

The Time is now, The Place is Caroline's

By "CP" Christopher Peppas

They say that there's a time and a place for everything. That phrase has never been truer than when applied to the *Paul Spencer Band's latest* recording: *(There's) a Time and a Place*.

There's no time like the present and no place quite like Caroline's for this ten-song, effort. It was recorded live at the legendary jazz club on Milwaukee's near south side at 2nd & Florida.

The redoubtable and, oh, so tight horn section, comprised of Mike Pauers on baritone sax and Joe Turano on tenor and soprano sax, are definitely driving the train on this drop.

However, there is plenty of room carved out and meticulously woven in throughout the

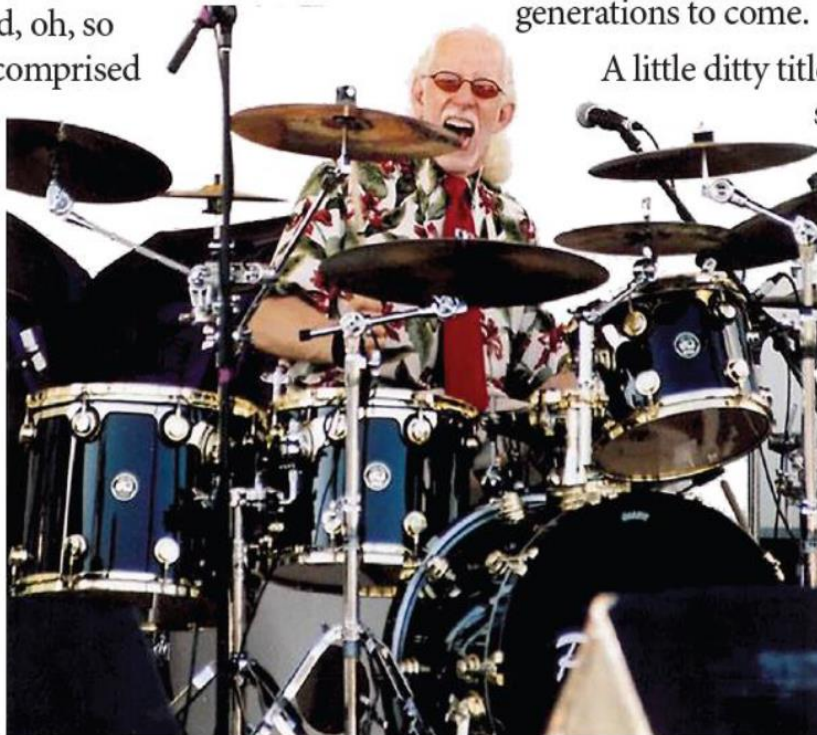
eighty-minutes for the rest of the band to bask in the spotlight from the opening downbeat to the lighthearted coda, a bouncy (natch) version of the Traditional "Oh, When the Saints (Go Marchin' In).

But this is not just a mundane list of covers of some jazz tunes. It is an homage to the artistry and the genius and these renditions stand on their own and will be delighting listeners for generations to come.

A little ditty titled *Horns Gone Wild*

starts off like a backstage warmup by a couple of players and ends up as a battle of the saxes rising to a fever pitch.

Michael Ritters' outstanding and upright bass sets the table, tempo and tone for the





title cut (*There's a Time and a Place* before the horns and drums take over.

With *Smack Dab in the Middle*, Turano takes a swing at the vocals while Pauers reaches down below the subfloor for some notes from the netherworld. Joe has a gritty, soulful voice that has a little playful Louie Prima tossed in for good measure.

Ritter does his thing yet again on Miles Davis' *So What?* From the 1959 Album *Kind of Blue* when the "Birth of The Cool" was still just a toddler.

Ditto for *Artherdoc Blues* by Percy and Jimmy Heath, a selection that is all-too-often ignored.

Then, *Bye, Bye Blackbird* sees the return of Turano to the mic and James Sodke carries the ball on this tune on piano. Sodke doesn't just play the keys, but choreographs them as if "The Rockettes" were made of ivory.

We come now to the piece-de-resistance of the opus: Dave Brubeck's Classic *Take Five* which is a bit of a misnomer as it goes on for some sixteen glorious minutes.

This is where Paul Spencer shows you how it's done, nuanced and at once, down and dirty, starting with machine-gun like precision on the hi-hat and cymbals to the great fills and improvisation on the Toms and Bass as the tune takes flight.

It's no wonder that this number gets the

biggest response, so rich and thick you can cut it with a knife but not without dulling the blade.

The grandeur of *Take Five* takes nothing away from Hi Henry Brown's *Titanic Blues* or *Little Sunflower* by Freddie Hubbard. They both hit the mark and then some.

You're going to want to get this CD, download it, stream it and demand it get pressed into vinyl. Heck, you'll probably find a way to record it on 8-Trac for your T-Bird.

Bottom Line: The Paul Spencer Band does not disappoint.

PAUL SPENCER BAND: Paul Spencer, Drums; James Sodke, Piano, Rhodes; Michael Ritter, Upright bass; Mike Pauers, Baritone sax and Joe Turano, Tenor and Soprano sax, Vocals.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

CP Christopher Peppas is a journalist, jazz vocalist and conga player in the Greater Milwaukee area and Correspondent at Large for the *Jazz Unlimited Newsletter* and a Field Editor for *Our Wisconsin Magazine*.

