



ARTIST: The Slackers  
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LABEL: moanin'  
CONTACT: christoph@moanin.de  
LABEL CODE: LC 09409  
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WEB SITE: [www.theslackers.com](http://www.theslackers.com)  
PRESS KIT: [www.moanin.de/theslackersradio](http://www.moanin.de/theslackersradio)

## The Healing View of Ska

The Slackers are doing what they actually use to hate. At their new album 'The Radio' they are covering famous pop songs as every third-class Ska band does. Plus, by doing so they are particularly devoted to the 80ies, to their own opinion a completely lost decade for the music. Though the Slackers don't need to do all that. Already 15 years ago with their first album fully packed with great songs they proven not lacking good ideas on their own. They can rival with the big shots in pop music since many, many years. It was not their own idea to do a cover album. But the New Yorkers noticed the challenge in that idea from the very beginning. They especially took care of songs they usually didn't like to bring to light it's kernel of truth. This was also a kind of playing with and against their own prejudices. And even not being a big fan of Madonna Singer Vic Ruggiero really loves 'Like a Virgin' and badly wanted to record it for the album. With 'Ganbare' a tribut to the people of Japan is included, a kind of greating card - saying that they are with the ones that greating each other with 'Ganbare' when starting cleaning up at Fukushima.

Recorded in Berlin 'The Radio' is a like of radio show when the station's mp3 server droppes out and the Slackers are the studio guests to bridge the time gap. By doing so they disburden the song's souls from the slag of time and the ballast of it's mighty interpreters.

On December 6th, 2011 'The Radio' will be released on moanin'/Alive as CD and Vinyl

## The Slackers are

Ara Babajian - Drums  
Marcus Geard - Bass  
David Hillyard - Saxophones  
Jay Nugent - Guitars  
Glen Pine - Trombone, Vocals, Percussion  
Vic Ruggiero - Vocals, Organ, Percussion

Gast: Larry Mcdonald - percussion at Track 6, 9, 11

# Interview With Dave Hillyard on the Album 'The Radio'

## **Why are you doing a cover album? You don't need to do such things.**

Well, the Slackers have done a couple covers in the past. Most of our albums have one or two per album but for the most part we have deliberately focused on our own songs. A lot of ska bands play mostly covers and we aren't one of them.

So when Tom Gibbons from [whatevski.org](http://whatevski.org) came up with this idea, I got to say that I was skeptical at least. A lot of ska bands have done a lot of covers, especially of songs from the 80s and 90s and most of the time I haven't liked them. But Tom had an interesting idea. His idea was what if you were listening to a radio station and all the bands that were playing were actually one band and that band was the Slackers. So he suggested some tunes that the band would play and we added some ideas of our own.

## **Many songs are from the 80ies. Is it because you grew up back then?**

Originally, most of Tom's suggestions were from the 60's, like the Sonics cover, strychnine, but then more songs from the 1980's kept creeping in. Its funny because the band is not really big fans of 80s music. For me the 80s, was a pretty lame period. There was some good music at the beginning and at the end of the decade but for the most part, I thought (and still think) most of the music sucks.

I hated bands like Reel Big Fish when they would cover Duran Duran. I hate the whole, 'its so lame, its cool' attitude and the detached irony with which they did songs. When we play a song we aren't joking, we are trying to find out what the good thing in that song is. What is the truth of the song or we just don't play it y'know?

We deliberately avoided making an 'ironic' covers record. We picked 'Like a Virgin' not because we want to make fun of the original but because Vic (Vic Ruggiero, Singer and Keyboarder of The Slackers) really likes the tune. He's talking about how his new relationship makes him feel brand new. He got past the Madonna version and found the kernels of truth underneath it. He sings it honestly and wants you to believe in his new relationship too.

The same thing with 'I'm Still Standing.' I did a lot of the arrangement for this one. I really don't like the original and when Tom suggested it, I was like 'yeah right'. But I thought about it. 'Ok', I thought. 'Which of the songs on Tom's list do I really not like? Let me see if I can find something good about the song and find a way to make it sound like The Slackers.' So I thought about it, cut out half the words, added some new riffs but kept the central theme of 'Im Still Standing' which is about overcoming all the obstacles thrown in your way during life and not letting them hold you back.

With 'Attitude' which was Glen's (Glen Pine, Singer and trombone player of The Slackers) idea which is funny because Glen is not one of the guys in the band who was into Punk. Glen was a band nerd in the 80s and then would listen to his friends rock collections. But he kept having girlfriends who were into The Misfits and this song kept sticking in his head. He was like, y'know what? This song would make a great reggae song. And so we recorded this in a late 60's Upsetters kind of style.

## **Where does the japanese song „Ganbare“ come from?**

We added, 'Ganbare' to the album because of the recent Japanese Earthquake and Tsunami. Ganbare is by the Blue Hearts who were one of Japan's main pop punk bands. We learned the song a couple of Japanese tours back cause Vic really like the melody. He learned the lyrics phonetically. 'Ganbare' means do your best in Japanese. So when I heard about the Earthquake and Tsunami and I read in the paper that people were saying 'ganbare' to each other as they were cleaning up, it really struck me. So we decided to record the song as a tribute to the people of Japan and what they were going through - sort of a get well card and letting them know we're with them.

## **What's about the Berlin based studio where you recorded the album?**

We recorded the album in Berlin at Harzkrafthof studios with this great engineer, Jochen Stroeh. He really gets what we do. We have been in there twice and both times it was right after we were on tour. We just came in and knocked out the tracks. We had that 'tour power' and Jochen was great at making the band feel comfortable.