

A Conversation with Dan Hicks

Frank Goodman (Puremusic 4/2001)

I was 16 in the summer of love. One sunny morning I left home in Levittown, PA (where all the houses look the same) with a backpack and thirty dollars, to hitchhike to CA. Ended up in jail three times, saw a lot of the country and didn't come home all summer. When cops would call my mother and tell her "We have your son," she'd just ask them how I was doing. "He's a runaway, right?" they'd assume. "Oh no, he's on vacation," she'd assure them. When they'd threaten to incarcerate me for three days for hitchhiking on the turnpike, she'd say okay, I'd probably consider that a part of the total experience (which I did).

Me and my drummer buddy Mike eventually got to San Francisco, where we stayed with his blind cousin for a couple of days. She was really cool, and cooked the strangest looking scrambled eggs you ever saw. Aside from those eggs, the thing I remember best about our stay in San Francisco was the night we went out somewhere to hear three bands. I can't remember who headlined, or who opened. But I was completely enchanted by the middle act, a group called Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks. They were jazzy, funny, and used pretty girls singing backgrounds like Brazil '66, and violin and upright bass. I was a folksinger learning to play country blues while listening to the Beatles, the Stones, and Hendrix. But this music was something different entirely, and it was obviously really hip, and I decided I was gonna find out all about it.

Our gonzo family ran on music, and we wore all four of the Hot Licks records out. *Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks* (1969), *Where's the Money* (1971), *Striking It Rich* (1972), and *Last Train to Hicksville* (1973) are a consistent string of fabulous recordings, and astonishingly different from everything else that was happening in music at the time. It's no wonder Dan Hicks ended up on the cover of Rolling Stone twice, because there's never been anyone like him, even in the more than 25 years since those first records were made.

And now the ice cool daddy of swing is back, with his first studio record since 1976, and the critics are raving. *Beatin' the Heat* is loaded with celebrity cameo appearances, as our interview conversation reveals, but what makes Dan the man is unique songwriting. The driest, wriest, tongue-in-cheek songs, featuring a cast of ridiculous characters, especially himself. The grooves are so jumpin' on the one hand and so kicked back on the other, it's the perfect cocktail, and I can't sustain a nasty thought or a bad mood when the disc is spinning.

I don't know where it's from, but I keep laughing at this typical Hicks quote I saw at one of his fan sites. He's wearing the snarl of a man doomed to live in a world of square idiots, and the caption reads: "I'm the only hip person there is."

DH: So, I'm here at your disposal, man. And I appreciate your call.

PM: It's my pleasure. How did it go with Mojo yesterday? [the excellent, in-depth music magazine from London]

DH: Uh, okay. It was a longer piece. It started last week, and then they wanted to extend it. The guy mainly wanted to know about the Charlatans days [a San Francisco rock band that Dan was in before he started the Hot Licks, early 60s]. I think he's doing a special article on that period, which I'm happy to take questions about. He was leaning on a certain angle, like "Were the Charlatans ever burned about how the other bands got all the fame, when they were really the first ones?" and weren't all the other bands picking up on what we were doing, et cetera. Maybe that was true to some small extent, but not much of one. But he was working that angle, a who ripped off the Charlatans kind of thing, when it wasn't necessarily the case.

PM: He was leading the witness.

DH: He was leading the witness, and he didn't want to let it go. Who came to the Red Dog to dig the Charlatans and later formed bands...

PM: I actually don't know too much about the Charlatans, I'm afraid.

DH: There's been a big buzz about the Charlatans in the last couple of years. I've heard the word Charlatans more in the last few years than I'd heard it for the previous 20 years. People would interview me for years and never even mention the Charlatans. We did go back and play at the [Rock & Roll] Hall of Fame in Cleveland, there was An Evening with the Charlatans, we did a reunion thing, 3 or 4 years ago.

PM: Did any of the other members of the Charlatans go on to become distinguished players?

DH: Not exactly, though maybe on a regional level. Mike Wilhelm, he did a folk and blues thing, and was a member of the Flamin' Groovies for awhile, and did a single act, I believe. You can still catch him playing at a folk or blues festival.

PM: He's kept his hand in.

DH: Yeah, I'm not quite sure how he's doing at the moment, I heard he may be ill, actually. And Richard Olsen, who played bass in the Charlatans, was also a reed guy. He went on to lead a big band, a local society band that plays the Getty's parties, things like that here in the Bay Area, so he kept going, too. And George is a designer of furniture and other things.

PM: Were the Charlatans at all on the jazzy side, or strictly a rock band?

DH: No, it was generally rock and roll. There's a Charlatans album available now on Ace Records, from England.

PM: Oh, I gotta get that. I have to check you out as a rocker.

DH: I play a lot of drums on that album. There's a couple of my original songs that I eventually did with the Hot Licks. It was a folk rock kinda thing. We did some Stones tunes, and some John Hammond stuff, and Chuck Berry, too. We did a few originals, and some old-timey stuff, too.

PM: Old-timey?

DH: Like "Sweet Sue" or something, with a back beat. Doo doo doo doo, chik boom bop bop, like that. Make it danceable, you know, like folk music with a back beat.

PM: Were you singing in the Charlatans?

DH: I wasn't at first, I was just the drummer. I sang a couple of tunes from back on the drums, you know. I did a song called "She's On the Road Again" that's an old folk tune. And I was starting to do a single folk type act around town at this time, becoming a guitar player, a strummer and vocalist in the making. Our piano player played drums also, so eventually he would come back on the drums and I'd get up front and play rhythm guitar. I was in the band for about 3 years, and the last year I was the rhythm guitarist and singer full time. But I was only the lead vocalist when it was my turn, it was more about Mike Wilhelm and his blues rock stuff, he was the main lead singer.

PM: So how did you cross over from the Charlatans to the early days of the Hot Licks, what transpired in your life at this point?

DH: Well, we were living in the city. I joined the Charlatans in '65, and have clippings of me as a solo act as early as '63 in coffee houses. I was a folksinger, with a few original songs, doing a little fingerpicking. I didn't do that with the Charlatans, but I was in the San Francisco Folk Festival. At a certain point, the Charlatans were kind of falling apart, there was no good management, didn't seem to be any future in it. Nothing was materializing, nothing was getting better. I was only fond of the music up to a point. Rock and roll wasn't really my love.

PM: You were already a jazzier at heart.

DH: Yeah, 'cause I'd been since junior high school, been a jazzier. So I sort of took this single act thing and expanded it. I got together with a violinist and a bass player, to see if they could accompany me. We did it, essentially, to make a little demo of tunes. But then I started getting a couple of gigs, that kind of thing, and added the girls, a female accompaniment came to mind. I was listening to Sergio Mendes, stuff with female voices on it, and I kinda liked that. The bass player's wife sang, and she had a friend, and we gave that a shot, started doing gigs this way. Actually, there was no violin yet, it was just

two girl singers, a bass and guitar. We did a thing at the New Committee Theater in North Beach [San Francisco] and got a good review from Ralph Gleason. I was still in the Charlatans at the same time, and had to make a decision. I figured I shouldn't do the Charlatans anymore, this new act would allow me to do all my songs, and I was beginning to get more prolific. Having other voices to write for, even just by ear, was very inspiring. So I started writing "I Scare Myself," and that kind of thing.

PM: So that was a very early song.

DH: Yeah. That must have been '68, when I quit the Charlatans and started the Hot Licks for real.

PM: Did any of the earliest players or singers stick?

DH: No, it kinda changed around. The first bass player left and then came back and did the record, Jaime Leopold, but then it was Bill Douglas, a jazz player from the East Bay.

PM: And the girls that stuck were Naomi Eisenberg and Maryann Price?

DH: Well, first it was Sherry Snow and Tina Gancher, they did the first album with me. Then I think Sherry decided she wanted to sing for God, you know?

PM: It happens, yeah.

DH: Some kind of spiritual enlightenment, we've heard about those. So I started over, that's when I found Naomi and Maryann. Then we started moving, and did a national tour.

PM: How did you run into the girls, Naomi and Maryann?

DH: I auditioned, man. This was when KSAN was going, and KMPX, and it was free form radio. I was a friend of theirs, and I had them put the word out on the air, with my phone number. So we got a lot of calls from girls who wanted to be singers, we auditioned a lot of girls.

PM: Nice.

DH: I did this twice, because at first I had Maryann and another girl who later left. Naomi had auditioned in the first round also, but it didn't happen until this second round of auditions. It wasn't word of mouth, it was more of a public thing. I had them coming over to my houseboat in Sausalito.

PM: You were at Gate 5, there?

DH: Yeah. They were coming over every hour on the hour, like that. We'd sing this and that, tape a few things.

PM: And were you playing the Guild acoustic way back then?

DH: Yeah, I think I was playing it by that point. I played a Gibson Southern Jumbo on the first album, and I'd had a Gibson Hummingbird also. When I was getting ready to record the second LP for Epic, which never got released, I got the Guild. I went over to see John Weber at Leo's Music in Oakland, and got two Guild F-50 guitars.

PM: Man, that F-50 was a good guitar...

DH: I still have that guitar. I still play a Guild live, it's not exactly an F-50, it's a little more modern version. I think it's just a taste smaller.

PM: I don't think the F-50 got knocked off properly. The whole thing about it was how big it was.

DH: I think they're going to make a real reissue of it soon. They're gonna make a special requirement guitar for me, not free or anything, when we get around to it. For now I'm just playing a version of the F-50.

PM: I always wanted one of those old posters of Eric Clapton playing the F-50 with the big afro. That was a real 60s icon for me.

DH: Oh yeah? He was playing acoustic?

PM: Yeah, in that he was. Anyway, as a lifelong Dan Hicks fanatic, it's really exciting to have a new Hot Licks record. What's the background on how that record, with the Hot Licks format, came into being?

DH: Well, I've been doing this from the mid 80s through the late 90s. But I had different bands. I played with the Acoustic Warriors for the most part, without girl singers. It was the same kind of sound, acoustic guitar, bass, with violin and sometimes accordion, and the guys would sing, that kind of thing. We did a record in '94 on Private Music, a live disc done in McCabe's [a famous guitar shop in Santa Monica, CA]. Private Music folded sometime after that. They hadn't planned to do another record on me anyhow, it was a one off deal. So I was left labelless, and I had a friend who knew this Surfdog label. He's a video photographer, and he'd done some work for them. This guy Dave Kaplan, who's the main dude at Surfdog, was a big Dan Hicks fan from, I don't know, since he was a little kid. So my friend mentioned that I was looking to record...I mean, I was always looking to record, but how much I actually pursued it was another thing. The major labels weren't that interested in me, and the smaller labels didn't have any money to do anything. But this seemed like a good combination of stuff. Dave Kaplan at Surfdog seemed like a cool guy, so I got kind of interested. He wanted to bring back the name Hot Licks, it was more or less his idea, because I didn't really care whether we did it or not, though I'd considered it before. Everybody certainly associates my name with that as the big hurrah, the biggest thing I'd done through the years. The Acoustic Warriors certainly

hadn't done anything that big, in terms of being in the public eye. I didn't necessarily want to start singing with girls again, and have to start carrying all that with me. Didn't feel like it, you know?

PM: Well, girls, you know...it's not very PC to say, but they can be a handful.

DH: Yeah. Yeah. So, we kinda made the record with the name Hot Licks, which was okay with me, and used some studio girls that they knew in L.A. We kinda got the voices going, some quick rehearsal stuff, went down and did a crash course on these songs. We went in the studio and cut it, did a lot of this layering stuff. They had cats come in and put steel guitar down, put this down, put that down. So it was kind of a production. And while all this was happening, I started experimenting myself again with lady singers up North. We had some gigs going on up here, and started arranging some tunes for lady singers, though we hadn't started using the Hot Licks name or anything. But we resumed when it came time to go out and support the album, which I've been doing steadily since August of last year. And we've been getting good reviews.

PM: The press on the record has been unbelievable.

DH: Yeah, on the record, and also on the live performances. And it really is a good feeling to get up there and make that sound. I'm not stuck in a time warp, because I can use as many of the old songs as I want to, just the favorites. And there's a feeling of confidence, too, that I don't have without making that sound. It's like, "Come on, you gotta like this..."

PM: Right, tell me you don't like this.

DH: Exactly. This the archetype, the actual mold, pal. You know. So it's been really good.

PM: Those were very inspired choices for the cameo performances on the record. All the celebrity vocals were pretty incredible. Let's discuss them in the record sequence. First of all, that is one swingin' guitar break by Brian Setzer in "I Don't Want Love."

DH: Dave Kaplan has managed Brian Setzer for awhile, so it came about that way. I've since met him, but he basically tracked that when I wasn't even there. But that's okay.

PM: Well then, how did you like the parts that Brian cut?

DH: Well, it was very good idiomatically, you know? He really steps up to the plate.

PM: Oh yeah, when the red light goes on, he gets right on it. But you guys were not previously acquainted?

DH: No, I think I met him once in a nightclub, something like that. He came and sat in on a gig of ours in Santa Barbara, we brought him on stage. That's the way it was with

everybody that pitched in, I didn't really know anybody very well. I think I'd talked to Bette Midler the most.

PM: Before we go a little bit into each performance, how did the idea of cameo appearances arise?

DH: Well, all those cuts had been made originally without the guest appearances. And then we had this idea about asking some people if they'd like to sing with me on a track. I made a short list of a few people who might have eyes to do it, and would sound good, maybe we were mutual fans in some cases. I contacted them mainly on my own, through phone calls or letters, to see if they'd be interested. It so happened that the album took some time to do, because we were commuting back and forth to L.A. and had to block out time whenever we could. So I sent out some tapes with notes like "my favorite song to do with you would be this one, but here's a couple of other ones, too." It was like that, man. Some people couldn't make it. Bonnie Raitt was too booked up at the time, but we were lucky with some other choices.

PM: Rickie Lee Jones, for instance.

DH: Yeah, she was great. She was actually a fan, and we met at a club gig somewhere. The idea was thrown out about her singing on the record, and we eventually got together on our schedules. She'd recorded a tune or two of mine, and I knew her from that.

PM: Famous songs?

DH: She did "Up, Up, Up." It was the B side of a single, never made the album. I haven't heard it yet.

PM: Having a B side cut used to mean something. [If the A side of a single or 45rpm in the old days was being played on the radio, the author of the B side would make money too, since it was the same "record."]

DH: Here it just meant it was the second song in the CD or the tape. I mean, there's nothing to turn over.

PM: That was a super re-do of "I Scare Myself," I think. I really liked how that sounded.

DH: On most of the stuff, I had a lot to do with the instrumentation and arrangement, and how it sounded. On that particular one the producers said, "Let us just try to lay down a rhythm track." I hoped that maybe Rickie Lee would be amenable to cutting a vocal on that one. She'd come in to cut "Driftin'" with me, but we'd also presented the idea of her singing on "I Scare Myself" as well, so we just went right into that after the first one. But that rhythm track was the brainchild of the engineer and producers.

PM: Rickie Lee really nails that bohemian sex appeal angle. [Hicks laughs a little.] You know? It's different than the uptown sexy thing, she does it in a beautiful bohemian way.

DH: Oh yeah. And that was one that we sang live together, unlike most of the tracks. In the other instances, my vocal track was already on tape, and the vocalists sang along with it. Oh, and Tom Waits and I sang live together.

PM: That one certainly sounded live.

DH: That was probably the most fun, the one with Tom, I don't know why. We had a good time.

PM: Were you guys already friends, or acquaintances?

DH: I'd said hello to him, like 20 years ago. Know what I mean? That's about as much as I knew him. We did it up in Occidental [Northern CA, west of Santa Rosa on the coast] in a little studio near the town where he lives. So he just drove over and cut it.

PM: Was it the studio of one of the Primus guys? [Excellent grunge group.] Some of them live up that way, I think they're friends of Tom's.

DH: Don't know, I can't remember the name of it. But we had a good afternoon there.

PM: But the real surprise walk-on was Bette Midler, I thought. I've always had a hard time with her, because such a big part of her schtick is so loud, which I can't abide. But she was so cute and so on the money on that cut, I want to go out and buy a record now.

DH: You know, I played that track for somebody the next day, and they said, "That doesn't sound like Bette Midler." My impression is that she can sing any way she wants. She has several voices, and that was one of them, one of her styles. I thought she did really good too, man.

PM: You rarely see her in a supporting role.

DH: She was willing to work really hard that day. On most of those tunes, I laid out just where people were supposed to sing, you know? You sing this line, I sing that, we sing the next one together, and so forth. Unison here, harmony there. And everybody just went along with whatever I sketched out.

PM: But in Bette's case, she sang a much more complete part than anybody else.

DH: She even played around with the melody, which was very cool, in a way that I try to do now when I sing it. I try to sing it like she sang it.

PM: So, what was she like?

DH: She was very professional, and wanted to work really hard and long and do it really good. I liked that about her, and I liked the way she was coming up with stuff.

PM: Did she have a good time?

DH: I think she did, hope so. I'd like to try something else with her in the future.

PM: How about Elvis Costello? I sure am a big fan of his.

DH: We sent the tape to Elvis in England, and he cut his part in a studio there.

PM: Amazing.

DH: Yeah. I sent him a tape with a lyric sheet showing him where he should sing, and he followed that pretty close.

PM: I thought his vocal was great. Did you like it?

DH: Yeah! But we weren't together.

PM: Was it easy to enlist his help?

DH: He wanted to do it from the get go, and it was just a matter of when he could schedule it. When we finally saw that there was little chance of him cutting it live with me in the States, we arranged to have him overdub it in England.

PM: I dig that Elvis is really on to the hip American bands that a lot of the natives don't know about. He's also a big NRBQ guy.

DH: Well, the word is that he goes record shopping at Village Music in Mill Valley. That's the word.

PM: It was great to see Sid Page back on violin.

DH: Brian Godchaux is my regular violinist. He's on the live album that's coming out soon.

PM: And Brian is the brother of the late Keith Godchaux, former keyboardist of the Grateful Dead.

DH: That's right. When we ran into a little snag in the studio, I suggested we give Sid Page a call. He lives down in L.A., that's how that came about. He came and laid down some solos.

PM: Seeing Sid Page in the lineup made me wonder about John Girton and Maryann and Naomi, what are those folks up to?

DH: Well, Naomi [Eisenberg] has a band going in some more remote part of Northern CA, after being in the city for such a long time. Sid's down in L.A., he's a string session guy. Maryann [Price] is in TX, she's a singer and a vocal teacher. Jaime Leopold, the bassist, is in Portland. He's got an ad agency going up there. And John Girton is up in the Nevada City/Grass Valley [CA] area. He plays locally, and is a computer guy.

PM: Right, he seems like he could be a good computer guy.

DH: Yeah, he's a really smart dude. He was a child actor, and plays a number of instruments. He was in some Tony the Tiger cereal ad as a kid. He grew up in L.A., and is multi-talented.

PM: Let's get a plug in here for the road band. Besides Brian Godchaux on violin, who all is playing?

DH: We're gonna be releasing a live album, *Live and Lickin'*, which was just recorded a couple of weeks ago at the Iron Horse in Northampton, MA. Tom Mitchell is on guitar. He sounds a lot more like Charlie Christian than Django or something. He's from the D.C. area.

PM: And what kind of axe is he playing?

DH: Oh man, it's an old jazz box with a little amp, I couldn't tell you make and model.

PM: Do you ever play hollow body electrics?

DH: No, I've tried, and there's some pictures of me playing hollow bodies, but I never last long. I always come back to the acoustic.

PM: Okay, so we got Tom Mitchell on guitar.

DH: I've had different bassists play with me. Most recently and most frequently, a guy named Steve Alcott, he's from NYC.

PM: Is there a drummer in the road band?

DH: No. The girls, Susan Rabin and Annabelle Cruz, play rhythm instruments. There's definitely a rhythm going on. It sounds like a light drummer, which I like.

PM: Yeah, if you got two people on percussion, that's plenty of rhythm.

DH: Yeah, it's good. It's good. And Annabelle plays violin, too, so we have some twin fiddle things going. They play a lot more percussion than the original girls did, seems to me. Now we have percussion on every song, which I like.

PM: You've obviously already heard this live CD from the Iron Horse. Was that a hot night, did it turn out well?

DH: I think so. We'd recorded several nights in the last two months, and I asked them to record us one more night. We had some new songs, and wanted one more crack at it. I think most or all of the record will come from that last night, at the Iron Horse.

PM: I look forward to that. I love a good live record.

DH: It's a lot cleaner than *Beatin' the Heat*, because it's just us on stage. Two guitars, bass, violin, and singers playing percussion.

PM: And jazz lovers like you and me, we like music played in real time.

DH: We do an instrumental of "Caravan" and "The Four Brothers of Woody Herman," it's a medley. That's jazzy, we do a lot of good stuff. So that oughta be a good album, I think.

PM: Will that be available on Surfdog Records, and when?

DH: Yesiree. If you ask them, they'll say June.

PM: That was an excellent cover of Tom Waits' "The Piano has been Drinking."

DH: I liked it too. About 7 years ago, somebody called me and said they were doing a Tom Waits tribute album. I don't think it was a real solid label, 'cause it actually never happened. But at the time, I asked them what tunes were still available, and that was my favorite. I like all the imagery.

PM: That's one unbelievable lyric.

DH: It *is* an unbelievable lyric, above and beyond the call of duty. So I just made it into my own melody to some degree, and added on the background parts.

PM: And it's the background vocals that totally make that arrangement.

DH: Yeah, I put in extra words, and all that. The guys singing on that, I'm not sure if the liner notes spell it out, are the cats from Hank Ballard and the Midnighters, the guy who started the Twist.

PM: Right, the guy who really cut the Twist. Before Chubby Checker jumped into his spotlight, courtesy of Dick Clark, so the story goes.

DH: Right, that's the story. Yeah, they're on 3 or 4 tunes. I'm not sure if they were the original Midnighters or not, they looked to be in their 40's to me, but coulda been.

PM: It flipped me out the other night when I was watching *The Sopranos*, and your song “Where’s the Money” was playing while the credits ran. Did you see that?

DH: Yeah, yeah, I got a tape of that. We got to see it the night we taped that live record, in the hotel.

PM: What’s the story, how did that happen?

DH: I don’t really know how it happened. All I know is I got a call from this lawyer I have, and he said that somebody contacted him, and that they wanted to use “Where’s the Money” for a *Sopranos* episode. That was about a month ago. I never knew until the Wednesday before that they were gonna actually do it. They were still editing, and still making the show. Then the word was suddenly go, and I still don’t know how it all happened. You know, who the fan was, or who was aware of that song. It served their purposes, you know, for the story. That was definitely Jake, it was a Jake call. My kind of gig, you know? A song that I recorded and wrote 30 years ago, you know what I mean.

PM: It’s beautiful.

DH: I get a nice check, and then another one when it goes to video.

PM: That’s sweet.

DH: I’m hip.

PM: That’s real mailbox money, there. So you’re enjoying the episode in your hotel room while they’re cutting you a check.

DH: I did. I got back to the hotel, the gig was over in time to catch the mailbox money show.

PM: Quiet, everybody. They’re paying for my song.

DH: Yeah, could we have a little quiet in here, please?

PM: Dan, your voice sounds particularly good on this recording. What’s your secret?

DH: The secret, let me see. About 3 years, no, it was like 5...no, it must have been like 10 years ago, I took some vocal lessons. [I start laughing outta control.] Why is that funny?

PM: About 10 years ago?

DH: Okay, well I’m just trying to tell you my secret. About 10 years ago, I took some vocal lessons. I’ll bet that helped. I got a tape of exercises that the girl gave me, which I don’t do anymore, but they were good. And I don’t smoke, you know.

PM: And you never did?

DH: I stopped in '85, same time that I stopped drinking and your brother Billy became my sponsor.

PM: Wow.

DH: I quit drinking in April, and laid off smoking in December.

PM: And you're still dry?

DH: I'm dry as a piece of sawdust.

PM: In terms of goals, what's on the horizon?

DH: Right now, I'm thinking in terms of just having a good band, man. Having a good act for the stage. Being a good performer, you know? Connected to that is future recordings, and future tunes, that kind of stuff. I really don't think in terms like, "Oh, man, would I love to make a movie." I just don't think in terms like that anymore. Maybe I used to, but I just take it a day at a time now. I do have an idea for a video, though. I'd like to do a video connected to this live album, and that kind of creative thing gets me going. Something I can get started on my own, get some ideas down. I say that because to get anything done, you need other people. But they're all gonna have input, and change your idea. That's the good thing about songwriting. It's all yours. You can decide, well, I'm gonna put that word there, and nobody can tell me I can't. I can go to that change right here.

PM: It's a minor nine, whether you like it or not.

DH: It's a minor nine, and that's just tough beans. So that's the stuff I think about, just to keep it going.

PM: Well, I'm really enjoying the record, Dan, and playing it a lot. It's great to talk with you, and fabulous that the Hot Licks are swingin' again, and that lots of people are back on board with Dan Hicks, it's a beautiful thing.

DH: Yeah, I like it too. The attendance at these gigs has been really good, and that wasn't happening a year ago. So I'm digging that.

PM: Momentum is a funny thing. Sounds like it's on your side at the moment. Well, okay, buddy.

DH: All right, man. Are you still doing...what song of ours were you and Billy playing?

PM: Oh, when we're in the same country and gigging, we like to do "News from Up the Street." I guess we owe you some royalties on that.

DH: Yeah, good, 'cause I'll have a guy call. There'll be a guy comin' around. There'll be a guy.

PM: [laughs] Well, thanks for your time, Dan. Hi to Clare.

DH: Okay, I will. Cool, Frank. Bye.