

Flavor Savers

Cajun Punkers Dash Rip Rock Got a Gold Album the Hard Way

by Stephen Pitalo

While songs like "Pussywhipped" and "I Wanna Be Locked in a Liquor Store With You" may not make the top 40, Dash Rip Rock's new album, a greatest hits compilation titled "Dash Rip Rock's Gold Album," blends their signature Tabasco hyperextensions of "Delta Dawn" and "Jambalaya" with ragin' Cajun punker energy.

"We wanted a great party record," said guitarist-lead vocalist Bill Davis. "And then there's 'Pot,'" referring to the underground hit pseudo-cover of Danny and the Juniors' "At the Hop" titled "Let's Go Smoke Some Pot," that went Top 60 in Australia, and exposed the American kiddies to the Dash sense of humor.

This trio of funlovin' three-chord



Dash Rip Rock

cranks, who just enjoyed a rockin' gig at Brownie's on Jan. 28, includes Davis, bassist Hoaky Hickel, and drummer Kyle Melancon.

On the subject of current rock band reunion fever, Davis laughed at the idea that Dash Rip Rock could have broken up after three years and then reformed this year for a 10-year reunion tour. "Yeah, like the Descendants. They broke up in '83 or '84 and now they're back together on the Epitaph label, selling a half million records. If we'd have done that, well ..."

If they'd have done that, Davis would have missed one of the great thrills of his life: taking a piss next to the late Willie Dixon. "Miller Beer had this convention in Milwaukee for bands in the '80s. They would sponsor bands on tour, and host a 'beer school' where they'd advise you as to how to mention how much you enjoy Miller Beer on-stage and all that. Every year they'd have a sort of Master of Ceremonies like Carl Perkins or whoever, and one year it was Willie Dixon. Me and Dave Navarro, then in a band called the Neighborhoods, followed him around and eventually ended up next to him in the bath-

room. A great thrill."

Dash's curse has been that bands who open up for them end up more famous than they. Examples include the Reverend Horton Heat and the Black Crowes. "When the Black Crowes opened up for us, they were still Mr. Crowe's Garden, and they were awful — trying to play jangly REM stuff," recalls Davis. "A year later we saw them doing that Faces rip-off stuff they do now. I'm a lot nicer to the bands that open up for us now. We used to be real pricks to them, but now, you never know. Like Hootie and the Blowfish. We played with them a long time ago. And last time we played Wetlands, they showed up and did 'Shake That Girl' with us. Their bodyguards got nervous when we went drinking with them afterward. We tend to get drunk and play football in the bar, and Darius [Rucker] had to tell the bodyguards that we were okay to tackle him."

After years of dumb rock journalist questions, I subject Davis to the ultimate in inane: word association with great rock trios. He agrees to play along.

Rush ... "Too complicated."

The Police ... "Too British."

The Kingston Trio ... "They smoked pot."

The Presidents of the United States of America ... "The spawn of a band called the Young Fresh Fellows. I'm a big Fellows fan."

Better Than Ezra (also from Louisiana) ... "The leader, Kevin, was in a band called the Surfin' Dachshunds that played all Dash Rip Rock covers. I kid you not. I went to see them once and they played 20 of our songs and I asked him, 'What the hell are you guys doing?'"

Nirvana ... "Revolutionary. Opened the door for all those idiots."

Shonen Knife ... "I bought their record long ago when they were on some little New Jersey label. They're hilarious — like a little cartoon."

ZZ Top ... "Dash Rip Rock can play every ZZ Top song ever written. No joke. We tried to meet them in Denmark at this big festival, but there was too much security. We ended up drinking with Lou Reed by the pool. He was great — 'Hey, guys, come over here and have a drink.' And we also had the distinct pleasure of sharing shrimp cocktails with Joe Satriani at that same festival."

Dash's drinking habits — falling somewhere between the legendary excesses of the Replacements and Hank Williams Jr.'s liver-killer days — have become more selective. Hickel seldom hoards his bottle of Jack Daniels on stage; front row fans generally get regular free-flowing pours. Davis and company rarely binge on Sunday, Monday or Tuesday anymore.

"It all depends on what's going on," Davis says with a laugh. "But if we're opening for Lou Reed, we're going to get wasted."