

ISSUE #41

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

FEB. 2004

Ten Year Anniversary Issue

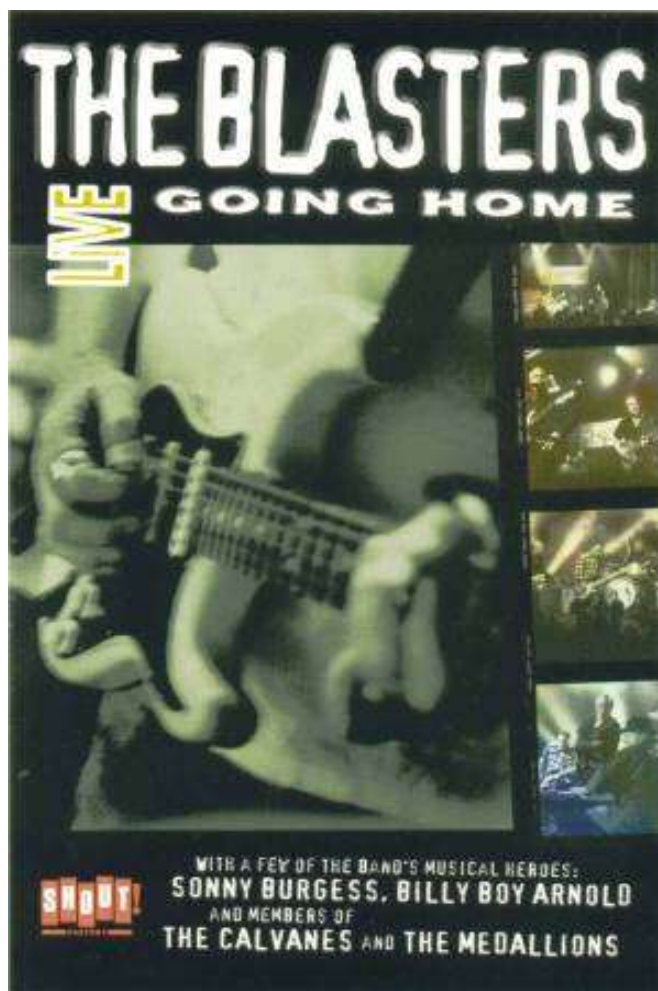
DAVE ALVIN Shows

With The Gully Men

- 4/30 Wuustwezel, Belgium at Night Of The Blues festival
- 5/1-2 Roscrea Ireland at Kilkenny weekend
- 5/5 Glasgow Scotland at Big Big Country Blues fest at Renfrew Ferry
- 5/6 Tentative London or Amsterdam
- 5/7 or 8 Ospel Ne at Moulin Blues Fest
- 6/? Tentative Kansas City, St. Louis
- 6/24 Annapolis MD at Rams Head
- 6/25 Arlington VA at Iota
- 6/26 Arlington VA at Iota
- 7/3 Chicago IL at Fitzgeralds
- 7/8 Grand Rapids MI at TBA
- 7/9 Ann Arbor MI at The Ark
- 7/10 Cleveland OH at Beachland Ballroom
- 7/16 Syracuse NY at R & B festival
- 7/17 Ottawa Ontario at Ottawa Blues fest
- 7/18 Toronto Ontario at Star Blues fest
- 7/? NYC, Boston, Philadelphia
- 9/5 Long Beach CA Blues fest (with Little Milton)

completed a studio album and are close to a deal with an un-named label. -- Dave Alvin will sing a Memphis Jug band song called STEALIN' on the next James Cotton CD on Telarc Blues records due out May or June. Cotton has had voice troubles and is recording an album with guest singers such as Doc Watson and Odetta. -- Dave Alvin as a producer will work on Christy McWilson's new album in April. Amy Farris' album called Anyway is due out on Yep Roc records on May 4. Dave co-wrote with her: PRETTY DRESSES, MY HEART'S TOO EASY, and ANYWAY (Dave will include a new version of this on his

Latest news -- This newsletter is ten years old this month. Hooray!! -- The Original Blasters have just released a DVD "The Blasters Live: Going Home" (pictured) and a companion live CD on Shout Factory Records. There are 8 songs that are not doubled on both formats, so you must have both discs. Both discs are separate releases in separate packages. They were released February 24, 2004 -- The Blasters (Phil, John, Jerry, and Keith) have com-



In This Issue: Happy Tenth Birthday Blasters Newsletter, Dave Alvin's Border Radio movie soundtrack, and The Blasters European tour 2003 Part 1.

Ashgrove CD). -- Los Lobos new CD, The Ride is due out on May 4 on Hollywood Records. The Davids duet on a song called SOMEWHERE IN TIME (different version than on Dave's upcoming Ashgrove album). -- ParkinSong, Volume One: 38 Songs of Hope on Ryko Disc due May 11 will feature a different version of Dave Alvin's MAN IN THE BED. That version has Amy Farris on fiddle and Chris Gaffney on accordion. Money raised from sales of the album will be used to fight Parkinson's Disease. -- Dave has written liner notes for a Terry Allen reissue album called Juarez. Available now on Sugar Hill Records. Terry is a piano-playing singer/songwriter from Texas. He's an associate of Flatlanders Butch Hancock, Joe Ely and Jimmie Dale Gilmore. -- The Johnny Paycheck Tribute record (produced by Robbie Fulks) is due out in late summer. Dave sang 11 MONTHS 29 DAYS. -- Dave played guitar on 3 songs on John Doe's upcoming album. -- Gene Taylor has formed a trio in Austin, TX, featuring Neil Hampton on drums and LC Parker on fiddle, pedal steel, and banjo. They have been playing around town and plan to record at the end of 2004. -- Dave Alvin comments on his greatly anticipated next book of poetry on 12 Guage Press: "I've been so swamped lately with the new album, it may not be released at the same time as my Ashgrove CD, but later." -- Keith Wyatt has been working on guitar lesson books: Blues Rhythm Guitar and Blues Soloing, both for Hal Leonard publishing. Look for Keith to play this summer at the Jamsa Blues Festival in Finland. He played last year with a Finnish blues band that specializes in the Freddy King blues style. -- Chris Gaffney has a new project with Dave Gonzalez (of the Paladins) and Teddy Morgan. Called The Hacienda Brothers, they will release a full album in the fall of 2004. Look for them out on tour this spring. -- Tom Russell's will release a book called California Bloodlines: The Letters of Charles Bukowski and Tom Russell on Mystery Island Press in March or April. Tom: "Dave Alvin wrote a wonderful intro."-- The Blue Shadows have mysteriously disbanded on the eve of securing a deal to release a John Porter produced album. Musical differences are rumored. -- For more news go to www.BlastersNewsletter.com -- Band Questions can be submitted at www.DaveAlvin.com ---AM

Countdown to the New Dave Alvin Solo Album

Due - June 15, 2004

Album title: Ashgrove. Here are the songs: *Ashgrove, Rio Grande, Black Sky, 9-Volt Heart, Out Of Control, Everett Ruess, Sinful Daughter, Anyway, Man In The Bed, Black Haired Girl, Somewhere In Time.*

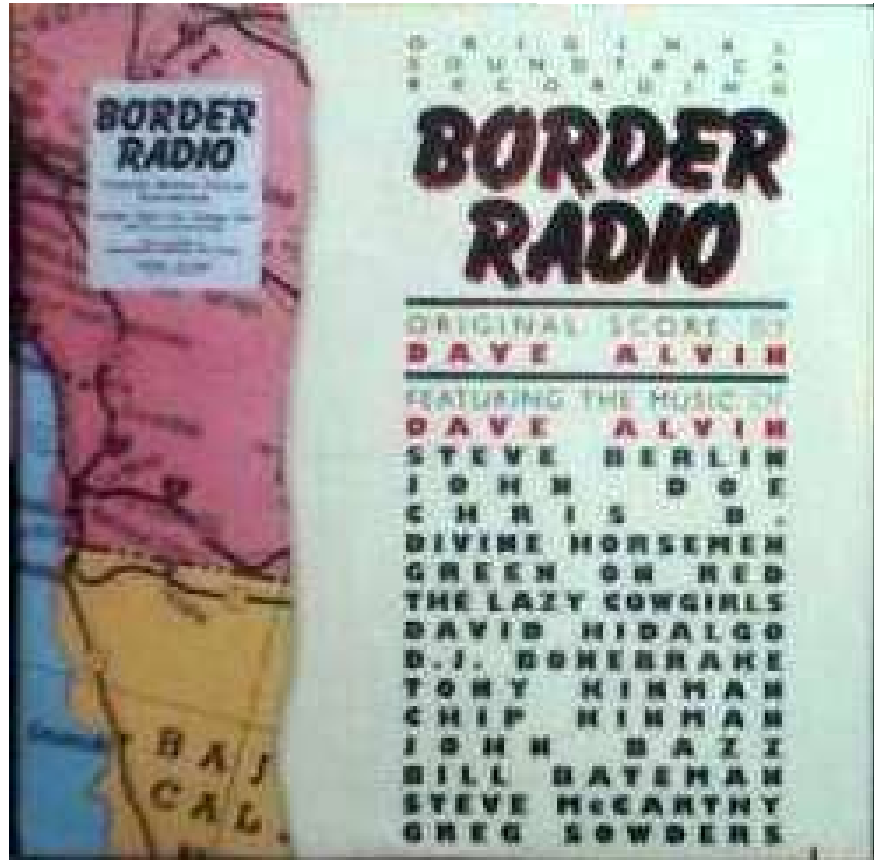
Dave: "It's similar to BJD because it's recorded live, but it's electric live! There will be a little acoustic guitar, but mostly loud guitar. Doing the live Guilty Men record and the Blasters tour, I like playing loud guitar. We're playing live, jamming with loud guitars. A lot of the songs are bluesy and it really works - It's a whole other direction than what I've done before. I think of it as sounding like Neil Young and Crazy Horse backing up Johnny Guitar Watson. I don't want to do a lot of overdubs. There are harmony vocals on a few, and at this point (February 2004) we're almost done. The recording band is me and Greg Leisz, Don Heffington on drums, and bass player Bob Glaub. All those guys have played at The Ashgrove (legendary L.A. blues club). Don played with Emmy Lou Harris, Bob Dylan, and Big Mama Thornton. Bob Glaub was with Taj Mahal, Dwight Yoakam, and John Fogerty. I have three great musicians and me (laughs). I have a new song called BLACK SKY, which is a loud blues number where I take off on guitar. It's like six minutes long but just pounding. All the songs are long. The album is running about 57 minutes.

Border Radio

The song becomes a Movie and a Soundtrack 1987

Over the course of a recording artist's career, albums can **By Tom Wilk** slip between the cracks, to borrow a title of a Dave Alvin/Tom Russell song.

That's the case with Border Radio, the soundtrack album to the 1987 independent feature film. Originally released on vinyl and cassette in 1987 by Enigma Records, Border Radio is now out of print. It was never released on compact disc although vinyl and cassette copies occasionally can be found on eBay. Seventeen years after its release, Border Radio remains an overlooked part of Dave Alvin's discography. The soundtrack album can be heard as a transitional al-



bum between the end of his tenure in the Blasters and the start of his solo career. The album consists of 12 songs, eight of which were written or co-written by Dave. Two of the eight also were recorded by the Blasters (the title track and LITTLE HONEY), while the remaining six are instrumentals written for the movie.

Those eight songs were co-produced by Dave, Steve Berlin and Mark Linett. The latter two served as co-producers for Romeo's Escape, Dave's first solo album. Musical assistance on Dave's songs was provided by members of the Blasters (John Bazz and Bill Bateman), Los Lobos (Berlin and David Hidalgo) and X and the Knitters (John Doe and D.J. Bonebrake). Other songs on the album are performed by Green On Red, who appears in the film, Chris D., formerly of the Flesh Eaters, the Lazy Cowgirls and the Divine Horsemen.

Border Radio (the movie) is set in the Los Angeles music scene of the early

1980s. Chris D. portrays Jeff Bailey, a musician who takes off for Mexico after burglarizing a club owner's safe for money that he and his band are owed for a gig. Lu, Chris' wife, portrayed by Luanna Anders, spends the movie trying to track down her husband with the assistance of Dean (Jeff's bandmate, portrayed by John Doe) and Chris (the band's roadie, portrayed by Chris Shearer).

Written and directed in 16-millimeter black and white by Allison Anders, Border Radio is an uneven drama as it veers back and forth between Southern California and Mexico. A scruffy-looking Dave Alvin has one extended scene as a musician friend of Jeff's and improvises a song on acoustic guitar. Some lines of dialogue show flashes of wit, such as Chris' observation about Jeff: "It's tough being a seminal L.A. rock artist." In its review of the film in November 1987, "Variety" wrote: "the absolute highlight is the score by Dave Alvin."

The title track is performed by a makeshift group called The Tonys featuring Chip and Tony Kinman of Rank and File and John Bazz on bass. Their rendition brings out the country roots of the song and is closer to the version found on Romeo's Escape than the Blasters' 1981 recording.

Co-written by Dave Alvin and John Doe, LITTLE HONEY is sung by Doe and features both men on guitars and Steve Berlin on piano. Compared to the version on the Blasters' Hard Line, this is a stripped-down performance that would be at home in the Knitters' repertoire.

There are four instrumentals on the album - LA FRONTERA I and II, BURNING GUITAR, and DRIVING TO MEXICO - are co-written by Dave and Steve Berlin and are atmospheric songs. They convey a sense of gloominess and uncertainty that complement the action on the screen but manage to stand on their own. The highlights of the album are two versions of MI VIDA LOCA, Spanish for "My Crazy Life." The first version - MI VIDA LOCA (Acoustic) is built around a lilting guitar figure that recalls some of the traditional Mexican music recorded by Los Lobos.

MI VIDA LOCA (Border Radio Theme) is played in its entirety at the end of the movie and over the closing credits. A driving, electric instrumental, the song sounds like a musical merger of the Blasters and Los Lobos with the former's rhythm section



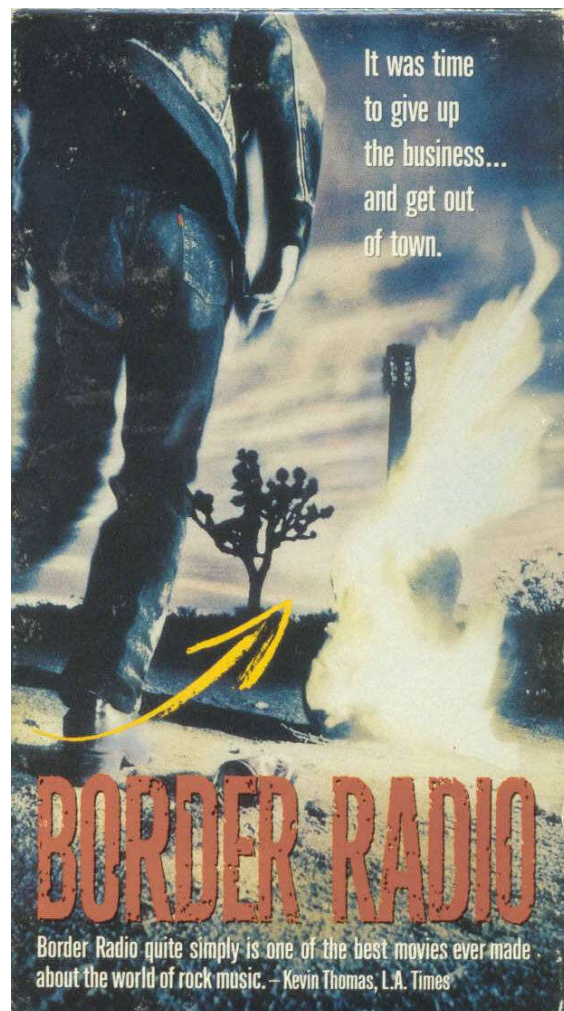
(Bateman and Bazz) and lead guitarist (Alvin) and the latter's accordionist (Hidalgo) and saxophonist (Berlin).

In a 2002 interview, Dave Alvin said he has revived the song as a concert encore with the Guilty Men and Chris Gaffney on accordion.

While Border Radio had a limited run in theaters, its songs would find greater success in higher-profile, Academy Award-winning movies.

Oliver Stone used BURNING GUITAR in Wall Street, his 1987 feature about investments and business takeovers that won Michael Douglas an Oscar for best actor. On a more personal level, Dave Alvin said the money Stone paid to use the song helped finance his 1987 tour of the United States with the All Nighters.

In 1991, Kelly Willis recorded LITTLE HONEY for the film and soundtrack album of Thelma and Louise. That movie won an Oscar for best screenplay for Callie Khouri. -- **AM**



Dave Alvin on Border Radio

AM: Were you happy with the way the soundtrack album turned out?

Dave: Oh yeah I loved it. But, the frustrating thing about the project for me is that the record is flawed. On the LP there are two instrumental pieces called LA FRONTERA I and II. Each on opposite sides of the LP. On the first pressing of the album in the mastering they repeated LA FRONTERA I in both spots. The cassette though was correct. Those songs were maybe the thing I was most proudest of on that album. On a later pressing it was corrected.

The budget was so small. The director was doing his first movie. I did the record, paid the studio time, paid the musicians for about \$5000. That's not a lot.

The other odd thing is that the track called BURNING GUITAR is this noisy-feedback-guitar-thing going underneath this pretty synthesizer sound. That song got used in the Oliver Stone movie, Wall Street. The gag was that we did the whole Border Radio soundtrack with the \$5000 budget. Then we were paid \$7500 for the licensing of BURNING GUITAR in Wall Street. That was more than the whole thing cost (laughs). I don't know if there was a Wall Street Soundtrack.

AM: Will it ever be released on CD?

Dave: I'd love to see if come out but I would want the correct sequencing done. I have no idea who owns it. I think the original label, Enigma was bought by MCA or Universal, but I don't know who owns them now. Sid Griffin of the Long Ryders was interested in putting it out. I'm all for it.

AM: Is it true there are some additional licensing problems?

DA: There were songs by the Lazy Cowgirls and the Divine Horseman that the record company doesn't own so they would have to seek the licensing rights on those tracks to put it out completely.

What's On TV: Temples of Rock special Travel Channel Network

Airdate: November 30, 2003 -- Dave Alvin was interviewed on Temples of Rock hosted by Ray Manzarek. The focus of the show was famous music locations around the world. In case you missed the show here are Dave's comments:

Dave on Sun Studio, Memphis TN: "Sun Studio to me is like Gettysburg - less bloody. But when you're at Gettysburg - Gettysburg is like haunted. I'm not a big guy for ghosts and goblins, but Gettysburg is haunted. There are certain places in the world and America that are haunted. The spirits are there and Sun Studio is one of them."

Dave on Sun Records Sam Phillips: "Sam Phillips was this enlightened capitalist visionary. He wasn't getting a government grant to do this. Sam Phillips wanted to make money, but he wanted to make money on his own terms."

Dave on the Sam Phillips Sun sound: "He saw something in distorted guitars (and) less than perfect technical performances. That was where the magic was. He stuck to his guns pretty much at Sun."

Dave on Hollywood's Whiskey A Go Go: "For most musicians the goal really was to play arenas and ride around in limousines and have drug problems - well maybe (just) have drug problems (laughs). The goal was to play "The Whiskey." 'Yeah we're doing a weekend at the Whiskey! We have Friday and Saturday night!' That's when you knew you made it."

Dave on the closing down of Whiskey A Go Go: "They closed the Whiskey down. That pretty much did it. The focal point was gone. There wasn't a place to aspire to."

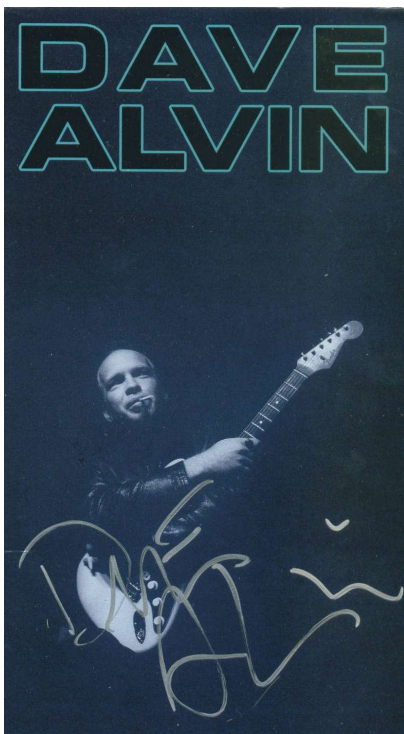
Dave on Motown's Berry Gordy: "The whole genius of his concept was the all inclusive package. I'm gonna teach you how to dance, teach you what to wear, teach you how to move on stage, and teach you how to act off stage. We're gonna have great songwriters write you the songs." -~~Al~~

10th Anniversary For the Blasters Newsletter - February 2004 by Billy Davis

It's been ten great years of putting out American Music: The Blasters / Dave Alvin Newsletter and hanging around these Blasters and Dave Alvin band guys. It's been amazing - and it's far from over.

I don't usually write about myself, but I figured once every ten years is okay. Fans at shows often ask me how I started the newsletter, so here's the background behind the ten-year-old publication you are reading now. The newsletter success has everything to do with the kindness of the great musicians from the Blasters and Dave Alvin's band.

I grew up into hard rock music. My father played Elvis and Johnny Cash all the time - but that was his music. I liked it but didn't give it much serious thought. But in 1990, I made a trip to Graceland and Sun Studios in Memphis. I bought The Million Dollar Quartet album (a jam session from 1956 with Elvis, Jerry Lee, Carl Perkins, and Johnny Cash.). I was intrigued by the live style of recording music by Sam Phillips. I then dove head first into Sun Records music. For the next few years I collected everything 'Sun.' My favorite artist was rockabilly legend Sonny Burgess. I collected everything on him which included many European albums and



CDs. In 1992 at a record / CD show (swap meet), I came across a new Sonny Burgess CD called Tennessee Border (which is still among my top favorites). I asked the dealer "Who is this guy Dave Alvin, who plays on the CD?" He told he was with a great band called 'The Blasters.' I listened to the album, was floored by this guitar player and loved his songs. Of course, I had to check out his band 'The Blasters,' so I bought the Blasters Collection CD. I was hooked and spent the rest of 1992 collecting all the Blasters and Dave Alvin CDs, LPs, singles, live tapes, magazine articles, photos, posters and everything.

Two big collector's items eluded me: The Blasters American Music Rollin Rock records LP (which I paid \$100 for a year later) and Dave Alvin's book of poetry called Nana, Big Joe and the Fourth of July. Then, on November 9, 1992, I saw Dave Alvin play live in concert for the first time (I've since logged in 65 Dave concerts) at New York's Bottom Line. Dave played acoustic, doing songs from his new Blue Blvd album and finished with a rockin' version of AMERICAN MUSIC being joined on stage by Scott Kempner (Dictators, Del Lords). After the show, after a lot of hesitation, I got up the nerve to approach Dave for an autograph. There was a small window of opportunity as Dave stood out front of the club to have a cigarette. It was a great thrill when Dave signed my Blue Blvd long Box. I told him how hard I had been trying to get his book of poetry, so I asked if he sold them himself? He said, "It's out of print and I don't do that kind of thing." I said if you know anyone who wants to sell me one, here is my card. I knew it wouldn't lead to anything.

Weeks later I was shocked to see a free, autographed copy of the book in my mailbox - addressed in Dave's handwriting. What a nice guy to do that for a complete stranger in New York City. Dave's kindness was a major event in my devotion to the Blasters world.

In 1992, I did not know that the Blasters still even existed in any form or that there was a Phil Alvin band. In an L.A. free Weekly, I learned of a Blasters show happening in North Hollywood, CA at the Palomino club on December 11, 1993. I made a trip just to see that show. This was the Blasters with James Intveld on guitar.

After the great performance, I waited with my wife Triss to get Phil's autograph. I think I waited an hour in the parking lot and told my wife: "I'll wait only 5 minutes more and we'll leave." Suddenly Phil Alvin came busting through the side doors in desperate need of air. Phil was very nice and signed a photo for me. I told him, "Nobody on the east coast knows the Blasters still exist. You need some kind of newsletter." He said, "Why don't you do it and I'll help you. Here is my home phone number. Call me when you get back to NY."

I left with a dropped jaw. Here I have an opportunity to call my favorite band's lead singer at home. Wow! The newsletter was five minutes away from never happening. If I'd left a minute earlier, I would have never met Phil. This connection was the second major event in my Blasters experience.

In February 1994, the first issue of The Blasters newsletter mailed out with a small circulation; the design was kind of shabby, but it was all from the heart.

All my Dave info. came from a secretary at his management company. On October 20, 1994

in Philadelphia they granted me an in-person Dave Alvin interview. I was so nervous; I probably asked dumb questions and didn't even hear the answers (luckily my tape recorder did). I thought I made a bad impression. However, Dave was very gracious and polite and professional.

Some time later, on a routine call to management, I was told Dave had left them and was self-managing his career. I gave the secretary my number to forward to Dave. I knew it wouldn't lead to anything. But a day later I was blown away to find a message on my answering machine from Dave. He said: "I heard you were looking for me. If you need any info for your newsletter, call me." Wow!! Too incredible! Dave's returning my call was the third major event in my pursuit to honor my musical heroes.

Since then all the Blasters and associated musicians have made themselves available to me and have contributed and supported the newsletter. Especially John Bazz who seems to always be there when I call. I've also been fortunate that all the guys have become good friends of mine.

What has cemented this whole thing together is the fellow fans of this music. I've met so many friends through this great music. It's inspired me from a personal standpoint to call my Blasters experience, a "way of life," instead of just an interest. It's changed me for the better.

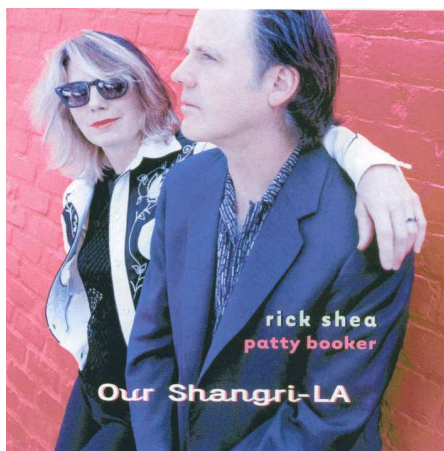
To all of the readers of this newsletter around the world, to all of the fans who come to shows, and to all of the photographers, writers, and collectors who follow and support these musicians, I say thanks for ten great years. Most of all, of course, I want to thank Phil and Dave Alvin and the guys in their bands. They make it all worthwhile.

Special thanks to the people who help out behind the scenes of the newsletter: Craig Frischkorn, the assistant editor who has been here nearly ten years; my wife Triss, who helps me on the layout; and Tom Wilk, who has done an amazing amount of research for the latest news and writes great feature stories. Thanks to everyone who makes American Music possible.

I'm sure I'll have more to talk about when the twentieth anniversary issue comes around. See ya then. --**AM**

Highly recommended New Releases

Rick Shea and Patty Booker

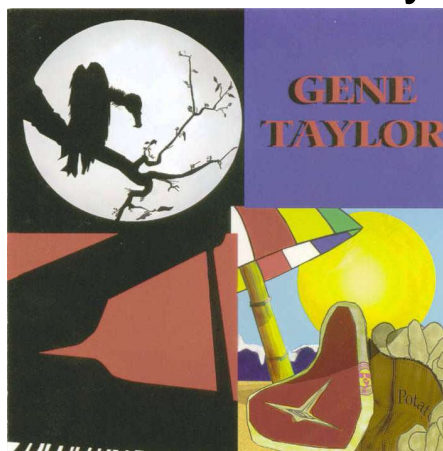


Our Shangri - LA
Tres Pescadores
Records

Guilty Men guitar
player Rick Shea
joins with L.A.
Country singer Patty
Booker for an album
of country duets.

Trespescadores.com

Gene Taylor



Gene Taylor
Pacific Blues
Records

Blasters' piano
player Gene Taylor
leads his own band
which includes Bill
Bateman, former
Blasters drummer
Dave Carroll, and
James Harman.
Phil Alvin did the
artwork.

Pacificblues.com

The Original Blasters European Reunion Tour 2003 Tour Diaries Part 1: by Billy Davis

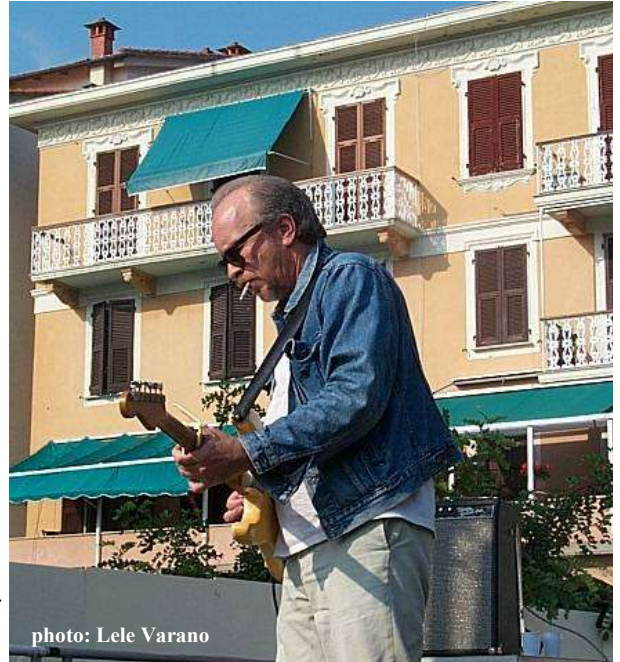
July 17, 2003 - Chiari, Italy at Oratorio di S. Bernardino.

This was the opening night of the European tour - an outdoor venue - a big festival tent set up on the grounds of a school right next to the soccer field. It was about 100 km from Milan, so it drew people from that city.

The Blasters had no rehearsal, so it was expected that things might go a little rough, but this was not the case. Setting up the stage was difficult. The Blasters borrowed backline equipment from the opening band. They had to make many adjustments. For instance, Bill Bateman didn't like the snare drum, so he took the skin off and re-tightened it using his lighter to tighten up the skin in weak spots.

Set list: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / flattop joint / long white cadillac / I'm shakin / help you dream / common man / crazy baby / border radio / hollywood bed / I wish you would / tag along / dark right / sadie brown / so long baby goodbye / american music. Encore: One bad Stud / don't lie to me / marie marie.

It was hot - very hot! Northern Italy had been in a drought for a few months but just after soundcheck, we got about 5 minutes of rain - A good sign. Phil dedicated I WISH YOU WOULD, to wishing Italy well, for more rain.



The Italian people loved the Blasters, cheered 'em on, and then gathered in a big crowd after the show for autographs. Dave Alvin has a tremendous following here and drew a lot of fans who always attend his Guilty Men shows in Italy. The Blasters got a standing ovation after SO LONG BABY GOODBYE, which is a big favorite.

In making the set list, I wrote out a master list of songs they had done on the US tour. Dave chose from that list. I forgot BORDER RADIO, so it didn't make it into the written list. During the set, Dave remembered and added it in. Gene yelled at me from the stage: "Billy, That's a \$50 fine for

forgetting BORDER RADIO." How did I do that? I'm guilty!

This was a great first show. Thanks to the promoter Franco for taking us out to a great Italian dinner. The Italians are very friendly people and we had a great time in Chiari.

July 18, 2003 - Lerici, Italy at Piazza Della Rotunda

What a beautiful town right on the western seaboard of Italy not far from La Spezia! The stage was set up in the open air of the town square with a hill of houses and streets running up behind the back view of the stage. As the Blasters played, the audience could see the traffic driving towards the Blasters - an interesting effect. The old style houses and buildings all provided a nice backdrop. Close along the shore, I saw a large fort reaching high on a mountain and on the end point, you could see wave splashing all over the rocks. What a beautiful place.

The opening band called Los Caimanos, an Italian roots rock band played a real good rock 'n roll set mixing originals and covers. They were really good. It was great to hear the singer proclaim to the audience what an honor it was for him to open up for the Blasters. As they played an instrumental, the singer spoke in Italian naming each Blaster and a list of his favorite songs. That was nice.

The Blasters show came off a little rough but as the Blasters go, it still was a damn good show. Phil's voice was a little hoarse maybe because he didn't have any Gatorade to drink. John Bazz broke a bass string, Dave also



broke a string and had a hard time getting it tuned up in AMERICAN MUSIC but then launched into a fierce solo to finish the song. He capped it off by jumping twice in the air.

I made a mistake too. As the roadie, I was supposed to put Phil's harmonica on his amp so they could play GOT LOVE IF YOU WANT IT after HOLLYWOOD BED. I forgot it, but got it up there for SO LONG BABY GOODBYE. In DON'T LIE



TO ME, Gene Taylor called for Bill Bateman to do a little drum solo, it was a real fan pleaser.

Dave finished off the show at the mic announcing the band member names, thanking the fans, and saying "Arrivadercci." It was another show the Italian fans will not forget. Thanks to our friends Lele, Oli, and little Lisa for making the band and crew feel at home in Italy, translating for us, and getting all the arrangements in order. Phil dedicated MARIE MARIE to Lele and Oli's daughter; Lisa who is almost two years old; she attended the Blasters show tonight and enjoyed it. Thanks Italy. Were off to Belgium.

Set List: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / long white cadillac / I'm shakin / help you dream / crazy baby / common man / blue shadows / hollywood bed / tag along / dark right / sadie brown / border radio / so long baby goodbye / american music. Encore: one bad stud / don't lie to me / marie marie.

July 19, 2003 Genk, Belgium

We arrived today on our day off near the R & B Fest site in a small town called Genk - a very quiet, small town. We were driven 23 km to the festival site to see what events were going on that night and to find some food.

Phil Alvin and Chris Gaffney (who was on the tour as Dave Alvin's guitar tech) met up backstage with Michael Dinallo of the Barrence Whitfield band called The Mercy Brothers. Barrence, Michael, and Chris Gaffney started jamming on Johnny Paycheck songs and blues song in front of their dressing room. Phil came over and joined in with PRECIOUS MEMORIES, then another blues song. A crowd gathered around because it was



photo: Nicole Lewerke

very entertaining and spontaneous.

A local radio station had a mobile studio set up at the festival site and invited them to come over and perform live on Radio 1 Club Live, a Belgian radio show.

Phil was in good spirits as he was interviewed and then played a few songs with Barrence Whitfield, Dinallo, and Chris Gaffney. Phil sang BIG ROAD BLUES and a very different version of SMOKE-STACK LIGHTNING. Chris sang IS THIS LOVE. Bill Bateman jumped in for the last song and added some percussion. This was great because no one expected them to be there a day early. We finished off the night going to the main stage and watching Dave Edmunds play with his full band.

July 21, 2003 Peer, Belgium - R & B Festival

There was no sound check today, just a line check; where the band plugs in right before the set and makes sure everything works. The soundman adjusts levels as they play.

It was a big festival crowd that was pretty impressive. On the backdrop of the stage hung a sign that said "Peer 2003 Blasters." The festival site had big screens on each side of the stage with about five cameras supplying images to it.

Set list: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / crying for my baby / I'm shakin / help you dream / crazy baby / common man / border radio / Hollywood bed / I wish you would / tag along / dark night / so long baby goodbye / American music / one bad stud. Encore: don't lie to me / marie marie

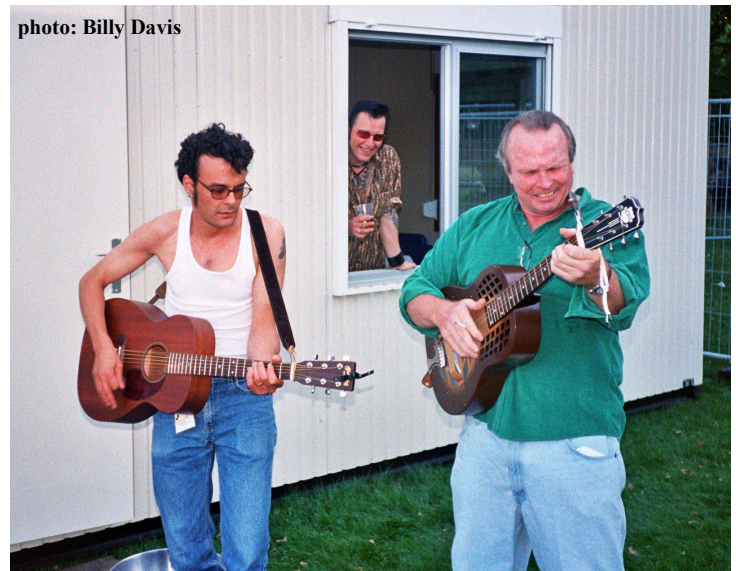


photo: Billy Davis



photo: Billy Davis



photo: Nicole Lewerke



The Blasters have been opening up the show with Lee Allen's **WALKIN' WITH MR LEE** recording. They walk on stage during the song to plug in and then as the song ends, they play.

The Blasters played a solid set. Phil's voice was in perfect form. They played **CRYIN' FOR MY BABY**, but Phil didn't play harmonica on it; he played guitar. Phil dedicated **I'M SHAKIN'**: "This goes out to the great Solomon Burke who is here tonight." For **HELP YOU DREAM**, Phil said: "This goes out to our roadie Chris Gaffney, who lives at the bar." The story there is that Phil spent the afternoon at the hotel bar with Chris Gaffney. It's rare to see Phil Alvin drink beer, but he chose well with Belgian tap beer. In the encore, Dave broke two strings. One of them was during Gene's song **DON'T LIE TO ME**. Dave changed it as fast as he could, as the song played on. Gene took a long piano solo and Bill took a drum solo to stall for time. That was cool. Then Dave broke a string in **MARIE MARIE**, but he played right on through his solo choosing his remaining five strings carefully.

They definitely kept the between-song banter to a minimum because they had only 90 minutes to get the show into. It was an exceptional show. The band seemed in a good mood and they were having a good time on stage. After the show the Blasters met with headliner Solomon Burke and then went out into the audience to sign autographs. Dave ran over to the merchandise counter to buy the last Charley Patton T-shirt. On to Amsterdam. *Next Issue Part 2 of the European Tour*



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