

Sonic Revolver hits the always moving target. An instant high energy blues rock classic.



'NON STOP HEAVY WEIGHT FREIGHT FROM AMSTERDAM TO SYDNEY.'

STORY BY NEAL VAUGHAN/ PHOTOGRAPHY RON KOFFEMAN

Ruben Hoeke sent the CD of his new album *Sonic Revolver* over 18000 km to the other side world so I could revolve and review it here in Australia. He needn't have bothered. He could have spun it on his home system in Wormer near Amsterdam and I would have heard it loud and clear right across the planet.

Like a thousand trucks thundering down the Rotterdam Freeway all the way to the Sydney Harbour Bridge this is pure hi octane rock'n'roll, fuelled by smart songwriting, Ruben's trademark guitar work and a band that lives to boogie. This is a heavy-weight rock classic - so much so I am surprised I didn't have a delivery surcharge when it arrived.

A BOLD, BALLS OUT ROCK RECORD

Although the paint peeling opener 'That's the Boogie' is actually the only track on the album that's unthinking, unblinking hard rocking. A detour from the main thrust of challenging lyrical intensity dressed in high-energy clothing. From the crazed 'Pet the Fat Cat' through to the power riffing of 'Bell Tower', The Ruben Hoeke Band have made a bold, balls out rock record. But flip through the lyric sheet - ah! the joy of the physical recording - and you feel something more. Sure, these guys are blowing the doors of the joint, but they're thinking about how the world works and challenging some big issues - personal and political - while they're doing it.

After all, as the ever-versatile vocals and songwriting of Lucas Pruim poetically declaim 'Where is the joy in pointlessly in believing'. It's almost as if the guys thought nothing is off limits to get the audience thinkin' as well as rockin'.



So you'll find Donald Trump appears as guest demagogue on 'Selling to Sell' a which shines a spotlight on unscrupulous political salesmen. While 'Liar Liar' and 'Hour-e-Cow' explore the dangers of unscrupulous love. Then there's the restrained power melody of a Naked Phrase examining parent child relationships with the perfectly poised opening 'Become the Poet my son, serve the phrase'.

SIX STRING MAGNUM OPUS

Yes, the Ruben Hoeke Band's current outing maybe called *Sonic Revolver* but it is no standard six shooter, this a six string magnum opus. High-energy blues rock with an underlying dark lyrical intensity not so often found in these times of airhead music competitions, billion dollar showgirls and cookie cutter rocksters.

For those familiar with RHB the band's trademark sound is heavier, faster, denser. For those who aren't imagine early U2 and Guns and Roses dropping by a base-

ment grunge club to jam on stage with the ghosts of Lynyrd Skynyrd and you start to get the feel of the accomplished, yet raw bar room band energy of RHB.

For me its actually the subtler numbers that are the standouts. The opening hook and smooth Hammond organ of *Naked Phrase* and *Live Today* may even have you thinking Pearl Jam in their more reflective moments. I'd almost call them instant torch song classics, though blowtorch would be more apt. With Ruben's renowned riffs and stylish string bending underscored by his bother Eric deftly pumping out the beat with Paul Brandsen on bass. Setting the stage for Lucas Pruim to show off the full range of his tungsten tipped vocal chords.

BLUES BYWAYS AND ROCK HIGHWAYS

In fact in a blind aural taste test these two tracks had a couple of regular punters suggesting they were cuts from other rock'n'roll A-listers. Not that RHB would have any trouble making it past the velvet rope into the all time VIP party room. Ruben has proven time and again that he has a special relationship with electrically powered string driven things, and anyone familiar with their last album *Loaded* will know Ruben and Lucas are equally at home on the *Delta Blues Byways* as they are blasting their way down that ten lane Southern Rock highway.

Like a great long lost Bad Company record re-mastered for the modern world *Sonic Revolver* is no compromise rock and roll but fueled by a full load of artful blues and soul sensitivity. Get a copy even if you have cross the planet to find it. Or just download to your suburb at www.rubenhoeke.com