

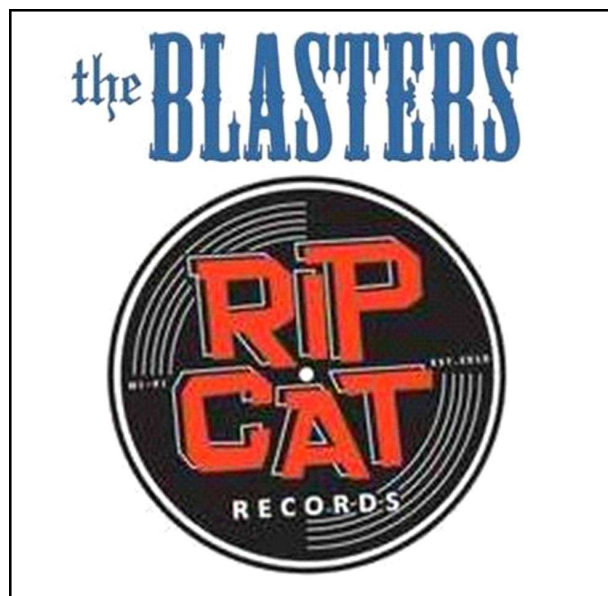
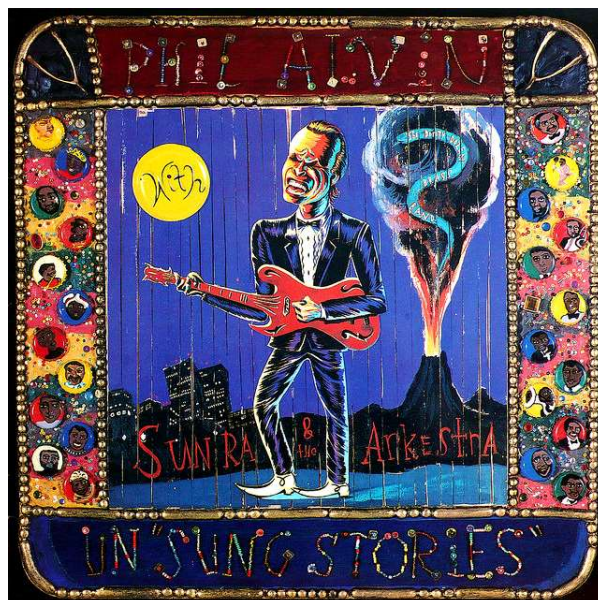
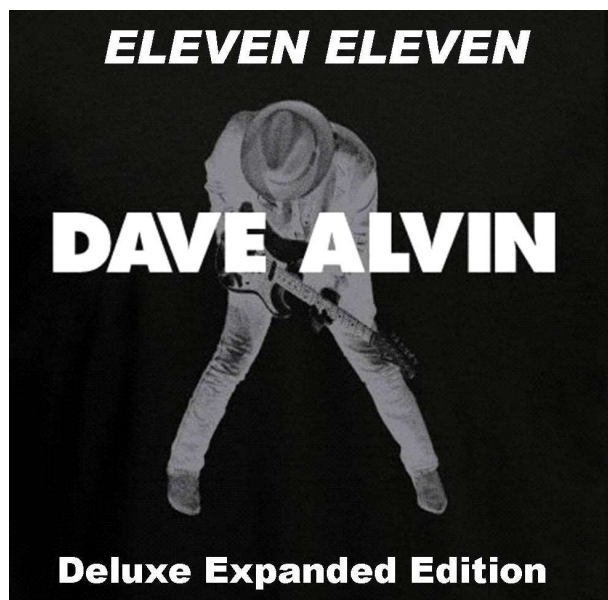
ISSUE #65

American Music

The Blasters/Dave Alvin newsletter

FEB. 2012

2012 New Releases



In This Issue: The Blasters shows fronted by Dave Alvin, 'The Ghost Brothers of Darkland County' announced, and The Original Blasters New Years Eve party.

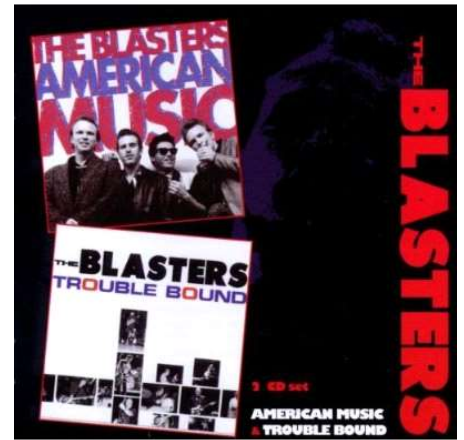
Blasters shows (Phil, John, Bill, Keith)

- 4/7 Las Vegas NV at House of Blues
- 6/27 Basel Switzerland at Grand Casino
- 6/29 Ameno Italy at Ameno Blues festival
- 6/30 Diepenbeek Belgium at Hookrock
- 7/6 Newark, Nottinghamshire England at Americana International Festival
- 7/8 Gierle Belgium at Sjock Festival

Dave Alvin & The Guilty Ones

- 3/1 Milwaukee WI at Shank Hall
- 3/2 Madison WI at High Noon Saloon
- 3/3 Minneapolis MN at Dakota Jazz Club
- 3/6 Grand Rapids MI at Tip Top
- 3/7 Cleveland OH at Beachland Ballroom
- 3/8 Cincinnati OH at 20th Century Theater
- 3/9 Berwyn IL at Fitzgeralds
- 3/10 Valparaiso IN at Memorial Opera
- 4/12 Glasgow UK at The Arches
- 4/13 Newcastle UK at The Cluny
- 4/15 Leicester UK at The Musician Pub
- 4/18 Brighton, UK at Komedia
- 4/19 Oxford, UK at Bullington
- 4/20 London, UK at The Jazz Café
- 4/21 Manchester UK at Night & Day
- 4/28 Indio CA at Stagecoach Festival
- 5/31 Austin TX at Continental
- 6/1 Houston TX at Mucky Duck
- 6/2 New Orleans LA at Rock n' Bowl

Latest news: The Blasters will release a new studio album on Rip Cat records this summer. Phil, Keith, John, and Bill are hard at work in the studio this winter and at least 9 songs have been recorded as a follow up to their 4-11-44 studio album. -- Phil Alvin's 1986 solo album Unsung Stories will be re-released on Wounded Bird records on 2/21/12. --- Floating World Records releases a budget 2-CD set of American Music and Troublebound



in the UK on 2/27/12. Those are the 2 Blasters albums originally released by HighTone Records in 1998 and 2002 respectively. -- Dave Alvin is featured in a new documentary by Tom Weber called Troubadour Blues, which examines the lives of singer/songwriters. The trailer for the film includes Dave singing HALEY'S COMET. It can be seen at www.troubadour-blues.com -- Author Craig McDonald credits the song CALIFORNIA SNOW, which Dave Alvin co-wrote with Tom Russell, as providing the inspiration for his new novel El Gavilan. McDonald describes the book as "a thriller/cum social novel about illegal immigration's profound effects on a small Ohio town circa 2005." Tyrus Books published the book in December 2011. -- The February 2012 issue of Uncut magazine features a CD called Bad Moon Rising: 15 tracks in the spirit of

Creedence. The Blasters AMERICAN MUSIC, from The Blasters Live 1986 CD, is included. In an accompanying article, it said: "Fogerty almost came out of self-imposed exile to produce the Blasters when they burst onto the scene in the early 1980s." Dave commented to The Blastersnewsletter: "I never heard that. We were on the same label, but nothing had ever been said to us. But it would have been great." -- It's rumored Dave Alvin will be doing 3 shows at San Francisco's Hardy Strictly Bluegrass Festival in October 2012: A Guilty One's set, The Knitters, and a tribute to Doug Sahm put together by Boz Scaggs. — **AM**

Yep Roc Records releases Eleven Eleven Expanded Edition on April 17, 2012

The expanded edition of Eleven Eleven boasts nearly three hours of music with three previously unreleased bonus tracks, SIGNAL HILL, NEVER TRUST A WOMAN and BEAUTIFUL CITY ACROSS THE RIVER. Also included are a live performance DVD, a CD of the same performance, and a repackaging of the original full-length album.

It comes in a box that has an embossed image of the original Eleven Eleven cover. Inside, the CD is in its normal packaging in one jewel case. The other jewel case has 3 discs in it. The DVD, live CD, and the CD of the 3 bonus tracks.

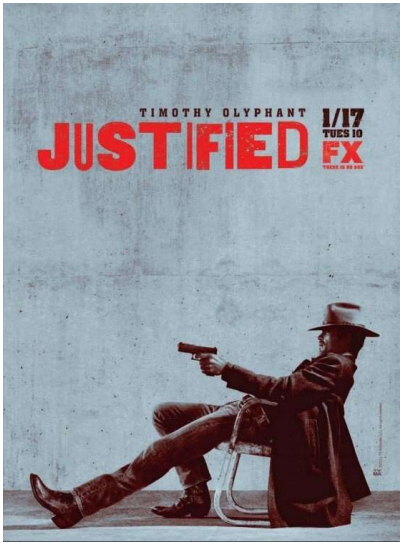
Dave commented on the Deluxe Edition for the press release: "Starting in May 2011, my great band, The Guilty Ones and I hit the highways and performed in every bar, theatre and joint that we could get into across America. As you might guess, I love playing with this band, and I think it shows in the live performance that was recorded last summer at The Ark in Ann Arbor, MI. I'm happy to be able to release this to you on DVD in a new swanky package of Eleven Eleven."

Dave had more to say to the readers of The Blastersnewsletter: "When I got off the road in December, I immediately went into the studio to mix the live CD and I didn't realize how long my songs were (laughs). The live DVD has eleven songs but the CD only has ten because we ran out of room (laughs). But it's a really good show and I think you'll enjoy it."

"The reason for a release like this by Yep Roc records is to keep the artist in the public eye and keep the momentum going. It is a limited edition so you don't have to buy it. But they also want to add all kinds of bells and whistles to encourage buying a product and not downloading music for free. I am fortunate that a lot of people who like me, like to still buy albums -- but it still has affected sales -- for everyone."

"Ten years ago, it wasn't an issue, but nowadays every act is threatened. People don't realize that free downloads are putting us out of business. If you're not the Rolling Stones or U2 or somebody like that, you don't make enough money on the road to make a record and then give it away for free. It can't be done."

Dave Alvin contributes more to *Justified*



The second season of FX's critically-acclaimed series *Justified* has been released on DVD. It includes Dave's appearance on the show when he sang HARLAN COUNTY LINE.

The third season's opening episode aired on (1/17/12) and featured music from Dave's song EVERY NIGHT ABOUT THIS TIME.

Greg Sill, music supervisor for the show, said: "Dave Alvin's music speaks to our show, both melodically and lyrically. We were fortunate enough to have him perform on the show last season, and it was a song that he felt spoke to our characters and the overall attitude of *Justified*; he was absolutely spot on. It is a rarity to find an artist who speaks the visceral 'language' of a character as well as Dave's music does with Raylan Givens. Graham Yost (creator/executive producer), Michael Dinner (director/executive producer), and myself decided that Dave's voice was that of a voice that would be playing in Raylan's head. Especially when you consider the breadth of our story lines this season. The poignancy is scary, because it's so real and kind of haunting, but amazingly good. We love you,

Dave Alvin."

Dave went into the studio in late January to record another all new song for *Justified* called BEAUTIFUL CITY ACROSS THE RIVER. "They look at my voice as the inner voice of the character Raylan but this song relates to another character. This was a song I was working on for *Eleven Eleven*, that came together perfectly for *Justified*. There are two versions of the song: One I cut with Steve Porcarro. He does the score and incidental music for the show. He was in the band Toto back in the 80's and is now a busy studio musician – nice guy."

"On that version, I plugged in my guitar and played to the timing of the filmed scene. It was just a verse or so for 50 seconds. That'll be on the TV show. After that, I went into the studio with the *Eleven Eleven* album band: Danny Ott, Bob Glaub, and Don Heffington and Christy McWilson, and we cut the full version. It's pretty rockin'. It's like *Blasters* rockin'. This version will be included in the *Eleven Eleven* deluxe package. The song will also be available by itself on iTunes."

Dave Alvin *Eleven Eleven* Contest winner announced

Last Issue's contest question was: In promotion of the *Eleven Eleven* album, Dave Alvin and his web site have claimed that this is his 11th solo album, but he actually has 16.

Can you pick out which eleven albums count as "solo albums" from the list on the right?

Dave's list of 11 and The *Blasters* Newsletter's list are very different, but I decided to accept all entries for both these lists in the contest as correct.

Dave's list of 11: "I viewed it as this: I didn't count *The Guilty Women* CD because that is a band. And I didn't include anything like *Live From Austin, TX* because I didn't go into the project thinking it's an album. It was an after-thought release. I counted *Interstate City* and *Out In California* because they were planned live albums. I didn't count *Outtakes in California* and *Great American Music Galaxy* because they were only sold at gigs. I didn't include *Best of the Hightone Years* because it was a compilation." *Dave's List: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12, 16,*

Blasters Newsletter's list of 11: I was surprised to hear Dave go through his reasons of "why's and why-not's." I thought it was much simpler than that: My list gathered anything that says 'Dave Alvin' alone on its cover. I didn't include anything that said 'Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men' which is: *Interstate City*, *Out In California*, *Outtakes in California* and *Great American Music Galaxy*. I didn't include *Dave Alvin and the Guilty Women*. *Blasters Newsletter's List: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16,* Congratulations to Randy from Honesdale, PA who was randomly selected as a winner from the 6 correct entries. He wins a rare Dave Alvin CD. Thanks to all the many other Dave Alvin fans who took the time to enter.

As a further note, all 6 correct answers had come up with the same criteria as stated in The *Blasters* Newsletter's list of 11. No entrants came up with Dave's list of 11.

1. Romeo's Escape (Epic) 1987
2. Blue Blvd (HighTone) 1991
3. Museum of Heart (HighTone) 1993
4. King of California (HighTone) 1994
5. Interstate City (HighTone) 1996
6. Black Jack David (HighTone) 1998
7. Public Domain (HighTone) 2000
8. Out in California (HighTone) 2002
9. Outtakes in California (self-released) 2002
10. Ashgrove (Yep Roc) 2004
11. Great American Music Galaxy (Yep Roc Private Stock) 2005
12. West of the West (Yep Roc) 2006
13. Live From Austin TX (New West) 2007
14. Best of Hightone Years (Shout Factory) 2008
15. Dave Alvin & the Guilty Women (Yep Roc) 2009
16. Eleven Eleven (Yep Roc) 2011

Phil and Dave Alvin in “The Ghost Brothers of Darkland County”

The long rumored ‘rock opera’ project has finally been announced by John Mellencamp and Stephen King on their websites.

Mellencamp and King’s dramatic “roots musical” has been in the works for more than a decade. It debuts as a theatrical presentation beginning April 4, 2012 in Atlanta, GA, and a guest star-packed studio concept album will follow on May 22, 2012, via Hear Music, in both a single disc and 3-CD deluxe edition.

Phil and Dave Alvin have recorded dialog and song vocals for the concept album. The Deluxe edition, produced by T-Bone Burnett, will include the show’s complete book, a cast recording of the entire production spanning two CDs and a separate CD with Mellencamp’s songs by themselves. The stage play is not expected to include any of the audio cast members.

Other musicians involved are Kris Kristofferson, Rosanne Cash, Elvis Costello, Will Dailey, Sheryl Crow, Neko Case; Matthew McConaughey, Meg Ryan, former boxer Joe Frazier and Costello do the readings.

The story is set in the tiny town of Lake Belle Reve, Mississippi, in 1957. It’s about two brothers (Phil and Dave Alvin), who strongly dislike one another. This hatred reaches an apex when they travel with their father (Kris Kristofferson) to a cabin that they had visited as children. It is later revealed that the brothers’ father also had two older brothers (Will Dailey and John Mellencamp) who hated each other so much that they murdered each other in this very same cabin. Will the the ghosts left behind by an act of violence help the father save his sons – or tear the McCandless family apart forever.

Dave Alvin reveals: “There are 3 or 4 Dave and Phil songs in the story and a bunch of others where our characters pop in for just one line. I get to kill Phil, and they paid me to do it (laughs). And Sheryl Crow is my girlfriend!”

Other cast members include Cash as matriarch, Costello as ‘The Shape’, Crow as Jenna, Case as Anna, Frazier as a caretaker, “24” regular Glenn Morshower as the narrator, and Stephen King as Uncle Steve.

The novelist King authored the narrative, while veteran singer-songwriter Mellencamp added music and lyrics. “It sounds like the Sgt. Pepper of Americana to me,” Mellencamp said in pre-release materials, adding that the goal was to make the recording sound something like “an old radio play” - complete with dialogue and sound effects. Dave: “This was the project recorded a few years ago that got Phil and me working together again. I’m glad to hear it’s coming out.” — **AM**



The Blasters fronted by Dave Alvin

– Dave Alvin ‘Phils-In’ for Phil –

The Blasters had a tour booked on the west coast in December of 2011 that would team them up with the Supersuckers. But in November of 2011, Phil Alvin, singer for the Blasters, was hospitalized with a blood infection related to a knee injury. There was no way Phil would be well enough to play those gigs, so Dave Alvin stepped in and offered to front the Blasters for four of the southern California gigs and contribute the pay he earned to Phil’s medical bills. Dave’s tour manager Danny Bland also donated his services to the Blasters. Dave: “They had 13 shows in 14 days booked on the Supersuckers tour. If his knee didn’t put Phil in the hospital, that grueling schedule would have. I could only agree to do four of the shows because I had to join the Guilty Ones in Texas.”



The first show on November 30 was at the Casbah in San Diego. Dave put himself in the same place Phil would stand on-stage – off-center, stage-left. Phil never likes to stand in the center because he feels that the audience should always be able to see the drummer. Dave wore his cowboy hat in honor of Chris Gaffney. It looks exactly like the one Chris used to wear. (ed. note - Check out the Dave Alvin and the Guilty Men 1999 Austin City Limits DVD to see Chris in that same style hat).



Dave played his black Stratocaster, not his cream Strat because the guitar and the rest of his equipment was already on the road to Texas for the coming Guilty Ones shows. Dave does not let his precious cream ’64 Stratocaster travel by air anymore because of the risk of damage or loss. But the Black Strat is his second favorite. They started off the show with Dave addressing the audience: “These are the Blasters. As you can tell, I am not Phil Alvin; I am Phil Alvin’s little brother David. Phil will temporarily be unable to perform for a couple of months - so for a

few gigs I am gonna join my hometown friends and Keith Wyatt for a few gigs and we’ll do some Blasters songs.” Dave added: “Phil is doing fine and he sends his regards. Exene (Cervenka) is over there washing his dishes for him – and I’m not kidding.”

Preceding the first song, RED ROSE, Dave said: “I can’t say I can sing as good as my brother, but I have one thing on him; I remember all the lyrics.” Keith took the first solo and Dave took the second. Dave wrote most of the Blasters songs in this tour’s sets, but he had never sung the vocals for some of the songs.

RED ROSE was one Dave had some familiarity singing because it occupied an everyday number 2 slot in his set with the Guilty

Men during January and February of the 2005 Ashgrove tour.

BARN BURNING was next. This song originally appeared on the Blasters American Music (1980 Rollin Rock) album. Dave Alvin brought it back in 1994 as an acoustic version on his King Of California album. The

Photo by Kurt Mahoney



last we heard it was in 2005 on a Dave Alvin and Chris Miller acoustic tour. This 2011 arrangement was very interesting with elements from all the versions with Keith's guitar making it new and even more 'bluesy'.

Dave "The arrangement here reflected more of the King of California version – more John Lee Hooker-ish. Bill Bateman played the groove different each night - but every night it was great."

CRAZY BABY is one that Dave may have never have sung before in a show. I heard him do it in sound check once with the Guilty Men in Boston, but it didn't make it into his show at the time. Dave: "That one was fun. I love playing CRAZY BABY. I remember singing it once in the 80's with the Blasters at a benefit show that Phil wasn't at. I sang it in the key of E which was a major mistake. For these shows, we moved it up to the key of A to suit my voice. Also I kept forgetting the lyrics, so each night I made up new lyrics (laughs). So by the last show in Ventura, the lyrics were getting nasty (laughs)." Other than the key change, this version was the same one as the Blasters played on the 2002-2003 reunion tour. Keith was familiar with it because for a while after the reunion tour, the Blasters with Keith Wyatt and Jerry Angel played it occasionally in their shows.

What happened with the next song explains exactly what excites me when these great musicians are put in a challenging position musically. Here is how Dave explained it to the audience: "We'd like to try something that has never been done before in the entire history of the Blasters. We would like to play one of our biggest hit recordings. But we really need a singer for this - but we don't have a singer." The band started the familiar notes of I'M SHAKIN' The first few notes are so easily recognizable to any Blasters fan that they know exactly how the song goes. But this time, no vocal came in its proper place. What did arrive were lead guitar licks melodically imitating the vocal line of the absent Phil. Dave and Keith traded off in a way that made it sound like the guitars were talking to each other. It was exciting to observe the musicians fixating on each other to make it all come together. You could see they felt like they were walking on the edge of a cliff and they could have slipped off at any moment. Of course it all worked, and it was one of the most fun things to watch in the whole show.

Dave: "That was the highlight of every show. The song has an extra two bars when the lyric 'I'm Shakin' is sung, which made the song difficult when we learned it years ago. It's a weird musical cue to begin with, so instrumentally if Keith or I played too little or too much, we're screwed (laughs). So this was like re-learning the song. We really had to keep an eye on each other and sing Phil's voice in our head to get the time right. It was my favorite song of the tour because here is a song I've been playing for 30 years, and I know it in my sleep, and now it becomes brand new. I thought it sounded pretty tough as an instrumental and no one expected us to do something like that."

TROUBLE BOUND was played with the same arrangement that the Blasters do and that Dave has been doing in his 2011 shows with the Guilty Ones.



Photo by Kurt Mahoney

Next was a Dave Alvin solo song that they played only at the first show, but it was a good fit here because it was a story about the Alvin brothers as kids, as Dave explained: “This is a song about my dear beloved brother Phillip and me, back when we were teenage rhythm and blues fanatics.” Dave continued with a grin: “Now we’re just middle-aged rhythm and blues fanatics - but we’re better lookin’.”

“This is back in 1972 when I was 16, and my brother was 18, and we went for a ride with our other father, our mentor, our spiritual guide – the greatest blues shouter that ever lived . . . a ride in a Lincoln Continental down Central Avenue in south central Los Angeles with Big Joe Turner.” The song BOSS OF THE BLUES was from Dave Alvin and the Guilty Women’s 2009 Yep Roc Records album. Dave’s song lyrics recall Big Joe Turner telling the kids what Central Avenue was like when it was a thriving rhythm and blues scene. Dave: “The version I did with the Guilty Women was a western swing song, but hand this over to the Blasters and it’s very much a Blasters song.”

For the next 3 shows, Dave replaced BOSS OF THE BLUES with another Dave Alvin solo song: NEW HIGHWAY, which originally appeared on Dave’s 1998 Blackjack David album. This one was familiar to John and Bill of the Blasters because Dave had played it with them in the Gene Taylor Blues Band shows last year. Dave: “It was a chance for Keith and me to play some blues and blow the guitars out.”

SO LONG BABY GOODBYE presented some interesting challenges to this band. The modern day Blasters version has Phil Alvin playing all of Lee Allen’s saxophone parts note for note on his harmonica with Keith’s guitar taking a back seat in support. Dave Alvin’s version, which he has been playing for years with his solo bands, is very guitar oriented replacing Lee Allen’s parts with guitar riffs but not necessarily note for note. For this band, they followed Dave’s solo band version with Dave and Keith trading off guitar solos.

DARK NIGHT is normally played in the swampy sounding Key of E, but it was next played in the vastly different key of A to match to Dave’s deeper voice. The voicings of the guitar played in a different key gave it a totally different feel. Keith’s solo was completely different from his Blasters version – definitely not as heavy and swampy, but more groove-oriented. At the end of the song, they brought the rhythm down in volume while Dave blazed through an extended solo - very cool! Dave: “I’ve played that song maybe twice outside of the Blasters – maybe a few times acoustic and really early on in my solo career. It was interesting to go back and sing it. On guitar, Phil plays it a certain way, and even though Keith and I are different players, it was fun to play with Keith because when either of us are stretching out, the other is playing rhythm stuff behind, that Phil would never play. It brought a whole different dimension to it.”

Phil is known for playing the intro to the song normally, but here Dave played it like he did on the original recording in 1985’s Hardline album. Dave: “In the old Blasters days, I would try to start it and it would piss Phil off – so it became Phil’s.”

In sound check the band played a complete version of FLATTOP JOINT – a song from the Blasters American Music (1980 Rollin Rock) album that hasn’t been played with Dave singing it since his 1987 Allnighters tour. Dave says this was the first song he ever wrote.





Photo by Kurt Mahoney

Dave remarked: “If we run out of songs, we can play that little gem.” It never made it into the set on the tour. Dave adds: “We worked up a lot of songs that didn’t make it into the set.”

The second show was in Hollywood at the Troubadour. The set was mostly the same but they threw in some surprises like BORDER RADIO. Why a surprise? I’ll explain: Beginning with the Blasters first album, the rock n roll version of BORDER RADIO became one of their most popular songs and still is today. But the song changed over the years. In 1986, there was an independent feature film called Border Radio that Dave Alvin wrote songs for and co-produced with a new version of the title track.

Dave re-recorded the song for his first solo album in 1987 as a ballad. In press interviews he said he never intended it as an up tempo song as the Blasters played it, and wanted to right that wrong on his first solo album Romeo’s Escape (Epic Records, 1987). He revisited the song acoustically again on his King of California album in 1994, then with the Guilty Men, he recorded a live version on 2002’s Outtakes In California album that stayed in the ballad format. The song, as a ballad, has always reappeared occasionally on every tour Dave did over the years - except in 2009 when he would refuse audience requests for it saying: “Me and Gaffney had ‘a thing’ on that song and I just can’t do it anymore.” But now Dave has eased up a little on it and has played it in 2010 when specially requested in an encore. Dave adds: “But doing it as a ballad is so associated in my mind with Gaffney, so I rarely like to do it.”

At this show, Dave sang and played it, maybe for the first since he wrote the song, exactly as the Blasters originally recorded it in the up-beat rock n roll style. He took the oldest arrangement of the song and made it fresh because he had never sung it that way as a solo artist. Dave: “It was fun. I may play it that way now with the Guilty Ones.”

SO LONG BABY GOODBYE was next to play, but this night the band would approach the song completely different. The Blasters invited harmonica player Jack Rudy up to play. Jack was a long time member of the Blue Shadows and has made occasional appearances over the years in Dave Alvin's southern California shows.

Rudy played the harmonica intro that Phil normally does, which kind of surprised Dave. Dave started doing that same riff on the guitar; then quickly noticed Jack had it, so he backed off to playing just rhythm. After that first verse, the key of the song changes, so it was funny to see Jack Rudy honking away at the rhythm and then struggle to quickly get his harmonica out of his pocket for the key change in mid-song and not miss a note.



Photo by Kurt Mahoney

They finished off the show with classics MARIE MARIE and AMERICAN MUSIC. Both were played in the Dave Alvin band style, which includes extended solos from both guitarists. Dave dedicated the former to his brother Phil. The Blasters played each night for only 60 minutes because they were in the opening slot for the Supersuckers. They went on to play shows in Redondo Beach and Ventura, California, and they got tighter and tighter, but Dave Alvin says the Hollywood Troubadour show was the best. — AM

The Original Blasters and The Gene Taylor Blues Band New Years Eve 2010 Show

The Redwood — Los Angeles CA December 31, 2010

By Billy Davis

Photos by Kurt Mahoney



The Gene Taylor Blues band consists of Gene Taylor, Dave Alvin, and current Blasters John Bazz and Bill Bateman. If you were to add Phil Alvin to the band, it would become the Original Blasters lineup. A few years ago, the Gene Taylor Blues Band was formed for these old bandmates to get together and play for fun. They've made it a habit of reforming this band every few years around December, as Dave says: "To be home for the holidays with the family."

This past December of 2010 they did a string of California shows culminating in a New Year's Eve show in Los Angeles at the Redwood Bar and Grill with many special guests in attendance.

Phil Alvin opened the small Los Angeles venue's New Year's Eve show with an acoustic blues set. Seated and wearing his "Red Devil" suit, Phil played half his set unaccompanied except for his harmonica and guitar doing songs such as CAT SQUIRELL and NEXT WEEK SOMETIME. In the second half, he was joined by Redwood house band upright bass player Kid Tristan for BROTHER CAN YOU SPARE A DIME. Then Phil brought up Bill Bateman and joked: "Some of these guys in the Gene Taylor Blues Band seem familiar to me." Phil finished the set saying: "I'd like to thank Gene Taylor for picking such a good band."

Phil finished off the set as a trio playing MEAN OLE FRISCO, TROUBLE IN MIND, GANGSTERS BLUES and a few others.

The Gene Taylor Blues band was up next featuring songs from Gene Taylor's new CD Let Me Ride In Your Automobile (El Toro Records). They played a number of songs that were in their set a few years ago like BEFORE YOU ACCUSE ME, EARL'S RHUMBA, THAT'S ALRIGHT and DRUNK. They played 45 minutes as the change of year occurred during their set unceremoniously.

Everyone was anxiously awaiting Phil Alvin to return to the stage to transform the Gene Taylor Blues Band into the Original Blasters. Twenty minutes into 2011, Phil came onto the stage with his first question of the year: "I was wondering if 2011 was a prime number." The answer, we later found out, is yes. It's the





first prime number year since 2003.

They opened with TROUBLE BOUND and then THE BIG F CHORD. Dave left the stage with some guitar trouble, so the rest of the band pulled out a rarity: TRUCKIN' LITTLE WOMAN. They did a long enough version for Dave to return to the stage, plug his guitar in, and finish off the song with a blazing solo. Phil then took Dave by surprise by calling for a song from the current Blasters repertoire - PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, the James Brown song. Dave pulled it off successfully but you could see he was watching the rest of the band for cues.

It seemed like they weren't well rehearsed for doing an Original Blasters show, but the spontaneity and having a good time was what it was all about. And Phil and Dave playing together on stage has never been as much fun for the brothers as it has been lately. But on occasion the brothers play up the old brotherly-rivals-thing as can be heard on the Phil and Dave duet WHAT'S UP WITH YOUR BROTHER on Dave's new CD Eleven Eleven. At the end of ONE BAD STUD, Phil dumped some water on his own head to cool off. Then he motioned to the audience – asking if

he should dump some on Dave's head. Dave was looking down at his guitar and didn't see it. But at the last minute, Phil shook his head no as he grinned and put his water bottle down.

Former Blasters guitar player James Intveld came up on stage to join Phil on vocals for MARIE MARIE. The band came back for an encore of GANGSTER OF LOVE and AMERICAN MUSIC. —~~AM~~

The Blasters East Coast Spring 2011: Brooklyn, New Jersey, Philadelphia

Brooklyn, NY, at The Bellhouse 3/12/11 ---- The Blasters booked this show in Brooklyn, NY, far from Manhattan, and maybe the first time they've ever played in the NYC suburb. I live in the New York area and had my doubts about seeing a good turnout outside of Manhattan. I was wrong. The 500+ capacity club was near full. 1980's Rockabilly legend Robert Gordon was on the bill and brought out a lot of the rockabilly crowd. The Blasters used to draw that same crowd in the 1980's and somehow their fan base became more of a blues/roots rock crowd. In fact, a lot of people were seeing the Blasters for the first time in a long time.

Robert Gordon opened the show and played a great set. I've seen Gordon in recent years and sometimes his shows lacked energy, but tonight he had a really good band. Combine that with a packed house and Gordon put on a rockin' show. He played fan favorites like RED HOT, BLACK SLACKS and ROCKABILLY BOOGIE.



The Blasters with Robert Gordon

The Blasters were next and opened with DARK NIGHT. It's an interesting song to play, because it's instantly recognizable as the song that opens the Quentin Tarantino movie From Dusk 'Til Dawn. So in a way it's one of the more well known Blasters songs that people unfamiliar with the Blasters still recognize.

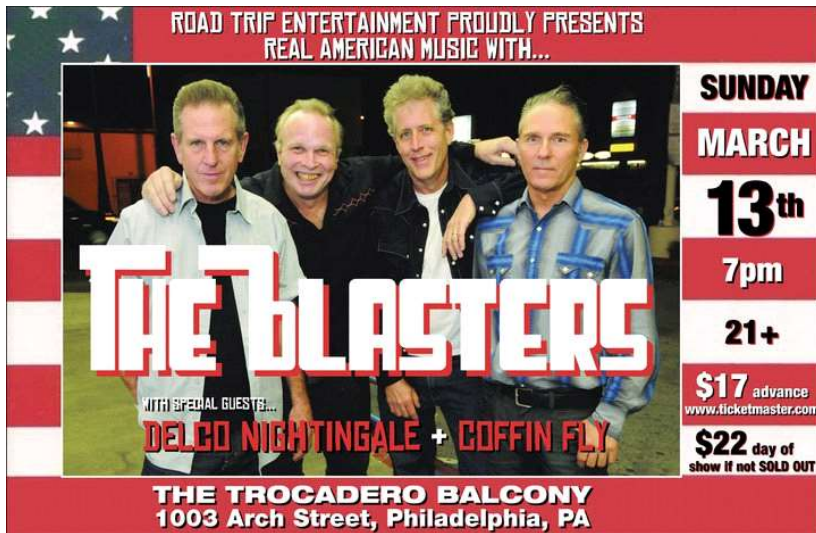
The Blasters played a good mixed set. For the old time fans they played BORDER RADIO, I'M SHAKIN', SO LONG BABY, AMERICAN MUSIC, and MARIE MARIE. For newer fans looking for different songs we got WELL OH WELL, T FOR TEXAS, and BIPOLAR LOVER.

Both the Blasters and Robert Gordon played only a 75-minute set each because at 11 pm the venue changed over to a dance club. The crazy thing is that the club chased out 400 Robert Gordon and Blasters fans who were perfectly willing to stay and spend their money on drinks; they kicked us out in favor of a DJ with swirling lights playing dance music in front of only about 20 people.

Hoboken, NJ, at Maxwell's 3-11-11 ---- The best show of the Blasters east coast tour was at the legendary Maxwell's. The 200-capacity small room is perfect for seeing a Blasters show up close where the experience is a barrage of sound. The perfect song to start that barrage was one of their loudest: DADDY ROLLIN' STONE. They played a bunch of songs that will appear on the new Blasters CD to be released in 2012: WELL OH WELL, FUN ON A SATURDAY NIGHT, PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE, and an original song by Phil: BIPOLAR LOVER. At one point during a 'technical difficulty,' Phil treated the audience to an acoustic version of WHAT'S THE REASON I'M NOT PLEASIN' YOU from his 1994 County Fair 2000 solo album. It was an abbreviated version but still appreciated because we haven't heard that one in a long time. Phil sounded incredible on the Blasters amped-up version of the Bo Diddley song I LOVE YOU SO. They still capture that same energy as on the first Blasters (The Face) album with that song.

Half-way through the set, Phil introduced the band members' names. He finished off saying: "And I'm Dave Alvin." The crowd cheered as Phil laughed: "No I'm Phil Alvin. David would get all pissed off if he heard that." That actually isn't true because even Dave introduces himself sometimes as Phil. It's become a funny part of both their acts.

Phil then pulled out an old 50's blues song by Sonny Boy Williamson called NO MORE NIGHTS BY MY-



SELF. This was one I've never seen Phil or the Blasters do. Pretty cool! The last two songs of the night were a pair of songs from the Blasters 1982 Live at the Venue EP: ROCK BOPPIN BABY and Jerry Lee Lewis's HIGH SCHOOL CONFIDENTIAL. This was the first time in a very long time to see the Blasters doing the Jerry Lee song that they made their own over the years. Back then it was always a high energy rockabilly song that couldn't miss in bringing the crowd to its feet. It worked then in the early 80s, and it worked once again.

It was a great moment for me to hear one of my long lost favorites. Thanks, Blasters

Philadelphia, PA, at The Trocadero 3-13-11 — The Blasters didn't play in the main theater, but instead in a smaller club located in the balcony of the theater. It was small, but like Maxwell's, the bar gave the fans a chance to see the Blasters in an intimate setting. I love seeing bands playing on small stages because there is more interaction between the musicians as they play their musical parts. It often seems that the bigger the stage, the less cohesive a band can be as a single unit – I feel that way about all bands. The place was an over-21 club where the opening act, Coffin Fly, were teenagers. The young band played their set and looked forward to watching the legendary Blasters show with the audience. But the venue's management said, because they were underage, they had to leave after their performance. Many people went to bat for the kids, including the Blasters. Just before the Blasters came on, it was announced that the kids would be allowed to stay. The audience gave a round of applause. During the set Phil teased: "Thanks to Coffin Fly. Hey, someone buy them a drink." The Blasters threw in a few more songs that they are working on for their next album like the 1930's Jimmie Rodgers song T FOR TEXAS also known as BLUE YODEL No. 1. Also a Magic Sam song called LOVE ME WITH A FEELING. It was just another great Blasters show. — **AM**

Photos By Billy Davis



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