

Ant Boogie - The Interview

Written by Anthony Frazier
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In my last article we talked about an incredible cd by an equally incredible band. “The Eternal Quest For Authenticity” by Collective Hallucination featuring Ant Boogie was released earlier this year and it’s been a banner year for the band’s leader Mr. Ant Boogie!

Ant has been on a promotional “tour” doing interviews on radio and more. We sat down and talked to the producer, writer, guitarist about his latest project.

Forward Times-”So Ant Boogie this is your fourth cd, right? What’s the difference between this one and the first three?”

Ant Boogie-”Yes, it’s my fourth and best so far! I took my time with this cd. The first three were kind of rushed. The band was riding a wave of hotness and I wanted to get product out there. Some people left, (the band), during the recording of the first three cds and I kept their parts because I didn’t want to go re-record them. Cost too much! This time, I used my own studio to record the whole project and I flexed all of my skills. Many of which I learned “on the job”. I wrote everything, did 90% of the engineering/recording and I produced the whole record. I was able to take my time and do it the way I wanted to do it. I had certain parts recorded and re-recorded by different musicians. I did this until I got exactly what it was I was looking/listening for in each song. Some songs have one vocalist throughout. Others have various vocalist. It’s the dream project I wanted to do from the time I started working on our second cd, “The Peripheral Moment”.”

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F.T.-"So were you pleased with the outcome?"

A.B.-"Most definately! I took a Quincy Jones, Bluey Maunick (of Incognito fame), approach to this cd. Instead of trying to stick with one particular person for each part, I used whoever I felt was best for each song. In essence it's almost like a compilation cd. I have various vocalist sprinkled throughout, I have various musicians etc. The only constant on the entire cd is myself and my good friend Brian Baldwin aka B. Funk. He played all of the bass parts. I enlisted help from many iconic Houston based artist including Kyle Turner, Joe Carmouche and Caretta Bell."

F.T.-"So what is this cd about? Why call it The Eternal Quest For Authenticity?"

A.B.-"The Eternal Quest for Authenticity" is a concept cd. If you flip the cd over it says on the back cover "The Search For Something Real", which is the subtitle of this project. I call it that because I, (having been in the music business in many aspects for many years), have grown tired of many of today's top artist recording full cds of old songs and cashing in on them. Many of these artist are really great artist who have written and recorded their own hits time and time again. Why they've chosen to do these "songbook" type of cds I don't know. Now, don't get me wrong many of these cds are incredible. Most notably Seal's cd simply titled "Soul" and Dwight Yoakam's (country artist), cd titled "Under The Covers". My thing though is let's not make the rest of our living doing those type of cds like Rod Stewart has done lately. He's recorded somewhere between 4 and 5 of these cds. I mean come on Rod..You're ROD Stewart for Christ sake. Write and record something new, please.. People want to hear something new from their favorite artist. Not new recordings of old material.

F.T.-"So what makes your cd so special?"

A.B.-"Every song on the cd is an original recording. All songs written by me. The cool thing about them though is each song has a reference to some other tune that I loved growing up. Whether it's in the song title or if there's a lyric/line from another tune incorporated into my own. For instance there's a song on the cd called "Take Me Back". We mention just about everyone in soul music from Al Green to Otis Redding. We pay homage to them by singing/incorporating one of their hits into the lyrics of the body of the song itself. There's a song on there called "Every Time I Close My Eyes" also. It's a totally original song, but it's titled after a Babyface hit of the same name. Ours is funkier though."

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F.T.-"That's remarkable and it's very different. So what have people been saying about the cd?"

A.B.-"So far the people who have supported us and bought the cd have had nothing but positive words about it. They love it."

F.T.-"There is something else special about this cd. Like with your other cds, everything was recorded live. No drum machines, programmed beats or samples."

A.B.-"Yes. That's almost unheard of in Black music these days. At least Black music recorded in America. I take pride in recording my songs live. I love programmed beats and samples if used correctly, but there's no place for them in my music unless it's in a remix. I'm from the old school. Back in the day everyone in James Brown's band, Prince's band, Earth Wind and Fire, The Bar Kays, Maze etc all had to know how to play their instruments. They didn't use auto tune for vocalist, and they did not use drum machines. They played what was in their hearts. Listen to an old Billy Preston recording or George Clinton recording and you get a feeling of organic love that's not heard in today's music. I love playing and recording live. No lyp synching, no tricks or gimmicks. It might not always be 100% perfect, but it's going to always be 100% real."

F.T.-"Are you getting the support from your hometown that you'd like?"

A.B.- (Laughing), "Good question. Yes and no. Yes, the fans love us and they buy our music and merchandise. No, radio isn't playing our music. Do I feel bad about it? Not really. I'm in the company of many great artist in Houston who do not get any airtime. I'd love to get airtime, but I'm not going to lose sleep behind it. We are getting a lot of airplay in other markets. It's helping to sell cds. Right now Opelousas, LA is all over the cd!! Houston will catch on one day."

F.T.-"What is your favorite song on the cd?"

A.B.-"It's hard to say. For the longest "Who Are You?" was my favorite. Lately I've been

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enjoying “Take Me Back” and “Days of Life”. Every time I listen to these songs I’m thinking to myself I can’t believe I wrote such amazing tunes. Every song on this cd is from the heart. There’s a mix of soul, funk, jazz and pop on this cd.”

F.T.-“So what can we expect in the near future?”

A.B.-“We are slated to perform for two nights at next year’s Houston Black Expo, we’re hoping to be on the Fiesta Black History program and a lot of performances here and there. Maybe we’ll even get hired for a Forward Times event!! Next year is going to be big and busy! We have a show this week on Nov. 19th at The Secret Word Cafe’. I’m excited about that because I’m introducing some new, incredible artist to the fans on this show.”

F.T.-“Do you change band mates often?”

A.B.-“Not really. I just go with someone til the steam runs out. I’ve remained friends with all but maybe two former members since the inception of the band. Most of my band mates in the past have been real cool. Some go on to do their own thing while others join other bands and some just stop doing music all together. I talk to most of them on a regular basis. B-Funk and I are best friends. He’s no longer in the band but we talk at least once a week. I love him like a brother.”

F.T.-“Who are you listening to right now?”

A.B.-Right now I’m listening to a mix of old school and new school. I love the new cds by fDeluxe and The Original 7ven. Kuumba Freeque and Steve Steele are getting a lot of play in my system as well. I’m re-introducing myself to some underrated artist from back in the day. Artist like Milira, Margie Evans, Shuggie Otis and William DeVaughn. I’m still jamming “Pretty Girl Rock” by Keri Hilson. I’m also diggin Dallas based artist Rhonda Nicole’s new cd as well. Hot.”

F.T.-“You were saying before this interview started how sad you were about the passing of Heavy D this past week.”

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A.B.-"Yes, Heavy D was a gentle giant. I had the pleasure of meeting him many years ago. He was such a down to earth kind of guy. He and I were the same age. It makes me think more about my health and what I'm doing or not doing right to make sure I stay here at least 40 more years. Heavy was one of a kind. My good friend Corwin McCruse and I always talk about his "Blue Funk" lp. It was one of the best, most underrated rap albums to come out in the 90's. I think it is so sad we have to lose so many greats at such a young age. Michael Jackson, Gerald Levert, Aaliyah, Jam Master Jay, Michael Hutchence and so many others. I pray for everyone everyday. When it's time, it's time. You cannot stop it. I pray I live a nice, long life."

F.T.-"That's so true. I guess Heaven needs a band of greats. So what can people expect with this show you have coming up?"

A.B.-"They can expect to leave feeling good and satisfied."

F.T.-"Thanks Ant Boogie."

A.B.-"Thank you."