

**2025 re-print and expanded edition**

# AMERICAN MUSIC

The Blasters Newsletter

Issue #13 Nov. '96

## —The Drummer Interviews

### LATEST NEWS: : -

Dave Alvin will go into the studio to produce the next Derailers album in late November and after that he will start working on his next studio record for HighTone Records. - Dave played guitar on a few tracks on a new Ray Campi album due for release next year. It is being

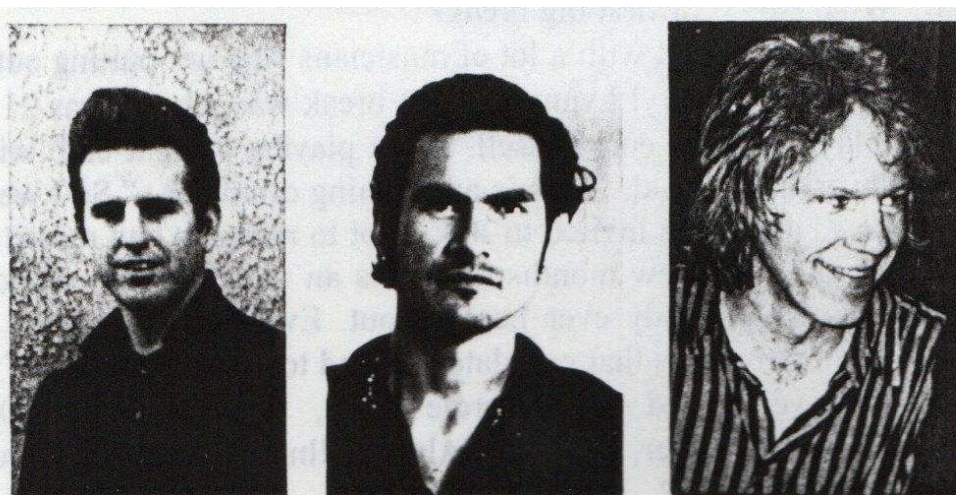
produced by Skip Heller for a record label through Twin Tone Records out of Minneapolis. Other musicians on the recordings include Stan Ridgeway, Greg Leisz, Tony Gilkyson, and D. J. Bonebreak. - Rumors have once again been circulating that The Blasters are in negotiations to release on CD the band's first album originally on Rollin' Rock. No confirmation of this yet from the band. - Bill Bateman has joined the James Harman band and will be touring with the band in the Spring. Harman has already recorded an album which will be released by Black Top records. - Blasters and Dave Alvin on the Internet: Dont forget, the best homepage yet online is The Blasters and Dave Alvin homepages at [http://bullwinkle.](http://bullwinkle.as.utexas.edu/scot/blasters.html)

#### BLASTERS TOUR DATES

11/22-23 Santa Monica at American Pie  
11/27 Long Beach at Blue Cafe  
12/31 Long Beach at Times Square on  
Pine Ave. outdoor show w/ Fabulous  
Thunderbirds

#### JAMES HARMAN BAND

11/19 Long Beach State U in Ca  
(Bill Bateman's first show as a member)



Bill Bateman, Jerry Angel, Bobby Lloyd Hicks

Photo courtesy B. L. Hicks

as.utexas.edu/scot/blasters.html - Another site called Texas Tears has a page dedicated to Dave's 'Interstate City' at [www.agonet.it/blue/texas/tears.html](http://www.agonet.it/blue/texas/tears.html) - If you want to be included on a Blaster/Dave Alvin e-mailing list for info and tour dates from this newsletter, e-mail me with your address at [davistb@aol.com](mailto:davistb@aol.com) —Am

***INSIDE: Drummer Interviews Bill Bateman, Jerry Angel and Bobby Lloyd Hicks, Dave's Interstate City Tour, and band Q & A's.***

# Dave Alvin's Interstate City Tour

**Concert Review**

**Photos: Geoff Cabin**

**By Billy Davis**

*-Baltimore MD October 11 at The 8X10 Club, Philadelphia October 12 at The Northstar Bar, New York City October 13 at The Mercury Lounge*

Dave Alvin went out on the road to promote his new 'Interstate City' album, touring from August to November. The well organized 18 to 20 songs picked for this tour worked well to keep the audience entertained throughout the two hour show. The opening track of the album *So Long Baby Goodbye* stuck as the opener of the set throughout the tour except for the few times Dave threw *Barn Burning* first, like in Baltimore.

The set list followed the live album with other tracks mixed in like *King of California*, *4th of July*, *Blue Blvd*, *Haley's Comet*, and *Dry River*. The only songs from 'Interstate City' I haven't heard performed were *Waiting for the Hard Times*, *Out In California*, and *Look Out*. An extra treat has been the performance of two new songs, which Dave says will be on the next album, "In the King of California style." The titles *Abilene* and *Mary Brown*.

The last few songs of the set finished just like the high energy of the live album with the trio of *Jubilee Train*, *Long White Cadillac*, and *Romeo's Escape*. You won't see Dave Alvin rock harder anywhere than he does on these three songs. The encore stayed the same almost every show with *New Tattoo*, *Blue Wing*, and *Marie Marie* being standard.

Dan Zanes who has been the opening act on the tour occasionally would join Dave on-stage and take over vocals for Bo Diddley's *You Cant Judge a Book By Its Cover*.

In N.Y.C., Tom Russell and Dave sang *Blue Wing*, a song Tom wrote. Tom's lap steel player, John Soles also came on stage for *Blue Wing* and remained, playing his lap steel through the Bo Diddley tune. Of course the big finisher was *Marie Marie* which Dave says has now become a Zydeco standard.

The 8 X 10 club was just up the street from Camden Yards where the Baltimore Orioles were playing the N.Y. Yankees in a baseball play-off game, so the crowd for Dave's show wasn't that big. Dave commented, "I don't care who wins, as long as it's not Atlanta."

In Philadelphia, Dave played the Northstar Bar, which he first played in '94 and again drew a packed crowd. If you arrived late you couldn't get anywhere near the stage in that place. The N.Y.C. date had been mis-advertised, but people were determined not to miss the show and it too was packed with a rousing crowd. Dave is definitely proud of this album and on stage he proclaims, "It's the third greatest live record ever made. The first one being 'Jerry Lee Lewis Live at The Star Club' and the second being 'James Brown Live at the Apollo.'" He joked,







“All I know is I’m getting threatening phone calls from these guys, so I think its a pretty good record.”

One thing that is very interesting for Dave Alvin fans is the fact that this time Dave tours with his Guilty Men and puts on a primarily rockin’ show. Then later in the year he returns to your town with just one other musician to accompany him and he does an all acoustic show. He has followed this pattern for a few years now and this diversity makes for an unpredictable and enjoyable Dave Alvin show every time. —Am



## The Jerry Angel Interview

By Billy Davis

*Jerry Angel has worked his way into being one of the top session drummers on the L.A. music scene and also finds time to be the Blasters regular drummer.*

**AMERICAN MUSIC:** How did you get started in music?

**JERRY ANGEL:** I started playing drums because one of my older brothers was a drummer. There was a drum set there and the inspiration was there. My brother was the only one who played an instrument, but there was always music playing in our house. I was the second youngest of six and the older siblings were continually bring home 45 records – what ever was the top 40 of the day. We had stacks of 45’s, everything.

**AM:** What was your first big break?

**JA:** Early on I played with a lot of musicians who are putting out great music now like

Cheryl Lynn. My first break was when I was 21. I got a gig playing with Leon Russell. I was playing a night club with his Sax player and he said, “Leon’s auditioning drummers.” So I went out and played and I was invited to stay. I got to rehearse and record at his home studio for a few months. There is an underground railroad of musicians that nobody ever hears about. Every city has them. It’s a network of musicians that circulates around town and I’m one of them.

**AM:** You’ve played with Carole King, The Divinyles, Dwight Yoakam, Brian Setzer, and Dave Alvin’ Allnighters. How did you get into those situations?

**JA:** A lot of opportunities come from connections through people you meet. One thing leads to another. Like for Brian. I had been working with the Paine Brothers. They knew Setzer and when Brian was going to record his second solo album, he was looking for more of a raw rockabilly sound. So they got me connected for an audition. I played a couple of songs, I think a Johnny Burnette song and then Brian says, (in Jerry's best Setzer voice) "Alright, This is really cool," and that was it. We did the record, did a summer tour opening for George Thoroughgood. With Carole King, I was working here in L.A. at the Central, which no longer exists. It's now the Viper room, Johnny Depp's club. I played there with Chuck E. Weiss. I was part of the rhythm section, but the guitarist's wife was the personal secretary to Carole King. So that guitarist Rudy Getts, got involved working with Carole. When it came to touring they needed a drummer, so I was asked. I remember getting together the first night in a rehearsal studio and we were going to do the Johnny Carson show. It was incredible to meet her and play with her. We did the show, had a good time playing, nobody made mistakes and from that time on we were her band. The Divinyls were in town looking for a drummer to do a video and my name came up and I was invited down. Next thing you know, I've got the gig and they send for me down in Australia. So for the next year they were sending for me like every other month down there.

**AM:** How did you get in Dave Alvin's Allnighters.

**JA:** Back in the 70's I was part of the house band in a club down in Redondo Beach and a Sax player, Steve Berlin was part of the house band. Now he is with Los Lobos. We were playing soul music with about 9-12 people on

the stage at one time. The band was called Soul Wave. Steve and I became really good friends. Steve was always working in 3 or 4 bands including the Blasters then later Los Lobos. I knew who the Blasters were because we played shows with them. When Dave left the Blasters and decided to record his first album ('Romeo's Escape' on Epic records, 1987) Steve Berlin and Mark Linett got involved. So Steve pulled me in to play Drums. He also pulled Greg Leisz in, Juke Logan, and Gil T. from Top Jimmy's band. He just knew



Photo: Billy Davis

all these players in L.A., again the underground thing.

**AM:** How did you get involved with Dwight Yoakam?

**JA:** I got a call from Pete Anderson (producer). Before Pete started working with

Dwight, Pete was around town playing his own music and we knew each other from that. They wanted to switch drummers in mid-tour and my name came up. At that time we had just recorded the Dave Alvin solo record and we were waiting for that thing to release. So I did Dwight's 'Hillbilly Deluxe' tour and when I finished that we did the Allnighters tour. It was a lot of fun.

**AM:** You were involved in the Pleasure Barons' album and the first tour?

**JA:** The Pleasure Barons were a hybrid of the L.A. and San Diego heads of state. Anything below the Orange County line is Country Dick Montana land. Over the years bands would play there and here. I don't remember a time of not knowing who Country Dick was or the Beat Farmers. I don't remember how we got involved, but it was Juke Logan, Gil T. and me. It was the regular rhythm section and they just yanked us down there (to San Diego).

**AM:** To tour or record?

**JA:** This is how it was described to me over the phone, "We're doing a run from border to border, San Diego to Vancouver. Probably no nights off. Were going to run our asses into the ground doing one-nighters. Then record the thing when we end up in Vegas, if we make it."

**AM:** What was the show like?

**JA:** It was broken in to 2 programs. The first half was us, the backing band called the Shovel Heads. Everyone in the band did a few songs then there would be a short intermission and the real show would kick in. We would transform ourselves into this Vegas show review with all of us in tuxedos. That was the Pleasure Barons and leading the way was Country Dick.

**AM:** I'm sure you saw a lot of Country Dick adventures?

**JA:** Every night something would happen. I remember Country Dick had this coat with

fake fur on the lining and it was always drenched in beer. It would never dry out because we would play every night. Then you have Mojo on his shoulders holding onto Dicks head while his hat, which has been saturated by beer, is being pulled over Dick's eyes. There's Country Dick trying to keep his balance with a beer in his hand and Mojo on his shoulders squirting beer all over everybody.

**AM:** A lot of Beer, huh?

**JA:** It was insane. We played the Commodore ballroom up in Vancouver and they were taping down the monitors with garbage bags because they knew the beer would be flowing. When Dick stepped out on stage, sure enough it was a fountain of beer! And there was Dick standing in his glory.

**AM:** How did you get involved with the Blasters?

**JA:** Ha, Ha It was the tragic freeway drive of O.J. Simpson on June 17, 1994. That was my first gig at the House of Blues. I had been called about 4 days earlier from James Intveld and I knew him for a long time. I've played for him at his gigs as did Keith Wyatt. So he asked me to join. It was easy for me to fit in, I already played with Dave Alvin and earlier I played around L.A. when Bateman and all the guys were playing. I knew the Blasters were an institution. I know Phil was very happy with me after that first night. He said, "A plus!" Then I knew I was in.

**AM:** How did you prepare for the show on short notice?

**JA:** James is really good with that, he gave me a tape to check out. I knew most of the songs anyway. Me and James got together over at his house for a little rehearsal. He broke out his guitar and I played brushes on a snare. So, then we did the show. I used to play with the Dickies and with them there is a lot of energy, a lot of fun and it is fast. So I tried to incorporate that energy into the Blast-



ers because in the early eighties they had great roaring energy. Bateman was back there just kicking up a lot of music and the band was just awesome! Johnny Bazz is just great. I love his bass playing, It's just thick and heavy. I love that! That's how I approached the Blasters.

**AM:** You went to Europe on tour soon after.

**JA:** Yeah, I love going abroad because the people there are really hardcore rockabilly fans and they love the Blasters. We opened for Dwight Yoakam in Manchester and London and then we did some dates on our own. It was great! I love playing with the band. I love the music! It's a lot of fun, it's something that I relate too. I love the people that come out and I love everything about it.

While we were in England we recorded some stuff for the BBC. First, it's like walking into Capitol Studios. It's overwhelming, just the history alone - a huge complex. We recorded a few songs and then sent a live feed up to Scotland to a guy who puts on a live rockabilly show there. They did an interview with Phil. We never got to hear a copy of it. It's in the vaults. They have everybody in there from the Stones to the Beatles. I remember watching our little reel being rolled up and put in this little box for filing back in the vaults.

**AM:** Tell me about your involvement in the

'County Fair 2000' recordings.

**JA:** When I got involved with the Blasters, James was still running around with Phil trying to complete that CD. Dave Carroll and Kenny Sara had already done some drumming, but Phil was adamant about having the Blasters involved in the recording of the solo album. We went out to Cesar Rosa's home studio and tried to come up with something. We came up with *Blueline*. I remember, because if you know Phil Alvin, you know it's going to be a marathon session. We went over and watched the Julio Cesar Chavez fight on Cesar's big screen TV, ordered a pizza, then went back into the studio and wrote the song. Also, I played at Bruce Witkin's studio on *Satellite Man*. They needed some brush work on that song.

**AM:** You played a lot of drums for the Beat Farmers in their set while on tour with the Blasters. How did that happen?

**JA:** The Beat Farmers are a different band when Country Dick's up front, so he asked me - you know, as a through back to the Pleasure Baron days. I said, "Sure I would love to." It was fun. I never get tired of watching him perform. I would get there early every show just to see Dick. He would knock me out - Funny as all hell! —**Am**

## **Bill Bateman Interview**

By Billy Davis

***Bill was the Blasters' drummer from the beginning of the bands existence to 1992. He went on to success with The Red Devils. He recently joined The James Harman band as a regular.***

**AMERICAN MUSIC:** You started young as a drummer didn't you?

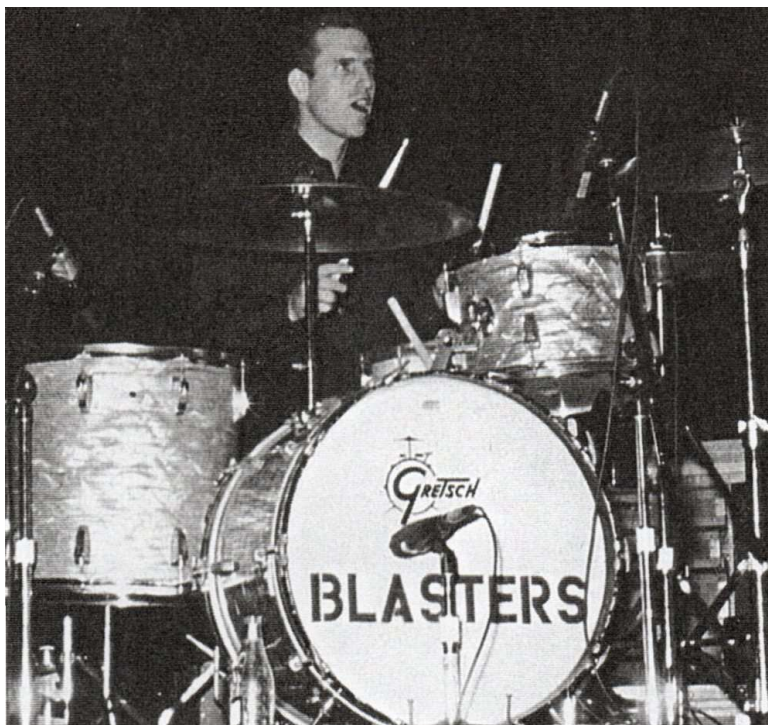
**BILL BATEMAN:** My family moved from Glendale to Downey when I was in ninth grade. I made a few friends but I didn't really like the kids in North Downey junior high, kind of snobby rich kids. So in the summer of

'67 I went to Yuma, Arizona to visit some friends because we lived there for a while. One of the brothers let me bang around on a snare drum. I bought the thing for ten bucks and brought it back with me on the bus to Los Angeles and set it up with a card board box that I could beat on. I practiced playing to the

radio and records so I was getting better... then my old man bought me a drum set for my birthday in December of '67. Late spring of '68, I joined my first band and then another and another. I think all total I'm pushing like 80 bands I've been in. I'm a music addict. I just got into a new band last week. The James Harman band. Me and James have been in bands together before, but this time it's a little more serious.

**AM:** How did you meet the guys that would eventually be in the Blasters?

Photo: Kim Peterson



**BB:** Phil and I started playing music together when I was 15 and he is a year younger. We had a band called Delta Pacific. Phil Alvin at the helm, sometimes I was on drums sometimes Johnny Bazz was on drums. Gene Taylor, Doug Allgood on bass, Gary Masi on guitar. We rehearsed at Big Joe Turner's house. Lee Allen would come over after golfing with T-Bone Walker and Marcus Johnson and they would sit around the living room drinking scotches and laugh at these white boys trying to play the blues. They would pick on Phil the most, he could sing, but he was trying to shape his voice and they said he would sing too

pretty. So that went on for a year. We used to go to blues clubs like the Ash Grove and Phil would get to sit in, Phil got to sit in with Clifton Chenier one time. Phil and I were under age but we had phony I.D.s. We sat at a table with Big Joe, T-Bone Walker, Lee Allen and a few girls. When Clifton Chenier had learned that Big Joe was in the house, he invited him up for a few songs and then Big Joe pulled up Phil because he was his little protégé dressed in a white three piece suit with shoes, spats and a Stetson hat. He was sharp, he was

17 and he brought the house down, he was really in control, it was great. I had long hair then so I didn't fit in. This is in the late 60's. In '71 we were doing a few different things and Delta Pacific broke up. Then Night Shift broke up when disco came in. It was hard to get gigs, so I joined the (musicians) union and started playing six nights a week. I gave up drums for a little while and I would jam with Phil once in a while. In '77 I was playing with James Harman and we put a new band together with Phil on lead guitar. He didn't sing or play harp, James did that. Phil was the only guitar and we had Willie Jay Campbell on bass. I forget what we called the band. It wasn't the James Harman band, it was something else. We played a few gigs and it was fun, but Phil wasn't having that good a time because he was constantly showing James what to do on the harp and arranging the tunes and helping him sing them. He wanted to have his own band, so he sat me down and told me exactly what we were going to do. "Were going to do a duo for a while." Where as I play rhythm guitar and drums at the same time and Phil would play guitar and harmonica at the same time. We had a steady gig at this place called the Sweetwater, a biker bar in Long Beach. We would have friends sit in. Finally, Phil's little brother David came down and played

lead guitar and we made such a unique sound the crowd went ape shit! So, now we had the three of us and we needed a bass guy, so we started jamming with Mike Kennedy who was an old buddy. He didn't really fit in, but he could really play the bass. So Johnny Bazz and Mike Kennedy were best buddies and I was pulling for Johnny Bazz because I had forced him to play bass earlier in 75-76 in a band I had where I played guitar. Bazz is a drummer, but he can play guitar too, like we all can. I told Phil, "Let's get Bazz because he's good, he has a place to rehearse, he's got a van to carry equipment," and Phil and Johnny grew up together from infants and he lived just down the street from Phil's house. Meanwhile Mike Kennedy got himself murdered in some pretty heavy circumstances, so we buried him and put Johnny Bazz on bass. I had to quit my day job at a factory that makes guitar amps - Randall amps. I was a designer in the lab, and I really dug my job. They said, "If you ever get done screwing around with this fly by night band operation, You come back and work for us." After 10 years went by with the Blasters, the company folded.

**AM:** It's been said the band started by playing a St. Patrick's day wedding in March of '79.

**BB:** It was a friend Frank Furillo, he is also a harp player. We played some other gigs. Like a gay bath house. They are outlawed in the state of California. It was called the 1350 club. They paid us like \$1500 for a couple of half hour shows. So we grinned and bared it.

**AM:** What happened next?

**BB:** The place we rehearsed at Johnny Bazz's father's factory was a big old mezzanine floor. It was a employees lounge with couches, a refrigerator, a hi-fi, a pool table, it was a home away from home. Johnny's father Chet had a son that was in a punk rock band called 'The Clan.' These guys were stone punks from Huntington Beach and they would rehearse every night and we would rehearse every

night, so we would do a song, then they would do some, it was real cool. We were a blues band but we picked up a few things from them and they did too. There was a surf band from Downey in 1962 and another called the Blasters, so we just stole the name, what the hell. We got more and more gigs, then read an article in the L.A. Times weekend edition, the Calendar section about this guy Rockin' Ronnie Weiser in the San Fernando Valley. He was taking bands in the rockabilly style, recording them and having some success with it. So Phil and Dave took a demo tape out to Ronnie's house. Ronnie liked it and offered us a little deal. I mean, a little deal - like the advance was \$200 for four guys. That was September of '79. It came out in February of 1980. The thing got reviewed and we got a couple of nice gigs out of it. We wound up opening for Queen at all sold out shows. The least people we played for is 10,000 on the 2 week tour. The Los Angeles forum is 18,000 and we did that 4 nights in a row. We had some trouble though, the marquee didn't reflect the fact that there was an opening band and Queen had the reputation of not having an opening band. So when the lights went down low and the M.C. screamed, "Are you guys ready to rock!" and everybody went crazy swinging around British flags, out came Phil and the Blasters and the boo's would start up. Boo's like you never heard before, mean, nasty! Beer bottles, cans, bananas, whatever would be flying at us. We played a half hour and we weren't going to be booted off that stage. In Tempe, Arizona it was an afternoon gig, it was in the summer and it was 120 degrees out. 20,000 people out there waiting in line a couple of days to get in. They were tired, they were drunk and as soon as we came on the boo's started. There were beer bottles, booze bottles, everywhere and the first bottle I saw flying in almost hit Phil in the face. But he accidentally dodged it, he was singing and



his eyes were closed. It missed his face, hit my tom tom, broke, and the glass cut my hand and my arm. I looked over at Johnny and Dave and they were on their hands and knees behind the bass amp, still playing but crouched down on the ground. Somebody ushered Phil off the stage and the music came to a halt. I started to pick up bottles off the stage and throw them back at the audience. Brian May from Queen came out grabbed the microphone and scolded the crowd for being so rude and unruly. He made some wild untrue statement like Queen wouldn't play if they didn't start digging the Blasters right now! So then they gave us the encore and we played another 20 minutes and it was successful and they put us on the marquee after that.

**AM:** How successful did you think the Blasters would get?

**BB:** We were going places but we just made a few mistakes. A couple of opportunities that we didn't follow through on. The first one was Walter Hill's movie '48 Hours.' He said we could have all the music in that movie. Gave us the script and David read it. He was unfamiliar with Eddie Murphy and he thought it was a racist sheet. And he didn't want to have anything to do with it. He was green, totally and didn't realize how they turn it into comedy, so he turned it down. They gave us 'Streets of Fire' but they didn't give us all the music in it.

**AM:** What about the release of 'Live at The Venue' EP. Some critics have cited that as a mistake at the time?

**BB:** Phil and Dave did not want to release a live record but it was in our contract to at some point do a live record. The president at the time of Warner Bros. music pushed it and said, 'are you going to fight me or join the program,' so we did it. If we knew it was a piece of art we were going to have to live with, we would have watched the tempo's more closely. It was recorded for the BBC ra-

dio program and we had no idea at that time it would be released.

**AM:** I heard The Blasters shot a Budweiser commercial where there was a Gene Taylor impostor.

**BB:** Yeah your right. Wally Hanley (The Blasters sound technician) did that. Gene Taylor got fed up with the thing going too slow. They want to do a million takes and that's one of a number of things that pisses the hell out of Gene Taylor (laughing). If you are a photographer and your doing a shoot, you better get some film shot up in a hurry.

**AM:** The Blasters slowed down in the late eighties what was going on?

**BB:** The Blasters weren't working too much and Phil was constantly telling me he wasn't always going to sing in a rock band for a living he wanted to get more into Mathematics and that I should really start looking for something else. So I started the Red Devils. We got a contract on Warner Brothers and Rick Rubin at American records was our owner, I guess you would call him. He bought the band, produced us, owned the record company. He loved us and would have done anything for us. We went out on this big deadly tour in '92, 100 dates in 110 days. Phil got upset and called me on Thanksgiving and gave me the ultimatum to come home. He said, "Look, am I going to hire Dave Carroll or not." I said, 'I've got to go back to dinner, Bye. I'll talk to you later.' He hired Dave Carroll and I was out of the Blasters, just like that.

**AM:** What ended the Red Devils?

**BB:** So the Red Devils did the tour of 92, got back in late November and Phil had already fired me or whatever. The singer in the Red Devils, Lester Butler decided he wanted to try another drummer, so he fired me too. He wanted to go on without me in my band. So he lost Johnny Ray and Dave Bartel because they weren't going along with that program.

So he broke up the whole band. I mean, we were going places. He was such a rookie, it was his first band. Finally Rick Rubin listened to as many stand in guys and told Lester he was giving the final audition for what ever drummer he got. Rick called me and told me to come down to this thing. Everybody played and I played too. Rick took Lester out in the parking lot and said, "Look you can't have a recording contract with me and my label unless you get Bateman back." So I went back, I didn't hold any big grudge. That was February of '93. We started playing again, playing big European festivals and really won them over. We had some really big shows booked in Europe in the end of the year. By that time Lester had slipped and fallen off the wagon on his dope trip and he was kind of out of his mind. Dave Lee, who is always on the ball found out that the manager I had hired and Lester were in cahoots to give Lester double and sometimes triple shares of the money we made and the manager was pocketing almost all the cash we got from Warner Bros. for tour supports and what not. We confronted Lester with it and he confessed. We fired the manager and we figured we had Rick Rubin, we don't need the manager anymore. We said, 'now everybody is going to be on the up and up.' Then Lester turned right around and told the manager, "Get me another band and let's go do those shows in Europe and you and I will split the money." So the band broke up and lost the record deal. Lester and I are back playing together again in the Blue Shadows and he's back on the straight and narrow. He's good when he's like that. He got a record contract with 'This Way Up' Records and is trying to get a release date and put a band together. We kind of broke it off. We have a Blue Shadows farewell gig for this year at least on November 16 and then I'm going to start up with the Harman band.

**AM** I interviewed James in American Music #4 and he talked about producing the Blasters first demo.

**BB:** Yeah, he still has that and there are some songs on there that are great. We did some Jimmy Cliff songs like *007* and *Shanty Town*.

**AM:** How did the Mick Jagger and the Red Devils recording session come about?

**BB:** Rick Rubin had struck a deal to produce Mick's solo record. In the middle, he took Mick out to the King King (club) to see us. So he got up to sing a song and then the second time he got up again, like 3 or 4 songs. So he said, "Hell let's do a whole album." They were all blues covers. Here's the songs: *Mean Old World* by Little Walter, *Blues With a Feeling*, *You Better Watch Your Self*, *Still the Fool*, *Checkin Out My Baby*, *One Way Out*, *That Ain't Your Business*, by Slim Harpo, *Shake 'em on Down* by Dr. Ross, *Don't Go No Further*, *40 days 40 nights*, *Dream Girls*, and a few more. We did a lot of takes on each one till we got one good, but the band sounded excellent. I didn't make one mistake all night. The best shit I ever did. I'm proud of that one.

**AM:** Any chance it will see release?

**BB:** No. It's dead in the can. There's already a bunch of bootlegs of that out. 'The Nature Of My Game' is one of them.

**AM:** I heard the Rollin' Rock album may be re-released?

**BB:** Yeah, but so much time has gone by since I first heard that and I'm getting nervous it's not going to happen.

**AM:** If it happens, do you think we might see a record release party where the original four play a gig?

**BB:** Yeah, that's what I'll say to Phil when I talk to him. 'Come on Phil, Let's do it like we used too.' Bury the hatchet or what ever.

— Am

# **Bobby Lloyd Hicks Interview**

By Billy Davis

*The drummer in Dave Alvin's Guilty Men has been involved in the music scene for over 30 years. He continues his membership in the Skeletons, a Springfield Missouri based Rock 'n Roll band. Here he is out on tour with Dave Alvin.*

**AMERICAN MUSIC:** What are your musical origins?

**BOBBY LLOYD HICKS:** I started in fourth grade in central Iowa playing in a school band, orchestra, marching bands, stage bands and Jazz bands. I was into drummers like Gene Krupa and all the old stuff. Our music director had a dance band so he would use

did dates and played on demo's by Wayne Carson (writer of 'You Were Always on My Mind'). Cy and Wayne were the most successful people in Springfield at the time in the music scene.

**AM:** Early influences?

**BLH:** Ringo of course and Charlie Watts but when I was in college I started to notice Hal Blain's name showing up on the back of a lot of records. So I wrote him care of Dunhill records and he responded with a 2 page letter answering a question I had on Jan and Dean. He was listing all the other things he'd done so we continued to correspond. He is a great guy. He still plays, touring with symphony orchestra and doing commercials.

**AM:** How did the Skeletons come about?

**BLH:** I met Lou (Whitney. Leader of the Skeletons) at a studio Wayne Carson built on money he made from his hits like 'The Letter.' I was doing mostly sessions and jingles. The Ozark Mountain Dare Devils were the first band to break out of Springfield in the early 70's and they did quite well and the next ones to make an imprint were the Skeletons. Donnie (D. Clinton Thompson) was playing drums and his guitar player quit so he moved to the guitar slot and then I joined. We started the Skeletons in the winter of '78. We were playing in this small space with no heat and Skeletal equipment. That's where the name came from...that and everyone has one. We did that for a year and Steve Forbert wanted to take Donnie on as his guitar player. Donnie said, 'Nah I've got a band.' So he took three fourths of our band. Forbert already had a keyboard player. So we became his backup band for about 8 months but I stayed with him



some of the students for that. Then when I saw Ringo on Ed Sullivan, I said 'That's a lot more fun!' So a lot of the musicians I was playing with at the time were musical snobs so they didn't get it. So I started playing with guitar players. We started a band called the Cooties playing Beatle stuff then I went to college in Springfield Missouri majoring in music there and got involved with music publisher Cy Simon who was a producer for the Ozark Jubilee (country music show like the Grand Ole Opry) in the 50's with Red Foley. I



for a couple years.

**AM:** So the Skeletons still would get together when everyone was in town?

**BLH:** Yeah. On and off. Lou was running a studio so we did a lot of sessions for local country stuff. A lot of it is horrendously bad which makes it really good. A lot of songs about Flying Saucers and Abominable Snow

was our first trek east. We played Maxwell's (Hoboken NJ club) in the spring of '91 and Donnie was a Blasters fan and Dave was a Morells fan and they had corresponded years ago. So Dave said, "I'm looking for a backing band..." So we were his back up band for awhile. Then Lou started building a new studio and the Skeletons had been doing the

same circuit and had been breaking down more and more over the years so we decided to hang it up for a couple of years so I stayed with Dave.

**AM:** How did you approach playing Dave's songs when you first heard the material.

**BLH:** It was already recorded (Blue Blvd album) so I just stole all of Donald Lindley's licks.

**AM:** I've seen in the encore of Dave's set some-

times you sing vocals on a track. Where is that song from?

**BLH:** The first record the Skeletons ever did was a cover of Jan & Dean's 'Gas Money' that is the photo there from the cover of the 45, (Bobby with gas nozzle to his head on previous page) and the back side was Johnny Otis' 'Crazy Country Hop.' So we put it out as Bobby Lloyd and the Windfall Prophets and the backside was Bobby Lloyd and his wandering Boot Heals. So when the Skeletons toured with Dave we would do a set then we would do the stuff with him, mostly Blue Blvd stuff and Blaster tunes. When I stayed on with Dave, when we came around to encore and we ran out of songs, we would throw in 'Crazy Country Hop' and it kinda stuck.

**AM:** What are you doing next?

**BLH:** Well I finish up with Dave on Nov. 10

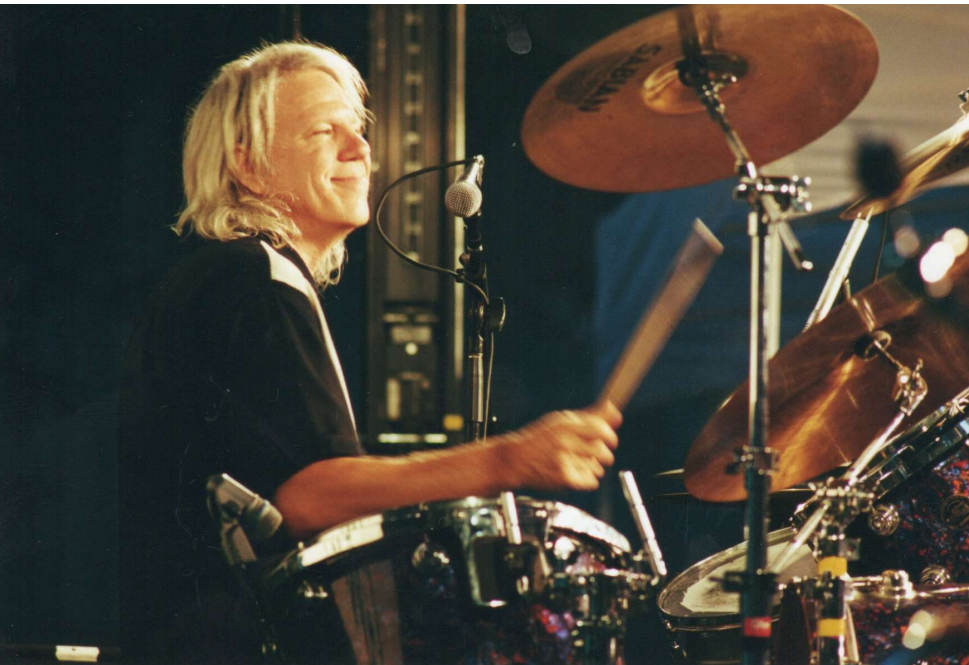


Photo: Jay Faler

Creatures. Really good stuff but not much of a market. We got together again in '90 to do South By South West and got signed by Alias records. But over the period we still put out 8 or 9 45's. We put out an album called 'Waiting.'

**AM:** I see that 'Waiting' and another CD called 'In The Flesh' are available in stores. How did 'In The Flesh' CD come about?

**BLH:** In Scotland there is a guy who puts out a Fanzine called 'The Next Big Thing' so for his tenth anniversary issue he put out a 12" on us of all our old 45's called 'Rockin Bones.' Then in 94 we did an album of original stuff that he released again called 'In The Flesh.' I think Demon records took both of those and put them on the 'In the Flesh' CD.

**AM:** How did your association with Dave come about?

**BLH:** In '90 the Skeletons reunited and it

then we are going to do a bunch of Skele-dates through the end of the year and get these new songs under our belts and then go in the first of the year and do another record. Go around one more time.

*This interview took place before Dave Alvin's N.Y.C. show on October 13. The interview was cut short when the audience couldn't wait any longer. A few days later Bobby followed up with this letter:*

*I've got to say that I'm most grateful to Dave because he helped me realize a nearly 30 year dream - that being to record a record in Hollywood, California. We did 'Museum of Heart' at Village Recorders and I was so psyched, it was all I could do to rush the tempo's. Later, he flew me out to L.A. to sing and play percussion on 'King of California', and still later I was involved in Tom Russell's 'Rose of San Joaquin' sessions. Those three experiences being a three layer cake, I'd have to say the icing would be doing the closing credits music for 'Mystery Science Theater - The Movie' with the Guilty gang and Tom Servo at Capitol Towers Studio B last year. I mean, the history of American Music that has been made in that room is overwhelming. Its like a church! These things may not mean so much to the other guys in this drummers issue since they have all been a part of the California scene for quite awhile, but for a kid from the mid-west who spent years in his room listening to the wonderful music coming from that mystical place, its been a humbling and deeply gratifying experience. So long live the "king." All the Best, Bobby*

**COLLECTING BLASTERS:** Anyone interested in trading Blaster stuff or just corresponding, write to Christian Gago Fernandez, Trav. De Fatima N-2, 3-DCHA, C.P. 15007 La Coruna, Spain. He'd like to hear from people in Austin, Germany, and Spain. - Dave Alvin appeared on Jay Marvin's live talk radio show out of Chicago on WLS taking live calls from Chicago and many other Midwest cities that hear the show. Anyone hear it? - Janne Kurunsaari seeks the following Blaster collectible vinyl: The U.S. and German release 45 with pic. sleeve of *So Long Baby*, U.S. 45 pic sleeve of *Colored Lights*, and King Biscuit Flower Hour 1982 radio show on vinyl. Also seeking all on Evans John. He has to trade: 'Age In Which We Live' 1985 picture disc, US pressing of 'Non Fiction' LP, *Barefoot Rock* 12 inch promo, and Dave Alvin 'Interchords.' Write: Janne Kurunsaari, Ryytimaantie 1 A 18, 00320 Helsinki, Finland

**Dave Alvin Contest Quiz** Name the current or former members of the Blasters (of course including Sax players) that have played on Dave Alvin's solo albums. Members from only his 5 solo albums, no Soundtracks or tribute albums. 2 winners will receive an Interstate City poster. Deadline for entries Feb. 1 1997. Write to American Music. 80-16 64th Lane Glendale NY 11385

## Q. from you & A. from the band

**For Phil Alvin:** You said you didn't have to make many changes to 'County Fair 2000' after the initial recording, unlike the Blasters' records. What changes or compromises were made on 'Unsung Stories'? - Janne Kurunsaari, Helsinki, Finland

**PHIL:** There was a lot more trouble on that in terms of the recording. That was done by me and Pat Burnett so that wasn't the problem. But the problem was with Bob Biggs (Slash records president) and Mark Trilling. I had described the record that I was going to make. There was only one electric song *Daddy Rollin Stone*, and this is before there was acoustic day on MTV. I didn't want to do electric stuff and step on the Blasters toes. That's why on 'County Fair 2000' the electric stuff is the Blasters, it takes that problem away. I mentioned three different songs that could've been the electric song. *Daddy Rollin Stone*, the Sting/Police tune *I'll Be Watching You* done to a New Orleans horn thing with Lee Allen, and the Rolling Stones tune *It's Off The Hook*. I don't have a whole lot of favorite Rolling Stones songs, but that is one of the better ones. So when I delivered the record with rough mixes and working titles with just *Daddy Rollin Stone*, Biggs said, "Where is the Rolling Stones song?" I said 'Those are different scenarios of records.' I also made sure I was getting paid as a producer and if we went over budget they could take some of my money from being paid as a producer out. I knew I would go to the endth degree, so I was mixing the Sun Ra stuff which was going to go slightly over budget. The last thing I had to do was the vocal on *Brother Can You Spare A Dime*. The vocal on the record as it stands is not the intended vocal, when I hear it, it kills me! When your in the studio with the guys for the first time and your trying to hold down a tempo, I exaggerated almost and it wasn't the way I wanted to sing it at all. When I went down to finish that nobody could find the tapes. As far as I know nobody can find the tapes to *Brother can You Spare a Dime* to this day, we only had that one mix with the work vocal on it. That's the trouble with the record company, they can lie to you. So I didn't get to work on it more, it was done!

**For John Bazz:** Who were 'The Tonys' that you play with on the 'Border Radio' Soundtrack? Is there anything else on record with them? - Per Ake Persson of Lund Sweden

**John:** Me on bass, Tony Kinman on vocals, Chip Kinman on guitar, Steve McCarthy on guitar, Greg Sowers on drums. It was an assembled band for the soundtrack. The engineer while recording kept calling us all Tony, he was calling everybody Tony (laughing). So we decided since we were all Tony, let's call the group the Tonys. We talked about doing gigs. Tony and his brother Chip were from San Francisco in a first generation punk rock band called 'The Dills.' They were political then, went about face, and did 'Rank and File.'

**For Phil Alvin:** What is your opinion on New Orleans shouter Roy Brown. He seems to be a major influence on everyone from Jackie Wilson to Elvis. Do you consider him an influence? - Ryan Cole of Bloomington IN

**Phil:** Absolutely, and he was a friend of mine. He gave me very high compliments as a singer and I met him later on. He wasn't in the business when I was a teenager, but I knew who he was. Roy Brown was playing with Hollywood Fats and his band down at the Whiskey A Go-Go and he called me up on stage to sing with him and gave me great compliments. He is one of my favorite singers and one of Lee Allen's best friends. Roy Brown's favorite singer was Bing Crosby, that's another thing we have in common.

**For Phil Alvin:** Are there any Peetie Wheatstraw albums you would recommend or CDs? I have some and want more. - Ron Rosano, San Francisco

**Phil:** He was one of the most prolific and popular blues artists of the late 1930s. I think he died in '42 and made his first record in '27 called *Peaches* on the Vocalion label. (Phil singing) "Peaches, Peaches don't grow on trees, No baby he he hay hay." That's where he put right on the first record his famous the "he, he, hay, hay." I don't know much about CDs, but his first record was made under the name Neck Bones on the Vocalion label which is owned by Sony now. I only heard it once over Bob Hite's house. There is a song I've been thinking of doing called *Block and Tackle Blues* and I don't know if it's on CD. This other one, *What's*



that *I Smell*, I found, but Bob Hite took it from me. Another thing of interest to get, and I don't have this, is an LP on OLP records with Peetie on one side and Kokomo Arnold on the other, it's good. Mostly what I have is Peetie Wheatstraw 78's on Decca. So you should be looking for Peetie Wheatstraw on guitar. Most of the stuff he does is on piano.

**For Phil Alvin:** *4-11-44* is a great Blasters song. Why don't you write more Blaster songs? I'm sure yours will be the best. - Christian Gago Fernandez, La Coruna, Spain

**Phil:** Yeah, I think it is a good song too. With this next record I'm going to try and get them all out there. Certainly the music and a certain percentage of the editing of the words of most classic Blaster songs, I did. In a lot of cases, David would offer me 50 percent of it, but I didn't take it because of the type of conflicts that develop. There are things that I've done with my voice that I wouldn't have done if David didn't make me do them. And there are things that David has done with his songs that he wouldn't have done if I didn't make him do them. Then there's places in the middle that we don't talk about (laughs). Any way *4-11-44* is known as the washer woman's number, a hotel maid. In the late 1930's there were these number houses legal lottery houses and people would 'play policy' as it was called. *4-11-44* was a number pick that you hear in many songs. There is a chapter on it in a book called 'Gumbo Ya Ya' which is about the history of New Orleans. It was a number so many people played in lotteries and in the 1930s, it hit down south. Well, all 6 of the major number organizations couldn't pay because so many people had bet it, so they all went bankrupt and nobody got paid off. That's when they made the laws against having lotteries in states. Then we brought them back through the initiative process in the late 70s early 80s. In those days, if you won a million dollar pot you would get it, now you don't even get that, they put it in a bank account and give you so much each year. That's securing the fact that they can pay it. I probably will subtitle the song on the record '*The Washer Woman Song*.' —*Am*

People Magazine 9/9/96

## INTERSTATE CITY

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

With his leathery voice full of bluesy, countrified soul, Alvin sounds like he has suffered every broken heart and traveled every cracked highway he sings about. While his last album, *King of California* (1994), was quiet and acoustic, on his first live solo release he revisits the revved-up intensity of his days as chief songwriter and lead guitarist for the much-missed, roots-rocking, Los Angeles-based band the Blasters. Whether revisiting Blasters' songs like "Long White Cadillac" and "Jubilee Train" or essaying newly penned laments, including the title tune and "Out in California," he sings evocatively about characters long on the road and far from home.

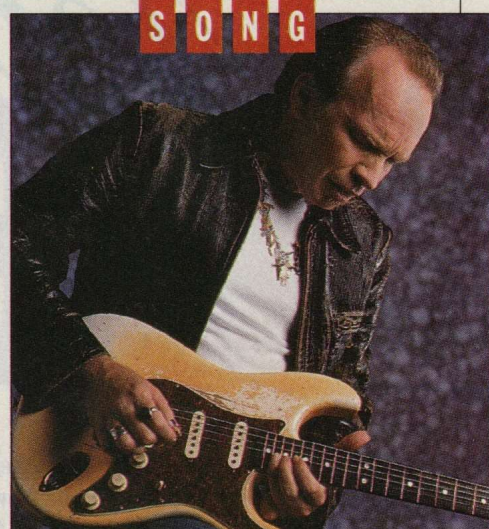
A Downey, Calif., native, Alvin also

vividly paints the unnatural Southern California landscape where he grew up. "I was born by a river," he sings in "Dry River," "but it was paved with cement." In "Thirty Dollar Room," he captures the anguish of a man in an airport motel waiting for a woman whose "earring [is] laying on the table/ She said she'll be right back/ But I get the feeling she's gone."

Alvin, the son of a union organizer, lets the ambivalence he feels toward his home state show in a medley of tunes, including Woody Guthrie's "Do Re Mi" and Chuck Berry's "Promised Land." And whether he's singing about lost souls in dead-end towns or hopeful Dust Bowl emigrants arriving in the West to find not much good and little plenty, Alvin and his sparkling

PICKS & PANS

SONG



▲ DAVE ALVIN The ex-Blasters country rocker rattles down some bluesy byways.

country-blues band—Rick Solem's piano, Ted Roddy's freight train harmonica and Greg Leisz's slide guitar—make the trip worth taking. (High-Tone) ■ LYNDON STAMBLER

STEVEN SMITH



p chewing

SONGWRITER-GUITARIST ALVIN'S CREATIONS ARE PART COUNTRY, PART ROCK, PART FOLK, PART R & B — AND ALL TALENT. HE'LL BE IN AMES TONIGHT.



# Gritty, exuberant Dave Alvin

By PATRICK BEACH  
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

## MUSIC: Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men

■ 9 tonight at the Maintenance Shop on the Iowa State University campus in Ames. Tickets are \$8 through Ticketmaster, \$6 for Iowa State, Drake or DMACC students. Call 243-1888 (233-1888 in Ames).

Dave Alvin has lived on the road since the early '80s, but every once in awhile he's got to return home to lick his wounds.

Literally.

The index finger of his left hand is chronically pulpy from the superhumanly heavy guitar strings he uses.

"It's an old wound from the Blasters days," Alvin said, referring to the band he started with his brother, Phil. "If you look at my two index fingers, the one on the picking hand is longer than the one on the fingering hand. Especially when I'm

doing the Chuck Berry double-picking stuff, that just rips the finger to shreds."

If this is suffering in the name of art, the results would appear to be worth the pain. Phil Alvin might have been the vocalist in The Blasters — a roots-rockabilly band that stood out in predominantly punk scene in 1980s Los Angeles — but it was Dave who provided the band's songwriting voice. Unfortunately, the band also painted itself into a corner: As rockabilly revivalists, The Blasters were masters, but they didn't break any real stylistic ground.

A restless Dave left the band and joined X for a time before going solo. Now, at 40, he's established a reputation

in songwriting circles as one of the very best — even though his talent-to-record sales ratio is wildly lopsided.

The emerging "Americana" radio format — part country, part rock, part folk, part R & B — was made for Alvin, who borrows from each of those genres to craft songs that emerge as nuanced portraits of people teetering on the edge of something, often something unpleasant.

"Haley's Comet," co-written with Tom Russell, finds rock 'n' roll pioneer Bill Haley dying drunk, alone and forgotten in Texas. "Between the Cracks" is a vivid examination of downward mobility. And "Thirty Dollar Room" is an Edward Hopper-esque still-life of existential loneliness in which the narrator finds himself *smokin' cigarettes down to the filter 'cause the pack's runnin' low*. On the title track to his Alvin's new album, a cowboy drinks bourbon, kicks in the TV and waits for the cops to close in on his motel room just off "Interstate City." The tune is gritty and taut, like something written by dime novelist Jim Thompson. Comparisons to Springsteen are apt, and more and more frequent.

As Alvin has grown as a songwriter, however, his audience has split. Half wants solo acoustic sets, and half wants the guy to holler and bleed and howl at the moon with his muscle-bound band, the Guilty Men.

He's currently indulging the latter half: "Interstate City" (HighTone Records) is a live work recorded over two nights at the funky Continental Club in Austin.

ALVIN Please turn to Page 2T



# Gritty, exuberant Dave Alvin

## ALVIN

*Continued from Page 17*

Texas. Touring to support the album, Alvin and the Guilty Men play the Maintenance Shop in Ames tonight.

"For the past three years life has meant touring by van on the interstates, studio work, more touring and then even more touring," Alvin writes in the CD booklet. "This is what it sounded like."

You can't quite feel the walls sweat, but it's the most exuberant record Alvin has made since the Blasters' heyday.

"There was some beer consumed," Alvin said with a nicotine laugh. "The band is *really* good. I knew we'd have something even before we went in to do it."

He's right; the Guilty Men — Greg Leisz (guitar, steel, mandolin), Bobby Lloyd Hicks (drums), Gregory Boaz (bass) and Rick Solem (piano) — are a hot band, one any front man would kill for. But it's the resonance of the songs, everything from The Blasters' "So Long Baby Goodbye" and "Long White Cadillac" to new

material, that drives the performance.

As admired as Alvin is as a writer, he says it's still hard work.

"It's not like you're building a building," he said. "There's no blueprint, and everybody does it different. When I first started writing songs, I thought there was a guidebook, that Bob Dylan and Irving Berlin and Robert Johnson had the same book. Then I realized it was happenstance. For a long time, I thought if I wrote a song it was a fluke: 'I don't know how that happened, and I don't know if it'll happen again.'"

"When I wrote the songs for the second Blasters album, that's when I realized there was a little craft to it. Those songs, like 'Long White Cadillac' or 'Bus Station' — I wrote 'Bus Station' and we did it in a totally different style than I'd written it, and I thought, 'I can write songs now.'"

Those songs are versatile. "Cadillac" has been through numerous incarnations — first as a Blasters' raveup, then an ornery version by Dwight Yoakam and now rendered on "Interstate City" as a simmering

blues. Similarly, "Fourth of July," the rocking, best-known version of which appears on the X album, more recently turned up on Alvin's all-acoustic "King of California" disc.

"It takes me a long time to write a song," he said. "There are exceptions, like 'Fourth of July' I finished in three days. I was in a bowling alley, and it hit me. But I'm real anal when it comes to words."

Even the meaning of that song, in which a frayed relationship unravels on Independence Day, has changed for its author.

"Sometimes you write a song, and you may not know what it's about," he said. "When I wrote it, it was an 'adios, see ya later' song. And then, for me, it became kind of a 'let's stick around' song."

Alvin's current reading of that song as more hopeful and conciliatory may have something to do with the toll that life on the road takes on relationships.

"You give up certain things people who don't live this way don't think about," he said. "You give up a stable personal life, but then you have a nonstop source of material."

He has to be content with a stable band.

"As you get older, there are fewer things you want to have to deal with," he said. "I choose (the band members) first on how they play and second how much trouble they are. They're road dogs. In The Blasters, we all grew up together and we knew each other's secrets and we just constantly fought — yelling, screaming, duking. When I joined X, I was like, 'Bands don't have to fight?'"

They don't, but they have to stare out through a windshield for hours, get to the gig, "set up, sound-check, get into the hotel, eat, play the gig, go to sleep and repeat the process."

What makes it worth it? When you can't feel the pain in that bloody digit.

"When you're doing long songs and get wrapped up in the sweat and the exertion, you get a runner's high that's very addicting," Alvin said. "There's times when I can be onstage and your finger could be bleeding and you're just like, 'Gimme a beer — who cares?'"

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#1. Blastory part 1, James Intveld profile.

#2. Phil Alvin interview Part 1, Dave Alvin's "Museum" tour review, Faultline Syncopaters profile.

#3. Phil Alvin interview Part 2, complete Blasters Discography.

#4. James Harman interview, Blasters 91 Finland tour.

#5. Lee Allen tribute issue. Dave Alvin interview. Lee Allen profile. Phil Alvin Foothill club review.

#6 Rockin Ronnie Weiser interview, Bobby Mizzel & James Intveld Cd review, State of the Blasters today story.

#7. Phil Alvin on the Making of County Fair 2000. An in depth look at Blaster cover songs.

#8. James Intveld interview, The making of Sonny Burgess' and Dave Alvin's Tennessee Border Cd.

#9. Blasters/Beat farmers tour reviews, Intveld Cd review.

#10 James Intveld ex-Blaster, Dave Alvin on the Knitters, Remembering Country Dick, Q&A for the band.

#11 Gene Taylor interview, Sonny Burgess interview

#12 Dave Alvin song by song on Interstate City, reviews.



# Dave Alvin shows off his band on live album

By TOM WILK  
Courier-Post Staff

**F**or a follow-up to his 1994 album *King of California*, a well-received collection of stripped-down tunes that featured acoustic instruments, Dave Alvin wanted to go in a different direction.

"I wanted the next one to be a loud, sweaty record," Alvin says. And the resulting live album, *Interstate City* (High-Tone Records), fulfills his wishes.

It captures the intensity of Alvin and his four-piece backing band, The Guilty Men, over a three-night stand in Austin, Texas, this past spring and invokes memories of Alvin's earlier band, the Blasters, with white-hot renditions of such songs as *Long White Cadillac* and *Jubilee Train*.

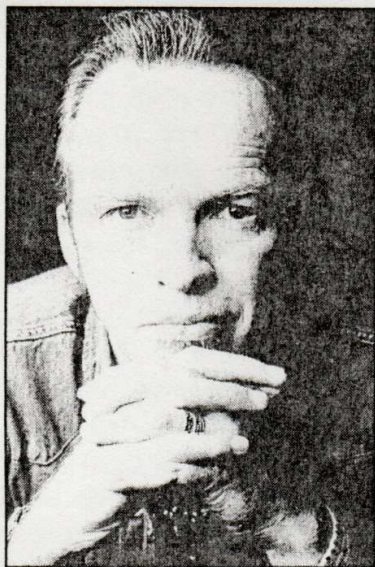
"I wanted to get this band on record," says Alvin, 40, who performs Saturday night at the North Star Bar in Philadelphia. "One of the reasons I chose to record a live album was because there were nights on stage when The Guilty Men blew me away with how good they are."

"The Guilty Men have no problem following me where I feel like playing blues, country, rock 'n' roll or folk ballads. It's all the same to me," he explains.

"I consider myself a folk singer in the same manner that Shawn Colvin is a folk singer," Alvin says. It's a broad definition for Alvin who performs a medley of his own *Jubilee Train* along with Woody Guthrie's *Do Re Mi* and Chuck Berry's *Promised Land* on *Interstate City*.

Alvin has always been a populist musician who can celebrate the common ground between seemingly disparate musicians such as Guthrie and Berry. "It happened organically; It's not done as a joke or whim," Alvin says of the medley, one of the high points of the album.

In the 16 years since the



DAVE ALVIN  
... at the North Star Bar

Blasters' first album in 1980 (*American Music*), Alvin has been building a reputation as one of the premier American songwriters of the past two decades. Alvin's command of language and sharply-drawn portraits of people teetering on life's edge have attracted the attention of other artists.

Dwight Yoakam had a hit on the country charts with *Long White Cadillac*. Other artists who have done Alvin's songs include Joe Ely, Marshall Crenshaw, Buckwheat Zydeco and Kelly Willis.

## If you're going

Dave Alvin and The Guilty Men perform at 10 p.m. Saturday at the North Star Bar, 27th and Poplar streets, Phila. Dan Zanes, formerly of the Del Fuegos, is the opening act. Tickets are \$10. For information, call 215-235-7826.

Alvin also has found an outlet for his writing in poetry. His first book of poems — *Nana, Big Joe and the Fourth of July* — published in 1986 has long been out of print. A second volume, *Any Rough Times Are Now Behind You*, which includes all 18 poems of the first book, has become the best-selling volume of poetry in the history of Incommunicado Press.

He finds inspiration for poems in unlikely places. The title poem, for example, grew out of a fortune cookie he received with a Chinese meal, while others have their roots in the music business.

Alvin attributes the book's success to an appearance on

*Fresh Air*, the WHYY-FM radio program in Philadelphia hosted by Terry Gross, where he read and discussed his poems.

"It's a testimony to the power of Terry Gross," he says with a slight chuckle. "The day after I appeared on the show, the first pressing had sold out."

COURIER-POST, Friday, October 11, 1996