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American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

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Dave Alvin & Phil Alvin Record a new EP called 'Hard Travelin'

Latest News: Dave Alvin and Phil Alvin are releasing an EP on April 20, 2017 for Record Store Day. It will be a 12 inch vinyl with four songs released on vinyl only. There is an out take song from the Lost Time CD Sessions called MEAN OLE FRISCO. Dave Alvin: "I struggled with keeping that one off Lost Time. I really liked it, but couldn't make it fit." Another song was recorded with Gene Taylor, Don Heffington, and Bob Glaub right after the Common Ground CD came out. Then there are two newly recorded songs, one is called HARD TRAVELIN'. At this time, there are no plans to release this on CD, so get the vinyl EP and support your local Record Store. -- Dave Alvin contributed a blurb for The History of Rock 'n' Roll, Volume One: 1920-1963, the forthcoming book by Ed Ward. The 416-page volume will be published on Nov. 15 by Flatiron Books. Dave says of the book: "Ed Ward tells the complex, unruly history of rock 'n' roll like few other writers can. He deftly separates sacred myths from the often brutal realities while connecting the various styles, races, cities and scenes into a coherent national saga. Mr. Ward writes with rare wisdom, insight and humor but most of all, a passionate love for this still powerful music." Ward serves as the rock 'n' roll historian for the Fresh Air radio program and is the author of Michael Bloomfield: The Rise and Fall of an American Guitar Hero, which was reissued on Sept. 1 by Chicago Review Books. -- Dave Alvin will take part in the rail trip West of the West 2017 set for Aug. 13-25. The trip begins in Los Angeles, with stops in New Orleans, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City and New Mexico before returning to Los Angeles. Other musical guests include Rick Shea and Christy McWilson with additional performers to be announced. For more information, visit www.rootsontherails.com. -- Dave Alvin read at La Luz de Jesus, the gallery space of Wacko/the Soap Plant in Hollywood on Oct. 23. The event promoted My Damage: The Story of a Punk Rock Survivor, the new book by Keith Morris, former singer for Black Flag and the Circle Jerks. Dave read a short piece about Eddie Nash and the Starwood, a club in West Hollywood where the Blasters performed in 1980 and 1981. -- On Dec. 4 at La Luz de Jesus, Dave performed a version of Bob Dylan's YOU'RE A BIG GIRL NOW as part of a book signing/author appearance by Chris Morris. His new book is Together Through Life: A Personal Journey With The Music of Bob Dylan (Rothco Press; \$12.95). Dave posted a video of his performance on his Facebook page. -- Roz Larman, who with her husband, Howard, ran FolkScene, the longtime radio program in Southern California, died from complications of a heart attack and stroke in October. She was 83. Dave and Phil Alvin both were guests on the program, which began in 1970. "When I finally got on the show," Dave Alvin told The Los Angeles Times in 2000, "I knew I'd made something of myself." Dave was a frequent guest on the show. In a 1988 appearance, he played THE PARTY'S OVER, an original song that he has never officially released. -- Dave and other contributors have been nominated for a Grammy in the Best Spoken Word album category (Includes Poetry, Audio Books & Storytelling) for their reading on the audio book version of the Under The Big Black Sun book. Dave is involved in another Grammy nomination: Bobby Rush was nominated -- **AM**

In This Issue: The Blue Shadows Debut CD, The Mike Eldred Trio's Baptist Town CD and "Everybody Digs Sammy Masters."

The Blue Shadows Debut CD



By Billy Davis

Press Release: Rip Cat Records is proud and excited to welcome The Blue Shadows as our newest family members!!

In The Blue Shadows lineup are some of the most respected and seasoned members in the blues community: Javier Matos is out front on vocals and guitar, with the original Blasters rhythm section of John Bazz on bass and Bill Bateman on drums.

They have recorded their self-titled first Rip Cat release at world renowned Pacifica Studios in Los Angeles. Release date October 21, 2016.

The Blue Shadows were originally formed by Bill Bateman and featured many legendary musicians such as Lester Butler, Paul Size, the Bartel Brothers (Johnny Ray and Dave Lee), and others.

Javier met Bill after Lester passed, and they reformed the band. Javier had his own style with his pre-war blues strengths and influences and together they forged a sound on the hardened streets of Hollywood and became part of the L.A. sound that included bands like Canned Heat and the Blasters. While applying deep blues to the modern culture of the times, they respected the past - with an eye to the future.

Javier has a lengthy resume, with awards and great reviews throughout his musical career. As once signed with Storyville Records, he worked with, and was produced by none other than one of our other family members, Mr. Barry Levenson. It seems Javier was destined to create music with us.

With this inimitable lineup, this new project traces the roots of their early influences, as well as the four decades of performing their own music. Welcome to the family, Javier!! And we welcome our continued connection to John and Bill!! ~All of us at Rip Cat Records~

American Music interviewed Blue Shadows' leader Javier Matos in December 2016 about making the record.

THE BLUE SHADOWS SONG BY SONG

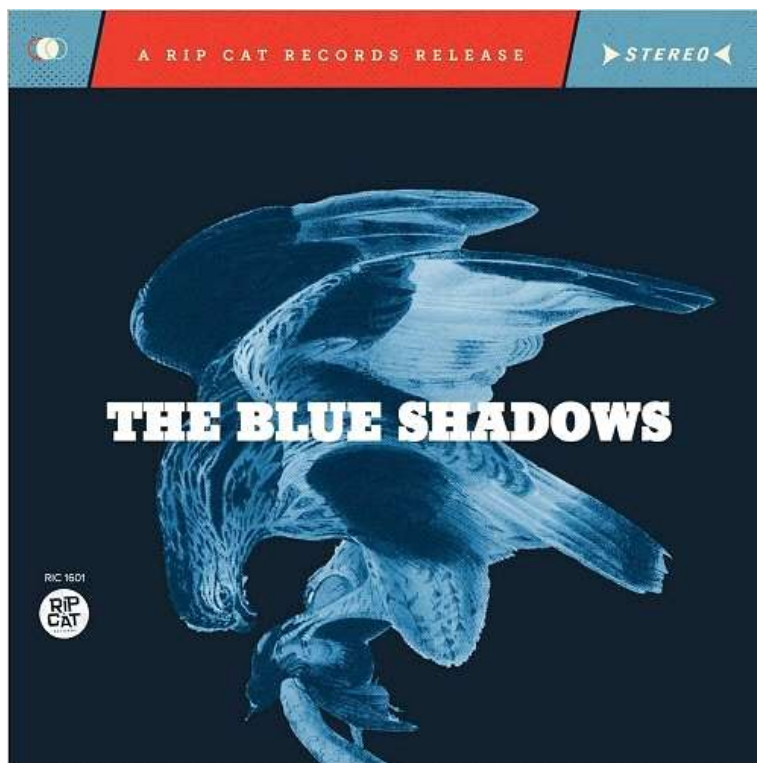
AM: How did you choose the songs?

JM: When I was preparing the songs for this CD, there was a lot of pressure because we had such a large catalogue of music that we've played over the years. There has been a lot of time between 2004 when I left L.A. and the Blue Shadows stopped. I didn't want to be too far from what the Blue Shadows originally were, but at the same time I wanted to incorporate new things. I don't think that being a pre-war band did us any favors professionally. Even though Bill, John and I get a lot of satisfaction from playing this music, blues can be a curse in terms of making money. At times it seemed we were admired strictly by musicians, and not taken seriously.

DIAMOND NEEDLES -- I was playing bass with the Cactus Blossoms at a club years ago and met a guy with a really messed up tattoo of a guitar - but I told him it was a cool tattoo (laughs). His name was Jon Dominguez. We met up again a lot later and he asked if I wanted to jam. We did. He's a great guy and a hardworking songwriter. He wrote this song, and I thought it was a homage song to the Blasters, so I brought it to the Blue Shadows and everybody loved it. The Blue Shadows are a hardcore blues trio, but to get a bigger sound on certain songs, we brought in extra players. We knew Dave Alvin would be perfect for this because it was like a Blasters song. The cool thing was that I was fronting the Blasters (lineup) on this song. With the exception of Gene Taylor and Lee Allen, this was 'The Blasters'. I asked Bill if anyone else ever had the opportunity to sit in this "Hot Seat" and he said: "No." So, I was really tickled and honored, no matter what the outcome of the track. These guys are my musical heroes. I like to pass the hat too, so I got Jon Dominguez in there on the songwriting credit even though he doesn't perform, but he deserves some recognition.

LET ME BE YOUR ROCKER -- This was a song from the Reverend Rubin Lacy originally called HAM HOUND CRAVE (Paramount Records, 1927). Our band has very strong pre-war influences and all the songs we draw from never have bass and drums, so adding accompaniment gives us a chance to put our own style on it. So the Blue Shadows' unique sound comes from interpreting pre-war music in a 21st century band format. My writing style of songs comes from that. Though I am known for playing my National Steel guitar, it is not on this record at all. I did it all on producer Scott Abeyta's Gibson Memphis ES295 Hollow-Body Electric. This recording was the scratch track (a guide recording to lay overdubs on). We didn't re-record the vocals even though I was showing some voice fatigue from a long night of recording. That edge turned out nice, so we kept it.

I love John Bazz's bass playing on this. I thought Bazz was the shining star on that song because his bass is so fat. Here's a funny story: Bill Bateman and I have this sort of father and son relationship, even though I'm 46 years old. He always has great ideas, but sometimes he drives me a little hard from the back seat. On this song, we were rehearsing it before getting into the studio. I wanted the intro to be more rock n' roll, but he was against it. He said: "Let's give the white kids something to dance to." (Laughs) That's an inside joke of ours. But in the studio, John played something that slipped by Bill, who forgot we had discussed his way in practice. And Bill just fell in line, so it became a rock n roll song like I wanted--and not just us imitating a pre-war blues song.



BLUES #1 -- It's a song we arranged and made our own by Belton Sutherland. When the arrangement is different enough, you then have the legal right to call it an original song: an "O-rip-tional" (laughs). I saw a video on YouTube of Belton on his porch in 1978, and I fell in love with the sound. With drums and bass it becomes a rock n' roll song. My brother Isreal lives in the Bay Area (San Francisco) and he has always helped me. I had him sing with me on this song. He has a high register, and I have a low, so we meshed well together. I like the way that came out. I play harp on it, too.

ON THE ROAD AGAIN -- That's a song by Gus Cannon and the Jug Stompers done in the Memphis style. I first heard it from a friend of mine named Lech Wierzynski, who played in the band Jug Free America. Now he plays in the band The California Honeydrops. He's a good friend, great musician and a mentor to me. This song was a nod to him. It has a technique like Furry Lewis used to do, where you tune your guitar to open G; you slide your finger on the fifth string from the second fret to the seventh and it mimics a jug. It's cool. I added background vocals of mine behind my lead vocal. We recorded at Underwood Studios in Minn. with Mark Stockert who worked with Brian Setzer.



Photo: Billy Folsom

The Blue Shadows 2016—Javier, John & Bill

DAVE ALVIN: Bill called and me asked me to play on the Blue Shadows new album and I said: "Sure." I think Bill called me for those two songs because they sound like Blasters songs. I went to the studio (Pacifica Studios, Los Angeles) while Bill and John were out on tour with the Blasters, and Scott Abeyta recorded me on guitar for **DIAMOND NEEDLES** and **BACK TO YOU**. It was cool to return to that studio because it was the place where I had recorded the Border Radio movie soundtrack, and I had produced an album by the Forbidden Pigs there. I always liked that studio.

HUD -- Hud was a band I formed in San Francisco with different guys, and then I formed it here in Minneapolis. The band was named after the Paul Newman character in the movie Hud. I found some similarities in my life, so I named the band that. But I wrote the song HUD in 2006 in Minneapolis. It's mostly biographical, but I added things in there from friends -- like saying that Phil Alvin's house is "the flop house." I spent a lot of time at Phil's house listening to 78's and asking questions and picking his brain on the blues. He's very generous and gave me access to a lot of music. He shared a lot of what makes him tick as a singer too. He told me about Big Joe Turner and really gave me an education as a musician. I'm fortunate enough to learn things from the Blasters guys, who all learned from the original blues guys like T-Bone Walker and Big Joe Turner. Chopper Franklin played guitar on here and came up with some parts for the song. We were in a band called the Doghouse Lords together.

ELDER GREEN BLUES -- I like to keep some songs as original as I can, but I won't mimic it 100%. This is a Charley Patton song. When I can add bass and drums to a song, it always pushes a song forward to be different. A great guitar player and performer named Jonny "Two Bags" Wickersham played on this song. He is a great friend and hero of mine from Social Distortion. I expected him to play hardcore power chords, but he shocked me with great country licks. Later on, I understood because I found out he recently played on a whole country album. His playing made this song sound great. Somehow honky tonk country and delta blues can sound great together.

CAT SQUIRREL -- Doctor Ross did that on Sun Re-

cords. Last year, Phil Alvin and Billy Boy Arnold did a show here in Minneapolis with my band The Innocent Sons, and Phil suggested CAT SQUIRREL. We learned it and I fell in love with the song. So I wanted it on the Blue Shadows record.

I CAN TELL -- That's a Bo Diddley song. But every time I've heard anyone do a Bo Diddley song, they change it too much. The way I like to cover his song is close to his. I had previously done a scratch solo. But then Kid Ramos came in to do a solo on the song. Later we listened to a mix with Kid's solo, and it was great, but lacking something. Bill suggested we hear both solos at the same time. We did and everybody erupted into laughter. It was peanut butter and jelly - perfect together. So you'll hear on the record two solos playing at the same time. Kind of a happy accident that put it over the top for us.

KEEP ON ROCKIN -- When we first did pre-production for the album, this song of mine was one of the first songs we worked on. I didn't think it would make the cut, because the vocals weren't that good, but the producer Scott said we should work on it. Jamie Cassius (the Blasters' road manager of a few years ago) helped work on the proper phrasing for the song and it came out good. I'm glad we did. As for the instrumentation, the intro needed an interesting or different figure to start it off with. I found a Melodica in a case in the closet in the studio in Long Beach. A Melodica is a tiny pipe organ with a keyboard and a mouthpiece that you blow into. So I used that. I also tried a Pan flute - which is a South American instrument. It has a bunch of tubes that you hold vertically and blow into. I played it on that song, but I'm not sure if you can hear it in the final mix.

GEORGIA CHAIN GANG -- It's originally by Guitar Lebbit. I discovered it years ago. This is another song that the original had only a guitar and vocal, and we added everything to it. That's a song I can't do without Chopper Franklin, so that's his guitar.

SHE LIKES TO BOOGIE REAL LOW -- That's a Frankie Lee Simms song that Bill turned me on to. We just love the Excello recording artists. We're not really a dance band, but this was a dance song we liked. And it was a chance to put horns on there. Mondo Dorame of the Royal Crown Revue did a great job on the horn arrangements. Aaron Deily from Rumble King played piano. I've had Aaron on just about every project I've worked on in L.A. - just a great piano player. You have to have cajones to play blues music on piano. He can do it, and I really respect him for that.

BACK TO YOU -- I wrote that in Minnesota about going out on the road and thinking about my kids and the hard roads I've taken to get here. I'm not complaining about it, but it's a story to tell. This record has really taken 20 years to make. Dave Alvin played on this, but I wasn't there in the studio to give him any "back story" on the song. Dave is so professional; he just listened to the song and played great riffs on it. You know he's always gonna come out with something great.

PEBBLE IN MY SHOE -- I heard it on a juke joint compilation record by Wild Bill Phillips. I like a lot of the musicians that people just haven't heard of. This is a song I really liked, and started playing it with my bands in Minneapolis. I met this great accordion player named Patrick Harrison whose father ran a bike shop out of a building that used to be a White Castle hamburger place. It was a trip. He's a really nice guy and an intelligent musician. I thought he was perfect on this song. The Blue Shadows are a blues band that likes to cover the rarities. You won't hear us play THRILL OF IT ALL or MUSTANG SALLY.



The Blue Shadows 2003—Javier, Bill Bateman and John Bazz

ROCKIN PNEUMONIA - I wrote that one. Kid Ramos played great guitar on this and some boogie woogie piano by Aaron Deily.

LA VOZ EN SUEÑOS -- My dad is a great singer and came up with this song while I was playing a riff on guitar. It has a really positive message in the lyrics. I'd really like to unite mariachi music with honky tonk because I believe country music got a lot from the blues as well as Mexican music. So you'll hear that it starts with pedal steel and then the horns join in, and then it splits off to a single horn. The steel player is Bill Flynn from Minneapolis. It was a nice way to end the record - a pretty song sung by my father. ((*Special Thanks to Cris Matos for translating his song to English*))

La Voz en Suenos

Lyrics: Cris Matos© 2016

**Cada ser lleva una canción
Que al brotar de su corazón
Le da alas a nacer y volar
Porque es la armoniosa solución**

**Si en la noche mientras duermes
En un sueño escucha un cantar
Es la voz de quien te acompaña
Te ama cuida y te incita a despertar**

Coro:

**Cada rima es un camino
Cada verso una enseñanza
Entre notas y entre acordes
Va cantando la voz de la esperanza**

**¡Es la voz que dé dice mira!
Dalí alas a tu corazón
Busca por dentro y veras
Pues en ti es que nace la canción**

Si en la noche mientras duermes

The Voice Within Dreams

Lyrics: Cris Matos© 2016

**Each being carries a song
That comes forth from their heart
Giving it birth with wings to fly
Because it's the path to harmony**

**If at night while you sleep
And in a dream, you hear a song
It's the Voice that accompanies you
Loves you, looks after you and
Inspires awakening.**

chorus:

**Each rhyme is a way
Each verse is a teaching
Between notes and chords
Sings the voice of hope**

**It is the Voice that says Hey!
Allow your heart to grow wings
Look inside and you will see
That the song is born within you**

If at night while you sleep

The Blue Shadows CD is available on Rip Cat Records at RipCatRecords.com and other fine music distributors.

Sammy Masters and his CD

"Everybody Digs Sammy Masters"

By Tom Wilk

It's an answer fit for a Jeopardy "Country Music" category. He wrote three songs recorded by Patsy Cline and recorded two songs written by Dave Alvin. The correct answer in the form of a question: Who was Sammy Masters?

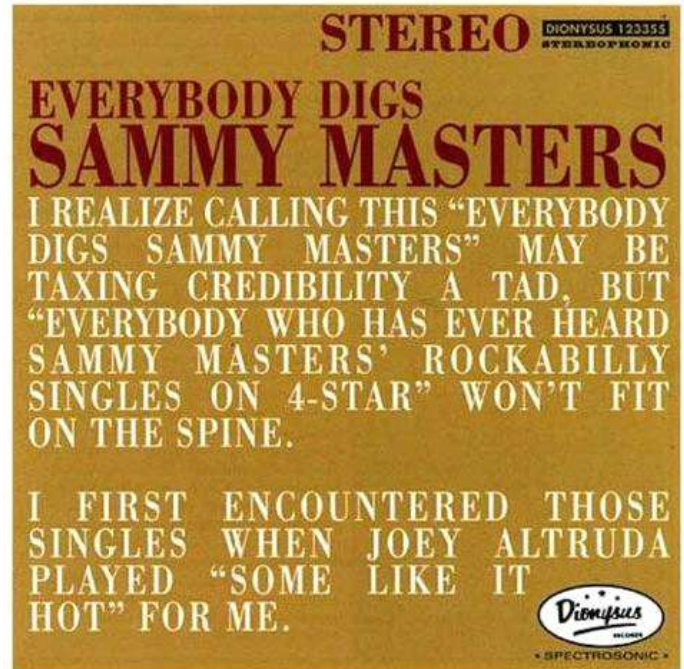
Masters died at 82 in March 2013, and enjoyed a career that spanned well over half a century. He shared a stage with Bob Wills and his band in the 1940s and was friends with Willie Nelson, who helped Masters get his song WHO CAN I COUNT ON recorded by Cline; It became the flip side of her multimillion-selling CRAZY, which became Cline's signature song.

Masters also became well known in Southern California for his appearances on country music shows and television shows in the 1960s and for his commercials for auto dealer Cal Worthington. Masters wrote the lyrics and sang the original recording of the legendary GO SEE CAL jingle featured on Worthington's television commercials (which can be found on YouTube).

Guitarist Skip Heller is a fan of Masters' rockabilly work, including his songs SOME LIKE IT HOT and PINK CADILLAC on 4 Star Records, featuring guitarist Jimmy Bryant.

"Sammy was one of the few baritone singers in rockabilly," Heller says. "His vocal delivery reminded me of Tommy Duncan (lead singer for Bob Wills)."

Heller ended up producing Everybody Digs Sammy Masters, an album released in 1998 on Dionysus Records. The title is a tip of the cap to Everybody Digs Bill Evans, a 1959 album by jazz pianist Bill Evans on the Prestige label. Heller modeled the album after jazz blowing sessions of the



1950s. "This is a rockabilly blowing session," he notes.

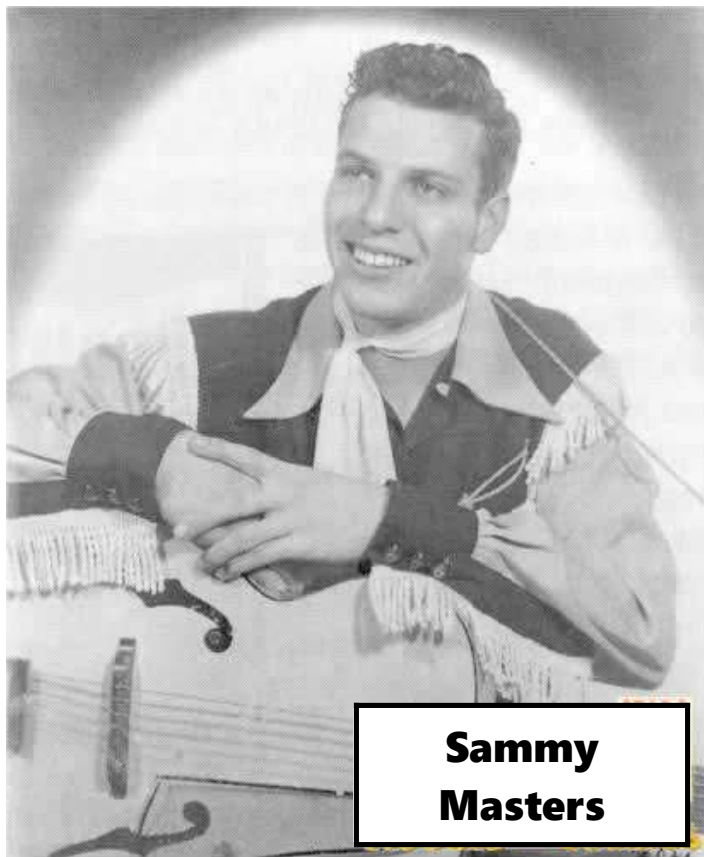
Recorded at Painted Sound in Van Nuys, CA, the album was made on a shoestring budget, but doesn't stint on sound or production values. "Our total budget was \$300," Heller says. "Everybody agreed to do it for free. It was a fun thing to do."

The band for the record was Heller (electric guitar); Deke Dickerson (acoustic guitar); Ray Campi (slap bass); and Howard Greene (snare drum). "The sessions were two five-hour rounds of live playing," Heller wrote in the liner notes.

Everybody Digs Sammy Masters starts off with IS ANYBODY GOIN' TO SAN ANTONIO, a song that was a No. 1 country hit for Charley Pride in 1970. "We wanted to establish that Sammy is a country singer," Heller notes.

The album also has Masters' version of WHO CAN I COUNT ON, Willie Nelson's FUNNY HOW TIME SLIPS AWAY, Bill Monroe's TRUE LIFE BLUES and Werly Fairburn's TELEPHONE BABY. The songs showcase Masters' vocal versatility.

The album ends with three songs associated with the Blasters and Dave Alvin: MONEY TO BURN, HELP YOU DREAM, and REAL ROCK DRIVE.



**Sammy
Masters**

Heller wanted the album to include some newer songs: "Sammy came to my apartment in Silver Lake, California, to go through some tunes," he recalled. He picked out MONEY TO BURN, a lesser-known song by Dave that he co-wrote with Billy Miller, a member of the Zantees.

MONEY TO BURN is a humorous and rockabilly-flavored song of financial and romantic frustration that can be heard as a forerunner of WANDA AND DUANE. Masters' version includes a reference to "The Beverly Hillbillies" theme song in the fade-out.

The Zantees first released MONEY TO BURN on a self-titled EP in 1983 and on the album Rhythm Bound, a year later. Their version can be heard on YouTube. "I didn't realize it was a Dave Alvin song until after we had recorded it," Heller says.

Dave Alvin remembers writing it with Billy Miller: "The Blasters were in New York City in the very early days. It was the first few times we had been there, and our gear got ripped off from our van. So we were broke and decided to stay at a cheap hotel in New Jersey while we waited for new gear to be shipped out from Randall amplifiers in California. I didn't want to spend four days in New Jersey at a hotel; I wanted to see the city and hang out. So I called Billy Miller (of the Zantees) and Miriam and asked if I could stay at their loft in Brooklyn. They said: 'Sure. But with just one catch.' I could stay, if I helped them write a song. I said: 'No problem.' So we wrote MONEY TO BURN. I stayed a few days and had Thanksgiving dinner with a bunch of friends. Billy and Mirium were always really nice to us 'Baby Blasters.' I always thought it was a pretty good song."

HELP YOU DREAM, from the Blasters' Hard Line album, was chosen since the ballad was suited to Masters' voice. REAL ROCK DRIVE, a Bill Haley song recorded by the Blasters' on American Music LP on Rollin Rock Records concludes the album.

"I wanted to include a Bill Haley song because I'm from Philadelphia," says Heller. Haley grew up in suburban Philadelphia. "Sammy thought Bill was someone special and wanted to do one of his songs," Heller adds. Released in 1998, Everybody Digs Sammy Masters showcased his vocal abilities and helped introduce him to a new generation of listeners. The album remains in print and be purchased on CD or vinyl at www.Dionysusrecords.com. —Am

The Dave Alvin Concert Archive by Tom Wilk

Since launching his solo career with the release of Romeo's Escape in 1987, Dave Alvin has maintained a busy touring schedule that's taken him across North America and Europe. Now, Fans can hear and download nearly 300 of his concerts recorded between 1987 and 2016 at the Dave Alvin Collection at the Internet Archive. Visit <https://archive.org/details/DaveAlvin>

As of mid-December 2016, the site featured 290 shows, recorded primarily at clubs and outdoor festivals. In addition, there are interviews and performances recorded for radio programs. The concerts feature Dave performing with various bands, including the AllNighters, the Skeletons, the Guilty Men, The Guilty Women and The Guilty Ones. There are also a few shows recorded with Phil Alvin from their 2014-2016 tours as well as a wide selection of acoustic shows by Dave, including several with Rick Shea and Chris Miller.

The earliest show in the archive is a September 1987 concert by Dave Alvin and the AllNighters at the Chestnut Cabaret in Philadelphia. The archive is searchable by year. There are no shows available for 1988, 1989, 1990 or 1993. Every year from 1994 to 2016 is represented. 2011 is represented by the most concerts with 22, followed by 2006 and 2010 with 21 apiece, and 2014 with 20.

The shows include Dave's first concert with the Guilty Women, which was held in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, as part of the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festival on Oct. 4, 2008. Some concerts feature Dave previewing new songs from albums yet to be recorded. For instance, he played MUSEUM OF HEART on Nov. 8, 1992, at J.C. Dobbs in Philadelphia, almost a year before that album was released. In 2003, Dave road-tested ASHGROVE, RIO GRANDE,

MAN IN THE BED, EVERETT RUESS, and SINFUL DAUGHTER at several concerts with some lyrics differing from the studio versions recorded for the Ashgrove album.

Sound quality varies, as some shows came from the soundboards of the clubs; others are from audience recordings. Recording information is provided for each concert and some listeners provide reviews.

For fans of Dave's music, this is an opportunity to hear him perform some rare and unreleased songs. One highlight is a version of YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE recorded with Kelly Joe Phelps on guitar and backing vocals at a June 1996 show at The Freight and Salvage in Berkeley, California.

Two rarities come from a March 17, 2010, show at the Bing Crosby Theater in Spokane, Wash. In honor of St. Patrick's Day, Dave played TOO-RA-LOO-RA-LOO-RAL (THAT'S AN IRISH LULLABY) with Christy McWilson on vocals. Crosby, who grew up in Spokane, performed the song in the 1944 film Going My Way. The recording also features Dave singing an abbreviated version of WHERE THE BLUE OF THE NIGHT (MEETS THE GOLD OF THE DAY) as part of a sound check. That song served as theme of Crosby's radio show in the 1930s.

Additional rarities include MAKE ME A PALLET ON YOUR FLOOR, a Mississippi John Hurt song performed on June 28, 2007, at The Freight and Salvage; HOY HOY HOY, a rockabilly cover of a Collins Kids song, at the Palms Playhouse in Winters, California, on Sept. 30, 2010; and LET'S HAVE A PARTY, a Wanda Jackson song, performed at McCabe's Guitar Shop on Nov. 8, 2009.

Dave has performed two Chris Gaffney songs that were recorded by other artists on the 2009 tribute album that he put together. MAN OF SOMEBODY'S DREAMS, was featured at The Coach House, San Juan Capistrano, on June 20, 2009. More recently, Dave sang FRANK'S TAVERN, at the Palms Playhouse, on Feb. 20, 2016. At the same show, he performed the Bo Carter song WHO'S BEEN HERE with Christy McWilson.

On April 30, 2008, Dave performed EAST OF HOUSTON, WEST OF BATON ROUGE, a song he co-write with Billy Swan, with the Cold Hard Facts at The Cellar in Long Beach, California. The show was a memorial tribute to Chris, who had recorded it on his Loser's Paradise album (HighTone Records).

Dave played an acoustic version of John Stewart's JULY, YOU'RE A WOMAN, on Sept. 27, 2002 at the Columbus Music Hall, Columbus, Ohio.


Dave and the Guilty Men also performed several rarities. SIDETRACKED, a Freddie King instrumental, was performed at the Handlebar in Greenville, S.C., Oct. 8, 1996. A rare medley of BLUE BLVD with LET HER DANCE, a hit single for the Bobby Fuller Four, was played at Fitzgerald's on July 4, 1998. DRUNK, originally recorded in 1953 by R&B singer Jimmy Liggins, was performed at Thunder Road in Codevilla, Italy, on Sept. 18, 1998, and again with slightly different lyrics at the the Sweetwater Saloon in Mill Valley, California, on Dec. 8, 1998. The latter features a spoken introduction by Dave. — ~~AM~~

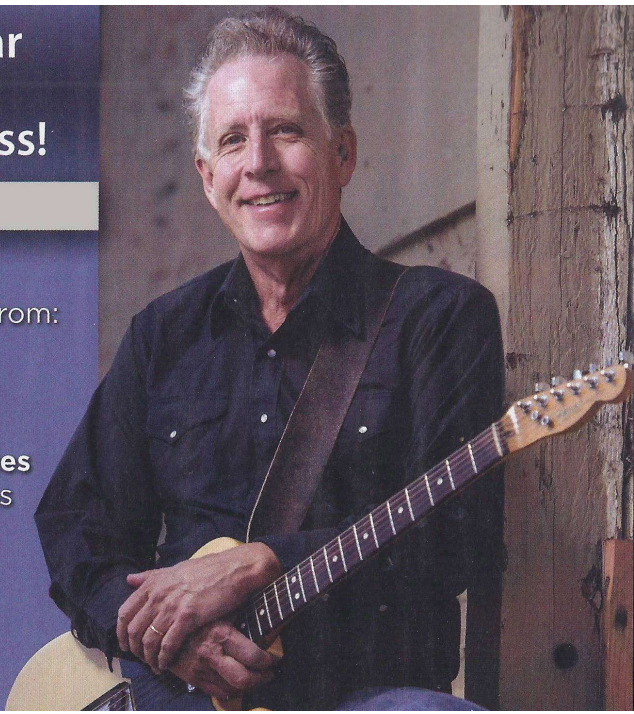
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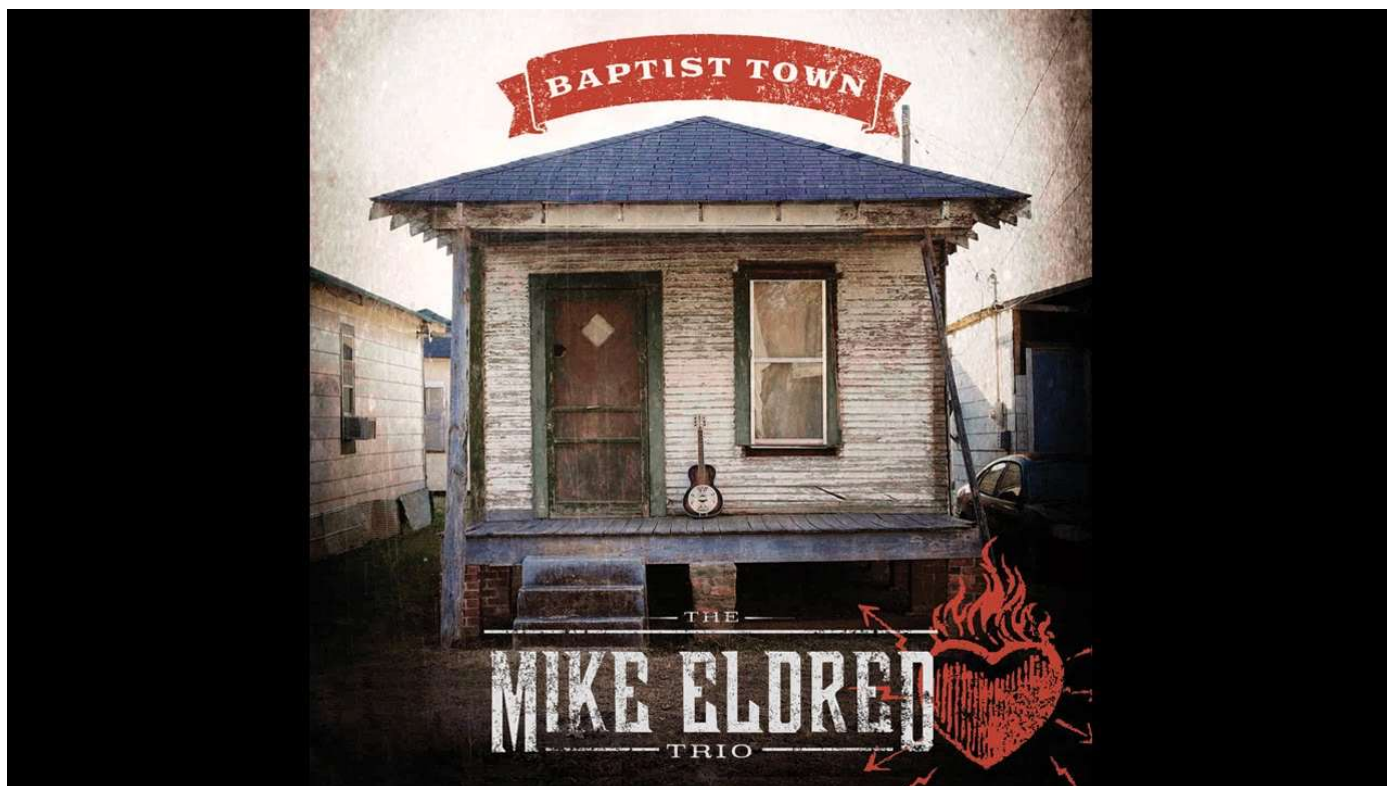
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*The Mike Eldred Trio is led by guitarist / singer Mike Eldred and backed by the 1994 - 2008 Blasters rhythm section of John Bazz and Jerry Angel. Recorded at Sun Studio in Memphis, Baptist Town (which is the band's fourth release) was inspired by the rich history of the South and the folklore that is so important to American culture. The catalyst for the record is the small neighborhood outside Greenwood, Mississippi where legendary blues guitarist Robert Johnson was murdered in 1938. The track **SOMEBODY BEEN RUNNIN'** references the final chapter of Johnson's "deal with the devil" made at the crossroads, and--some say--was fulfilled in the tiny community of Baptist Town the night he died.*

The record also focuses on the poverty and racism of the past, and still exists in the Deep South today. Baptist Town remains mostly as it did in Johnson's time. It is a stark contrast to the surrounding city of Greenwood, Mississippi. The dichotomy between love and hate, rich and poor, sin and salvation, black and white, are apparent throughout the record, which reflects many of society's current struggles.



Photo: Matt York

Mike Eldred: I knew back in 2011 that I was going to record this album at Sun Studios. I didn't know what it was gonna be, but I knew it was gonna be a blues record, not a rockabilly record. When I think about Sun Records, I think about Howlin' Wolf and the blues. Most people think Sun Records is only about Elvis Presley.

I love the south. Mississippi, for me, is a magical place. I really wanted to pay tribute to that whole culture. A lot of people don't know about prison work songs and field hollers and how they influenced music. I wanted to bring some of that back to life. We recorded this album in June 2013.

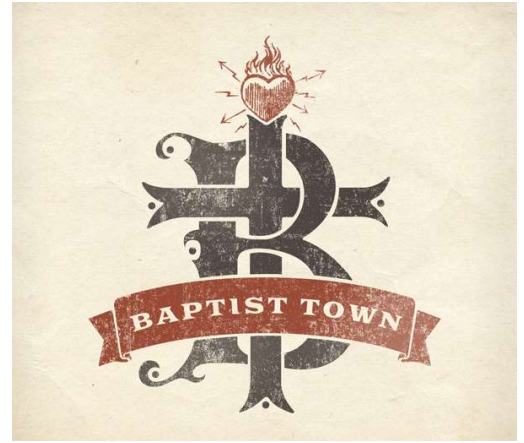
I took a trip through the south in March 2013. I called my journey a soul cleanser -- from Nashville to Atlanta, and to Tupelo, Mississippi. I'm a big fan of Robert Johnson.

I knew he died in Greenwood, MS, but I didn't know where the juke joint was where he was poisoned. I read that he was brought to a neighborhood called Baptist Town, and he stayed in a house for a few days as he was dying. Knowing he was gonna die, they took him to a nearby plantation. He died, and they buried him just outside of Greenwood at Mt. Zion Church.

I decided I had to visit Baptist Town. The place was a mess. It's a horrible ghetto, but there are houses still there from 80 years ago – in fact, one where Honey Boy Edwards grew up. The whole town is four blocks of poverty and very sad. We already had dates booked for Sun Studio recording in June and I hadn't written anything yet. So as soon as I got home after this trip, I was filled with inspiration from all of what I saw in Baptist Town. I just couldn't stop writing songs. Every night I had a new song – It was just happening.

We arranged everything and did demos at my house. We did one rehearsal before going to Memphis to record. We recorded all the songs in two days. This record blows me away. It's just a beautiful record. Very few people know that this neighborhood had one of the most influential guitar players of all time die there. And the people who live there who do know, don't give a shit. If you believe the legend, it's where the devil came to collect on a deal he made with Robert Johnson years earlier at the crossroads of Highway 61 and 49. It's one of the most historical places in music history, but it's full of drugs and thugs, poverty, and no one cares about it.

This record is so important to me. It's important that I tell this story. Important to tell people about Baptist town and point in the direction of why a place like this can exist in this world. The whole record is based on good verses evil, rich verses poor, the haves and have nots, and caring verses complacency. It's a dichotomy. I hope people get the message from this album and recognize that places like Baptist Town exist.



Sun Studios Memphis Tennessee by Matt York





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