

ISSUE #33

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

NOV - DEC 2001

DAVE ALVIN TOUR DATES with The Guilty Men

12/4 Davis Ca at The Palms
12/5 Berkeley CA at Freight & Salvage
12/6 Mill Valley CA at SweetWater
12/7 Los Angeles at Getty Museum

BLASTERS TOUR DATES

12/22 Long Beach Ca at Blue Café
1/4/02 San Juan Cap at Coach House

BLASTERS CD ANTHOLOGY SET FOR A FEBRUARY 2002 RELEASE

-- Latest news --

Dave Alvin recorded two shows with the Guilty Men in August for a possible live album. Shows in Santa Barbara's Labarro Theatre and The Blue Cafe in Long Beach were recorded. The band played unreleased songs like HIGHWAY 99, a Sonny Boy Williamson song called HELP ME and they also did a bit

of FREEBIRD with Gaffney and Joe Terry singing. -- The Blasters Anthology on Rhino records is on schedule for release in February. This rare photo (right side) will be part of the artwork. With the recent few reunion jams of the old Blasters at local gigs, some have speculated that the Original Four Blasters may reunite for one show to celebrate the release of the Blasters Rhino anthology. Stay tuned. -- In November, Dave produced Jill Olsen's (from country band Red Meat) solo album. Her solo is more folk/pop music. Dave also produced a new album for Christy McWilson due next year on HighTone. Rick Shea played on both sessions. -- Greg Leisz plays with jazz guitarist Bill Frisell on his Nonesuch/Atlantic album Blues



In This Issue: Rick Shea's Sawbones, Dave Alvin's Guilty Woman Katy Moffatt, and a look back at the Blasters 1982 Soundstage TV concert.

Dream, Frisell titled one of his songs GREG LEISZ. It's an unusual honor. The CD came out in January this year. -- The Mike Eldred Trio, featuring John Bazz and Jerry Angel of the Blasters, has released their first official album self titled (American Music advertised a promo of it for sale last year). For the official album on Virgin Records, send \$18 to Mike Eldred Trio, PO Box 5120, Bellflower, CA 90707-5120 -- The Blue Shadows have finished recording a new album. Guests include Dave Alvin, Gene Taylor, Kid Ramos, and Aaron from Rumble King. The album is being shopped to labels right now. Dave: "I think the record is real good. It's rootsy but modern and noisy." - Keith Wyatt has finished work on a guitar instructional video called Fender Presents: Getting Started on Guitar - 2 DVDs/3 videos. The project has taken most of the year, between planning, pre- and post-production. It will be included in every guitar case with sales of Fender Guitars. Keith also reports, "I'm currently working on an ear training method book and have blues rhythm guitar and blues soloing books as my next projects, all for Hal Leonard Publishing." ~~~*AM*

**Avalon Blues Tour: Peter Case,
Dave Alvin & Bill Morrissey:
A Tribute to the Music of
Mississippi John Hurt.**

Singer-songwriter Peter Case has just produced a new CD called Avalon Blues on Vanguard Records, an all-star tribute to the music of legendary blues musician Mississippi John Hurt. The album features an all star list of performers such as Beck, Ben Harper, Lucinda Williams, Steve Earle, John Hiatt, Victoria Williams, Taj Mahal, Chris Smither, Mark Selby, Geoff Muldaur, Bill Morrissey, Gillian Welch, Alvin Youngblood Hart and Peter Case with Dave Alvin. To celebrate the albums release, three of those performers - Peter Case, Dave Alvin and Bill Morrissey will tour playing songs of Hurt as well as originals inspired by the kind of powerful acoustic blues of Mississippi John Hurt. Each performer will play a 30-minute set and then all three will play together. Dave Alvin expects to shy away from his original songs, to make the event special by playing only traditional songs.

Look for the shows on the west coast in December and the rest of the USA in 2002. ~~~*AM*

RICK SHEA SAWBONES

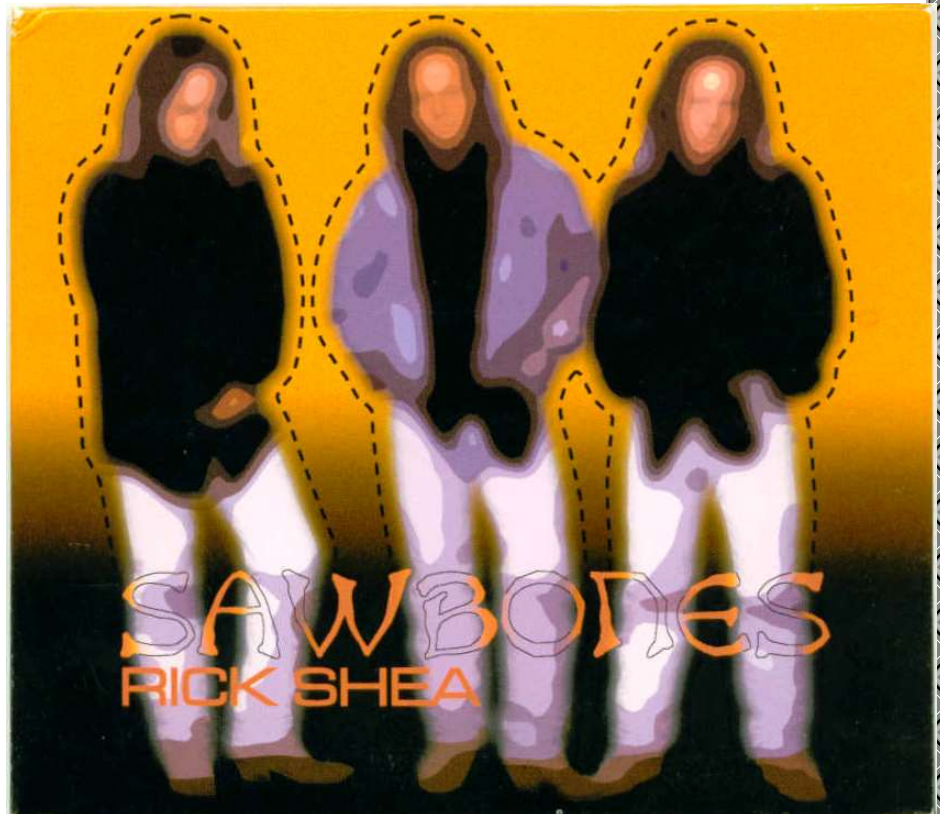
Rick Shea is a multi-talented string instrumentalist, who writes songs and has an exceptional singing voice. He may be more familiar to some of us as a member of Dave Alvin's Guilty Men backing up Dave on guitars, mandolin, lap steel, and pedal steel. He splits his time between Dave's touring and recording and his own solo work. Rick Shea has released three albums to date: 1995 The Buffalo Show, 1999 Shakey Ground, and his most recent album called Sawbones. This record features great songs and playing as well as a style that goes beyond country to more diverse territory. I like to call it South Western music.

American Music: In the planning stages of the CD was there a specific style in mind?

Rick Shea: The only thing I had in mind was that I wanted there to be more electric guitar than my previous albums. The style ends up being determined by what the songs turn out to be.

We did basic tracks for about 6 songs earlier in another couple of studios over a few years. The first session we recorded BLACK EYED GIRL and MAGDALENA. The second session was CAMMELLIA and STILL WATER. The third was A BEND IN THE RIVER and EMPEROR OF THE NORTH as well as a different version of LONESOME CANNONBALL that we didn't use. All those songs were tracked live with John Lee White III on drums, Dave Hall on bass, Wyman Reese on keyboards, Brantley Kearns playing fiddle and mandolin.

Then in early 2000 we went in the studio with (producer) Cody Bryant and his people. We transferred the tracks over to the



format in that studio and then started adding extra instrumentation to them as well as recording the rest of the songs from scratch.

AM: Let's go through the songs on the album.

BLACK EYED GIRL

RS: That's a little take off of the old song Black Eyed Susie. My wife's name is Susie so I thought that would be a nice twist if I could come up with something. That was the first song recorded. The basic tracks

were recorded back in 1997. It really wasn't a song until we went in and started recording it. We worked it up in the studio. Brantley's fiddle part was an idea we came up with later, as well as the long guitar outro idea. I'm very happy with the way it came out.

MAGDALENA

RS: There is an old legend about the mission in San Juan Capistrano. The young girl Magdalena falls in love; she's not allowed to see the boy and then she is discovered with him. She then has to do penance in front of the congregation and as she's walking there, an earthquake destroys the chapel, her - and everyone in it. The legend says that you can still see her ghost on the grounds of the mission. It's all based in a lot of religious mythology stuff. The name Magdalena is a Spanish form of the name Magdalane. Mary Magdalane was the fallen woman who helped out Christ in his last days. In this legend the day that Magdalane went before the congregation was December 17, which is the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

AM: For MAGDALENA You name a co-writer in J. Moyeda. In the last American Music (Issue #24 August 1999) interview with you, you mentioned this person co-wrote some of the Spanish lyric songs on The Buffalo Show album (Major Label Records 1995). Did she write the Spanish lyric chorus and what does that translate to?

RS: That is my wife's Mom, Jennie. That chorus was her part. I had a pretty clear idea of what I wanted it to say. I had the song pretty well written up to that point. I called her and told her what I wanted to say. She worked it up and after a few re-writes by her, it was done. She is really talented (with) writing poetry and just ideas, thoughts and stuff. It translates to "Oh My Heart, Oh My

heart the love of my life. I won't ever let you for get me you are the love of my life, my heart and my soul."

LONESOME CANNONBALL

RS: It's an expression that's used in a lot of other songs like by Hank Williams and Freddie King. I noticed it was never used as a title. So I got started with it. It's a modal bluegrass thing like the Stanley Brothers done with electric guitars.

AM: Dave Alvin plays on this. It sounds like a perfect song for how he likes to play guitar on a song -- bluesy.

RS: Yes, I intended all along for him to play on that song. Dave has his guitar in some weird tuning and his parts are very live sounding. He played them all the way through.

DEEP WITHIN THE WELL

RS: That was the first song I ever wrote on the mandolin. I had just gotten a mandolin and came up with that part. It took a long time to write that and over the period, I did about three versions until it worked into what you hear now.

AM: The ending of the song changes tempo into a Celtic type dance song. How did that come about?

RS: I was goofing around on the mandolin and played the same part but with a different feel to it. I decided to use it as an ending to the song, although the producer, Cody, lobbied pretty hard to have that not there. I'm glad we left it, cause it has gotten good responses.

AM: I thought it might have been Brantley's idea, because of his experience playing old Irish music.

RS: Actually he was unhappy playing that (laughs). He was not having a good time and I had to force him to work on that. He didn't think he was doing it well, although it turned out beautifully. He was sort of mak-

ing little complaints about it (laughs) but I made him stick with it.

Ed. - Here is an interesting excerpt from the American Music #29 interview of Brantley Kearns showing how hard he is on himself. It's probably what makes him such an extraordinary player. Brantley: "In '76 I left (David Bromberg Band) because I felt I wasn't the musician he was looking for. Some songs I thought I was faking -- like the Irish tunes. I was used to traditional southeastern American fiddle and string band music. I learned it that way. To really play traditional Irish music you have to grow up playing it; it has to be in your blood. I felt I didn't do that very well."

AM: Tell us how Katy Moffatt sang back up on the song. Did you have her specifically in mind?

RS: No. I knew I wanted a female voice on there, but I couldn't think of who. I saw her at the (memorial) services for Dave's Dad, after not having seen her in a long time, so I asked her to sing on the song. That worked out as a nice little thing.

WALKIN' TO JERUSALEM

AM: What inspired you to write a spiritual song like this?

RS: The song kind of popped out of nowhere. It's about someone going through the process of dying. The whole structure of the song came to me one morning. I started thinking about people I know and that for some there isn't a lot of time left. I think a lot of people can relate that to people they know.

AM: The interaction between mandolin,

acoustic slide, and the fiddle works beautifully. How did the arrangement come about?

RS: I had WALKIN' TO JERUSALEM set aside for Dave Alvin to play acoustic guitar on, but with schedules changing a few times, Dave couldn't make the session right away. In the mean time, Brantley had come in and played some great parts and then I added the acoustic slide. So, Dave missed that one for that reason. I intended for Dave to play some acoustic stuff like he did with me on the Kate Wolf tribute album (Treasures Left Behind, Red House records, 1998). I liked that a whole lot. But Brantley took over this song and I wouldn't want to change it.

STILL WATER

AM: Who is Co-writer Jann Browne?

RS: She has a few albums of her own. I wrote one song with her that was on The Buffalo Show album and then this one we worked on quite a while ago. I knew I wanted this to be moody and I worked on the lyrics right up until recording it. In fact, there wasn't much left of the original version. Jan and I wrote when I recorded it, but she helped me structure it and She helped me realize it could be a song.

AM: I see Wyman Reese's keyboards are only on a certain songs. How was that decided?

RS: This is another song that was recorded in those early sessions. Wyman was at all those sessions but not in the studio later when Cody Bryant was producing.

AM: Since you are a mandolin player, how



did Brantley Kearns wind up playing mandolin on STILL WATER and a few of the other songs?

RS: Actually those tracks were recorded so long ago it was before I had a mandolin and was regularly playing mandolin.

SAGINAW, MICHIGAN

AM: Why a cover song and the only cover song on the album?

RS: I always liked that song and played it live for quite a few years. We actually recorded another cover song. Neil Young's SADDLE UP THE PALOMINO (CARMALITA), but we never got around to finishing it. We cut a version of SAGINAW with the whole band and we wanted it to sound like the Lefty Frizzel version with the same instrumentation and the same arrangement. I thought it would be fun that way, but it didn't seem to be working. I think Cody suggested I play it with just the acoustic guitar - that worked. We added Don Heffington playing bongos and it sounded fun at the time of recording it, but when we mixed it, the bongos didn't seem to work so we left them off.

EMPEROR OF THE NORTH

AM: What was Co-writer Wyman Reese's role in writing the song?

RS: He basically brought me the lyrics complete. I think I added half of the last verse and I wrote the music. The story is as it is written inside the album liner notes: - *Bob 'Guitar Whitey' Symmonds rode the rails in the 1930's as a 13-year-old looking for work. 50 years later, retired, he went back to riding the rails. This song is dedicated to the spirit of Guitar Whitey who managed not to lose all of his rough edges.* - Bob Symmonds was a friend of Wyman's dad. He was featured in the movie called Riding the Rails. He was a

pretty colorful guy, very loud and interesting. Wyman and Loren Rawls were in a band together with this guy's son. He said his dad stopped riding the rails after that movie came out, because there were a lot of creepy, unexplained murders and disappearances among the hobos. Somebody was murdering them. So Bob stopped and said. "It's not like it was. There are a lot of crazy people out there."

'Emperor of the North' was a title of a hobo movie from years ago with Lee Marvin and Ernest Borgnine.

A BEND IN THE RIVER

RS: That's a phrase Joan Didion used in an essay she wrote on that phrase. I liked it. It's something John Wayne says in a movie called Hell's Angels. I had the basic idea for the story and finished it in the studio. That was the toughest song because it didn't transfer well from the other recording format but it turned out real well and I was happy with it.

PIEDMONT RIDGE

RS: That was comprised of a few different riffs I had been playing, so I put them together. The Piedmont Ridge will be familiar to people on the east coast. It's in the Carolina's between the coastal plain and the mountains. It runs north and south. I was trying to keep in mind the Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee type thing, that comes from that area and the country blues of Doc Watson and Norman Blake. It actually turned into a big electric guitar thing, and was a great showcase for Dave to play. Dave played this tremolo guitar part in the background then went back over it with a solo.

SAWBONES

RS: That was the last song I wrote for the album. It was finished up the night before

it was recorded. It's kind of a nonsense song with lyrical ideas that I stuck together to have fun with.

AM: Why did you choose it as the album title?

RS: We had a hard time finding a title for the album. It turned into a committee approach, which is not a good idea. I had come up with a half dozen titles and everybody put their two cents in. I considered "Guitar Whitey", but got negative feedback on it. I just went and chose Sawbones. It was short, easy to remember, and that was it.

MESQUITE (instrumental)

RS: I recorded the mandolin first and the rest of the band played to that. I came up with the whole thing pretty quickly when writing it in Mesquite, Nevada. Then in the recording sessions, I was looking for an instrumental that featured some mandolin

playing on it and that song was perfect.

CAMELLIA

RS: 'The Band' inspired that. The song OPHELIA, although I tried to keep it from sounding like that, but I'm a tremendous fan of 'The Band' and all those albums. Although a lot of people don't even see that in it, but the lyric is like a southern type of feel and the gal sounds like she's a lot of fun but pretty loose (laughs).

AM: The album has been out for over a year. Are there plans for a follow up?

RS: Oh yes, absolutely. I have been writing songs and I'm heading in that direction. With the events of September 11, I was kind of paralyzed there for a while and it took a month to really think of writing again. But, I think you have to keep doing what you do, although I'm sure that it will affect me for a long time. ~~ *AM*

The New and Old Blasters play Long Beach's Blue Café Again 11/3/01

The current lineup of the Blasters played two sets of great music and in the encore of the last set, Phil saw that Dave and Bill Bateman were in the club so he called them to the stage. Phil announced to the audience, "There are some special friends here, so I'll have them come up and play a couple of tunes. One is Bill Bateman and say hello to my brother, Dave Alvin, not to be confused with Phil Alvin. Thanks to Jerry and Keith for being so gracious."

They then launched into MARIE MARIE. Next the rare songs started to come out, including the Elmore James song CRY FOR ME. I asked John Bazz if there was any previous discussion of playing the song, because they played it perfectly. John Bazz: "Nothing is ever discussed. I think Dave started noodling around with that lick. That's all it takes is Phil to hear that and we said, 'Let's do CRY FOR ME.' The same thing happened when Bill and Dave played with us at the Blue Café in June. A lot of songs, Dave kind of noodled on the guitar to send the message to Phil. No words spoken. Phil would either accept or decline." The last time the Blasters played that song was when Dave was still in the Blasters. The song was recorded in the Non-Fiction album sessions and appeared on the Blasters collection CD as a bonus track. Next, Dave played a little of ROCK BOPPIN' BABY, but it didn't catch on so they started the Joe Turner medley song JUMP CHILDREN/ MY BABY'S A JOCKEY. The band went off stage and the crowd noise was so loud the band came back for a second encore and played a real rarity - Carl Perkins MATCHBOX. ~~ *AM*

KATY MOFFATT: GUILTY BY ASSOCIATION

by Tom Wilk

Katy Moffatt and Dave Alvin have been musical collaborators for more than a decade, both in the studio and onstage. She has sung on four of his albums; he has sang and played guitar on two of hers and produced Loose Diamond (Hightone 1999). They also appeared together on Tom Russell's 1997 CD, The Long Way Around, (HighTone 1997) while Dave played guitar on her version of Merle Haggard's I CAN'T BE MYSELF on the Tulare Dust (Hightone) tribute CD.

A native of Texas, Katy got her first break in show business while attending college in New Mexico. Actor/director Tom Laughlin cast her in Billy Jack, the 1971 cult film. She sang in the movie and had a song on the film's soundtrack



album called THE RING SONG which she also wrote).

She made her solo debut with Katy, (Columbia) in 1976. Since then, she has released more than a dozen albums, both solo and with other artists, including her brother, Hugh, a successful Nashville songwriter. She is an accomplished songwriter herself but is also a singer equally at home performing the songs of Cole Porter and blues man Jimmy Reed.

Her latest CD is Cowboy Girl

(Shanachie), an album of traditional and contemporary Western songs that includes a five-minute a cappella version of TEXAS RANGERS, the song that appeared on Dave Alvin's Public Domain, a year earlier. It's a performance that shows Katy's vocal range is undiminished at age 50.

"That's the traditional way it's done," she said of her decision to do the song without instruments. "It's a traditional Texas song. Ian and Sylvia's version seems to be the template." What about Dave and Katy doing the same song a year apart? "It was a total coincidence," she said.

Katy first teamed up with Dave in 1986 when she began working with former Blaster and current Los Lobos sax player Steve Berlin. "That was when Steve, Mark (Linett) and I started pre-production on Child Bride. Steve was a fearless producer in getting the sound he wanted."

At the same time, Berlin was producing Dave's first solo album (Romeo's Escape.) "Dave and I met in the studio and I liked him immediately," Katy recalled. "I was living in L.A. and had never seen the Blasters. I had heard some of the Blasters recordings, but the lyrical content was not clear to me."

On Romeo's Escape, (Epic 1987) she sang on JUBILEE TRAIN and BORDER RADIO, transforming the latter from a Chuck Berry rocker in the Blasters version to a country ballad in the vein of George Jones and Tammy Wynette. "Border Radio is a well-written song. I love doing it with Dave," she said. "I was sitting in a lot with Dave and

the All Nighters and hearing all of these great songs. I was so moved by his compassion for women and a woman's plight. In all of his songs, there's a real respect for women."

Child Bride (Rounder) was not released until 1990 and it found Dave and the All Nighters backing her up on a version of Hank Williams' SETTIN'THE WOODS ON FIRE, with Dave and Katy singing a duet. It's a rollicking version of a classic tune that ends Child Bride on

a high note and demonstrates how their voices serve as a counterpoint to each other. The version of Child Bride released in the United Kingdom had a Dave Alvin song not on the U.S. album. LOOK OUT (IT MUST BE LOVE) featured some different lyrics from the Blasters version on Non Fiction (Slash 1883). "It was Steve and Mark's decision (not to release it in the U.S.)," she said. "They felt it was flawed; there were a few tempo problems." In 1996, Dave and Katy would perform the song together on the live Interstate City CD (Hightone 1996).

They continued to work together in the 1990's. Katy did backing vocals on RICH MAN'S TOWN, on BLUE BLVD, and vocals on BETWEEN THE CRACKS and THE DEVIL'S WIND on MUSEUM OF HEART. Her singing adds an air of mystery to the film noir-like Devil's Wind.

The two also performed together in the Pleasure Barons, a traveling road show that included Mojo Nixon and Country Dick Montana. The Pleasure Barons released a HighTone CD in 1993 called LIVE IN LAS VEGAS. "It was a grueling tour," she recalled. "We were having so much fun, everyone almost died."

Katy and Dave would team up for Loose Diamond. Recalled Katy: "We wanted to collaborate on an album for years literally. We wrote a song together (for Loose Diamond) but ended up not using it," she said, but the title escaped her at that moment. Loose Diamond focuses on her strengths as an interpreter of country-flavored material, including a stripped-down version of Dave's SO LONG BABY GOOD-BYE inspired by a slow reading of the song by Last Train Home on the Blastered tribute CD. "That was a song I wanted to record on Child Bride, she said. A highlight of Loose Diamond is Katy and Dave's duet on THE CUCKOO, a traditional song that was a forerunner idea to the Public Domain CD.

Future collaborations between the two seem likely. "I've sung with a lot of different people. It's always interesting to sing with Dave. He's one of my favorites." ~~*AM*

The Blasters 1982 Soundstage pbs tv concert special from Chicago

In 1982 The Blasters were touring the country promoting their successful debut album on Slash Records. A one-hour concert special aired on PBS stations around the country on September 23, 1982, featuring the Blasters. The weekly concert series show was called Soundstage.

Dave Alvin remembers what he was told prior to the taping of the show at Stages Music Hall in Chicago, "Soundstage was like the Chicago version of Austin City Limits. They said it would be an hour-long show filmed over two nights in Chicago. We could pick two guests and they would get 'em. We talked about Big Joe Turner but chose Willie Dixon and Carl Perkins. We thought that was the two sides of the Blasters."

The Blasters were on tour at the time and flew in after playing a sold-out show at New York's The Ritz and a show in Boston. The date was February 24, 1982, and the band brought its full arsenal of players: Dave and Phil, John Bazz, Bill Bateman, Gene Taylor, Lee Allen, and Steve Berlin.

Dave: "The first afternoon we rehearsed with Willie and the second day with Carl. In rehearsal with Willie Dixon we did I'M READY and BUILT FOR COMFORT and a new song of Willie's called IF YOU DON'T

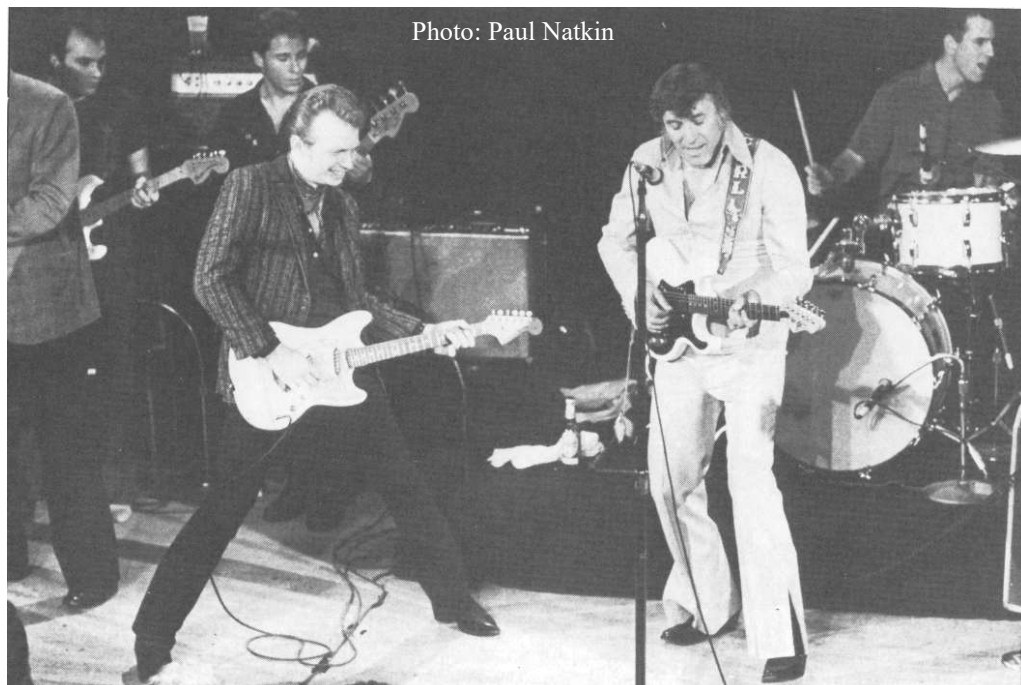


Photo: Paul Natkin

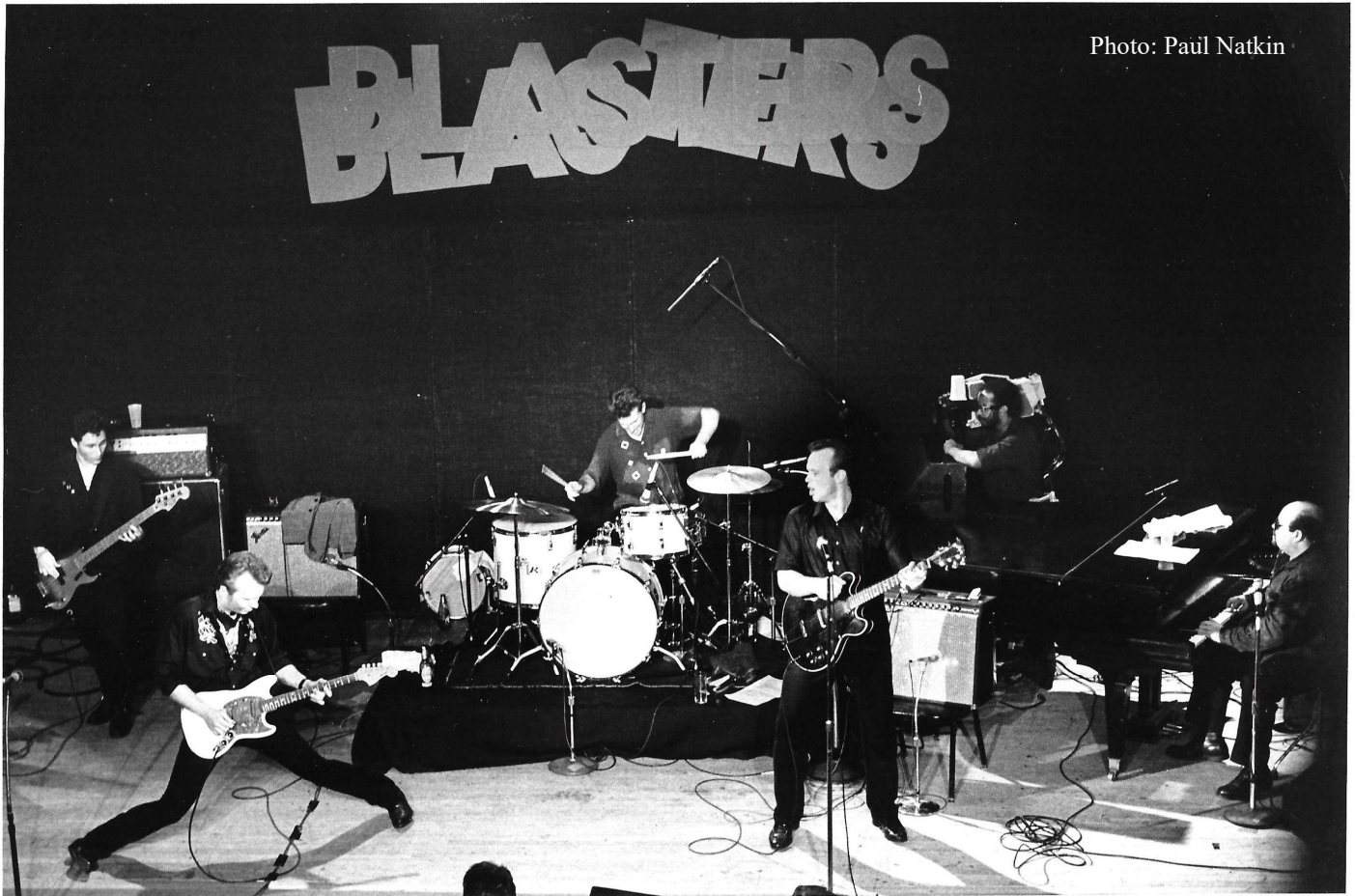
Dave Alvin and Carl Perkins trade guitar licks

HAVE PEACE. Willie brought along his bass player, who was his son, and he wanted him to play on the PEACE song." Freddie Dixon played on all the songs the Blasters backed Willie on.

There was some difference in opinion between Willie and the Blasters on how the songs should be presented. Dave: "We wanted to do the songs like the Muddy Wa-



Lee Allen, Carl Perkins, Dave Alvin, and Phil Alvin



ters band and Willie wanted them done like he did them. We sort of got our way. The PEACE song was really cool because it was so different, but it didn't make it into the show." Producer Ken Ehrlich edited the two nights into a one-hour show.

The broadcast starts off with fans' comments about the Blasters music, and then goes into a bunch of great old Blasters songs like CRAZY BABY, THIS IS IT, and BORDER RADIO. The Blasters' Lee Allen was a third legend appearing on the show and he was announced by Phil accordingly, "I'd like to introduce the king of rock n roll saxophone. One of the greatest rock & roll saxophone players - bar none. (He played on) all of the Little Richard stuff, and all the Fats Domino stuff -- Chicago, New Orleans - it doesn't matter: LEE ALLEN." They played I'M SHAKIN' and later did a scorching version of Lee Allen's signature Blasters song - SO

LONG BABY GOODBYE.

Midway through the show, Carl Perkins band is brought to the stage as the Blasters sit it out. After Carl's three songs, the Blasters return for a few more of their own. Then Phil announces Willie Dixon to the stage: "One of the greatest songwriters in American music and one of the greatest musicians in American music - Willie Dixon." As Willie comes on stage, John Bazz hands his bass to another bass player. John: "Willie brought his son along and wanted him to play bass." Phil Alvin put down his guitar and did some great Little Walter style harp playing just like the Muddy Waters bands of years ago.

Finishing the show, Carl Perkins and his band were brought back out to the stage. Both full bands played an extended version of Carl's BOPPIN' THE BLUES featuring solos by all the players. Dave remembers, "We did 8 or 9 songs but only BOPPIN' THE BLUES

made the show. We did HONEY DON'T, MATCHBOX, GONE GONE, GONE and a few of Carl's biggest hits. When we got to the end and went off the stage, the audience wanted an encore. We were standing in the wing and Carl said, 'Hell, let's do WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN GOIIN ON.' The producer, Ken Ehrlich chose all the songs. I was disappointed that only one song with Carl Perkins was used."

After the bands went off, Carl made a heartfelt statement to the audience, "I've been in the business now for a little over 30 years and I don't know of a greater night I've had in my life really and truly that I've spent tonight on this stage."

The morning of the second day, the Blasters rehearsed with Carl Perkins. Dave remembers making an impression on Carl. Dave: "We did HONEY DON'T and over the years Carl had changed his solos. When it was my turn to take a solo I did his old solo note for note and he lit up when I did that. I thought that was pretty cool." They also filmed a sit-down interview between Carl, Lee, Phil and Dave that morning. Dave: "We filmed the interview the morning of the rehearsal. If you look at me, I hardly open my eyes when I'm talking. It was early in the day (laughs). I remember Lee and Carl talking about touring in those days; that was fascinating."



Photo: Linda Matlow

John Bazz remembers some interesting discussion off camera: "Phil told Carl Perkins that he couldn't have written MATCHBOX because too many of those words are in other blues tunes. Carl said he didn't write MATCHBOX; it was a song that the black field workers pickers would sing on the plantation. His dad was the sharecropper. He just took it as a teenager and adapted it using some of their words and some of his words into a song." Dave also adds, "I'm sure Phil did it tactfully. A lot of the Sun Records guys in the Memphis area listened to WDIA and that station was the first to exclusively play black music. Elvis, for instance, learned a lot of black music by listening to that station. So they could have heard Blind Lemon Jefferson on there." Blind Lemon Jefferson made the song a hit in the 1930's. Dave continues, "The way I look at the rockabilly guys was that they didn't have record collections. It was more of an environmental thing. They might just hear part of the song and then try by memory to play it. MATCHBOX was recorded by a lot of artists including western swing acts. Bob Wills changed the lyrics on his. That opening line in MATCHBOX was in a lot of songs. I think Carl said his dad suggested he do the song."

In the interview Carl praised the Blasters. Carl: "It's so great to be around you guys. Somebody sent me a Blasters album, I put it on and I said, Wait a minute here is something that was cut at Sun records and it didn't get released! It really sounds like the Sun records feel. It's cut better -- You all play better." Dave cuts in and says, "Oh come on. Are you gonna' tell me I play better than Roland Janes?" As everybody laughs, Carl comes back, "Let me put it this way. I haven't heard you play yet with a fifth of whiskey sitting on the floor. That's the way we cut them records back at Sun. (laughs)." ~~*AM*

DAVE PLAYS IN TOM WAITS BAND - OCTOBER 2001

Dave Alvin: “American Cinema tech is doing a PBS show that will feature a tribute to Nicholas Cage. Tom Waits has known Nicholas since he was a kid, so he was asked to do a couple songs. Tom’s manager called me up and said, ‘Tom wants you to play guitar for him.’ I said, ‘Yeah’! We did a day of rehearsal, then the next day we filmed it at the Beverly Hills Hilton Hotel at a big star studded event. Larry Taylor played bass and Steve Hodges on drums. We did one song off The Bone Machine album called GOIN OUT WEST. It was rearranged as a slow blues. And another was a ballad called TIME. Tom was great, a real sweetheart. He gets real nervous before going on stage - more than me.” ~~*AM*

American Music links on the Internet

First, you have to check out John Bazz’s web site, which features BlastoTV. You can watch twenty minutes of video footage from the Blaster “Original Four” reunion from Long Beach in June of 2001. Go to <http://homepage.mac.com/lazyboyrocker>. You’ll also see pages for all the bands that John Bazz plays in, as well as a great photo page of rare new and old photos of the Blasters, Blue Shadows, and Mike Eldred Trio.

Not to be missed is Scot Kleinman’s official Blasters and Dave Alvin Homepages. Go to <http://bullwinkle.as.utexas.edu/scot/blasters.html> for a whole load of features. A fave page of mine on that site is Dave Alvin’s personal photo gallery where you see rare pix. Dave narrates who, why, and where.

For everything concerning the Mike Eldred Trio go to www.MikeEldredTrio.com. For James Intveld go to www.JamesIntveld.com. For Chris Gaffney check www.ColdHardFacts.com. For the Skeletons and everything musical that happens in Springfield, MO, go to www.skeletons.org. ~~*AM*

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Monsters of Folk tour report, Q & A's from Phil and Dave

#20 Ex-Blasters guitarists James Intveld and Smokey Hormel (part 1) are interviewed. Also Bazz rates the Blaster guitarists.

#21 Dave/Dylan tour, BJD Tour, and Blasters tribute CD

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