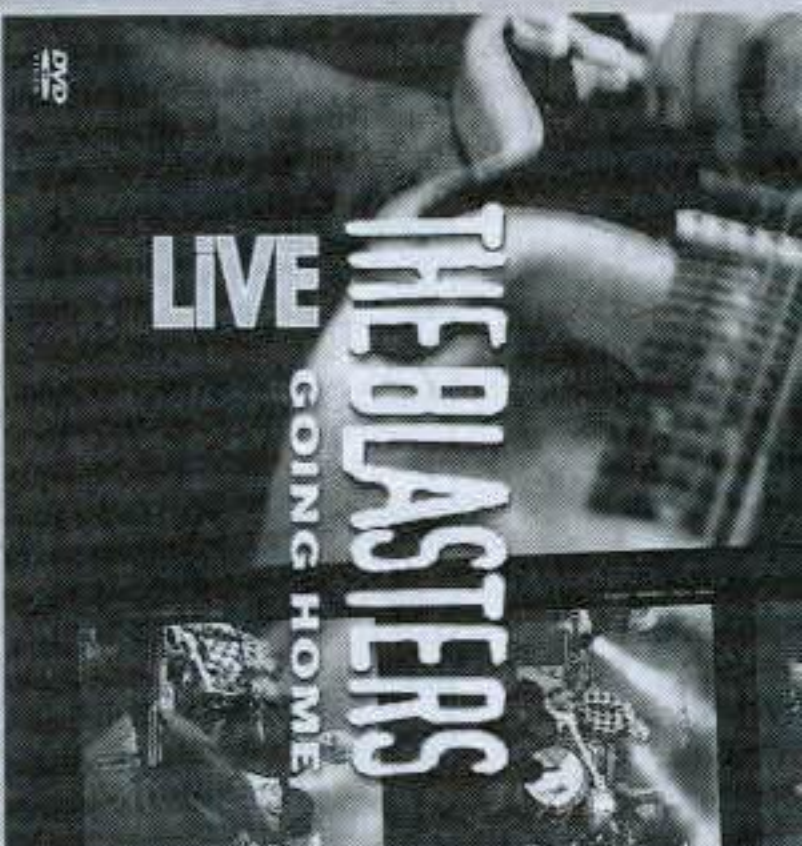


THE BLASTERS WERE ONE of the greatest American rock bands ever. I'm also of the opinion that their lead guitarist and main songwriter, Dave Alvin, is one of today's finest writers. That started with some great songs he penned with the Blasters in the early '80s. As one look at this DVD will show you, he's also grown tremendously as a guitarist.

This is a recording of a concert the fellas did to wrap up their "reunion" tour in 2003. They recorded the DVD in their home area at the Galaxy Theatre in Orange County, California. The original lineup is featured here. That means Dave's brother, Phil, is sweating, grimacing, and smiling through 18 great tunes. It also means the nasty rhythm section of Bill Bateman (drums), John Bazz (bass), and the wonderful Gene

Taylor (keyboards) is propelling this band to new heights on pretty much every performance. And guiding things along is Dave Alvin and his Strat, whose playing has grown tremendously through the years.

There's some nice extras on the DVD that show the Blasters back in the '80s. While he was certainly a fine roots-rock guitarist, his playing stayed simple and fit the songs.



The Blasters

Live: Going Home
Shout! Factory DVD

case, pick this one up. Rock and roll like it should be. — **JH** LF

Medallions shine on several songs.

From a musical standpoint, this is what's great about the DVD. A great band, putting on one hell of a show for lots of their fans. Throw in great interviews, old clips, and great sound and camera shots, and you get more than your money's worth. Dave says he'd be happy to do other reunion gigs in the future, but just in

case, pick this one up. Rock and roll like it should be. — **JH** LF



Nat King Cole, Louis Jordan

Swing Era

Idem Home Video

Along with titles by such jazz giants as Dinah Washington, Stan Kenton, Dizzy Gillespie and others, Idem Home Video (available from Music Video Distributors) has released DVDs of archival performances by two of the most influential figures in jazz and rhythm and blues, as part of its Swing Era series: Nat "King" Cole and Louis Jordan.

Before achieving fame as a smooth pop vocalist, Cole was one of jazz's foremost pianists — the bridge between Earl "Fatha" Hines and Oscar Peterson.

His King Cole Trio recorded such hits as "Sweet Lorraine" and "Route 66," as well as classic examples of jive like "Frim Fram Sauce" and "Solid Potato Salad," all included here, along with 23 other "soundies" produced for television and theaters.

The 72-minute DVD includes some trio performances with original guitarist Oscar Moore, but unfortunately they are all lip-synched. However, the fluid work of Moore's successor, the great Irving Ashby, is shown live on several other tracks, along with bassists Joe Comfort and Johnny Miller and conga man Jack Costanzo.

The Louis Jordan volume runs 90 minutes and contains no less than 35 songs — 10 each from the movies *Beware and Reel*, *Petite and Gone*, from 1946 and '47; five from the 1948 western *Look Out, Sister*; and 10 soundies.

Jordan was a huge star in the heyday of early R&B and jump blues as a singer, composer, saxophonist and, most of all, entertainer. His Tympani Five influenced everyone from Bill Haley to Joe Jackson, including B.B. King, Ray Charles, Sonny Rollins, and McCoy Tyner (to name a few) along the way. Many of Jordan's numerous hits — such as "Caldonia," "Five Guys Named Moe," and "That Chick's Too Young To Fry" — are included here.

Most of the clips are lip-synched, although "Early In The Morning" and "Look Out, Sister" are live. And although he is confined to strumming rhythm, guitarist Carl Hogan, a major influence on Chuck Berry, is visible on most tracks.

All of the Swing Era DVDs are double-sided, for PAL and NTSC systems. — **DF** LF

Daylight" and shines. His work on the cover of "Love Me Like a Man" turns the concept of blues guitar playing inside out. Great original licks and a wonderful feel and sound highlight the tune. Again, Wilson is given lots of chances to shine.

The real star here, of course, is Krall, and she's up to the challenge. For the first time, she writes with new hubby Elvis Costello, including a cover of his "Almost Blue." The partnership works on pretty much every level. Krall's singing has reached a certain maturity. And I always thought she was a fine singer, but here she ups the ante. She does a fine job covering Joni Mitchell's "Black Crow," with a jazzy solo from Wilson. Krall is also playing a bit more piano, soloing with confidence, and the music she composed for some of her husband's lyrics is wonderful.

I can't say enough about this record. Krall is reaching a point in her career where she's moving up the next step. Great stuff. — **JH**



Gurf Morlix

Cut 'N' Shoot

Blue Corn Music

Is Gurf his real name? I don't know. What I do know is he's produced excellent records in the past few years for other artists, and in the past couple has started putting together some pretty good ones of his own.

Once upon a time, country music radio sounded this good. What's really surprising is Gurf played the lion's share of the instruments on the record. Despite that, each tune has a great feel, and the collection works really well. At times, it's almost like one person playing every instrument and singing.