

BROTHERS FROM ANOTHER PLANET

**THE BROTHERS SCHAEFER-MURRAY
OF THE PLANETARY BLUES BAND
TALK TO ROCKWIRED
ABOUT KEEPING THE BLUES ALIVE
ON THEIR NEW CD ONCE UPON A
TIME IN THE SOUTH LOOP**



You guys have a fantastic CD and now that it's out there for people to hear how do each of you feel about the finished work?

MARTIN: It was a long time coming. We recorded a few things and we've been trying to get our sound down over the years. It's been a while now and I just wanted to do a blues album that really covers a broad spectrum of what the blues is. I wanted to do a few really old songs. There are three cover songs on this album that go back to the thirties - the delta stuff and I also wanted to do a rock track. I would always write songs based on what I knew about music and over the past couple of years I thought I'd try to see what I could do by keeping it simple. This album is the culmination of that and how I feel about the blues. I also think this album is a starting point for where we can go with the blues as a genre.

BOBBY: In all seriousness this is like our first album. We've recorded several albums before and we did one a few years ago which was kind of our experimental recording, and we recorded that one in my apartment a couple of years back. This album was also engineered by us by our brother MICHAEL he did all the mixing on it and we had it mastered and we printed it through DISCMAKERS. I'd have to agree with MARTIN that this is our debut album. It's the first thing that we've ever recorded where I have no doubts in my mind about it. I feel good about every track on the album. We've recorded stuff before and when I would listen to it in places like the car it wouldn't be something that I'd want to listen to over and over again. That's not the case with this album. I find myself listening to it and the hair on my arms stands up at times. I'm really proud of it.

And MICHAEL since you had a hand in the mixing of the album, tell me what your thoughts are?

MICHAEL: Actually I've been recording stuff out of my house for the past three years. I actually engineered and mixed the whole album. This is actually only my second entire album. Other than that I've only done songs randomly. For this album it was the most mature recording project that I've ever done yet. With digital recording these days its so hard to get a nice warm tone out of all of the instruments for the type of band we are. The kind of music that we play is old so we don't want to sound all clean and overproduced and pristine. We went that raw edge to our sound. The bass, drum and the guitars on this CD sound warmer and better than anything I could've imagined before going in to record it. The album was recorded in little over a month and that is the shortest window of time I've ever recorded within and it was really hard to achieve what I wanted. But with the amount of time that we had, I'm happy with the job that we did. Overall I'm happy with everything. MARTIN's singing is awesome. BOBBY's bass playing is incredible NICK's drumming is incredible. The album has a lot character.

How did you guys settle on this blues sound of yours? What drew you to the blues?

MARTIN: Our drummer NICK and I basically grew up together and we fell in love with Black American music. Nick more jazz and me more blues but we both loved jazz and blues. The first track that we cut was SEE THAT MY GRAVE IS KEPT CLEAN the BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON song. For years and years NICK was playing this beat from jazz drummer MAX ROACH and we love this beat and there were so many things that I wanted to do with this beat. We were sitting around and came up with the idea

of playing BLIND LEMON JEFFERSON over this AX ROACH beat. We have this be-bop drummers beat and this old country blues thing on top of it and it worked perfectly. It's a good example of how things come together for us. As far as blues today is concerned, you go to Chicago and you hear a lot more of what would have been called R&B in the seventies. You hear a lot of BILL WITHERS and you hear a lot of AL GREEN. You don't hear a lot of SONNY BOY WILLIAMSON. More and more it's people playing old soul music and with our music I wanted to bring things back home to few basic templates such as CHESSE RECORDS and the 1950's Chicago sound. And then again there is that jazz thing. They put blues into a genre where it's limited to a slow blues kind of sound or lump-de-lump but the blues is so much to us than that. COUNT BASSIE played the blues. MILES DAVIS played the blues. Just about every rock band from the sixties did a CHESSE RECORDS cover. As much of the blues as we can show to people the better and this album is our first starting point.

Talk about the songwriting process within this band. How do you guys go about it?

MARTIN: Well MICHAEL and I both write. With writing it can go either way. You can get a musical idea first and then you put some lyrics on it later. I think that MICHAEL and I have tons of musical ideas and we work from there and I think it's always a little bit later when we're like "What does this musical idea sound like?" and then that is when the lyrics come. They come after the music. I'm always writing lyrics too so I'll have words and music in one compartment and music in another and somewhere down the line they get married.

MICHAEL: What I think is awesome about MARTIN and I writing songs together is that we've barely grazed the surface of our capabilities. We've played as a band for not much more than ten years and we're brothers. Getting along and learning about each other and how we can actually coexist in a business together is very hard but now that we're all getting older and we have an environment in where we can really explore each others capabilities to the fullest potential and I think that every album after this one is going to get better and better.

BOBBY: The majority of this album that we've just recorded was mostly done in a day slash night. We spent an entire day tracking the majority of the rhythm tracks and we were up until eight in the morning recording one thing after another. I think I recorded close to seven of the ten of my bass tracks. Most of the stuff we had rehearsed a few times and the rest of it was just the natural chemistry that we have as brothers.

MARTIN: The way this came together I write the song and have the idea for a song - chord progressions and a riff and I would work with drummer NICK to hash out the beats and once the basic structure comes to together we work with MICHAEL and record the rhythm tracks and then BOBBY will throw his bass line on. Before long we all add something to it. Track number eight from the album is called IN A BLUES STUDY and that was something I came up with on an acoustic guitar. It was more like a country delta blues kind of a sound. But when we recorded it. We decided to leave the acoustic guitar off but have the acoustic feel to it. With that song we ended up taking lyrics from another song and scraping the lyrics I had for it originally. Sometimes a lot of things happen in the moment. Even if you had planned to take things in a different direction.

MICHAEL: I'd say this whole album was one magical moment.

What would each of you like for someone to come away with after they hear this album?

BOBBY: I guess I would like them to come away with that feel of "Who are these guys? Where are they coming from?" It reminds me of a story about ERIC CLAPTON driving around and hearing STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN's guitar for the first time and pulling over. That is what I want people to do. I hope the music has that effect on the listener - that they will stop and wonder.

MARTIN: I agree with you about that BOBBY because I'm a music instructor at a store here in my hometown and there is one thing I've noticed from younger students. There is a huge gap between what kids are listening to today and from where it all comes from basically. American roots music isn't something younger people are grasping a hold of easily. There are musicians out there who are opening the door somewhat like THE BLACK KEYS or JACK WHITE but for the most part there is not a whole lot out there to get kids to open the door to classic rock n roll and blues. It's my hope that this album can fire up younger generations into wanting to explore the blues. Hopefully they will ask themselves "Where does this sound come from?" and take their curiosity a little further.