

ISSUE #55

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

JANUARY 2008

Gene Taylor Blues Band On Tour

Latest News –

Dave Alvin will make a second appearance on Austin City Limits when the show airs on Feb 2. The show has taped segments from San Francisco's Hardy Strictly Bluegrass festival in which Dave played at earlier this year. -- Dave Alvin may release a new "Only available at shows" CD which may consist of acoustic performances from his annual Neighborhood Church



Photo: Billy Davis

shows in Pasadena. – Dave joins Bill Morrissey, one of his favorite singer/songwriters, on Bill's new CD, Come Running (Turn And Spin Media Records). Due out in May 2008, the CD features Dave playing electric guitar on most of the tracks along with members of the legendary bands Morphine and The Twinemen. Dave, honored to be asked to play, says that

(Continued on page 2)

In This Issue: The Gene Taylor Blues Band on tour and The Blasters / Dave Alvin video available on the internet on Youtube.com

Blasters shows

(Phil, John, Jerry, Keith)

2/22 Solana Beach CA at Belly Up

2/23 San Juan Cap. at Coach House

3/29 Downey CA at Anarchy Library

Dave Alvin Solo shows

1/18-19 Santa Monica CA at McCabes

2/9 Chicago at Old Town School of Folk

2/10 Minneapolis MN at Cedar Center

2/18-22 Desert Hot Springs CA at Fur
Peace Ranch

4/18-19 Los Angeles CA at Royce Hall
Auditorium (Ashgrove 50th Anniversary)

Morrissey's songs make him "cry while smiling." -- On January 3, 2008, Dave Alvin went into Winslow Court Studios with the Gene Taylor Blues band to cut three tracks that may be released on-line only, or become part of a future release. One song was a New Orleans instrumental and also a new version of Dave's NEW HIGHWAY. Bill Bateman was home with the flu, so Steve Mugalian of the Guilty Men sat in on drums. Dave: "The neat thing about this session was that it was like 'This Is Your Life Dave Alvin.' I had Steve (Mugalian) from the Guilty Men, Greg Leisz who recorded all my albums, then the Blasters' Johnny and Gene and me. It was pretty neat." -- Dave played guitar on sessions for

Amy Allison's (Mose Allison's daughter) new album. -- In July 2008, Ranchero Records will release We Never Close, the third CD from San Francisco's pre-eminent honky tonk band, RED MEAT. The CD is produced by Dave Alvin (as were their other two releases) and features him on baritone guitar. -- Dave Alvin is on the bill to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Ash Grove club in April in Los Angeles. A documentary film in the works. -- Guilty Man Steve Mugalian, was called upon to join Cliff Wagner's band on the FOX TV show The Next Great American Band. -- Dave Alvin's 9 Volt radio show on XM is now being archived temporarily on DaveAlvin.net. Three episodes are available for a limited time before another three will replace those. -- Sad news: Steve Bartel, artist, poet, author, and friend of the Blasters died on January 3, 2008 at age 55. Steve designed the Blasters Rollin Rock record cover and logo and then designed the famous Blasters blue and red double exposure Blasters logo on "The Face" album cover. We'll miss him. --Am



The Gene Taylor Blues

"Home For the Holidays" Tour

By Billy Davis

Gene Taylor is the piano player from the Original Blasters, and he most recently played with them on the 2002-2003 reunion tour. For 13 years (1993-2006), he played keys as a member of the Fabulous Thunderbirds. Last Year, Gene relocated to Belgium to start a full time solo career. His most recent solo album was released in 2003 on the Pacific Blues label called Gene Taylor.

For the 2007 Holiday season, Gene planned a tip to Los Angeles to visit with friends and do a few shows with his old part time combo – The Gene Taylor / Bill Bateman duo. Bill Bateman was the Original Blasters drummer from 1979-1992. John Bazz was soon added on bass and a variety of blues guitar players were going to be invited to sit in at low-key shows at local bars. Gene came up with the idea of inviting Dave Alvin, but with Dave's busy schedule, no one expected him to be available. But to every

one's surprise, Dave committed to a whole tour.

Dave recalls: "I was really touched that Gene asked for me on this tour. He could have gotten any blues guitar player. It was a little bit of Downey Magic." Soon Dave asked his booking agent to set up shows at bigger venues. Gene's original idea was now becoming a real event: **The Original Blasters (minus Phil).**

On Monday, December 17, Dave was just back from a Knitters tour and John Bazz returned from a Blasters Northwest tour. They got together with Gene and Bill for a five hour rehearsal to decide on songs. Because John Bazz was designing concert posters for the gigs, he needed a name for the band so he chose one: 'The Gene Taylor Blues Band.'

The six-show tour began with three dates in Northern California and ended with three shows in Southern California.

December 19, 2007 – San Francisco, CA, at Annie's Social Club. --- The first gig was at a small club owned by an old friend of the Blasters named Annie. As an extra rehearsal, the band played a longer sound check.

The band hit the stage looking good. Dave wore a straw cowboy hat. John Bazz, who normally plays electric bass with the Blasters, had an up-



Gene tries out Bill's drum set.

right acoustic bass for the sound of true vintage blues. Bill Bateman played one of his own unique maple finish drum sets, handmade by Bill for his own Bateman Drum Company. Gene Taylor played a Carlos Guitarlos piano.

The band opened up with Gene's specialty – a BOOGIE WOOGIE IN C. Gene took to the role of band leader right away by making jokes to the audience and calling out songs quickly. The audience was entertained and enjoying the show. He said: "I'm living in Belgium. I can't speak either of the national languages. I only speak piano - It works anyway."

Gene sang most of the songs – a few from his Pacific Blues records CD, as well as a bunch of lesser-known cover songs. Gene also did some songs that he used to sing in the Blasters – LIGHTS OUT, DON'T LIE TO ME, and SANTA FE. Dave sang a few songs throughout the set like: GANGSTER OF LOVE from the Pleasure Barons Live CD (1992 HighTone), STEALIN' STEALIN' from the James Cotton

Tribute album, and a song that Dave recently recorded and released as an on-line download single called EARL'S RHUMBA. Dave's selections were strictly blues. The only Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men song was a newly reworked song version of NEW HIGHWAY from 1999's Blackjack David album. Dave: "I wanted to do the song loud – a Magic Sam type-thing."

Gene got on well with the audience by making a lot of jokes and by jokingly introducing Dave as: "The one and only. A great pleasure and a great burden; the one and only Dave Alvin." Dave quickly responded: "The Burden is all mine."

At one point, Gene commented to a member in the audience about her photo-taking. She said "Don't worry there's always 'Photo Shop'." Gene announced to the crowd: "Photo shop is like nuclear energy. It has the propensity for great good and great evil."

Dave sang only a few songs, but it was worth the wait. Over the years, Dave has played GANGSTER OF LOVE a few times in different bands, but I think the version on this tour was the best of them all. As the band vamped the opening groove, Dave told the audience: "This is a Johnny Guitar Watson song done in the style

of Otis Rush and Magic Sam - because no one can touch Johnny Guitar Watson." Dave improvised the lyrics: "The sheriff comes up to me and says: 'Are you Phil Alvin?' in a very deep voice. I said 'No, but that's your wife on the back of my horse.'"

Dave enjoys tours like this where he just plays guitar or sings only a few songs. Sometimes Dave likes to focus



on just letting loose on the guitar. For all the Gene Taylor Blues band members, this was a way for the Original Blasters to play together again without feeling obligated to fill the fans' expectations of playing Blasters songs. On a few occasions, a request for MARIE MARIE came from the audience. Dave responded "Right guys, wrong band." On another, Gene said, "Marie couldn't make it this time."

Near the end of the show, Dave was having some trouble with his long-time, trusty 'Fender Concert' amplifier. It seemed to fluctuate in volume. Gene announced to the crowd "Ladies and gentlemen, Dave Alvin's amp has left the building." Fortunately, for the end of the show, Dave's amp came back.

The closer was Big Joe Turner's ROLL 'EM PETE. It brought back memories to hear Gene sing it again with the same arrangement the Blasters recorded on the Live at the Venue EP. The encore started with a few songs by the Gene and Bill combo, and finished with the only Blasters standard - AMERICAN MUSIC - a great high energy version sung by Dave.

Dave said goodbye to Annie's audience: "We're four old guys playing old music. Thanks for sharing our 'home for the holidays' with us. It's a little bit of Downey, California here in Soma."

December 20, 2007 -- Santa Cruz, CA, at Moe's Alley --- The first thing Dave did when he arrived in Santa Cruz was put out the word to local musicians to borrow an amp. A custom amplifier builder from Santa Cruz brought over a similar looking amp to Dave's 'Fender Concert' that said on its face "Fluid Drive" made by



Walker Audio. When Dave first plugged into it, he just said, "Wow!" He loved the sound and under his breath said: "Sorry, baby, this only a one night stand." The amp sounded great, really crisp with the bite in Dave's sound that we all love when he rips into his solos.



**GENE TAYLOR
BLUES BAND**

thursday, december 20

MOE'S ALLEY 1535 Commercial Way, Santa Cruz, ca
moesalley.com (831) 479-1854

gene taylor bill bateman dave alvin john bazz

The band hit the stage to a full house crowd. They did a version of BLUE MOON OF KENTUCKY by Bill Monroe. Gene does the song like the Elvis Sun Records version; it starts out slow, and then kicks up into a fast rockabilly / boogie-woogie version.

They played MISSISSIPPI HEAVY WATER BLUES – a Barbecue Bob song that Gene recorded for his Pacific Blues CD. It's a song Dave likes and requested the band play. Dave featured Gene's recording of it on his November XM radio show: Dave Alvin's 9-Volt. Gene added a few Blasters songs tonight that he always sang with the band: WHAT AM I LIVING FOR



and TAG ALONG (with Dave's blazing guitar solo ending). These songs are essentially Original Blasters songs and because Phil didn't sing on them, we heard them exactly as they played them in the old days.

Gene and Bill started the second set with HONKY TONK TRAIN. As Gene called the rest of the band members to the stage, John Bazz did something funny. As he walked behind Gene, he imitated an organ grinder behind Gene's back. Gene didn't realize what John did, which is funny, because that's also one of Gene's own tricks that he plays on Phil Alvin and also Kim Wilson of the Fabulous Thunderbirds.

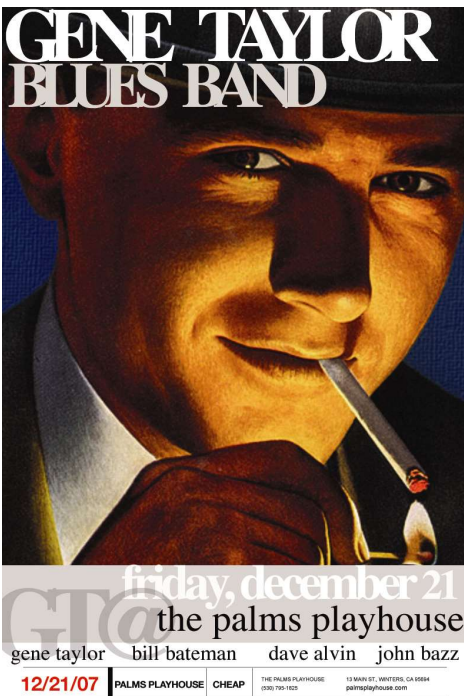
It was about time for Dave to sing a song. He had a surprise. The highlight of an already great show was an unexpected song – unexpected even to the band. Here is how it happened: Gene motioned to Dave between songs that he had to leave the stage – presumably to use the bathroom. Dave quickly said: "I've been put in an uncomfortable position. Gene has just quit the band. He said we're rocking just a little too hard for his tastes - so slow it way, way down." Dave continued: "Maybe the greatest singer I've ever seen in my life is a guy named Big Joe Turner. And the only guy who can sing like Big Joe is my brother and he ain't here, but nonetheless, here's a Big Joe Turner song that we've never rehearsed." Dave played the Big Joe Turner song CHAINS OF LOVE. This was a great rendition of the song. Gene got back to the stage very quickly and added in some nice piano accompaniment to the song. Wow!

Every show on this tour featured different songs. At this show Gene played a rare song by Guitar Gable & the Musical Kings called IRENE (not to be confused with the Leadbelly song, GOODNIGHT IRENE). Then for the encore the Gene and Bill Combo played DIRTY DOZENS and an untitled BOOGIE WOOGIE INSTRUMENTAL.

At Moe's end, Dave said: "Thanks for coming to Moe's Alley for the Gene Taylor Blues Band Experience. Sometimes the only way you can go back home, at least for me, is to be on stage with the guys I grew up with in the little town of Downey, California. Everyone else is dead and gone or just confused – so that leaves us . . . Happy Holidays, guys."

This was a solid show, and Dave's guitar was really on fire to-night. Too bad we'll never hear Dave play this one-of-a-kind guitar amplifier again.

December 21, 2007 Winters CA at The Palms --- In the morning we were leaving the hotel in Santa Cruz, and I saw John Bazz practicing his bass out in the parking lot. Then I saw Dave coming out the band van. He was laughing an evil and very deep "He, He, He, He, He." He was happy because he just made a deal to buy the same 'Fluid Drive' amplifier that he played last night. He went to pick it up that day, and the deal was done. Back in L.A., Dave's girlfriend Mary, laughingly told everyone she was being replaced by a "new girlfriend" – the Fluid Drive amp. Dave sure loves that amp, and we love how it sounds with his guitar.



It was cold in Winters, but I guess that's appropriate. 'The Palms venue is the size of a small theatre in downtown Winters---a great place. Upon arriving, we hear that it's sold out.

After the band started the show and played a few songs, you could see they were really hitting their stride and having fun. During SUGARBEE Dave took a solo and started playing the opening guitar riff to LONG WHITE CADILLAC. John Bazz, who always plays his bass in a trance-like state, seemed to snap out of it when he heard that and looked over at Dave with a smile. Dave smiled back, getting the attention he expected with those familiar notes.

The band played two sets with an intermission. In the second set, the band played two songs from their set list and then announced they were bringing Rick Estrin to the stage to play harmonica. Rick is from the Sacramento based blues band, Little Charlie and the Night Cats (Dave and Rick co-wrote a song called NEVER TRUST A WOMAN for a Little Milton tribute album in 1999).

Rick walked on stage with a crumpled brown paper bag in his hands. Gene said: "Do you have a hamburger for me? Ohh, He's got the George 'Harmonica' Smith harmonica case." Rick reached into that bag every time he needed a different





Photo: Kurt Mahoney

SIPPI HEAVY WATER BLUES: “This is a song for all the folks in Louisiana and Mississippi who got hit with the flood. I recorded this in 2003. I hate to think that it was a premonition. It’s about the 1927 flood of the Mississippi River. It’s an apropos song in this day and age. It’s by a great American composer named Barbecue Bob.”

For the last song, Dave posed a question: “Well, we’ve done Lloyd Price, Earl Hooker, Slim Harpo, Big Joe Turner, Nat King Cole, Guitar Slim, Amos Milburn, Bo Diddley, Rocket Morton, and Johnny Guitar Watson. Someone is missing from that illustrious group of songwriters, singers, and entertainers – Me!” Then Dave counted: “One, two, three, four” and they launched into a finale of **AMERICAN MUSIC**.

December 22, 2007 Sherman Oaks , CA, at Cozy’s --- This venue is on the North side of Los Angeles and like the name suggests, is too small to accommodate a hometown audience – it filled up to standing room only.

GENE TAYLOR BLUES BAND



saturday, december 22
cozy's

dave alvin	john bazz	gene taylor	bill bateman
12/22/07	COZY'S	CHEAP	COZY'S 14008 VENTURA BLVD. SHERMAN OAKS, CA 91403 COZY@COZY.COM

Again the band played two sets. The first set followed the set list to the letter. In the second set they brought up Big Sandy to sing on **SICK AND TIRED**. Then Gene pulled out more songs they hadn’t done on this tour: **SHAKE RATTLE AND ROLL**, **LAWDY MISS CLAWDY** and Guitar Slim’s **THINGS I USED TO DO**.

They finished off the show with **ROLL ‘EM PETE** and then didn’t come out for an encore because the audience didn’t cheer enough. Dave: “It was a little weird, but that’s the problem with those bar gigs. You play two sets and the audience is pretty shot by the end. I was disappointed that we didn’t come back and play **AMERICAN MUSIC** but then I realized that the audience might have thought there was gonna be a third set. We didn’t make that clear to everybody.”

Throughout the tour, John Bazz found

playing the upright was a real challenge on the fast songs. Dave Alvin said: “The thing that blew my mind was how good Johnny Bazz was on standup bass. I never played with him when he was playing standup. During the shows, I would forget he was playing the standup on fast songs like **AMERICAN MUSIC** and **TAG ALONG** – It was that good.”

key harmonica. It looked like he has had that paper bag for years.

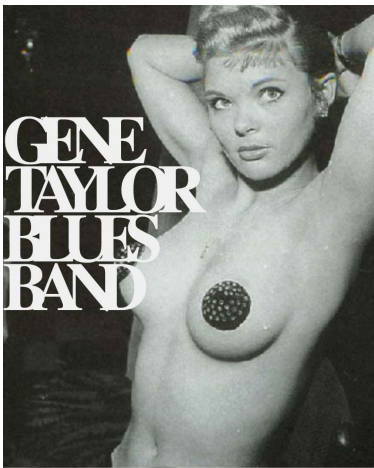
Gene threw out the set list, which was exciting for the band and those of us who had seen the other two shows. Who knew what would be next? They played a whole range of different songs: **RAININ’ IN MY HEART**, **LATE IN THE EVENING**, **HUNG DOWN HEAD** and **ROUTE 66**. They played a really unusual version of **EARL’S RHUMBA** to accommodate the harmonica. Gene later said it was really cool to play with Rick Estrin and that “Rick is a really good harmonica player.”

In the encore Gene, Bill, and Rick Estrin returned and played a version of **NINE BELOW ZERO**. Next, Gene talked about the song **MISSIS-**



Photo: Kurt Mahoney

December 28, 2007 Santa Monica at Harvelle's --- The band



Friday, December 28
harvelle's santa monica
gene taylor bill bateman dave alvin john bazz
12/28/07 HARVELLE'S CHEAP 1001 AN STREET SANTA MONICA, CA 90401
harvelles.com

took a week off for the Christmas holidays, and then resumed with the last two shows. They enjoyed the first four shows quite a bit and knew they were experiencing something special. Dave Alvin made arrangements to have producer Mark Linnet record the last two shows.

The band played a set full of their well-rehearsed songs. Gene threw in the song NINE BELOW ZERO. Actor Dennis Quaid was at the show and stood behind Gene intently watching his playing. Gene complimented his band members on a few occasions saying about John Bazz: "I love the sound of the upright bass

with my piano." Gene on Bill Bateman: "Bill's drums sound great. If I can play them and they sound good, anyone can, so drummers come up and inspect these drums: you will not be disappointed." As for Dave Alvin, Gene commented: "David's guitar has been really loud (on the tour). But it's a good loud."



Photo: Kurt Mahoney

December 29, 2007 Hermosa Beach, CA, at Café Boogaloo --- The band was excited about this show all

GENE TAYLOR BLUES BAND



Saturday, December 29
cafe boogaloo
dave alvin john bazz bill bateman gene taylor
12/29/07 CAFE BOOGALOO CHEAP 1318 HERMOSA AVE., HERMOSA BEACH, CA 90254
boogaloo.com

throughout the tour. They knew the last show would be special. Friends would be in attendance and it would be a long time before they would play together again.

The first set went off without a hitch. The band, at this point, can read each other and the songs are all flawlessly executed. Gene surprised everybody with Jimmy Reed's BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG CITY. LOOPED got the crowd going, especially with one of Dave's patented screaming guitar solos. Dave sang GANGSTER OF LOVE with his usual improvised lyric parts. He said: "The sheriff said: 'Are you Guitar Watson? Are you Chris Gaffney? Are you Phil Alvin?'" That brought a roar from the crowd almost as if the audience sensed Phil might show up which would mean they would be seeing a mini-Original Blasters reunion.

In the second set they loosened things up a bit. Chris Gaffney came up to sing a song that he often sings with the Guilty Men: LONELY L O N E L Y NIGHTS. After a few more songs, Gene looked into the audience and said: "We have a harmonica player."

Dave continued: "Oh we do? I hope he's good. I hope he's as good as he is good lookin'. I hope he brought harmonicas, but I sincerely doubt it." Then sarcastically Dave said: "All the way from Downey, California, please welcome Gene Taylor's brother, Phil Alvin." Sure enough, it was Phil himself.

The suddenly reunited, Original Blasters started with



Photo: Kurt Mahoney



the old Jimmie Rogers slow blues called THAT'S ALRIGHT, which Gene sang. Gene challenged Phil right away calling for him to do a double solo on the harmonica. Dave then took a solo and Gene followed with his solo. It was 4 minutes of solos without any lyrics. Next was a song not yet played on this tour called TOO MANY DRIVERS followed by DRUNK. Gene sang 'em all and Phil was really starting to get warmed up on the harmonica.

Gene said: "I guess were gonna let Phil sing one?" He turned to the audience and said: "Do you want to hear Phil sing one?" The crowd went crazy. I thought they would pick an easy blues jam, but they really shocked everyone with the Blasters classic song: HOLLYWOOD BED. It was great to hear that one again. Phil tried something new on that song by taking a harmonica solo on it.

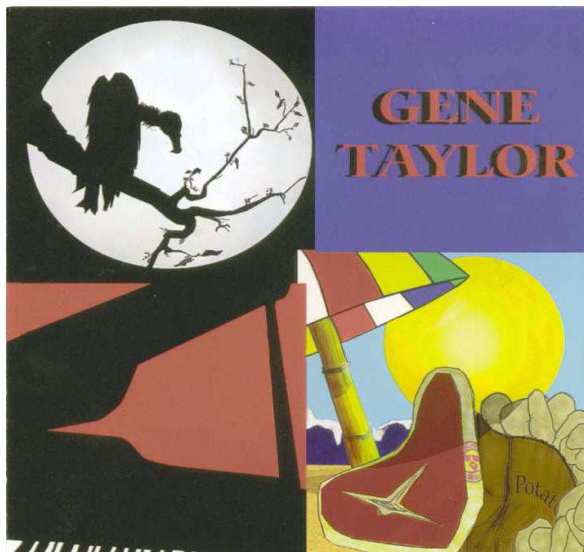
They followed that with HELP YOU DREAM and then another gem: Sonny Boy Williamson's DON'T START ME TALKING sung by Phil. Some people in the audience kept making jokes about the Alvin brothers fighting. Phil heard someone and replied with a laugh: "There will be no fighting." Later, when Phil and Dave stood close discussing a song, Gene fueled the fire saying: "Hey break it up over there, David. Don't hit your brother again."

They finished with ROLL'EM PETE and Phil sang his JOE TURNER MEDLEY lyrics to. Phil calls the song OH WELL OH WELL, which are the opening words of the song.

The band returned to the stage to play AMERICAN MUSIC. Dave thanked the crowd and said he would sing the first verse and then "If Phil makes it on stage in time, he will sing the second." They started the song and Phil rushed out on stage and sang all the verses anyway. Dave: "AMERICAN MUSIC with Phil was great and so was the BIG JOE TURNER thing."

The audience loved the show and it was recorded for possible inclusion on a live CD. Dave has listened to the recordings and says there is a lot of good material to release. All the guys in the band loved doing these shows together during the holidays. Dave: "It was fun and I told the guys I would do it again at some point." I'm sure we'll see more of the GT Blues Band in the future. Maybe it should become a holiday tradition? --Am





Gene's 2003 solo album on Pacific Blues Records



GENE'S WITTY STAGE REPARTEE

*** "We're gonna feature Dave Alvin right now – his whole cowboy-ness – his essence of his cowboy-ocity is going to become full blooming and flowery -- How Did Bukowski put it?" Dave responded: "His exact words were: Get out of my way kid."

*** Gene: "I backed up two poets in my lifetime playing piano – Charles Bukowski and David Alvin. It was a dead heat on which one was a bigger pain in the ass." Dave responded: "I thought I was number one." Gene: "The spoken word should remain unspoken." Dave: "Well, that's the last spoken word gig you get out of me buddy (laughing)."

*** "Dave Alvin is wanted in three states and not wanted in the other 47."

*** "In honor of Dave's cowboy hat, were gonna do one of the many country selections out of our country repe – (stutter) repe. . ." Gene leans in to the audience to hear a girl finish the word 'repertoire.' Gene says in the mike: "Twaaa. What ever the lady said, I agree with it. I never disagree with women about anything unless it's about money (laughs)." Under his breath he continued: "It's always about the money."

*** "I have a question. They say 'a penny for your thoughts' but when you offer someone something you're putting in 'your two cents' worth.' Where does that extra penny go?"

Gene Taylor Answers Yahoo 'American Music' Email list Questions

1. OK Gene, why did you move to Belgium?

Just for something different to do. I have a manager over there and I can live at his house. I like to move around a lot.

2. How are the waffles in Belgium ?

ALL the food in Belgium is excellent.

3. I would like to ask Geno how he compares Phil and Kim Wilson as singers?

Apples and oranges -- they're two entirely different singers -- both of them GREAT! Great voices and phrasing plus good instincts on material.

4. Who are your 3 or 4 favorite jazz, blues pianists?

I have so many; but off the top of my head: Jimmy Yancey, Roosevelt Sykes, Earl Hines and Willie "The Lion" Smith; would be a good four to start with.

5. Who is an obscure artist that you have recently discovered that you'd like to turn us on to. It Could be an artist still living or on a compilation CD.

Obscure is a relative term. I haven't uncovered anyone lately (haven't really been looking), but if you want to hear a SERIOUSLY under-appreciated bluesman, check out Walter Davis (1912-1964) He- made most of his 100+ records for Victor and its subsidiaries. He was based in St. Louis and is one of the most unique stylists in all of recorded music.

6) What (if any) rockabilly artists have influenced you?

Carl Perkins was BIG for me.

7. What was your favorite ever Blasters gig?

I don't have any one favorite, but the Hollywood Palladium show (Aug. 6, 1982) was memorable.

8. What are the plans for your next CD?

Dave Alvin, John Bazz, Bill Bateman and myself recorded some live stuff (Dec. 28-29) in L.A. and I'm working in a studio in Amsterdam, so I plan to have something out this year.

6 Questions for John Bazz

What made you decide to play the upright bass on this tour?

These days I play upright any chance I get. I also thought it would be appropriate in this context, and Gene concurred.

Any fav songs to play on the tour?

Drunk!, Tag Along, Lights Out and American Music.

What does it mean to get together with these guys if only on rare occasions?

In some ways, this was better than those (Blasters) reunion shows because it captured the essence of original Blasters but didn't have any of the limitations or confines of having to play certain songs a certain way - meaning, we could play whatever popped into Gene's head, and then some.

Anything surprise you or that you particularly liked in Dave's playing?

Dave has always had the ability to play the blues, and does so in the style of a Johnny Guitar Watson or Magic Sam, but rarely got the freedom to do so in the Blasters. In the GTBB he has that freedom, and it's reminiscent of how the Blasters sounded back in the Rollin' Rock years.

How about Gene?

Gene has always been a great performer, and continues to play and sing as strong as he did back when I first meet him in 1972.

And Bill's playing?

It's always good to play with Bill. He and I have such history together - he's the first drummer I ever played with. It's almost telepathic how the both of us play.

American Music on Youtube – By Tom Wilk

A little more than two years since its creation, Youtube serves as the video and audio jukebox of the online world. Videos, concert performances, and interviews featuring The Blasters, Dave Alvin and various spin-offs offer an entertaining journey through the past at www.youtube.com. This serves as a selected list of what's available in the Blasters and Dave Alvin world. New clips are always being added and occasionally taken down.

One of the earliest clips is a 1982 excerpt from The Uncle Floyd Show, a low-budget variety show that aired in the New York/New Jersey area. The clip features the original seven-piece Blasters doing a powerful version of ROLL 'EM PETE. Lee Allen and Steve Berlin trade saxophone solos as Bill Bateman swaps drumsticks for brushes on the drums (*pictured below*).

Flash forward to 1987 at a rock festival in Finland with a new version of the Blasters. This rare video shows Billy Zoom, formerly of X, on lead guitar as the band runs through such songs as MARIE MARIE and BLUE SHADOWS. Once again, Lee Allen and Steve Berlin are on saxophone on a series of clips. The year 1987 also marked the release of Romeo's Escape, Dave Alvin's debut solo album. Two videos from the album NEW TATTOO and EVERY NIGHT ABOUT THIS TIME are available on Youtube, as is a 1994 video of BARN BURNING from the King of California album.

There is no shortage of Dave Alvin solo performances on the youtube web site. One clip shows Rosie Flores and Dave performing an acoustic duet on GOODBYE AGAIN, the song they co-wrote for the King of California CD. Another clip shows Dave backing up country singer Dwight Yoakam on the song WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW. Both performances are from Lil' Art's Poker Party, a longtime cable TV show hosted by Art Fein in Santa Monica, CA. A humorous clip from the same show features Phil Alvin discussing the evolution of the music business.

Dave Alvin is shown performing Tom Russell's BLUE WING that aired on VH-1 in 1995. Dave can be seen in concert in a variety of clips from various shows over the years, including an acoustic performance of ASHGROVE with Chris Gaffney and EVERETT RUESS (from the Ashgrove CD) with Chris Miller.

Dave's tenure with the Knitters is represented by several clips, including a performance of SEE HOW WE ARE, the X song, with John Doe, and a version of THE NEW CALL OF THE WRECKING BALL from the Knitters' most recent CD.

Filmmaker Robert E. Burge has posted excerpts of his documentary Finding The Blues that includes a lengthy interview with Dave Alvin, who is interviewed at his home and thoughtfully discusses such subjects as the Blasters reunion shows of 2002-2003 and the Ashgrove CD.

Recently posted Youtube clips include the Blasters playing in Kansas City at 'Knuckleheads Saloon' doing an acoustic version of I'M GONNA MOVE TO KANSAS CITY. You'll see Phil and Keith on acoustic guitars, John Bazz on upright bass and Jerry playing persussion on a milk crate. Also look for some newly posted videos of the Gene Taylor Blues band tour.

Using Youtube is easy. Go to www.youtube.com, sign up, no credit cards or payment are necessary and you're ready to go. Then type in key words like "Gene Taylor" for your search and an assortment of videos relating to your search will come up. A high speed broadband, cable, or DSL internet connection is recommended for smooth streaming of the video data. Happy viewing. --Am

