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**PRESS RELEASE**  
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## **DELMARK RECORDS ANNOUNCES NEW RELEASE FROM GUITARISTS DAVE SPECTER AND STEVE FREUND**

**(October 20, 2004) CHICAGO, IL** -- On November 16, 2004, Delmark Records will release "Is What It Is" a long-overdue collaboration between two old friends, Dave Specter and Steve Freund. Although they may be coming from different directions as musicians, their styles mesh perfectly on this collection that varies far and wide -- from classic blues to jazz-oriented R&B, '60s soul and some new spins on familiar pop tunes.

When they met more than 20 years ago in Chicago, guitarists Steve Freund and Dave Specter literally had a teacher-student relationship, with Freund being the teacher and Specter the student. In the intervening years the two have shared the stage many times, forging both a musical and personal bond.

In the mid '80s, Freund was an MVP on Chicago's blues club scene. Freund grew up playing alongside such stalwarts as harpist Big Walter Horton, pianist Pinetop Perkins and former Howlin' Wolf guitarist Hubert Sumlin. Most notably he was Sunnyland Slim's right hand man, playing with the blues piano legend on virtually every gig from 1978 to Slim's death in 1995.

Specter was an eager-to-learn guitarist. Specter would attend weekly lessons at Freund's small studio apartment on the recommendation of legendary bluesman Jimmy Johnson. Although Dave was fairly new to the blues as a player he was an incredibly fast learner. Before Freund knew it he was hiring Specter for gigs. Soon after, Dave joined Son Seals' band and after a year or so Freund says Specter became "Incredibly good."

This release marks Specter's seventh Delmark release and Freund's third.

For Specter, "Is What It Is" provides a chance for two good friends to cut loose. "In my years of playing there are very rare times when you have a really strong, intuitive connection with another musician," says Specter. "Where you complement each other and naturally play off each other. And with Steve and I, it is what it is."

"When I'm on stage with Dave, I'm flooded with memories of my years in Chicago, when I shared the music with my mentors, men such as Floyd Jones, Lee Jackson, Hubert Sumlin, Walter Horton, Louis Myers, and so many others," says Freund. "And once in a while, Sunnyland Slim pops into my head, and I can almost hear him say, 'you can get your soul saved with the blues.'"

Also appearing on the album as special guests are West Coast harp ace Mark Hummel and Chicago keyboardist Barrelhouse Chuck. The rhythm section of bassist Harlan Terson and drummer Marty Binder display amazing versatility and flexibility. All the while Hammond B3 organist Rob Waters lends rich sonic textures throughout.

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