

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

SEPT 2004

Blasters shows

(Phil, John, Jerry, Keith)

- 9/15 Enviken Sweden at Tengergården
- 9/16 Umeå Sweden at Droskan
- 9/18 Saetervika, Norway at Kongo
- 9/20 Malmö, Sweden at KB
- 9/21 Helsinki, Finland at Tavastia
- 9/23 Steninge, Sweden at Göstas Café
- 9/24 Gislaved Sweden at Folketspark
- 9/25 Jössefors, Sweden at Folketshus.
- 9/26 Stockholm, Sweden at Akkurat.
- 9/29 London England at Borderline
- 10/10 Los Angeles CA at The Echo
- 10/17 Long Beach CA at Vault 350
- 10/30 Bakersfield CA at Fishlips

Dave Alvin & Guilty Men

- 9/17 San Juan Capistrano at Coach House
- 9/23 Nashville TN at Americana Music Fest
- 9/24 Greenville SC at Handlebar
- 9/25 Charlotte NC at Visulite Theatre
- 9/26 Atlanta GA at Smith's Old Bar
- 9/28 New Orleans LA at Mid City Lanes
- 9/30 Austin TX at Continental Club
- 10/1 Dallas TX at Sons Of Herman Hall
- 10/2 Houston TX at Continental Club
- 10/3 San Antonio TX at Casbeers
- 10/5 Albuquerque NM at Launch Pad
- 10/7 Phoenix AZ at Rhythm Room
- 10/8 Tucson AZ at Plush
- 10/9 San Diego CA at Casbah
- 10/10 Los Angeles CA at Echo Benefit for Gil T.
- 10/12 Hollywood CA at Amoeba records
- 11/6 Chicago at Old Town School of Folk
- 11/8-9 Lincoln NE at Zoo Bar
- 11/11 Denver CO at Bluebird Theatre
- 11/12 Durango CO at Abbey Theatre
- 11/13 Santa Fe NM at The Paramount

Blasters first studio album in 19 years Due 9/28

Latest News – The Blasters (Phil Alvin, John Bazz, Keith Wyatt, and Jerry Angel) will release their studio album 4-11-44 on September 28, 2004 on the Evangeline record label in the UK and the rest of Europe. Negotiations are near completion for a US release in the fall. If you don't have access to a record store in



Europe, try www.amazon.co.uk for mailorder. Track listing: DADDY ROLLING STONE, 4-11-44, REBOUND, IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT, JULIE, DRY RIVER, YOUR KIND OF LOVE, LOVE IS MY BUSINESS, SLIP OF THE TONGUE, PRECIOUS

MEMORIES, BONEYARD, WINDOW UP ABOVE, JUST TO BE WITH YOU, and FIRE OF LOVE. – The Blasters are celebrating the new CD release with a Scandinavian tour ending up in England Sept 29. -- A Blastersnewsletter Special Fan Appreciation Event -- Dinner With the Blasters in London England Sept. 27 or 28, 2004 Blasters fans are invited to spend one evening of food and drink with the Blasters (Phil Alvin, John Bazz, Keith Wyatt, and

(Continued on page 2)

This Issue: The Original Blasters play once more, a quick interview with new Guilty man Chris Miller, and the Original Blasters European Tour diaries summer 2003 part 3.

Jerry Angel) at a restaurant / pub in London England (Sept 27 or 28) TBA. check www.Blastersnewsletter.com for details. -- Actor Jeff Bridges has signed to star in a movie call King of California, scheduled for release in 2005. It's written and scheduled to be directed by Michael Cahill. -- A new book is out called The King of California: J.G. Boswell and the Making of a Secret American Empire by Mark Arax and Rick Wartzman. -- In July Rhino released "X - The Best: Make The Music Go Bang," a two-CD retrospective. -- Los Lobos have included a version of MARIE MARIE on Ride This. It's an EP of seven cover songs by artists who worked on The Ride CD. The version of MARIE MARIE is the only concert recording on the EP (recorded at the Aladdin Theater in Portland, Ore., on 8/26/99). — The Knitters new album release has been pushed off until June or September. A few labels have shown interest. — Dave Alvin will record a song for a Nick Lowe Tribute CD. — Look for a Dave Alvin interview in Vintage Guitar magazine. — Dave Alvin joined Little Milton on stage at the Long Beach Blues fest on 9/5/04. Dave sang ASHGROVE with Milton's band and Little Milton took the solo on the song. Then Dave played lead guitar as Milton sang SHAKE, RATTLE, AND ROLL and BLUES ARE ALRIGHT. — Dave Alvin plans to record a new album in 2005 with the Guilty Men on Yep Roc Records. ~~ *AM*

The Original Blasters: One More Time

Live in Long Beach California September 4, 2004

by Jeff Staudinger Los Alamitos, California

The Original Four Blasters were a last minute addition to headline the Sept 4, 2004 Long Beach Blues fest in California. Bo Diddley cancelled due to illness. The Original Blasters; Phil Alvin, Dave Alvin, John Bazz and Bill Bateman were asked to fill in. Gene Taylor had previous commitments with the Fabulous Thunderbirds and couldn't be there. Keith Wyatt and Jerry Angel from the current Blasters were scheduled to appear as special guests.

Whew! Call the Fire Dept! Long Beach is still smokin' from the Blasters set. But first, a little quiz: Which of the following did Phil Alvin say, and which did Macy Gray say? "Lets all get naked, take something off!" and "Salacious and loquacious." Well, I'm sure you know. The choice is obvious. Gray said the former, and Alvin said the latter. Different quotes, from different folks, and different styles. But still, all in all, they both play American Music.

The Blues festival was at Cal State University, Long Beach. The stage was set up with large video screens on each side so the audience of thousands all the way to the back could get a good look. I arrived late, but in time to see Macy Gray start her set.

I made my way down to the front of the stage, and figured I'd have to 'put up' with her music, to get to the Blasters. But after her first number, I found myself rockin'



along with everyone else.

Near the end of her set, Macy made a reference to how hot it was, and that's where her 'naked' statement came in. Macy finished up, and the stage was set for the Blasters. A DJ for the local station putting on the festival introduced the boys. He was pumped up for the Blasters appearance, exhorting the crowd to get on its feet, especially the folks in the VIP section. They all did, and the DJ introduced the Blasters.

Dave, Phil, John, and Bill took the stage and before Phil had a chance to say anything, Dave went right into RED ROSE. The sound was a bit muddled, and distorted but it still rocked. The guys seemed to be in good spirits. Dave was smiling throughout, and Phil seemed especially up to the challenge. Inspired by the large throng of people and the headline status, he was even more animated, and was in great voice. His voice carried over the large venue, and was easy to see why his vocal cords are a musical instrument. TROUBLE BOUND was next, then BIG F CHORD. That's when he made his 'loquacious' remark. Dave took an extended solo on this.

There were many people in attendance unfamiliar with the Blasters. But the audience really started to get into the groove with BIG F CHORD. Phil weaved his way through the song, and with his grin beaming on the video screens in close-up, I imagine the unfamiliar fans felt as if they were discovering a gem they never knew about. I bet record stores might have a run tomorrow on Blaster material.

BORDER RADIO followed, with I'M SHAKIN' backing that up, sending the crowd in a 95-degree frenzy. Dave ambled up to the mic, and mentioned about Diddley not being there, and wishing him well. Phil added that Bo, "had a Florida bug." Phil then dedicated I LOVE YOU SO to Bo. After the song Dave approached the mic and said: "That was a Bo Diddley song, and were gonna do another."

And what a neat surprise it was when they did YOU CAN'T JUDGE BOOK BY ITS COVER. Phil really tore this one up. He gave this song the same treatment as he did in the Blasters Going Home DVD when he sang HAVE MERCY BABY. A definite gem. The boys might not have had too much rehearsal on this, as they started



the song, Phil was raising his hand, as if it was not starting to his liking. Either Dave didn't see him, or didn't want to stop, as the band kept playing. Phil then gave up, dropped his hand, and tore it up.

Phil then made a dedication to Sonny Boy Williamson, doing one of his songs called NO NIGHTS BY MYSELF. Phil gave the deserved mention of Lee Allen on SO LONG BABY GOODBYE getting the crowd rollin' and reelin'. Special guest time was up as Phil introduced Billy Boy Arnold as the "Phi Beta Kappa of Chicago Blues." Mr. Beta Kappa sang WANDERING EYE.

Keith Wyatt then joined the fray, although current Blaster drummer Jerry Angel never made an appearance as advertised. Phil introduced Wyatt as "The other Blasters guitarist." This could have gone either one or two ways. It could have been awkward with both Dave and Keith up there. Or, a once in a lifetime chance to see two great Blasters guitar players jamming. I'm glad I was there.

Keith stood to Phil's left and Dave in his regular spot on his right, as the band went from 0 to 60 in about 3.2 seconds with MARIE MARIE. The only thing hotter was the weather. The song just blistered. It was incredible to see Dave and Keith play off each other. Keith took the first solo in the song, and then Dave took the next.

ONE BAD STUD followed with Keith again taking the first solo, and Dave taking it home. Near the end, Dave and Keith were literally inches from each other, going back and forth. At the end, Dave leaned over to Keith, and he pointed back and forth, between him and Wyatt. What he wanted was for them to trade licks at the end, as Phil called for the ending segment of the song. Phil sang the final words bringing the band to a stop. Dave and Keith come to the front of the stage, on each side of Phil. Keith played a few notes and then pointed to Dave. Dave did his little thing, and then Dave tossed his pick in the air, but the wind caught it, and he missed it. So, Dave dug deep, got another pick, tossed it, caught it, and the band read the cue and finished the big chord ending. The band then left the stage.

Coming back out for the encore, Dave went up the mic, and thanked everyone for their support, and asked the crowd to: "Support my brother, he needs all the help he can get." I'm thinking this was in reference to the upcoming release, and tour. Phil replied jokingly: "I just need all the support I can get." Dave's comment seemed to be a



sincere genuine concern for Phil's chance to re-activate the new Blasters with their new album and tour. Nice to hear.

They did DADDY ROLLIN' STONE with Keith really bustin' chops on this. Phil dedicated the last song to "all you guys" in the audience – AMERICAN MUSIC. This was very different but the best version I've ever heard. It was about 8 minutes long, Keith took the first lead, and then Dave later. But Dave changed it up mid-song. As he was about to go into his solo, he kind-of made a nod to the band as if saying: 'I'm about to mix it up, follow me, and hang on.' He did, and they did.

Mid-way through his solo, he took it real low, and started playing real soft, and Phil and Keith stopped playing, tapping along on their guitars, and it was just Dave, Bazz and Bateman. It's very similar to the Blasters recording of KATHLEEN where at the end of the song, the band is rocking along then takes it down a notch. Then as the piano solos, the band kicks it up again, to a rising finish. This was the same – Amazing!

I've seen the Blasters about 8 times now, and this was easily the best combination of ending songs I've ever seen - Hands down! The highlights were seeing how strong vocally Phil was and the intensity he sings with. He was in top vocal form. Also the interplay between Dave and Keith was a treat. They were playing in tandem and both seemed to be enjoying themselves. Several times they were right up next to each other, handing it back and forth on guitar.

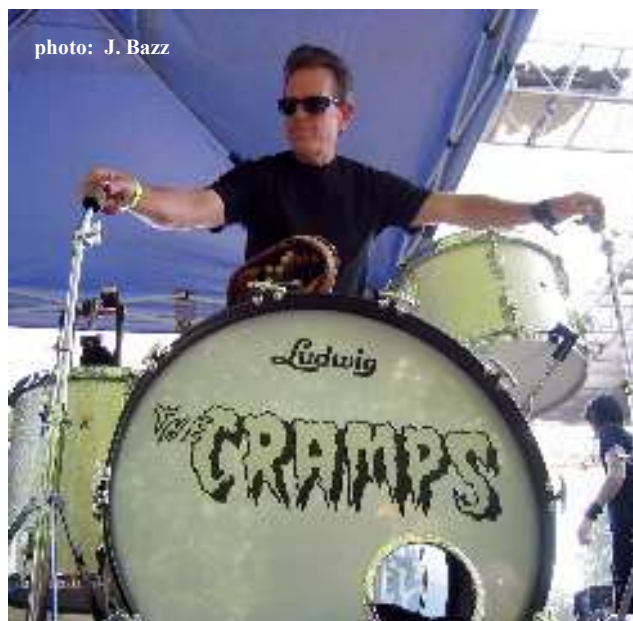
I couldn't help but think, as I was watching this display of Blaster wizardry, that Keith seemed to be paying homage to Dave—giving Dave the respect he's due. I'm sure he is honored to be carrying on the tradition of Blaster guitarists, and sharing the stage with Alvin, who's responsible for the great Blaster legacy that Wyatt continues on with today.

I also couldn't help but think that Dave was like a proud parent, prowling the stage, showing the "new kid" how it all started. But also, like a proud parent, playing up there with Wyatt, to prove how good this guy is. The guitar spot in the band is in good hands. It's American Music. It's the greatest sound, right from the USA.

SET LIST - Red Rose, Trouble Bound, Big F Chord, Border Radio, I'm Shakin, I love You So, Can't Judge A Book By It's Cover, No Nights By Myself, So Long Baby Goodbye, Wandering Eye (w/Billy Boy Arnold), Marie Marie, One Bad Stud. Encore: Daddy Rollin' Stone, American Music. ~~ *AM*

Bill Bateman Joins the Cramps

photo: J. Bazz



Bill Bateman has become the new drummer in the Cramps. He played his first gig July 4th weekend at Irvine CA's Hootenany festival.

It's Miller Time!

Chris Miller joins the Guilty Men

June 2004 - Dave Alvin's long awaited new album Ashgrove is about to be released and the Guilty Men are getting ready to hit the road for the summer tour. Rick Shea had recently left the band after six years to concentrate on his own music. In steps Chris Miller, an Austin based guitarist with an impressive resume. I spoke with Chris on the Seattle stop of the Ashgrove tour. I found out that Chris Miller is from the Northwest. He had quite a few fans at the Portland Oregon show.



Interview by Jon Noe

JN - So I heard that you're from Portland.

CM - ...ish. I graduated from High School there.

JN - You were in the Razorbacks.

CM - We were a three piece. I played guitar.

JN - Didn't you open for...

CM - The Blasters

JN - I knew it! I saw that show.

CM - Yeah, at The Central. And we also opened for the Romantics and The Cruzados.

JN - So what other bands have you played in?

CM - In Austin I played with Wayne Hancock, Lavelle White, Ted Roddy, Chris Gaffney, Marcia Ball, Sarah Brown, The Hollisters.

JN - So you just made the rounds with all the great Austin bands.

CM - Yeah.

JN - So how did you get the gig in Dave's band?

CM - He called me. Dave and I have been friends for quite a while. I always told him I wanted the gig if it ever became available.

JN - How much rehearsal time did you have with the band?

CM - Two days.

JN - Two days? Wow. What are some of your favorite songs to play on the tour so far?

CM - Somewhere in Time, Out of Control, and Dry River.

So, once many years ago a guy named Chris was in a band that opened for a band with a guy named Dave in it. Now Chris is in Dave's band. It's all come full circle. As it should be.



Chris Miller of the Rockin' Razorbacks, 1985.

photo: Gustavo Rapoport

The Original Blasters European Reunion Tour 2003 Tour Diaries Part 3: by Billy Davis

July 28, 2003 Glasgow, Scotland at Renfrew Ferry

This is a really cool venue. It used to be a ferry boat that is now permanently docked on the river Clyde and is used only as an entertainment venue. It promised to be an interesting show tonight because Chris Gaffney would be opening the show. So in soundcheck the whole band was there except Phil, but Chris was fronting the Blasters. They played an instrumental version of I FELL IN LOVE, then Gaffney sang SLEW FOOT. Gaffney sang a song I had never heard him do called SINCE I MET YOU BABY - A great version that would be included in his set later that night. Next Gene sang three songs - one called BLUE BIRDS OVER THE WHITE CLIFFS OF DOVER, then the Robert Johnson song DUST MY BROOM and finally MATCHBOX. This was all in Soundcheck. What a treat. Everybody left soundcheck except Chris and Dave who stayed to play a few songs that they would do together in Chris's set. Chris was borrowing a Gibson ES-335 guitar from a friend in Glasgow and had to try it out.

Throughout the tour most of the band seemed to really bond together as friends. In all the fooling around, Gene and John promised Gaffney that in return for his help as roadie for the Blasters, in his one show they were gonna be his roadies. They let me jokingly play along. I was told that if I wanted to speak to Gaffney, I had to go through John, who had to go to Gene, who was the only one allowed to deal directly with Chris. We had a lot of fun.

Gene did the introduction saying, "Ladies and Gentleman, direct from a two week sold out engagement at the marijuana strip club in Long Beach Ca. Under the musical direction of Lonesome Lightnin' Skinny (Gene points over to Dave). Fighting out of the blue corner with a record of 17 victories and 1 defeat, 12 by way of knockout. The pride of Tucson, Arizona, the great Chris Gaffney."

Dave Alvin accompanied Chris the whole set, and Gene knelt on the side of the stage and put beers down for Chris. After the first song, Chris yelled to Gene: "Key of E, if you want to





play along." So then Gene joined in.

Set list: albuquerque / is this love / slew foot / man of somebody's dreams / honky tonk / since I met you baby / the cold hard facts of life. John Bazz's roadie job was to take Chris's jacket and guitar at the end of the set. It was a real good Chris Gaffney set. The crowd enjoyed it and as usual Chris's voice was brilliant.

The Blasters came on and already Dave Alvin wasn't happy. At least one of the reasons was that the PA speakers were on the stage in front of him and they reached about 8 feet high. Dave appeared to be very uninspired and looked as if there would be no extra effort given tonight. Sometimes he even leaned up against the wall. It definitely takes away from a Blasters show when Dave phones it in, but still every Blasters show is guaranteed to be an excellent rock n roll show. The band was also very tired at this point. We had a tough travel after the Gijon, Spain gig. We had to get up at 4 AM after the gig, drive 4 hours to the Bilbao airport, then connect thru London with a 2 hour layover and then finally made it Glasgow at 1 PM. We only had a few hours until soundcheck.



During soundcheck and the show, the Blasters were being monitored by a sound decibel meter. They weren't allowed to go above 105 dB, so the overall mix had to be adjusted. The staff told us that there is a little old lady across the river who always complains, so the law says 105 dB is the limit. Everybody agrees though that if we invited her over for a few pints, that might just take care of the problem. Anyway, we were curious what the meter would read during CRAZY BABY or TAG ALONG or AMERICAN MUSIC - the ends of those tunes really hit the limit. During the show we watched the meter and I won't admit





here in print what that number was, but I'll tell you we were all smiling and looking out the windows.

Phil Alvin started the show commenting to the crowd, "Buenos notches. We flew Virgin airlines and there were no virgins on the plane. We flew Easy Jet and it wasn't. I'm playing on a ferry boat, don't disappoint me."

After two songs Phil took off his jacket and Dave played a little strip tease music. Phil played along and did a dance, so I guess Dave is having some fun.

The third song was supposed to be NO OTHER GIRL which requires Bill Bateman to start the song on the drums. I made a big mistake when trying to write out the set lists quickly before show time. The band started NO OTHER GIRL as Bill started CRYIN FOR MY BABY. They stopped and Gene yelled out "who made the set list, Billy." Everybody looked at me standing in the balcony and Phil yelled "It's his fault." OOPS that was embarrassing. HELP YOU DREAM always features Gene Taylor doing a bunch of solo piano stuff, tonight he did a different solo with a few old-time song melodies thrown in. Phil has been consistently in good voice and has not had a weak show yet on this tour.

The last song of course was MARIE MARIE and in the solo at the end, Dave started to come out of his shell. He stepped out from behind the PA speakers, spread his legs wide and worked over his guitar through the solo. He jumped up in the air and after coming down, the volume on his guitar dropped low. He thought that his guitar setup was failing like it had in Spain. I had to tell him later the real reason: The stage was so bouncy, it vibrated loose a mic that picked up the guitar sound from the amp to the house PA and stage monitors. It happened to John Bazz earlier on his bass amp. Dave finished by introducing the band members and said, "Those are the Blasters. See ya in another 19 years."

Set List: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / crying for my baby / I'm shakin' / long white cadillac / help you dream / crazy baby / hollywood bed / border radio I wish you would / tag along / dark night / sadie brown / so long baby good-bye / american music. Encore: santa fe / one bad stud / marie marie



The crowd was a good size but not a sell out. Being a Monday night in the pouring rain probably hurt. Brian Young and Liam Killen of the Sabre Jets were at the show. The Sabre Jets played on the Blasters tribute CD. Thanks to The Blasters old friend Lindsay Hutton who set up this show.

July 29, 2003 London, England at Dingwalls (1st Night)

This is a legendary club located in Camden Lock. We heard that they renovated the old club and moved it to a new part of the building. That's good because when the Blasters played there many years ago, they say there was a big column in the middle of the stage. Dave, Chris and I wandered around looking for the club and were finally led to a place called Jongleur's comedy club. This was the venue, but I guess the promoters like to use

the Dingwalls name because of its reputation. We walked inside and immediately noticed it was intensely hot in the room. It wasn't very hot outside - maybe the ventilation was off. The stage was very small - a temporary platform set up about about a foot off the floor. That's not good for viewing, but at least the club was set up with ascending levels back towards the bar for the crowd to stand on and see. The dressing room was smaller than the size of a car - and that was for two bands totaling 10 people. Based on the conditions, we didn't feel like this was gonna be a very good set of last Blasters shows.

Soundcheck was short because the rented equipment arrived late and the opening band, Robert Randolph, had a lot of equipment, had to set up.

Showtime came and it was just as hot in the club as it was earlier in the day. Everyone commented how strange it was that it was a new facility with no modern ventilation system. The band wasn't looking forward to going on stage in such hot conditions. We had trouble getting water and ice from the venue and they got upset when the band ran late getting on stage. Dave and Phil had a little spat when Phil requested that I'M SHAKIN' be moved further down in the set. Dave wanted a reason, which Phil didn't give up easily. The reason was that he felt placing it near CRYIN FOR

MY BABY made them sound similar. So now Dave had to write the set list over causing more delay.

The Blasters came out with all five men wearing black shirts. I don't know if that was a conscious decision or not. It was a good start to the show - everybody seemed to be playing hard. Dave was moving around the stage and even crossed behind his brother to come over and watch Gene play the piano. Before the show Dave said he was starting to feel a little nostalgic. I think everybody in the band is thinking that this is it for the original Blasters. So far, this was turning out to be another great Blasters show.

At the beginning of HEAR ME CRYIN' Phil sings "Woo! Sometimes I get a little lonely, and I think about



what my baby said to me..." then he pauses and he band waits for him to start singing. Phil commented about his gal from the song: "She's a loquacious woman." Someone in the crowd yelled, "What does that mean?" Phil replied, "It means wordy. . like me."

The intense heat was amplified by the fact that the place was sold out and jam-packed with people. By the fifth song, Phil was showing the effects of heat exhaustion. He put his leg up on the monitor, held tight on the mic stand, gave up strumming on the guitar, and between lyrics gasped for breath.

When the time came for Gene to sing TAG ALONG, Phil exited the stage to get a much needed rest. He leaned over to talk to Dave and said, "I gotta go backstage and sit down for a few minutes." When Phil came back, Bill Bateman walked off also for a rest. Phil joked to the audience: "If you could turn more lights on. (laughs) - that's British sarcasm." They waited a few minutes for Bill Bateman to come back and Gene played some piano from the Blasters JOE TURNER MEDLEY song. Bill came back for I'M SHAKIN' but Chris Gaffney had to towel fan him from behind the stage. Bill was getting pretty overheated and on top of that he was battling a cold.

In the encore Gene sang DON'T LIE TO ME. He was having some trouble with the sound in his monitor. He usually likes to hear his own vocal very loud in his monitors. When he turned around to look at the monitor man (a guy employed by the club), he was asleep, or had just closed his eyes. It was funny. But Gene finally threw his hands up in the air and finished the song. The guy woke up but couldn't seem to figure out what Gene wanted.

Set List: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / cryin for my baby / long white cadillac / hollywood bed / help you dream / crazy baby / common man / border radio / tag along / I'm shakin' / dark night / so long baby good-bye / american music. Encore: don't lie to me / marie marie

Dave finished off the show introducing the members and said: "It's been 17 years since we last

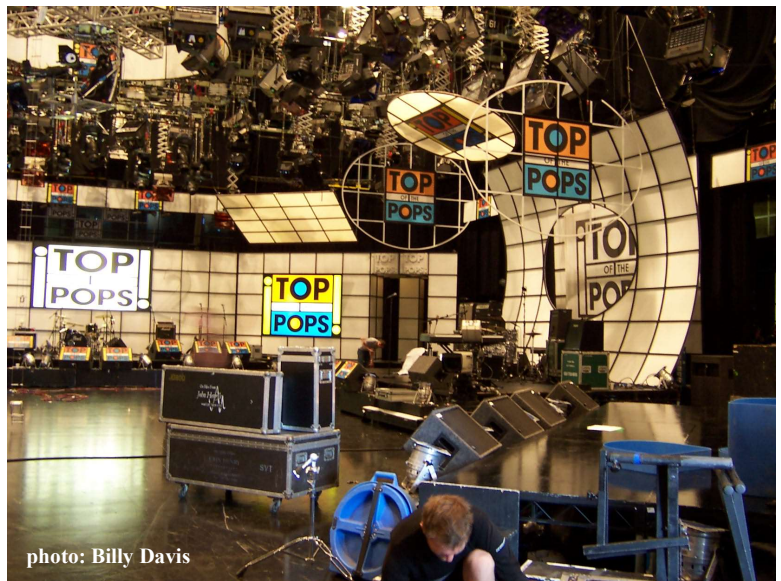


photo: Billy Davis



photo: Billy Davis

photo: N. Lewerke



played and after tomorrow night it will be another 17 years. Bye." Over all, it was one of the better shows of the tour but it was so hot, we couldn't wait for the show to be over. It was a shortened set because of the heat, but still the fans were satisfied. Tomorrow is the last original Blasters show.

• July 30, 2003 (afternoon)
BBC Studio's, London, England
-- The Blasters film a segment for the BBC TV music show called
Top Of The Pops 2.

Noon -- The road crew: Me, soundman

Rick Brown, and Chris Gaffney, along with Bill Bateman, and the Blasters manager Greg Lewerke drove to the BBC studios. We are supposed to check on the equipment being set up for the Blasters. The Blasters had their own stage to set up on and ordered duplicate equipment, so they didn't have to move their Dingwalls set up.

Bill Bateman has to see the drums because he has a very unique set-up that only he can get right through fine adjustment. When we arrive, the equipment is already set up and we find out we are in trouble already for being late. The stage producer is a big guy named Clive and he isn't happy with us. Chris Gaffney set up Dave's guitar pedals as I got Phil Alvin's guitar ready. Time for lunch, but Bill Bateman chose to work through lunch to tune the drums.

Meanwhile the rest of the band arrives and meets at Dressing room 230.

1:30 PM -- I escort the band from the dressing room, which is down a long hallway full of different production rooms and then up the stairs to where we pass two security checkpoints to enter studio 3.

The TV studio room was very impressive. The first thing you see on the ceiling are rows and rows of girders, hanging lights, and chaining rigging lifts for equipment. Along the four walls are stages, one for each band performing that night, all facing into the middle where the audience stands. Decorating the walls are various light up signs for Top Of The Pops. The room is all ready to go for the show with a production crew in place.



photo: Billy Davis

A few minutes later, Phil Alvin walked into the big room looking a little nervous, but singing an old blues song - instantly drawing attention. The boys get up on the stage and run through the two songs they will do on the show: **ONE BAD STUD** and **MARIE MARIE**. They do the pair twice and soundcheck goes fairly easily. Phil seems to hit it off with Clive and I think we might be okay, though I get reprimanded for taking photos in the studio. Now the band can take a little break.

2:30 PM -- Camera check time. The band returns to the stage and the

Blasters run through the two songs as the production crew shoot the band in a practice run for the show. We are treated to the full light show - colored stage lights, swirling spot lights, and strobes. The band leaves the stage and is told to return at 5:30 for make up.

Most of the band goes back to the hotel. Chris Gaffney goes back to set up for the nights gig at Dingwalls. Its gonna be tight. The **Blasters** play their **Top of the Pops** bit at 7:30 then have to rush back to Dingwalls to do their set at 9 PM.

I stay and I'm in charge of getting the rest of the guys, Bill, Gene, Rick, and our friend Paul Williams to a bar that I passed by when we made our confusing path through the building at Noon. I lead and repeatedly ask security and workers where the bar is. I never get correct directions. Bill Bateman steps up and asks some mate "Where can we get a few pints?" and the guy points us exactly in the right direction. Okay, I guess I'm not getting the right lingo down. We made it! Cheers.

At the table Gene reminds Bill of an old tune the **Blasters** used to do called **LIGHTS OUT**. It has some tricky parts in it, but Gene wants to sing it tonight at Dingwalls. Thanks to Paul for convincing Gene to do this



song. I got pretty excited hearing they wanted to do a rarity like that.

5:30 PM -- We meet back at the dressing room and we find out that makeup is at 6:20. Phil jokes "Oh so they lied to us to get us here early (laughs)." Yeah I guess they must know about the **Blasters**. So the **Blasters** get makeup put on. Phil took to it naturally, but Dave felt uncomfortable. Next the band waited at the side of the stage in a cool looking bar/lounge with neon lights. They use this lounge to tape short interview segments. A BBC Kids show host named Fearne is roaming around interviewing peo-



ple for the show and they decide to place Bill Bateman and Paul Williams in the back of the shot on an interview of someone else.
 6:45 PM -- The Blasters are brought into another room where they recite Top of the Pops 40th Anniversary commercial break clips.
 7:00 PM -- The first band on stage was a 60's hit singer named Chris Farlowe. He came on to sing 3 songs. It was interesting to watch how the producer handled the audience. The audience was filled with a few hundred teenagers. The producer psyched them up to cheer loudly at certain parts of the show. Each and every one of those kids was under the direction of the producer. They were given

specific instructions on how to cheer, dance and where to stand. Before the Blasters arrived he told them that they should imagine the Blasters had played a two hour show and this was the last song. They wanted a big crowd response. The funny thing is: these teenagers never heard of the Blasters.

7:30 PM -- The Blasters came out and ran through half of BORDER RADIO as a last minute soundcheck. The producer yelled to the audience "That's not the song you're going to hear." The producer gave the cue and introduced the Blasters to the cheering crowd. They played MARIE MARIE and ONE BAD STUD. The crowd went crazy on cue. This was a great Blasters performance. They were fresh, acting very energetic, and sounded perfect.

As soon as the song ended Phil and Dave, as is the routine in concert, walked off the stage towards the dressing rooms. The producer jumped on stage and asked everybody to pause for a second - Phil and Dave were already gone. I waited with the producer as he listened to his head set waiting for word from the staff that a playback would confirm they successfully taped. It took about 30 seconds and we were given the thumbs up. We were given only a few minutes to get our equipment off the stage we needed because they were about to tape another band. That's it.



photo: Billy Davis

(The episode aired on the BBC in the summer of 2003.) Now were off to the last Original Blasters show. July 30, 2003 London, England at Dingwalls (2nd Night)

The strange thing about tonight's show was the ticket sale situation. Shops that sell tickets in Camden and London as well as on-line agencies were not offering tickets for the Blasters second night. They weren't even confirming that the show was scheduled to go on. This definitely hurt ticket sales. I, as Blasters webmaster, have a direct link to the fans, and I received numerous e-mails from people who wanted to go to the second show but wouldn't travel unless they had an advanced ticket. And this is even after the first show was reported to be sold out.

On the second night when you paid at the door, they handed you a stub from the previous nights show. Strange.

One advantage of the low ticket sales was that there was a sparse crowd, making it more comfortable for eve-

rybody to move around. Expecting a hot temperature again, the club provided air circulating fans on the stage. And there was ice and cold drinks at the stage. It was now bearable.

Dave Alvin wrote out a 13 song set list instead of the normal 17. The plan was to add songs as they went along depending on how they felt. The band was in good spirits coming fresh of the Top Of the Pops taping. I was hoping for a good show since it might be the last Original Blasters concert.

This show was good all through out. Dave Alvin seemed revived and was happy and playing hard. The rare song of the night was LIGHTS OUT sung by Gene. He told the audience that Blasters-friend Paul Williams was the one who suggested they play the song. Since I seconded the motion, Gene said we would be the ones to blame if the song didn't come out good. We were ready to take all the blame, but there was no need because it came out great.

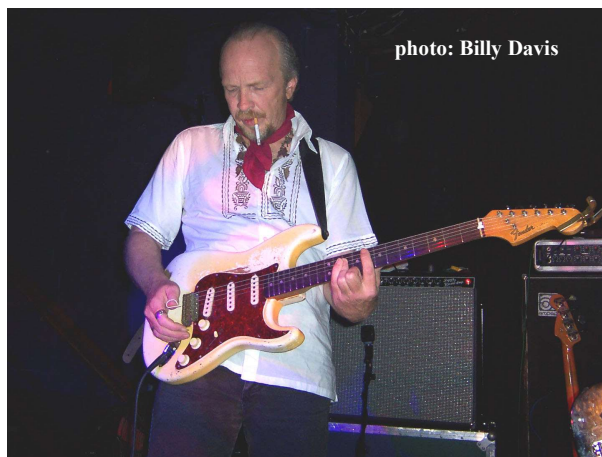
The band were all feeling loose since it was the end of the tour. They seemed to be smiling and relaxing at the same time. During HELP YOU DREAM Gene Taylor took a long solo and Dave and John stopped playing. John took my video camera out of my hands and walked in close to shoot Gene taking his solo. Wow! That was an angle I would have never gotten.

Then something happened that has never happened before, Phil Alvin left the stage to let another singer front the Blasters. Here's how Phil called it: "I'd like to bring up the singing roadie. My good friend and the Blasters good friend Chris Gaffney." Chris came up and sang the Webb Pierce song HONKY TONK. In the encore, Gene Taylor started an ad-lib piano lick singing the line: "Is everybody having a good time tonight." Then he merged it into the song SANTA FE. Next they did SADIE BROWN, a Sonny Burgess song from the Blasters highly-influential Memphis Sun Records period.

Little do the Blasters know, but at this moment back in Memphis TN we are losing one of music's great innovators. Sun records founder/producer Sam Phillips, the man who discovered Elvis, Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee, Carl Perkins, Sonny Burgess, Howlin Wolf, and many others, died at 80 years old.

MARIE MARIE finished the show as the last Original Blasters song. It felt like the last song of the reunion, not counting the planned Santa Ana, CA, DVD taping show. That show may not even be a proper concert since its intended as a vehicle for the DVD taping. This feels like the last show.

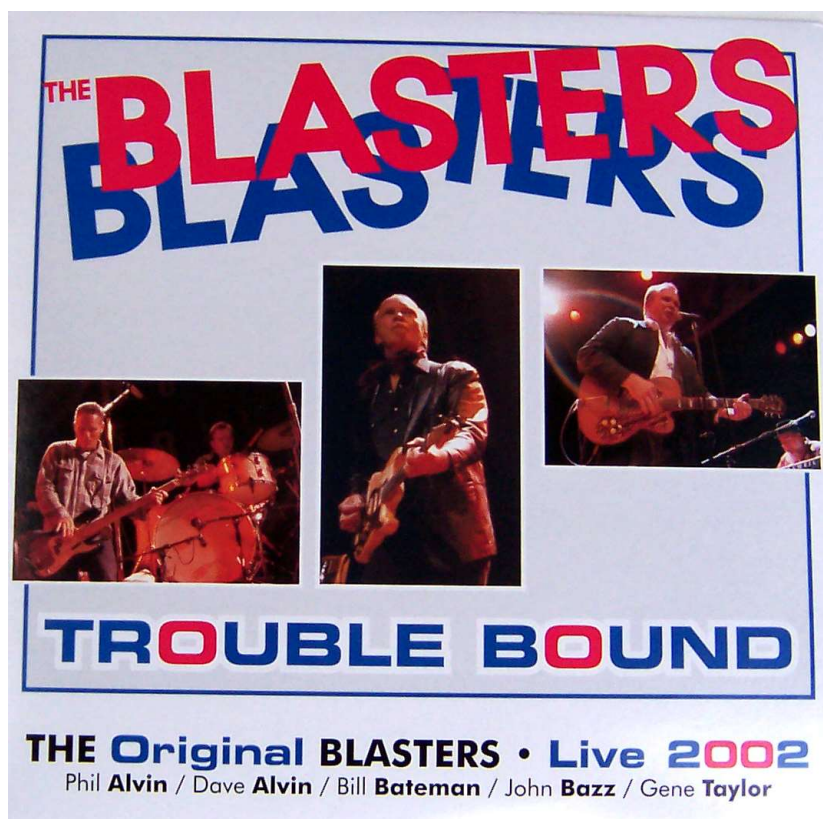
After the last note, Dave approached the mic and said, "It's been a great trip down memory lane. Maybe we'll do it again in another 30 years." As the band walked off fans grabbed the set lists and they could read in small print in the corner "See ya Original Blasters."



Set List: red rose / trouble bound / no other girl / cryin for my baby / lights out / I'm shakin' / border radio / help you dream / crazy baby / honky tonk / dark night / so long baby good-bye / american music / one bad stud. Encore: santa fe / sadie brown / marie marie ~ ~ AM

Original Blasters Vinyl Release

Raucous Records in England has released a 10" vinyl version of the Blasters 2002 Live Trouble Bound CD (licensed from HighTone records). The EP has nice packaging and uses the Blasters first album logo. This 10" LP is a strictly limited vinyl release of only 1000. Track listing: RED ROSE ~ TROUBLE BOUND ~ LONG WHITE CADILLAC ~ I'M SHAKIN' ~ BLUE SHADOWS ~ I WISH YOU WOULD ~ SADIE'S BACK IN TOWN ~ SO LONG BABY GOODBYE ~ AMERICAN MUSIC ~ MARIE MARIE. Order at www.raucousrecords.com



Blasters and Dave Alvin on the web

Www.BlastersNewsletter.com

Www.DaveAlvin.com

Www.TheBlasters.com

AMERICAN MUSIC –editor/writer: Billy Davis - editorial assistant: Craig Frischkorn

-format and layout: Tristan Currie-Davis

contributing writer: Tom Wilk **SUBSCRIPTION INFO:** Publishing 4 issues quarterly. Send \$10 for 4 issues (worldwide). If paying by check, payable to **BILLY DAVIS**. Mail to: **PO Box 210071, Woodhaven N.**

Y. 11421 e-mail: davistb@aol.com **BACK ISSUE COPIES:** \$2.50 per issue worldwide