

Mp3 Paul Curreri - Songs For Devon Sproule



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(5/03) Working real hard, this young Virginian and his shimmering guitar, to cancel everything that doesn't lend toward gut, Singing, sounds like a good day. 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Folk Blues, BLUES: Delta Style Details: Produced and engineered by renowned singer/guitarist Kelly Joe Phelps and recorded in just two days, Songs For Devon Sproule captures the full spontaneity and power of Paul Curreri's incredible live performances. "I guess that's what happens when you record an entire album in four hours versus nine months," says Paul. The result is a freewheeling collection of stories, spirited wordplay and stunning finger-style guitar work. A record in the old, true sense, Songs For Devon Sproule unfolds with each listen. From the lilting "Greenville," to the glimmering "Beneath A Crozet Trestle Bridge," which features Kelly Joe Phelps on slide guitar, to his covers of Fred McDowell's "Louise" and the Sam Coslow penned standard "Tomorrow Night," Songs for Devon Sproule moves along with a deceptively gentle energy, careening from breezy playfulness to sudden longing in a beat. The first time I saw him play I was just blown away," says producer Kelly Joe Phelps. "Paul's songs were incredible, the guitar playing was amazing. It's just undeniable stuff." Phelps soon set to work booking Curreri to open as many of his shows as possible, even flying the singer across the country for gigs. "I'll do anything to expose him to people and people to him, because I think the music is just so good." When the time came to record Songs For Devon Sproule, Phelps offered his home studio in Vancouver, WA, where he had recorded his own solo Rykodisc CDs Roll Away The Stone and Shine Eyed Mister Zen. "I was glad to hear that he wanted to record in the most straight forward way, just guitar and vocals. So often during recording other things tend to get in the way. We set things up with as little extraneous gear as possible and just went to it." Most songs required only one or two takes and the entire project was completed in one weekend. Named for his companion and fellow artist Devon Sproule, the disc is at once Curreri's tribute to the

woman he loves and the traveling musician life they share. "I have at times wanted to change the title or thought maybe I should," says Paul, laughing. "At one point I thought of calling it More Songs For Devon Sproule." Throughout, the record celebrates and explores the ways in which relationships transform and shape us and all we do. "Devon has had such an enormous influence on me," he says, "who I am as a person and the way I work." In "Night Jet Trails" Curreri sings of this connection, "If every axe handle broadcasts its designer/Then my prints are on yours, and yours are on mine./Keep swinging that work till your work shirt seams split/I'll bust out, fresh-hatcheted, and finish it." Exciting and individual, Paul's work is nourished by, but not slavish to, the different traditions from which it rises. "When people started calling me a 'Country Blues' songwriter, that was the first genre that I actually didn't mind -- only because I really enjoy Country Blues and it has a far more specific connotation than, say, 'Folk.' Some of my favorite musicians, individual as they are, get classified as 'Country Blues' artists," he says, listing Dave Van Ronk, Mississippi John Hurt, Reverend Gary Davis, Skip James and Blind Willie McTell. "In the end what unites them," he explains, "is that when they play, it seems a perfect, clear representation in sound of what they are feeling. They are smart enough to write well, ambitious enough to play well, and brave enough to be in tune with themselves. And really digging down, concentrating hard enough to access what they're feeling, they somehow bring it out via their mouths and hands." This is precisely what comes across in Paul's own work on record and on stage. "Most of my songs have intros of a few bars or more before I start singing. So while those bars are rolling along, I do my damndest to scan my heart and brain, trying to hear and feel where this piece of music and these lyrics came from and, more importantly, see where I stand now, feel about it at this very moment. Then I can trust that it will be the most honest singing of it at that time." Curreri's expressive guitar playing draws from this same well and is showcased throughout and in particular on the disc's two (mostly) instrumental songs "Tomorrow We'll Wake Again" and "It's a Little Room (And I Need A Little Room)." Raised in Richmond, Virginia, Paul now makes his home in Charlottesville. He grew up playing music but ended up enrolling at Rhode Island School of Design to pursue painting and film. While Curreri credits his experiences at art school with developing his ability to observe and record the visual world, soon his true passion began to rise to the surface. By the time Paul graduated from RISD, he'd composed over 200 songs on guitar and piano. Turning down an editing job at -- "ironically and hysterically" -- MTV, he set to work carving out a life as a musician. His acclaimed debut for City Salvage Records, *From Long Gones To Hawkmoth*, was released in May of

2002. A triumphant follow-up, *Songs For Devon Sproule* is a driving record full of rainy day elegance and late night wit. * * * * * Acoustic Guitar Magazine, October Issue: "...Curreri eschews romantic cliches in his original imagery ('Ain't crossing nothing sweeter/ Than the 'keep out' of the theater/ Lift the velvet rope/ Now lift it for me") and belies the innocence of both his sentiments and his charming tenor voice with the bluesy bite of his dynamic fingerstyle guitar work." -- Dirk Richardson * * * * * Relix Magazine, October Issue: "There's an abundance of good singer/songwriters out there, but Paul Curreri is one that stands out from the crowd. Singer/guitarist Kelly Joe Phelps has not only used him as an opening act but produced Curreri's superb *"Songs for Devon Sproule."* Curreri melds elements of country blues picking with folk and eloquent contemporary lyrics and emerges with songs that are engaging and honest... sparkling originals such as the lilting "Greenville" and the almost spoken "Night Jet Trails." But the most pleasing aspect of the disc is Curreri's crisp and complex finger picking. Fans of Jorma Kaukonen are advised to give this guy a listen." -- Mick Skidmore * * * * * Blues Revue Magazine, Issue #85: "Country blues guitarist or folksinger? The answer doesn't matter much when the artist is Paul Curreri, whose gorgeous sophomore effort *Songs For Devon Sproule* is loaded with subtle genius in its delicate music and impressive words (they work as well on the page as in the songs). Not deep blues but very engaging, literate, and charming. Listen to "Night Jet Trails" and "Fishbowl" and be drawn in by the rest. Kelly Joe Phelps produced and lends his slide guitar to one track." -- Tom Hyslop * * * * * PureMusicReview, 2/2004 Wow! A hot, eccentric, eloquent modern country blues artist. Extremely likeable, and a good looking varmint to boot. Paul and his very talented muse are from Charlottesville, VA, and I'm told they figure prominently in the acoustic scene around those parts. But anymore you may see the artist popping up anywhere opening up for his producer and champion, Kelly Joe Phelps. That's a hell of an endorsement for a fingerstyle guy. The fellas knocked this out in KJP's home studio in Vancouver, WA, where the producer had cut his two solo discs before he took to fleshing out the jam. Curreri is such a fluent fingerpicker that he's free of all convention or blues device, grooving and improvising all over the place. There's just a boatload of spirit and old time verve on every tune. Kelly Joe also engineered (you gotta love that) and came out to play slide on one tune, "Beneath a Crozet Trestle Bridge." (Dig the major seven ending chord while the producer finished his blues lick, nice.) And the lyrics, the cat is a beatnik blues poet, we kid you not. In fact, the only guy we know who plays this good and writes that good is the one who's producing. Truth be told, rolling through the lyrics there's

hardly a stanza not worth quoting, so I'll just feed you the opener: Oh, perhaps I might sleep, but the screen door's a guilt bull stuck plainly on sticking me through. Had I the blood boiled, or the fist like a marker, I'd haul off, and dot his eye blue. But that bull just wants a word, the night just wants to barrel, bet the sunrise'll want a piece of me too. The back window creaks as I head over heels; You say, "Greenville," so it's Greenville with you. We'll be real surprised if his next disc is not on a national label, and shame on the passers. And by all means, also check out the previous album on Brooklyn's City Salvage records, called From Long Gones To Hawkmoth. (We just checked out some awesome clips on CDBaby, damn.) We thank the gifted Laurie McClain for turning us on this badass poet picker -- and when we asked Kris Delmhorst (in our recent interview with her) what she has been listening to lately, Paul Curreri was at the top of her list. Book him, buy him, dig on him. -- Frank Goodman, Pres of Puremusic.com

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