

Mp3 Paul Spencer & The Maxines - Cut The Jive



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Power-Pop with a wild punk edge 10 MP3 Songs POP: Power Pop, ROCK: Punk Details: Following the release of Paul Spencer's 2005 debut, *The Whole Shebang* ("A promising debut album - Spencer infuses his meaty, Cheap Trick / Heartbreakers-like garage / power-pop with thick catchy riffs, and a scratchy, bluesy voice which alternately recalls Elvis Costello, Paul Westerberg and The New York Dolls David Johansen...the songs are solid and Spencer's enthusiasm remains unchecked throughout the album. - Mark Suppanz, *The Big Takeover*) 2007's *Cut The Jive* builds on the promise of that record, bringing the power-pop elements to the forefront and infusing the songs with hooks galore (The Raspberries and Cheap Trick come to mind), without ever losing a wild punk edge that owes a lot to bands like The Clash, The New York Dolls and seminal post-punkers The Replacements. Backed by The Maxines (name which right at first glance recalls The NY Dolls sleaze), the CT based Spencer seems to have found in the swagger of The Maxines the perfect vehicle to deliver his highly charged brand of rock roll, full of power chords, sticky melodies and clever lyrics (I'll be at the bar drinking myself sober / But there's now way I'm gonna avoid the hangover, warns the take-no-prisoners opening track, *No Regrets*) "*Bolt Of Lightning*", true to its name, blasts out of the speakers next: a song about a punk rock girl who digs The Damned, it succeeds with its luscious harmonies, lightning solo and start-stop dynamics (courtesy of the solid-as-a-rock Maxines drummer, Bobby Soares). It also introduces the listener to the unifying subject of the album - the System ("You wanna shake the System / You wanna give it one good earthquake / So every brand new day / Brings a new hair color and a new set of rules to break") "*Ain't Nobody (Gonna Tell Me What To Do)*" maintains the rebellious mood in a vicious riff, a bouncy chorus with catchy "woooo-hoooo!"s, a juicy twin-guitar solo that recalls Thin Lizzy, and some very defiant lyrics ("It's genetically built into my DNA / Until my 6 feet of earth claim it one day / People hear what they see, but

can you really see me? / Go feed the Machine, waste no time on me"). The listener is treated at the end to a restart / coda filled with some gorgeous background harmonies that recall Big Star, The Raspberries, Badfinger. "Today Is The Day" kicks in with an anthemic fury, best expressed in its lyrics: "Because you only regret the things that you don't do / And when you live by the rules / the System is bound to get to you!". Sonically, it invokes The Replacements circa "Tim", and it features a(nother) blistering solo from The Maxines' lead guitarist Danny Soares. "T.L.M.E.Y." - the initials being nothing more than a jokey take on the song's chorus - comes across as Ramones style punk but with a Kinks sensibility, which makes for a sticky-as-glue melody; it's the kind of infectious tune that lodges itself in one's brain and stays there. Full of the same beautiful background harmonies supplied throughout the album by The Maxines' bassist, Mark Soares (who also created the provocative album cover), "T.L.M.E.Y." is pure power-pop. "Shake Off" announces itself with a boozed-up shout from Paul Spencer ("Sing when you win, booze when you lose!") that would make Bon Scott proud. The song features a powerful riff coupled with a feverish, funky cowbell and a barrage of "La-La-La-La-La"s straight out of The Who's workbook. Lyrically, it is pure barbed wire while being funny at the same time; it contains some of Spencer's best lines: "She was a czech, I was her mate / Ain't life ironic? Call it fate", and "Burning the chaff, smoking the weed / And punching the clock until it bleeds", just to mention a few examples. The whole song is a lyrical tour-de-force with a swaggering solo to boot and a rhythm section that just won't let loose. Next comes "Don't Put Me Down" strolling by with its Stones-y riff, shifting fast-slow-fast dynamics, quirky background vocals and a rippin' solo that sounds like pure Keith Richards. The whole song has a punkish 'going-off-the-rails-at-any-moment' feel to it, partially created by the pumpin' piano in the background the jealousy theme, which nevertheless is counter-balanced for comic relief by lines such as, "Girl, you can't say I never tried / It will be hard to wave goodbye / Specially in handcuffs / With broken bones and stuff". The title track follows right way, and at a mere 1:10, it's one hell of a ride. Opening with a delirious, 'taking the piss', radio-like jingle, it quickly kicks into full punk mode, but with a twist - with its rollercoaster piano in the forefront, it sounds like Jerry Lee Lewis fronting the Ramones. With Paul Opalach providing the pumpin' piano, "Cut The Jive" sounds like a barely contained riot ("Smash the bottle, go full throttle / Kick the stool, spin wobble"). It reminds us how much 50's rock roll (Jerry Lee Lewis, Gene Vincent, Eddie Cochran, etc) has, in terms of spirit rawness, lots in common with the late 70's punk exemplified in bands like The Clash, The Damned, The Sex Pistols, etc. "24 Hour Non-Stop Perfect Waste Of Time" arrives

next with hooks handclaps galore. Opening with a crunching Cheap Trick-like guitar sound and the typical, clever word play you've come to expect from Spencer ("Well you took a bad joke / And you made it kind of funny / You wrote your number on the wall / And made a meal out of my money"), the tune is genuine power-pop bliss, oozing gorgeous 'Aaaahaaa's and a catchy as hell chorus that can lead a listener to pressing that 'play' button over over again. The record closes with the sweet mellow acoustic pop of "Alcohol, Cigarettes Coffee". With a sound that conjures up The Shins, like an outtake from "Oh, Inverted World", "Alcohol, Cigarettes Coffee" fully displays the range that Paul Spencer The Maxines possess and their knack for writing and playing damn catchy tunes. Expertly produced by Paul Opalach (who, with ease, brings out the power-pop elements of the band while retaining a raw-as-sushi punk edge), and skillfully mastered at NYC's legendary Frankford Wayne by Duncan Stanbury, "Cut The Jive" is one hell of a sophomore release for an indie band. I think it was George Bernard Shaw who once said, Hell is full of musical amateurs: music is the brandy of the damned. Though the man could not envision such a thing as rock roll as the music he had in mind, one would be hard pressed to find a better definition of it; rock roll is indeed the brandy of the damned, and at its best, it is loud, raw exhilarating. Cut The Jive exudes all those elements and leaves the listener wanting more...lots more. The only 'problem' is that Paul Spencer The Maxines sound less like musical amateurs and more like wild, skillful rockers that promise even greater things to come...and what a good type of problem that is to have.

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