

Germany and Switzerland just got a taste of the alternative side of Memphis music, as a troupe featuring Alex Chilton, Lorette Velvette, Alluring Strange, the Country Rockers and Austin singer-songwriter Townes Van Zandt just returned from an 11-day tour of 1,000-seat halls.

"Eleven nights, 11 cities," said journalist-filmmaker-producer Robert Gordon, who accompanied the groups as MC and tour manager. The jaunt was in support of the album, "Love is My Only Crime," released in Europe with tracks by those artists and several other Memphis acts. Gordon's production company Eclipse is producing new albums by Velvette and Alluring Strange, both of whom are featured in Sunday's music and heritage festival lineup at Mud Island.

Gordon said he was surprised at how readily the European audiences accepted the Memphians. "Being there, knowing these people hadn't heard of three of the five bands, and watching this reception, you could totally feel the European embrace of the 'Memphis thing,'" he said.

