

STARR MAN AND TEAM PLAYER ... ANGELO SPEAKS

Written by Bill Buckley
Sunday, 09 August 2009 10:10



The Team are acknowledged as the hardest gigging soul band in the UK. They broke through as the backing band for the legendary EDWIN STARR, but since his death they've been fronted by his brother, ANGELO. With a new album out, we decided it was time we found out more about the group. We met up with ANGELO and started by asking about his background...

Well, I was born in America's Midwestern state of Ohio. I grew up in a household with two older brothers and one sister. That meant that there was always plenty of music around the house to listen to. There was a healthy mix of music that had all the elements I was enjoying at the time; Earth Wind & Fire, Stevie Wonder, Average White Band, Prince, etc ...and, of course, the vintage Motown and the 'Philly' sounds with powerful drums, hooky bass-lines, strings and horns plus passionate lead vocals on top! Seeing my brother Edwin perform while at Motown and later at 20th Century was what influenced me to want to be in a band of my own. So when the opportunity came in High School to play bass (and later guitar) in an RnB band called The Final Results, I took it! We became very popular regionally until all the members graduated High School and, unfortunately, went separate ways. But, by then, I had 'the bug' for performing live. In the late eighties, Edwin moved from America to the UK to consolidate his many years of coming here to tour. Several years later, on one of my visits to see him, we started writing some songs together for an album that he was recording at the time. Things worked out well, and Edwin asked if I'd consider staying on... and so I did. Eventually, this would lead to becoming a member of The Team as a guitarist and backing vocalist. As Edwin Starr & The Team we performed everywhere throughout Europe, and the rest (as they say) was history... well, at least until Edwin passed away in 2003. Yet the loyal fans asked if we'd continue because they loved the music and the energy of our shows.... So we obliged!

How did the album come about?

The album "Keeping The Faith" came about for a few reasons really. Firstly, I think, the guys in The Team just love playing together! And because we've know each other for such a long time, it felt natural to want to. Also, several of the guys realised something very important... we'd been so busy performing when Edwin was alive, that we'd never had the chance to record an

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album, start to finish, as a band. Occasionally, we'd do a song here or a song there, but never a complete project. And thirdly, as The Team was continuing to do live concerts post-Edwin, we wanted to show that we were still moving forward and not just trading on the past. Of course we'll always do Edwin's material live - who else could and not be a 'tribute' act? - but It feels great to have our own songs as well. And although the main songwriters on the album are the musicians in the rhythm section, it's still very much a "Team" project... and so the journey continues.

What do you like about the album... What are your hopes for it? ... and the future for you and the band?

I like the fact that whole "Keeping The Faith" album comes from a sincere place. It's not too clever and over produced. It reminds me of the days when fans could grow with their favourite band.... As the band's music grew, improved or changed, their fans could enjoy the ride as well... and that's what we want. If we can exploit our music and it becomes a part of people's lives, then The Team will be able to continue performing and continue to give back some of the love that our fans have given us over the years.

It would be remiss of me not to ask about your brother - Edwin - what was your relationship like... what are you fondest memories of him... and what is his musical legacy.... And what do you hope will be your musical legacy?

As one could imagine, Edwin and I had a very special relationship. Not only did we work together, but we genuinely liked and respected each other as people. Our relationship wasn't just professional, it was emotional... and that bond still exists. He's handed me the baton and I'm trying not to drop it!!! If I can do that, then maybe one day - when it's time for me to pass it on - someone will be able to ask about my legacy too... and my fondest memories of Edwin... his cheeky smile, his infectious laugh and his generosity.

'Keeping The Faith' by THE TEAM, featuring ANGELO STARR is out now - check the review on our review pages....