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MAD DAWGS: THE BAND

ACOUSTIC BLUES

Off the beaten path of mainstream blues and jazz, five exceptionally talented mainstays of the Berlin blues scene have stashed away their amps and turned to entirely acoustic instruments.

The Mad Dawgs are not about reenacting 1920s and 30s country blues. Instead, the fledgling band has opted for a modern, funky approach open to experiments.

Now, who's in that gang of five?

KAT BALOUN, VOCAL/BLUESHARP

Her warm alto and mastery of the blues harp make the native Texan Kat Baloun a cornerstone of the band. Since relocating from San Francisco to Berlin in 1994, she has played all major European festivals with her own group, the Alleycats.

AMY ZAPF, VOCAL/PIANO/MANDOLIN/ACCORDION

As a multi-instrumentalist, singer and founder of the Mad Dawgs, Amy Zapf is the wild card in the band's line-up. Together with Kat, she's co-written most of the band's repertoire and arrangements. Her equal command and tasteful choice of piano, accordion and mandolin enhances the individual character of each tune.

JAN HIRTE, VOCAL/GUITAR

Over the past 30 years, Jan Hirte has built up a fantastic reputation as one of Germany's top-notch blues guitarists. Luther Allison, Johnny Copeland, Angela Brown, Aron Burton, Guitar Crusher and many more have requested his services. For the Mad Dawgs, he swaps his main squeeze, the ES-335, for the steel-string flattop.

BERND KUCHENBECKER, VOCAL/ACOUSTIC BASS

Bernd Kuchenbecker's bass is the band's rock-solid foundation. His amazingly broad spectrum ranges from big-band jazz to soulful combo playing, as he has aptly demonstrated with the likes of Jimmy Smith and many others.

MARCEL VAN CLEEV, DRUMS/PERCUSSION

On drums, Holland's Marcel van Cleef completes the line-up. One of Europe's most flexible and powerful drum virtuosos, he routinely stages jaw-dropping solo concerts. The Dawgs are damn lucky that he's also got a deep love for the blues.

For many years now, all five musicians have been busy touring Europe in different formations.

