

P.A.U.L. LAMB & THE DETROIT BREAKDOWN

Paul Lamb and The Detroit Breakdown are a power-trio from the Motor City, specialising in a heavy Blues-Rock style, with some hints of Funk. After playing a twelve-date UK tour in November 2013, Lamb is returning for more dates in May. After reviewing their album 'Ready, Fire, Aim' in Fireworks 61, James Gaden caught up with guitarist/vocalist Paul to hear all about it.

'Ready, Fire, Aim' is a curious title - can you explain the thought behind it?

It's a lyric from one of the songs called 'High Decibel Call To Arms'. Basically, we live in a society now where information is so disposable. Everything comes and goes so fast. In the music industry, it's almost here today, gone today. It's no longer taking the time to say ready... aim... fire! Now it's more ready, fire, aim later.

I liked the fact that there were some Funk influences in what is otherwise hard hitting Blues-Rock. Is that a throwback to Detroit's musical history with Motown and things like that?

Absolutely. Very much from Detroit. Growing up here, with Motown, like you said, bands like Funkadelic. I was constantly surrounded by that music growing up. Detroit musicians and the scene has that natural element to it, in a variety of genres.

Is the Detroit scene still as much of a musical hotbed as it always was?

It sure is. The only people in Detroit working are musicians! (laughs) The scene here is amazing. It goes through its ups and downs. Unfortunately a lot of the clubs are closing so there are less and less places to play. At the same time though, musicians will always find somewhere to get together and we have a tight knit community here.

There are some great lyrics and word play featured on the album - I liked the fact that you write songs about what is going on in the world, but have avoided sounding too preachy. Your way is more thought provoking.

Thank you very much, it's very important to me to not sacrifice lyrics for the sake of the song. I want to get a point across, not simply put a bunch of words together that rhyme. I really tried to get my ideas across in a metaphorical sense, which will hopefully let the listener decide what they want to take from that metaphor - otherwise you're right, it can get too preachy. I've always believed the microphone is a very powerful implement and can be used in a very strong way. I want to do that, but I don't ever want to come across as someone who is preaching.

I get the impression the album is not big on overdubs or studio polish.

Right! We recorded all of the bed tracks live. We had several special guests come in to add their parts later, but there's not really any Pro-Tools editing or trickery in there. We would play it until we got it right! Luckily we could then bring in some friends from around the scene to play and they are all

A-listers, so each of those only needed to give us one or two takes.

One of the guests is Joanne Shaw Taylor who I like a great deal.

Yeah! he is on 'Feeling Young'. Joey, my bass player, sings lead on that and Joanne played the solo which I thought was just fantastic.

The two songs I singled out as my favourite were 'There Goes The Neighbourhood' and 'Feeling Young'! Do you have a specific favourite?

It's that old thing for me, the songs are like my children. They all start out as the ultimate idea... some grow into beautiful things, some grow into slightly troubled things! (laughs) I don't know what my favourite is on this record, there's a lot of songs on there that are really close to my heart and related to different situations. The first song on the album is 'When the Crown Hit The Ground'. That was about some of my friends who went out to Rotterdam. I used to stay with them on their boat. They went out to see the Northern Lights last April and haven't been seen or heard from since. They are lost at sea and that's what the song is about - that's really personal to me and came from a pretty heavy spot. I put the pen to paper and it wrote itself in about five minutes. There's a couple of others on there - 'Feeling Young' is a good old fashioned love song.

You played some UK dates this past November and have more coming up. How does the music scene over here compare to the States?

I always describe it this way: in the UK, when people see a band or hear music they've never encountered before, they approach it with open arms as if they are going to like it. Then, if they don't like it, okay, they don't like it. In America, the approach from the off is that they are not going to like it. It's a lot better to be accepted by an audience then to have to fight to win them over! In America, things are very much dictated by the media. Especially some of the younger people, they are just force fed this constant data which almost immediately fades away. What they see on TV, be it American Idol or whatever, that's what's good to them. I think that's too bad, but it is what it is.

Are your recent shows based heavily around the new record?

Yeah, we're playing every song from the new album in our set, so you could say that! (laughs) We've never done that before, so we're pretty

excited about that, we had to rehearse pretty hard. We played a show here a few months ago, with Joanne Shaw Taylor as it happened. We debuted some of these new songs and they went over really well, so we're excited to see how the fans in the UK respond!

Paul Lamb and The Detroit Breakdown play the following dates:

May 24:Headliner at the
Hebdon Bridge Blues Festival
May 25: Montrose Music Festival (2 Shows)
May 28:The Robin
20-28 Mount Pleasant Bilston
May 30:The Star Inn
The Green Bentworth, UK
June 1: London (venue TBC)
June 5:The Acorn Theater
Parade Street Penzance
June 6:The Polish Club, Barnsley

The band also release 'Take It From The Top', a compilation CD featuring work from the albums issued prior to 'Ready Fire Aim', on 5th May.

