

Today's Cool album of the day(#770 in the Series) is the new self-titled release by *The World Famous Headliners*. (Big Yellow Dog Publishing)

Out of the blue comes an album that I think will be in so many top 10 lists at the end of the year and no one even saw it coming.

I think most reviews are going to start with who are these guys? That's a good question and it's a great answer but I wanted to start with what really matters, the music.

The album's 15 tracks slip effortlessly from rock and roll to funk, with bits of power pop, country, and 60's style rock thrown into the mix.

It's a fun from the get go when "Big" Al Anderson shouts to the band "Come on, don't be pussies" and they launch into the rollicking "Give Your Love to Me." A great guitar groove with fun harmony vocals that you can't help singing along with even though you realize that you have never heard the song before. Then the guitar solo that just leaves you smiling even more.

I've read different reviews comparing the songs to ZZ Top, Dave Edmunds, Los Lobos and of course NRBQ. Don't let that make you think that this is a mix of songs trying to sound like someone else or searching for an identity. Nope the World Famous headliners just find themselves creating bright, smart, fun rock that is in way too short supply today. My favorite track "Mamarita" sounds like a great, lost outtake from Dixie Chicken era Little Feat both lyrically and musically. I mean that as a high compliment.

The album has a loose, feel to it, a mixture of up-tempo rockers and more relaxed country tunes. The rockers are what jump off the page on the first listen, but the second time around, the other songs begin to reveal their craftsmanship and beauty. If you can't get up and dance to "Give Your Love To Me,"

"Mamarita," "Jukin" or "My Baby Wouldn't Come Back Home," than you just can't get up.



The second time through listen to the organized chaos of "Party 'Till The Money's Gone" as the whole band somehow manages to show their chops without stepping on each other at all. Listen to the core of the album "Can I?, I Bleed," "Heart of Gold" and "Take Me Back" to hear the true spirit of the band. The trading off of lead vocals and harmonies, as well as the guitar playing that is so impressive throughout without ever being too flashy and a rhythm section that any other band would kill for. Then the reality sets in, it's not just the performance, but these are killer tunes. My guess is that the rest of Nashville is going to be fighting over who gets to cover these songs next.

So who are these guys? Where does a first time band get off calling themselves "World Famous Headliners" when you have never heard of them? Well that's part of the fun, because you see you have heard of them, you just don't know it yet.

They are three of Nashville's top songwriters, guitarists and singers to start out. That might sound like an experiment that has no chance of being successful, but with egos in check, (all songs are credited to all three) they manage to support each other and work together as few bands can. Having spent so much time writing and performing on their own and with other top acts, they know what works and what doesn't.



I already mentioned Al

Anderson, “Big Al” to the legion of old NRBQ fans out there. This is his first band since he left the Q back in 1994. This isn’t an NRBQ album by any stretch but it’s got that same feeling of we are gonna have some fun and we want to take you along for the ride. For those that don’t know, since the NRBQ days Al has been a mainstay in Nashville writing hit songs and appearing with the like of the Mavericks, Tim McGraw, George Strait and Vince Gill. He also wrote three of the songs and played some guitar on Bonnie Raitt’s latest Slipstream.

Joining him are both Shawn Camp and Pat McLaughlin. Camp has been writing hit songs for the likes of Garth Brooks, Brooks and Dunn, and Blake Shelton among others, as well as working and performing with Alan Jackson, Susie Boguss and Trisha Yearwood. McLaughlin has also written songs for Bonnie Raitt, Alan Jackson, Taj Mahal and a host of other artists as well as performing with Johnny and Rosanne Cash, and the latest Rick Rubin produced Neil Diamond Project.

Holding these three together is the rhythm section of bassist Michael Rhodes and drummer Greg Morrow. Rhodes has been playing bass for over 40 years with everyone from Steve Winwood to Dolly Parton, Vince Gill and into the jazz world with Larry Carlton. If this was still the age of LP records and you had credits on the album covers – we would all know his work. Morrow has also worked with a who’s who of the industry, Reba McIntyre, Billy Joe Royal George Jones, Sugarland and Allison Kraus to just name a few.

That’s who they are, but reading this and talking about music really get us nowhere. Get their new album and start listening. Today. You can thank them later.

– Rob Henry