

Agent Cooper Selected Press Quotes:

“...*From The Ashes* is a rollicking twenty-minute reintroduction to this highly proficient group of musicians. Never does it feel like they are needlessly showing off, instead delivering six well-crafted and succinct tunes of joyful American prog.” *Dominic Henry, The Digital Fix.com*

“...they also offer something special, real special...” *Shan, Battlehelm.com*

“...they’ve delivered a little understated gem that leaves you feeling happy that they are back again... loads of prog flourishes, time changes and musical dexterity... you are left wanting more...” *Matt Davies, This Is Not A Scene.com*

“...they are all very talented and technically more than just proficient musicians... The production standard of these recordings is at about the highest level I could imagine... This is uplifting, happy prog...” *wfg2, Alternative Matter*

Agent Cooper - From The Ashes

TAGS

[american](#), [prog rock](#), [southern](#)

It has been seven years since we last heard from **Agent Cooper**, but the Atlantan proggers have decided to leave their various other projects and reconvene to make a full go of being a proper band once again. Put together in short order, new EP *From The Ashes* is a rollicking twenty minute reintroduction to this highly proficient group of musicians. Never does it feel like they are needlessly showing off, instead delivering six well-crafted and succinct tunes of joyful American prog.

Of course it references the great bands of the genre, from the power of **Rush** to the vocal harmonies of **Queen**, but there is also a healthy dose of home too with the laid-back groove of the South, an ever-present spine to *From The Ashes*. Bassist Sean Delson has coined the phrase "old school modern" for the **Agent Cooper** sound, and it is a well-fitting tag as the elements of their heroes are melded with the clean, crisp production afforded by today's technologies. This bite size chunk may be too small to judge the success of their comeback, but it does bode well for any forthcoming long-player. [**7/10**]

[Agent Cooper - "From The Ashes"](#)

March 4, 2012 by Shan

Agent Cooper – "From The Ashes" EP (Binary Recordings / Universal)

Anyone familiar with Stuck Mojo's Rich Ward will know what a funky, kick ass character 'The Duke' is. Agent Cooper is made up of the cream of Atlanta's rock talent who spent the decade recording and touring with Fozzy and Stuck Mojo. As eclectic as they sound, these guys play a contemporary rock n prog mix drawing its inspiration from 70s Queen and Genesis on tracks like 'Tornado Dreams'. However, being good ol' Southern boys, and associates of 'The Duke', they also offer something special, real special in melding a southern rock element on songs like 'Mother' and 'Misunderstood' that adds some real soul and passion to a prog style not commonly associated with it. In that respect, Agent Cooper have pushed the boundaries of musical conventionality out of place, leaving us either appreciative, aggravated or just plain astonished!

Agent Cooper- From The Ashes EP



By Mat Davies

– March 12, 2012 **Posted in:** EP Reviews, Music

Tags: Agent Cooper, Dream Theater, From the Ashes, Kansas, Prog, progressive rock, Queen, Rock, Rush, Sean Delson, Tony MacAlpine



Going away for “a bit” is one thing but being out of the music scene for nigh on seven years is something of a dangerous game to play: for many, it could be career suicide. It’s a nice warm ‘welcome back’ then to modern progressives, **Agent Cooper**, and their blend of modern, clean-cut, musical overtures.

Agent Cooper play a charming blend of mainstream prog-infused melodious rock that is both perky and sparky. I wouldn’t say that the band wear their influences on their sleeves; more, they are tattooed there with pride. The “*From the Ashes*” EP is nothing less than a twenty minute romp from the Atlanta-based outfit that says “Hello! Remember us?” really loudly and, fair play to them, they’ve delivered a little understated gem that leaves you feeling happy that they are back again. As an appetizer to a presumably forthcoming new album, it sets you up very well indeed, thank you.

Opening track ‘*Power*’ had me reaching for my **Queen** b-sides just to check there wasn’t a complete and utter rip off- rest easy, there isn’t, but you can feel the love for Mercury and Co. running through this and the rest of the EP; it’s all bold bombast, fabulously produced, modern and yet somehow retro in its delivery and outlook. ‘*Tornado Dreams*’ is more of the same, packing in loads of prog flourishes, time changes and musical dexterity. ‘*Mother*’ and ‘*I Can*’ are more straightforward rock tracks with some nice energised, proggy keyboards and some exemplary bass from band architect *Sean Delson*. ‘*Misunderstood*’ closes the proceedings, its complexity appearing effortless and charm-filled.

“From the Ashes” is an effective EP- as a statement of intent, it works; you are left wanting more and, as it’s not there, you invariably go back to putting these six tracks through their paces again. If you’re a fan of **Dream Theater**, **Kansas** or mid-period **Rush** there is much that is likely to appeal. **Agent Cooper** are never going to set my particular part of the universe on fire but “*From the Ashes*” has an effortless charm and an endearing nature that will, as likely (as not), garner them a lot of fans on their forthcoming **Tony MacAlpine** tour. This is a nice record, and, for once, I’m not using “nice” in the pejorative sense. Worth checking out, if you like that sort of thing. Which you do.

[Agent Cooper – Official Website](#)

Our Rating: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Sean B. Delson - Agent Cooper - Interview Exclusive

Written by Johnny H

Sunday, 11 March 2012 05:30



Hey Sean firstly many thanks for taking the time to talk with us at Uber Rock, it's really appreciated.

Any time.... any place, just let us know and we will happy to do it!

For someone who has yet to hear Agent Cooper, introduce yourselves and tell us a little bit about your history.

Agent Cooper (Formerly Salem Ash), goes back a long way. We first formed in Hollywood, CA back in 1986. Like most bands, we started out gigging as much as possible playing covers and writing music. Because we were all from the East Coast originally, California wasn't really our scene so we decided to set up base camp in Atlanta, Georgia in 1989. There we started working hard within the local music scene, doing the odd session work, writing, recording, and gigging. In 1994 we made our first trip over to London to seek out a record deal. It was a great experience!! I still remember the record executive listening very intently to our demo. He stopped the tape, pondered his thoughts for a moment, and said... "I see what it is you're searching for... but I just don't think you have quite found it yet." We still all laugh about that to this day. Our first official release was in 1999 (Agent Cooper) on Prog Rock Records. Then, in 2005 and 2006, we twice released "Beginner's Mind". It was never our intention to take so much time in between records, but various members got caught up in touring and recording with other bands.... which was GREAT, but it took away from Agent Cooper time. We all got together around New Years Eve and made a vow that 2012 would be all about Agent Cooper. We made a pact amongst ourselves to really focus on finishing this thing we had started so long ago. A few phone calls later, we were on a massive tour with Tony MacAlpine, and signed to Binary/Universal records! BAM! It all happened so fast. I am typing this from the dressing room of the Underworld in London. Tomorrow we head for the Netherlands and all across Europe from there. (For complete tour information, please visit www.agentcooper.com) So far, 2012 has been a dream come true for us, and I can't wait to see what happens next!

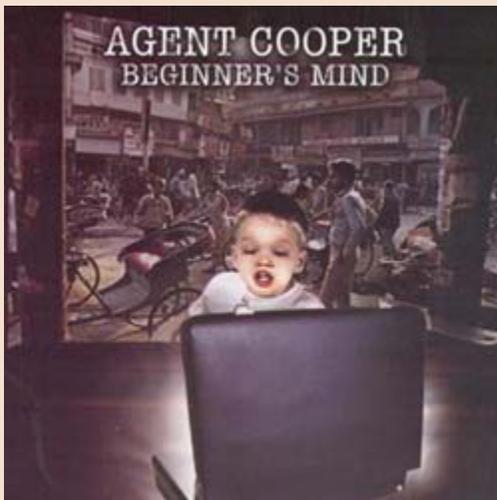


I note that you list bands as diverse as Genesis and Dixie Dregs as your influences- so what exactly does Southern Prog Rock sound like then guys? Please explain what you sound like to our readers.

That's a tough one! It's like trying to describe to someone what an apple tastes like if you have never had one. Try to do that. My heartfelt advice to everyone reading this is to simply download our new 6 song EP. Then you will know what Southern Prog Rock sounds like! Thanks in advance for that.

As you say, Agent Cooper have been recording since 1999 with you guys releasing two albums to date, but your last album 'Beginners Mind' was released way back in 2005-2006. So what are the plans for a new full-length album, given you're also out on the road right now promoting that all-new 'From The Ashes' EP you just ruthlessly plugged (*laughing*)?

We have a pretty large back catalogue of songs to pick from that we have written, and we are also writing whilst we are on this tour. The exact schedule for recording a full length record will be determined around the 1st of April. Our hope is to hit the studio hard when we get home, but our booking agent may have other plans for us. We will see. One day at a time... Everything seems to falling in to place for us as they are supposed to. It's a great feeling.



The EP sounds a bit more direct and less prog song wise than your previous two albums ('Mother', 'The Stand' and 'Power' being perfect examples.) Is this due to the new lineup of the band bringing new influences into the writing mix?

I think it just happened that way. But in regards to those 3 tunes you mentioned. They're not exactly straight! I think there is a real trick to playing odd time music, but doing in such a way that it's smooth and doesn't sound "prog". On this latest EP, we all agreed that we needed to try and "re shape" our sound. Going for what I dubbed, "Old School Modern". Bringing in old school sounds with lush harmonies and more acoustics. Something a little more

organic if you will. I am very happy with the ebb and flow of 'From the Ashes'. It's a great mix of all worlds. We are who we are, and we write what we write. All these guys have so much to offer, and that is what gives us so much diversity.

So once again, where was it you said our readers can get a copy of this excellent six-tracker from then Sean?

The official release date for "From The Ashes" was Monday, Feb. 18th, and it is available through Universal Records on all the standard digital outlets. (iTunes, etc.) We also have a physical CD (which the whole band has personally signed) available through our website. www.agentcooper.com



I have to complement Doug on his vocals, he's certainly got a set of lungs on him, has anyone said he sounds a hell a lot like Dennis Churchill Dries before?

HA HA! I have heard that a few times actually... Doug can really sing. He's no joke.

Doug Busbee (chipping in): Thank you for the compliments.

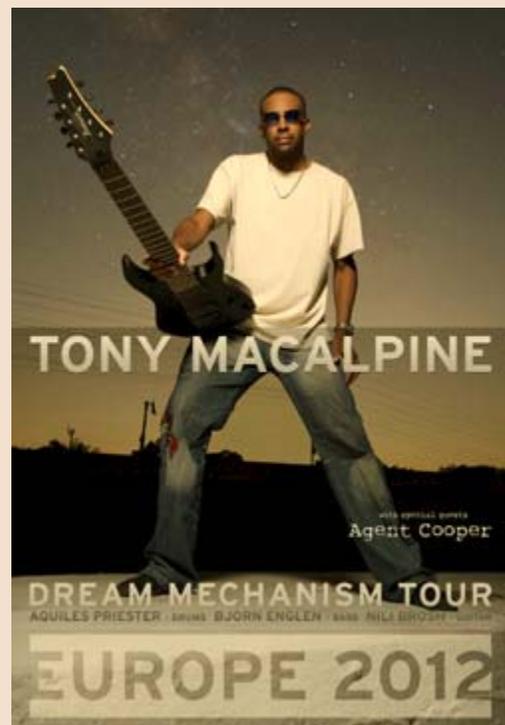
Doug's voice really does bring you an almost AOR crossover potential though, what is your vision

for the band? Is it to cross over into the more mainstream market?

Thank you for "hearing" that, and for noticing. Of course we would be thrilled for that to happen. Much in the same way that RUSH, YES, and Genesis did. So "yes", I would consider that one of our band's visions.

You are out and about touring with Tony MacAlpine, right now and you've got a fair few dates to go it seems, we hope the chemistry and vibe is good...

This all came about through our agent, Adam Elfin. He knew it would be a great "marriage" and he was right. We are having a blast so far. The entire band are true professionals right down the line. We all have played with so many different people, and that gives us a lot in common... which leads to shared stories and experiences on the tour bus. I could not have asked for a better band to tour with. As fate would have it, it's called "The Dream Mechanism Tour". What a perfect name! See what I mean about fate?



Some of our readers may recognise you from your work with Rich Ward, Fozzy and Stuck Mojo. What are your fondest memories of working with those guys, and why did you give that all up to concentrate solely on Agent Cooper?

YES! I was with The Duke, Fozzy, and Stuck Mojo for about 9 years. Doing the records and all the tours. I got Mike Martin involved on guitar and our keyboard maestro Eric Frampton doing all the keyboards. Like I said, we all go way back in the Atlanta music scene together. It was a lot of fun and we did

accomplish so many great things. I always knew that I was meant to be in a BAND, and not just a hired gun. It was this reason that really pushed me to move on and get back to my musical family. It was a mutual decision, and I told everybody in the Fozzy\Mojo camp that I would be there for them if their current bassist could not make a show. I could easily sit in for some gigs, and would be all too happy to help them out in a time of need.

I take it from the band's name one of you must be a David Lynch fan? Who came up with the moniker, what's your favorite Lynch movie, and would you say you brought any of his off the wall qualities into your music?

I'll lay this one off on Doug. He was, like you said, a Lynch fan.

Doug Busbee: Hmm? I never thought about David Lynch being a part of our music, but I think you may be on to something. I guess maybe some of his madness may have crept into some of our music. Good call!

Just to finish off then and on a little lighter note if we were to do the random five tracks on Agent Cooper's iPod/iPhone MP3 player right now what would come up? (No cheating OK !!!)

Ganesh Giri Jaya (drums) -- Miles Davis - 'Four and More'

Doug Busbee (lead vocals & guitar) -- King Crimson - 'Frame by Frame'

Mike Martin (lead guitar) -- Animals As Leaders - 'Weightless'

Eric Frampton (keyboards) -- Kevin Gilbert - 'Last Plane Out'

Sean Delson (bass) - I don't have an iPod

And with that we'd like to thank you guys for taking the time to speak with us at Uber Rock, we wish you every success with the ongoing tour, which ends in Paris on the 21st of March.

CHEERS!!

<http://agentcooper.com/>

<http://www.youtube.com/agentcooperband>

[Pick up some Agent Cooper from their Amazon.co.uk store](#)



Wednesday, March 14, 2012

Agent Cooper – From The Ashes

Categories: Reviews

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I am sure there are people out there that would absolutely eat this stuff up, but I am not one of them.

Here is the thing: they are all very talented and technically more than just proficient musicians. They are also quite capable of using odd time signatures and switching between them. They have some very 'clever' musical jokes and trickery throughout the album. They achieve extremely clean tones with great separation between all of the instruments so you can easily make out exactly what every member of the band is playing at every turn. The production standard of these recordings is at about the highest level I could imagine.

Yet, even with all of those (what one might consider) great elements coming together, it leaves me wanting to scream at the top of my lungs, "STOP!" followed by an immediate dive into the ugliest, dirtiest, punkest area of my music collection. Yes, I will be spinning 'Damaged' by Black Flag when I finish listening to this album and writing this review. I am actually listening to it for a second time while I am writing this to confirm my initial reaction.

Now, although this album makes me want to do bad things to good people, I also know that there is a huge audience out there that will really be into this. Fans of super-clean, really technical, beard stroking, wink-wink nudge-nudge prog will probably love this. People who dig post-mid-eighties Rush stuff, Dream Theater, Joe Satriani, and that ilk will most likely find this to be right up their alley. This is uplifting, happy prog for folks who like the rock but don't see the need for it to be so angry and dissident.

However, if you are like me and like music with a little dirt, attitude, and raw visceral power that makes you want to break things and have wild, reckless sex, this is one to avoid. I will not be giving it a third listen.

Now, hit it Greg (Ginn)!!!

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Agent Cooper “From The Ashes” CD Review

By David Lowry
February 20 2012
By David Lowry

Agent Cooper is a progressive rock band from Atlanta, GA that has a gentle throw back sound to some of the classic progressive rock bands from the 60's and 70's in its heyday, but at the same time has captured some of the modern sounds of today's prog monsters, with one exception: Agent Cooper understands how to write a hook and make a song radio-friendly, which many of today's prog rockers don't do, either by design, or by not being able to step out of their own virtuosity and simplify things. Neither is bad, one way has a certain fan base just as the other does. I know when I listen to prog, I am not looking for three minute songs that are just ear candy. Agent Cooper has done a great job of melding the two together and hopefully on their end being able to capture a much larger audience because of it.

“From The Ashes” is the band's third CD but first with this current line-up. It's more of an EP really, with six songs on it, and “The Stand” being the strongest of the six in my personal opinion. It's a happy song in its melodic structure but a very strong song lyrically about standing up for yourself. It's an interesting contrast in the way the music is written and the way the lyrics provide a completely different feel. It is an acoustic-based song with soaring vocals, an uplifting pre-chorus, a very strong chorus, and the use of the B3 organ and keyboards are a nice thing to hear again in today's music. It's definitely something we don't hear enough of with the younger musicians of today.

Agent Cooper have the ability to weave in and out of time changes, key changes and tempos with the best of them and it provides an interesting ride throughout the songs, which is really the point of a song: to take you on a journey. The great thing about Agent Cooper is it isn't just a lyrical journey, it's a sonic one as well. Singer Doug Busbee brings back a vocal styling sorely missed in today's rock music. He does his predecessors proud and the band as a whole does a great job with harmony vocals. There are plenty of spots in the songs where this is a highlight and adds a rich color and depth to the music without it ever feeling like they are showing off. This can be said as a whole of all the music and the musicians. The musicianship was brilliant from everyone in the band and played so well that it never took anything away from the song.

I thoroughly enjoyed this EP and am really looking forward to hearing more from this exciting band. A truly stellar effort on their part to bring us a style of music we don't get enough of. Thank you Agent Cooper for bringing back a style of music that harkens to the greatness of the 70s prog-rockers but catapults it into the now.

You can find out more about Agent Cooper at www.agentcooper.com