



The Slackers Newsletter

Rude. Reckless.

Better Late Than Never: The Official Newsletter of The Slackers Issue #30



Just got off a plane from NYC to Austin. It's warm in New York but it's positively tropical and humid down here in Texas. It's hard to believe that it's the last week of October but this is the way of the world these days.

We are down in Austin for our annual Slackfest at the Flamingo Cantina. This is one of those Slackers' traditions that we have made part of our lives. Flamingo Cantina is the only venue from our first US tour that we still play. (The Grog shop in Cleveland is another but it's in a different room than it was in the 1990s.) We play for 3 nights. 3 different sets of music. Around 60 different songs around the course of the weekend.

With so many one nighters in the schedule, it's a luxury to be in a place for 5 days, travel day in, 3 days of shows, and travel day out. In this issue, we write about some of our Austin experiences. We also write about some recent tour experiences from our last weeks' show in Hamden, Connecticut.

If you are reading this, you are part of the few, the proud, those that keep our newsletter from going to your spam folder or even rarer, those that fish our newsletter out of your spam folder. Thank you for being part of the elite!

If you got a topic, you want us to write about, please send us an email slackermusic1991@gmail.com We do this newsletter so it will be read!

Hope you enjoy issue #30!



Self Medication is Back on LP!

We are really happy to announce that after many years of being out of print, thanks to those lovely people at Pirates Press Records, Self Medication is back in print on vinyl!



With the original album, back in 2008, we made 1000 copies and then they took around 3 years to sell, being that time was a low point for vinyl sales. And that was that. It's been out of print. That is, until now!

Pirate's Press did another great job. We sharpened up the cover art based on the original 2008 artwork. We also added a bonus single of music from the 2007-2008 sessions that didn't make the final album. We also had Mitch Rackin make a proper vinyl master instead of just burning it off of the CD. I got to say that it sounds great!

2006-2007 when we recorded the album was a time when we were first getting used to digital recording. Much of it was made at Jeff Baker's (King Django) Version City in New Brunswick, New Jersey. In general, it was a time of trying to figure out who we were again as a band. We were tinkering with the elements of ska, reggae, rock, dub, soul, latin, and rnb that make up the Slackers.

Self Medication is a very baroque album. Lots of layering. Lots of backing vocals, little keyboard parts, and multiple different kinds of guitars in the same song. I think the immediate inspiration throughout was the Beatles and this led to a lot of experimentation (and of course its impossible to play live without an orchestra!)

So enjoy! I hope you have as much fun listening to it as we did making it.

Order your copy of the vinyl at
www.piratespressrecords.com
www.theslackers.com/store

Booking the Slackers into 2024



Although we still got 25 gigs to go for 2023, we can start talking about 2024 and give you a sneak preview of what to expect next year. Because you are cool enough to read this newsletter we can tell you about some shows that are to be announced soon (if they have not already been announced by the time this newsletter is released.)

After a winter break of January through March, the Slackers will be back touring in the spring. We got a 'spring training' tour in the Midwest and Canada.

April 4 Harrisburg Stage on Herr

April 5 Millvale, PA (Pittsburgh) Mr Smalls Theatre

April 6 Cleveland, OH Grog Shop

April 7 Detroit, MI Magic Bag

April 8 Buffalo, NY Rec Room

April 10 Kitchener, NY The Hub

April 11 Toronto, On Velvet

April 13 Quebec City, QC The Antibar

April 14 Montreal, QC Café Campus

After these shows, we are working on some northeast club dates for late April and early May. And we are trying for some outdoor shows and festivals as we get into June.

Later in the year, our European tour will be from late September into mid-October. We can tell you about these dates so far. We got more shows coming for Spain, France, Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.

Tuesday, Sept 24 Brighton The Arch

Wednesday, Sept 25 London Underworld

Thursday, Sept 26 Glasgow Audio

Friday Sept 27 Sheffield Corporation

Saturday Sept 28 Southampton 1865

Sunday Sept 29 Bristol Exchange

Monday Sept 30 Swansea Sin City

Sunday October 13 Berlin SO36 END OF TOUR PARTY!

There is still much yet to be revealed for 2024 so hopefully we will make it a memorable year.

If you are interested in booking the Slackers for 2024 please email John@soundtalentgroup.com



Recap of the Slackers'
Live in Connecticut



It was really nice to get back to work this fall after a 7 week break. Our kickoff show was at the Space Ballroom in Hamden, Connecticut.

It's been a pleasure for us watching Mark Nussbaum, the promoter grow over the years. He started out booking us in little social club halls out in small towns in Connecticut when he was still in high school. This was back around 2000 or so.

He was able to work his way up to owning this great indie venue in Hamden which is just north of New Haven. It's like a European style venue with several different rooms and a nice intimate feel.

Being that we just put out the reissue of Self Medication, we rehearsed several of them at soundcheck.

The room filled up close to capacity with around 270 people being in a 300 capacity room. The Connecticut fans were warm, fun, and they seemed to enjoy the set list.

Matt Flood of Asbestos Records was in attendance and he put it better than any of the Slackers could.



Matt Flood

5m · 🌐



If for some reason you're on the fence about seeing [The Slackers](#) on their current tour... go get tickets.

They pulled out a ton of almost never played deep cuts (and you could hear people freaking out when the long they waited a decade to hear got played) and the band was really at the peak of, for lack of a better word.. playful.. Vic was bouncing off the walls, live dub/vocal effects, lots of audience sing a longs... really one of the most fun & unique sets i've seen from them in years.

See you out on the road in 2023!

—

[The Best Diner in the United States](#)



The Slackers are a band that travels on its stomach. We center most of our days around the question of 'what are we going to eat?'

I would posit that the Modern Diner is currently the best diner in the United States. The food is distinct from other diners, it is creative but just fantastically understated and matter of factly presented.

The Modern Diner is located in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, a small city adjacent to Providence. Its set up in a classic rail road car format and is only open for breakfast and lunch. Service is fast and efficient in a classic no nonsense northeast US style.

One of the things that makes Modern Diner distinct is its Portuguese influences. If you look at the specials that are posted on sheets of paper by the front door, you will notice lots of dishes with Portuguese influences like Linguica, Blademeat, and Mozambique. Linguica is Portugese sausage and is used instead of the normal corned beef hash. Blademeat is marinated pork shoulder that is pulled and chopped. Mozambique is seafood or chicken cooked in a sauce of garlic, olive oil, and white wine.

There is also a lot of Lobster on the menu. Not because its fancy but being New England because it is local and plentiful.

The last strength of the diner is its ability to do luxurious yet understated versions of classic dishes like French Toast with caramel instead of syrup. Pancakes and crepes are also done in spectacular fashion.



On recent trips to the diner Marcus got Cheese grits with a side of Blade Meat. Dave got a Blade Meat Ommellet. Jay got Lobster Mozambique grits. Vic got Linguica hash with home fried potatoes and eggs over easy. Jess, our tour manager, got Lobster Benedict with a side of Linguica Hash. Marc got Challah French Toast with extra crispy Bacon.

Looking at the Modern Diner, I can see a lot in common with the Slackers. Its independent. Its scrappy. Its opportunistic in that it tries to maximize what advantages it has. It has a sense of craft and it has a sense of roots. I think everyone in the band would recommend it highly.



72 Hours in Austin with The Slackers

It's a luxury for us when we can play more than 1 show in a city. In Austin we get to play 3! This means we can have up to 5 days to

spend in a place. We get to hang out and enjoy what a town has to offer.

Last night after getting in from our flight, we found our Airbnb is around the corner from the **Silver Medal Bar**. It's a cosy little shack next to a run down motel and some used car places. The music on the jukebox is mostly psychedelic metal if that makes any sense. The beer is cheap. They also have liquor. For food they have very good smash burgers, chili dogs, elote, and the old favorite, frito pie.

The bartenders are friendly and were soon giving buybacks of beers to the thirsty out of town visitors.

In Austin, Mexican food is always on the menu. We have eaten at many a restaurant over the years and this year is no different. Vic got a nice Caldo de Res (Beef Soup) at **Los Jaliscienses**. For breakfast, Dave has been hitting up **La Aguilera** for Migas and Machaca, and is appreciating the quality of their handmade tortillas.



When we have a kitchen, we usually have a band feast and cook some dishes. We usually shop at one of the Mexican supermarkets like **El Rancho** and fill up on supplies.

We also tend to like some of the classic old Austin places. Dave likes **the Original Hoffbrau** with its butter steaks. The **Austin Chili Parlor** is also good as is **Franklin BBQ**.

Art wise, Austin has lots of stuff as well. Two years ago, Dave went to the **Blanton Museum of Art** and was impressed. Another spot to visit is the **Cathedral of Junk** which we discovered 2 years ago when we stayed near it. It built of trash and discarded things that are put together into temple like structures.



A regular stop on Austin stays is **Waterloo Records**. Several of the band members are vinyl junkies and will search through their offerings.

Lastly, I need to give a shout out to the Flamingo which is hanging on despite shifting economic tides on 6th street in Austin. It provides us with a home base where we can sustainably play multiple nights in the same city. Much love to you for making our lives that much better! See you tonight!

The Latest in Slackers Merch

We are really excited to have Self Medication vinyl back on the merch table. We have it as both black and 'smoky red' vinyl. We also have the latest single, 'Kill You' in stock.



www.theslackers.com/store is the address of our store.

We got these vinyl albums in stock!

Self Medication!

Red Light

Question

Wasted Days

Live At Ernestos

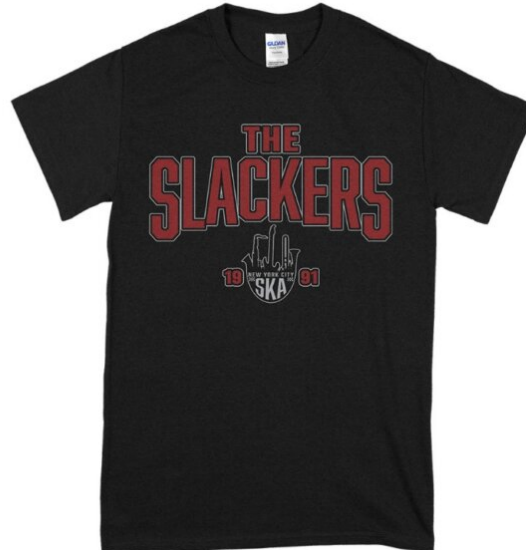
Peculiar

Don't Let The Sunlight Fool Ya

plus

NY Berlin / Tell Them No 12"

Kill You / Statehouse 12"



Plus we got 4 different tshirt styles plus the Slackers custom harrington jackets!
This will be available for sale at our shows and through our mail order at
www.theslackers.com/store
YOU CAN ALSO PREORDER MERCH AND HAVE IT DELIVERED TO YOU AT
THE SHOW!

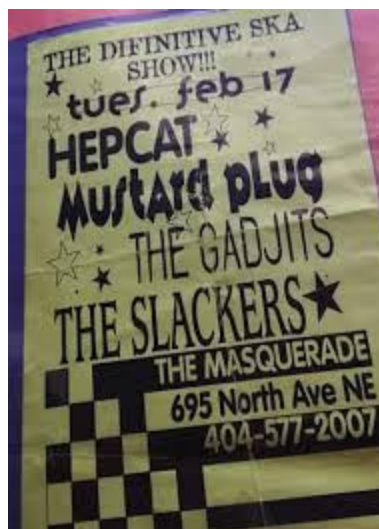
Reserve your size, reserve your color, and then put 'in person pick up' in the
shipping column and we will bring it to you at the show! Don't worry about
whether we will have your size. PREORDER AND SAVE!

Dave Hillyard's History of US Ska: Chapter 7



Well, this is the chapter that talks about the unpleasant topic of how the Ska scene crashed and ska retreated from the eyes of the general public in the late 1990s.

1998 was the turning point year. The Hepcat/Slackers/Gadjits tour went out in March/April and did great. Lots of sold out venues and Hepcat was featured on the Conan O'Brien show.



But the word was getting out that the ska bands touring during the summer of 1998 were having erratic attendance. Ska package tours weren't the sure thing they were in 1997. As fall of 1998 came around, shows were showing diminished attendance and promoters were starting to utter the infamous words, "we don't book Ska shows anymore" and they had moved on to other things.

Parallel to the Ska revival during the 1990s, there was a swing revival. The first band I heard doing it was Royal Crown Revue back in 1991. Hepcat and Royal Crown Revue played together at the Palomino club in the valley back then. Much as Ska came up as a DIY movement in the 1990s, so did the swing revival.

One band, the Cherry Poppin Daddies, were able to make a quick transition from Ska to Swing just as ska receded and swing rose. They of course being late to the party, had one of the scene's biggest hits with 'zoot suit riot.'

As 1998 wore on it was 'swing' that was having its moment and Ska was seen as being over. Brian Setzer Orchestra's cover of 'Jump Jive and Wail' was ubiquitous.



Another strange moment was in 1999, when the "Latin Rock Explosion" happened. The flagship song was 'Living the Vida Loca' which so obviously Ska influenced musically and had checkerboard imagery. It was actually MORE SKA than a lot of what was being passed off as ska at the time. But Ricky Martin wasn't marketed in the US as a ska act and most US label execs wouldn't know who were the Los Fabulosos Cadillacs or other sources that his musical directors were drawing from.

Despite songs with actual ska elements being popular, by 1999, the industry had moved on. It's hard to overestimate that the late 1990s was a return to dominance of the traditional music business. Pre-packaged boy and girl bands dominated over indie artists. Songs were written and produced by committee. The artists' images were products that were mass marketed by an experienced team of professionals. The artists were just employees of the managers which owned the product.

In some ways it was also a generational switch. Boy bands were being marketed to 13 year old girls who were no longer Generation X, they were millennials. The punk / indie / ska / DIY scene was the product of disaffected Gen X born in the 1960s and 1970s. As those born in the 1980s entered the music market, they began by buying really corporate products. Their larger size as compared to Gen X also got the label's attention. There was just more money in it than in the DIY bands of the late 80s and early 1990s.

The internal structure of the 'ska show' and the way it was marketed by indie promoters also led to a downturn. Whenever something gets popular it gets overdone. Whereas Ska shows in most towns would be a monthly thing or bimonthly thing in the late 1980s or early 1990s, by the mid-1990s it was becoming a weekly thing.

Quantity was winning out over quality. To promoters a ska show had to be at least 4 bands. Many were 5 or 6 bands per night or even more if the promoter was feeling sadistic. The sheer logistics of this was taxing to the venues. Every show can't be a festival. And let's just face it, many of the bands were really bad. On a 6 band bill there might be 1-2 good bands.



This lack of quality destroyed the ska gig experience. Most people would be listening to 4 hours of crappy bands to hear the 45 minutes of the one good band. This is a recipe for burn out.

As promoters began to have too many ska shows chasing after a shrinking burned out market, many ska shows began to fail, and as a result more and more promoters were saying "I don't do ska shows anymore." There was a sense that all ska bands are the same and their time had passed.

Add in a glut of ska bands. In the mid-90s, a lot of 80s era ska bands that had wandered back from their funk careers and showed up claiming to be pioneers.

The overall quality of bands was low. The generic third wave Ska formula mix of Ska, Punk, and Metal has a certain appeal for around 30-45 minutes. So one band can ride off the momentum of the formula but the more bands using it for a longer time, it starts to lose its charm quickly.

The album market was also glutted with lots of ska releases. CDs were easy and cheap to make, so bands who could get together an album relatively simply

as well. Whether they had the talent or recording skills to make a good album was another question altogether.

Moon Ska Records which was the flagship of the US ska scene had a rapid collapse in the late 1990s and then by 2000 was out of business. They had lots of product out on consignment and suddenly it stopped selling. This was compounded by a lot of distributors of indie music going out of business. In the years between 1998 and 2001, bands started breaking up again and the number of ska bands would slowly go down.



For those of you who have been paying attention, you may have noted that the vast majority of Slackers' albums were put out after 'the peak' of Ska. The only two that were in the heyday of 1995-1997 were Better Late Than Never and Red Light. Everything from the Question on is post-peak! We have terrible timing! The wind is always in our face with the Slackers. We have never had an easy moment where the larger social momentum was in our favor! I guess we are just stubborn as to why we continue with our band.

The next chapter will talk about how the scene continued. Bands like the Slackers continued on. We were on our own trajectory that didn't have much to do with Ska waves and we were able to survive and slowly thrive in the post 3rd wave landscape.

A Note From Our Agent



Here we are, back together - huddled and shivering - like a trauma survivor's support group, to finalize the trial of Dave Hillyard. On moral, ethical, and creative grounds. The charges? Murdering Jimmy Buffett. Did he do it? I don't know, but the guy aint around no more. Do you want to pin it on skin cancer? Nah - you can usually fight that off. That is, unless A) either it's really rare or B) if one of your FAVORITE BANDS IN THE WHOLE WORLD refutes your musical existence and your prowess. Then that's a spirit killer, and we all know what happens when your spirit is broken. That's right - death. Thanks Dave.

When I last left you hanging in suspense, we were speaking about the theory of bands as religions, the history of religion (using rationalization of 'a higher

purpose' in order to infiltrate other organizations and take their land / water / resources / fanbase. In this case, my grand scheme was the theory of using OUR HOLY CALLING in order to INVADE, DESTABILIZE AND CONQUER the world of Jimmy Buffett. Imagine the sheer amount of Parrotheads there are, with their free-wheeling ethos and their ability to SPEND SPEND SPEND. If only 0.1 PERCENT of their flock would merely listen in to Vic's heart-rendering take on "A Pirate Looks At Forty" (I don't remember what the fuck its called, but thats one of them), they'd be hooked. Slackers shows become embossed with the glossy sheen of Margaritaville. We are the new Valhalla. What's done is done and we can start the plans for our first Married Girl Motel.

Or so it would seem. I had a skeptic in the mix - Dave Hillyard, Mister Scholar himself. He felt that this nation with all of its potential lucre was A BRIDGE TOO FAR for our audience. In turn, I stated that I would take the first bullet. I would listen to the ENTIRE CATALOG OF BUFFETT in order to actually back up my argument - that there are EIGHT GOOD SONGS within his catalog. (I'm not calling it "JB" because even though I'm agnostic, I'm not betting against the chances that James Brown and James Brown Enterprises may in fact run the Gates of Heaven.)

So I downloaded, and I deleted all the "Greatest Hits" and "Live" records that he had. (They were copious.) The remaining amount was 32 albums. This was more painful than getting through the George Jones catalog but less painful than getting through Depeche Mode. Here are my key thoughts -

THESE YACHT ROCK FUCKERS WOULD LOVE THE SLACKERS - there's a lot of fans there, and they got NO ONE to like that is living right now and playing relatively cheaply. We fit in with their world. Some Buffett songs are all about loneliness, death, chaos, and how he deals with his existence in the earth. How he keeps life together despite being on the road all the time. Some bad decisions that turn out good every once in a while. Sound familiar?

HE HAS AT LEAST EIGHT SONGS WORTHY OF THE SLACKERS - "Margaritaville", "Why Don't We Get Drunk", "Cheeseburger In Paradise", "He Went to Paris", "A Pirate Looks at Forty", "Changes in Latitudes", "I Aint Home", "Come Monday". Throw in the fucking "Pina Colada Song" and then a Donna Summer song, and you're done. It's hilarious, it works, and you grow the religion.

I GAINED NOTHING EMOTIONALLY FROM LISTENING TO ALL OF THIS - But I did gain more appreciation for him as a businessman - he figured out the format that worked for him, and he moved the needle enough for his fans to feel like the NEW products were ACCEPTABLE to them. And they ate it up. His songs are all different, but not dramatically, and that's one of his keys - a straight line through all of his work right to the heartstrings of his fans.

The end result is that the group shot it down, and now he's dead. We can't bring him back, but could the Slackers bring back his ethos? Could they mastermind the takeover whose plans are already built and prepped? Is this an indictment for your entertainment, or a missive to them?

TOUR DATES...TOUR DATES AND MORE TOUR DATES!



October 21 Hamden, CT Space Ballroom	Dec 1 Portland Dantes
Oct 27/28/29 Austin Flamingo Cantina	Dec 2 Berkeley Cornerstone
Nov 2 Nashville Marathon Music Works	Dec 3 Santa Cruz Moe's Alley
Nov 3 Atlanta Masquerade	Dec 5 Salt Lake City Metro Music Hall
Nov 4 St Petersburg, FL Janus Live	Dec 6 Denver Oriental Theater
Nov 5 Orlando, FL House of Blues	Dec 8 Los Angeles 1720
Nov 6 Melbourne, FL Pineapples	Dec 9 Garden Grove Garden Grove Amp
Nov 7 Ft Lauderdale, FL Revolution	Dec 10 San Diego House of Blues
Nov 8 Flopping Molly Cruise SOLD OUT	Dec 14 Washington DC Black Cat
Nov 17 / 18 Chicago Reggies	Dec 15 Bensalem, PA Broken Goblet
Nov 29 Vancouver Rickshaw	Dec 16 Brooklyn Brooklyn Bowl
Nov 30 Seattle The Crocodile	Dec 17 Cambridge, MA The Sinclair

October 27/28/29 Austin, Tx – Flamingo Cantina – SLACKFEST SOUTH!

Nov 2 Nashville Marathon Works (with Interrupters, Big D)
Nov 3 Atlanta Masquerade (with Interrupters, Big D)
Nov 4 St Petersburg Janus Landing (with Interrupters, Big D)
Nov 5 Orlando House of Blues (with Interrupters, Big D)



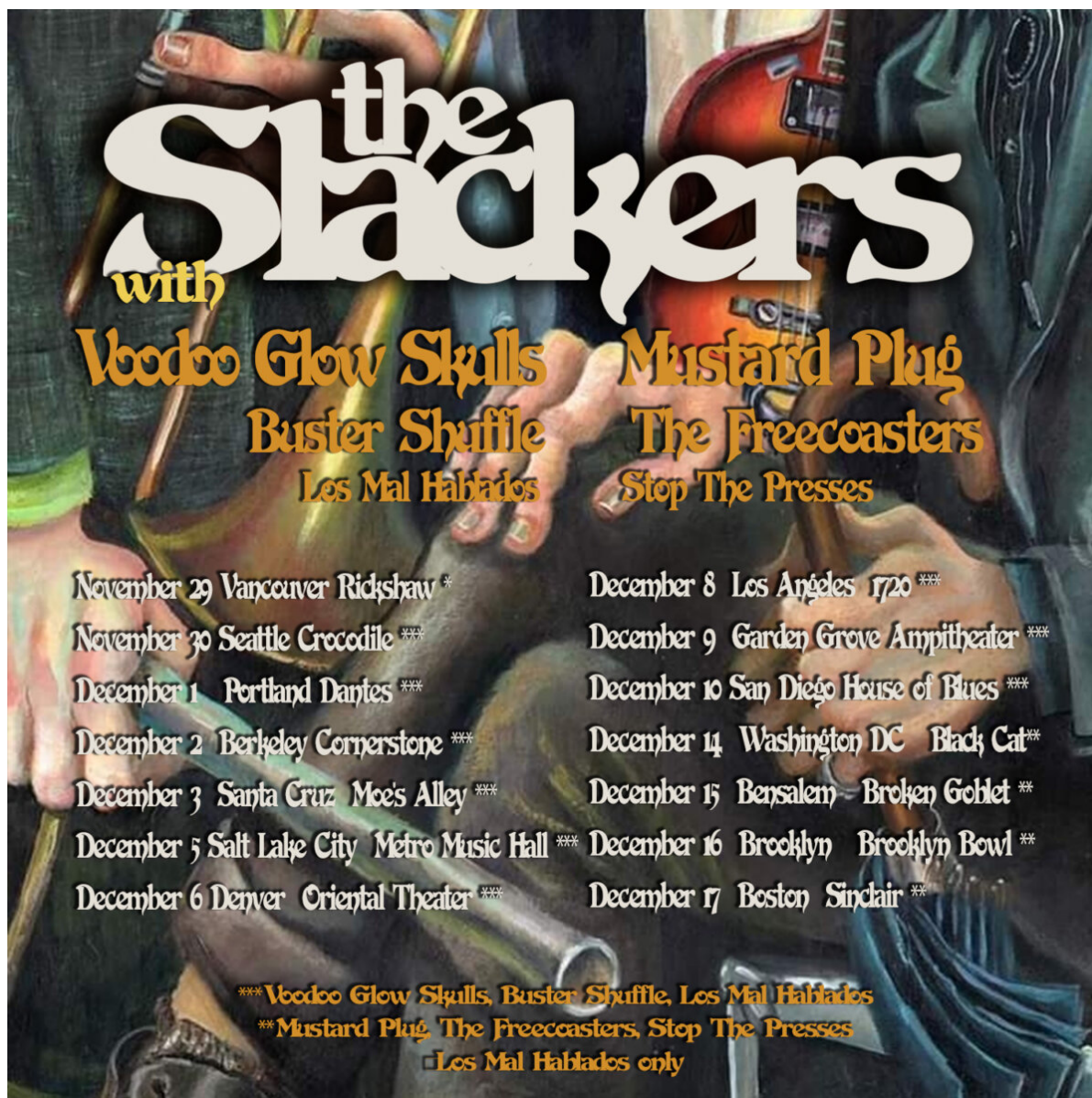
Nov 6 Melbourne, FL Pineapples

Nov 7 Ft Lauderdale Revolution (with Interrupters, Big D)

Nov 8 Miami, FL Flogging Molly Cruise SOLD OUT

Nov 17/18 Chicago Reggies SLACKFEST NORTH!

Nov 29 Vancouver, BC – Rickshaw Theatre
Nov 30 – Seattle The Crocodile
Dec 1 Portland Dantes
Dec 2 Berkeley Cornerstone
Dec 3 Santa Cruz Moe's Alley
Dec 5 Salt Lake City Metro Music Hall
Dec 6 Denver Oriental Theatre
Dec 8 Los Angeles 1720
Dec 9 Garden Grove – Garden Grove Ampitheater
Dec 10 San Diego House of Blues
Dec 14 Washington DC Black Cat
Dec 15 Bensalem, PA Broken Goblet
Dec 16 Brooklyn Brooklyn Bowl
Dec 17 Cambridge, MA The Sinclair



the Slackers

with

Voodoo Glow Skulls
Buster Shuffle
Los Mal Hablados

Mustard Plug
The Freecoasters
Stop The Presses

November 29 Vancouver Rickshaw *	December 8 Los Angeles 1720 ***
November 30 Seattle Crocodile ***	December 9 Garden Grove Amphitheater ***
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***Voodoo Glow Skulls, Buster Shuffle, Los Mal Hablados
**Mustard Plug, The Freecoasters, Stop The Presses
□ Los Mal Hablados only

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