

Spotlight

Eli's Coming: On the follow-up to his blues-drenched debut, this paperboy delivers exhilarating classic soul

**ELI "PAPERBOY" REED
& THE TRUE LOVES**

Roll With You

Q Division Records

It's time to testify. 2007 lit the fuse on a long-awaited renaissance of so-called "old-school" soul. Sharon Jones & the Dap-Kings crossed over into non-niche publications, as did Bettye LaVette. Amy Winehouse, for all her self-destructiveness, released a groundbreaking album that landed on multiple Top 10 lists, and young lions such as Ryan Shaw referenced the archetypal Motown sound in the same way aspiring bluesmen reference Chess Records.

Now, make way for Eli "Paperboy" Reed, a 24-year-old Boston native who submits this year's first salvo in the classic soul revival. His influences range from Curtis Mayfield's Impressions to Muscle Shoals grease and the urban

postures of Jackie Wilson, Howard Tate, and Little Willie John. Reed's cutting tenor hits the high notes with slinky ease, connecting the dots between gospel, secular, and sexy Sixties soul with effortless grace. Better still, he writes riveting original material that'll have you checking the credits for copyright info. A three-man horn section provides the steel wheels for Reed's locomotive, and upbeat soul screamers such as "Won't Give Up Without a Fight" and "The Satisfier" hit all the R&B mile markers without sounding the least bit clichéd.

Comparisons to Wilson Pickett and Otis Redding might stretch the point, but they're obvious sources in Reed's bulging stylebook. Reed's songs are perfect vehicles for his spine-tingling shout, with intricate yet natural Stax-influenced arrangements reminiscent of soul's golden days. When he shifts from a moan to a shriek on "She Walks," the



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hairs on the back of your neck will rise like they did the first time you heard Pickett do the same thing. You'll want to learn the steps to "(Doin' the) Boom Boom" as the sax honks, the bass thumps, and Reed breaks it down to scorching, primal soul that would make even the Capitols or the Contours proud. Slip this terrific album between any Atlantic, Stax, or Motown set and start your own dance party.

Hal Horowitz