

ISSUE #96

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

Celebrating 30 Years 1994 — 2024

JULY 2024

Dave Alvin's New Album Release

Latest News: Dave Alvin is being featured on two tribute albums in 2024 with proceeds helping musicians with health issues. His version of A APOLITICAL BLUES is included on Long Distance Love: A Tribute to Lowell George on Flatiron Records. The album was released on May 17. Proceeds from the sale of the two-CD/two-LP set will go to Sweet Relief, which provides financial assistance to musicians and others in the music industry who need help with their medical bills. Other artists featured on the album include Elvis Costello, Ben Harper, and Inara George. |||| On Sept. 18, Clover Music Group/Nine Mile Records will re-



lease Tonight, I'll Go Down Swinging, a tribute to drummer Don Heffington. Dave recorded AVENUE C for the album, which also features performances by Jackson Browne, Jim Lauderdale, Peter Case, Tony Gilkyson, Buddy Miller, and Fiona Apple. Proceeds from the album will go to Sweet Relief. Heffington was a member of Lone Justice and played sessions for a variety of artists, including Bob Dylan and Emmylou Harris. He also was featured on Dave's Ashgrove, West of the West, and Eleven Eleven albums. Heffington also released music under his own name. He died at 70 in March, 2021. |||| (((cont. page 2)))

In This Issue: Shelly Heber Interview Part 3 of 3, Dave Alvin on TexiCali and Jesse Sykes of the Third Mind

Latest News (Continued from page 1.) Dave Alvin will receive a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Americana Music Association at the organization's 23rd annual awards show on Sept. 18, at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. Others to be honored include Dwight Yoakam, Rev. Gary Davis and Shelby Lynne. **II III** TAKE BACK THE NIGHT, a feminist anthem from The Dark Bob album Ekphrasis Synesthesia, was released in March. The song features Syd Straw on lead vocals, Dave Alvin on lead guitar, and X drummer DJ Bonebrake. A video for the song is on YouTube. **II III** Work is underway on Los Lobos Native Sons, a film about the longtime Los Angeles band that features former Blasters saxophonist Steve Berlin. Dave Alvin is among those interviewed for the documentary. Other musicians interviewed include Tom Waits, Linda Ronstadt, and Bonnie Raitt. The film will be released in 2025 and a trailer has been posted on YouTube. **II III** Dave Alvin is featured in The Chinatown Punk Wars, a documentary on two Chinese restaurants in Los Angeles that became an integral part of the city's punk music scene in the late 1970s. Other musicians interviewed for the film include John Doe, Mike Watt, and Carla Olson. The film was broadcast in October as part of the "Artbound" television series and can be seen on YouTube by searching for the film's title. **II III** Mojo Nixon, noted for his comedic songs (ELVIS IS EVERYWHERE) and larger-than-life persona, died of cardiac arrest at 66 on Feb. 7 while aboard the Outlaw Country Cruise. He, Country Dick Montana, and Dave Alvin toured as the Pleasure Barons in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The band released the Live in Las Vegas album on HighTone Records in 1993. After Mojo's death, the Knitters reunited for their first concert in nearly a decade on March 16, at the Continental Club in Austin, Texas. They performed as part of "Mojo's Final Mayhem" show during the South by Southwest music festival. **II III** Sarah Brown, bassist in the Guilty Women, received a liver transplant on Jan. 18, in San Antonio, Texas. She was discharged from the hospital in late February and returned to her home in Austin. More than \$26,700 was raised on the GoFundMe site to help with her medical expenses. On March 8, she wrote on the site: "I'm infinitely grateful to all that have followed my story. Your support and positive outlook, not to mention love, has charged my recovery. 'Grateful' can't possibly cover it - you've deeply affected my life." On June 8, she posted another update. "My current state is HAPPY and HEALING! There have been a few bumps, and there will be more, but I bounce back. My mobility is back, and I'm walking in my neighborhood, doing my PT, and eating healthy (when my sweet tooth is at bay.) I do get tired, and I love my naps, but depend on them less and less. Most importantly, I'm still the beneficiary of a medical miracle, and I will never, ever forget it. Nor do I forget the support you have given me in getting to the other side of a difficult time. You're the best!" **II III** The FX TV show Justified is doing new TV episodes. Dave Alvin contributed music to the original show with HARLAN COUNTY LINE. When Dave Alvin was asked if he may do more music for the show, he said "The new show is set in Detroit, so if they call me, I may have to write DETROIT COUNTY LINE." **II III** Jo-el Sonnier, a country and Cajun musician, died of a heart attack at 77 on Jan. 13, after a concert performance in Llano, Texas. He was a noted accordionist. He recorded SO LONG BABY GOODBYE by Dave Alvin for Come On Joe, his 1987 album. It reached No. 17 on the Billboard Country Albums chart. **II III** Bill Bateman and Javier Matos of the Blue Shadows performed as a duo called "Two Lane Blacktop" in November of 2023 at the North End club in Hollywood. It's not clear if this was a one-time performance or if it's an ongoing group. —~~AM~~ **AM**

Dave Alvin On Other Happenings: June 2024

AM: Congratulations on the announcement that you will be receiving an Americana Music Association Lifetime Achievement award.

Dave: Thanks. I'm very honored and proud about that. I will be there at the award ceremony Sept. 18, in Nashville at the Ryman Auditorium with Shelby Lynne and the Blind Boys of Alabama. I'll give a speech and it will be a great night. Jimmie Dale and I will do some showcase shows while we're in Nashville. Details on that will be announced soon.

AM: In March (2024) you produced a second album for blues-woman Carolyn Wonderland. How did that go?

Dave: The sessions were great. Stylistically, it's all over the place, but still all variations of blues songs. We did a song called BLUES FOR GENE. That got me teary eyed in the studio. That track means a lot to me. We got a guy to play piano on it that plays just like Gene Taylor named Henri Herbert. He's an European guy who now lives in Austin. What a great player! He plays like Ray Charles and was a big fan of Gene. Carolyn gave me co-writer credit on that song because I added a few things. She sings the hell out of it, and we do a little guitar battle on that while Henri does some boogie-woogie. The album should be out at the end of the year.

AM: What's the future of the Third Mind band?

Dave: There will be a Third Mind Live album coming out in February on Yep Roc Records. Will Golden who engineered Third Mind 2, went out on the road with us as our sound engineer / guitar tech. Our road manager, Don Boles is a soundman also, so with both of them with us, we were able to record every show and make it affordable financially. The recordings sound really good and Michael our drummer is exceptional. I like the fact that I have a chance to just be a loud guitar player sometimes. There is a song called DORA LEE that's never been released and a version of a song called DARK STAR. The album songs we played were different every night. So, you'd never get the same version of like SALLY GO ROUND THE ROSES on different nights. On any given night, a same song would be completely different except for where Jesse would sing. Oh! And Michael Jerome's tempos were the same every night – which is hard to do. That's how good he is. It's my favorite live recording I've ever done.

AM: How is your health doing? I see you've booked a whole lotta dates the rest of the year?

Dave: I'm a little nervous about being out that long, but it's what I do. I have a clean bill of health right now. And being with a good team on the road will make it easier. Our road manager is Don Boles, who did the Third Mind tour. He road managed the Flatlanders and currently works for other bands. He's really great. He and Danny Bland are different animals [laughs], but great animals. It's hard to get a good road manager. Frank Drennen did a great job for a while, but he hurt his arm and can't do the road anymore.

AM: Many fans are asking how Phil is doing?

Dave: Phil is doing good. He's been bedridden for a year and a half, so it will take him a while to get up and walk. But otherwise he's been in great spirits. I've gotten him to sing and his sense of humor is right on. He can be grumpy and grouchy which is a good sign [laughs]. It's just a matter of time before he can sing again. There were moments last year that looked pretty bleak. The Sweet Relief foundation really helped getting him out of the hospital and it did wonders for him psychologically. So thank you to everyone who contributes. Sweet Relief is a lifesaver. I'm very optimistic about Phil.



The Blasters 1980s Manager

Shelly Heber Exclusive Interview Part 3

Shelly Heber was the Blasters' manager in the 1980s, guiding them through their most successful years, and managed Dave Alvin during his CBS Records major label solo period. Shelly, died from cancer on Aug. 5, 2023 at 75 years old. As a Blasters historian, for years I had her on top of my list to interview. She finally granted me an interview that spanned weekly phone calls between April and July 2023. Shelly's conversations with me were filled with laughter and so much joy. It's hard to believe she was in the last few weeks of her life. In this third and final part, she talks about the end of the Blasters' Warner Bros. Records days and Dave Alvin's solo career.

By Billy Davis

Shelly: Warner Bros. Records always respected artistic integrity. The Blasters were in a comfortable niche at the time in 1984. But then when Hard Line was being recorded, Warner Bros. really wanted a hit - which was very difficult. They didn't feel the Blasters had anything strong enough to get on the radio. Warner Bros. approved me spending more money on a credible producer to get a few more songs, so I called John Mellancamp, who loved the Blasters. I wanted his producer, Don Gehman. John said: "I'll fly out on my own to produce the Blasters." I said "You'll what??!!" [laughs] "John, I don't have the money to pay you what you deserve." He said: "I'll do it for free." Again, I said, "You'll do what??!!" [laughs]



He said he wanted just one thing. I had just finished promotion on the Van Halen 1984 album. He said: "I just want you to do for me what you did for Van Halen - a #1 album." I couldn't promise him that, but he said: "Just try your hardest." And we did get his Scarecrow album to #1 in 1985. So, John and Don produced for the Blasters a song called COL-

ORED LIGHTS and JUST ANOTHER SUNDAY. Phil didn't like COLORED LIGHTS, but Warner Bros. did, and hoped it would get top 40 airplay, but it just never happened.

They wanted to name the album Trouble Bound. I said that's a terrible name. I could just see critics and press making fun of the title. I thought Hard Line was a strong positive statement. Phil



The Blasters with John Mellancamp in the studio

was Phil. You had to pick your fights to get through to him. My assessment of the situation was to predict how long he could last in a discussion and then think how long I could last. Then place your bets where it makes the most sense. You very rarely would win with him.

AM: Did you know the Alvins' father?

Shelly: Yes. Cass was a union leader and very argumentative. The dynamic was interesting between all of the family. The older sister Mary would be like: "I'm not getting involved in this." Their mother [Nana] was a very old-time American mother always taking care of these three men. It was truly fascinating.

She did the cutest thing one time. She had not seen the band perform in three or four years. So, she took her friend and sisters to the Whiskey in Hollywood to see the Blasters show. I got them a private table. It was when Oliver Stone was planning the Doors movie and John Travolta was considering doing it. John wasn't a Blasters fan and had never been to the Whiskey before, but he wanted to see the club since the Doors got their start there. The place was packed and the owner asked if I could spare a seat. So, I brought John over to their table, and there they were -- 60-year-old mothers yelling "Oh John, Oh John!!" [laughs]. He bought them a bottle of Champagne. Nana insisted that I come sit next to John. I said, I have to check on the band. She said [sternly], "Sit down!!" So, I did. Nana leaned over to John and said, "John, isn't Shelly pretty? She manages the band and she's so smart." I slumped down in my seat thinking, please let me leave right now before I die [laughs]. But she was so sweet.

We filmed a video for COLORED LIGHTS. The director was Frank DiLeo. He was very expensive, but one of the hottest video making directors in the business at the time. I tried to get Johnny Depp cast as the male lead. He had just moved to L.A. and was staying with a friend of mine. I got him an audition, though I couldn't be there to see it. The director said:

“No. He had no sex appeal.” I thought he had incredible charisma and swagger. But instead, they cast a literal lump of coal [laughs], who had been in a Jordache commercial. He had the sex appeal of a broom [laughs] – and did a Don Henley video later and then his career ended. That pissed me off. (below—Excerpts from the *COLORED LIGHTS* video)



It was filmed in Paris, Calif. and the dance scenes were filmed in a Moose Lodge in Hollywood. Also, Dwight Yoakam made his video debut as a dancer in the video. We got all our friends and neighbors to show up. I liked the COLORED LIGHTS video. I thought it was honest.

At that time Dwight just loved Dave Alvin and thought he was the

coolest person in L.A. and he was gonna be his new brother. It was that obvious. He hadn't put out his first Warner Bros. album yet, but I got Dwight to open up for the Blasters at the Ritz in New York after that. I got a call the day of the show from the club owner who said: "I made a vow to never have country music at my club." I insisted that he better not cancel. The owner was so pissed at me, but Dwight got to play a great show. Dwight and Dave had a falling out for a few years after Dwight had gotten a bit big-headed. But then Dwight recorded LONG WHITE CADILLAC as an acknowledgment and peace offering.

When MTV first launched, it was not in every city. Not in New York, L.A. and some other big cities. So, we had to market bands two different ways - but unilaterally a good promotion video made it only to those MTV cities. People only saw live music on TV on variety shows or American Bandstand. Video became very important. But it was difficult with the Blasters because they didn't look like anybody else, and their intensity was different. They weren't video show guys. I can safely say they never had a hit video, but the videos were helpful in certain exposure to new people.



Dave and Phil with the MTV crew

Publishing is always a big issue in bands. The dynamics are interesting. One member always comes to the top to lead or dominate the others. I managed a band out of Sweden, a funk metal band called the Electric Boys and there was one writer. In a standard band publishing deal the writer gets the writer's share and the whole band shares in the publishing share. I suggested this, but the writer said: "It's all mine." That band wound up

breaking up because he was getting all the money.

My real first job in the music business was president of the Yardbirds fan club in the late '60s. They were the best live band I've ever seen. They had a great guitarist in Jimmy Page, but they were in turmoil. I got in an accidental conversation about their management and finances and found out that they were being ripped off. The manager told them, "I discovered you, so I get all your publishing." Sure, why not 'cuz we're idiots [laughs]. Then: "I discovered you, so you have to give me all your masters rights." OK?? [laughs]. Then: "On the road, I get 50%." Giorgio Gomelsky was enormously talented and was involved in creating them, but that didn't give him the right to own them. They earned no interest in their own property. They were just given sustenance to survive on the road. I screamed at them that they were gonna break up because they were listening to the wrong people. But what did I know as a 16-year-old girl? Everything they gave away. So, I learned things early on. I was around Jeff and Jimmy quite a bit and when they told me they were breaking up, I said: "Good, you've been doing shit." They said: "What??? You're the fan club president, you shouldn't say that." [laughs]

In the Blasters there was a big battle over publishing. It was wrong what Phil decided, but no one would stand up to him. Phil said: "I get half of Dave's writer share because it doesn't become a song until it's in my voice." Dave was his little brother, so he went along with that. Then Phil made a demand that the publishing, which would normally be shared with all the band members, Phil got two shares. That was just horrible. I tried to convince Dave that you don't have to give away your publishing. Your songs are yours. But he wouldn't buck Phil. The zeitgeist of the family as a whole was like that and only the father, Cass and Phil had say. Phil in any argument never gave concession. If you were strong enough, the best you could hope for is that he would leave it alone. It was everything but "You were right."

The Blasters were as much Dave's songwriting as it was Phil's voice, but it existed mostly albeit on Dave's songs and that's why it still exists 30 years later. But I love the boys equally, and being female, I couldn't help but be maternal. But Dave was the smartest person I ever knew. He has a wealth of knowledge. Phil is brilliant as well, but he doesn't understand how people fit into everything.

AM: What was next for the Blasters after 1985's Hard Line album and tour?

Shelly: A year later Warner Bros. knew Dave Alvin had left the band for X and wouldn't finance a new Blasters album until they heard a three-song demo. I assured Warners that Dave would continue to write for the band. Phil said he could write songs, but he really couldn't. Nick Lowe loved the Blasters and while he was in L.A. he agreed to produce the demo, which got Warner Bros. excited.

We scheduled four days in the studio, but Phil Alvin would not come in. Phil said: "Nick Lowe is an English weenie. We can't have English weenies producing us" [laughs]. Dave

had gotten very close with Nick when we toured with him in England in 1982. Dave had three songs, one of which was FOURTH OF JULY. They laid down the rhythm tracks, but Phil wouldn't come in with Nick. So, Nick pushed Dave to try a vocal. At the end of the first take Nick said: "You have a great voice." In Dave's context he thought he didn't have a good voice. I credit Nick for getting Dave started as a singer.

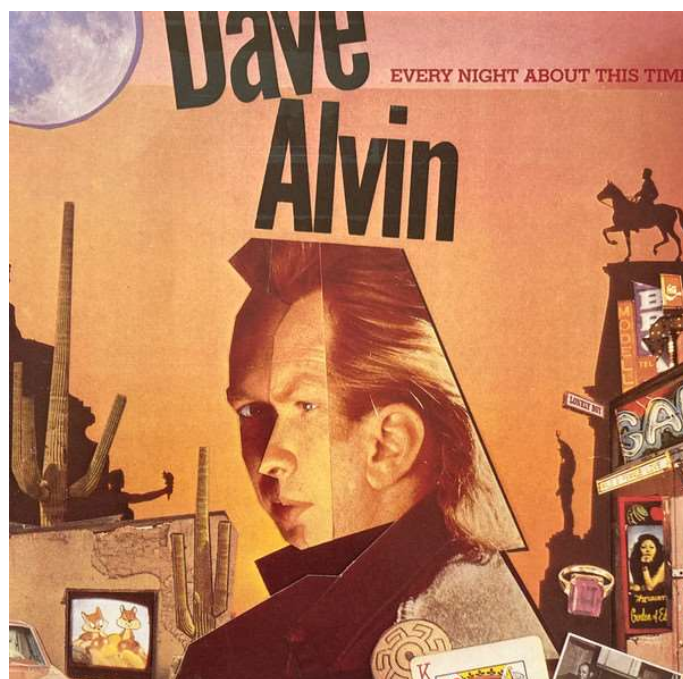
I don't know how long Dave had any aspirations of singing. In my conversations with him in the Blasters years he wouldn't even do backing vocals. When it finally happened, he had a boatload of confidence, which is wonderful.

Phil did come in and lay down a vocal finally with another engineer, but it didn't work because these songs were for Dave's voice. It felt forced. The two sing very differently, so the songs weren't comparable, and the Blasters got dropped from Warner Bros. Phil said: "Oh well, they're just furniture salesman. There are other labels." Phil always went on about record companies being only furniture salesmen because they started out selling just phonographs.

Here's a funny story: My great uncle Saul came from Poland in 1880 and he had a large furniture store on Fifth Avenue in Manhattan. He got an exclusive to sell the Edison Victrolas in 1910 along with the cylinders to play. Someone approached my uncle with an offer to make the cylinders very cheaply. My uncle being a smart businessman thought that meant more profit, so he said OK. Well, Edison found out and sued my uncle and he went to jail for eight months. So, I know about furniture salesmen [laughs]. By the time I knew my uncle in the '50s, the subject wasn't something that would have been brought up in family circles. I love my uncle and he was well respected and rich. I only found out about this much later. This would have given Phil a complete and utter chuckle to know that he was being managed by the niece of a furniture salesman bootlegger [laughs]. I go off on a tangent sometimes, so please un-tangent me [laughs].

After Warner Bros. dropped the Blasters and Dave was leaving X, he got a solo record deal through Nick Lowe's manager Jake Riviera who founded Demon records in the U.K. The album was called Every Night About This Time.

Around that time Steve Earle and k.d. lang were leading a style called 'New Americana.' And that's where Dave really fit in. Columbia Records in Nashville wanted to release the album. I remember going to Nashville and having a meeting to decide what image Dave should have. Should he wear a cowboy hat or



not wear a hat? It was so ludicrous. I said: "They don't have stage clothes, it's whatever they wear."

My angle on Dave's solo career was to pitch certain songs to the country charts and others to the New Americana AOR situation. But the problem was that CBS New York and CBS Nashville hated each other. They didn't want to work together. But I did get \$60,000 to make a video. I was able to broker two different directors to do three videos – FOURTH OF JULY, NEW TATTOO and EVERY NIGHT ABOUT THIS TIME. The video directors loved Dave and did an amazing job. I think these are the videos I'm most proud of. The FOURTH OF JULY video is one of my favorite videos by Dave. It's so evocative and it stands the test of time.

I couldn't get Dave on Warner Bros. because Lenny Waronker the president was afraid that Phil would beat him up [laughs], literally. If you didn't know the Alvins you'd think they had physical violence in them from all the yelling and screaming. Lenny was only 5' 5" and Phil terrified him.



Shelly, Dave and The Wagoners. Nashville '87

So, at this point I had to choose between managing the Blasters or Dave Alvin. In the Blasters, it had gotten boring because Phil would never let go of control and I knew I'd have a certain amount of fights in a given day. I thought Dave's course had more longevity. They didn't ask me to choose, but I could see that I would get caught in the middle between Dave and Phil. I was always in the middle, but this would really put me in a difficult middle. I didn't think that emotionally I could take handling both.

I chose Dave because I believed so much in his uniqueness and charisma and ability to communicate. He's so humble and he believes it. Now as he has gotten older, he has gotten much more self-confidence and understands what his legacy is.

Greg Lewerke had been working for me, so I assigned him to work with the Blasters as manager. The Phil Alvin Unsung Stories album came out around that time in 1986 and it got decent press because Phil was a Blaster and the critics loved them. It was an incredible album. Greg helped Dave get the solo record deal with Demon Records in the UK. He brought Walter Egan into the fold. CBS then bought the masters and his contract.

The record companies used to hold these huge conventions. I brought Dave to one in Vancouver. The president of Columbia, Walter Yetnikoff, was introducing all the artists he

signed, and he said: "This is Phil Alvin, leader of the Blasters. I yelled: "No, No, it's Dave." He said: "Are you sure?" [laughs] Another example of people confusing the brothers.

One thing I regret that Dave didn't let me explore enough was movies as an actor and scoring films. I really wanted to go after that. We had a few meetings in which he didn't get the job. But, so what. In movies you usually don't get the jobs. Keep trying. I wanted him to be Bob Dylan.

There's so much money to be made with music on TV and film. An example is that Dave Alvin and Steve Berlin recorded an album of material for \$10,000. A piece of it got used in a movie and they got \$20,000 for it.

I remember I stopped managing Dave when he wanted to move to HighTone Records. I didn't like the people at HighTone. It was difficult for me to get along with them. I played a stupid card and told Dave it was either me or them. We had been together 10 years, but he chose them. HighTone was very supportive, but I could see they were limited in their reach. But Larry Sloven [HighTone president] was very dismissive of me. At that time, I had the craziest roster of artists – Dave Alvin, Dave Koz (a smooth jazz sax player who was very successful, though his music I hated), then the funk metal band Electric Boys, out of Sweden, and also Robben Ford (who was the most talented of all of them, but a complete asshole). So, I had a lot on my plate at that time.

All through this, I didn't realize that I was bipolar. I wasn't diagnosed until three years later, so I was having a lot of personal stuff going on while co-owning and co-managing Image Consultants and managing five acts. So, Dave and I parted, but recently we have reconnected because we both have the same cancer.

I lost contact and never saw the Blasters or Dave Alvin perform again. Nancy Sefton used to be my secretary. No one told me she went on to manage Dave Alvin.

Looking back on my career, there are three bands that I managed, that I think if things had pivoted time-wise they would have been way-big contenders. One was 20/20 - a new wave band signed in the wake of the Knack. They were the best of the best with harmonies and great songwriting skills. But the problem was that by the time we got their album out, New Wave had died. Then the Blasters, who if we came out two years later, we would be in an atmosphere that was more conducive to Ameri-



Shelly in 2023

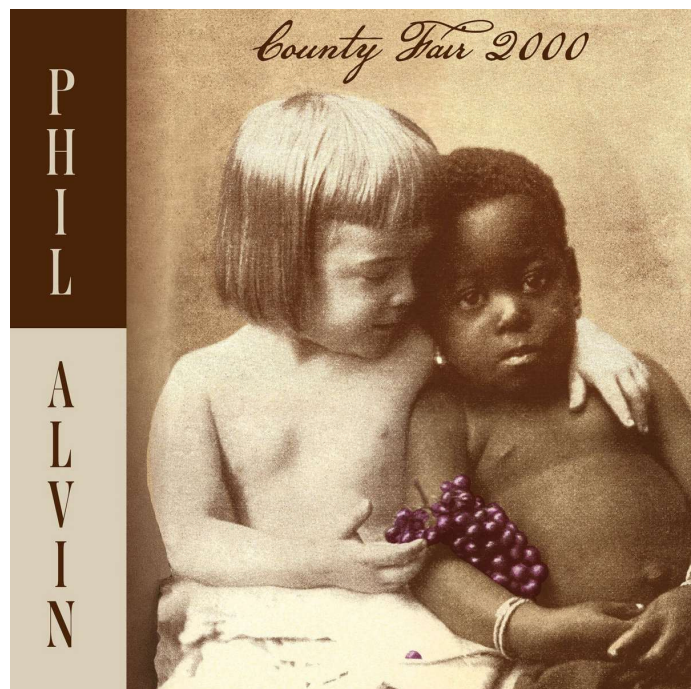
cana radio. And the Electric Boys, a funk metal band out of Sweden. They were signed for an enormous amount of money, but they were a hair band and by the time they came out, that era was over. Timing is so pivotable.

I was so blessed to help create something in music with no musical ability. I was the type, like Phil, that if I believed in something and thought it was right, I was totally domineering in doing it. Most of the time, if I was reaching for something, I would get it.

My experience in the music business was interesting and wonderful - but complex. Of course, there are things I wished I handled differently. And even though there are holes in my memory, these are memories that I treasure and I would not have a reason to look back on them if it wasn't for your interview of me. So, I am so grateful to talk to you.

I had great times. I had a life full of adventure and music, that I was able to have some impact on and that's amazing. I am so fortunate. I now have stage 4 cancer and I'm perfectly fine riding this through. I don't want to go through chemo. I don't particularly need to have a longer life. I've had a terrific life and it can just fade out. I do enjoy being here. -~~Phil~~

Liberation Hall Records Re-releases Phil Alvin's County Fair 2000 on CD and Vinyl Sept. 20, 2024



Singer-songwriter-musicologist Phil Alvin drew from the deep well of American blues, jazz (both hot and avant garde), R&B, gospel, and early 20th century popular songs for this collection's material. He is joined on the album by the 1994 edition of the Blasters and an illustrious lineup of guests: Cesar Rosas of Los Lobos, Chicago blues ace Billy Boy Arnold, New Orleans' Dirty Dozen Brass Band, blues shouter Top Jimmy of Top Jimmy & the Rhythm Pigs, and L.A. street musician Jerome Bowman.

In addition to being available on CD and digital, County Fair 2000 will make its vinyl debut in a gatefold LP package; due to time limitations, the LP will omit four songs from the original track list. Those songs will, however, appear on CD and digital.

Los Angeles music journalist Chris Morris — who contributed liner notes to last year's inaugural entries in the Blasters' reissue series, Mandatory: The Best of the Blasters and Phil Alvin's debut solo album, Unsung Stories — once again provides an essay detailing the recording of

the album. His liner notes include observations from the Blasters' James Intveld and John Bazz, band manager Greg Lewerke, plus the original album's art director, Ed Boswell.

The Blasters appear on four tracks - COUNTY FAIR, THE BLUE LINE, KEEP IN TOUCH and MR. SATELLITE MAN. In addition to Alvin, the lineup of the band at that time included guitarist James Intveld, bassist John Bazz, and drummer Jerry Angel. Two other Alvin-led musical combos appear, the Guada La Habrians and the ad hoc jazz group, the Faultline Syncopators. Various sessions for the album were recorded in Los Angeles, Chicago, and New Orleans.

Preorders are available now on the bandcamp website.



Dave Alvin and Jimmie Dale Gilmore's New Album in 2024

By Billy Davis

Dave Alvin and Jimmie Dale Gilmore released their second album on June 21, 2024 called TexiCali, referring to the duo as cross country collaborators from Texas and California - just like the title of the first album Downey To Lubbock. While the first album was recorded in California primarily with session musicians backing up the duo, this time the album was recorded in both Texas and California using Dave and Jimmies' touring band, The Guilty Ones.

The trek through beautiful and historic terrain between the two singers' locales has had a profound influence on the songs and themes of the album, as Dave Alvin wrote in the liner notes: "I filled my trusty old van with gas, guitars and amplifiers and drove the long, dusty miles down Interstate 10 several times back and forth between California and Texas. From one part of the borderland to another, through concrete swaths of traffic, tract homes and shopping malls, across vast rocky deserts of Joshua trees, saguaros and ocotillo, speeding by forgotten battlefields, remote mining towns, corrido barrooms, cinder block churches and abandoned houses filled with abandoned dreams, past Mission San Xavier del Bac, Cochise's Stronghold and Apache Pass, into the shimmering lights of El Paso/Juarez before the seemingly eternal emptiness of West Texas, traveling those 1,400 miles some-

