

**NEW!**

**'I don't want to live in the '60s. I'm a man for today.'**

Eli "Paperboy" Reed: Brylcreem of the crop.



# ELI "PAPERBOY" REED

The fresh young sound of vintage soul. Never done a paper round in his life.

**D**ressed like an extra from *Mad Men* in a fine, green suit and heavily Brylcreemed hair, Eli "Paperboy" Reed sticks out like a swan in a pigsty. Not just in this scruffy London café, but in pop's current landscape, too. Twenty-four years old, white and Jewish, when he sings he sounds like something else entirely. His debut album, *Roll With You*, is vintage – like Wilson Pickett, Sam Cooke and James Brown combined.

"I've been listening to blues my whole life," he says in mitigation, his voice loud, almost tetchy. "I was obsessive over Chuck Berry at the age of 10; when I was going through teenage heartache it was Otis Redding that got me through."

And why was this child of the '90s so impervious to the music of his youth – to

grunge, rap, Britney Spears? He shrugs. "I don't know what to tell you. I am what I am."

Born in Boston, and in thrall to his music-journalist father's record collection, Eli Reed (the nickname "Paperboy" derived from the kind of hat that he once favoured) properly immersed himself in his beloved genre aged 18, spending a year playing blues clubs in Mississippi and performing to audiences who were "always welcoming of me and my abilities".

In 2004, he self-released a mini album, *Walkin' And Talkin'*, before landing a proper recording contract

that resulted in *Roll With Me*, currently the subject of much media attention – not all of it positive. Much as Joss Stone was lambasted for affecting Aretha Franklin-isms in lieu of authenticity, so, too, is Reed.

"Hey, to me, it makes no difference if good music is black or white, young or old. And anyway," he bristles, thick eyebrows leaping caterpillar-like across a broad forehead, "I've done my homework on the blues. Has Joss Stone? I don't think so. I understand it inside out. I know the culture. I've played in black churches, in gospel quartets..."

Clearly, though, he's a man out of time?

"No, I'm not. I don't want to be living in the '60s; they used to wear a lot of stupid shit in the '60s." Pulling on his tailored collar, he says: "I'm a man for today." ■ NICK DUERDEN

## FURTHER INFO

**Out Now:**  
*Roll With You*  
100VISION/UP  
**Download:**  
The Satisfier **3.50**  
**Go To:** [elipaperboyreed.com](http://elipaperboyreed.com)

