remember his words: "This is amazing." At that time in our lives, we were all on the same plane. The Morells had a big following. The Blasters had a bigger following. All of us knew about each other. We did that for a year (1991), opening Dave's shows and then backing him up. In late 1992 we went back to being just the Skeletons, and we have been together ever since. Dave formed the Guilty Men, and Bobby Lloyd joined up.

AM: What have the Skeletons done since then?

JT: Right after Dave's tour we did an album called Waiting for Alias Records. That was based on a signing at South By Southwest. We played SXSW with Dave at the end of the Blue Blvd tour. The Skeletons played at Liberty Lunch in Austin, and then Dave came out, and we backed him up. It was packed, like 1000 people, and we were later voted best of show for SXSW in a Dallas paper, I think. It was really cool and a conquering moment for the Skeletons. A few years later we did Nothing To Lose for HighTone Records. It wasn't so rootsy, but more pop. That kind of threw them for a loop. It didn't sell all that great. There are many reasons we didn't tour much. Lou is busy with a studio he built called "The Studio." We recorded Nothing To Lose there. Donnie was busy with a trio, including a girl drummer, called The Park Center Squares. They put out a CD that's really good

AM: How did you come into the Guilty Men?

JT: Early last winter (late 1998), Dave called and said, "Joe (in his deepest Dave Alvin imitating voice) do you want to join the band?"

Of course I said I'd love to. So he sent me a bunch of stuff to learn.

Actually there were a few times later on after the Skeltons and Dave separated, that we did hook up for a few outings. I remember, Dave had just put out King Of California, and we were the first to work that out with him. The same with Museum of Heart. He brought it to us at soundcheck soon after he wrote it. So I knew a lot of that stuff.

When Dave first sent me Blackjack David to learn for joining the Guilty Men, I thought,



Photo: Billy Davis

"Wow this is really folky." It threw me, and then I started to fall in love with it. I liked it a lot, going into that direction. I had done all the other old songs a million times, so it was great to have all these new songs from Black Jack David. So we got together in Springfield. We practiced for 5 days and that was it.

AM: The Skeletons recently did a session with Rudy Grayzell?

JT: Yeah that started for me anyway, when I was in NY years ago. Billy Miller from the A-Bones asked me to do a cut with Rudy Grayzell at Coyote Studios. It was only funny that just last year we hooked up with Rudy again, and the Skeletons did a record with Rudy. Rudy is a great, great guy and a hell of

a singer.

AM: How about some of the other sessions you did.

JT: Robbie Fulks was a big fan of the Skeletons. He came to Springfield, and I never heard of him. He seemed like a kid, but he had these songs that he wrote and we did it as a one-off for fun. (Country Love Songs, 1996) Low and behold, he is now getting his name out there. We did his second one (South Mouth, 1997), and then for the third (Lets Kill Saturday Night, 1998), he had this big budget from Geffen. They wouldn't let him do it in Springfield, so I went to Nashville to do it with the other guys in his band. I'm a big fan of Robbie's and he should rule the world. One of the favorite things I've done recently is with Jono Manson. He's a great singer and put out a great album. He's out of the same lower east-side like Blues Traveler, sort of Joan Osbourne stuff.

Ed. –Suddenly I spot a rather large waterbug walking across the center of the hotel lobby we're sitting in. After pointing it out to Joe, he runs over to it, bending over and upon careful examination says, "That's a big one!" Then even louder he directs his voice to the front desk saying, "The good size!!" and then even louder so everyone can hear, "Cockaroach!!" Then he runs back to the chair to continue the interview.

AM: What kind of music do you write for

yourself?

JT: Lately, some of the stuff that I haven't really played for anybody has been a long the country vein. I've never been a country writer. My roots are not country; it was never in the house. Most of what I do is based on pop sensibilities. I've been writing on the road, and nice things have come to me in the form of lyrics. I just did about 12 songs for a kids record of mine, that I haven't put out. I thought of doing side one - lullabies for small infants. Mom can put it on to put them to sleep. Then side two is fun stuff for two-to-four-year olds. I recorded it all on the keyboard at my house on a ADAT: drums, guitar sounds, and everything. I took it down to Lou's studio to sing the songs. I had it mastered and burnt on a CD ready for replication. I haven't had the money to replicate it. But I still want to do that.

As far as the writing style, I draw from people admittedly. I draw from NRBQ or The Band. I've been thinking about the way that Dave writes. He's a narrator of stories in an unbelievable way. I'd love to have that gift. I draw from slightly universal themes, but on a more personal level I guess.

AM: How did you wind up playing the accordion?

JT: I don't really play the accordion. I loiter on stage with one in my hands (laughs). Well, there was accordion on Blackjack David, so I figured 'What the hell.' It might sound better than some synthesized keyboard accordion. So I gave it a shot. But I'm getting better and I really enjoy it.

You can hear Joe Terry singing lead vocals on The Skeletons' albums. Listen to the album Waiting on songs ST. LOUIS, THE THINGS WE NEED, and RAIN, SNOW, AND SLEET. On Nothing to Lose it's MAD OLD LADY, IT'S OKAY TO BE LONELY, THE WORLD YOU GRACE, and WHIFFLE BALL. ~~AM



THE RICK SHEA INTERVIEW. MAN OF STEEL.

The 'New Guilty Men' Interviews: Pedal Steel guitar player Rick Shea joined Dave's band for the BlackJack David tour, to add more color to the band's sound, and he has become a permanent member of the Guilty Men. In addition to playing steel, Rick is a fine vocalist, songwriter, and guitarist. He has released two solo albums to date and played on numerous other sessions. Rick was interviewed in Sparta, NJ, on 7/11/99 overlooking Lake Mohawk.

By BILLY DAVIS

AM: Let's start with your first ever band.

Rick Shea: Well, I started in a band in grade school, but before that I was listening to music around the house and on the radio. A friend of mine in 7th or 8th grade and I played in a surf band. I had a Japanese St. George guitar. I got a Fender Dual Sonic pretty quickly. That was a big charge for me. I played bass for a little while in junior high school, in garage bands, playing schools and parties. The first thing I remember playing was Yardbirds' songs. We next learned blues progressions, playing the Rolling Stones, Buffalo Springfield, and Neil Young songs. We learned just about all of the songs on Neil's Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere album. This was the late 60's.

After that I started doing acoustic music. Out in San Bernardino, there were a few places to do that around the college. I didn't start playing with guys who were doing their own songs until I was 20 years old (1974). I didn't have songs of my own until I was 30 years old. I tried to write songs, but I knew they were pretty bad (laughs). I didn't want to play any for people until I thought they were good enough.

AM: When did you know that good songs were coming out?

RS: From other people's reactions. Later, I was living up in the mountains, by Lake Arrowhead and Crestline, and I started playing weekend bars. When I was about 26, I started playing in country bands in San Bernardino, with guys I hadn't known before. We had a



Photo: Janet Crump

band and we changed our name to "The Stompers" after we saw the Blasters at the Palomino Club (N. Hollywood, CA). We were so knocked out, we changed the name and then learned a bunch of Blaster styled songs. But we weren't that good at that. We were really a country band.

AM: Were you already playing pedal steel at this point?

RS: I think I was. Some one who owed me some money gave me a steel. So I started taking it to the jobs right away, and I started working things up on it. Probably way too soon; but they were drunks gigs, so it didn't matter (laughs). Later, with the country



bands, I put in a lot of time on the steel.

AM: What musicians influenced you on the steel?

RS: I started listening to country radio and Merle Haggard. There was plenty of good steel

guitar on the radio at that time. I had a real interest in it, so I listened to it anywhere.

AM: When did you start playing the mandolin?

RS: I just started that a year before joining Dave's band. I didn't play it much before Dave. I think a few recording sessions maybe. I'm really still learning that one though.

AM: So after being in the country bar bands, what was the next big step?

RS: Well things didn't start to happen until I moved down to Covina, CA. There were a lot of little steps. I started working with people at the Palomino. Probably Chris's (Gaffney) band, "The Cold Hard Facts" was a big step. That was the first band I was in that was playing the L.A. clubs on a regular basis. I played on that album they did for ROM records (Chris Gaffney and The Cold Hard Facts, 1986). I started with the band maybe a year or two before that. Actually, before I moved to Covina, I was working with Heather Miles before she had anything going on.

AM: How did you get in Chris's band?

RS: Through Wyman Reese (Chris Gaffney's keyboard player). He had friends in one of

the country bands I played with: Mary Lynn Diaz and Alan Campbell. Wyman liked that band and spent a lot of time with the band. I got to know him because of that. He's a quiet type of guy. I knew him for about two years before I ever had a conversation with him.

So in Chris's band is where I first met Dave. We went to Tucson, opening the show with Chris's band, and then backed Dave. This had to have been '88. It was at the point where he was without a band (after he disbanded the Allnighters). We opened a few shows for different versions of Dave's bands over that time. I was also doing stuff with George Highfield. We opened for George Jones in Stockton, CA, and also toured europe. I also went to europe with Heather Miles after she put out her HighTone record.

AM: How did you wind up leaving Chris's band?



RICK SHEA SESSION DISCOGRAPHY

Rick Shea Outside of Nashville 1989
Chris Gaffney Cold Hard Facts 1990
A Town South of Bakersfield 1992
Heather Myles Untamed 1995
Rick Shea Buffalo Show 1995
Treasures Left Behind 1998
Patty Booker I Don't Need All That 1999

RS: Well, what happened was (laughs), I was kind of busy doing stuff on my own, and with other people. I wasn't able to make a couple of gigs. In particular, I didn't make a tour of Texas that they did. So, after that I stopped hearing from them (laughs). I started noticing they were playing places, and they didn't tell me about it. I didn't do anything for about a year and a half with them. That's happened a couple of times, that I was fired from that band.

AM: Tell me how your first album Outside Of Nashville (1991) came about?

RS: Wyman produced the first four songs, and I used them as demos. We did another four songs, and I heard Gary Barandon and Patty Booker had put out their own album on cassette. It looked pretty easy, so I did the same thing.

AM: I heard you're re-releasing it on CD.

RS: I'm not sure it's even gonna be called that, but we recorded a few new songs to put on there. Recently, Cody Bryant helped us record five more new songs. He's gonna master all of it with the original eight and put it out on CD. It will be on Wagon Wheel or Windsor Records. They're labels that Cody inherited from his father. His father used to release square dance records.

AM: I see you have been singing a solo song in Dave's set called WANTED MAN, the old Johnny Cash song?

RS: Yeah I've been doing that for a long

time. In fact, we recorded that to be on the Outside of Nashville release. Dave wanted me to do GEORGIA PINES (an acoustic song), and maybe we will work it up, but a lot of Dave's shows are pretty up. I thought we might do something that would fit in a better dynamic range. I have another song we might try too.

AM: How Did The Buffalo Show (1995 Major Label) album come about?

RS: I started doing shows with Gary Mandell at McCabe's in Santa Monica. He's the guy who owns Major Label Records, and he was interested. I was doing most of my own tunes at the shows, and he liked the songs a lot. He talked about doing a recording. I went in with my drummer, and we recorded three songs. That was 1994. He liked them so, he said, 'Let's go for more.'



Photo: Billy Davis



AM: On the album there is a Spanish influence on certain songs. Where did that come from?

RS: From my wife Suzy's mom. She's Mexican, with a lot of Indian blood in her. She wrote those two songs on the album that are all in Spanish. She would come over to the house and sing them into the tape recorder. I would figure out the chords, and then the band would work out an arrangement. The other songs that have Spanish in them, like a chorus or something, was stuff I heard her using around the house when she and Suzy's dad came out to visit. Sometimes, I would call them up and they would give me a phrase, so it's all from them. My Spanish is kind of non-existent. I have a few other songs saved, but she stopped giving them to me. I was very disappointed. After Suzy's dad died,

the whole dynamic of the family changed, so it's kind of a sad thing.

AM: There are vastly different directions on The Buffalo Show - acoustic songs, full band songs, and the Spanish songs.

RS: Originally we were trying to make a folk album. When we first started, we used all acoustic instruments; we weren't even gonna have any drums. The idea was, that I would be able to present those songs live with acoustic guitar and sound close to the record. Then it was Gary's choice to have the real country songs on there. I said, 'If you're gonna have country shuffles, then we have to have drums.' So once the drums were there, we used them on everything.

I also did a song on the Town South of Bakersfield Vol. 3 CD called FOOT IN THE FIRE. It's a compilation of country artists. I got that from playing at the Palomino club.

AM: Didn't you do some soundtrack work with Dave Alvin early on?

RS: Yeah, for The Body Guard. Greg Leisz was out of town, (laughs) so Dave called me up. I already knew Dave from going to Tucson. In the studio we did one song, I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU. John Doe was a friends with Kevin Costner, who called John up to do background music and John called Dave. Playing in movies is always great money. There's residual money for years after, especially for a big movie like that. So I played on that song.

AM: How did you get in Dave's band?

RS: We did the thing in Tucson, so I knew him. We probably did things at the Palomino earlier, a hand full of times with other people, just sort of jamming. I would see him around. In early '98, we were both playing at Jack's Sugar Shack at the Barn Dance show. Dave said he wanted to give me a call. We did a few rehearsals at Jack's Sugar Shack (in August of '97 Dave played the opening slot at L. A.'s Jack's Sugar Shack all through August

rehearsing the new Black-jack David songs). Bobby wasn't out there playing drums. Rick (Solem) was playing keyboards, and Gregory was there. Then we did the Noe Valley Ministry show in November (acoustic with Dave, Rick and Brantley Kearns.) Dave asked me to join the summer tour. It was all sort of indirect.

AM: You didn't think you'd wind up playing Madison Square Garden, did you?

RS: No! That was pretty cool. The tour was supposed to be just the summer, and he said, 'That would be it.' Then the Italian tour came along afterwards and that was great. Then he asked me to do some stuff in October. So, I pretty much thought I was on board at that point. Then the October stuff became the Dylan tour.

AM: Who is currently in your solo band?

RS: Brantley Kearns on fiddle, Wyman Reese on piano, Dave Hall on bass, and John Lee White plays drums.

AM: Brantley Kearns is a name that seems to pop up with yours and Dave's bands.

RS: Brantley had done some stuff with Dave's band a year or two before that Noe Valley Ministry gig. Brantley did one or two of the dates at Jack's. We also did an acoustic show at The Neighborhood Church (Pasadena, CA) too. I've known Brantley a long time; he played on all the Buffalo Show stuff. We started working together back in '92 on a tour with Heather Myles.

AM: The recent feature article on you in the L.A. Weekly compared you to the Bakersfield sound of Roy Nichols.

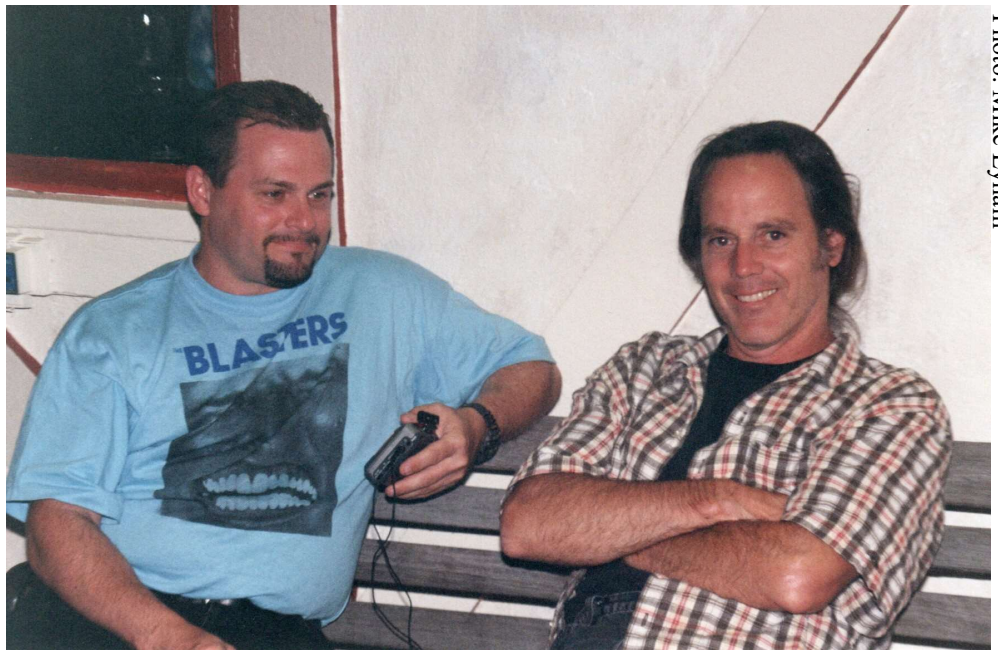


Photo: Mike Lynam

Billy Davis doing this interview with Rick Shea

RS: I'm a big fan of that stuff, but I thought that was pretty generous. I don't consider myself in any kind of league with those guys. I've got a lot of the old Merle stuff, and Buck Owens. It's just great music. Anything you like a lot has a big influence on you. Plus, I had to learn a lot of that music when I was playing in country bars. So I had to listen to that guitar playing and learn the parts.

The L.A. Weekly has been so supportive. We did a show in conjunction with that article. They put my song GEORGIA PINES on a compilation CD of L.A. artists. I have had more things falling into place from working with Dave than with anything else. I've met radio people, promoters and such.

AM: What's next for you?

RS: Well, we're getting together stuff for a new album. It will have more electric guitars. I'm opening the Strawberry Festival in Yosemite, CA, (Sep. 3). I'll also be doing a show with Jessie Winchester at the Labarro Theatre (Santa Barbara, CA) in August. Patty Booker and I are doing a show at Culver Saloon in August. ~~**AM**

Q. from you & A. from the band

For John Bazz: Have the Blasters ever done anything with Dave Edmunds? It seems that they should be real soul mates. And equally underappreciated.— Charlie Hebson hebsonch@spsd.org

John Bazz: The Blasters never had the opportunity to work with Dave Edmunds, but I think that it would have been an ideal match, not only for his musical sensibilities but also for his stripped-down production techniques that would have leant a leaner, gutsier sound to our recordings that I feel we never quite captured. You must realize that the sentiment within the Blasters back in those days was to forgo the use of any outside help / production in lieu of doing it ourselves. It was only at the insistence of Warner Brothers (the guys with the money) that we used Jeff Eyrich to produce Hard Line in 1984. We did, however, work with Dave Edmunds' colleague, Nick Lowe, sometime in 1985 when Warner Bros. had him produce a demo session for the songs, BROTHER and FOURTH OF JULY. This, unfortunately, was the last time the original band ever recorded together. - ciao, Johnny B

For Keith Wyatt: What guitars, amps, and effects do you use? And when will your tape, Blues Guitar Tone be released? — Robbie Stewart robert.stewart@duke.edu

Keith Wyatt: When I play with the Blasters currently, I'm using pretty much the same setup all the time, which is: Fender Strat (1973) that I bought new. Also a Gibson '54 Reissue Gold Top Les Paul that I just got last year. It's a great guitar with a good sound for the band. It has P-90 pickups, which are just about my favorites. I use the Les Paul to replace my ES-295, which is too old and fragile to travel with. I use a Matchless amp. It's a 30 watt head and 2-12 cabinet that is very smooth, even tone and doesn't require much fiddling with the knobs to get a sound. Also a Matchless "Hot Box" pedal which contains a preamp tube and provides a warm distortion that comes in very handy when we travel and use rented gear, which is sometimes horrendous. I also have a Fender Reverb amp - I got this a few years ago when it wasn't hip and it didn't cost much. I use just enough reverb to fatten up the tone. That's about it - I pretty much believe in getting tone with your hands and using guitars and amps that don't get in your way. The Blues Guitar Tone video should

already be out, as far as I know, although I haven't seen a copy myself. I just finished a Jump Blues Rhythm Guitar video and will be shooting a Jump Blues Soloing video in a couple of weeks.

For John Bazz: John, I'm a bass player as well, and I'm a big fan of your solid style of bass playing. My question is of the gear head variety: What's your rig like? Are you a Fender bass w/flatwounds kind of guy like I imagine? What sort of basses, etc. do you own/prefer. Thanks, Gear head.

John Bazz: Dear Gear head, Busted!!! For most of my Blaster life, I've used a '59 Fender Precision with La Bella 'Deep Talkin' Bass' flat wounds. In 1984 I was persuaded to switch to half round or brite flats, by our record producer, Jeff Eyrich, for the Hard Line LP. I continued using this style of string for quite some time until switching back to flatwounds (GHS). Although I prefer the La Bella, I can't find them as easily as the GHSs, which can be crucial while on the road. The '59 P bass along with a '67 P bass were stolen almost 3 years ago (a moment of silence, please), and I've gone on a bass-buying rampage since then, acquiring two '51 P bass reissues (Japanese), a '57 P bass reissue (U.S.), a '64 P bass reissue (U.S) and a reissue Dan Electro 'Long Horn' in purple burst! The original 'Rolling Rock' recordings were done using my first bass, a \$75 pawn shop special, (1949 maybe), 'Kay' electric hollow body. I own one other bass, a vintage '57 Gibson EB 2, which can be heard on County Fair 2000's, SAT-ELLITE MAN. My other gear consists of a SWR Goliath jr. (6 x 10") cabinet and an Ampeg SVT II Pro head along with a couple of other smaller cabinets. I also have an old Ampeg B15 that I intend to fix because it really sounds great for that 'you're-playin'-me-too-loud-so-I'm-gonna-distort-now,' Chicago blues style. It also looks wicked. So Long, Johnny B.

For John Bazz: I'm a bassist. I enjoy your playing VERY much. I am curious who YOU listened to that helped you form your style. Thanks. Any advice for blues/roots bass playing? Gerry Bass-jam624@AOL.com

John Bazz: This is a difficult question for me to answer because I don't play anything like my hero, Willie Dixon. Instead, I play a lot of the guitar lines

from Little Walter's 'Chess' recordings. Go figure. For some reason, Little Walter didn't always use a bass player, but instead, the second guitar would play the bass - and it's as near perfect as you'll get; very sparse and repetitive, almost cliché. It's sometimes hard to play in this style, the temptation being to add more than is necessary...must resist the urge! But if you listen real close, you can hear Willie Dixon in the background playing a simple, alternating I, V sort of pattern. This simple style is prevalent in most of his recordings of which there are many. If you listen to MAYBELINE by Chuck Berry you'll hear this simple style, then at the guitar solo, Willie starts walkin' and it really moves. If you have a chance to see Larry Taylor, don't hesitate. He has mastered Willie's (and others) style of playing. He is currently on tour with Tom Waits (w/Smokey Hormel on guitar!). Usually you can catch him in the Canned Heat or with Kim Wilson and his Blues All-Stars. Larry really commands whatever band he's in and has the best note selection going. Gene Taylor says that Larry has the best note-to-note volume consistency (no easy task) of anyone he's ever played with - highly recommended. A few other bass players that I really admire are Willie J. Campbell currently of The Fabulous Thunderbirds (killer right hand and unique, soulful bass lines), Keith Ferguson, also of the Fabulous Thunderbirds circa 1979 to 1985. Tommy Shannon of Stevie Ray Vaughn and Double Trouble, Jeff Turmas

ex-James Harman Band, and Jack Meyers, a post-war Chicago blues session player. You have to hear VIETNAM BLUES by Buddy Guy and Junior Wells, on Vanguard Records. Jack's playing is a bit over the top and very unorthodox. In fact, I'm surprised anyone in the band can play along with him, but they do and to great effect. Thanks for the Question, John Bazz

For John Bazz or Phil: I first want to say thank you two for keeping the Blasters alive, Jerry and Keith are both outstanding performers!!!!

Second, I just moved to Texas from L.A. (where I got to see the Blasters almost monthly.) Will the Blasters make it to Dallas or anywhere in Texas soon? Thanks for all the great music guys, you are and always will be the greatest! Eddie ebower@jacor.com

John Bazz: Eddie, Thanks a lot. It's really great to have a band that can play this music with the necessary urgency. As far as getting out to Texas...it could happen. If we had a new record, it would be a natural for us get out of L.A. and to tour the U.S. in support of such a monumental thing. In fact, we are currently in rehearsals, so that we can make a new Blaster record. So, with any luck, you just might see the Blasters in Dallas sometime before the year 2000...it could happen. Otherwise, come back to Los Angeles y'all. So Long, Johnny B. —Am

American Music Internet Style

--The Blasters/Dave Alvin official web site now has another address; WWW.DAVEALVIN.COM. -- For a more interactive internet site, visit the free AMERICAN MUSIC club page on Yahoo. Fans and friends can post their views and converse about The Blasters and Dave Alvin. Fans have joined in from all corners of the US, as well as Europe, reporting on the latest shows. Mondays at 10 PM E.S.T./ 7 PM Pacific, we have a live chat at the club page. In August, 'Guilty Man' Joe Terry came by and answered questions, and told stories about the recent summer tour. He will make a second appearance in late August. Expect more guests from the bands in the future. Go to WWW.Yahoo.com and search for AMERICAN MUSIC, or for help e-mail at Davistb@aol.com.

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• • • WEST COAST REPORT • • •

By American Music Correspondent Anita Bunter

NOTES *** Ramblin' Jack Elliott played at The Palms tonight, in Davis, CA, (June 5th). He mentioned that Dave's going to be on the his new album, which sparked spontaneous applause from the audience. Later, talking about the album some more, he said, "Dave Alvin;" and then he paused, and pushed his cowboy hat further back, shaking his head and said in his old cowboy drawl, "That guy has the DEEPEST voice..."

*** Dave Alvin really charmed the audience at Club Fred in Fresno, CA, (June 4th) during his song intro's. At one point, he was chatting with the crowd while replacing a string. He dropped references to Fresno, CA, places and events that you'd have to be a local to know about. It just delighted everyone. He cemented his bond with the crowd and got them cheering when he introduced KING OF CALIFORNIA. He said, "Well, my mother and my aunts and my grandfather all came from a place called Reedley, California. So, this one's for my mom, and my grand-daddy." (Reedley's a very small town southeast of Fresno.)

Dave got a lot of laughs when he started off the show by saying, "It's great to be back in Fresno on a Friday night. This is our first gig in a while, and it's a warm-up gig. We're going to make lots of mistakes, so if anyone can spot all the mistakes, I'll buy them seven beers." With everyone still laughing, he and the band launched into SO LONG BABY GOODBYE. Just a few beats into the song, everyone started laughing even harder. Dave turned around to see that (drummer) Bobby Lloyd had his right finger up to claim mistake number one.

*** The Aug '99 issue of Guitar Player magazine has a great review of Keith Wyatt's video Classic Blues Guitar, (part of the "Getting the Sounds" series). Classic Blues Guitar (\$19.95) shows Keith Wyatt demonstrating the sounds and styles of blues giants such as T-Bone Walker, BB King, and Stevie Ray Vaughan. He describes the evolution of blues guitar equipment over the last 50 years, and demonstrates how guitar and amp controls shape tone. Wyatt plays great and is a good teacher, tackling hard-to-define topics such as finding your own voice. His historical insights are excellent. If you're tired of the same old stuff from instructional videos, this series will be a breath of fresh air. -- Warner Bros.

*** Dwight Yoakam's touring for the first time in 3 years and instead of closing his shows with his current top hit, his remake of Queen's CRAZY LITTLE THING CALLED LOVE, he's still closing every show with Dave's LONG WHITE CADILLAC. Yeah, hard to top a great Dave song!

----- Report by Anita Bunter out of Northern California.

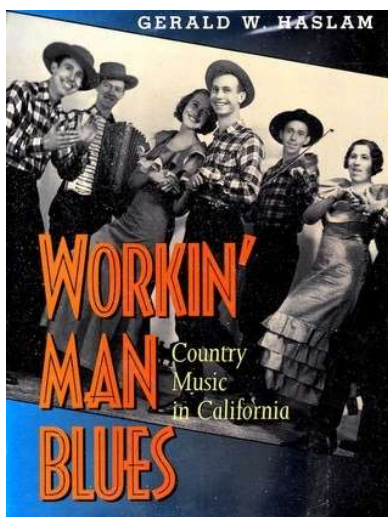
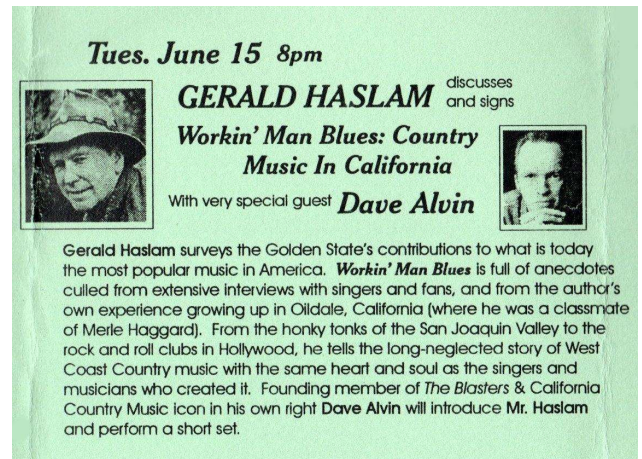
Workin' Man Blues: Country Music in California

A reading by author Gerald Haslam and performance by Dave Alvin

June 15, 1999 at BOOK SOUP - West Hollywood, CA



Gerald Haslam authored Workin' Man Blues: Country Music in California, and did a book signing at Book Soup. Dave Alvin added to the special event but doing an in-store performance. The book features Dave's and The Blasters' significance in the California music scene. There's also a photo of Dave and Dave's quoted often in the book. There's also a great quote featured on the back cover of the book by Dave about Gerald Haslam.



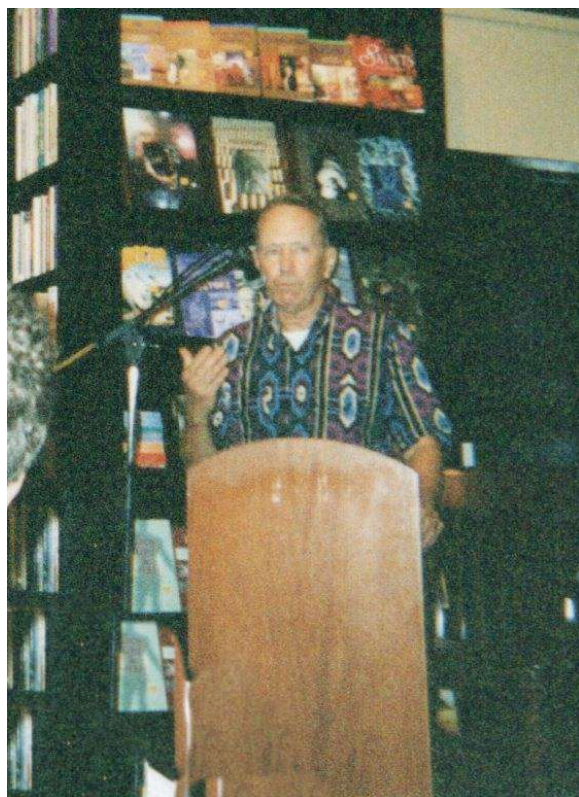
event. The evening started with the musical performance.

Dave Alvin's band included Rick Shea playing electric guitar, Greg Leisz on lap slide, and Brantley Kearns on fiddle. Dave Alvin played acoustic guitar.

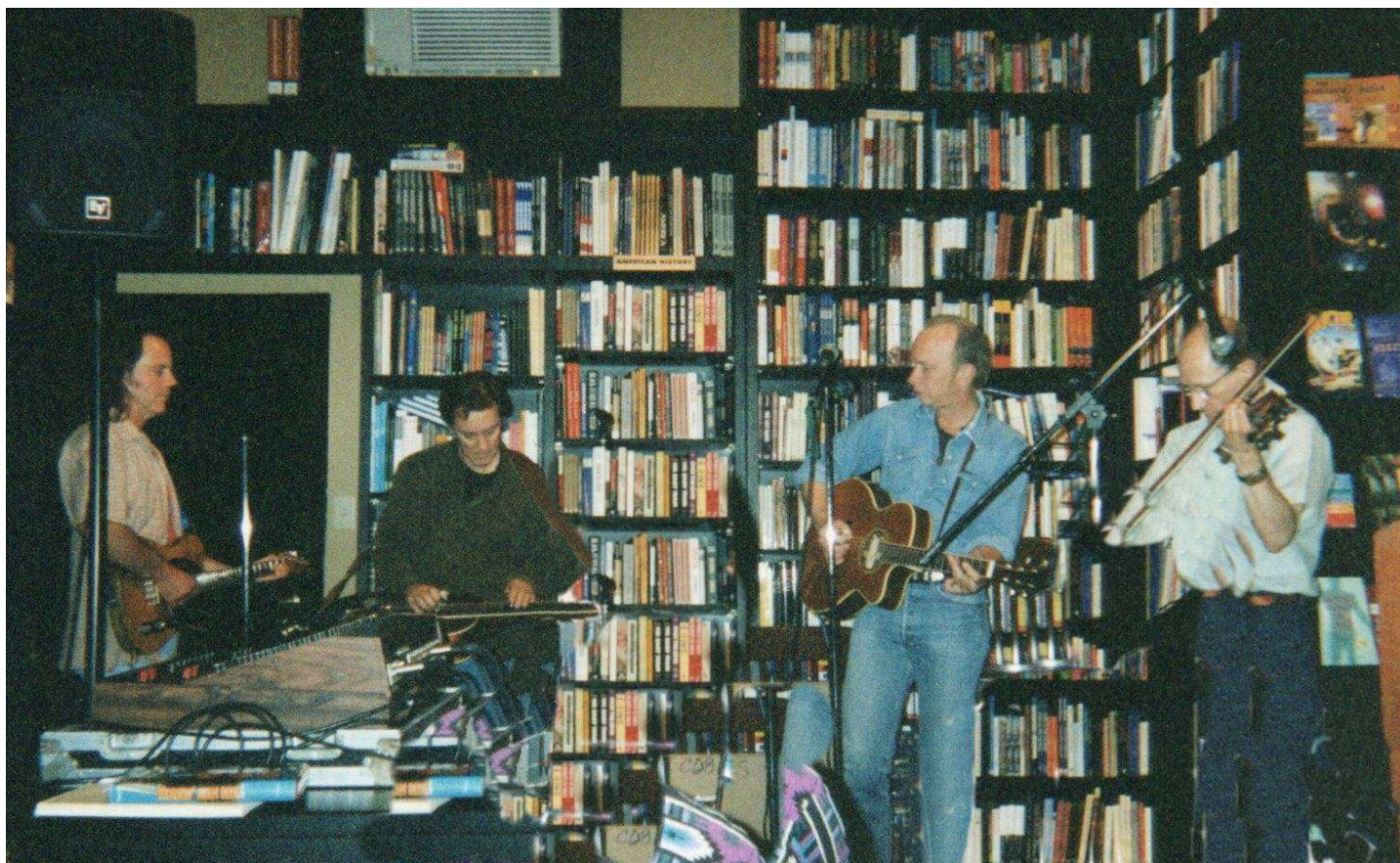
Rick Shea started the show singing GOING TO CALIFORNIA, followed by Brantley singing MY OWN KIND OF HAT. Greg Leisz even sang a song called SING ME BACK HOME and then another Rick Shea sung song by Buck Owens called HELLO TROUBLE. Dave Alvin finished the mini set with OUT IN CALIFORNIA. Gerald then did a reading from his book—a chapter on country legend Buck Owens and he took some questions.

The band then played a few other songs to close out the evening. Dave sang WHO BUYS THE WINE and Rick sang SWINGIN DOORS. The night finished with Gerald signing his book and meeting with the audience. —*AM*

Photos and description by American Music west coast correspondent Anita Bunter



Gerald Haslam speaking.



Rick Shea, Greg Leisz, Dave Alvin and Brantley Kearns

Kate Wolf Folk Festival

Dave Alvin with Rick Shea, Greg Boaz, and Brantley Kearns

June 26, 1999 - Sebastopol, CA

The Festival started in 1996 to honor Kate Wolf's contributions to folk music. She died in 1986 of Leukimia. Her influence on Folk artists is immeasurable.

I thought it would be a huge place. It sells out every year. My impression was, this is it? It's small, intimate and very

friendly. I heard they keep it small on purpose. Good!

Dave Alvin was the headliner with what was billed as his acoustic band - Rick, Brantley and Greg Boaz. This was the Saturday of the two day festival.

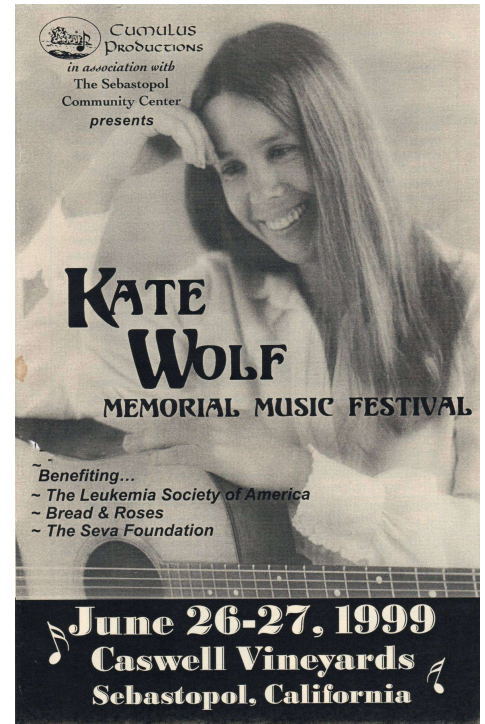
Dave Alvin really

enjoyed the location for this concert. Between songs, he often mentioned to the crowd how beautiful the outdoor setting was. Even before DRY RIVER he said "I hope when I come back in 10 years, that this place still looks like this."

Note in the photos the golden color of the grass behind the stage. That's where the line "The golden rolling hills of California" comes from in the song Kate made famous THE RED TAILED

HAWK. Golden grass means no smoking for everyone at this festival including Dave. There is a sugar pine tree directly behind Dave's spot on stage. It's John Muir's favorite tree, each branch goes its own way.

From the audience's point of view near the top it was a grassy slope that picnickers all sat comfort-





able to watch the performers at the festival.

Off to the far right (not pictured) is a radio station, the pirate “Sunrise Radio” booth set up which broadcasts the music from the stage. After Dave’s set he went to the booth to do an interview.

Dave Alvin’s set included the Kate Wolf song THESE TIMES WERE LIVING IN which he recorded for the 1998 Kate Wolf Tribute album called Treasures Left Behind.

The festival closes at dusk, so Dave was playing as the sun was setting so no encore. The last song was DRY RIVER. —~~AM~~



Photos and description by American Music west coast correspondent Anita Bunter



The Palms - Davis California

Dave Alvin with Rick Shea, Greg Boaz, and Brantley Kearns

June 27, 1999

by Anita Bunter



I was there with my friends Annette Henderson and Holly Cannon who I met originally at the Dave Alvin Austin City Limits taping in January of this year. We all met up to see a few Dave Alvin weekend shows, this one at the Palms. We sat close to the stage, in fact our feet are on-stage - as is some guy who is barefoot next to us.

While we were waiting for the show to start we got to know the people around us. We were surrounded by hardcore Dave

Alvin fans. Dave has a big following here, so we passed around the May 99 issue of the American Music Newsletter. A guy sitting next to us throws a party for Tom Russell every time he comes to town.

Another guy behind us was doing a DAT recording of the show and the couple on the other side of us drove 90 minutes from Sonoma to see the show. They are trying to get Dave to do a house concert for them on New Years Eve. They said Dave turned them down saying he just wants to hang out in San Francisco with his girlfriend Mary and his friends at Annie's bar. I think he should. It sounds like more fun than getting caught up in the millenium hype.

The wood next to the stage is barn-quality, as is the rest of the building. It was so hot, Annette used the American Music Newsletter to keep cool.

They were selling really nice Blackjack David T-shirts which I think would have sold better if they weren't black. The temperature that day was in the 90s. But we considered ourselves lucky because the next day it hit 100 degrees. The San Francisco Bay Delta breeze quit on us.

Rick Shea opened for Dave Alvin with a wonderful solo acoustic set using Dave Alvin's Martin guitar. It's not often that Dave Alvin fans get the bonus of a Rick Shea set. The audience loved him!! Rick told the audi-





Rick Shea with his Mom and Sister looking on.

The Palms Davis CA set list

NEW HIGHWAY
MARY BROWN
CALIFORNIA SNOW
DEEP SEA
HALEY'S COMET
EAST TEXAS BLUES
OUT IN CALIFORNIA
EVENING BLUES
BLACKJACK DAVID
DRY RIVER
FOURTH OF JULY
KING OF CALIFORNIA
RAILROAD BILL
LITTLE HONEY
MARIE MARIE
KERN RIVER
HONKY TONK

ence that his Mom was present, but she was too shy to stand up and acknowledge the applause. She did have the best seat in the house for seeing her son perform. She was way cool! Rick did 5 songs—a few nice originals of his - GEORGIA PINES, MAGDALENA and QUE MAS SERA.

Dave started out with NEW HIGHWAY and a few songs from his recent album. It was really cool to see Dave do an acoustic band set like this.

Early in Dave's set he set his beer is on the floor. Sitting on a stool, he had to bend way down to get it, which would be after every song because it was so hot. Finally the Palm's manager, also named Dave, brought





out a bar stool for Dave's beer. Because they were all sweating, Dave Alvin stopped to pass out towels to each band member. He had one extra so to everyone's delight, he asked the audience if they needed one. Lots of laughter and many hands went up. He gave it to Annette.

The newest member of the band, fiddle player Brantley Kearns was marvelous —just a great performer. Dave's girl Mary commented to me on Brantley's restraint. It was obvious he could do the virtuoso type of playing through the whole show, but instead he did what was best for the song. Brantley plays a 150 year old fiddle. He mentioned how old it was before the show after Annette told him she had bought 2 water pistols as part of her plan to keep Dave and everyone from getting too hot on stage. Actually, she forgot to bring them so Brantley's fiddle was dry and safe. What a great show and weekend it was. —**AM**

Photos and description by American Music west coast correspondent Anita Bunter



Museum of Arts - Richmond VA 7/8/99

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

Photos by Janet Crump



Artscape - Baltimore MD 7/10/99

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

Photos by Janet Crump

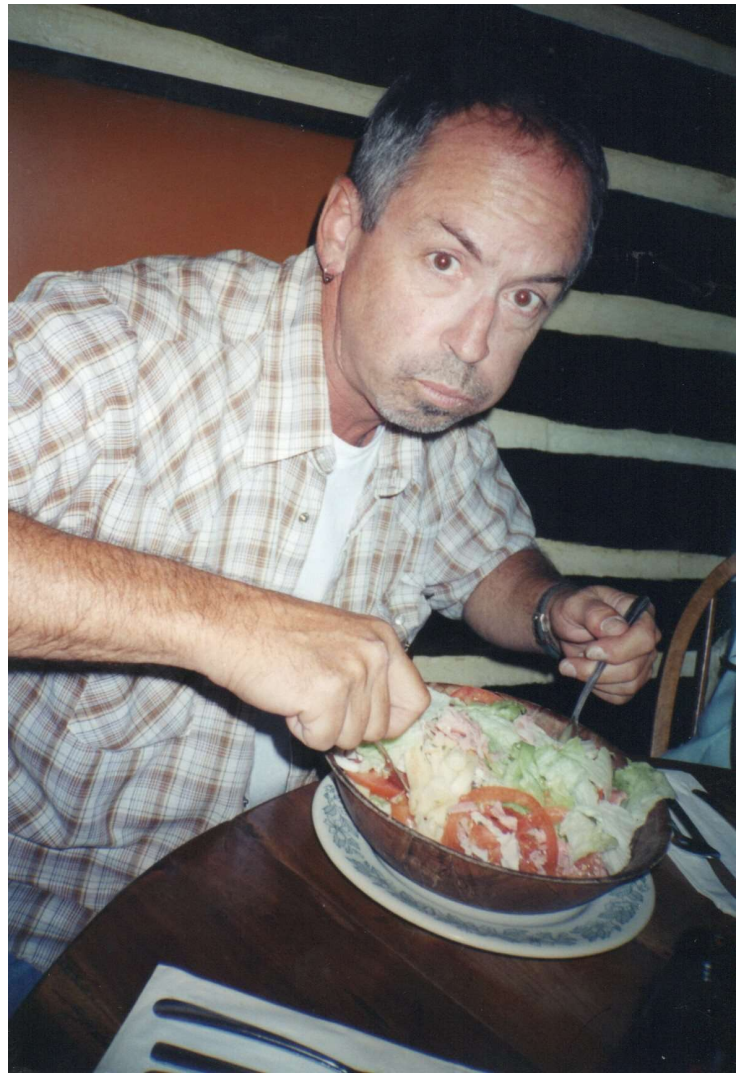


Krogh's - Sparta NJ 7/11/99

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

Photos by Billy Davis

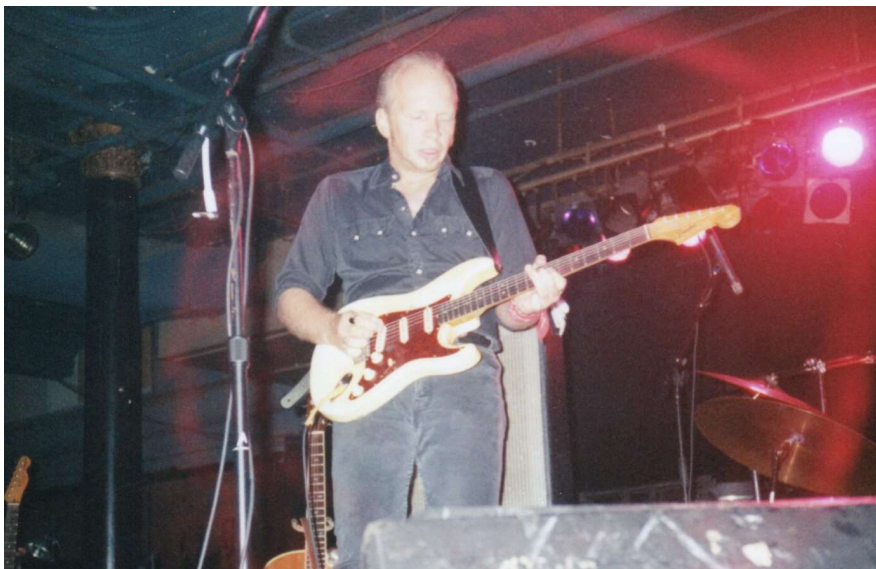




Lupo's - Providence RI 7/16/99

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

Photos by Billy Davis



The Call - Providence RI 7/16/99

Dave Alvin with Barrence Whitfield

Photos by Billy Davis

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men opened for John Mayall at Lupo's in Providence. Because Dave and the boys finished early, Dave chose to leave and go across town to a club called 'The Call' to see his friend, singer Barrence Whitfield. Chris Gaffney and Bobby Lloyd Hicks came along and of course they all jammed on stage. Great stuff!

