

# American Music

## The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

DEC. 2013

## Dave and Phil Alvin Record A New CD For Yep Roc Records

**Latest news:** Dave and Phil Alvin are in the process of recording a new album for Yep Roc Records called Common Ground: Dave & Phil Alvin sing the songs of Big Bill Broonzy. It's planned for release in June 2014 with a tour to follow. -- The Gene Taylor Blues band featuring Dave Alvin is touring California in December 2013 -- One of Dave Alvin's rarest recordings with the Guilty Men has surfaced after more than 15 years. Dave's version of LOVE THEME FROM MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000 is included on the Blu-Ray release by Shout! Factory of the 1996 film. The song is played in its entirety over the bonus features menu, complete with lyrics. When Mystery Science Theater 3000: The Movie was released in theaters, the film only included an instrumental snippet of the song. -- Dave Alvin has recorded the title track for Link of Chain, a Chris Smither tribute CD to be released in conjunction with Chris' 70th birthday in 2014 on the Signature Sounds label. Other artists on the CD include Peter Case, Emmylou Harris and Bonnie Raitt. Dave and Chris have toured together, most notably on the Monsters of Folk tour in 1998, and even share a birthday (Nov. 11.) -- Dave Alvin posted on his Facebook page that he has recorded the Bill Morrissey song INSIDE. No word on when the song will be released. Dave has performed the song often in concert.

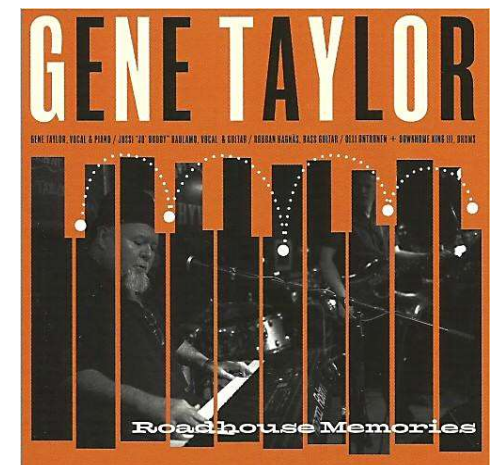
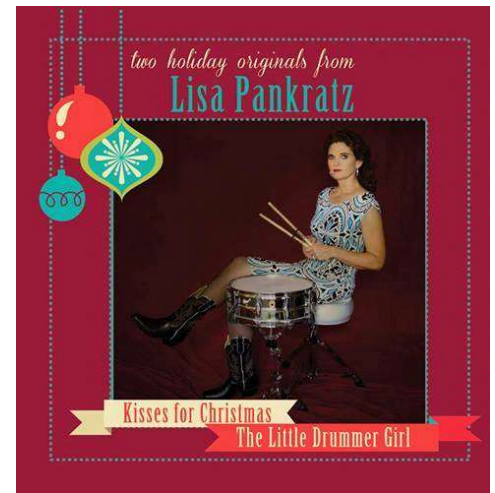
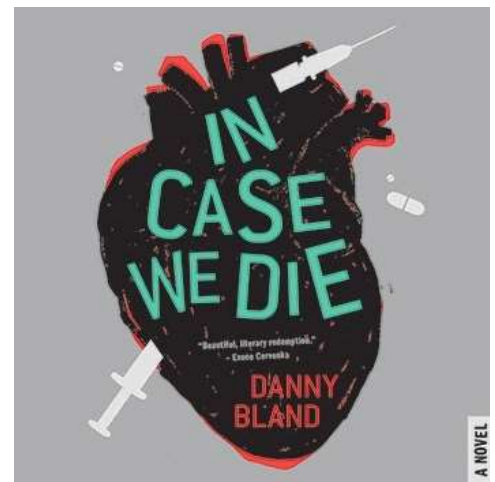


**In the studio: Phil Alvin, Don Heffington, Bob Glaub, and Dave Alvin**

((((latest news continued on page 2 )))

***In This Issue: The Mike Eldred Trio, Rick Shea's new CD, and The Ghost Brothers of Darkland County.***

(((latest news continued )))) -- Dave Alvin is featured in two music books. He was interviewed for My First Guitar: Tales of True Love and Lost Chords from 70 Legendary Musicians (ECW Press) by Julie Crowe. Dave discusses how James Harman purchased his first guitar (a 1964 Fender Mustang) for \$75 at a California pawn shop in the late 1970s. Dave also discusses the appeal of the guitar in popular music. Parts of Dave's chapter can be read at Google books. — Dave is also quoted in Mojo Hand: The Life and Music of Lightnin' Hopkins by Timothy J. O'Brien and David Ensminger (University of Texas Press). Dave recorded Lightnin's song EAST TEXAS BLUES on the King of California CD and mentions him in the first verse of ASHGROVE. -- Dave's version of LONESOME WHISTLE was featured on The Lone Ranger: Wanted, music inspired by the film starring Johnny Depp. -- Dave is quoted in the liner notes for a new box set devoted to the music of guitarist Mike Bloomfield: The 3-CD/1-DVD anthology is called From His Head to His Heart To His Hands and is labeled as an audio/visual scrapbook. It will be released on Feb. 4 by Legacy Recordings. -- Dave Alvin will be the host of a Roots On The Rails train trip from April 11-21, 2014. The trip begins and ends in Los Angeles and will feature musical guests, including Phil Alvin, Rick Shea, Terry and Jo Harvey Allen, Eilen Jewell and Jon Langford. Other stops on the trip are Albuquerque, Chicago, Glacier National Park in Montana, and Portland, Oregon. Phil Alvin will join in between Chicago to Albuquerque from April 11 through the 15<sup>th</sup>. For more information, visit [www.rootsontherails.com](http://www.rootsontherails.com). -- Danny Bland, road manager for Dave Alvin, has published his first novel, In Case We Die (Fantagraphics.com). Dave Alvin reads the opening chapter ("Slip Inside This House") on the audio version of the book. Other readers include John Doe, Aimee Man and Lou Beach. The book is set in the 1990s music scene of Seattle. -- John "Juke" Logan died of cancer at 66 on Aug. 30, 2013. Logan played harmonica and keyboards on four albums with Dave Alvin: Romeo's Escape, Museum of Heart, Public Domain and Out in California. Logan also appeared on the Roseanne and Home Improvement television shows and provided music for such movies as Streets of Fire and Crossroads. -- Dave Alvin played guitar on two songs with Marissa Gomez and the Ghosts of Echo Park for the band's upcoming album. -- Phil Alvin played guitar and sang on three songs on the California Footwarmers self-titled CD currently available from CD Baby. Phil can be heard singing on FRANCE BLUES, GOLDEN GATE, and MICHIGAN WATER BLUES. The group is an eight-piece band that plays classic jazz, blues and original compositions. -- Wounded Bird Records is reissuing the Blasters Testament 2-CD anthology (2002 Rhino Records) now called The Slash recordings, due out January 14, 2013. — Gene Taylor has a new CD out called Roadhouse Memories available from CD Baby. — Lisa Pankratz, drummer for the Guilty Ones, has released a holiday-related single. KISSES FOR CHRISTMAS and LITTLE DRUMMER GIRL are available as a digital download. Copies of the CD sold out. Lisa wrote and sings on both songs. Brad Fordham, her husband and bassist for the Guilty Ones, plays on both numbers. For information, visit Lisa's Facebook page. — -- **AM**





# THE MIKE ELDRED TRIO

By Billy Davis

*The Mike Eldred Trio is a west coast-based American music band that has been recording and touring for*

*15 years. The singer and guitarist is Mike Eldred, former guitarist from Lee Rocker's Big Blue band in the 1990's. On bass is Blaster John Bazz and on drums former Blaster and Allnighter Jerry Angel. Mike Eldred talks to American Music about the history of the band.*

**AM:** How did the band start?

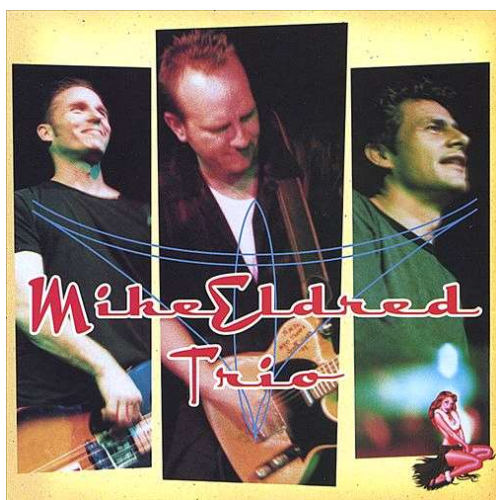
**Mike Eldred:** In the 90's Jerry Angel, John Bazz and I would be called up all the time to back people up in L.A. for gigs. At times the combinations might have included Steve Hodges on drums or others, but when it was me, Jerry, and John, we always had a lot of fun playing together. It always clicked between the three of us. This was towards the end of when I was in Big Blue (Lee Rocker's blues band). In the early days of Big Blue, it was great. I was singing 3 or 4 songs in our set, but then over time it became 2 songs, then only one song. Lee didn't want to play out as much as he used to and I was getting a lot of pick-up gigs, so I quit Big Blue. I was frustrated and not sure what I wanted to do.

Jerry, John, and I were playing occasionally, and it was Jerry who said: "Why don't you just start your own band?" I said: "Yeah." Jerry and John were both into it and so we had a band and started booking gigs on our own.

Jerry, John, and I were playing occasionally, and it was Jerry who said: "Why don't you just start your own band?" I said: "Yeah." Jerry and John were both into it and so we had a band and started booking gigs on our own.

**AM:** How did the first album, the self titled 'The Mike Eldred Trio' (pictured left) come about?

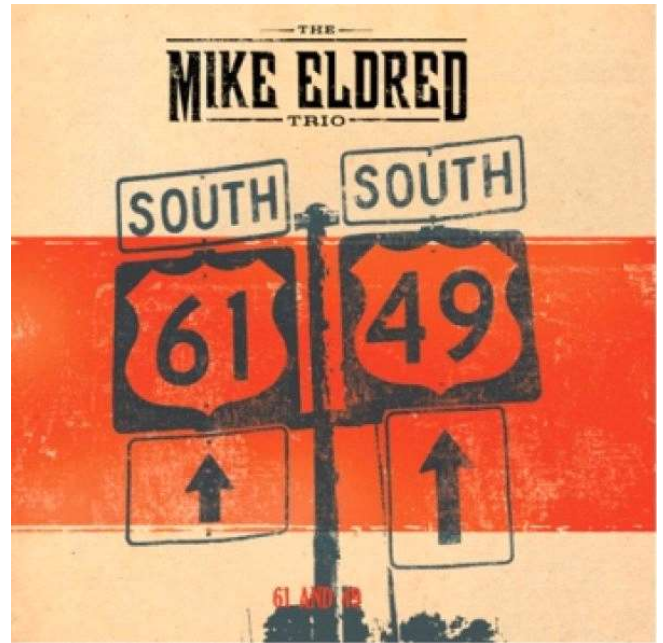
**ME:** Jerry had a buddy who owned a studio, so we recorded very fast in about 2 days - some



Brian Setzer: "Mike Eldred is among the rare breed of guitarists who is not afraid of blurring the lines in American Music. By blending all of his favorite musical styles, Mike has created his own original voice in modern electric guitar playing. He's what it's all about, baby!"

originals of mine and some covers. We made a promotional CD ourselves out of it in 1999. A few years later a friend of mine had just been signed by the Virgin label in France. He played a few of our tracks for them, and Virgin wound up making an offer to us to release the whole album. That was in 2002. It sold well and got great reviews. It's out of print now, but we may re-release it at some point.

Because I played with Lee Rocker, people thought I was just rockabilly and that bugs me to get stuck in a genre. So for the next record, I wanted to re-focus the band's direction.



The second record, called '61 & '49 was a lot harder to make. Even though the songs were written very fast, it took a long time to record -- eight years -- because either we got busy, or the studio or producer Chris Falson was doing other things. But it was a great process that was really exciting. It finally came out in 2010.

**AM:** Tell us about recording songs with Sun Records legends Scotty Moore and Ike Turner.

**ME:** Scotty has been a really good friend of mine for many years and I really wanted him to be on this. He's older now and it's hard for him to get around, so I sent him the track MISS GAYLE'S CHICKEN HOUSE, an instrumental, and he put his parts on it.

A guy named Gary Chiacchi was talking to me about recording the new album



and mentioned he knew Ike Turner. I said: "I'd love to have Ike Turner on the record." So I gave Gary two songs to pass on to Ike. One night Ike calls me at home. Wow! He asked if I had a guitar there and that he had some questions about the songs. He started playing piano and I was playing guitar – so I was rehearsing over the phone with Ike Turner! It was hilarious! Then later, we met him at a studio in San Diego to record. We

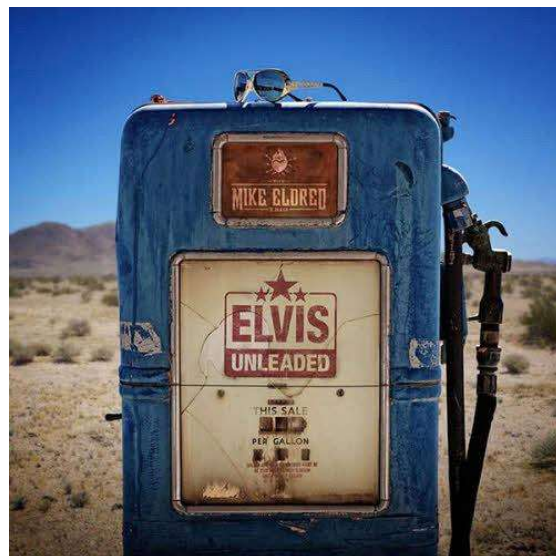


made a great video of the session that somehow I should eventually put out. I became really close friends with Ike, so it was sad when he died. People think of Ike as a guitar guy, but the piano for him is the thing. Ike was a musician who was multi-talented. He can play anything. But that piano style is like nobody else. He learned from Pinetop Perkins. He would hang around watching guys like Muddy Waters rehearse and learn from all these great musicians.

**AM:** Some people claim the first rock 'n roll song was the Chess Records hit in 1951 called ROCKET 88 by Jackie Brenston and the Delta Cats. The band name was made up and was actually Ike Turner's Kings of Rhythm with Ike on piano.

**ME:** Yeah, that was his song. He worked that up and had Jackie Brenston sing it because they needed a front man guy. He plays great piano on that. I interviewed BB King and he said to me that in those early rhythm and blues days around Memphis, "There was me (BB), Rufus Thomas and Ike Turner. That was it."

So we put the album out ourselves in 2010 through CD Baby. Then Zoho Records out of NY wanted to re-release it. I turned them down a few times but they said they could get it Grammy-nominated. Their release was only interesting because they had me write details on each song for the liner notes, but I was never really happy with how Zoho handled it. They didn't market it. After it came out they changed the Grammy categories, and they made me change the sequence of the songs and the artwork. I wound up buying my record's rights back from them and then got it re-released on Rip Cat Records in 2011.



**AM:** Next, you put out an all-Elvis cover song album called Elvis Unleaded in 2012.

**ME:** Yes. We had approached Sony Music to do a publishing deal, but they said they weren't signing roots rock acts at that time. But they really liked us and asked if and when we do our next album, could we do a cover song that they handle publishing for. They said they could help push it. They mentioned Johnny Cash and Elvis songs. I thought that doing an Elvis cover would be really cool. They had a list of 44 Elvis songs we could do. I liked so many of them, I said to Jerry and John: "Let's do a tribute record to Elvis. We'll do real high octane versions." When I said 'High Octane,' they said: "Cool." I immediately thought of the gas pump idea for the cover and to title it Elvis Unleaded. We decided to self-finance the record and put it out all by ourselves. We booked one day at Pacifica Studios and none of us had played these songs together before. We each learned our parts individually and came in to try them the first time when we were recording. The owner, Glenn Nishida, asked what we were going to record. I told him we're going to do 22 Elvis songs today. He stopped and looked at me and said: "You're not gonna get in 22 songs?"

He was there and we got them all in. He couldn't believe it.

Later, I booked a day each for piano with Gene Taylor and backing vocals with The Jobs Quartet. Then I did vocals and mixing at my home studio.

After we were done, Sony offered to pay for all our recording expenses. We didn't want to accept it because we assumed that Sony would own the recordings, so I turned down the offer. They said: "We just want to help you out; you can retain ownership of the masters." I was unclear about their interest in this. I found out that because they own the publishing, they will take the songs and pitch them to movies, TV and commercials. They can't use the original Elvis versions because they're too expensive for their clients, but our recordings would be less costly. In fact right now we're talking to Disney about the use of one of our recordings.

**AM:** Will Elvis Unleaded be reissued on a label like the last?

**ME:** No. I really learned my lesson with Zoho records. We let them change everything and then got nothing out of it. In retrospect, I wished I never made the

Zoho deal. Unless it's a label that really understands what we do, I don't want to do anything like that ever again.

Scot at Rip Cat Records let us re-release '61 and '49 the way we wanted it.

**AM:** Tell me about your bandmates Jerry Angel and John Bazz.

**ME:** Like I said before, when we started playing together, something just clicked.

John has an animalistic approach to playing the bass. It's intense. He looks like he's

playing bass for the last time. He knows he has a huge responsibility to fill the bottom end of the sound and still be a part of the song. He respects the greats like Willie Dixon and Larry Taylor.

We feel like we're a punk band more than a blues band because we take a no-holds-barred approach. An interviewer once said of us it was a combination of the Who and the Sex Pistols playing blues. A reviewer of one of our records said: "This is what the Clash would have done 20 years earlier." I thought that was cool. We don't want to be just a blues band. And John gets that. He says "Let's go out there and destroy it!"

Jerry is such a blast to play with. Jerry is timing-perfect. From day one Jerry was always the idea guy and suggested the way to go. Musically he is amazing.

**AM:** Have you had a favorite Mike Eldred Trio gig?

**ME:** The best would probably be us opening up for George Thorogood at the Anaheim House of Blues. The place was packed. It was one of our best we've ever played. The crowd went nuts - completely bananas, and after the shows





we sold a lot of CDs and increased our fan base.

*The next Mike Eldred Trio recording project is one that Mike sees as the most important piece of work he's ever done. The songs are being recorded at the legendary Sun Studio in Memphis. The album's title Baptist Town was inspired by a pilgrimage Mike made to the tiny Mississippi town where bluesman Robert Johnson died. Watch [MikeEldredTrio.com](http://MikeEldredTrio.com) and this newsletter for updates on this exciting musical project.* —AM



House of Blues opening for George Thorogood

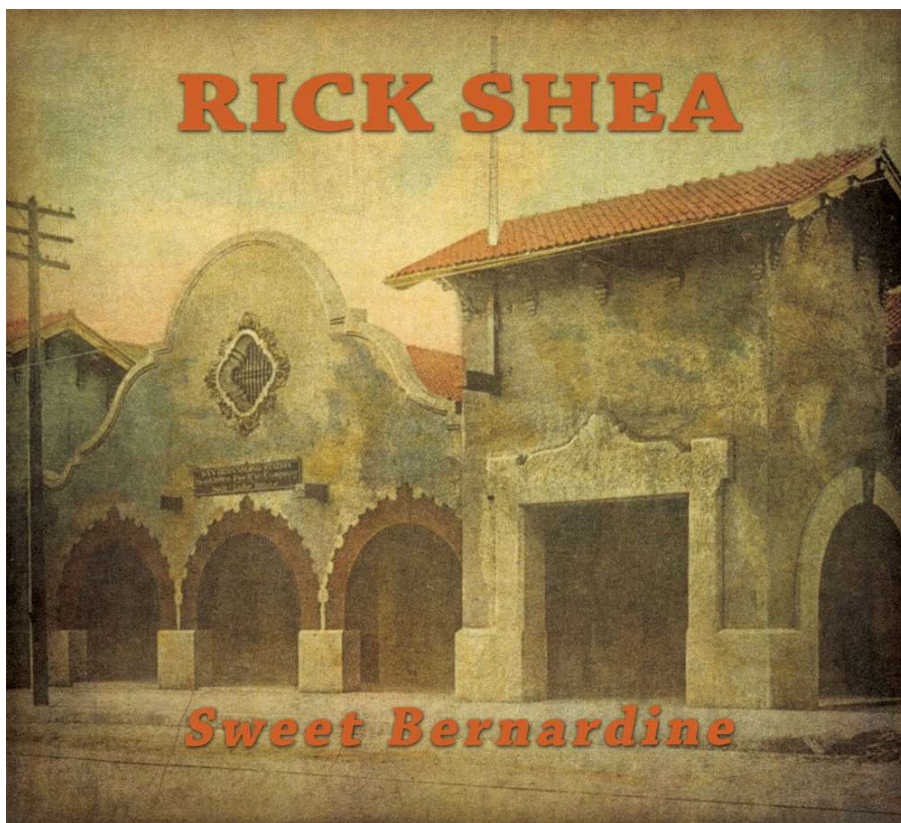
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# Rick Shea - Sweet Bernardine

By Tom Wilk

*Rick Shea returns with a strong CD Sweet Bernardine (Tres Pescadores), his first studio album in four years. The album's title is a reference to San Bernardino, California, and some of the album's 10 songs draw inspiration from his life in California and beyond. The album is an eclectic mix of folk, country, and rock and has received positive reviews since its release in September.*

*A former member of the Guilty Men, Rick shared his thoughts on making the CD, songwriting, and what it's like to play with Dave on one of his train trips, among other topics, in a recent email interview with Tom Wilk.*



American Music: Some of the songs on Sweet Bernardine have direct references to California and your own life. Do you see a unifying thread running through the album and do you plan something like that before going in to record a CD?



Rick Shea: It wasn't really planned, but I started to see a connection between the songs as I was writing and recording them. Most of the songs on the album come from my own personal history and experience or have a direct connection to where I live in Southern California, maybe more so than previous albums of mine. Just a few examples: the first song MEXICALI TRAIN is about a train trip I took in Mexico years ago - broken down trains - I was a kid with a broken heart. MARIACHI HOTEL is about a hotel in Boyle Heights, near where I live, where for years the Mariachi musicians all stayed. And SWEET BERNARDINE, the title track, is about the town of San Bernardino where I grew up and some of the heartbreak and hard times the town has seen lately.



AM: You play electric guitar on three tracks, but the album is primarily acoustic. When you write a song, do you know if a song is best suited to an acoustic or electric backing or do you have to try it out in the studio? As a multi-instrumentalist, do you write songs solely on guitar or on other instruments as well?

RS: There's a fair amount of experimenting that happens with some of the songs, as far as arrangements and instrumentation. MARIACHI HOTEL, for instance, started out as more of an electric blues than the acoustic arrangement it ended up as.

Other songs I have a pretty clear idea from the beginning what they should sound like: MEXICALI TRAIN and GREGORY RAY DEFORD are both very close to what I first imagined - MY DARLING LIVES IN DARLINGTON also. Guitar is my main instrument for songwriting and I try and spend some time every day just playing guitar and seeing what comes out. But I have written songs on mandolin and steel guitar, and a big part of the songwriting process doesn't really involve an instrument at all. When I have a song or an idea I'm working on, at some point I'll just be carrying it around in my head, going over and over it for days and sometimes weeks, trying to get it right. It can be a little maddening.

AM: What led you to include songs by Hank Williams (HONKY TONK BLUES) and Roy Acuff (STREAMLINE CANNONBALL) on the new CD? And did you know Dave Alvin included a snippet of HONKY TONK BLUES at the end of his version of LONG WHITE CADILLAC on his 1987 solo album Romeo's Escape?

RS: I did the HONKY TONK BLUES as a minor key blues at a Hank Williams tribute show a few years back. It seemed to go over well and I started thinking about recording it then. It was really one of the first songs I was sure I wanted to include on the album. It's a song I first started playing in bars and honky-tonks years ago and it's still a reminder for me of where this music comes from. And I do remember it being part of LONG WHITE CADILLAC on Romeo's



Escape although Dave wasn't including it when I started playing live shows with him.

STREAMLINE CANNONBALL is a song I've been singing with Mary McCaslin. Jim Ringer and Mary McCaslin were a big part of the folk and acoustic music scene in San Bernardino when I was growing up there. They had albums out and they toured and a lot of us looked up to them. I got to know Mary. A few years ago, she and I started doing some shows together, singing some of the songs she and Jim sang together. I wanted to include something of Mary and me on this album. This recording is from a live recording on the Folkscene radio show hosted by Roz Larman.

AM: During your years touring with and recording with Dave, did you ever discuss the songwriting process? Has Dave been an influence on your songwriting?

RS: Dave has always been a big influence on me as a songwriter, a guitar player, as an artist, and as a friend. We have talked about songwriting at times and even wrote a song together, LET MY HORSES RUN FREE on my Trouble and Me album (2002, Tres Pescadores Records). Generally speaking though, I think Dave might consider the songwriting process as much a mystery as I do, and he seems reluctant to talk too much about it.

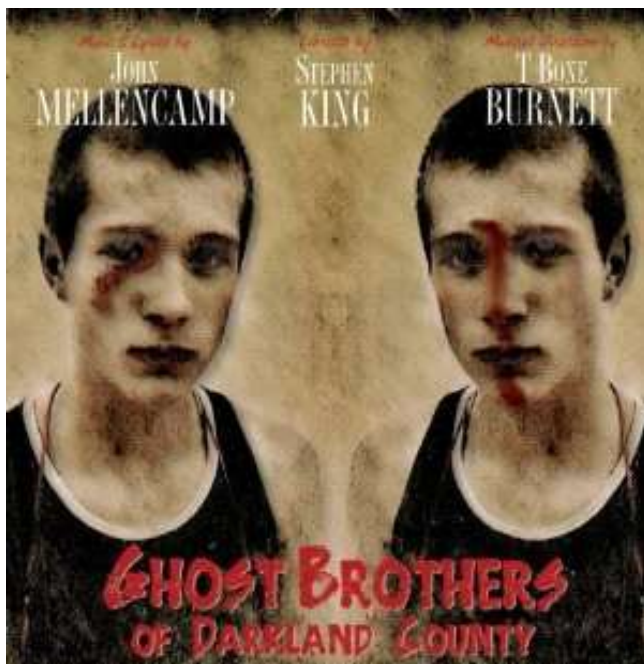
AM: In the press release accompanying the Sweet Bernadine CD, you talk about playing bars, honky-tonks and coffeehouses. Was it much of a change to play on Dave's recent Kings of California train trip? I saw from your web site RickShea.com, that you will be on the Roots On the Rails: Dave Alvin's West of the West trip in April 2014.

RS: The train trips are pretty amazing and not like anything I've done before. For one thing, you're moving pretty fast and the train can bounce around a bit, so you have to be careful and pay attention, or you might take a spill in the middle of a song. Also, the audience or guests are with you for the whole trip, so you get to know them pretty well - which is different than most shows. I've made some great friendships; they're a wonderful group of people and very devoted and knowledgeable music fans. I will be on the West of the West trip; it should be another amazing experience. As far as playing music in different settings, I did grow up musically speaking, in the bars and honky-tonks around San Bernardino. It's really where I learned to play and sing and where I learned songs I still play today. Since those days, I've played music in so many places, from concerts to festivals to small intimate acoustic shows - the trains are a new one though. —AS



*Rick Shea's latest CD Sweet Bernadine is available on Tres Pescadores Records at [trespescadores.com](http://trespescadores.com).*

# The Ghost Brothers Of Darkland County CD by Tom Wilk



More than a decade in the making, Ghost Brothers of Darkland County (Hear Music/Concord Music) was released in June, 2013 on CD. Described as a "Southern Gothic musical," the play was written by John Mellencamp and Stephen King and features a top-flight cast of musicians, including Phil and Dave Alvin in prominent roles. T-Bone Burnett produced the album.

This is a gripping musical about a family stretched to the breaking point over two generations. Mellencamp's songs and King's libretto deal with lust, rage, jealousy, murder, family secrets and the elusive nature of truth. In addition to the Alvin brothers, other singers involved include Kris Kristofferson, Rosanne Cash, Taj Mahal, Elvis Costello, Neko Case and Ryan Bingham.

Mellencamp previously worked with Dave and Phil on The Blasters Hard Line, the 1985 LP which was the final studio album released by the Original Blasters. Mellencamp wrote and co-produced the song COLORED LIGHTS. It was King, though, who suggested bringing the Alvins into the

project. "That was my idea," the best selling novelist told Randy Lewis of The Los Angeles Times for a story published in June, 2013. "I was a big fan of both of them. I've still got all my old Blasters records and I made a 60-mile trek to see Phil play in Florida last year. I'd still like to see one of Dave's shows."

In the same story, Dave told Lewis: "It's a bit of a lark. On the other hand, it's a serious lark." Dave and Phil sing the roles of Jack and Andy McCandless, two brothers who died in an apparent murder/suicide in 1967 in the small town of Lake Belle Reeve, Mississippi. Sheryl Crow sings in the role of Anna, the woman who comes between them.

The three are ghosts, looking on in the McCandless family cabin as history threatens to repeats itself. Frank and Drake, the nephews of Jack and Andy, battle over a woman in 2007 as the threat of violence looms in the air.

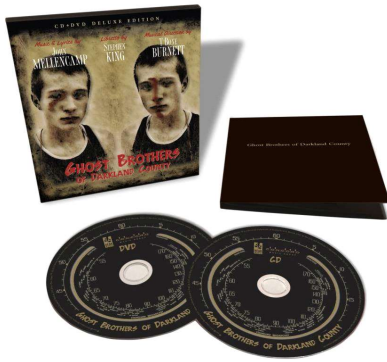
Dave and Phil are featured on five of the CD's 17 songs. SO GODDAMN SMART spells out the brotherly antagonism between Jack and Andy against a menacing blues accompaniment. SO GODDAMN GOOD is a pivotal point in the play as the brothers' contempt for each other threatens to erupt into violence. AND YOUR DAYS ARE GONE is a reminder of the irreversible impact that results from decisions made in the heat of the moment.

On the wistful HOME AGAIN and rueful WHAT KIND OF MAN AM I, Dave and Phil have supporting roles to the lead vocals of Crow on the former and Kristofferson on the latter. Musicians on the CD include guitarist Marc Ribot, drummer Jay Bellerose and bassist David Piltch.

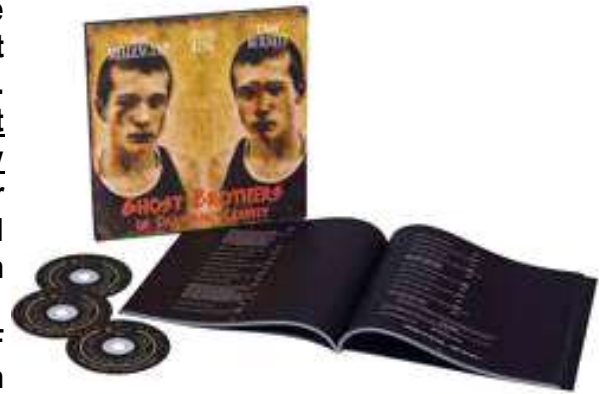
Dave and Phil bring an edge to their roles, no doubt helped by being actual brothers. Alan Light's liner notes overstate the case somewhat when he describes them as "real-life feuding brothers who hadn't spoken to each other for years." Light overlooks the Original Blasters re-

Dave Alvin: "I thought we both sounded very good on the songs. I'm glad that Phil and I were pulled from the dialog parts and that they used good actors. The ridiculousness of it is that it takes place in Mississippi and we don't sound like guys from Mississippi. We even said that when we did the recording. At best we sound Midwestern - maybe Chicago or Indiana (laughs). They brought in famous actors which makes sense if they want to still sell this thing to Broadway."





union shows of 2002-03 and the brothers sharing the stage at concerts in subsequent years. Their collaboration on Ghost Brothers of Darkland County served as a catalyst for their duet on WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR BROTHER, a song on Dave's Eleven Eleven CD.



GHOST BROTHERS OF DARKLAND COUNTY comes in

a variety of packages: a CD with songs only (62 minutes), a CD with the songs plus dialog excerpts from the play in between songs (70 minutes), and a third version the deluxe with a DVD documentary on the making of the musical and the text of the play. Also available is a super deluxe 11-inch sized box set which includes a 11 X 11 bound book of the libretto, the DVD and both versions of the CD. The musical has been staged in Atlanta in 2012 and as part of a theatrical tour in the Midwest and Southeastern U. S. in the fall of 2013. None of the musicians on the CD took part in the stage productions. —~~AM~~

**From the Editor** — Hello everybody. Sorry for the infrequency of the newsletter lately. I've just gotten so busy with other things, but I do make sure to keep BlastersNewsletter.com updated with the latest tour dates. Maybe the newsletter is slowing down in its old age. . . I don't think so. It's hard to believe that in February 2014 American Music: The Blasters / Dave Alvin Newsletter is 20 years old. Wow! How did that happen? —Billy

**AMERICAN MUSIC: The Blasters / Dave Alvin newsletter**

**editor/writer: Billy Davis      editorial assistant: Craig**

**Frischkorn      writer Tom Wilk**

**www.BlastersNewsletter.com**

## **Dave Alvin exclusive digital download tracks discography Part 4**

In summer of 2007, Dave Alvin launched DaveAlvin.net. It opened up opportunities for Dave to further reach out to his fans. He began releasing exclusive bonus songs available only on the internet. It was announced: "Throughout his career, Dave Alvin has periodically paid tribute to songwriters/performers that have inspired him by recording his favorite songs by these artists. Dave has many of these and other self penned gems hidden away in his personal archives. He is happy to now have the opportunity to make some of these tracks available to you exclusively through yeproc.com and davealvin.net. To accompany each song's release, Dave has a few words for us about why he felt compelled to record it."

Starting in American Music #54 (August, 2007) Part 1 of this discography appeared for the first group of songs he released: PEACE, and HIGHWAY 61. Then Part 2 in #61 (January, 2010), Part 3 appeared in issue #63 (December, 2010) and finally here is part 4 of Dave's descriptions of the exclusive tracks:

***These digital singles are available for download on Yeproc.com in the Yep Roc Web Shop for just \$0.99.***

**Dave Alvin – "On My Way Downtown" (a tribute to Peter Case)      Release: August 2008**

The first time I heard Peter Case sing "On My Way Downtown" was some years back when he'd just finished writing it. I was in the audience at a "new song" workshop featuring Peter and a few other songwriters. We've all heard of "love

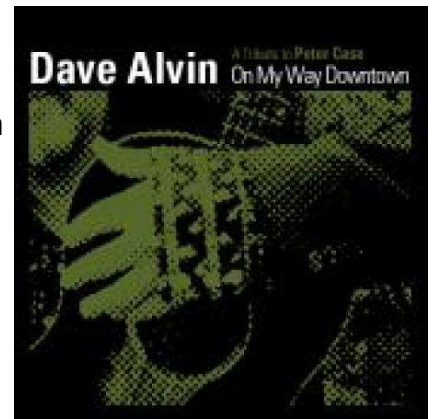
at first sight," well, for me this was love at first hearing. The song knocked me out then and it still does.

My version of "On My Way Downtown" was originally recorded for a stunning 3 CD tribute project called A Case For Case. A variety of great singers and songwriters (from Joe Ely, James McMurtry and Todd Snyder to Tom Russell, Chris Smither and Maura O'Connell) all contributed tracks to show their love and appreciation for Peter's unique body of work.

Let me quote what I wrote about Peter for the tribute CD's liner notes: "For over two decades I've been blessed to know Peter Case and his music. I could ramble on with over two decades of stories and memories that would illuminate what a good guy and under-recognized talent Peter is but his songs do a better job at that than I ever could. As he and I have passed through various scenes, good times and bad, Peter has always been someone I respect as a person, as a musician, as a powerful songwriter and as a bottomless well of soulfulness. Simply put, he's one of our best."

My fellow Case fans joining me on the track are my late amigo, the always excellent Chris Gaffney, on accordion and harmony vocals; the beautiful and multi-talented Amy Farris supplying the sweet violin and viola; the Guilty Men's long board surfer, Gregory Boaz, playing the solid stand-up bass and my old pal from The Blasters, Bill Bateman, performing to his usual high standards on the drums. Besides singing the lead vocal, I'm strumming the acoustic guitars and plucking the electric baritone guitar. The consistently patient and wise Craig Parker Adams recorded the track at his Winslow Court Studio.

The Case For Case tribute set was released a couple of years ago on the Hungry For Music label and it was put together by Jeff Campbell with the proceeds going to his wonderful Hungry For Music organization that gives musical instruments to underprivileged kids. Please check out the group's website at [hungryformusic.org](http://hungryformusic.org) for more information. If you want to hear Peter singing his own songs as only he can, listen to any of his records from his days with The Plimsouls through his various solo albums and, especially, to his his most recent Grammy nominated CD, the inspirational Let Us Now Praise Sleepy John on the brave and true Yep Roc label. - Dave Alvin



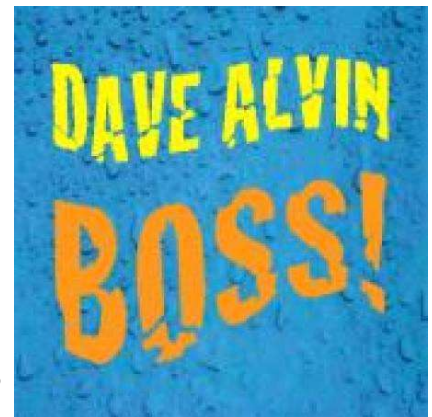
### **Dave Alvin – "Boss! Boss!"**

**Release: September 2008**

While the Carpenters are the most famous musical group to come from my hometown of Downey, California, I have to admit they aren't my favorite. Through the years I've come to appreciate Karen's melancholy vocals and admire Richard's arranging chops but, none the less, to me the greatest band to have risen up from Downey's old orange groves and new tract homes of the early 1960's were The Rumlbers. And their signature song was the tough instrumental, "Boss!"

Often classified as a "surf" band, The Rumlbers were actually a hard rocking, sharp dressing, R+B combo who were described by their original bassist, Wayne Matteson, as "a black band with white skin." The Rumlbers recorded "Boss!" in the backroom of a Downey record store called Wenzel's Music and it was first released in 1962 on the Downey Records label (A small label run by the record shop owner Bill Wenzel with his son Jack, who had their biggest success with the surf classic "Pipeline" by the Chantays as well as cutting other great surf, R+B, blues, rockabilly sides through the late fifties and sixties). "Boss!" was a fairly big regional hit in California (it even charted to some extent nationally) and is now considered one of the essential early surf rock records. Despite recording some fantastic R+B, surf and proto-garage-punk instrumental follow ups, The Rumlbers never had another hit and disbanded in 1965.

Bill Wenzel's other son, Tom (along with Tom's lovely wife Maxine), kept the record store going as an "oldies" store long after the glory days of the Downey Records label. When my brother Phil and I were kids we considered it a Mecca of sorts. It was the place where we could find old, rare blues, country, rockabilly and do-wop 45s, 78s and LPs. After I grew up and moved out of town, I'd still drive back to Wenzel's to see what "new old records" they had in stock. One day at Wenzel's, after The Blasters started getting well known, I was lucky enough to meet one of the original Rumlbers, guitarist Johnny Kirkland, who just happened to have stopped by that day.





Well, to say that I gushed over him like a kid meeting Santa Claus would be an understatement. He just smiled as this wild young guy with a pompadour raved on and on about The Rumlbers and how raw and powerful their records were. He was extremely kind and patient with me (as is another Rumbler I still cross paths with, saxophonist/philosopher Rex De Long). Sadly, Johnny Kirkland passed away a few years after that and Wenzel's Music finally closed it's doors in 2002.

My version of "Boss!" was recorded a couple years ago as a bonus track for my West of the West tribute to California songwriters CD. While I crank up my electric guitars, my fellow Downey guy and Rumlbers connoisseur, Blaster Bill Bate-man pounds out the big "Boss!" beat on the drums along with long time Guilty Man and long board surfer, Gregory Boaz, who does his always expert job on the throbbing electric bass. The superb engineer Craig Parker Adams recorded us at his Winslow Court Studio in Los Angeles. I had a ball finally recording a song that meant a lot to me growing up and I hope you get a kick out of it. If you do, I then suggest you look for some of the Rumlbers tracks that are available on a variety of surf and instrumental rock and roll reissue CDs. Even better, go looking for some of those old Downey Records 45s. You might even like them more than The Carpenters. - Dave Alvin, Sept 23, 2008

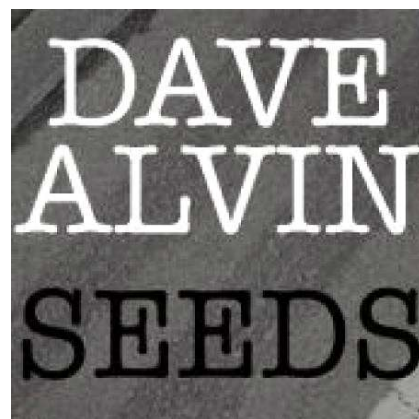
### **Dave Alvin - "Seeds" (Bruce Springsteen song)**

**Release: October 2008**

Says Dave Alvin, Oct 27th: Well, what can you say about Bruce Springsteen that hasn't been said?

Looking past his iconic status, massive success and legendary live performances, I guess the only thing I can say that really matters is that he is simply a great damn songwriter. For us songwriters that is ultimately the only thing that counts.

Back in 1997, I was in Austin producing one of the Derailers records (a great Bakersfield styled country-rock band) when Cheryl Pawelski asked me to contribute a performance to a Bruce Springsteen tribute she was producing for Capitol Records. I was hesitant at first because Bruce Springsteen's recordings of his own songs are pretty much THE definitive versions and I didn't think I could possibly bring anything new or unique to any of his songs. Cheryl was gently persistent though and eventually I agreed to record a little known Springsteen song called "Seeds."



Springsteen's recording of "Seeds" was only issued on one of his live records (as far as I know - maybe all you Springsteen experts know different) and it wasn't anywhere near as well known as most of his material. That made me feel a bit more comfortable doing it because it was a song I could easily bend and shape to fit my own style. Springsteen's version is sort of a loud rocker while my approach was to make into a swampy blues song. I also liked the lyrics that tell one side story of what was going on down in southeast Texas during the rough times of the 1980's. Back then a lot of people ventured down to Houston and similar oil towns looking for work and were often disappointed by what they found. If that isn't a good subject for a blues song I don't what is.

A recording session (at Arlyn Studios with the superb engineer Stewart Sullivan twisting the dials) was quickly planned around the Derailers sessions and I gathered some of my favorite musicians in Austin to cut the track. Joining me for the first time in the studio was future Guilty Men guitarist, Chris Miller, on the snaky lap steel while future Guilty Women bassist, the extraordinary Sarah Brown, and harmonica virtuoso Ted Roddy added their great talents. Sadly, it was my last recording session with an old friend, the late Donald Lindley, on drums. Donald played drums on my Blue Boulevard and Museum of Heart albums and you may know him from his memorable work with Lucinda Williams, Buddy Miller, Joe Ely and Jim Lauderdale, among others. Like so many other of my friends who've now moved on, I miss Donald very much.

We only had a couple of hours of studio time to record "Seeds" so we didn't have the luxury of fretting about our arrangement or performance too much. We just gathered in a circle in the studio, played it through once for rehearsal and then cut it live in one take. Some songwriters don't mind when someone changes one of their songs while other songwriters can get a little upset if too much liberty is taken with their material. I don't know if Bruce Springsteen ever heard our version of "Seeds" but I hope that he'd kind of dig it. I hope that you dig it too. - Dave Alvin, Oct 27, 2008

### **Dave Alvin - "Amanda," (Waylon Jennings song)**

**Release: November 2008**

A few years back, knowing full well that I couldn't come anywhere near Waylon Jennings classic original, I agreed to to record a version of "Amanda" for a Waylon tribute CD. Maybe for private sentimental reasons or maybe because the bitter-sweet, middle-aged angst lyrics of the song have always appealed to me, I went into the studio and gave it a shot.

"Amanda" was written by Bob McDill, a successful, transplanted Texas songwriter in Nashville. Although, throughout his long songwriting career, many of Bob McDill's songs have been covered by such stars as Don Williams, Jerry Lee Lewis, Pam Tillis, Alan Jackson, Mickey Gilley, Crystal Gayle and even Sam The Sham And The Pharaohs, "Amanda" is perhaps his most famous composition due to the huge hit recording by Waylon. I don't that much about Mr. McDill's other songs but if I had written "Amanda", I might just quit songwriting because I may not be able to write anything as good again.

I played acoustic guitar and sang as best as I could as some old friends joined me for the session; Chris Gaffney (accordion and harmony vocals), Greg Leisz (electric guitar) and Don Heffington (drums), while Mark Linett recorded the basic track at his Your Place Or Mine Studio in Glendale, California. In an odd twist to the recording, Paul Gannon later recorded some overdubs in Nashville at Big Ears Studio that featured Dave Roe on bass, Mike Daly on steel guitar and Chuck Mead on guitar. This impersonal, transcontinental approach was an unorthodox way of recording a song, and I don't normally recommend it, but I think it came out all right in the end.

Even though his songs are more famous than he is, maybe someday someone will do tribute record to Bob McDill. If they ever do, tell them to give me a call. Dave Alvin - November 13, 2008



### Dave Alvin - "Walkin With Mr. Lee"

Release: January 2009

"David, the saxophone may not be your instrument." With those gentle words, Lee Allen convinced me to try playing guitar or harmonica or piano or kazoo, anything but the tenor sax. I was about 15 and Lee had already given me a couple of sax lessons when at the end of our last lesson he made his pronouncement on my saxophone abilities. I was a bit crushed to have my sax hero tell me that I stunk, but seeing how Lee was one of the greatest R+B/rock and roll sax players ever, how could I argue with him. Eventually I found my way to the electric guitar and have been happy ever since.

For those of you who've never heard the name Lee Allen, you have certainly heard his saxophone artistry for the past several decades on the radio and anywhere else music is played. Lee played the wonderful, melodic sax solos on most of the classic hits by Fats Domino and Little Richard as well as legendary recordings by R+B luminaries like Professor Longhair, Dr. John, Huey "Piano" Smith, Lloyd Price, Smiley Lewis, Big Joe Turner, Etta James, Amos Milburn, Shirley & Lee, and just about anyone else who passed through New Orleans in the 1950s and the early 60s. Along with fellow saxmen King Curtis and Sam "The Man" Taylor, Lee was one the founding fathers of rock and roll saxophone. If there's any justice, Lee Allen will someday be inducted into the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame where he deserves to be as much as any of the other inductees.

In honor of my old saxophone teacher, I recently went into Craig Parker Adams' Winslow Court Studio in Hollywood and recorded a guitar version of Lee's 1957 sax instrumental hit, "Walking With Mr. Lee." Besides the always tough Guilty Men rhythm section of Steve Mugalien on drums and Gregory Boaz on bass, I was very happy to be joined on the recording by keyboard whiz Skip Edwards (some of you may know Skip from his work with Dwight Yoakam, Johnny Rivers and on my King Of California CD). I tried my best to do a note for note version of Lee's song but in a couple of spots a few of my own licks popped up but I don't think Lee would be too upset. If you dig this song, I highly recommend searching for Lee's original recording as well as checking out the many tracks he recorded with countless artists over the years. You'll hear the art of a true American Music original.

It's a very long story, that I don't have space to go into here, about how Lee came to be living in Los Angeles and then how he became a mentor, role model, teacher and life-long friend to my brother Phil and me. From our early teenage days through our adult years, when we were blessed to have him as a member of our band The Blasters, Lee did his best to instruct us not only musically but also in the hard realities of surviving the treacherous music business. For all that I'm forever in his debt. I'm also eternally in his debt for getting me to stop trying play tenor sax. Lord knows where I would have wound up if I followed that road. Probably pumping gas somewhere. - Dave Alvin, Jan 6, 2009

