

# American Music

## The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

JUNE 2017

## Streets of Fire Film is Re-Released

**Latest News:** Streets of Fire the 1984 film that features performances by the seven-man lineup of The Blasters performing ONE BAD STUD and BLUE SHADOWS, has been released in a Collector's Edition on Blu-Ray by Shout! Factory. Directed by Walter Hill, the film stars Diane Lane, Rick Moranis, Michael Pare and Amy Madigan. A bonus disc includes two new documentaries. Shotguns & Six Strings: The Making of a Rock and Roll Fable which features interviews with Dave Alvin, Hill and members of the cast. Rumble on the Lot: Walter Hill's "Streets of Fire Revisited", the second documentary, includes additional interviews. Other bonus features include music videos, the theatrical trailer and still photos. -- Under The Big Black Sun: A Personal History of L.A. Punk by John Doe and Tom DeSavia lost in the Grammy category for "Best Spoken Word Recording" to Carol Burnett's In Such Good Company: Eleven Years of Laughter, Mayhem and Fun in the Sandbox. Under The Big Black Sun, which features a chapter written by Dave Alvin, was released in paperback by Da Capo Press in April 2017. -- Dave Alvin was a featured guest for two concerts in March 2017 with Los Lobos as a substitute for guitarist David Hidalgo. Dave played a handful of his own songs (MARIE MARIE, ASH-GROVE, and FOURTH OF JULY) at Downers Grove, IL over two shows including a version of Doug Sahm's MENDOCINO. -- Dave Alvin and fellow singer/songwriter Jimmie Dale Gilmore performed for eTown, the internationally syndicated radio show in May. The show is archived at [www.ETOWN.org](http://www.ETOWN.org). Look for the duo doing more tours together including an East Coast run of acoustic shows in October 2017. -- Guitarist Steve Dawson recorded a podcast interview with Dave Alvin. Listen for free at [www.stevedawson.ca](http://www.stevedawson.ca). Another episode features Steve Berlin, former Blasters saxophonist and current member of Los Lobos. -- Dave Alvin's West of the West train trip is August 13-25. Musical guests on the trip, which will feature stops in Chicago, New Orleans and Kansas City, include Christy McWilson, Rick Shea and Terry Allen. [www.rootsontherails.com](http://www.rootsontherails.com) -- Dave Alvin and John Doe appear in a video for I LIKE CATS / YOU LIKE DOGS by Cindy Lee Berryhill. The song appears on her new album The Adventurist (Omnivore Recordings). The video can be seen on YouTube. -- Dave Alvin recorded a song for an upcoming Mose Allison tribute CD. The song called WILD MAN ON THE LOOSE has Dave, Phil, Bob Glaub, Don Heffington and David Wither playing. -- Dave Alvin wrote liner notes for the new re-mastered Frank Zappa live at the Roxy CD. Dave attended one of the shows. He also talks about the Blasters meeting Zappa in 1982 in Italy. ((((( Latest News Continued on page 2 ))))))



***In This Issue: A Farewell to Bobby Lloyd Hicks, The Guilty Ones Interview Part 1, Katy Moffatt, and Hard Travelin' Review***

**Latest News** (continued) -- The Americana Music Association<sup>SM</sup> will celebrate its "Lifetime Achievement Honorees" on September 13, 2017 which will include HighTone Records co-owners Larry Sloven and Bruce Bromberg. Others honored are Robert Cray, the Hi Rhythm section, Iris DeMent, Graham Nash, and Van Morrison. The 16th Annual Honors & Awards takes place at the Ryman Auditorium in Nashville. The press release states: "HighTone Records founders Larry Sloven and Bruce Bromberg are the recipients of the Jack Emerson Lifetime Achievement Award for Executive. In the mid-'80s, these industry partners bonded over their wide-ranging roots music tastes and sought out an opportunity to create a label home for the melting pot of influences that is now Americana music. Artistic freedom was imperative to their business model from day one, and it made all the difference in providing a liberating platform for artists who have paved the way in Americana such as The Blasters, Big Sandy, Buddy Miller and more. For 25 years, HighTone Records produced 300 albums and a number of landmark achievements including the release of the first and longest running #1 Americana Radio Airplay album, Tulare Dust: A Songwriter's Tribute to Merle Haggard, and a GRAMMY® for Dave Alvin's King of California." -- **AM**

## Robert "Bobby" Lloyd Hicks March 12, 1947 - February 19, 2017

Bobby Lloyd Hicks, long time drummer for the Guilty Men and the Skeletons, passed away on February 19, 2017. Dave Alvin broke the news on Facebook to the fans: "Bobby Lloyd Hicks passed away last night surrounded by his loving children and wife. He was/is my dear friend, drummer, singer, teacher, trouble-maker, Guilty Man-Skeleton-NRBQer inspirational rock and



Photo: Billy Davis

**Bobby Lloyd having fun at the 1999 Austin City Limits TV show sound check**

roll anarchist angel. How do I summarize nearly 30 years of close friendship? How do I explain 16 years on the road together? All the sweaty gigs, miles, adventures, great shows, bad shows, drunken misdeeds, music lessons, disappointments, laughs, tears and all the brotherly love and broken drum heads. We battled our demons together and, happily, Bobby eventually triumphed over his. He didn't get the fame and fortune he deserved, but nevertheless, he kept playing until his body gave out. Selfishly, I have to say, that so far in 2017, I've lost two of the closest friends I'll ever have. First was my Blaster-era road manager, Wally Hanley, and now Bobby. I already hate this terrible year, but I'm gonna do what musicians do to survive: turn up loud, sing our songs, mourn, celebrate, touch some hearts, shake some asses and play some damn music to raise the dead. I Llove and miss ya, Bobby Lloyd, but I'll see you onstage every night."



In April, there was a memorial in Springfield, MO, for Bobby Lloyd. It became a reunion of the original Guilty Men band. Rick Shea, Greg Boaz and Dave Alvin came from California to join Joe Terry who lives in Springfield. Road manager Danny Bland was also there. Dave: "We played without a drummer, but his trademark drum kit of many colors, was set up on stage. We felt like he was, as someone said, "just running a little bit late to the gig." We did the song CRAZY COUNTRY HOP, which he always sang in our shows. I sang, Joe sang, and his daughters played ukuleles on it. We also did SURFER GIRL. It was pretty sweet."



At Bobby Lloyd's Memorial: **Dave Alvin, Rick Shea, Greg Boaz, Joe Terry, and Lloyd's drum kit.**

In June, 2017, Dave Alvin talked to American Music about Bobby Lloyd Hicks. Dave: "I always loved him. He was sort of like Gaffney to me. He was one of my other non-biological big brothers. It was shocking when he passed because, though we knew he was ill, it happened so quickly."

The day before he died, I was driving out to play a private party in San Francisco and his wife was texting me about his progress. She told me he wasn't doing well. The next day I did a show in Whittier with Phil and while I was on stage she texted me and said: "If you want to say goodbye, call now." I got off stage, got the message, called immediately, but it was already

too late. I was told he had a nice end. He was conscious and spent the whole day with his wife, daughters and grandkids at his bedside. They played ukuleles and sang songs. He was living on oxygen and at some point he said: "Okay, you can turn it off. I'm ready to go." That's how he went.

I remember a funny story. I got drunk in Italy with these Italian writers drinking the Italian Liqueur, Grappa. Drinking beer and that, got me very drunk. For some reason I thought it would be a good idea to kick out the headlights of a police car - with the police in it. Bobby Lloyd grabbed me away, then talked the cops out of arresting me. He then threw me over his shoulder - and I'm not exaggerating - and brought me back to the hotel and laid me on the floor.

The very first gig we played together was with the Skeletons. I first met him and saw him play at the club Maxwell's in Hoboken, NJ. I watched the Skeletons and I said: "Wow! What a great drummer." Then six months later we started touring together with the Skeletons backing me up. It was October 1991, and we spent 4 or 5 days in Springfield, MO, rehearsing. One of our first few shows we played was a big venue with a big crowd in St Louis. It was a Halloween show with people in costumes. We did a sound check and then Lloyd went back to the hotel. He came back totally bombed. He made it through the Skeletons opening set and then they called me up for my first song, which was ROMEO'S ESCAPE. Lloyd didn't make it through that song; he passed out on the drums. Every once in a while he would wake up, hit a cymbal, then fall back asleep (laughs). We only played about 6 songs and we're basically without a drummer. I was really pissed, but the next morning, he was all sheepish and I

could never be angry with him. Then I kept him as my drummer for the next 14 years.

The day that I fired him (May 9, 2006), I told him I couldn't handle this anymore. I bought him a ticket to Seattle and Danny Bland set him up in a recovery house that gets you three months sober in one month. The MusiCares foundation paid for that. He stayed sober the last 11 years of his life. I hated firing him because we were bonded, but I can be really hard on drummers.

Besides being a great drummer, he was an incredibly smart musician. His understanding of music theory and harmony was incredible. He got me to like the Beach Boys by playing so many records; I couldn't help but like them.

After he was sober a few years, he got to play with NRBQ - his favorite band. It makes me not feel as bad about having fired him."



The Guilty Men 1998

**Rick Shea:** When I first started touring with Dave Alvin and The Guilty Men, I was the new guy, so I took the back seat in the van and thought I'd stay out of the way. After a couple of days, someone let me know that I was in Bobby's usual spot, so I gladly took another seat and he moved back in. After a couple of weeks, I noticed the whole back seat area was filled with comic books, music magazines, cassette tapes and boxes, some of Bobby's clothes, letters and personal stuff, and it just kind of stayed that way for the rest of the time I was touring with Dave.



Bobby was always kind and patient and would talk with anyone and everyone who came to the shows for as long as they wanted to talk. He was genuinely interested in everything they had to say. He had friends and fans at every show we played.

Musically he was a pro with deep music knowledge, all about the groove and the feel. If he thought you'd played something particularly good, he'd always have a wink or a nod or little lick on the drums. He was always listening.

My favorite stories about Bobby were stories I heard from the old days, the guys in the Skeletons driving around Springfield trying to find him last minute to leave town, finally finding him at some gig or some party, throwing him in the van and Bobby playing the whole tour in the same clothes he was wearing. There's others maybe a little too wild to tell, some I heard and some I was there for. Bobby was a rock & roll drummer his whole life and as far as I know, he did live up to it. Adios, Bobby Lloyd Hicks, I am glad I got to know you.



**Katy Moffatt**, who had Bobby Lloyd Hicks play drums on Loose Diamond, her 1999 album produced by Dave Alvin: "I didn't know him well, but I experienced him as a guy who made everything better, from the music you make to the kind of day you might be having."



**Robbie Fulks** shared his memories in a Feb. 24, 2017, blog post on his Web site: "Bobby's time-feel was his own, which is either a backhanded compliment or the highest thing you can say about a good drummer, and in this case it's the second. Beat-wise, he



wasn't a guy who played on it or a little behind it. He pushed you along, in a good-natured and dynamically assured but insistent manner. He was also a drummer who sang well, who loved and thought deeply about lyrics and song structure, all of which raised his game and wove his

mind more thoroughly into the team's.

Now that he's left the earth there's no point in resisting the acceptance of a complicated man exactly as he was. For us, the musicians that played with him and benefited from his attitude and intelligence, Bobby was in many ways a model, showing us by example how to feel and project natural pulse, how to assume leadership with grace, how to do a demanding job well, and how to treat others considerately. His considerateness meant that a lot of us around him had to guess at whatever troubles might have been weighing on his mind. Probably the exact same troubles that everyone has and that most people are all too happy to harangue us about. I'm grateful to Bobby for a few very sound life lessons. And -- I almost forgot -- for the swingin' country shuffle: man, he owned that! " - ~~Am~~

## Hard Travelin' by Tom Wilk

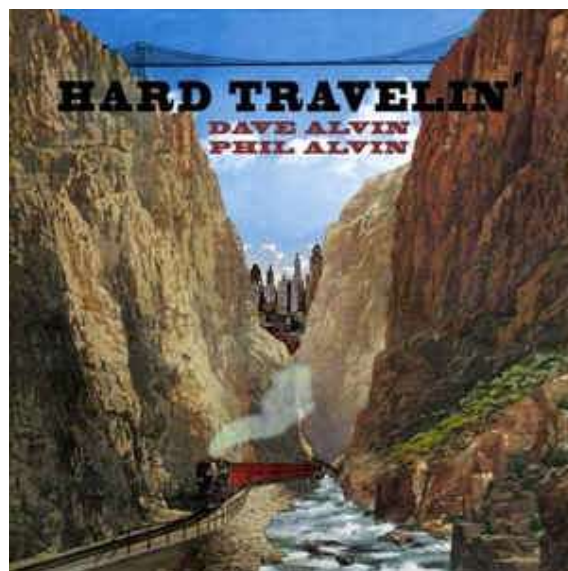
Emmylou Harris once observed that old songs need new voices to sing them in places they've never been sung before in order to survive. That could have been the philosophy behind the recording of Common Ground: Dave Alvin and Phil Alvin Play and Sing The Songs of Big Bill Broonzy (2014) and Lost Time (2015). Their interpretations on those albums have introduced the songs to a new generation of listeners and go beyond being unimaginative copies of the originals.

This is the third Alvin Brothers blues collaboration on the Yep Roc label called Hard Travelin', a four-song EP released on translucent red vinyl for Record Store Day on April 22, 2017. The material finds the brothers reaching back again to songs that have influenced them while putting a fresh spin on their new versions.

Dave performed the Woody Guthrie-penned title track during the Monsters of Folk tour with Ramblin' Jack Elliott, Tom Russell and Chris Smither in 1998. Each of the artists took a verse and the acoustic performance acknowledged the influence of Guthrie.

For the 2017 version, Dave and Phil transform the song into an electric blues and trade off vocally on the verses with dynamic backing from the Guilty Ones (Chris Miller on slide guitar, Lisa Pankratz on drums, Brad Fordham on bass). A song about the travails of the working man is fitting for the brothers, the sons of a labor organizer. Phil contributes some inspired playing on harmonica. The introductory guitar work has echoes of BARN BURNING, a song from the Blasters' American Music album.

Phil takes the lead vocal on MEAN OLE FRISCO by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. It's a song that Phil has frequently featured in his sets



as a solo artist and gives him a chance to show off his skills as a blues interpreter. The backing by the Guilty Ones has the feel of a Sun Records session from the 1950s and calls to mind MYSTERY TRAIN, Elvis Presley's final single for the label.

Dave sings lead on the obscure CALIFORNIA DESERT BLUES, which was written and recorded by Lane Hardin in 1935. It's a good fit for one of Dave's quieter vocal performances and lyrically fits in alongside his own songs about California, such as DRY RIVER and OUT OF CONTROL. Hardin, believed to have been born in Tennessee in 1896, is one of the shadowy figures of the blues. He recorded infrequently and died in Los Angeles in 1975. Blues scholar Stefan Wirz claims that no photos of Hardin are known to exist.

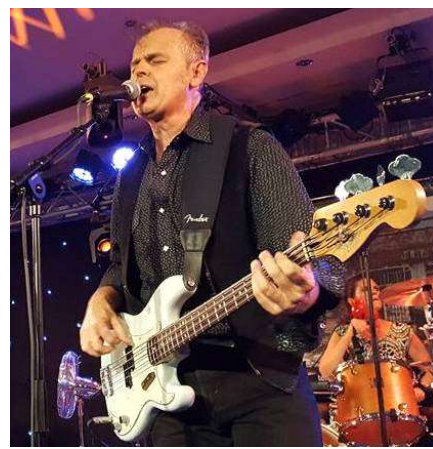
Phil and Dave share lead and backing vocals on Jim Jackson's KANSAS CITY BLUES, which he first recorded in 1927. The brothers bring a good-time feel to the song, which deals with putting a failed romance into the past. The instrumentation features Gene Taylor on piano, Bob Glaub on bass and Don Heffington on drums.

Initially, Hard Travelin' seems like an inspired collection of four unrelated songs. However, after repeated listens, I noticed that each song deals with traveling or the singer's desire to move from one place to another. It's a theme that any touring musician would appreciate.

In any case, Hard Travelin' serves as a fine musical appetizer, while Dave and Phil consider their next project together. — ~~AM~~

# The Guilty Ones Interview Part 1

## Chris Miller—Lisa Pankratz—Brad Fordham



In spring 2017, I sat down for a roundtable discussion with Dave Alvin's current backing band - The Guilty Ones. Besides being great musicians, lead guitarist Chris Miller, drummer Lisa Pankratz, and bassist Brad Fordham share a warm camaraderie that made for a fun and informative interview.

**By Billy Davis**

**American Music:** Tell me about your early musical influences.

**Chris Miller:** There was always music in my house. I think I started hearing blues when I was about five or six and I wanted a guitar right away. I wanted to play like Big Bill Broonzy and Leadbelly. I really wanted a 12-string guitar when I was a little kid. I finally got one when I was 10 years old.

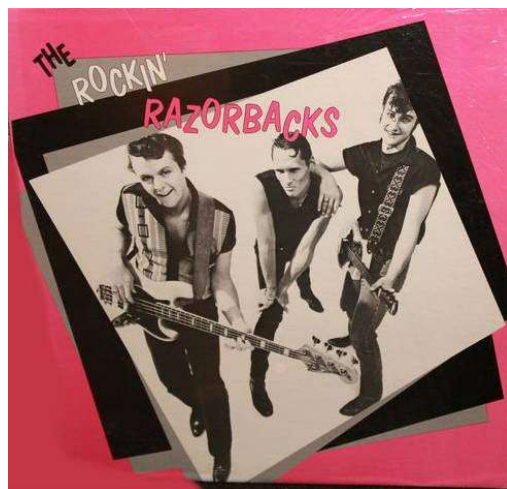
My family moved a lot, but when I was living in the Northwest, I started out as a trumpet player in marching bands. I took that knowledge and applied it to playing guitar when I was 10 in Berkeley, California. I was in a blues band in about 1969 or 1970. Living in that area, there was a lot of music you could see in clubs like at the Keystone and at blues festivals. There was a place called Leopold's Records in Berkeley and a guitar store next to it. So me and my friends would buy \$.99 records and jam in the guitar store.

I made my first record when I was 15 in San Francisco. It was a church gospel band. It got played on the gospel radio station in San Francisco. So I started playing professionally in high school and never turned back.

**AM:** Chris, What brought you to Austin, Texas?



**Chris:** I was living in Portland, Oregon, and had my own band called the Rockin' Razorbacks. It was kind of an Americana rockabilly roots thing in the early 80's. We had a regional hit record called MORE LOVE, LESS ATTITUDE. It started getting some national airplay. Later, the song was recorded by Curtis Delgado and a guy in Australia named David Hole. That fizzled out and I went on to a blues band called the Terraplanes. My friends Tony Villanueva and Brian Hofeldt, who formed the Derailers, had moved to Austin. They called me and said, 'This is your place; you have to get down here. They have the music you like here.' So I took a trip down, spent a week, and saw a band called 47 Indians with Lisa playing drums, at the 311 club. That week I saw all the people that I would be playing with later, like a band called Chaparral and also Two Hoots and a Holler. I knew I needed to be there. I went back up to Portland and played a little while, until Tony came up and got me. I took just my guitar amp and steel and drove to Texas. I started playing in what later became the Derailers. I played with Sarah Brown, and then went out on the road with Lavelle White. I was in Roy Heinrich's band for a while, Marsha Ball, Dale Watson, Wayne Hancock, Charlie Robison, The Hollisters and so many others.



It was with Lavelle White at a club called The Mint in Los Angeles where Dave Alvin remembered seeing me play for first time. I had opened for the Blasters in Portland years before, but he didn't notice me until that Mint show. The first year in Austin, I was playing in about 20 or 30 bands - half the time at the Broken Spoke with all the country bands - and half the time at Antone's at blues gigs.

**Lisa Pankratz:** Austin didn't need you (Laughs).

**Chris:** Ha Ha! I don't know about that, but I definitely needed Austin.

**Lisa:** I had music around from an early age. My dad was a drummer and my uncle was in a really popular band called Greezy Wheels that played at the Armadillo

World Headquarters often. On that side of my family, we were always going out to hear music and they always had some kind of jam at someone's house or in a park or my father would take us out to his gigs. This was in the late 60s and early 70s. My father played drums since he was 13 in blues and country bands. My grandparents on my mom's side of the family were much more conservative, but they had a gospel quartet that they sang in. So they appreciated and encouraged music in their own way.

When I got old enough to try to play, there were drums always set up at home, so that helped me 'stick' with it. I took piano lessons for a little while too, which I didn't stick with.

My father had a great record collection of country and R&B, so I could hear a lot of different things. I probably started playing when I was around 12 and figured out how to put a beat together. I would come home from school every day and play along with records and tapes. Later on, when in high school, I started playing percussion with my father's band and started trying to meet people my age to play with. I ran a few ads, played at a few parties and eventually made friends who were starting their own bands. Some of them were the guys who would eventually go on to form High Noon and the guys who would form The Wagoners. We all played together in different rockabilly and roots bands during high school. God bless Austin. There were so many good bands at the time. I grew up about 30 miles west of Austin. When I was old enough, I would go into town to play. I tried to get into clubs to see bands - I didn't care about drinking at

all at the time. I just wanted to hear the music. Eventually, I did play in High Noon and a few of us formed a band called 47 Indians - a rockabilly / swing band that had members of High Noon and 8 ½ Souvenirs. Whenever I was home, I would play with my dad's band and one of the first things I did was to play in a reunion band of my uncle's band, which they called St. Greezy's Wheel. I got to do an Austin City Limits anniversary TV show, and I was only 16 or 17 years old.

**Brad Fordham:** it's on YouTube, and it's great.

**Lisa:** Ha Ha! No, you don't need to find that. Anyway, once I did that, I started playing as much as I could. I went to college in Houston and pretty much that whole time that I was there, I was waiting for my friends to come through town to play with them. In the summer, I'd go back home and play with different versions of bands that I eventually joined on a regular basis - like Teddy and the Tall Tops, Chapperal, The Derailers, and High Noon. I thought I really had made it when I got to sub-in for the Leroi Brothers or Teddy and the Talltops. These were the guys in Austin playing the music that I loved. I thought if they let me sub-in for them, then I must be okay.

My chance to get out there and really be a professional musician was when I became Ronnie Dawson's touring band drummer. It was a big door to open for me to play the music I cared about. I did that for several years.

**AM:** I saw you so many times on Ronnie Dawson shows because he was a favorite of mine. You did a show at NY's Carnegie hall and I snuck a Walkman cassette recorder in to record the show. It's not very good quality, but at least it captured a legendary show.

**Lisa:** Oh, you did that? I have a copy. As much as I gripe about taping nowadays, that is a whole different ball game and that is truly a treasure to my heart. That was such a fun show.

**AM:** What recordings were you on before becoming a Guilty One?

**Lisa:** Let's see, I'm on the first Derailers record that Dave Alvin produced. . .

**Chris:** And we were both on the first Wayne Hancock record.

**Lisa:** I was proud of that. I was the first drummer to play on a Wayne Hancock song.

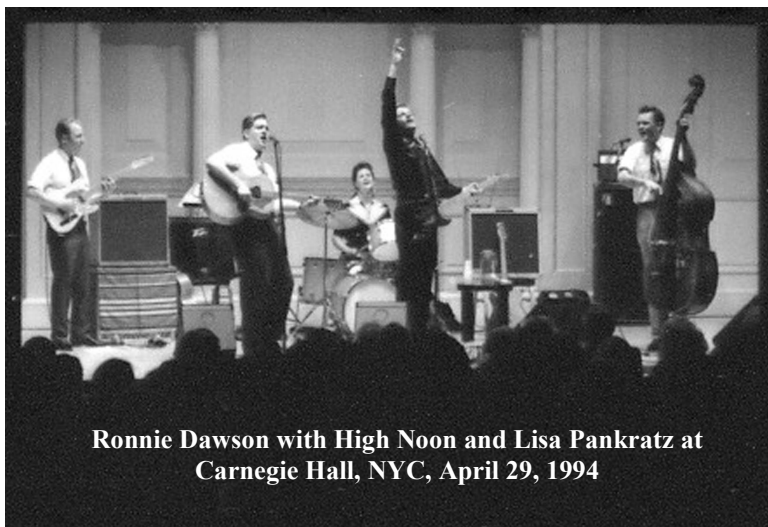
**Chris:** The first and the last. (laughs)

**Lisa:** I took it as a compliment that I was able to play drums in all these drummer-less bands like Wayne Hancock and High Noon and seamlessly bring something in that could complement their music. We did a live record with Ronnie Dawson at the Continental club which I'm really proud of. I did some recording with Toni Price and the Cornell Hurd band.

**AM:** Brad, Tell me about your entry into the music industry.

**Brad:** I played trombone in a sit-down band. Luckily, there weren't many marching bands in Canada near Toronto in Georgian Bay, which is a fishing and lumberjack town. I tried to get to Toronto as soon as I could because that was the big scene. I was lucky to finish high school in Toronto. My school had a hip music and art department. They had good instruments like a Rhodes piano and some Japanese Fender basses and Traynor amps. They would let us jam anytime, which was the best thing to keep kids off the streets. I was asked to pick 3 favorite instruments in school; so I put down 1. Electric bass 2. Electric bass 3. Electric bass (laughs).

Our big street was Queen Street, and it was hopping. The Horseshoe Revue Tavern laid claim to having both Hanks play there – Williams and Snow. The El Mocambo club was right around the corner. The Stones just



Ronnie Dawson with High Noon and Lisa Pankratz at Carnegie Hall, NYC, April 29, 1994



cut a live album there, so everyone wanted to play there. I got a job at the big guitar store on Queen Street, so I got to meet all the musicians in town.

I was in the house blues band at Grossman's Tavern in Chinatown. Stevie Ray Vaughan would come into town and play the El Mocambo and would hang out at Grossman's on his off-time. He discovered a lot of good young blues guitar players like Colin James and Jeff Healey. But I really cut my teeth playing Honky Tonk at a club called the Matador that didn't open until last call. Last call in Toronto is 12:50. So no booze, but you played all night.

I started a band with a singer named Lori Yates. We made a little bit of a splash with cow punk. We got picked up by a CBS records and we were called Rang Tango. They wanted us to be a cow punk version of Cyndi Lauper. The deal changed and they wanted to move us to the CBS Nashville division. When they said they wanted us to be more country, I knew that they weren't behind us and the band was gonna implode. We recorded in Nashville, but things fizzled out. It was a good introduction to how things work in Nashville, though.

I really wanted to go to Austin because a lot of friends like in the Wagoneers and Ted Roddy told me so much about it. Lori Yates told me: 'All the guys look like you there.' (laughs)

I went straight to Austin in 1989 and it felt just like home. I met everybody. I heard there was a band with a girl singer that was looking for a bass player. I thought: 'Oh no! Not another girl singer?' But it was Austin and that girl was Kelly Willis. Five months later, she had a record deal with MCA. So I wound up in Nashville again recording. We started touring, but between tours, I started playing around Austin.

I remember I was able to ring in the new year of 1990 at a club called the Hole in the Wall. Kelly opened the show. The Wagoneers were next. I was hanging out with the guitarist Brent Wilson and this girl walked in with a pair of drum sticks in her back pocket. I said to Brent, "Who is that?" That's the first time I saw Lisa. She didn't play that night.

**Lisa:** I was coming from some other gig. But I was trying to get over there as fast as I could because all my favorite bands were playing.

**Brad:** Chris, what year did you get to Austin?

**Chris:** I think in 1991. I can't remember specifically, but my first few gigs were with Ted Roddy. Brad, you were on bass.

**Brad:** Yes. Ted Roddy was THE guy in Austin - the one with the record collection. I don't know who coined the phrase, but Austin is all just one big band and we all play in it.

**Lisa:** It was me. But I'm not the only one to say it.

**Chris:** The first place I lived, I met Lisa rehearsing with the Derailers in my living room. I pretty much met you guys the minute I got there.

**Lisa:** Brad and I met that day at The Hole In The Wall, but pretty much didn't play together in 10 years.

**Brad:** Maybe just a few pick-up gigs with Ted Roddy. I do remember one at the Electric Lounge that was thrown together at the last minute.

**Lisa:** Yes, that's right. We were both touring in different bands. And we weren't together yet. We've been married now for 14 years.

**Brad:** I was on the road a lot with Kelly Willis. When she wanted to slow down touring, Jimmie Dale Gilmore recruited me. When I was off tour, I would always be playing at the Broken Spoke or the Continental or The Black Cat especially. I shared a town house with Ted Roddy, and there was always some kind of band rehearsal going on in the living room. That's where I first met Chris Gaffney.

**Lisa:** I did a short tour with Ted Roddy and Chris Gaffney. We had Rob Douglas on bass and Casper Rawls on guitar. I didn't know Chris personally, but I knew of him. I was a DJ at Rice University, when I was going there, and that's the first time that I saw a Chris Gaffney record. College music was mostly new wave and alternative, so I was the only one looking for roots music. Some great records came through the station that I liked. When I met Gaffney, I remembered that he had this great record that I heard in college.

**Brad:** I met Gaffney when you were putting together that tour. He was playing the kind of country that we loved - Texas shuffles.



**The first Guilty Women show came about after the band huddled in a tent for 20 minutes preparing for their set**

**Chris:** I was on the big long Ted Roddy HighTone Records Review tour and that's where I met Chris Gaffney. Ted asked me to come out on the many-months-long HighTone revue tour. We went down to the Ark and had one rehearsal and I said, 'I love this dude.' Chris and I became really tight after that. He used to stay at my house. We both went out songwriting with a guy named Troy Olsen in Tucson - we just became really close. That's how I got into the Dave Alvin band. I used to tell Chris: 'If an opening ever comes up. . . ' I was the go-to guy in HighTone for a while. I played in just about every band. I was always in the HighTone offices when record contracts were being signed. When the opening did come up, Chris put in a good word for me. So did Bruce Bromberg from HighTone. Gaffney was godfather to my step daughter. Chris was definitely part of the family.

**AM:** Lisa, How did you get into Dave Alvin's band?

**Lisa:** It was with the Guilty Women. There's nothing like starting out of the gate in front of thousands of people with no rehearsal (laughs). I worked with Dave very briefly on the Derailers record that he produced. We never played together at that point. I was certainly aware of the Blasters. I saw them on that ABC TV show Fridays performing in 1982. It was a mind blower to see them playing old music that I only thought was on old records or played in clubs. I didn't think you could play this music on national TV, but the Blasters did it. My first Guilty Women gig was at the Hardly Strictly Bluegrass festival (October 4, 2008) in San Francisco in front of thousands with no rehearsal. Sarah Brown who was playing bass helped get me in.

**Brad:** I got to witness that first Guilty Women gig.

**Lisa:** Yes, because you were there with Jerry Jeff Walker. But it was amazing because I got to meet new people like Laurie Lewis and Nina Gerber and got to play with friends from home like Amy Farris and Sarah Brown. I had never met Christy McWilson and the accordion player, Suzy Thompson. Dave wanted to do a really different show, so he brought in a broad array of influences and talents that all happened to be women and he put it all together.

I wasn't up to speed on all the great songs of Dave Alvin at that point. So we huddled in a tent before the show and spent 20 minutes going over songs. Some of the other musicians had played with Dave before, but I went out heart-in-throat. It was fun. I remember playing and trying something on drums and he turned and smiled. I knew it was gonna work out okay. After we realized people liked it, the idea came up to form a band. Chris Gaffney had passed away and Dave was looking for somewhere else to focus. So we did a CD and toured for a few years.

Dave's next CD after The Guilty Women was called Eleven Eleven. He was in Austin with Christy McWilson and they came down to club and saw me and Brad backing Roger Wallace. He liked what he saw and asked me if Brad and I would like to play in a new version of his band. We said, Yes!

**Brad:** So we've been doing this since Eleven Eleven came out. We toured for that album.

**Chris:** Going back to what Lisa said about playing for the first time with Dave in front of thousands of people - I think he likes doing things like that (laughs). The first time I played with Dave, I was on the Mountain Stage radio program with Sarah Brown. Backstage during sound check, Dave said to me: "Hey did you bring your steel? I'd like you to play with me on the radio show." I said: "No I didn't." So he said: "I bet one of the radio

show's band guys has a steel." I asked one guy and he said: "I don't have a steel around here but if you want, you can come back to my house and take a look at some steels..." Dave interrupted: "Yes he does want to take a look" (Laughs). So at this guy's house, he starts pulling out steels that haven't been played in years with rusty strings and no strings to replace them with. I had to clean the strings hoping they would stay in tune and wouldn't break. I went out on stage with Dave and he just said: "The song is in the key of E." It was JUBILEE TRAIN with that big long medley. That was the first time I played with Dave, on the radio, live on a song I never played before, on an instrument with rusty strings (laughs).

**AM:** Tell me about you three coming together as The Guilty Ones band.

**Chris:** Long before the Guilty Ones, we three had played together in so many different bands in Austin.

**Lisa:** Which really made it easy to come together behind Dave, because we already had something in common that we could rely on.

**Brad:** When Dave threw us all together, we said: 'It's gonna be a piece of cake,' cuz we all like each other.

**Lisa:** And that's not an understatement. We've played with a lot of people, more often than not playing with people we like. But it's really nice that we get along as well as we do, because it's very tight quarters when you're putting in a lot of time on the road together. It's a family.

**Chris:** It's a blessing to know these people for the last 25 years. I know from first-hand experience in trying to put a band together that it's nearly impossible to find musicians who can play all those different styles and that you get along with. Country has to be believable. Blues has to be believable - and all the roots variations.

**Brad:** We can't stress enough how excited we all were to get our first chance to play with Dave.

**Chris:** Oh, absolutely!

**Brad:** When I was living in Toronto, the Blasters had a huge connection with that city because Gene Taylor was living there at the time. Me and this rockabilly guitarist I was playing with, used to go over to Gene's house to hang out, because he had this big record collection. The Blasters were always coming thru Toronto. If you were lucky, you got to open for them.

**Chris:** From that first tour that I did with Gaffney, I told him I want that gig in Dave's band. I just kept saying: "If the spot ever opens up, I gotta have it." I already had plenty of work in Austin so I didn't have to go begging, but that one I begged for.

**Brad:** When I was recording with Kelly Willis for MCA records, we recorded the version of The Blasters LITTLE HONEY that made it on the Thelma and Louise soundtrack. We were so excited just recording it.

**Chris:** I played on a recording session back in 1982 for a Rockabilly girl named Ronnie Noise. At the time, I was a blues guy, but I was determined to play rockabilly. She said: "Just listen to Dave Alvin." So if you can find that record, I'm playing just like Dave Alvin.

**Brad:** It's the dream come true gig for me because he wrote the song AMERICAN MUSIC which is all about what I love playing: Country, I love playing blues and I love rock 'n roll. With Dave it's the one gig where you get to play it all. So, when I found out the core unit of the Guilty Ones was going to be me, Lisa, and Chris, I thought, "This just keeps getting better and better."

**Next Issue: The Guilty Ones Interview, Part 2. Chris, Lisa and Brad discuss their solo work and playing with Phil Alvin—as well as the band's favorite songs and memorable moments.**





# Katy Moffatt WHERE THE HEART IS by Tom Wilk

Katy Moffatt is a familiar name to Dave Alvin fans. She sang on his first three solo albums and guested on Interstate City, his first live album as a solo artist where she performed a duet with Dave on “(LOOK OUT) IT MUST BE LOVE. Dave has produced and played guitar on one of her solo albums (Loose Diamond) and sang and played guitar on another (Child Bride). They also worked together on Tulare Dust, the Merle Haggard tribute CD.

Since her debut album was released in 1976, Katy has pursued a solo career and worked with a wide range of musicians, including Tom Russell, Andrew Hardin, Kate Brislin and Steve Berlin.

Katy has returned with Where The Heart Is (Centerfire Music), her first studio solo album in nine years. It demonstrates her strengths as a strong vocalist and songwriter of depth. She remains a solid interpreter of songs by other artists. Her interest in American history led her to compose songs about Wyatt Earp and his fourth wife (the Western-flavored WYATT AND JOSIE) and a championship race horse during the Great Depression (the uplifting SEA BISCUIT) for the new album.

In recent years, she has worked on and staged a one-woman show, Midnight Radio, which highlights “the role of women and radio through songs of personal history and the telling of history through song,” according to her website. She also has appeared in movies, including Hard Country and The Thing Called Love. She recently took time to answer questions about her new album in an email interview.

**AM:** You cover a lot of ground artistically on Where The Heart Is and you had mentioned it took three years to record the album. Did you have a particular idea in mind on what you wanted to accomplish when you began recording? Did your concept of the album change over those three years?

**Katy:** Most of my albums have revealed themselves in process and yes, with a long road such as this one had, the revelation can shift in shape or tenor, but will still be defined by the songs that survive the final cut. In pre-production the paring away of titles begins like a sculptor’s process, eventually revealing the record. That paring continues through the final track selection. All of that happened here, although more slowly. However, nearly from the beginning, WHERE THE HEART IS, a song of wandering and discovery, was clearly going to be the title song; that constant was our lodestar. At the same time, an album has its own path. I find recording can mirror the mystery of songwriting. A record can be as “willful” as a song.

**AM:** You have a reputation of being a good interpreter of other people’s songs. Where The Heart Is includes songs by Mickey Newbury and your brother, Hugh. How do you go about choosing these songs? Do you keep a list? Do you feel you have to live with them awhile or try them out before recording them?

**Katy:** I don’t feel that I choose songs. A song will just hit me and leave a mark ... and a need to approach it. The song of Hugh’s was new and I had just begun to learn it; it was never on a production list. I thought it would be a good one to “break the ice” and get sounds on. It turned out to be the lead song on the record. In contrast, the Newbury song I had been performing for a few years, trying to get it right. I tried to get it on Fewer Things, but that didn’t happen. I love it and I’m so happy it works here.

**AM:** Where The Heart Is features six songs written by yourself or with other writers. Did your one-woman show Midnight Radio influence your songs on the album? As an artist, has songwriting gotten easier or harder as you have gotten older? Does collaborating with another writer, such as Tom Russell, make it easier?

**Katy:** Midnight Radio was not a specific influence, but because its growth is concurrent with the making of this record,



there is song crossover. It's tempting to say: "Yes, songwriting has gotten harder," but I'm not sure that's true. It's always been hard, and the writing I've done the most, of recently, is on the spoken-word (portion) of Midnight Radio. Co-writing can be helpful because it can bring a different kind of inspiration and motivation, but when it really works, it comes from a shared sensibility, which is a rare find.

**AM:** Did growing up in Texas play a big role in your development as a songwriter and musician? Do you feel living in California has had an impact on you as a musician? I noticed Where The Heart Is has a song set in Texas (MARINA) and one set in California (SANTA ANA WINDS).

**Katy:** Place has much influence, because it literally alters the path you walk and what you see. But the way I am affected internally by place, is what seems to get written --- you'll notice that two of the songs you ask about, WHERE THE HEART IS and SANTA ANA WINDS, move through Texas, Colorado, California, and Tennessee and wind up being about the roving, the rambling: how drifting is tied to escape and how that affects the character.

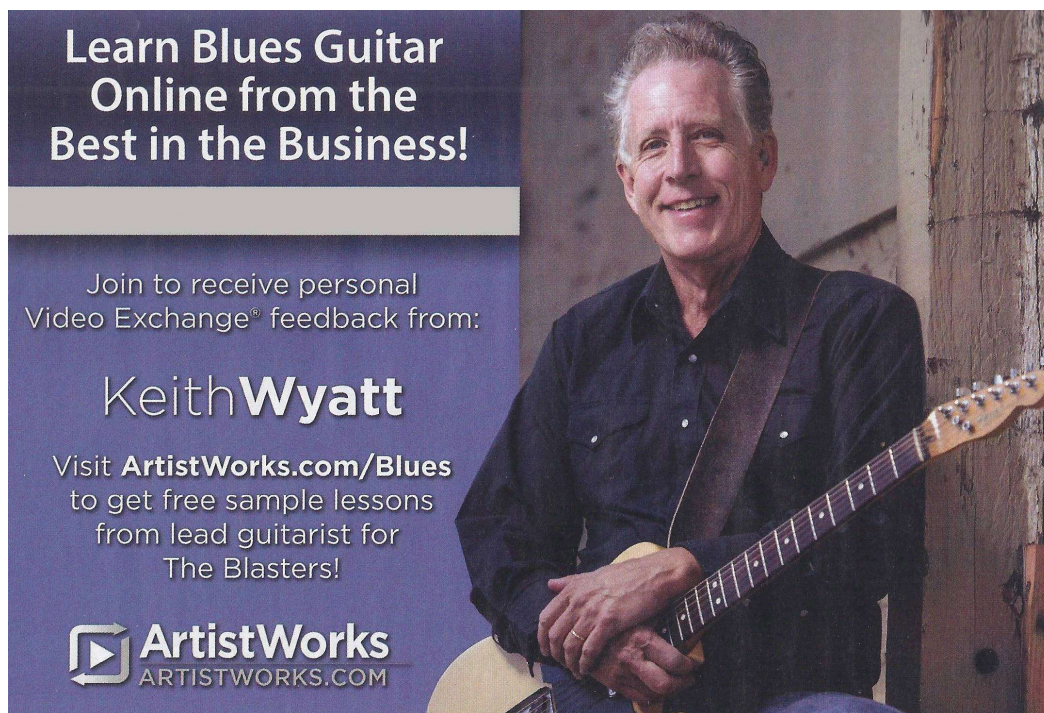
**AM:** Do you have any musical goals or projects left that you would like to accomplish?

Katy: There are several songs I care about that, for one reason or another, didn't make the cut on this record. Some I perform, some I'm beginning to perform. They belong on a record I have not yet approached. So, there's a reason to persist: a sense of something left to say.

**AM:** You worked with Dave Alvin a fair amount in the late 1980s and during the 1990s. Have you discussed the possibility of working together again?

**Katy:** No, we haven't, but I wouldn't rule it out!

**Where The Heart Is is available for purchase at Katy's Web site: [www.katymoffatt.com](http://www.katymoffatt.com))**




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