

# American Music

## The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

**MAY 2000**

**DAVE ALVIN TOUR DATES**

with The Guilty Men

6/23 Seattle WA at Experience Hendrix

6/25 Portland OR at Zoo

7/22 Chicago IL at Sheffield Garden

Acoustic tour

w/ Rick Shea & Brantley Kearns

10/12 Minneapolis MN at Cedar Cntr

10/14 Chicago IL at Old Town School

10/18 Pittsburgh PA at Rosebud

10/20 Alexandria VA at Birchmere

10/22 Phil Pa at Tin Angel

**THE KNITTERS**

7/1 Irvine CA at Hootenany

**BLASTERS TOUR DATES**

6/3 Long Beach Ca at Blue Cafe

7/1 Irvine CA at Hootenany

## Dave Alvin's PUBLIC DOMAIN album recorded.

**Latest News:** Dave Alvin has recorded an album of traditional folk and blues songs. The album is due for release in August. -- The Blasters have postponed their Scandinavian tour due to an illness in the family. The Blasters played a gig at the Blue Café in Long Beach at the end of April. Some who saw the show said the band, who hadn't played together for months, were on the top of their game. -- Keith Wyatt has been playing blues every Tuesday at a well known L.A. club called the Baked Potato. Keith: "Jerry Angel

and I plus a bass player have done a couple of Wednesdays at a restaurant/bar/hangout in Hollywood called Lola's playing instrumentals; everything from jazz to spy to surf to blues." John Bazz has been playing with Top Jimmy and other pick-up gigs. -- Dave Alvin will be producing Red Meat's next album in July. -- Jack's Sugar Shack in Hollywood closed down in April, and Dave played a final show there 4/15 with the Guilty Men trying out songs recorded for the Public Domain album. -- Dave Alvin just taped segments as a guest DJ for the House of Blues digital radio station. Dave: "I play some of my favorite blues records and talk about each artist." The hour long show will air in June. Check [www.HOB.com](http://www.HOB.com) for details. -- Dave Alvin and the Guilty men have contributed a song to the upcoming Mickey Newberry Tribute album. Newberry is a country songwriter known for writing Elvis's AMERICAN TRILOGY as well as many country hits. Dave: "I cut a song called MOBILE BLUES. Everybody does a solo, but Rick's is incredible!" It will be released in Germany this summer on Glitterhouse records. A U.S. release is planned later. -- Keith Wyatt has been writing monthly profiles for Guitar World magazine on influential blues guitarists. Most recent has been Freddie King, Lightnin' Hopkins, Gatemouth Brown, and Les Paul. -- Christy McWilson's CD produced by Dave Alvin, will be out in June on HighTone records. Dave: "It's called The Lucky One. I think it's one of the best things I've produced, and I even get in a couple of good guitar solos, including my first ever wah-wah guitar solo." -- In June, Candye Kane's new Rounder record is due out. Dave played guitar on a rockabilly song and a blues. Dave: "I did my best Johnny

***This Issue: Dave on his new Public Domain CD. James Intveld on his new record, and highlights of South By South West 2000 in Austin, Texas.***

Guitar Watson.” – Time Bomb records will release a live Hootenany CD which will include a live version of Dave’s OUT IN CALIFORNIA from last years’ Hootenany set. – **Rick Shea** released his second full-length CD called Shaky Ground on Wagon Wheel records. The CD includes all of Rick’s 1991 (and out-of-print) album Outside of Nashville, along with five recently recorded tracks. The CD is a limited release, and is available by mail-order by sending \$16 post paid to Rick Shea, PO Box 294, Covina, CA 91723 – Rick Shea reports: “I’m working on an album of new songs now with Cody Bryant’s label, Wagon Wheel. Hopefully, it will be out soon. All new songs. Brantley will be singing and playing and Dave will do a guest appearance.” -- Chris Gaffney’s Live And Then Some 2-CD set is available directly from Tres Pescadores records by sending \$20 postpaid to: Tres Pescadores Records PO Box 4 Anaheim CA 92815-0004 For more info on the web -- <http://www.primenet.com/~thewett> -- James Intveld has recorded a radio commercial for Corona Beer, in which he speaks and sings his song LOVE CALLS. – Bobby Lloyd Hicks has been playing with a new band called the Kelley Hunt band. Bobby Lloyd reports, “Kelley is a "Chick"singer/songwriter/pianist doing original r&b/blues stuff. The guitarist, Miles Joseph, from Studio City, has played with Aretha, Dylan and others. We just did a live album last weekend, taping at the Grand Emporium in Kansas City and Liberty Hall in Lawrence, Kansas. It's a rockin little record! Should be out in June...about the time I join back up with the Steve Forbert tour.” -**Am**

## DAVE ALVIN reports on his new CD: PUBLIC DOMAIN -SONGS FROM THE WILD LAND

Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men have recorded a new album in the month of April. Dave labeled it a traditional/acoustic/folk album. All the songs are either blues, folk, or country songs that were previously recorded by other artists. Most are very obscure. All the songs are in the PUBLIC DOMAIN, meaning no one can claim publishing ownership on them. Dave, “I’ve never done an album without a Dave Alvin song on it. It’s strange. I produced it unfortunately. I don’t like to produce myself, but we had a great engineer - Mark Linett. We recorded everything in seven days in April and mixed in five days.”

Dave tells about the recording musicians: “Bobby Lloyd plays drums and sings harmony vocals. Joe Terry on acoustic piano, organ, harmonium, and accordion. Joe is such an amazing keyboard player. He was so great in the studio. I’ve never recorded with Joe before in all the years I have known him. He just rose to the occasion and came up with great parts. He really knows how to be a supportive player. Rick Shea played acoustic guitar, electric, mandolin, and pedal steel on one song (DARK EYES).

Gregory Boaz played bass on six songs. Electric and acoustic. David Jackson played bass and did all the other standup bass stuff. He’s a player who actually played in the folk revival in the late 50’s early 60’s. He was the only guy who knew just about every song we were recording. Brantley Kearns plays fiddle on 6 or 7 songs. His solos and playing were amazing. Rick said that we really captured Brantley on this record. Juke Logan plays harmonica on about 6 songs. Greg Leisz played slide acoustic on a few, dobro on one, and mandolin on one. I do all the finger-picking guitars, electric guitars and the vocals. So, basically it’s a Guilty Men record. We’re calling the other guys ‘Guilt By Association’.”

# Dave Alvin Song by Song

**SHENENDOAH** --Shenandoah is a song I first heard as a kid but where/who/etc, I don't remember. It's one of those old folk songs that you probably knew before you were born. The arrangement is pretty straight R+B, sort of Otis Redding, sort of Jerry Butler with a little electric blues guitar thrown in.

**MAGGIE CAMPBELL** – An old Tommy Johnson delta-blues song. It features my first bottle neck guitar solo. I've always banged on it around the house, but when you know people like Kelly Joe Phelps and Greg Leisz, you just don't want to ever say you played slide guitar in any way (laughs).

**SHORT LIFE OF TROUBLE** – I had that by a couple of different people. Buell Kayzee and also by Grayson and Whitter. I used most of Grayson and Whitter's lyrics. There's a lot a lot of cool acoustic playing on that.

**WHAT DID THE DEEP SEA SAY** – I heard that on an old Woody Guthrie/Cisco Houston record. The song predates them, though, by several decades. We do it as a bluegrass song.

**ENGINE 143** - That's a duet between me and Brantley Kearns. We sing in harmony. I've never done that on record before. Brantley knew the Flatt and Scruggs version, and I knew the Carter Family version, but the song goes back to the 1890's. It's a fictionalized account of a real train wreck.

**DELIA** – I learned that from Blind Willie McTell's Library of Congress sessions. There are a few DELIA songs. I've never heard the Cash version, so I don't think it's the same song. My version is real different than the Bob Dylan version. It's based on Blind Willie's with an added guitar figure from Frank Stokes, just to give it more of a hook.

**DARK EYES** – I have it on an old 78 from the late twenties by the Miller family. They could have been hillbillies, or a vaudeville group -- I don't know. I arranged it to be a Cajun honky tonk thing.

**WALK RIGHT IN** – An old Gus Cannon and his Jug Stompers song. It was a hit in the sixties for a phony folk group called The Roof Top Singers. We did the Saturday-Night-whore-house version. It's in stripper tempo. Bobby Lloyd and I duet on that. It's pretty nasty (laughs).

## The Guilty Men

**Rick Shea:** “Yeah! Dave's album came out great. Great songs, performances, and the band plays great. I'm real proud to be part of it. I'm anxious to see it finished.”

**Joe Terry** “Makin' Dave's record was a blast - should be a good one. I even got to play some accordion on it. and it wasn't too embarrassing either.”

**Bobby Lloyd Hicks** “Except for two or three songs that we'd been doing live, Joe and I walked into this one totally unaware of what Dave had in mind for his “folk” album. Rick Shea had told me that the songs were all really old - old songs with, "lots of dying in 'em." Other than that, I had no clue. I expected to be doing a lot of shakers and tambourine only, but it turned out that most of the songs feature the entire band. There's just more emphasis towards acoustic sounds. Translated: It's just another great Dave Alvin record, for the fabulous HighTone label. Also, with Joe Terry added to the mix, let's just say that between he, Dave Jackson, and Brantley Kearns, the humor was fairly nonstop.

**THE MURDER OF THE LAWSON FAMILY** -- A real up-tempo ditty on a record I've had since I was thirteen years old, by a group called The Carolina Buddies. It's pretty obscure. But It kinda sounds like a Dave Alvin song. I got that record and EAST VIRGINIA BLUES around the same time in my formative youth. So, maybe they subconsciously affected how I write songs.

**DON'T LET YOUR DEAL GO DOWN** -- It was recorded as a mountain music song in the twenties and thirties. But it's known from various bluegrass bands. I took it in the entirely opposite direction and it's done like a Chicago blues number. This is the closest I've gotten to sounding like the Muddy Waters band since HIGHWAY 61 on the first Blasters record. So, I'm real proud of this one. It's been drastically rearranged. Brantley thought he would be playing on it because he knew the song so well. He didn't realize that we were gonna make it sound like a 1953 Chess record.

**RAILROAD BILL** -- I got that off a reissue record called Let's Go Riding. It had all southern black blues and ballads. The bulk of my version comes from Bill Bennett on that record. On this version we added chords in the instrumental section from an Elizabeth Cotton song called FREIGHT TRAIN. So, it gives the instrumental sections some kick. *(ed.- Different version than on the Monsters of Folk promo CD.)*

**TEXAS RANGERS** -- From an old 78 by the Cartwright Brothers in the twenties. That's the mood piece of the record. This is another that Dave Alvin could have written. It's like ANDERSONVILLE.

**MAMA AIN'T LONG FOR THE DAY** -- One of my favorite Blind Willie McTell songs.

**EAST VIRGINIA BLUES** -- I cut that with Ramblin' Jack last year on his album. We did that one very Ramblin-Jack-ish. This one is pure rockabilly based on the Ray Harris song Green back Dollar, which was (laughs) based on the folk song EAST VIRGINIA BLUES. So this is the closest I've come to playing raw rockabilly on a record since I don't know when.

**SIGN OF JUDGEMENT** -- It might be an old standard in the spiritual music repertoire. I heard it from Kid Prince Moore, a solo guitar player, who made two 78's in the 20's-- a blues and a spiritual.

**SATURDAY NIGHT RUB / HOKUM STOMP** *Hidden Track* -- If you stick around for twenty seconds, there's a mystery track guitar instrumental. Rick and I do a medley of Big Bill Broonzy. A thing called SATURDAY NIGHT RUB and something Big Bill did with Georgia Tom Dorsey called HOKUM STOMP. That was hard (laughs). ~~~~Am~~

**Dave Alvin report: "Countdown to the Black Jack David Follow-up Album"**

Dave: **"The Public Domain"** record is turning out to be better than I expected; Everything from Chicago blues, to mountain ballads, to rockabilly, to country blues, to cowboy ballads, to R&B ballads, to Cajun, and a little honky tonk. With the exception of David Jackson playing bass on some stuff, and Greg Leisz and Juke Logan sitting in, the CD features ALL the Guilty Men! Boy, what a band! Rick and I are sharing the guitar (both electric and acoustic) duties. And some of this stuff ROCKS! Go figure. I go in to make a folk CD and it winds up rocking. So, The Guilty Men finally make a CD!"

# James Intveld

## Somewhere Down The Road

*James Intveld--singer, songwriter, player of all instruments and former Blasters guitar player—has a new solo album out called Somewhere Down The Road on his own record company called Molenaart. James released his first solo album in 1995 called Introducing... (See American Music # 9 for song-by-song coverage of that.) In this interview conducted in May 2000, James talks about how his musical growth has been fueled by songwriting collaborator John Coinman and lead guitarist and producer Mike Turner. These two men have formed individual partnerships with James that have really shined through on this album. James himself will now take us song-by-song through the songwriting and recording.*



**By Billy Davis**

Last year, I started to collect all my tunes that were written or half-written. We set a date and figured we had three weeks to make a record. They put me on a time limit, which is good for me. We cut 16 songs and used 12. We formed our own record label called MOLENAART RECORDS. I was looking for a name that was original. I was talking to my folks, and we came up with the wind mill keeper. That's a Molenaar in Dutch.

The first album for Bear Family was geared towards Europe, and I think in my subconscious, I used my material that I thought would be really good for that market. For this one, I felt I had a lot more to say than I did then. The first record had a lot of sad songs on it. This is more evenly distributed as far as the feelings. I got Michael Turner to co-produce. He's coming from a different place, so that was a good influence for me. I had someone to bounce ideas off of. I thought Somewhere Down The Road was a great title, because it had a theme and it was going somewhere. That's kind of like where I'm in my life now. I'm thinking pretty positive about my future. I feel good about everything. I bought a house, and I've been working on my self in a lot of ways. For the future, we are looking to hook up with a label that wants to promote the record. If it doesn't happen, we'll keep it on our own label and keep playing. We want to hit the road and get the most exposure to the record.

**SOMEWHERE DOWN THE ROAD** – I haven't done that song in years. I wrote that many

years ago, when it represented 'hope for me in the future.' I did it for the Town South Of Bakersfield compilation (Restless Records), with Pete Anderson producing it. When I heard it on record, I wasn't happy with it. For this new record, I planned a whole new arrangement with twin fiddles on it. It was more a zydeco thing. I had the parts all figured for Scott Joss; he plays fiddle with Dwight. But he got sick and couldn't make it. I didn't know what to do because I really wanted him. Somewhere on this record I wanted to do something with a phaser guitar sound like Waylon Jennings uses. Dale Watson was in town and played with us at a gig, he had a phaser on his guitar and I really liked the way it sounded. So we figured we would try it on that song. Mike came up with the guitar part, and we thought it was really happening. I really love this version of it. It's got a real cool funky edge to it. Marty Rifkin played dobro on this, too.

Photo: Lisa Gilman



Michael Turner and James Intveld at Cheapo Records.

**STRINGIN ME ON** – I wrote that a long time ago. It's written about being in a relationship when someone is playing around with you and not making any kind of real commitment - and that can drive you nuts! It was a playful attitude about how that comes along - but it's such a truthful thing that happens all the time. I recorded it for the first record, but I wasn't happy with the version. When Mike Turner and I hooked up, we did a demo of it and Mike's guitar playing just gave it a whole new flavor. We recorded the song just like the demo, with Mike on harmony vocals.

**ALL THE WAY FROM MEMPHIS** – (Co-writer) John Coinman and I were sitting in my back yard and got on a kick of wanting to write a song about Memphis. We wanted it to be a love song without necessarily talking about the people who are from Memphis like Elvis. We just jumped on it and about an hour later, we had the song. I wanted the song to represent the whole influence of Memphis music, so I said, 'We have to get some gospel singers on there and a B-3 organ.' We wanted to take it to the church, so to speak. So, we got these girls from South Central (L.A.); they came down to sing on it and they really got into it, and it was incredible. Mike Thompson played this swampy and cool B-3 organ.

**LOVE CALLS** – Me and John Coinman were trying to write songs for a Kevin Costner movie called Message in a Bottle. We were playing around with the two-chord riff and a lyric following the movie plot. Originally we were calling it LOVE TALKS. I played some



percussion and bass. Shawn played drums. While I had the girls there for the other song, I figured they could sing on this. That made the song really happenin', too. I played B-3 organ because we were doing overdubs and I would hear the parts in my head, so it was easier to just go and play the part..

**ONE SWEET LETTER** – That's a Jimmy Liggins song. I've been playing that about two years, and I always thought it was great tune. It has a good hook to it. I played stand up bass on it. Mike played a Gibson L-5 hollow body guitar for that traditional sound. It was the perfect flavoring on the song.

**LIVING WITHOUT YOU** – I am more of a ballad writer, and this one is closer to me. I was probably going through some relationship at the time, and writing something like that must

have come real easy at the time for me. This is one of those songs that I wanted to sound like an early sixties country song, like Willie Nelson with the string arrangements. I got Richard Green on piano, who plays with us in the swing band, to play a Floyd Cramer style. We didn't want to make it too heavy like an orchestra, so it just has overdubbed violins by Annabelle Cabrera.



**STOP THE WORLD** –

When I was playing bass in the house band at The Barn Dance, Bonnie Owens came up and sang that song. I thought it was such a great song. I think Patsy Cline did it, and then I heard Waylon Jennings do it, too. At one point, I was in Nashville doing a lot of those clubs on Broadway. I was listening to that song in the car. I pulled it out one night at a gig. It's a song that hasn't been over-done. I could make five albums of old country songs that I love. That wouldn't be a problem for me. But, I DO focus on doing my own stuff instead. Marty Rifkin played pedal steel. He started with us at Ronnie Mack's Barn Dance, and he played with Rosie Flores years ago.

**MODERN DON JUAN.** - That's a song I heard years ago that Buddy Holly had cut. I had it on one of those box sets, and once in awhile I would sing it. One night, at the Dixie Belle in Downey, I pulled that out. Mike (Turner) really liked it! He said, "We should do a version of that for the record!!" We cut a version of that in the first three days of tracking. When I went to sing it, it sounded too slow. So, I just layed down a drum thing, and basically cut the track right there. The engineer, Mike Mirikitani, played electric bass. Then, I put some upright bass on it. We got it at the tempo we wanted.

**WHAT ABOUT YOU** – I went out to Tucson to visit John Coinman with my girlfriend. We were fighting about stuff on the way there. I woke up the next morning and went over John's house. I just thought, 'life is too short to be fighting over things that aren't important.' We were going to work on a few other songs, but I said, "John. We need to write this other song that I feel I HAVE to write right now!" I threw some ideas out, and started playing. In two hours we had a song. I wanted it to be a straight ahead groove. Mike and I, cut a demo of it, and then started doing it live. We developed an arrangement of it, so it was easy to record. I had Marty play pedal steel on it.

**IF I SHOULD LOSE YOU** – Me and John started that song years ago, when he was living in L.A. We had a whole other idea. It was re-written three different times. It kept changing formats. But one night, when I came home late, like three in the morning, I sat down and wrote about five verses. I was basically writing, what I would want from some one in a relationship. It was such a personal song for me.

**SINNER'S PRAYER** – That was written acapella. Originally, there was a possibility that we were gonna get Johnny Cash to sing on a track on this record. Eddie Morris (James' manager), called the Cash people, and they said, "It would be cool." In fact, we talked to his son, and he said he would talk to his father about it. John Carter said, "I think it would be great because we really like Jimmy." I had done a bunch of different gigs opening for Johnny Cash. In fact, they asked me to open solo acoustic for June Carter, when she did her show at the Troubadour (*ed. – June put out a fine solo album in 1999 called Press On (Risk records).* She played only two cities; L.A. at the Troubadour and New York's Bottom Line.) and I knew their family. I sent the song to Johnny in Jamaica (his second home), and they told us they would play it for him. Later, we got a call from the manager, who said John was sick, and had an obligation he was yet to fulfill to record 13 songs for American records. So, he hadn't even done his own album yet. So we had to get the record out and went with our own version. So, one night I came up with this song. I have a group of friends that we call 'The Sinners.' It's a group of all my buddies over the years. It's kind of a club. The song was basically about my friends, and how I view life sometimes. You know, we're all here and we're all getting older. Some things we're sorry for, and you now start

### **James on the James Intveld Band**

**Mike Turner (guitar)**- Eddie Perez was playing guitar with me, and started getting other gigs out of town. Mark Goldberg, who was playing bass with us at the time, recommended Mike. I went over his house, with my CD and he liked it. So, he did some gigs filling in for Eddie Perez. Eddie got so busy I had to look for a replacement. Mike said wanted to do it. He was able to get out of some of his commitments so he could play with us. I thought that was great. He is such a talented person, musically and spiritually. He helped me grow as a musician. He's a producer and an accomplished musician. We have fun working together..

**Bruce Witkin (bass)** - I met him years ago when I was cutting a track for Adam Ant. He had me playing some slide acoustic delta blues guitar for backing tracks in a play Adam was doing. I met Bruce, because he owned the studio. We started playing gigs together and became friends.

**Shawn Nourse (drums)** – We were looking for a drummer, so our bass player Mark Goldberg hooked us up. We jammed in my garage and we just clicked.



thinking about these things. I thought about Johnny Cash, and then I thought about a guy on death row, who had a private talk with God. I saw this guy sitting in a jail cell, strumming a mandolin, or singing it accapella. I used a mandolin, so it would be very sparse. That's how I wrote KERMIT VALE (from Introducing James Intveld on Bear Family records). The album was done when I wrote the song SINNERS PRAYER.

The good thing is that the song got written, and I'm happy about that. It reminded me of the Carter family. It was the first real spiritual song I had ever written, and I kind of needed to write one.

**REMEMBER ME** - John and I wrote that for the Kevin Costner movie. This is about; that desperate feeling when you lose somebody. Whether they die, or they just leave your life, you love them so much, you still want to have a connection to them. So, you're reaching out, and putting a message to them in the universe, hoping it reaches them. It's a prayer, a dream, and a wish. John Coinman had a version of this on his own album. He had taken it in another direction. Sometimes, we write a song together and then we each take it, and make it more personal.

**IF TEARS COULD TALK (unreleased song)** – When we sequenced the album we couldn't find a spot for it. We used strings on that, but were saving that for the next record. I think that was kind of written on mandolin. When John and I would get together to write, I would play mandolin and he would play acoustic guitar. It would give a different flavor to stuff. Using a different instrument makes you think and write differently. *(ed. – James plays this song often in his acoustic live performances.)*

*Somewhere Down The Road is available at James' website. [WWW.JAMESINTVELD.COM](http://WWW.JAMESINTVELD.COM) or it can be mail-ordered from Hepcat records at 1-800-404-4117. ~~*AM**

## HILLBILLY DOWN: To Roy Nichols with Love, Volume 2

The new Cowgirl Records release from Kathy Robertson with Merle Haggard, Brantley Kearns, Rick Shea, James Intveld, Cody Bryant, Tony Gilkyson, Paul Marshall, and Katy Moffatt.

To order please send \$15 US plus \$3 S&H to:  
Cowgirl Records, 1977 Yale St., Ontario CA 91764-2344

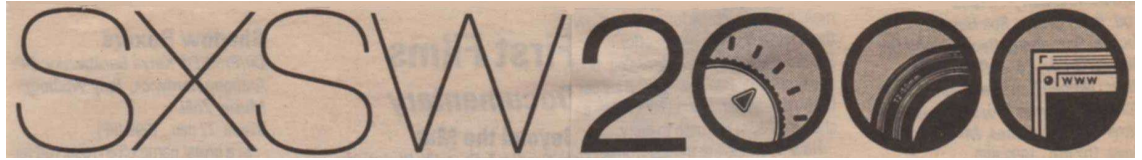


# SOUTH BY SOUTH WEST MUSICAL FESTIVAL

Austin Texas — March 2000

by Billy Davis

*SXSW 2000 Music conference - What a place to go if you like all*



*the bands covered in this newsletter! The Blasters were absent but the opportunity was there to see Dave Alvin 3 times, James Intveld 6 times, and Chris Gaffney 3 times, all in less than a week. Dave Alvin points out: "It's a gathering of the tribes." All our favorite bands seem to converge on Austin. There was a mood of tribute in everybody's performances for Texas legend Doug Sahm who died in 1999. He was an Austin institution.*

**SXSW (the day before) Tuesday, March 14, 2000** -- James Intveld, former Blasters guitarist, played the Continental Club, for a record release party. In a special promotion, each paid admission receives a free Somewhere Down The Road CD. What a deal! This is James's first new album in five years and James later joked to me, "I'm as bad as Phil Alvin about putting out albums --well not that bad (laughs)." James started off his set with a the title track from his new CD, a great song that James first recorded over ten years ago on the Town South of Bakersfield compilation (Restless Records). James announced a dedication for the song LIVING WITHOUT YOU. "I'd like to send this out to these guys in front. They're the Texas Renegades from Holland. They don't even have a gig out her; they just came to hang out. I heard their tape. They're really good." James later told the story of meeting them in the parking lot of the Motel 6. That's the cool thing about SXSW, bands come to also check out the music. Most of the musicians who do play wind up hanging out at other gigs with the fans.

James put on a great show. He played 10 of the 12 songs on his new CD. Hearing those new songs live was great and the band sounded perfect. From the first CD they did CRYIN' OVER YOU, BLUE BLUE DAY, and PERFECT WORLD. Extra songs included the cover of the Dave Dudley song SIX DAYS ON THE ROAD and Big Joe Turner's BOOGIE WOOGIE COUNTRY GIRL. Fantastic set. It wasn't even an official SXSW show, and already I saw one of the best shows of the year. James has a hot band: Michael Turner who plays a pink telecaster and has a great guitar sound. On bass is Bruce Witkin, and on drums Shaun Norse.

**SXSW Day Two Thursday, March 16, 2000** -- Oh what a day this was. It started at Noon at a record store called Cheapo's where beer is free and bands do in-store performances. "The Bastard Sons of Johnny Cash" started setting up and the singer did his sound check by playing an acoustic version of BORDER RADIO. And what a rendition it was. The band played a 30-minute set of some good country music. At 4 PM the James Intveld band did a short set of songs from the new CD and then James hung around and signed autographs, as the store sound system played the Cry Baby soundtrack. (James sang the vocals for actor Johnny Depp in the movie and Dave Alvin produced the tracks.)

Late that evening at a little smoky roadhouse way in the north of town called Ginny's Little

Longhorn, James Intveld had another gig. Everybody loves this place and a lot of musicians show up there to get a break from the busyness and tourist draw of downtown. There were lots of musicians in the audience. The James Intveld band was set up in a little corner of the bar and had piano player Earl Poole Ball sitting in just for the evening. Earl is an old piano player who played many years with Johnny Cash. James: "I met Earl when he moved out to L.A. We used him on gigs and we became friends. He was in that movie with me called A Thing Called Love." James was wearing a cowboy hat for the occasion, and there were a lot more cowboy hats in the packed crowd that pushed back to the entrance of the place. James played a lot of interesting cover songs like SILVER WINGS, FROM A JACK TO A KING and RING OF FIRE. In fact, RING OF FIRE was a special moment for me, because I had seen Earl Poole Ball play those same piano riffs on the song with Johnny Cash so many times over the years. And it's kind of sad because the touring days that Earl did with Cash are truly over, now that Johnny's health has declined. Lots of credit goes to guitarist Michael Turner who plays the trumpet on the song for that classic opening riff.

Shaun Young from High Noon, was called up for a few songs early on including Elvis's MILKCOW BLUES BOOGIE. Next Chris Gaffney sang a Johnny Paycheck song he has been working up called (PARDON ME) I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL. Next Gaff sang Lefty Frizzel's NO ONE TO TALK TO BUT THE BLUES. When a guest was called up, James would hand over his acoustic guitar and play the bass. James spent many years playing bass in bands, including Rosie Flores.' Two members of the Hollisters were called up, and they sang a song called HOLD MY BABY. The singer, Mike Barfield, walked off the stage as James tried to convince the singer to stay up there for another song. The Hollister mentioned LITTLE EGYPT and James excitedly said, "Yeah, Yeah, Yeah." They played the old Leiber and Stoller song kind of touch and go – lots of chord changes and stops after verses. The boys had a lot of fun following the song by improvising. They all had smiles on their faces when that one was over, but you wouldn't have known they never played the song together before.

Next Dave Alvin was invited up and sang a Bakersfield song by Billy Mize called, WHO BUYS THE WINE. Dave later said, "Haggard recorded it as well as Jerry Lee. Its one of my favorite Honky Tonk songs. Earl P. Ball was playing piano that night; he was a west coast guy for a long time so when I saw him playing that night, I said that's the song to play!" Wow! Now how could James finish off the night with all these great guests? James had one last song and said, "This one is by request." Then he launched into his signature song, his first ever single, and one of the great rockabilly songs – MY HEART IS ACHIN FOR YOU. A great finish. Just another typical great night for music in Austin.



Photo: Jim Catalano

Tom Russell, Bill Kirchen, and Dave Alvin at The Continental Club rehearsal.



### SXSW Day 3    Friday, March 17, 2000

I dropped by the Continental Club for Dave Alvin's 3 PM rehearsal in preparation for the HighTone showcase that evening. I expected a low-key sound check. The Guilty Men set up as Chris Gaffney and Tom Russell got ready with the plan of singing with Dave later tonight. Bill Kirchen was there, too. The band ran through a bunch of songs for the evening. Gaffney prepared I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL and some of the songs he had been singing on Dave's tours in the encores. Dave and Tom Russell practiced a few of their co-written songs. They ran through the song RIO GRANDE which is a Tom Russell song that Dave will record on his next album. Merle Haggard's SWINGIN' DOORS was next as well as other surprises planned for the HighTone showcase. A camera crew from Tokyo, Japan, was there to shoot footage for a Japanese TV series on roots rock music. They shot some of the rehearsal and the evening show. The rehearsal finished with Chris singing LONELY LONELY NIGHTS, as a large crowd had developed in the club. Someone from the audience yelled out MARIE MARIE. Dave announced "We've never had an encore at a sound check, so were not gonna start now." At that point we realized that we had just seen an extra Dave Alvin show. Let's call it the matinee show. The band played full songs and sounded great. It was a 2-hour unscheduled Dave Alvin show open to the public who knew about it.



Photo: Jim Catalano



Photo: Jim Catalano



Photo: Jim Catalano

The HighTone showcase started at 8 PM with Randy Weeks, Aztex, Chuck Prophet, and The Hollisters. It was a must to arrive early and secure a spot. The show was expected to be a sellout by the time Dave Alvin hit the stage at Midnight. When that time came, Dave Alvin and the Guilty men were announced to the stage by Charlie



The Shoeshine Man. This was a highly anticipated event. The band hadn't played for a long time and Hightone made special arrangements to have their top artist, Dave Alvin on the bill. He would not disappoint. Dave started with WANDA & DUANE and in the middle Dave stated sarcastically that he wanted to thank the SXSW schedule maker, "who put all the roots rock gigs on the same night." It's true. Other artists like Joe Ely, Jimmie Dale Gilmore, Candye Kane, Duane Jarvis, Whiskeytown,

Robert Earl Keen, and Hank III all were all scheduled at the same time. Standing at the side of the stage was famous traveling concert fan Beatle Bob. In fine form, the band played about five songs from Black Jack David. You wouldn't guess that they hadn't played together in months. Next, Dave did the best version of AMERICAN MUSIC I've heard him do. It was spurred by a special dedication. Dave: "Last time I got on this stage was about a year ago when the Leroi Bros were playing. I had one of the greatest thrills of my life with one of my heroes. Me, Chris Gaffney, and The Leroi Bros, joined Doug Sahm. They locked the doors, nobody left and we played. Unfortunately, the good die young, so we're gonna do this for Doug Sahm." Dave really went for it – banging harder on the guitar than I've seen from him. He did a bunch of his trademark leaps. A rockin' eight-minute version of AMERICAN MUSIC which segued into a nine-minute version of LONG WHITE CADILLAC. Dave was finishing off his solo part of the set just blowing everybody out. As CADILLAC ended, Dave started the riff to COWBOYS TO GIRLS. Chris Gaffney ascended to take over the vocals. This song has developed so well with the band that it has become a featured song in Dave's show with Chris on vocals.

Gaffney followed with ALBUQUERQUE, I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL, and a killer take of SUGARBEE. Chris really went off on the accordion on this one.

Next Dave introduced Tom Russell to the stage with a warning, "Tom Russell is gonna play Rock n Roll!" They were teasing Russell because it has been many years since he played with a full loud band. He now only tours with an acoustic duo. They started off with a duet between Gaffney and Russell on THE EYES OF ROBERTO DURAN, a song that Tom wrote, Chris recorded, and Dave produced on Chris's Losers Paradise album. This was the first time they were singing this song together. Next Dave and Tom did OUT IN CALIFORNIA trading off vocals. Tom was having fun at this point and later excitedly asked Dave who relayed this, "If you guys promise to play like you played tonight, will you play on all of my records?" They did the same again on BLUE WING after Dave said, "This is tied for first in my book with an Iris Dement song for the best song written in the last twenty years."

HALEY'S COMET was next with Tom pushing his vocals to be as loud as Dave's. Tom and Dave smiled at each other as they passed verses in which they differ on their versions. They have spent many hours debating lines like, 'The screams of the ladies filled the hall.' Dave changed that line to 'The screams of the children fill the hall.' With the explanation that Bill Haley did not draw the women like Elvis, but instead played to the young kids. So they still



have fun with their debates. Next the band played Haggard's SWINGIN' DOORS. Tom took the vocals and Bill Kirchen took second electric guitar. For the last song, Dave dug out a song that for many years was in retirement -- ROMEO'S ESCAPE. Dave challenged Kirchen to a guitar dual: they traded off and then Dave got the last word in saying, "Bill Kirchen may be a better guitar player but tonight, I'm gonna be a LOUDER guitar player!" Dave thanked everybody for coming and then blasted through the end of the song. The place was so packed they opened the entrance double doors so crowds could stand out in the street and try to catch a peek at the excitement. Gaffney later recalled that it was so crowded, "The only place to be was outside or on the stage. I did the ultimate boner by trying to get up on stage at the wrong song. And it was hell getting there. It was pardon me excuse me and I knocked people in the head with my cowboy hat. Then I have to do it all over again because Joe signaled 'One More'" (Laughs).

For an encore, Dave returned to the stage with harmonica player Ted Roddy and Chris Gaffney. Chris addressed the Continental staff, "Can you beer us?" The band never got "Beered" because it was after the 2 am curfew. Chris sang Johnny Guitar Watson's LONELY LONELY NIGHTS. Dave finished the set as he usually does with MARIE MARIE as the fans went crazy. What a show. And quite a focused performance by Dave Alvin who has been understandably troubled over his father's health lately. He took out some aggression in the good old fashioned outlet of rock 'n roll.



Chris Gaffney at Under the Sun.

It can be considered the last show of the highly successful Black Jack David period. We're entering a new era. Dave's forthcoming traditional folk album will bring new songs to his shows, and soon after that, there will be even more new music with the official Black Jack David follow-up.

#### **SXSW Day 4 Saturday, March 18, 2000**

'Under the Sun' is a vintage clothes and record store located right next to the Continental Club. During SXSW, they have free live performances all day in their back yard. It's a cool place and is a 'must-visit' during SXSW. The performers set up in front of this corrugated metal wall in the back yard. There are old tires, boxes, and barrels lying around giving it an old yard look. A few large trees provide some shade and a big fence is left open that faces out into the rear street, where cars can stop and watch. Chris Gaffney was rooming at the house of the owners of 'Under The Sun.' So, anytime this weekend he could be found hanging out in the back yard drinking beers with the people watching the performances.

At 4 PM James Intveld was scheduled for 'Under the Sun.' The band arrived 30 minutes late coming from a gig in Oklahoma City the night before. The band set up in record time (about 10 minutes) and played the expected 30-minute set. The band played songs from the new CD and finished the set with a pair of songs that I haven't heard James do live before. One was George Jones NOTHIN CAN STOP MY LOVIN' YOU, and the other was a song James recorded on his Innerworks records solo album a few years ago called STANDIN' ON A ROCK, a great



Photo: Lisa Gilman



song that James adapted from a version by Rodney Crowell -- a good set finisher.

At 5 PM, the Cajun accordionist Ponty Bone played a set; then at 6 PM it was Chris Gaffney doing His 'Under the Sun' set at twilight. Chris had assembled a band of great musicians. Chris Miller of the Hollisters played guitar. Gaffney met Miller while he played guitar for Teddy (Roddy) and the Talldrops on a tour Gaffney shared. Sarah Brown was recruited to play bass. She played on Chris's Losers Paradise album and is one of Austin's best bass players. Rounding out the band were our familiar heroes from the Guilty Men: Bobby Lloyd, Joe Terry and Rick Shea.

Gaff approached the mike looking cool in his cowboy hat, black sunglasses, and holding his black Strato-caster; "It's time to bring you up to speed. How about a hand for James Intveld. He was a little late, but he's HANDSOME. . . I've relied on PERSONALITY (laughs)." Chris started with a beautiful version of his SEE THE BIG MAN CRY from his Loser's Paradise album followed by (PARDON ME)I'VE GOT SOMEONE TO KILL, a slow Haggard type song that has been worked to perfection the last few nights. Chris called up famous accordionist Ponty Bone for ALBUQUERQUE. As Ponty got ready, Chris had to stall for time, "So I went to couch last night, about 3 am and got the quality eight. . . and how is everybody else?" ALBUQUERQUE had a different groove than when Dave Alvin leads the band on it. In fact, Chris did something new to me: taking a lead guitar solo. He was having fun. Chris's original song GLASS HOUSE was

Photo: Lisa Gilman



Photo: Lisa Gilman





next. As the sun was going down, Chris still kept the sunglasses on. Next was '68 (known also as Dave's 1968) and a Gaffney interpretation of Johnny Paycheck's APARTMENT # 9.

Bill Kirchen was invited up, and as Gaff handed him his guitar he playfully said, "Don't wreck my stuff." They played the Ray Price song CRAZY ARMS. For the final song SUGARBEE, Chris called out, "Is Dave Alvin here?" After a pause of silence. "Okkee Dok. Is Keith Richards here? (laughs)" Gaffney grabbed the accordion, and off they went into SUGARBEE. The forty-minute set that started at 'Under The Sun' ended 'Under The Stars.' Chris finished inviting everybody to see his evening show at a club nearby called Ego's.



Ego's is a little bar in the bottom of an office building. The inside looks like an airport lounge complete with swivel vinyl chairs at tables. At 10 PM the Gaffney assembled band started. It was the same line-up seen earlier at 'Under The Sun.' The song GOIN BACK TO SAN ANTONIO continued the mood of SXSW 2000 in tribute to the recently departed Doug Sahm. Gaffney mixed some of his original songs with some country cover songs with the unique Gaffney stamp on them. A perfect one sung by him was Webb Pierce's THERE STANDS THE GLASS. Then we heard another song that would recur with the California bands at SXSW -- RING OF FIRE. And in some obvious way of connecting all these bands, it's interesting to note that later, (Johnny Cash's piano player) Earle Poole Ball would show up here at Ego's. Gaffney's RING OF FIRE didn't have the trumpet sound but was padded with the extra instrumentation. Chris really dug down low to sing it and did a great song justice.

Another high point was the song, TOWN THAT I LIVE IN, which Chris explained about singer Little Willie G.: "He is one of my all time favorite singers. This is a song he used to sing with Thee Midnighters." It was a slow ballad. Chris threw in lyrics from TEARS ON MY PILLOW.

Rick Shea sang an Ernest Tubb song called THANKS A LOT. Then Gaffney finished off the set with THEY CALL ME ROCKIN'. The second set confirmed the week-long rumor that Dave Alvin might drop by Ego's. Dave stepped up to play a full set with



Dave at Ego's with surprise guest Greg Leisz



Photo: Lisa Gilman



Gaffney. HONKY TONK started it and a few songs later, Dave took the vocal on a Jimmy Liggins cover song called DRUNK. Dave rarely performs this song, and if so, only in encores. Gaffney did his song LIFT UP YOUR LEG and then called up Greg Leisz to play on the next couple of songs. (Rick took a break from pedal steel for Leisz.) The first was PEOPLE GET READY. Bass player Sarah Brown took the vocal on the old blues standard BLUES BEFORE SUNRISE and Ted Roddy came up to play harmonica on LONELY LONELY NIGHTS. They finished the second set with an outro-instrumental. It was something new I never heard Dave play before. The third set started with Dave Alvin still on stage. Fantastic! Chris started with a Waylon Jennings song called RAINY DAY WOMAN, then a Billy Joe Shaver song called LET THE WORLD CALL ME A FOOL.

Next Bill Kirchen and Johnny Castle (Kirchen's bass player) came up on stage to add another guitar to the jam. Dave joked to Gaffney, "I can sing with the band?" Then Dave and Chris sang together on SIX NIGHTS A WEEK. The band was definitely improvising on some

Photo: Lisa Gilman



songs. Dave cued the band to play, "a medium tempo blues shuffle," saying "We'll fake it." Gaffney sang the lyrics to what sounded like the MILKCOW BLUES BOOGIE, another recurring song at SXSW. Remember Gaffney had been in the audience when Shaun Young sang it with Intveld at Ginny's on SXSW day 2. I enjoy these tie-ins of songs. Everybody seems to have a similar music vibe going on

Photo: Lisa Gilman







**Rick Shea, Dave Alvin, Chris Miller, Bill Kirchen, Chris Gaffney, and Sarah Brown at Ego's.**

this year in Austin, and its cool. There is a certain symmetry going on especially with the California bands. Yeah, Dave sure did fake it; he played a cool blues solo in the middle and the band fell in as if it were a set mainstay. Chris handed over the mike to Rick Shea and he said, "And another guitar." There now numbered five guitarists out there: Rick, Gaffney, Dave, Chris Miller and Bill Kirchen. I've heard Rick do LONG BLACK VEIL before, but this one seemed to be a little faster tempo, almost rockabilly. Five electric guitars may have had something to do with that, too. Gaffney took the mike back and said, "I give you Rick Shea. Buy a CD from him; he has them for sale. While you're at it, buy one of mine because I'm broke" (laughs).

To finish the set the band played easy into COWBOYS TO GIRLS as Gaffney thanked the audience and his fellow musicians for a great evening of music. The band brought the song to a rising finish, leaving the crowd demanding more. For the encore, Chris sang a Jimmie Dale Gilmore song called DALLAS. It's on Chris's new album, Live And Then Some. In the middle of the song Dave spotted Earl Poole Ball in the crowd and started yelling, "Earl! Earl!" Dave pointed to Joe Terry's keyboard. Joe courteously stepped down in time to let Earl take a solo on the song. As the song finished, Gaff said "Thank You, Texas." After the show as the band broke down their equipment, James Intveld and his band showed up to say hello to their fellow Californians, just after leaving the Continental stage for their showcase.

### **SXSW Day 5 Sunday, March, 19, 2000**

The James Intveld band at Stubb's Bar-B-Q. This is a rustic looking old building that has become an Austin landmark. It was known first for its excellent Bar-B-Q food. Its name was taken from C.B Stubblefield, who opened the place in the 70's. Over the years, it has become legendary for its musical performers. It's said that lots of famous bluesman like Muddy Waters, performed here for meals. The band was very excited to play the historic place. James was playing on the inside stage and started with his most famous written song; CRYIN OVER YOU.

Next was a few songs from the new CD. James announced he wanted to bring some friends up on the stage. At the Continental Club record release party the previous week, James dedicated a song to a band called the Texas Renegades who were in the audience. Tonight James brought the whole Dutch band up on stage, so they could say, "We played Austin, Texas!



James explained, "I met these guys in the parking lot of the Motel 6 and they're here just to hang out. Let's let them do a few songs." The Intveld band stepped down as the Texas Renegades played what I would call "Modern Country." They played an original and then Dale Watson's NASHVILLE RASH. The band has a real good deep voiced singer who invited James back on stage to duet on Merle Haggard's SING ME BACK HOME. The Intveld band returned and played few more songs, one of which was unusual: Johnny Paycheck's YOU'RE STILL ON MY MIND (AN EMPTY BOTTLE, A BROKEN HEART.)

Another guest invited up was Johnny Dilks. He took lead vocal on IT WASN'T GOD WHO MADE HONKY TONK ANGELS with James on bass. Next, Dilks' guitarist Chance came up and took over guitar duties and Dilks sang his signature yodeling song LOSE THAT WOMAN BLUES from his new HighTone album Acres of Heartache. James and Johnny traded vocals on the Hank Williams classic I'M SO LONESOME I COULD CRY. Chance and James then switched guitars, and James was now on lead guitar. The last time I saw James on lead guitar was when he was in the Blasters. They played the Carl Perkins song GONE GONE GONE. James took a few leads and I could hear some of the old Blasters licks going on there. James hasn't lost it.

The closing song was RING OF FIRE. It's crazy how things mysteriously happen: Who should walk in the door, when the Cash song is playing, but Earl Poole Ball? Unfortunately, there was no piano on stage for Earl to play. But he was there – once again for RING OF FIRE. South By South West 2000 is now history. Did I like it? As Mr. Stubblefield used to say, "Yesiree." This is only a taste of the excellent music at the SXSW music fest every March. I strongly recommend everybody take a shot at SXSW, I think you'll have a great time. ~~~~~Am~~

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