

CRACK OF DAWN; Spotlight (via CD Baby)

Written by Bill B

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Sadly, I've never heard of 'em till recently (much to my shame) but Canadian band Crack Of Dawn have been in business for over 40 years peddling their own brand of old school soul and funk. They were actually discovered by Otis Redding's manager and Canadian record sales statistics will tell you that Crack Of Dawn have sold more records than "big" bands like Earth Wind and Fire!

Over four decades there's been plenty of personnel changes but at the moment the band features the wonderful voice of Michael Dunston, guitarist and producer Carl Harvey (ex Toots and the Maytals), sax player, Alvin Jones, trombonist Trevor Daley (who has played with Third World), trumpeter Alexis Baro, keyboardist Bela Hayman, drummer Carl Otway, percussionist Mark Daniels and bassist Charles Sinclair (who has played with Al Green).

This new 'Spotlight' LP was heralded a month or so back with the mighty single 'Ol Skool'... an appropriate title for a tune that was a joyous throwback to the great days of the 80s weekenders. Brimming with the optimism that only upbeat soul can engender, the song featured one of those popular soul greats litanies....a winner!

The good news is that the 'Spotlight' album offers plenty more of the same. 'Keep The Faith' is crafted from the same ingredients; 'Somebody's Watching' is brassy and brash (flavours of Tower Of Power) while on 'Booby Rooby' the band prove that they can "do" funk with the very best! The album's title track is a sweet but not cloying ballad but the cut that keeps beckoning me back is the mid-tempo groove that is 'It's Alright'. It reminds me just a little of JJ Jackson's 'But It's Alright'... and it's not just the title... think it's the catchy hook.

Sadly it's taken me forty years to catch up with Crack Of Dawn... better late than never; here's hoping the wider soul community investigate the band.... they won't be disappointed!

(BB) 4/5

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