

Roll With You

Eli "Paperboy" Reed and the True Loves (Q Division Records/Shock) ***

So we've seen the female soul revival, but where are the blokes? Leading the pack is Eli "Paperboy" Reed and his hot young seven-piece band the True Loves, who offer a fresh take on devastating, horndriven soul stompers and ballads in the vein of Sam Cooke. The 24-year-old was raised on his father's gospel, blues, country, soul and R&B collection and taught himself to play guitar. But it was when he moved to Clarksdale, Mississippi, where he received informal lessons from legendary blues drummer Sam Carr, that he really found his voice and the stage at the various clubs around town. With the blues under his belt, he relocated to Chicago and found work performing at a church run by former Chess records' singer turned minister Mitty Collier. After releasing an album of soul covers he used all of this experience to pen the originals on this album. Whether wailing his heart out on a lovestruck ballads or unleashing his spine-tingling scream, Reed's voice makes his tales totally believable. And that's what soul music's all about.

PATRICK DONOVAN