

The Legal Matters

The Legal Matters

Futureman Records, 2014

<http://www.thelegalmattersband.com>

REVIEW BY: [Jason Warburg](#)

ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED: 09/19/2014

Like a million other Facebook users, I took the “Albums That Influenced You” challenge last week. After a few listens to The Legal Matters’ self-titled debut, I feel like I already know what a major chunk of their list would look like, starting with The Beatles’ *Rubber Soul* and *Revolver*, The Byrds’ *Mr. Tambourine Man*, and the Beach Boys’ *Pet Sounds*, then adding something by The Hollies and maybe The Everly Brothers, too. A couple of songs into



this classicist power-pop gem and it's 1966 all over again.

The Legal Matters came together when Andy Reed (An American Underdog) joined up with Chris Richards and Keith Klingensmith, bandmates in both Hippodrome and side project The Phenomenal Cats, to explore their shared musical roots. The Midwestern trio of singer-songwriters proceeded to deliver as finely-crafted an homage to mid-'60s pop-rock as you're likely to hear recorded this decade.

The sunny jangle of “Rite Of Spring” captures the imagination immediately, a sweetly melodic George Harrison / Roger McGuinn mind-meld that adds a prominent synth line for emphasis. The key, here and throughout, is the way the close harmonies and chorused background vocals of Reed, Richards and Klingensmith lift each track into the sky.

As the rest of the album unfolds, the boys manage to traverse many of the same genres as their heroes. Building from a blues base, “Stubborn” adds an irrepressible main riff and multilayered harmonies to deliver a catchy-as-hell ode to frustration. “Have You Changed Your Mind?” explores Byrds-ian folk-rock territory; “The Legend Of Walter Wright” and “Before We Get It Right” feel like *Rubber Soul* outtakes; the quieter “Mary-Anne” is the sweetest ballad Brian Wilson never wrote; and closer “We Were Enemies” moves the needle from mid- to late-period Beatles with tinges of orchestral pop and psychedelia leading up to a big, swirly ending. In between, “So Long Sunny Days” offers British Invasion harmonic pop in the Hollies vein, all gentle strums and lush background vocals.

Bouncy beats, jangly, memorable guitar lines, and earnest lead vocals backed by rich, layered harmonies; with this flawlessly imagined and executed album, The Legal Matters deliver a sonic time capsule arriving intact from the summer of '66. Listening to a trio this gifted play in the footsteps of their musical heroes is a genuine pleasure.

Rating: [A-](#)

User Rating: Not Yet Rated

[Login](#) to submit a rating for this album.

Comments

[Login](#) to post a comment.

© 2014 Jason Warburg and
permission. Cover art is