

September 2006 - Dave's On Tour (an interview by Dave Iozzia) - USA

DAVE'S ON TOUR: AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVE KILMINSTER

By Dave Iozzia, Dave's On Tour | September, 2006

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When davesontour.com first chatted with guitarist Dave Kilminster, it was during the winter of 2005. Now it's Fall 2006 and a whole lot has changed in Dave's musical journey. He toured the United States in September as a guitarist and vocalist in the band of ex-Pink Floyd bassist Roger Waters after touring Europe earlier this summer. I tracked down Dave between tours to get some updated information to add to the interview we did previously.

DI: Best of luck on tour with Roger Waters, and thanks for letting me update the interview we did last year. I really enjoyed the performance at the P.N.C. Bank Art Center in Holmdel, New Jersey, earlier this month. I can't offer any onstage advice, but don't wait around backstage too long after the shows. With eleven bandmates, you'd better hustle to the food tent before they run out of food.

DAVE K: That's OK, I'm on a diet!!!

DI: Your musical journeys are far from over. I don't know if you'll look back one day and say that the Roger Waters band was the BEST band you've ever played in. I am pretty confident that you'll be able to look back and say it's the BIGGEST band you've ever played in. Introduce your bandmates.

DAVE K: Yes, it's definitely the biggest! They're ALL such nice people too and that's a rare thing.

Roger Waters on bass guitar and vocals. He's a visionary, he sees the whole picture in his head: the music, orchestration, arrangements, lights, and images. Nothing happens on stage by chance; it's all down to Roger's incredible imagination and boundless energy. He's also a very funny guy!

Dave K on guitar and vocals. A musical genius, and very cute!!!! Ha ha ha, I'm kidding! I'm basically Dave Gilmour's 'stunt double' on this tour!

Snowy White on guitar. Snowy is a wonderful blues player, and what a tone! He's also one of the nicest people I've ever met.

Andy Fairweather-Low on guitar. Another great blues player, but he also does that 'Chet Atkins' thing brilliantly! He's got some great stuff down on the guitar. I wish he'd play more!

Jon Carin and Harry Waters on keyboards. Jon is a musical train spotter, he knows everything about every part on every Pink Floyd record ever! Give him a chance and he'll perform everyone's part! He's great! Harry is also a great player. He'd never played Hammond before the last tour and mastered it pretty much instantly. He's also a mean chess player, who's turning out to be a rather splendid jazz pianist!

Graham Broad on drums. A brilliant drummer, with great tone and feel. It's really difficult for most drummers to play with a click track, but Graham is totally on it, all the time! It's quite amazing. He's also a wonderful personality to be around.

Ian Ritchie on saxophone. He's totally great! He plays the ass off his solos every night. Another closet jazzer too, and a lovely chap to hang out with!

and Katie Kissoon, PP Arnold, and Carol Kenyon on backing vocals. I've worked with female backing singers before, and they can be a real nightmare. But you can see why these girls get so much work. They're all individually amazing, but they're also lovely people to be with.

Sorry if that all sounds like some sad Oscar speech, but it's true! I don't think Roger would employ any of them if they weren't really lovely people.

DI: This tour is being billed as 'Roger Waters' The Dark Side of the Moon.'

DAVE K: Yep, because in the second set we play the whole of 'Dark Side...' in the same order as on the record, with the same sound effects! It must be pretty incredible, I really can't wait to see it one day!

DI: Is the balance of the setlist a surprise? If not, please give the music fans of North America a brief preview of the other songs Roger and his band will be performing.

DAVE K: I don't think there're many surprises in there, apart from a new tune called 'Leaving Beirut,' about Roger's experiences hitchhiking in Lebanon. It'll be interesting to see how that one goes down for a number of reasons.

DI: When you played in the Keith Emerson Band, re-arranging Emerson, Lake and Palmer's classic material and adding lead guitar to a formula that traditionally featured only keyboards, bass guitar, and drums must have been very challenging. What's been the biggest musical challenge for you with the Pink Floyd material being played on the Roger Waters tour?

DAVE K: That's a good question. It's a different kind of pressure. I'm playing (and singing) this stuff pretty much note for note, and if you do make a mistake, then it's kinda obvious to everybody, because the fans know the songs SOOO well. They know how it's supposed to sound! It's a bit of a no-win situation to be honest. If you play it exactly the same as Dave Gilmour, people say "It's not as good as Gilmour." If you put your own slant on it, people say "It doesn't sound like Gilmour." What can you do? It doesn't worry me though, I'm actually very, very happy at the moment! I'm having loads of fun.

DI: I'm sure there were many highlights from the summer tour of Europe with Roger Waters. Talk about two of your favourite memories. You pick one city and I'll pick the other. My choice is playing in Red Square in Moscow, Russia.

DAVE K: Red Square was great, but mainly for the setting. It was pretty incredible looking up and seeing St. Basil's and the Kremlin whilst you're playing. But it felt a little strange, because there were a lot of people sitting quietly at the front in the really expensive seats. But over to the right, and outside the wire fence people were going totally bananas! They really, really loved it, but I guess they couldn't afford to get in. So you had this complete contrast, almost like there were two separate gigs going on! But Russia is definitely a country of contrast.

It was great to play Hyde Park, because I had a load of family and friends there. But I think the highlight of the tour for me was playing in Israel, which was just totally incredible, absolutely mind-blowing. Apart from the fact that it was our biggest gig (somewhere near 60,000?) there was just such an incredible feeling there. I tried to write about it in my tour diary (on my website) but the words really couldn't justify the experience.

DI: The Roger Waters North American tour will take you to a lot of cities and venues that you've never performed in. I know you've played in New York City before, at the B.B. King's Blues Club, with the Keith Emerson Band. Share your thoughts on your upcoming shows at a bigger and more historic venue, Madison Square Garden.

DAVE K: Well, we're playing Madison Square Garden next week, and I STILL don't think it's sunk in yet! I remember seeing 'The Song Remains The Same' at the cinema, with Led Zeppelin doing their thing at the Garden, and it just seemed like an impossible dream to play there. It still does really. But I guess a lot of what's happened to me in the past few years would have seemed impossible when I was younger.

DI: What's the latest news on the pending release of your new album 'Scarlet?'

DAVE K: Well I'm trying to finish it, but these tours with Roger just keep getting in the way! Actually it's almost complete; all the drums, bass, guitars, and most of the keyboards are done. I've just got to finish arranging and scoring the strings (I've got a real string quartet coming in!!!), do all the vocals, and mix... all of which will probably take about two/three weeks when I get back. It'll be finished by the end of November anyway.

DI: How would you describe its musical direction?

DAVE K: Musical direction? Umm... I listen to such a variety of music, that there's a whole bunch of different influences in there. I'm actually intrigued as to how it'll turn out myself!

DI: Are you planning any solo shows to support it?

DAVE K: A guitarist friend of mine called Bumblefoot (who is TOTALLY amazing by the way) wrote this great song, and one of the lyrics goes 'We make plans, and God laughs.' I love that line. Looking at this year so far, it's COMPLETELY different from the one I'd planned out in January, but it has been incredible. I'd love to go out and play some solo shows supporting 'Scarlet.' I'd also love to go out on tour with Guthrie Govan and Jamie Humphries doing our version of a 'G3' thing. There's also talk of maybe some more shows with Roger next year. I think the only way to cope in this business is to be as flexible as possible, be open to any new things that may come along, and just say 'yes' to everything!

DI: Prior to touring with Roger Waters, you were the lead guitarist and vocalist in the Keith Emerson Band. Have you ended your musical relationship with Keith Emerson or will you be working with him and his band again after the Roger Waters tour?

DAVE K: I'd LOVE to play with Keith again! We wrote enough new tunes for a double album; it'd be amazing to get that recorded, and maybe even tour with that album too. It would be so cool to tour with those guys again.

DI: In your career, you've had the opportunity to work with a bunch of 'Hall of Fame' calibre musicians: Keith Emerson, Carl Palmer, John Wetton, Ken Hensley, Roger Waters, and so many others. As you've sat with them on a tourbus, airplane, or even backstage, you must have heard some crazy rock and roll stories. Will you share a funny one with us?

DAVE K: There are loads of stories, most of which are not repeatable! But one of my favourites (and probably the cleanest) was told to me by John Wetton, about his old band mate Bryan Ferry when John was playing in Roxy Music. They were on tour and staying at this swanky hotel for the day. Most of the band were out by the pool, but Bryan was inside, messing about on a piano in the hotel lobby. All of a sudden Bryan came out all excited, his arms and hands locked into a strange, contorted shape... he walks slowly over to John, carefully holds his hands out and asks "John, what's this chord?"

DI: I recently asked a musician about all of the great musicians he's played with and their influence on him as he's evolved on his instrument. He replied, 'I've learned something from somebody on every instrument. All musicians have something great that they do. I try to steal from each and every one of them and throw it into my style.' Can you self-relate to that statement?

DAVE K: That sounds like me! In fact, that sounds like an old interview I did! It's definitely true though.

DI: What are your future plans?

DAVE K: I really don't plan much... I'm always gonna be writing and recording my own stuff, and hopefully I'll be successful at that. I just love being part of a great band though. I'm not really interested in being a Ritchie Blackmore-type character!!!