

PAUL MANOUSOS

The first thing that stands out about Bay Area-based musician Paul Manousos is his massive and distinctive voice. The troubadour's first instrument was the piano at the age of five. After playing in a few bands while in school, Paul realized his desire to sing and write his own songs early on. He grew weary of being asked if he was faux playing the keyboards because he was shaking his tail feather so violently while singing intoxicating harmonies. He ultimately decided to make the leap from behind the piano to taking centerstage by strapping on a guitar.

Through the 90's Paul played the role of background musician until forming his own band POWER13. They gigged locally in Northern California for a few years and released two indie records, the second of which (*Soon*) they managed to procure the services of producer Steve Fisk (Pell Mell, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Screaming Trees).

Working with Steve inspired a lot of change for Manousos. Fisk was really supportive of the musician's desire to explore different sounds and work outside of the traditional four piece rock band mold. Paul decided to become a solo artist and within six months of this decision, he toured the U.S. and his first solo album *For Better or Worse* was almost ready to hit the street. That record garnered media accolades in 2006 from HARP, Drum and EQ magazines as well as from numerous regional and web publications. More touring followed, both solo and with a three piece backing band and then came more songs. If his name or face rings a bell to you, you may have seen him in an eMusic promotion featured at Century Theatres accompanied by a track from *For Better or Worse* called "Beautiful Girl." He still finds it completely surreal when people in the Bay Area stop him on the street to ask if he's the guy who sings the song about the beautiful girl.

Paul received an Honorable Mention in the WCSA International Song Competition in 2006 for "Beautiful Girl" and was also awarded as a finalist in the Best Male Artist category for the 2006 International Acoustic Music Awards.

The new album and second solo release *Common Thread* finds Paul teamed up once again with Steve Fisk along with some excellent local players (Peter Canton-bass, Darrin Fox-electric guitar, and Andrew Griffin- drums and percussion) who have been since dubbed The East Bay Wrecking Crew. The record features mostly live vocals and talented Seattle-based artist Carrie Akre (Hammerbox, Goodness) performs guest vocals on "Real World," "Rhumba #23 (Crazy)" and the cover of Merle Haggard's "Silver Wings."

From the driving guitar riff energy of the second track "Stay Awake" to the political stylings of "Real World," Manousos' knack for creating songs with indelible choruses and hooks is apparent. Both his piano and acoustic guitar prowess is on display, managing to remain quite audible under that massively fantastic voice.

Oh yeah, and in case you were concerned: there's another girl song too – "Who'll Kiss The Girl?" Our bets are on Manousos.

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