

BY KEITH VALCOURT

# PAUL RODGERS: IN GOOD COMPANY

**IF YOU TURN ON ANY CLASSIC-ROCK** station in America and listen for an hour, you will probably hear Journey. After that, chances are you'll hear the voice of Paul Rodgers. You may not know the name at first, but you will definitely recognize the voice.

Starting back in the 1970s, Rodgers has been rocking us as the lead singer/songwriter of Free ("All Right Now"), Bad Company ("Feel Like Making Love," "Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy") and the Firm ("Radioactive"). Music Editor Keith Valcourt caught up with the legendary frontman, who proved to be a true English gentleman as he discussed everything from his latest solo release (the DVD *Live in Glasgow*) to joining forces with Queen.

**HUSTLER: How does it feel to be a rock icon?**

PAUL RODGERS: Oh, that's a fantastic question. I don't know how true it is, I think it's a privilege to be out there and be singing the way I am. I always feel like I'm just starting. I never sit back and say, "Okay, that's it, there are all my records." I like to be out there doing it. Performing is the thing for me.

**The most impressive thing about Live in Glasgow is your voice, which sounds as good today as it did 30 years ago. How do you keep it going?**

You know, to a large extent, it's really a

God-given gift. When I was younger, I was a bit careless and did all the things everybody does when they are growing up. I went through a whole learning period that way. I find now that if I take care of myself, my whole being—heart, soul, mind and body—then it's going to reflect in my voice. Not to be too pompous, but it's a message of love. It always has been about the music from day one for me. I still listen to the greats, the same people who have influenced me—people like Otis Redding, Aretha Franklin, the Four Tops and the Temptations. I still get chills. What they did is still something I'd like to achieve, so I'm still reaching.

**What do you think is the greatest song you've written?**

Whoa! It's hard to say. Maybe I haven't written my greatest song yet. Although having said that, "Feel Like Making Love" has some thing about it that I really like. It does seem very timeless when I sing it onstage. It seems to be fresh when I do it. I do that with my solo band and when I play with Queen. With Queen we take it to another level.

**Are you still working with Queen?**

Yes, I am, actually. I'm proceeding on two fronts. I'm proceeding with the solo band, which I love. And working with Queen has been great.

**Elio & The Bunnymen: Dancing Horses**

Bring on the dancing horses yet again as Ian McCulloch and Will Sergeant lead the latest lineup of the seminal 1980s group through all their hits.

**Like Sugar?** included. Among the bonus features are interviews with each band member.

**You're gonna miss me: A Film About Rocky Erickson**

The powerful wall of 13th Floor Elevators singer Rocky Erickson disappeared decades ago. This dreary and seemingly exploitive documentary takes a look at the shell of a man he is now. Erickson was once a musical genius, but sadly, not any longer.

# The Dirty Dozen

NEW CDs YOU NEED TO HEAR.

## INTERPOL

**Our Love to Admire**  
More of the same dark and foreboding gloom rock to move to on the band's guitar player, Matt Cameron. *Our Love to Admire* is the perfect soundtrack to any angst-ridden teen's life (or life of their Joy Division-loving parents). Highlights include "Paced Is the Trick" and "The Scale."

## MEAT DEPRESSED

**Fat, Drink & Stoopid!**  
Matt Depressed is perhaps the best party punk band to come out of the great state of Massachusetts since the mighty Mighty Bossnoses. On that note, listen to what less than six beers in your system and a fondness for the Ramones in your heart.

## BARBARE

**Absolute Garage**  
The six-supergroup composed of three uber-producers (including Bruce Vix) and Scotland's sexiest export ever (Shirley Manson) get the best-of-treatment. Packed with a handful of hit songs and videos (on a bonus DVD)—including "Queen," "Sinful Girl," and "I Think I'm Paranoid"—*Absolute Garage* is a must-have for any collection. Also available is a special limited edition, offering remixes of hits by everyone from UNKLE to Massive Attack.

## THE BRUNETTES

**Structure and Cosmetics**  
Like a modern hipster Donny & Marie, this New Zealand duo has put out a CD that's a bright ray of pure pop sunshine. The indie darlings seamlessly blended their influences—probably the Beach Boys, Television and the Modern Lovers—to create an exciting and awesome sophomore release.

## KMFDM

**Zehetwahn**  
The German industrial freaks do it again with their new release, *Zehetwahn*. The latest collection brings more of the band's edgy, rhythmic stylings capped by heavy-hitting lyrics focusing on politics, society and most important, KMFDM.—Joseph Brunner

## THE BLUEGRASS ELVISSES

**Volume One**  
This bunch hunk of burnin' bluegrass love pays tribute to the King of Rock 'n' Roll's early years without coming across as gimmicky. Both Stanton Camp and Fleckwood Mac alum (and John Fogerty sideman) Billy Burnette—know how to channel Elvis with pleasing results. (continued on page 107)



## Music DVDs You Need to See and Hear

**Dinosaur Jr.: Live in the Middle East**  
Hard to believe that the grunge godfathers never released a live DVD before, but it's true. This disc captures the reunited trio of J. Mascis, Lou Barlow and drummer Murphy during a 2005 East Coast tour as they blast through 18 songs from their first three albums. Plus, there's a ton of behind-the-scenes footage with Sonic Youth and other all-rock pals.

**Phil Varone: Making Up Dead**  
Send Druggs! Rock 'n' roll and salvation! Um, maybe? Saigon Kick/Skid Row drummer Phil Varone's rise to fame and ultimate descent into his own self-destructive drug hell is

chronicled in raw and uncensored detail. *Making Up Dead* serves as a cautionary tale for anyone who has ever thought that being a rock star was easy. Our only complaint is that for an "uncensored" look at the rock lifestyle, there sure are a lot of black bars and gray circles blocking the good parts.

**Volunteer Jam Starring the Charlie Daniels Band**  
This full-length musical picture captures one of the greatest Southern rock/country bands in concert with a little help from their friends and fans. Thanks to the multicamera format, you feel like you're in the front row as Charlie and the boys rip through their hits, with Dickie Betts, George McCorkle and Doug Gray chipping in. Vee-Hai

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## What was it like stepping into Freddie Mercury's shoes?

Well, the interesting thing was I never really felt like I was taking Freddie's place, because no one really could do that. To the Queen guys, credit Brian [May] and Roger [Taylor]; they didn't try to replace Freddie. That would have been an insult to his memory in many respects. He was a one of a kind and a brilliant showman.

**When performing with Queen, you don't so much cover a song as put your personal stamp on it.**

We want to keep the feel of the music alive, which is what I do whenever I cover a song. I do try to make it my own. I learned listening to John Lee Hooker and those blues guys. They took the songs and made them special events every night. There is one particular song of Queen's called "The Show Must Go On," which really reflects what that thing is. It's so intense and can be interpreted on so many different levels.

**Will there be a new Queen studio album?**

We have had a couple of studio sessions and we've kicked each other's ideas around. We have yet to really start writing together. It's very exciting. It's a hell of a and there's a lot riding on it. So we all have to be happy before we go any further.

**Who's playing bass?**

That's a good question. It's just the three of us in the studio. We are exchanging the bass between us.

**Having collaborated with so many greats, is there anyone you would like to work with?**

I wish that I had worked with George

Harrison. His influence was phenomenal throughout the music industry. I think it was very brave when the Beatles were at their height for him to introduce Eastern music into their sound.

**Was there a common factor that Firm shared with your previous groups?**

That was myself and Jimmy Page! One of the [common factors of all [my] bands is that I have formed the bands with a guitar player. With Free it was Paul Kosoff; with Bad Company it was Mick Ralphs. We formed that nucleus, that songwriting team. With the Firm, Jimmy came round, and we started writing songs. He's an awesome, superlative guitar player. He's a great guy.

**Do you have any tales of rock excess?**

I was on the road with Lynyrd Skynyrd, and they were renowned for having "a good time." We toured with them at one point, and all I remember about it was I woke up the following morning, outside of my room, in my underpants in a shopping cart.

**Are you still bad company?**

I don't know if I am or if I ever really was bad company. There are funny things about calling yourself "Bad Company," which I thought was a brilliant rock 'n' roll name at the time. I even said to the guys, "Let's not try to live up to this because we could walk down some terrible roads." When I wrote the song, it was really about the wild-out-law frontier days when it was lawless and anything could happen. You are in the middle of the desert, you see this dust appearing. Who knows what's going to come in?

**Where did the name come from?**

People think it came from the movie *Bad Company*, but it actually came from a book on Victorian morals. There was a picture of a Victorian punk standing on a street corner. He's dressed up like a dandy with the top hat, the waistcoat, the tails leaning on a lampost with a pipe in his mouth. The top hat is dopped up; the shoes are burst. He was a real punky gentleman. This chonky is looking up at him, and underneath it says, "Keep away from bad company."

