

Paul Reddick

<http://www.paulreddick.ca/>

Paul Reddick is a blues man from Toronto who plays the harmonica and sings with a voice that can be as serious as a gun, or as subtle as touch. He has a long list of awards and accomplishments. His music is of the old school. It has what all old school, pre-war blues have at their core: a paradoxical nature. His voice, harmonica playing, and above all his lyrics are clear and dark at the same time. They are easy to understand, but impossible to understand completely. What his music gives is a pleasant sense of confusion, and what is better than a little bit of confusion? Call it wonder. Without it, nothing new can happen.

To understand Paul Reddick, you have to see him play live in a dark room with bright lights. In this setting, the paradox of the blues thrives. Some things are made clear, while other things are allowed to sit and shift in shadow, in the corners of the room and the corners of the mind.

Paul Reddick once said that when he sings, his whole body hums, but he didn't need to say so. It is easy to see. He gives himself over to each song as if to a new friend in close conversation.

There is a sense of urgency in his performing. Maybe this comes from the desire, as in new friendship, to know and to be known quickly, even suddenly, for once and for all. Song by song, he abandons himself, and by doing so allows us to abandon ourselves and our days. The blues, when they talk to you, say, "My friend, this is how it is. Don't you see? Life is as beautiful as it is ridiculous." The blues done right, the way he does them, have a certain effect. They make you feel more alive, more willing.

Produced by roots music legend, Colin Linden, Paul Reddick's recent recordings do succeed in netting his "wayward brilliance," as Mojo Magazine noted in 2007, but recording him must be a bit like chasing butterflies. See these albums: *Revue: The Best of Paul Reddick* (2007), *Villanelle* (2006), and *Rattlebag* (2002). Linden does a good job of making chase and of being careful not to pin down the wings of Paul's poetic phrases, both sung and played on the harmonica. As listeners, we get to take part in the chase, and thanks to Paul's deep sense for the inner workings of poetry—his lyrics contain series of poetic images and rhythms—there are alternating moments of loss and of revelation.

When Paul Reddick was young, he was supposed to go out day and night with women, and he was supposed to drive fast cars to places where he might loiter for hours on end, and he was supposed to stand with a certain attitude of abandon on corners and on the sides of rural routes, and he was supposed to work a job in order to make money to spend on the women, on the car, on the right jeans, and on the soap to clean the dust from the jeans. But no. Instead, he stayed in his room and played his harmonica to his heart's content. This content is ours now, and it is good to share in.

KOKO BONAPARTE

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