

Soul-patrol.com

First & Foremost, this is a great album: Angel Rissoff - Nu Soul Stories (Life, Love and Tall Tales) Featuring three Rock & Roll Hall-of-Famers.

Angel Rissoff is quite possibly the most important artist that I have covered here on Soul-Patrol over the course of the past 10 years.

His music is great, no doubt about that. But of course there is much more to the story. And this weekend it seems most appropriate to tell you all why. <http://bit.ly/XmpOGV>

This is a very special weekend. First of all, it is my birthday. I was born on January 19th 1957.

And no different than any other kid who has a birthday, right around Christmastime, I grew up feeling slightly "gypped," when it came to getting presents. My family was always quite broke after Christmas, and although they always tried their best, my birthday always felt like it was something of an afterthought. Really and truly, just another cold day in January.

Of course this all changed quite dramatically in 1983, when Dr. King's birthday was made a national holiday. Well for me, strictly as a "side effect" it also meant that my birthday suddenly became celebrated during a "three-day weekend" most years.

And this year it takes on additional significance, because it is also the weekend celebrating the second inauguration of President Barrack Obama. For many Black Americans, even those who disagree with many of his policies this is a big moment in history. And not just because it is taking place on Dr. King's birthday. It is because this second election means that perhaps that which not so long ago seemed not just impossible or even unthinkable, might actually be a normal or a regular thing. And if what was previously impossible or even unthinkable, could be normal or regular, that means there is hope for a whole lot of other things to be normal/regular as well.

And this brings me back to Angel....

Angel is a dude from the Bronx. Just a regular dude. Happens to be a white dude.

Musically he comes out of the same musical tradition that gave us artists like Dion, Laura Nyro, the Rascals and others. A few of you out there might call it a tradition of "blue eyed soul."

Personally I can't stand that term. It is so shallow and in some ways is offensive. It implies somehow that the artist and their artistry is just "impossible or even unthinkable" as opposed to being "normal/regular." One of the problems in attempting to describe music using shorthand terminology like "blue eyed soul," simply because we are too lazy to consider what it actually is and what it might actually represent. Therefore, we don't allow ourselves the pleasure of being able to accept the "impossible or even unthinkable" as being "normal/regular."

And I am here to tell you that very clearly the days of being unable to "impossible or even unthinkable" as being "normal/regular," are over. <http://bit.ly/XmpOGV>

Dion, Laura Nyro, the Rascals and others from NYC who happened to be white were bonafide R&B artists. They could and should be considered to be GREAT R&B artists, simply because not only did they perform it, but they lived it. And nothing should be considered to be unusual about that. Nor should we have to insult, and marginalize their artistry by using terminology like "Blue Eyed Soul."

And so should the music of Angel. It is quite simply a great album of what some might call R&B music. Some might call some of the songs "Classic Soul." Some might call it "Nu Soul." Some might call it "Blues." Some might call it "Funk." Some might call it "Jazz." <http://bit.ly/XmpOGV>

But again, these are all shorthand names that each sort of miss the point. It's all great Black music.

-- It's "normal/regular" because it is created by a talented cat from the Bronx. This is Big City music for Big City folks who walk down their streets with a "glide in their stride & a dip in their hips."

--It's "impossible or even unthinkable" because it dares/challenges the listener to consider the fact that maybe, just maybe the era of GREAT BLACK MUSIC hasn't come to an end, simply because this kind of artistry still exists in 2013.

No surprise to me whatsoever. That's because these two things ALWAYS holds true for all of the music that comes from Angel. And that is why I feel he may be the most important artist that I have covered over the course of the past 10 years. His music represents both the past and the future at the same time.

Here is the track listing:

1. 29 Ways
2. Baseball Junkie
3. Sugar Bowl
4. You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling
5. Back From The Dead
6. Thought I Knew Her
7. Thought I Knew Her pt 2
8. Every Man
9. You Better Run
10. On The Other Hand
11. Fine Wine
12. Open the Door To Your Heart
13. Shag Time

Note: some of these songs are covers and some are originals. This album is far more than the sum of its parts. Although some of you may not have the "attention span," you really should try to "swallow it whole."

And if you do, you might just find that what you thought was previously "impossible or even unthinkable" as being "normal/regular."

And just like everyone finally coming to understand that the existence of something like "President Obama," is actually quite "normal," the existence of a work of Black Music Artistry coming from "a talented cat from the Bronx," is quite "normal" as well.

After all, he's only been doing it for the past few decades.

Now back to my birthday celebration....

Bob Davis Co-Founder, soul-patrol.com