



► record out of the masses? And any of the Frank Stokes records, any of Jesse Fuller, who's a personal favourite – good rumbling, rail-roading stuff.”

“Tampa Red's...” continues Steve. “There's so much. On the live show we're going to be doing some more old favourites from various eras, and some more originals, more recent stuff than when we did the Hillbillies album. And maybe some early Dire Straits stuff like *Water Of Love*, which would fit nicely into the format. We've only planned for the album and the tour because we do all have other commitments. So we can't say what we're going to do really...”

Until you and Brendan decide to do an album together again?

“Yeah, then we can cause all this trouble again!” he laughs.

You must have a pretty heavy insurance bill with using all these old guitars...

Steve: “Oh yeah, but we're trying to keep it down to a minimum really, otherwise we'd have a mental amount of guitars onstage. So we'll probably end up swapping instruments and taking out guitars that do a particular job, rather than everyone taking their own.”

Brendan: “And we've got some nice old Fender amps to play through – Vibroverbs and Vibroluxes. Some of those were already lying around but with the others it's just a question of 'liberating' things from friends and acquaintances!”

When you play live are you hoping that the interest for this album, admittedly because of

Knopfler's involvement, will spur people to rediscover old blues music?

Steve: “Well, it's funny you should mention that, because we were talking about that a few minutes ago when we first realised that might be an effect. But obviously, we're not doing it for that reason, but we do want it to be successful and if it opens people's eyes, then great!”

Croker and Phillips' thoughts turn to waistcoats – like their heroes they'll be sporting the 'complete gentlemanly tackle' when they play live in April and May. But at the moment, that is the extent of The Hillbillies' ambition. The tour over, Knopfler and Fletcher will return to the security of Dire Straits, Croker will be back with his Five O'Clock Shadows, and Phillips to his round solo gigs. In the meantime, Croker says the Hillbillies are determined to bear out their album title, 'Missing. Presumed Having A Good Time.'

“Blues has never gone away and will always be there. We're obviously aware that modern pop is Kylie Minogue or whatever, but to me, blues is just good-time music. Just because new things come along doesn't mean what's gone before loses anything. It's like the attitude of our Government who seem to think that if they find something new, then everything that's gone before is worthless, and that's just not true.”●

With thanks to Peter Mackay, Ron Eve (of Bromley) and Dave Foster at Unamerican Activities for help with the photos.

Solo Discographies:

Steve Phillips:

'The Best Of Steve Phillips' (Unamerican Activities 1987: BRAVE 5)

'Steel-Rail Blues' (Unamerican Activities 1989: BRAVE 9)

Brendan Croker:

'Boat Trips In The Bay' (Red Rhino 1987)

'A Close Shave' (Unamerican Activities 1987: BRAVE 1)

'Brendan Croker and the 5 O'Clock Shadows' (Silverstone 1989)