

ISSUE #68

# American Music

## The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

MAY 2013

## Phil Alvin Benefit Issue

**Latest news:** The release of The Ghost Brothers of Darkland County CD has been delayed to June 4 -- Dave played lead guitar on Roger Knox's new CD Stranger In My Land (Bloodshot Records) on a song called THE LAND WHERE THE CROW FLIES BACKWARDS. -- Floating World records has continued putting 2 for 1 HighTone albums on one CD. They just released Black Jack David / Out In California. -- New Rides of the Furious Swampriders is a compilation CD of various artists on Sireena Records. Dave Alvin plays with Lydia Lunch. -- Check out Keith Wyatt's monthly guitar column called TALKIN' BLUES in Guitar World magazine. He teaches guitar technique and occasionally shows how he plays some of the Blasters songs. -- The Mike Eldred Trio, featuring John Bazz and Jerry Angel, has released Elvis Unleaded, a CD of classic Elvis movie songs. The CD is available on amazon.com and CD Baby. -- Yep Roc will release Dave Alvin's West of The West on LP vinyl this year with a bonus track. -- Dave Alvin is possibly going to reactivate the song downloads again on his website. -- On September 7, Dave Alvin is booked at the San Diego Blues Festival. Dave wants to put together a different type of band just for that event called possibly The Downey Blues all stars. We can only guess it must include some of the Blasters. -- On April, 13, Dave Alvin and a slew of other veterans of the Southern California blues and roots music communities, including Junior Watson, James Harman and the Mike Eldred Trio, gathered at ((continued))

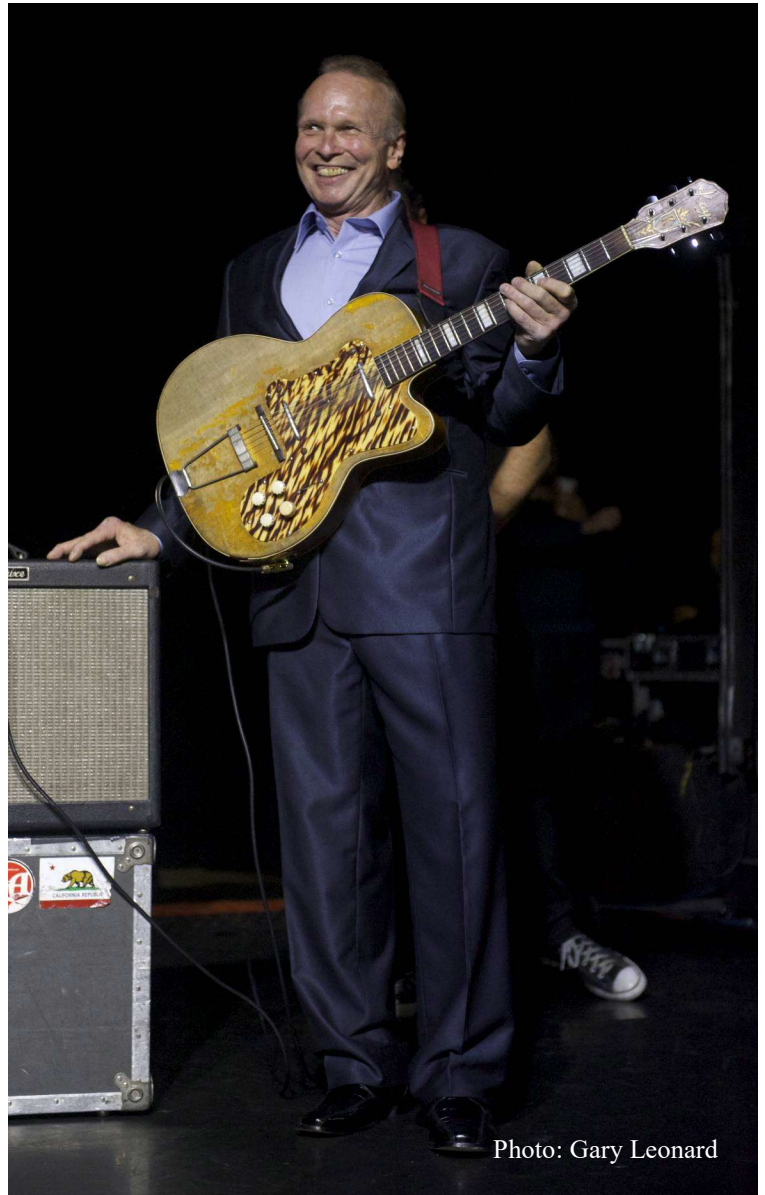


Photo: Gary Leonard

***In This Issue: The Phil Alvin benefit concert, Dave Alvin as a co-writer, Dwight Yoakam, and all the latest news.***

#### **Blasters shows**

**(Phil, John, Bill, Keith)**

- 5/11 Culver City CA at Car Show
- 5/24 San Jose CA at Blank Club
- 5/25 Sacramento CA at Blues Fest
- 6/15 Ventura CA at Roadshow Revival

#### **Dave Alvin & Guilty Ones**

- 5/11 Fallon NV at Barkley Theater
- 5/31 St. Louis MO at Off Broadway
- 6/1 Bowling Green KY at The Warehouse
- 6/3 Buffalo NY at Sportsman Tavern
- 6/5 NYC at City Winery
- 6/6 Somerville MA at Johnny D's
- 6/7 Bellows Falls VT at Roots on River
- 6/8 Pawling NY at Towne Crier Café
- 6/9 Lancaster PA at Long's Park Landing
- 6/13 Austin TX at Continental Club
- 6/14 Dallas TX at Kessler Theater
- 6/15 Conroe TX at Crighton Theatre
- 6/16 San Antonio TX at Sam's Burger
- 7/3-4 Berwyn IL at Fitzgeralds
- 7/6 Lincoln NE at Zoofest
- 7/9 Kansas City MO at Knuckleheads
- 7/11 Frisco CO at Historic Town Park
- 7/12 Denver CO at Soiled Dove
- 7/13 Central City CO at Central City Fest
- 7/16 Ogden UT at Peery's Egyptian Theater
- 7/17 Boise ID at Live after Five
- 7/19 Moscow ID at Rendezvous in the Park
- 7/21 Alta WY at Targhee Fest
- 9/7 San Diego CA at Blues fest
- 10/20-25 King of California Train Trip

#### **Dave Alvin solo**

- 6/21 San Diego CA at Acoustic Music
- 6/22 Santa Monica CA at McCabes
- 6/23 Santa Monica CA at McCabes
- 6/26 Santa Cruz CA at Kuumba Jazz Center
- 6/27 Mill Valley CA at Sweetwater
- 6/29 Laytonville CA at Kate Wolf Fest
- 7/27 Los Angeles CA at Pershing Square

(( *Latest News continued*)) Café Fais Do Do in Los Angeles to salute harmonica ace John 'Juke' Logan in a benefit for the American Institute for Cancer Research. Logan has been contending with esophageal cancer on and off since 2009, and proceeds from the show went toward research on that strain of cancer. Dave Alvin rejoined with Guilty Men Steve Mugalian, and Greg Boaz, with Rick Holmstrom on guitar and Phil Alvin showed up. Dave: "It was a really great night." – Keith Wyatt is working on a blues guitar solo instructional book for Hal Leonard publishing, which will include an instructional CD. It's due out in late 2013. -- James Intveld sings a duet of LOVE'S MADE A FOOL OUT OF YOU with Carla Olson on her new CD Have Harmony, Will Travel. The song was written by Buddy Holly & Bob Montgomery. Cindy Cashdollar, of the Guilty Women, plays on the album. -- **AM**

## **Dave Alvin Justified News**



**Dave Alvin (Facebook page) 3/29/13** - "Here is a recent snapshot of (L to R) brilliant bassist Bob Glaub, Guilty Gal vocalist Christy McWilson, drummer extraordinaire Don Heffington and me during a break from recording a song that will be featured in the upcoming episode of Justified. Also playing were my longtime pals Danny Ott and Rick Shea on guitars and the one and only Brantley Kearns on fiddle. I can't go wrong with this crew." – The song is Dave Alvin's version of the Darrell Scott song YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE HARLAN ALIVE. It was featured in the closing moments of the 4th season's finale of the FX hit TV show Justified (air date 4/213). The song is now available on iTunes and at the Yep Roc Store.

--- In January the first soundtrack CD for Justified was released featuring 2 Dave Alvin songs: HARLAN COUNTY LINE and BEAUTIFUL CITY 'CROSS THE RIVER.

# **Brotherly Love: A Night For Our Brother Phil Alvin**

**The Blasters   ‘X’   The Knitters   Los Lobos**  
By Billy Davis   photos by Gary Leonard

January 26, 2013 – Santa Ana, CA, at The Observatory.

This benefit concert was set up by Dave Alvin to help Phil Alvin pay off his expensive medical bills from being hospitalized last summer while on tour in Spain.

On June 19, 2012, at a Blasters show in Valencia, Spain, Phil Alvin had a reaction in his throat from an abscessed tooth causing it to swell and block his breathing. He was rushed to the Hospital where they performed an emergency tracheotomy. Phil flat-lined, but was brought back by a Doctor named Maria. Though the 12 remaining tour dates were cancelled, Phil's Blasters band mates stayed in Spain with him for a week until he stabilized in the Intensive Care Unit.

Dave Alvin organized this benefit and a medical relief fund to help Phil pay off the outstanding medical bills. When the idea of a benefit show came up, bands lined up to be on the bill and help out their friend Phil. The show sold out well in advance with only The Blasters and the Knitters on the bill. Later they added 'X' and Los Lobos. Those bands weren't necessary to raise more money, but they wanted to show their support. It was truly a historical event to present these four closely linked important LA bands of the late 80's playing on one bill.

Phil Alvin was not comfortable with the idea of a benefit saying, he was "humbled but humiliated." But it looked like he would have to live with it because his friends wouldn't take no for an answer. Phil would later say: "This show is the hardest thing I've ever done."

**SAT. JAN. 26 • ONE NIGHT ONLY!**

**BROTHERLY LOVE**  
**A NIGHT FOR OUR BROTHER PHIL ALVIN**

**PRESENTS - IN PERSON**

**THE BLASTERS**  
WITH SPECIAL GUEST  
**DAVE ALVIN**

**THE KNITTERS**  
MASTER OF CEREMONIES  
**BIG SANDY**

**AND**

**THE HULA GIRLS**  
**THE AMERICANS**  
**THE MIKE ELDRID TRIO**  
**THE CALIFORNIA FEETWARMERS**  
**DAVE GLEASON**  
**AND MORE SURPRISE GUESTS!**

**OBSERVATORY THEATER**  
3503 S. HARBOR BOULEVARD SANTA ANA, CA. 714-957-0600



Keith Wyatt: "Phil was of course extremely grateful and humbled by all of the support, but for weeks beforehand he was also dreading the event itself. After the whole drama in Spain and his subsequent recovery, the band hadn't had the opportunity to play much. The idea of getting on stage in front of all of those people and in the company of all of that talent without having had a chance to completely work the rust off was a big hurdle to get over."



The venue (formerly known as The Galaxy Theater where the Blasters recorded their Going Home DVD) was set up with 2 rooms. The large room had the main stage for The California Feet Warmers, The Knitters, The Blasters with special guest Dave Alvin, X, and Los Lobos. The smaller Constellation room



had these acts: The Hula Girls, The Americans, Dave Gleason, and The Mike Eldred Trio. Big Sandy was the master of ceremonies.

There was some very interesting merchandise for sale. A limited edition concert poster designed by artist Gary Houston which can be ordered online at [www.voodoocatbox.com](http://www.voodoocatbox.com), a T-shirt of the show poster, and a one of a kind Fender Custom Shop reproduction of Dave Alvin's infamous '64 Mustang guitar, autographed by various musicians playing on this night. This was raffled off at the end of the night to a lucky person for \$5000. It is a one-of-a-kind collectible.

Keith Wyatt: "We rehearsed with Dave a couple of times during the week before, in order to sort out who would play what and finally settled on three 'mini-sets' - the current Blasters, the lineup with Dave, and then all five of us together. On the day of the event, Phil was as nervous as I've ever seen him, and because we had to do an early load-in and sound-check and then stick around until the show, all of the waiting around just made it more nerve-wracking."

The California Feetwarmers opened the main stage doing very old time music kind of like a jug band, but with an upright bass. The Knitters were next. Big Sandy gave them a great introduction:



“Around 1982 these people started a congregation as a side project. They were all in different bands: The Blasters, The Red Devils, and X. They did it just for fun, but along the way they inspired young punks and ne'er-do-wells to turn on to country music, honky tonk, and folky sort of things. Make them feel welcome.”

They played 50 minutes of their best known songs, with Dave Alvin staying silent except for his blazing guitar riffs which do all his talking in the Knitters. Exene addressed the crowd: “We come to celebrate our lives, and that we’re here for a special occasion. This is a victory for everybody. All the bands here tonight dreamt in 1983 that all of us would go on the road as a review. Promoters said, ‘Why would you need Los Lobos, X, and the Blasters altogether when we can get local bands (to open up for each of us) for free. But we finally did it here in 2013, thirty years later.’”

Everyone felt that this show had historical significance. Even, Big Sandy said to the crowd: “This might be a funny thing to say, but with a lineup like this, Phil, thanks for getting sick!”

The band members were all having a great time and they playfully ribbed each other even on-stage. John Doe dedicated POOR OLD HEARTSICK ME to Phil saying in the mic: “I don’t know if you all know, but Phil and I had a gay love affair long ago. I remember it very well, but he doesn’t remember it.” Exene played right along as she and John do in their shows with back and forth banter. He continued: “So even though Exene sings this song, every time she does, all I can do is think of Phil.”

The moment everyone was waiting for came at the beginning of the Blasters set when Phil Alvin walked on the Observatory stage by himself. In heartfelt thanks, Phil said to the sold-out crowd: “First of all let me tell you that I love you all and I always have. It’s a very humbling experience. So without any further adieu, let me do this.” Phil played a self-accompanied acoustic version of BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME from his 1986 Unsung Stories solo album. Keith Wyatt observed: “Phil had lost a lot of weight over the summer and had a sharp new suit, shoes, and haircut - so even though he was undergoing mental torture, he looked good doing it. Up to the last minute he





was going back and forth on whether to go out first by himself or with the band. He finally chose the solo approach, opening with an appropriately titled song. He sounded strong, which must have been a huge relief for him.”

After that Phil said: “When I was in Spain and my throat blew up, the next thing I saw when I opened my eyes was these guys – The Blasters.” The crowd cheered as The Blasters – John Bazz, Bill Bateman,

and Keith Wyatt walked onstage to join their band mate. Phil continued: “So now, let’s have some fun on Saturday night.” They went in to the title track of their latest album **FUN ON SATURDAY NIGHT**. Following, they did **LONG WHITE CADILLAC**, **WELL WELL WELL**, **DADDY ROLLIN’ STONE**, and **REBOUND**.

Phil: “Now I’d like to bring out my best friend who was in Europe when I flat lined and she sent me a bunch of stuff and was really concerned.” Phil looked off to the side of the stage to Exene and said off mic, “Yes, I’m talking about you (laughing).” Exene joined Phil onstage to sing the Johnny Cash & June Carter Cash song **JACKSON**.

Keith: “When Exene sang on **JACKSON**, we could hear her on stage, but unfortunately the front-of-house engineer was caught by surprise and didn’t get her mic plugged into the mains for about half the song. Anyway, the energy carried everyone through.”

For the second half of the set Keith Wyatt left the stage as Phil had another introduction to make: “I love my brother, and therefore this is a brotherly love benefit,” as he motioned Dave to come onstage for a mini-set of the Original Four Blasters. They played **RED ROSE**, **CRAZY BABY**, **BORDER RADIO**, **TROUBLE BOUND**, and **AMERICAN MUSIC**. Next was a rare song choice in an Otis Redding song called **THESE ARMS OF MINE**, which the Blasters have played many





(above) Photographer Gary Leonard caught bassist John Bazz taking his camera out onstage. — (below) You can see John Bazz's photo taken seconds later.



times over the years going back to their '79 garage demos before their first album. They recorded the song for the Live At The Venue 1982 EP, but it did not make the release. When the expanded 'Live at the Venue' recordings were released on the Testament collection in 2002, it still wasn't included. At this show Phil dedicated the song: "A good friend of ours, long time friend of these bands named Mouse passed away last week. So I'm singing this to a man (laughs)." Dave Alvin later added: "Mouse was one of the early Blasters fans and he used to always come to our gigs and stand right in front of the band and shout out do 'THESE ARMS OF MINE.'"

Keith Wyatt returned to the stage for a grand finale of MARIE MARIE with trade off solos and Phil's Spanish lyrics. Before the closer of ONE BAD STUD, Dave thanked everyone, and in tribute to his big brother said: "But especially thanks to my brother Phillip because he is as smart as he is good lookin' and I would still be a fry cook in Long Beach if it wasn't for him. Thank you, Phil." Phil jumped in on the mic and said: "I'd also like to thank Doctor Mariella Anaya who brought me back to life twice in Valencia."

Before walking off the stage Phil said: "Thank you for coming out for all this love. And thanks to all these fantastic superior musicians that are playing." Big Sandy said to the crowd: "American Music at its finest!"

The Backstage had a big area outside for the large group of people and band members to hang out. Dave: "There were people from every aspect of our lives – especially for Phil – guys from grammar school, ex girlfriends – people from the 80s, 90's, 00's and teens - family members, and friends. It was kind of like a dream state in many ways."

Dave Alvin: "The night was pretty intense. I didn't relax until after the Blasters set. Phil was pretty stressed out. Drac and I went to pick up Phil to make sure he got to the show. I knew he was nervous and felt horrible about having to ask people for money. I thought there was a 1% chance he wouldn't show (laughs), so I'm getting him there."

"But Phil is a different guy now after his near death experience. He's a guy I don't know (laughs).

He's changed for the better. Were getting along great and just having a ball. Phil looked amazing in that suit."

Next, 'X' played a greatest hits set including YOU'RE PHONE'S OFF THE HOOK BUT YOU'RE NOT, THE HAVE NOTS, LOS ANGELES and JOHNNY HIT AND RUN PAULENE.

Los Lobos was the last band to play with a special guest – who would be Dave Alvin in the last half of the set. David Hidalgo and Conrad Lozano both were missing, but César Rosas, Louie Pérez and Steve Berlin brought special guests up on the stage to jam like Harmonica player Tex Nakamura and accordionist Joel Guzman. Dave Alvin finished the night onstage with them.

It was a historic night for Los Angeles Music, as well as honoring the great Phil Alvin.

### After Thoughts:

Dave Alvin (facebook page): "A sincere Thank You to everyone who came down to the benefit last night and to everyone who couldn't get in or couldn't get there. Thank you to every musician/singer/visual artist/road manager/roadie/band manager/merch seller/family member/old friend/new friend/well wisher/etc who volunteered and helped out my brother Phil. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Did I say "Thank You?" Well, I'm gonna keep saying it. Thank you!"

John Bazz: "Saturday's show was a huge success, and everyone involved had a ton of fun coming out to support old Phil. I think there were at least 1,300 people in attendance. Phil opened the Blaster set by himself with his rendition of BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME. It was a heartfelt and moving moment. Many thanks are owed to Dave Alvin for his time and devotion invested into this benefit. There was a real cohesiveness between the bands and fans that helped make the night a gigantic celebration. It would be great if we could take this circus on the road."



**Keith Wyatt** — “The benefit was – let’s hope – a once-in-a-lifetime event. Dave personally put in a huge amount of work to organize it, helped by a real community effort on all levels from the bands to the venue, crew, PR, and any number of other people who lent their support in various ways. Phil was of course extremely grateful and humbled by all of the support. Phil’s voice is as strong as ever, so maybe we’ll even be able to finish the Spanish tour one day.”

**Phil Alvin:** (facebook page): “Thanks to everyone for your support and contributions to my benefit last Saturday night. Since my emergency in Spain, when I joined Facebook, all of you have shown your concern for my well-being. When the benefit was announced, my pride and embarrassment got the better of me. I couldn’t bring myself to open my timeline - I hope you can forgive me. I am overwhelmed by the love and friendship I’ve received. Thank you all.” — Philip Joseph Alvin

*Phil Alvin’s Medical relief fund: – If you couldn’t make it to the show, but would still like to donate, you can send checks payable to New Highway INC., 1563 Solano Ave. #439, Berkeley, CA, 94707*

*Special thanks goes out to photographer Gary Leonard for the use of his photos in this article. Gary has been shooting LA Music for the last 40 years and has always been THE Blasters photographer. Just about every important moment in Blasters history has been captured by Gary.*

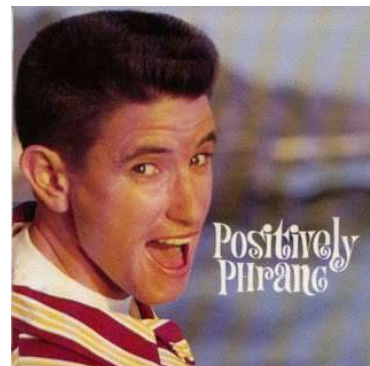
# Dave Alvin Song Co-writing

by Tom Wilk

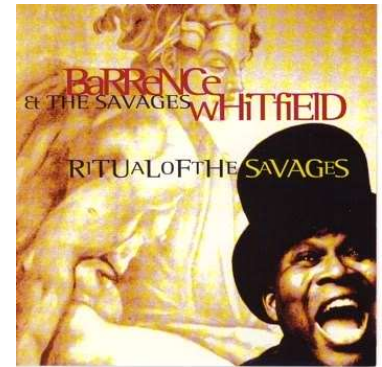
As a songwriter, Dave Alvin has recorded more than 100 of his own compositions as a solo artist and as a member of the Blasters, X, and the Knitters. He’s also co-written songs to help other artists and written and recorded many unreleased songs. Here’s a look at some of the songs in roughly chronological order with some comments from songwriters he’s worked with:

**What Do You Tell Your Man** -- The song was written in the late 1980s with Dennis Walker. Walker, who has co-written songs with Robert Cray, recalls how the song came to be: “I was living in Glendale (Calif.) on the back side of the mountain. I was facing north toward the San Gabriel Mountains. We just sat down with an idea and both worked from there. I had an idea for the title and we started there.”

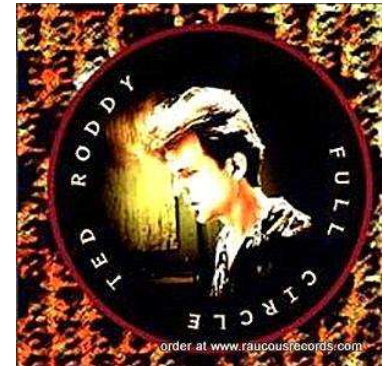
**Hitchcock** -- Singer Phranc, whose real name is Susan Gottlieb, recorded and released this co-write with Dave on her 1991 album Positively Phranc on Island Records. It’s a bittersweet, wistful love song that uses film titles by Alfred Hitchcock throughout the lyrics. Dave also plays acoustic guitar and the guitar solo on the track.



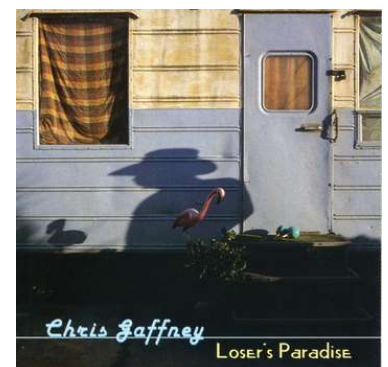
**Time Will Catch Us** -- It's a catchy pop/soul song co-written with Ben Vaughn that was released on Ritual of the Savages, an album released by Barrence Whitfield in 1995. Vaughn, a New Jersey native, served as executive producer of the Ocean Music release and released his own version on Glasgow Time in 2002. Vaughn recalled the evolution of the song in a 2011 email. "I started writing that by myself in Jersey and took to over to Dave's house during a visit to L.A. in the early nineties. Writing with Dave was great. He pretty quickly fleshed out what I had and then slowed down to address certain details that tightened the song up, which it did in a really nice way without sacrificing the immediacy and feeling of the piece. It was a great experience. I'm not sure if he's ever performed the song, but I've gotten a lot of positive feedback from folks over the years. It's a solid tune."



**Since I Lost You** -- This ballad was co-written with harmonica player and singer Ted Roddy, who included the song on Full Circle, a 1995 release on HighTone Records, Dave's label at the time. "I don't remember the exact timeline of events, but I know Dave and I knew each other before we got together to write the song," Roddy wrote in a 2013 email. "When I got the opportunity to do the record, I asked Dave if he wanted to try writing something together. I had part of the song, mainly the first couple of verses already. I had been messing with those lines for a couple of years. I never could finish it. Dave asked if I had any ideas, so I figured I would bring that and see what we could do with it. We got together at his hotel one afternoon and we had a complete song in no time. I remember thinking that co-writing sure speeds up the process. It's based on the old 'Don't Play That Song For Me' changes and Dave added some signature chorus changes that were, to my ears, very Dave-like. Later, I did the live recording of the Interstate City CD and various gigs with him. I still do that song."



**East of Houston, West of Baton Rouge** -- Chris Gaffney recorded this song on Loser's Paradise, which was released on HighTone Records in 1995. Dave served as album producer and co-wrote the song with Billy Swan, best known for I CAN HELP, a No. 1 hit in 1974 that was later recorded by Elvis Presley. EAST OF HOUSTON is a driving, Cajun/Zydeco type song that recalls MARIE MARIE in spirit. Dave also played acoustic guitar on the recording. Asked why he never released the song himself, Dave felt that it was not in the right key for his voice. However, he did perform it in concert with the Paladins as



his backing band in 1990. Dave: “I wrote that with Billy Swan who was a Bug publishing writer and lived in L.A. in those days and of course I was a fan. He called me and I was honored, so I went over to his house and tried a few things writing songs. I always had that title rollin’ around in my head because it was a way of describing Cajun country. So we just went with it.”

### **I Left My Heart in Texas -- The Lord Was a Woman -- I’m in Love with a Girl --**

All three songs were co-written with Candye Kane and were included on Diva La Grande, her 1997 album on Discovery Records. Dave also served as co-producer and one of the mixers on the album and also played guitar on THE LORD WAS A WOMAN. Robert Williams, also known as Big Sandy, is included as a co-writer on I LEFT MY HEART IN TEXAS.



Candye has fond memories of working with Dave, a longtime friend, as she recounted in an email interview in 2013. “Dave is super serious in the studio and he gets the job done, of course. I remember driving his rental car to go get some lunch and every CD he had in his rental car was me!!! He was studying me before he went into the studio to work on the CD, and it was an honor to have him listening to me. He contributed one or two lines to various songs so I gave him a songwriting credit. I don’t recall which lines specifically Dave contributed.”

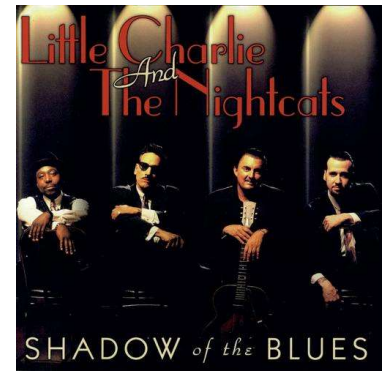
“In between pool lessons - (there was a pool table at Pedernales, Willie Nelson’s old studio in Texas where we recorded) and Dave is a great pool player — we made a record. It was with Dave and Derek O’Brien working together, which was really fun to have these two guitar giants giving me their full attention. It was fun to see them work together – Derek with his laidback Texas style and Dave with his intense seriousness peppered with wry story telling.”

“Dave has been an incredible friend to me through the years and taught me so much about writing and music. He is just so down to earth and so incredibly sexy and smart.” Candye, recalled how Dave and his girlfriend, Mary, visited her in Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles in May 2012 the night before her last cancer surgery. “I was also honored to sing the bonus track (NEVER TRUST A WOMAN) on the expanded edition of Eleven Eleven (in 2012). What an incredible honor.” Previously, Candye credited Dave for helping her with TELL ME A LIE, a song included on A Town South of Bakersfield, an album featuring various artists on Enigma Records in 1986, and Home Cookin, her 1994 solo album.

Dave comments: “That’s very sweet of her. It was a song she was doing live really early in her career when she was making the transition to singing. I remember maybe suggesting chord changes. But we never officially sat down together in a writing session for that song. I do that often when I’m producing an album. I never ask for co-writing credit because I believe that’s what a producer does to

make the song better.”

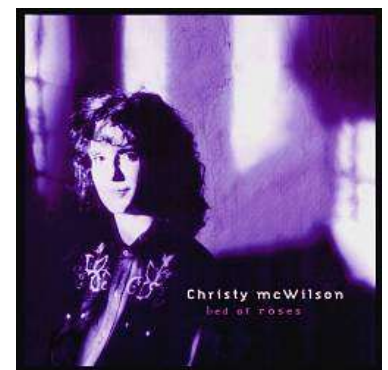
**When Your Woman is Gone** -- Harmonica player/singer Rick Estrin teamed up with Dave for this song included on Shadow of the Blues, the 1998 album by Little Charlie and the Nightcats on Alligator Records.



Estrin talked about the roots of the collaboration in an email earlier this year. “The two songs I co-wrote with Dave (WHEN YOUR WOMAN IS GONE and NEVER TRUST A WOMAN) were maybe the easiest co-writing experiences I ever had. Sometime in the ‘90s, we were both at the Byron Blues Festival in Australia. In the backstage hospitality area, we were sitting and talking with Joe Louis Walker. Joe was asking Dave about co-writing something and Dave mentioned that as a co-writer, he was real good at helping finish songs when a writer feels stuck. At the time I had the first two verses of WHEN YOUR WOMAN IS GONE and couldn’t see where to take it, so when I heard him say that, I perked right up and got his phone number. The next time I played L.A., we got together in the afternoon and I think we wrote the rest of it right there in my room at the Beverly Laurel hotel. As I recall, Dave came up with the bridge and we may have both contributed to the last verse. There’s a fine line between hypnotic and monotonous and that song really needed the bridge to break it up.”

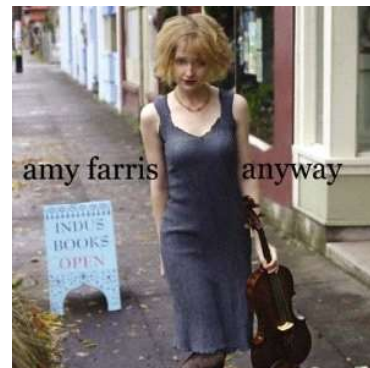
“As he was putting his guitar in the case and getting ready to leave, I told him about another idea I had: ‘Never trust a woman and don’t you ever think you can ... and all you ladies pay attention, ‘cause girls you sure can’t trust a man.’ We wound up writing that one over the phone. That lyric was a real collaborative effort. I recorded ‘NEVER TRUST A WOMAN with The Nightcats, but the coolest thing about it, to me, was when I got a voicemail from Dave telling me he just recorded it as a duet with Little Milton! After that, he cut it again with Candye Kane! Everybody knows Dave’s a great writer, but I think the main reason we could work together so easily is that for writing blues, we have a lot of the same influences and a real similar, lowdown frame of reference. I’m real proud to see my name next to his when they print the credits.”

**Shooting Fish in a Barrel** -- Christy McWilson recorded this collaboration with Dave for Bed of Roses, her 2002 album on HighTone Records. Dave also served as a producer and played guitar solo on the song. Dave: “Often when I’m a producer I help out a little on songs but I never ask for co-writing credit. Christy said this song might not have existed if I didn’t put what I did on it. That might not be true but she was nice enough to say “we’re co-writers.”



Pretty Dresses -- My Heart's Too Easy to Break -- Anyway -

Amy Farris recorded these songs, which she co-wrote with Dave, on Anyway, her only solo album. Dave served as producer and played electric guitar on MY HEART'S TOO EASY TO BREAK. Dave: "She brought over half finished songs -- maybe a title, theme, and a half a verse in some cases. She lived a block and half from me, so we could easily sit around with guitars. Amy songs were proper co-writes, like I do with Tom Russell." — **AM**



---

## Dwight Yoakam

### A Thousand Miles From Nowhere

by Tom Wilk

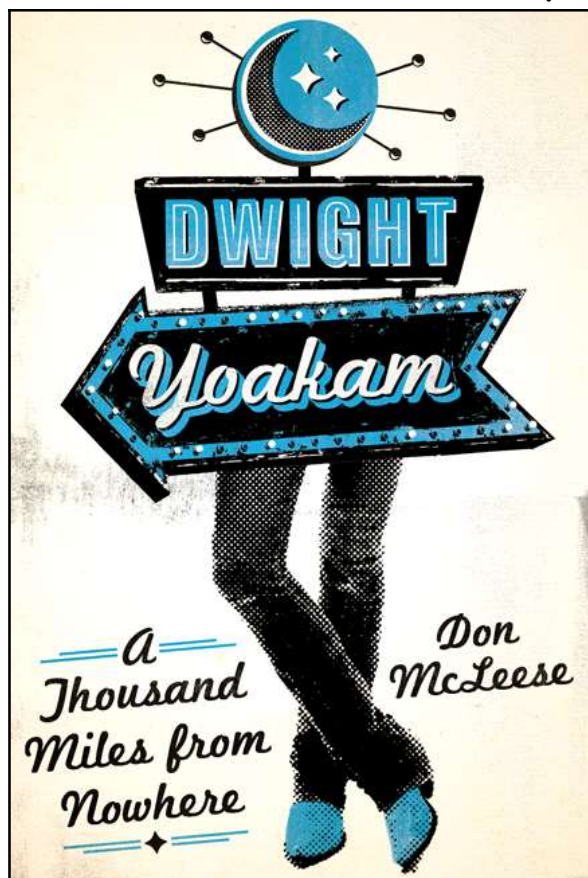
In Dwight Yoakam - A Thousand Miles From Nowhere (University of Texas Press; \$19.95), author Don McLeese chronicles the career of the country music star, who was a contemporary of the Blasters on the Los Angeles music scene of the 1980s.

The band and Dave Alvin provided crucial early support for Yoakam by

selecting him as an opening act for shows in California and on a tour of the United States. On Guitars, Cadillacs Etc., Etc., his 1986 LP, Yoakam singled out Alvin and the Blasters in the album notes as part of a select few "who believed when nobody else cared," McLeese points out.

In the book, Dave Alvin recounts how he and Yoakam worked as short-order cooks in Long Beach, Calif., in the late 1970s. Dave became a champion of Yoakam's music after seeing him and his band perform at the Palomino Club before a sparse crowd of about a dozen in the 1980s.

"After their first set, I went backstage," Dave told McLeese. "I just walked up to Dwight and said 'Order the limousine now! You're gonna be a star.' And so that kind of kicked off our friendship."



Dave and Dwight performed together on Art Fein's "Lil Art's Poker Party" music talk show in January 1986. They played WHAT I DON'T KNOW and a medley of SWINGING DOORS and Patsy Cline's WALKING AFTER MIDNIGHT on acoustic guitars. The performances can be seen on YouTube.

McLeese views the Blasters and Yoakam connection as important in his career development. "Alvin heard something real in Dwight," McLeese writes: "and the Blasters adopted Dwight as their opening act, giving him the opportunity to make their crowd his crowd."

In the studio, Gene Taylor of the Blasters played piano on Yoakam's version of the Johnny Cash hit RING OF FIRE on the Guitars, Cadillacs album.

Yoakam returned the favor to Dave by covering his LONG WHITE CADILLAC on the 1989 best-of album Just Lookin' for a Hit. The album, which reached No. 3 on the country charts, provided a much-needed infusion of cash for Dave. "I was about forty grand in debt, living hand to mouth," he told McLeese when Dwight made the recording.

"I did it because I loved that song," Yoakam recounted to McLeese. "I thought it was one of the greatest songs ever written, a rock-and-roll homage to Hank Williams, who was essentially the first rock star."

LONG WHITE CADILLAC also was included on Dwight Live, a 1995 concert album, and Reprise Please Baby: The Warner Bros. Years, a four-CD box set in 2002. Along with Shakin' Stevens' recording of MARIE MARIE, a Top 20 single in England, Dwight's version of LONG WHITE CADILLAC is the best-known cover of a Dave Alvin song.

The last collaboration between Dwight and Dave came in 1991 when Dwight added backing vocals to HALEY'S COMET, one of the standout songs on Dave's debut album Blue BLVD for HighTone Records. In 2002, Dave was a contributor to the liner notes for Reprise Please Baby. — ~~AM~~

**AMERICAN MUSIC: The Blasters / Dave Alvin newsletter**  
**editor/writer: Billy Davis      editorial assistant: Craig Frischkorn**  
**contributing writer Tom Wilk**

Publishing issues quarterly—ish. [www.BlastersNewsletter.com](http://www.BlastersNewsletter.com)