

Music

Angie Aparo, the American

CONTRIBUTED STORY
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

"I decided I had to get fearless," says Angie Aparo. "I realized that if you're truly an artist, whether you're Woody Guthrie or a medieval artist, you've simply got to communicate. It's in those moments that you're really alive. Communicating, creating—that's what I have to do." With characteristic intensity, the singer/song-writer/guitarist is talking about the soul-searching behind his remarkable Melisma/Arista debut, *The American*. Aparo's songs are urgent and inspiring, and capture the full breadth of human emotion. They are subtly arranged and melodically indelible, telling the story of the

common man. A rich aural landscape of primal guitar and insistent rhythm, of strings and horns and evocative vocals, *The American* is music that will last. The album introduces a voice who'll be around for a long time: a street poet for the 21st Century.

The journey toward *The American* began roughly two years ago when Angie began collaborating with producer Matt Serletic (Matchbox 20, Edwin McCain, Aerosmith, Collective Soul). In a genuine meeting of minds, the pair traded ideas and insights, working out how best to derive the full measure of meaning from Aparo's music. "I'd been working with a groove-box for a long time, just compiling tape after tape of ideas," Angie says. "I write every day—generally starting

in the morning, when I just open up to a kind of stream of consciousness. And about 90 percent of the creating happens when I'm driving in my car—I get ideas that I shape into finished songs later, I just follow the music. The music knows what it's supposed to be."

Eventually landing in studios in Atlanta (Angie's home base), Nashville and Miami, Aparo and Serletic assembled an ace corps of players to augment Angie's guitar, groovebox and spell-binding vocals. The method they arrived at was emphatically collaborative, a real synergy of forces. Feeding the players groove-box riffs and scratch vocals. Aparo began crafting, piece by piece, music of an intense immediacy. "Working that way, putting things together in the studio,

made the songs fresh for me," says Angie. "It was a method Matt and I first came up with on 'Spaceship,' laying down about 40 tracks on the song in a single day." Singing about family and fatherhood, about romance and heartbreak, Aparo creates a cycle of songs that illustrates the many facets of the human condition. And, as he prepares to take this remarkable music on the road, he's thinking of another kind of sharing.

"To me, performing is about much more than even the performer getting into the songs," he says. "That phenomenon happens, of course, and it's amazing. But performing is an interchange: it's mutual. From audience to performer, there's a gift going on. It's a collective experience, of people united—just by the simple fact that we're all human." Human, honest and real. That's *The American*. That's Angie Aparo.



Atlanta-based singer, Angie Aparo fuses the anger of rock and passion of folk, the first single, "Spaceship" investigates the impact of modern technology and its current relationship to spirituality.

PHOTO BY SASHA WALDMAN

Deep Soul CD brings back old funk sound

BY DANNY BELL
FOR THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

For you local ol' schoolers back in the day, remember local stand-out in the R&B arena like Lanny Hunt, Frankie Redding and Montereys? This was the era of Rudy's Pool Hall and the Cotton Club.

Among the bright and shining stars of the 60s and early 70s was the lead singer of the Montereys, Ural Thomas. Ural has just released a self-produced CD called "It's a God Thang."

His voice is still in fine form, just as much like the smooth, clear tenor of 30 plus years ago. Since then, he has amassed a wealth of experience from performing with Otis Redding to taking time out to raise his son. But there is one thing that has been constant—he has been true to music, his craft and his art.

Ural Thomas was a messenger of funk before the phrase was ever turned. His big hits "Deep Soul" and "Thing in G" attest to that. On this CD, he traverses terrain from up-tempo to ballads to even Hendrix-like rock and roll. "It's in the Book," the first cut on the CD, is reminiscent of Wilson Pickett's school of music, delivered in Ural's unique, infectious way.

The ballad "Is Anybody Out There (I Miss My Momma)" is a touching and powerful statement about a child's love for their mother. The last cut "Froggy" features a mean guitar solo.

For those of you who are fans of Jimi Hendrix, this cut is evocative of his music. Although I would have

enjoyed more upbeat tunes on this CD, Ural said that there will be more on the next one. For those of

you who are interested, Ural is back to performing and can be reached at 503/281-0822.





A Tisket A Tasket



The place for cards, gifts and baskets
Easter Headquarters

Easter baskets
starting at \$8.00



Customized baskets
for all occasions



Order your Easter basket before April 16 and receive \$5.00
off any order over \$25.00

We will also be carrying a variety of fresh flowers.
Hurry, you don't want to miss out!

1305 NE Fremont
Portland, Or. 97212

284-7344
tisketgifts@yahoo.com