

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

FEB 2000

DAVE ALVIN TOUR DATES

with The Guilty Men

3/17 Austin TX at SXSW
w/Tom Russell and Chris Gaffney
7/22 Chicago at Sheffield Garden

THE KNITTERS DATES

7/1 Irvine CA at Hootenany

BLASTERS TOUR DATES

3/23 Borlange Sweden
3/24 Helsingborg Sweden.
3/25 Jonkoping Sweden
3/26 Stockholm Sweden
3/29 Gavle Sweden
3/30 Umea Sweden
3/31 Helsinki Finland at Tavastia
4/1 Aitoo Finland at RnR Jamboree
4/29 Long Beach Ca at Blue Café

CHRIS GAFFNEY DATES

3/18 Austin TX at Ego's (3 sets)

RICK SHEA DATES

2/19 & 2/29 Hollywood CA at Jack's
3/4 & 4/1 Burbank CA at Viva Fresh

Dave Alvin Plans New Album

LATEST NEWS – Dave Alvin's Seattle Center New Year's Eve show was cancelled by the city of Seattle only 48 hours before the event due to threats of terrorism. Supposedly the man who was caught bringing explosives over the Canadian border, had a room booked at a hotel near the Seattle Center – The Blasters have been holding weekly rehearsals for a possible April recording session. – The Knitters had a very successful reunion tour and rumors have circulated of a possible album. No official confirmation of that has surfaced. – While the Knitters were in Santa Rosa, bass player Jonny Ray had to be rushed to the hospital in Dave Alvin's van to have his appendix removed. Jonny Ray missed the Petaluma CA show. The band played minus any bass sounds that night. -- Guilty Man Bobby Lloyd Hicks is out on tour with Steve Forbert in February, playing the mid-south and east coast dates. — Dave has played on a bunch of sessions this winter including guitar on Candye Kane's album, due out in June on Rounder. Dave played on Victor Krumenacher's new album. He was the bass player in Camper Van Beethoven. Dave played on a new record for Biercen L.A. Dave played on his first CD years ago and on the new one with Chris Gaffney. – Dave played a last minute gig at Jack's Sugar Shack in L.A. in January. Dave played with Rick Shea, Brantley Kearns, Steve Van Gelder on fiddle, David Jackson on bass, and Steve Duncan (Sugar Shack house drummer). Dave: "Bill Bateman got up and we played a very long version of MARIE MARIE with a fiddle battle and a Gaffney accordion battle. It was fun." -- The long awaited L.A. Times magazine cover story, "On the Road with Dave Alvin." may be out in February or March. – Dave just finished producing Christy McWilson's (lead singer of the Picketts) solo album. Gaffney plays accordion, Peter Buck from REM played guitar as well as Rick Shea and (((continued page 2)))

Dave Alvin report: "Countdown to the Black Jack David follow-up album"

Here is what is percolating in my brain. I have come to the realization that I'm not gonna live forever (laughs). There is stuff that I wanna do - that I have been putting off for years. In March or April, I'd like to go in the studio and make the 'traditional song/folk music' record and put that out in September. Then I'll go into the studio in September and October and have the official Black Jack David follow-up out in January (2001). I look forward to the folk record because it would be fun and I've always wanted to do it. Some obvious songs would be RAILROAD BILL, WHAT DID THE DEEP SEA SAY, and then some pretty obscure stuff. Maybe some rockabilly tracks like GREENBACK DOLLAR. Then maybe some Chicago Blues beside the regular folk songs. I'm 99% sure I'm gonna do this.

This Issue: The Chris Gaffney Interview, Dave Alvin's New Year's 2000 Open Letter, and the Jack Daniels Lovers interview.

Greg Leisz. Brett Miller from the Old 97's did some harmony vocals. These sessions, along with sessions from last year, will come out on a yet-to-be-announced label. – Dave is shooting for July to submit his writings for publication of his new book of Poetry. Dave says, “Hopefully it will be out in the fall.” It will not be titled The Crazy Ones. – Dave Alvin recently got a computer and is now online surfing the Web. Watch the official web site WWW. DAVE ALVIN.COM for Dave's frequent contributions and answers to fans' questions. Chris Gaffney is following right along and says, “I'm getting a computer because everyone else has one. I'm going online baby! I'll be swimming with Alvin.” – James Intveld will have a new album out on March 1. He will be playing SXSW in Austin in March. – Keith Wyatt has a new video out entitled Getting the Sounds: Jump, Jive and Swing on Warner Bros. Video. Keith, Jerry Angel, and John Bazz play on the video. Call Note Service Music at 1800 628-1528 to order the video. Keith reports, “I've been writing a series of profiles for Guitar World magazine. So far, I've done Robert Johnson, Muddy Waters, John Lee Hooker, T-Bone Walker, Albert King, and I just finished one on Freddie King. Also, I wrote a review of BB King's latest record of Louis Jordan tunes, a short review of Luther Allison's live CD and I'm currently working on a profile of Eric Clapton: Unplugged.” -- **Rick Shea's** new CD called Shakey Ground. Is out and is available by mail-order by sending \$16 post paid to Rick Shea, PO Box 294, Covina, CA 91723 – Rick Shea and Brantley Kearns are featured on a new CD from Cowgirl records titled, Hillbilly Down: To Roy Nichols with Love, Vol. 2. Singer Kathy Robertson put this CD as well as a first volume in 1997 called, To Roy Nichols with Love. Merle Haggard plays as well as other California musicians. To mail-order send \$15 to Kathy Robertson c/o Cowgirl Records, 1977 Yale St., Ontario, CA. 91764. – The Mike Eldred Trio have struck a distribution deal with Virgin records France. No word yet on its official release. -- **AM**

Dave Alvin is now online and wrote this open letter for the Dave Alvin web site reflecting on 1999.

— A New Year's Open Letter From Dave Alvin —

DON'T GET OUT OF THE VAN!

"Life was perfect until I got out of the van.

Now, I know, no matter what happens,

don't get out of the van!" -Chris Gaffney September 1999

Dear Friends, Fans and anyone else, those are wise words from my-soul brother, Chris.

It's the dawn of the next century/millennium, so they say. I'm sitting here at one in the morning, listening to old blues records by Leroy Carr, smoking too many menthols, trying to figure out how to work this computer I just bought and wishing I was back in the van with The Guilty Men somewhere on the interstate heading for another gig. The past two years have been filled with non-stop touring, with only a couple of breaks to produce CDs for The Derailers and Katy Moffatt, and now I'm back home starting to write the songs for my next CD and (hopefully) finally finish the second book of poems.

Resting at home is fine and all (definitely much needed) but I'd still rather be playing in some smoky bar. There were so many great shows the past two years: The Bowery Ballroom in New York, Slim's in San Francisco, Antone's and The Continental Club in Austin, Skipper's in Tampa, Fitzgerald's in Chicago, The Strawberry Festival in Yosemite (both electric and acoustic), The Roxy in L.A., The Off Broadway in St. Louis, The Satellite in Houston, The Tin Angel in Philadelphia, Cibolo Creek in San Antonio, The Rialto in Tucson, City Stages in Birmingham . . . too many to mention them all. In fact, just about any gig is memorable for me because I get to play with The



Photo: Billy Davis

Dave Alvin in the back of "The Van".

Guilty Men (I know you're probably thinking this sounds corny but I can't help that). There were nights that I couldn't believe how lucky I am to have such an incredible band. Blues, folk, country, R & B, rock and roll, whatever I ask for, they can do it.

I've been extremely fortunate to have played in two of the best bands to ever plug in guitars, The Blasters and X, and I can tell you without any hesitation that Bobby Lloyd, Gregory, Rick and Joe are just as great. When incredible artists like Buddy and Julie Miller, Robbie Fulks, Chris Gaffney and Duane Jarvis were opening for us on many of these shows, The Guilty Men backed them up, with little or no rehearsal, and sounded jaw-droppingly great. I'm proud of them and I miss them. See ya soon in the van, I hope.

So many intense things happened the past two years. I don't want to leave out the tour The Guilty Men and I did opening for Bob Dylan, or touring solo and acoustic opening for Richard Thompson, two of my song-writing heroes (Also, If you ever think that you're a hot-shot guitar player, Richard Thompson will erase that illusion very quickly! So will Buddy Miller. What guitar ego I had will never quite recover, oh well). It was also fun to reunite with my old pals, The Knitters, for a west coast tour and some benefit shows.

Sometimes, between the constant touring, working on records and just getting the bills paid, it's hard to stay in touch with people you care about so it was great to be able to hang around each other again and make a righteous racket. There was even a night The Guilty Men and I were playing at The Blue Cafe in Long Beach, California, and all the original Blasters (Gene Taylor, John Bazz, my brother, Phil, everyone except current Alaska boy, Bill Bateman) got up on stage for the encore. With Bobby Lloyd filling in for Bill, we played almost a full set of Blasters songs and old blues songs we grew up with. It's hard to put into words how amazing that was. Just a bunch of old Downey guys.

Unfortunately, some dear friends, family and heroes passed away leaving some pretty large, unfillable holes in my heart. Donald Lindley was one of the best, nastiest, funkiest, wildest, greasy groove drummers in the universe. You might know him from his work over the years with Lucinda Williams, Rosie Flores, Joe Ely and Buddy and Julie Miller, but I was lucky enough to have him play on Blue Boulevard and parts of Museum of Heart and King of California. Donald was a master musician, a patient teacher (especially with me), a proud father and husband, a good friend and a true rock and roller.

I got to know Mark Sandman many years ago when his first band, Treat Her Right, opened for my old band, The Allnighters, in Boston. Over the years from that first night through his success with Morphine, Mark's bluesy voice, jagged lyrics and willingness to experiment musically (without ever losing his raw groove) always blew me away. I'll always remember one time when I was depressed about making music and all the negative crap that sometimes comes with that, Mark slapped me out of it with a few quiet words. I can never thank him enough.

Doug Sahm has been a hero of mine since I was a kid and first saw The Sir Douglas Quintet on Hullabaloo singing SHE'S ABOUT A MOVER. Doug was one of the first to seamlessly blend blues, country, norteno, cajun and rock and roll in a classic mix of American Music. He was one of the people that taught me by example that there was no difference between T-Bone Walker, Hank Williams and Flaco Jimenez. I treasure the memory of a night last year at The Continental Club when Doug, The LeRoi Brothers, Gaffney and me jammed long after closing time. (Billy Davis was smart enough to tape that night and Anita Sturgeongrrl was sweet enough to give me a copy, thanks. That tape means the world to me.) Doug, for all his success and all the wild legends that surrounded him, was vastly underrated and now that he's gone I think many people are realizing just how important he was. A true Texas original.

What can I say about Curtis Mayfield? I wrote a poem once about how seeing him perform one night made me want to play music again after a period of inactivity and fear. Just seeing him live changed my life, Curtis was that powerful! A songwriter equal to Bob Dylan and Merle Haggard and Chuck Berry, a guitarist of subtle complexity, a innovative record producer and a singer that the angels envy. He was the greatest. What else can you say? Wherever you are, play on, Brothers!

Well, my rough plans for this new year/century include making a new studio album soon, followed pretty quickly with a new live album featuring all The Guilty Men singing (!) and, if he agrees, Chris Gaffney joining us for some songs. There are also some CDs I'm planning to produce in the near future, especially Mr. Gaffney's, one of the most soulful singing ex-boxers I've ever run across. There's talk about other stuff that's probably best left unsaid for right now, ya never know what might happen. Outside of all that, in the coming

year I hope to get some time for hiking, horseback riding, reading, thinking, drinking a beer or two, figuring out this computer and, even answering all the letters and questions that have been sent to the web-site! (Unbelievable, you say! Yeah, I know I dropped the ball but have patience). Until we meet again, I wish you all the love, happiness and music that anyone can have. See you down the road, Dave Alvin



Chris Gaffney Interview: Getting Un-loose

Interview by Billy Davis: “What’s the scoop there, snoop?” is what I heard when Chris Gaffney answered the phone for this exclusive interview direct by phone from the Costa Mesa California house of Hudson and Lulabelle. Chris had to change phones, due to a loud TV controlled by his wife, Julie. She was watching a “flash back eighties weekend TV show.” Chris warned if he didn’t leave the room he “might be turnin’ Japanese while sitting here.”

After finding the other phone, Chris wouldn’t start the interview until we heard the ceremonial flip/fizz of the opening of a Budweiser. “I just cracked a fresh one.” After a big swallow, “Ahhh. Virgin swill.” We were ready to go. “It’s time for me to tighten up. Time for me to get unloose” (laughs).

Chris Gaffney and his band, The Cold Hard Facts, just released a 2-CD package called Live And Then Some. The ‘Live’ part features 68 minutes of music taken from a two-night, eighty-three song recording made at The Swallows Inn in San Juan Capistrano, CA., on March 27-28, 1999. The ‘Then Some’ part is a re-release of Chris’s first record, an EP from 1986 called Road To Indio.



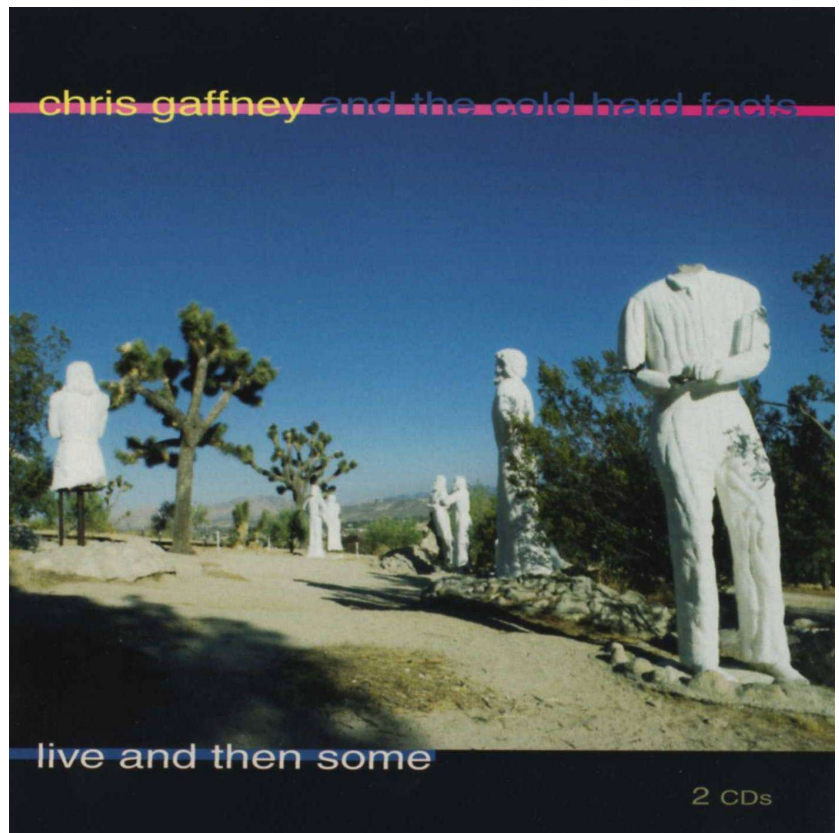
Photo: Heather Myles

Chris Gaffney in a 1959 Cadillac from the original Road To Indio album cover.

Chris Gaffney will be playing at the South By South West music conference this March appearing at three separate events to promote the new Live And Then Some CD. Later in the year, Dave Alvin will produce a new Gaffney album for HighTone records. You may also catch Chris selling merchandise for Dave Alvin on his summer 2000 tour, or sitting at a bar watching what ever game is on TV. In other important matters Chris had to comment, "My fuckin' beloved Rams! (They just qualified for the 2000 Superbowl at the time of the interview). I don't want to Jinx them right now, but look what I just did. (Laughs) They are DONE! Tennessee has already beaten them this year. I can't get away from that Ram helmet even after they moved to St. Louis." That was Chris's prediction. but he is celebrating right now. The Rams beat the Tennessee Titan's.

The Live And Then Some 2 CD Set is available directly from Tres Pescadores records

by sending \$20 postpaid to: Tres Pescadores Records PO Box 4 Anaheim CA 92815-0004



AMERICAN MUSIC: Hearing Road To Indio for the first time was surprisingly the same Gaffney Style that we know of today. I thought you would be a little rough on the edges back then, but it's great stuff.

CHRIS GAFFNEY: Well, when I made that I was 36. So it's not like I was a young one. We made that in a studio (Studio One) in Riverside, California. We were sharing the studio with that band that made the song SUPERSONIC. That was kind of a techno-rap-supersonic (laughs)

AM: Start with how the Cold Hard Facts came together.

CG: That version of the band started when me, Wyman (Reese), and Gary Brandin were in a band called 'The Phantom Herd.' We were a legendary Marshall Tucker-Lynyrd Skynyrd cover band. After that we had a band called 'The Terriers.' I was in a couple of rock bands. One called 'The Dining Cocktails.' We did ska stuff to techno -- I'm not kidding. We did all the eighties hits. I wasn't playing much originals. I had gotten fired from 'The Phantom Herd' because I was writing original tunes, and that wasn't fitting into the formula.

AM: So The Cold Hard facts came together because you wanted to play original country tunes?

CG: We have never been just country. We can play real stone-cold country better than anybody, but that wasn't our purpose. We wanted to play anything we wanted to play. (Ed. – Check out the Deep Purple guitar solo on the Live and Then Some track ARE YOU LISTENIN' LUCKY.) We didn't go stone cold country, but that was what we found we could all agree on for the record. You can hear where we drift over to the left.



AM: Tell me about the making of the Road to Indio vinyl EP in 1986.

CG: We made that EP (Cactus Club records EP 101) to get put on the map. Just to see if anybody would go for it. We went through the full studio process for a week. Me and Wyman put together Cactus Records. We made only a 1000 of them.

Around that time we

opened for Dave (Alvin) in Hollywood at a place called Rog's, and I didn't know him yet. We were playing this Ray Price song and Alvin hung out. Dave's a real cool guy, but who knew then? (Laughs)

AM: There is some interesting artwork on the original EP. I see Heather Myles is credited for the photos. On the front cover is a shot of you sitting in a '59 Cadillac with about 22 guitars.

CG: That's everything that we had in the band. I have a couple of squeeze boxes on there too. Me and Wyman knew Heather for a long time' so she came along and took photos.

AM: On the back is a picture of you pulling a camel. Did that really happen or was that put together in the cover layout?

CG: I actually pulled the camel. In Garden Grove, California they have the spectacle of Easter for the Crystal Cathedral. So they have all this live stock in the back. This camel -- Marcy -- that was her name (laughs). The reason she is bucking me a little there is because she didn't want to go by the peacock cage. She didn't like the brilliance of the feathers. (laughs)

AM: Maybe they had words before.

CG: So it wiggled. It wiggled big time. They said just get up on it and I said, ' Fuck that!' That camel was bitey! Yeah sure. A camel on the street with cars. I looked like Peter O'Toole. It's cute for a while (laughs)

AM: So tell us about the re-release of the Road To Indio and why you put it out.

CG: Because it was out of print and people still wanted it. Wyman and Tim Hewett (president of Tres Pesca-



Chris as Dave Alvin's "merch guy" in Providence, RI 1999.

dores records) and his partner Brian (Thomas) worked on it. Tim is a great guy. Tres Pescadores means three fisherman. I'm hoping I'm one of them. I know I will get a residual when I'm eighty. Then I can update my cat food (laughs).

AM: At first, this CD release was going to be only one disc.

CG: It was gonna be just some bonus songs then it became a 2-CD package. We played at this club for two days (In March of 1999), so we just ran some mics and recorded in the kitchen (laughs) Then we just played live. We did record 83 songs. I have the tapes. We even had Billy Bacon from the Forbidden Pigs doing TUSH. (ed. – That track didn't make it to the Live album.)

AM: Tell me about the artwork on the new CD.

CG: That (the photos) was done out in Joshua Tree where Gram Parsons is. (ed. - He died on Sep. 19, 1973 in Joshua Tree, CA.)

AM: What's the significance of...

CG: You know what? I have no idea. That was out of my control. If I was gonna make an album, like I did, It wouldn't be something that says, 'Hey No. Don't Buy me. Please don't buy me.' I would want it to say, 'Buy Me.' Just look for the one with the headless statues that has some ambivalent writing on the side (laughs).

AM: What about the horses inside?

CG: Well those are pretty good. But that cover....No.

AM: Okay maybe I'll edit this out of the interview.

CG: Why? (laughs)

AM: Okay well I thought you would BS me about the cover and tell me it meant something.

CG: How about Cock-a-mamie!! (laughs) Everybody knows the way I feel about the cover. (laughs) Cock-a-mamie!! (laughs) (ed. – *I think the cover is cool.*)

AM: Tell us a little about growing up in Tucson.

CG: I love Tucson. I've been all over, being in a military family. I lived in Utah, New York, Italy, and California. I came over from Europe when I was three. I started boxing when I was in Tucson at about 12. When I came to California, I hooked up with Jackie McCoy, who trained world champions Don Jordon (ex-jr middle champ of the World), Mando Ramos (who held a World title at a very young age), and Ruben 'Dofu' Martinez. I was in his camp for 17 fights and my eyes went bad. I was aggressive but not a good fighter. I was 17 but it all depends if you want to hang in there and make it your life business. But that's not me. I can knock somebody out, but you also have to take a beating too, and who wants to do that?

AM: What's your take on the Southern California Country/Roots music scene?

CG: Fuck Em! (laughs)

AM: How about plans for the future?

CG: Dave is gonna produce my next album, and we should tour together in September. I'm in no hurry, but I would love to get out on the road.

AM: Will you do the summer festivals again if Dave invites you?

CG: Hell yeah! He can't do it without me. (laughs) He needs the dog and pony show. (laughs) Needs the Merch guy. ~~*AM*

Chris likes to make light of his songwriting, but that's just because he likes to have fun when talking about the process. I have a feeling there's a lot more to it than that. Here are his exclusive track-by-track comments on ...

The Road To Indio.

-- **ROAD TO INDIO** -- Indio is a desert town on the outside of Riverside, on the way to Yuma. Me and RJ (Simensen -- Washboard player) were on our way there because I was doing a catering job with a big truck. These kids cut us off with a '65 Mustang and RJ goes 'Hey you Heavy Metal fucks!' (laughs). So I wrote that from there. We were listening to Ricky Skaggs and the Psychedelic Furs. (ed. -- *Listen to the lyrics to understand.*)

-- **BRIDGE TOO FAR** -- I wrote that song in 1984 while in The Phantom Herd.

-- **WHITE GIRL** -- That's in half Spanish and English. That's where we lived and there was a home there that we called 'The Meeting and the Beating Place' (laughs).

-- **ALCOHOLIDAYS** -- That's self-explanatory. My Mom used to call it Martuni time. (laughs)

-- **STILL A FEW MORE HONKY TONKS** -- You mean (is there) a story behind it? Get the hell out of here, Davis! (laughs) These are just songs! (laughs) There is no hidden meaning.

-- **DON'T LET LOVE TEAR APART** (what lust has brought together) - Come on! (laughs)

-- **I'M AN OLD OLD MAN** -- You'll have to dig him (Lefty Frizzel) up and ask HIM about that one. (laughs) Oh yeah, this is going in the newsletter? Oh I'm supposed to be helping now? (laughs)

THE JACK DANIELS LOVERS

AMERICAN MUSIC FROM ITALY BY LELE VARANO

The Jack Daniels Lovers were a roots rock band from Italy that played true American Music. They were highly influenced by the Blasters and gained acceptance by their mentors by recording their first album, 1986's Stay Out of Jail with members of the Blasters. Here, Lele Varano interviews the drummer, Cesare 'Ches' Ferioli, about the JDL experience.

LV: How and when were the JDL born?

CF: The Jack Daniels Lovers took form in the last months of 1986 at a birthday party held in an unknown pub in downtown Bologna (Italy). Everything began as super rock'n'roll jam, with people from various town bands. I remember scenes of five guitars, bass, drums, and piano playing improbable and loud versions of the usual JOHNNY B. GOODE or GREAT BALLS OF FIRE. What happened that night repeated again many times in different points in town until Stay Out Of Jail came about.

LV: How did The Blasters and American music influence your way of playing and song-



Photo courtesy Jack Daniels Lovers

The Blasters and The Jack Daniels Lovers in Italy, 1987

Photo courtesy Jack Daniels Lovers



The Inside cover of the Stay Out of Jail album.

(Jack Campagna, lead singer) during a trip to the USA 1986.

It was the period when Hollywood Fats was the lead guitarist. Billo went to Los Angeles because he knew a member of Green On Red and, during one of his night-raids, he met the Blasters.

LV: Who took part in Stay Out of Jail?

CF: Steve Berlin was the producer and saxophone player, Lee Allen was on sax, Dave Alvin as lead guitar in one song and copywriter. Dave Alvin gave the idea for the title. (Dave used to sign his autograph 'Stay out of Jail – Dave Alvin') Then David Hidalgo on accordion, Kandy Kane on vocals, Andy J. Forest on harp, and Leon Haywood on Hammond. All songs were recorded by Steve in Modena (Umbi Studios) Italy. All sections with guests and the mix were done in Los Angeles during Summer '88.

LV: Did you open any gigs for the Blasters?

CF: Yes, we did during the summer of '87. It was the tour with Billy Zoom on guitar. We opened a gig in the centre of Italy and -- extraordinarily -- it was the Blasters who paid the Jack Daniels Lovers. In fact, the promoter refused to pay the opening band, and the Blasters decided to pay us for letting us play before them. They proved to be great guys from a human point of view, and they became "untouchables" for us.

LV: What happened after Stay Out of Jail?

CF: After the coming out of the record, we tripled the gigs and went many times on national TV with the great Lee Allen. There was a video often shown on Videomusic (Video music channel). We went even to Russia for a mini-tour. It was incredible! The record had sold quite well -- considering it was not exactly a market product. We were satisfied, but towards the end of 1988 a split inside the band started. Some of us were thinking of turning the band into something less roots -- focusing (rather) on pop, with lyrics in Italian. Me and Andy (Carrier, guitarist) left and started working in a trio named Dirty Hands. We played rough and electric house-rocking blues. We played together till the end of '96, making three albums, dozens of collaborations in the blues field, and hundreds of gigs in Europe and southern US. Going back the Jacks, they made an album in Italian in '91, with only Perry (Daleggi), the piano player, of the original band. As far as I know, the record was not appreciated at all, and the band inevitably broke up.

LV: Are copies of the first JDL record still available for American buyers?

writing?

CF: The Blasters' melodies had a huge impact over all of us. As far as I am concerned, the first thing about them I was interested in was this absolutely non-rhetoric, raw approach to R'n'R, with its 'garage band impact.' All that made me feel very close to them because I was born as a musician listening to Clash, Damned, and the Sex Pistols. I felt and shared this kind of energy and feeling with them. (Because of them) I began to buy records of Gene Vincent, Vince Taylor, Eddie Cochran, and Sonny Burgess. But also of T-Bone Walker, John Lee Hooker, Freddy King, and records by new and very exciting bands like Los Lobos, X, Stray Cats, Fabulous Thunderbirds and of course, The Blasters.

LV: How did you get in touch with The Blasters?

CF: I think the first one who got in touch with the Blasters was Billo

CF: Stay Out Of Jail was printed on 6000 copies of vinyl and 3000 copies on tapes. All of them were sold. I think we could master another pressing of it if we had many requests. Something like, 'Lazarus, get up and walk!' This summer an agency offered us some gigs if we agreed to put together the old band. Unfortunately, we were all busy with bands or jobs. Maybe next summer, if they call us again and in advance, who knows?

LV: Have you recently met again the Blasters or Dave Alvin?

CF: Sometimes I met the guys somewhere. I met Bill (Bateman) twice with the Red Devils at the King King club in Los Angeles in '91 or '92. I saw Mr. Bazz one of those evenings, too. I saw Dave both at Belly Up Tavern (Solana Beach CA) with the Paladins and James Harman and more times here in Italy. The last time was at "Festa dell'Unità" in Modena, where I saw and heard one of the best gigs in years. Dave has improved very much both technically (he was already cool) and conceptually. Actually, in my opinion, he is one of the most complete examples of progress from the old concept of roots-music: to be able to speak his own language, without borders. ~~*AM*

Visit Cesare Ferioli's web site at http://www.spazionet.it/mjrpitta/uk_version.htm

DAVE ALVIN on The Jack Daniel's Lovers: "I remember meeting the guys on tour with the Blasters in 1987. They did the STAY OUT OF JAIL album over in Leon Hayward's studio in Sunny Side in LA. I remember Lee (Allen) and I and Dave Hidalgo. On the artwork for the album they used my 'Stay out of Jail' autograph. I used to sign that when giving my autograph."

News and Tidbits from the U.S West Coast

****The Knitters, Petaluma, CA 12/7/99 at the Mystic theatre -- A Very, VERY hot show. Towards the end of the night, John Doe told the crowd that they had felt a little trepidation coming out on stage, playing without Jonny Ray. But the Knitters put on such a hell of a show, and the crowd was so enthusiastic and so wild for them, that this was one of the best Knitters shows of the 7 I've been fortunate to see. Dave's playing was very different that night as he was compensating for the missing bass line by altering how he played. And his playing was just great, great, great. They were playing without Jonny Ray because Dave and Exene had taken Jonny Ray to the hospital Monday night, and Jonny had his appendix taken out on the afternoon of the show. He wasn't due out of the hospital until Thursday, but Jonny told them: 'Don't get another bass player for San Diego [their gig on Friday]. I'll be there! I'll play it!' He's such a great guy and such a trooper. (But I'm sure his doctor probably would have had something to say about this. And if his doc had any idea how energetic a performer Jonny Ray is when he's playing, his doc would probably have had even more to say.)

****In the fall Dave and Rick Shea toured with Buddy and Julie Miller. Dave was introducing Rick as "a great singer, a great songwriter..." and then he'd pause dramatically and then add: "a great killer of rattlesnakes..." At the Carrboro, NC, show, Dave joked that Rick had been out killing rattlesnakes that morning, which got everyone laughing, and to which Rick responded, "Yeah, different breed of rattlesnakes in these parts," which also got a lot of laughs from the locals. Well, the story behind it is this: This past August, Rick was out camping and a rattlesnake came meandering through the campground. And it passed through one family's camp after another, and there was a lot of concern, of course, because there were a lot of kids around, but everyone was aware of it and watching it, and the snake was passing calmly through the camps. And everyone thought: OK, no problem, it'll pass through the campground and be on its way. And everything looked fine. Until it came to Wyman Reese's tent. And decided to move in. And stayed. And wouldn't leave from under the tent. So finally, Rick had to kill it with an axe, and this was no little snake - it had 10 rows of rattles. Later, when Chris Gaffney heard that the snake had been under his band member's tent, Chris quipped: "Awww, I would have left it there! Why did you have to move it?!"

The Skeletons Honored in Springfield, MO Mural

"The Skeletons were honored this year by being included in a mural titled "The Sounds Of Springfield," which was painted on the side of the magnet school downtown. There was some flack over a few obvious omissions: Songwriters Ronnie Self (I'M SORRY) and Wayne Carson (THE LETTER), jazz bassist Charlie Haden, and (to a lesser extent) Porter Wagoner... not from Springfield MO but he got his start here."

"Well, the artist is young and not a Springfield native, but he is obviously a Skele-fan. I've heard that the others will be represented in a later piece of artwork (due to the "concerned response" that this one created). Nevertheless, it was a humbling experience, and I think we look damn good!" –Bobby Lloyd Hicks

Pictured top left and clockwise –The Skeletons, The Ozark Mountain Daredevils, Red Foley, The Philharmonics, and Dallas Bartley.



Photo: B.L. Hicks

The Sabrejets 'Wild For Kicks' 6 track CD Out now! You'll remember this Irish rockabilly band from their BARN BURNING track on Run Wild records' Blasters tribute CD. This new CD of original tunes rocks hard and is available directly from the Sabrejets for £4.99 which includes postage. (From the USA, you may send the equivalent in US Funds) Cheques payable to Brian Young, 32 Castleview road, Belfast, N. Ireland, BT5 7AX

AMERICAN MUSIC –editor: Billy Davis editorial assistant: Craig Frischkorn

SUBSCRIPTION INFO: Publishing 4 issues quarterly. Send \$8 which includes 4 issues and postcard mailings (U.S.A. only) covering Blaster and related tour dates in your region. Overseas rates are \$10 U.S. for 4 issues. Canada \$9. For overseas subscribers wanting tour updates between newsletter mailings send 2 I.R.C.'s per desired response and you will be notified by Airmail letter of regional tour dates.

If paying by check, payable to Billy Davis. Mail to :

AMERICAN MUSIC 80-16 64th Lane, Glendale N.Y. 11385 e-mail: davistb@aol.com Alternate address :

PO Box 210071, Woodhaven N.Y. 11421

BACK ISSUE COPIES: \$2 per issue in the U.S. Overseas \$2.50 per issue