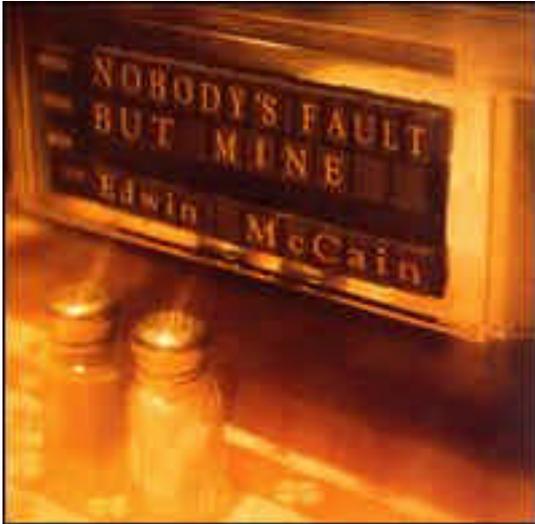


allmusic

Review by Thom Jurek



One has to hand to it to Edwin McCain. Ten years after his big hit, "I'll Be," appeared on Atlantic's Lava imprint, he's been all over the map and all but lost musically. Yet, he's consistently recorded and toured no matter the economic or critical circumstances. He's also played many different kinds of music, from rootsy, jam-based rock & roll, to introspective solo acoustic shows, to barnstorming Southern R&B dates that are big on covers and crowd-pleasers. In fact, McCain and his band are diverse enough to be able to pull 500 songs out of the hat at any given time. *Nobody's Fault But Mine* is his first all-covers record and it's solid top to bottom. These covers come from the roots of McCain's raising in Greenville, SC:

Southern soul and funk. McCain used most of his road band and some ringers for the date, including the nearly ubiquitous drummer Eddie Bayers; Ivan Neville on various keyboards such as the B-3, Rhodes and Wurlitzer electric pianos, clavinet, and backing vocals; and Doug Moffett and Quentin Ware on horns. Guitarist Steve Cropper and singer Joan Osborne both make guest appearances. Produced by veteran Tor Hyams, the approach and mix are loose, dirty, and woolly; the sound Hyams gets here is very immediate and present, nearly live sounding -- and yes, that's a very good thing. It's raw on the edges and warm in the middle.

As to the song selection, one can simply say that McCain has cajones: anyone can cover any song, but to be able to take classic soul tracks that have been well defined already and interpret them as if they were your own and/or new songs, while bringing out what made them special in the first place, takes a special kind of audacity, and his song choices are remarkable and terrific.

The set opens with a Southern gospel take on Holland-Dozier-Holland's "Can I Get a Witness," which feels like something Delaney Bramlett would have recorded and arranged in his prime. Ike Turner's "Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)" contains all the driving, greasy funk of the original, while McCain's vocal touches on both Ike's and Joe Cocker's, yet remains firmly his own. The horns are killer as they move up against the whomp of chunka-chunka guitar chops. The reading of Carolyn Franklin's "Ain't Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around)," with its female backing chorus, is right up there in the red; it's got the elegance and exuberance of the original, but McCain's gritty approach takes it to another place. It's more desperate -- every minute counts in this singer's universe and the determination in it is based on survival instinct as well as resolve. Another killer is the steamy, nasty rock guitar in the fabulous "I Can't Get Next to You," by Barrett Strong and Norman Whitfield (famously recorded by the Temptations) that brings out the blues element in the tune; though it's slower, it's smokin'. The set closes with Otis Redding's "I've Got Dreams to Remember," featuring Osborne. This ballad reveals the strength and vulnerability in

McCain's voice, and though Osborne's vocal was recorded elsewhere, it feels live whether she's singing in call and response or in the backing chorus. It is simply stunning. Covers albums are risky, but McCain pulls this off with swaggering confidence. There isn't a dud in this 15-song set. It seems weird that a covers album might define an artist; time will tell. But this one surely comes close.



JUST ANNOUNCED!!

TOWER of SONG show Friday August 15, 3 pm

EDWIN McCAIN visits Horizon and The Bohemian to roll out his new CD.

Acclaimed singer/songwriter Edwin McCain's formula of earnest soul vocals over acoustic-led folk-rock has earned him a Top 5 Hit, a Top 40 Hit and another Top 100 Hit. In the midst of a career filled with self-penned songs, McCain recently took a rare break to record covers of his childhood heroes – a dream album of vintage R&B and classic southern soul songs. *Nobody's Fault But Mine* features the songs of legendary artists including Otis Redding, Sam & Dave, Al Green, Wilson Pickett, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin and more. McCain recorded the album with a dynamic band, including Eddie Bayers and Ivan Neville, plus special guests Steve Cropper and Joan Osborne. *Nobody's Fault But Mine* was recorded in the spirit of a live album, with little studio overdubbing or tweaks. This vibrancy makes it intimate and adds to the charm. Just like it will be when Greenville's favorite musical son packs the house here and celebrates his new CD.

Edwin McCain "Nobody's Fault But Mine" out now on Time-Life Records.



Edwin McCain to give free Suwanee show

by Scott Sowers

Acoustic rock star Edwin McCain's recent album, "Nobody's Fault But Mine," features a range of old soul and R&B classics from the Motown era. Fans will get the opportunity to hear some of the songs live at a free concert Aug. 2 at Suwanee's Town Center Park.

July 31, 2008 | 08:41 AM
www.gwinnettherald.com

SUWANEE -- His hit "I'll Be" has been played at maybe every wedding in the country over the last decade or so, and he's known as being an acoustic crooner, but Edwin McCain wants the world to know that he's more than the man behind that hit and his other major one, "I Could Not Ask For More."

This is a man who can rattle off a laundry list of influences as lengthy as his once trademark long hair. Citing everyone from punk pioneers Black Flag to folk legend Stephen Stills to the Dave Matthews Band, McCain has pulled from all across the musical landscape to make his sound.

And he wears some of these influences on his sleeve on his latest effort, "Nobody's Fault But Mine," a collection of old R&B and soul covers, some obscure, some a little more well-known. He said he's loved the genre ever since he used to go and listen to the jukebox at his cousin's diner in his home state of South Carolina.

"I've talked about doing a soul album for my whole career," he said. "I cut an acoustic album with Kevn Kinney of Drivin' N' Cryin' 10 years ago and he brought up this suggestion to me, but I thought that no one would let me do it."

Then, a about a year ago, McCain received a call from Time Life about doing one, which he said stunned him since it just fell into his lap. The singer and some of his fellow musicians poured over hundreds of old soul records to find the best ones to cut for the album.

The album itself didn't take long to make as the band only did two takes of each song, and performed them as one unit, giving it a live album feel rather than overdubbing. This gives "Nobody's" a grittier feel, which meshes well with the theme of the album.

"I've been living in soul land for a while, but I'm not sure if I want to do an original soul album or not," he said. "Sometimes it's fun performing songs other people have written because it doesn't require any return to personal memories like my songs do."

"They take me back to when I wrote them, so in some way it's an easier way to use my voice as an instrument since there isn't as much emotional attachment."

McCain has spent the majority of his career with an acoustic guitar strapped around his neck because he's always had a common thread with acoustic songwriting. To him, it's not a true song if it can't be stripped down to the nitty gritty of just an acoustic guitar and singer, so he says he starts with that foundation and works from the ground up when writing.

But that's not to say he always wants to be associated with acoustic music.

"What I really want to do one day is to make a punk album," he said. "But I've never had the time I need to do these projects, and then pop punk showed up and kind of derailed the genre. Also, I play the electric guitar pretty poorly."

One side project that McCain did have over the years, however, was fronting the jam band supergroup Frogwings in the late 90s. Put together by Allman Brothers drummer Butch Trucks, it featured Trucks' nephew and slide guitar phenom Derek Trucks, current Widespread Panic guitarist Jimmy Herring, Allman Brothers bassist Oteil Burbridge, Kofi Burbridge on keyboards and Allman Brothers percussionist Marc Quinones.

"Man I loved playing with those guys," McCain said. "Those crowds are just so cool and always appreciative of the music. Most opening acts don't get much respect, but when my band opened for the Allmans and Ratdog, the crowds were loving us.

"I wish we could get in that scene more, but when you have a hit with a ballad it kind of discredits you in jam circles."

McCain wanted to record an album with the band, but Atlantic Records wouldn't allow it, so he and the band parted ways and they brought in Blues Traveler frontman John Popper to take vocals. After Col. Bruce Hampton left jam band pioneers the Aquarium Rescue Unit, McCain hoped to get the call to take over, and said he was heartbroken when he didn't.

He said his band does do some improvisation when playing, but they follow a general arrangement. Sometimes the band is forced to improvise if he forgets the way they're supposed to play.

One thing he has in common with jam bands is the constant touring he does to help connect with fans in the grassroots way that was first explored by the likes of the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers.

"We're always in the middle of a tour," McCain said while checking in from Soloman's Island, Md. where his band would open for Kenny Loggins in a few hours. "Although this new album is a covers album, we only do about two or three at a show because we've got eight albums of original material."

And although he's made his name on the "wedding songs" as he calls them, he said the crowd shouldn't expect a complete set with them. Those have simply provided him the financial freedom to go out there and truly play the music he loves.

"It's such a gift to have success in the music industry. To do what I love to do is because of them. People come out that may only know those songs, but they are what help us sell out. We hope they leave the show with an appreciation for all of the music that we play," he said.

And fans will get the opportunity to see the man doing what he loves when he rolls into Suwanee to play a free show at Town Center Park Aug 16 at 7 p.m.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Edwin McCain living on Cloud 9 in Soulville

By Regis Behe

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Thursday, July 31, 2008



When Edwin McCain was growing up, he'd often hang out at his cousin's restaurant in Orangeburg, S.C., where the jukebox always enticed. He tended to gravitate to soul music, and the menu offered songs by Al Green, Wilson Pickett, the Temptations and Aretha Franklin.

But there also were relative obscurities, such as Bobby Patterson's "T.C.B. or T.Y.A." and "Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)" by Little Milton.

The thing is, McCain didn't know what was a hit and what wasn't. They were all huge to him.

"There was a lot of interesting stuff," says McCain, who performs Wednesday at the Palace Theatre in Greensburg.

"And it was happy and it was tongue-in-cheek and it really was about riding down the road with the top down."

McCain's new release, "Nobody's Fault But Mine," features the Patterson and Milton songs, along with versions of other soul standards, including "Can I Get a Witness," "I Can't Get Next to You" and "(I Know) I'm Losing You." In spirit, the record recalls the Blues Brothers albums of the early 1980s, albeit with better vocals.

McCain was recruited for the project by producer Tor Hyams, who has worked with musicians ranging from Lou Rawls to Joan Osborne to Viv Campbell of Def Leppard.

His reaction to Hyams' request: "Just tell me when and where."

"As a songwriter, I'm always trying to dig up these uncomfortable themes and say things in songs I wouldn't normally talk about," McCain says. "Sometimes, that theory, it's tiresome for people after a while, and it's tiresome for me to have to constantly be picking at a wound, so to speak. How much belly-button staring can you do in a career?"

"This whole thing came along at a great time. It was a nice break."

Despite his eagerness to work on the project, there were risks involved. Just how does one attempt to sing "Ain't Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around)" when a version by Aretha Franklin is available for comparison?

McCain admits that song was not one he especially wanted to try, given its provenance.

"We kind of went into this saying, 'OK, let's just look at these as songs and what can we do with them and not look at whose songs they are,'" he says. "It became glaringly apparent almost immediately what was working and what wasn't."

One of the delights of the album is the guitar work of Steve Cropper, whose compositions "You Don't Know What You Mean to Me," "Ninety-Nine and a Half (Won't Do)" and "Raise Your Hand" are featured on the record. But McCain never had the pleasure of dealing with the legendary guitarist in person; instead, the tracks were sent out and returned with Cropper's contributions. Which was good enough for McCain.

"My thinking was that Steve Cropper has earned the right to work on his own time in his own studio without a bunch of grimy new kids getting up in his grille," McCain says. "And what was interesting, too, was to hear what he played. You start to realize how many people have listened to him and copied his licks."

McCain, who first came to national prominence a decade ago with the hit single "I'll Be," is certain the experience of recording "Nobody's Fault But Mine" will influence the direction of his next recording. Soul music might not be the most popular of genres, but it looks like it might be his metier for the foreseeable future.

"It feels so good to me, landing here," he says, "and I might be here for a while. It's kind of like going on vacation in the Bahamas and never leaving. I may be living in Soulville for a while."

Edwin McCain takes listeners to funkytown with his new soul CD



Edwin McCain says he was reluctant to attempt at least one song on his CD of soul covers, "Nobody's Fault But Mine." "I had to be talked into 'Some Kind of Wonderful,'" he says. "The Grand Funk Railroad version seems to be the seminal version of that. How do you go near it? They own it. We decided to do enough to pay homage, but we made it a little skankier. I think it works."

One look at the CD jacket sets the tone for "Nobody's Fault But Mine," the new album by Edwin McCain.

There's a sepia-tone photograph of a jukebox in a diner -- the kind that has push buttons and sits right at the table. The title, and McCain's name, have been placed front and center on its keyboard.

The only other detail visible? A simple pair of salt-and-pepper shakers.

According to McCain, 38, that's exactly how he encountered soul and R&B music during his youth, in a cousin's restaurant near his home in Greenville, S.C.

The singer-songwriter might be famous for his pop-rock hits -- particularly the soaring and introspective ballads "I'll Be" and "I Could Not Ask for More" -- but part of his heart belongs to artists such as Wilson Pickett, Little Milton, Percy Sledge and Tower of Power.

"I grew up with that," McCain says. "As a kid, loading up the jukebox, all of those songs were on 45s and all of those artists were stars to me. I didn't know the difference between Bobby Patterson and Al Green. All I knew was that the music was moving me, even then."

Fast-forward to 2008, and the release of McCain's first collection of soul covers, "Nobody's Fault But Mine." The 15-track disc, on Saguaro Road Records, allows him to apply his gruff, richly emotive voice to classics such as "Can I Get a Witness," "I Can't Get Next to You," "(I Know) I'm Losing You" and "Raise Your Hand."

He'll sing some of those in Birmingham on Thursday during a concert at the WorkPlay theater.

On his CD, McCain made sure to include some lesser-known, but equally fine and funky tunes. These include "Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)," "T.C.B. or T.Y.A.," "The Happy Song (Dum-Dum)" and "Ninety-Nine and a Half (Won't Do)."

"The obscure songs were my idea; the familiar ones were the label's," McCain says cheerfully. "We made this record quickly, on a very tight schedule. We did it in the spirit of how records used to be made, doing two takes of each songs and getting a groove we liked. We didn't go back and tinker, because we didn't have time."

Working that way, without nit-picking every note, proved to be invigorating, McCain says. In his view, it lent the disc immediacy and spontaneity, qualities that tend to be lacking in much of today's meticulously produced music.

McCain hopes the tracks on "Nobody's Fault but Mine" have the vibe of vintage summer anthems -- the kind that used to be played, loud and frequently, on AM radio.



"I want whatever car you're driving to turn into a '66 Cadillac DeVille, with the top down, on a two-lane road between Greenville and Augusta, Ga.," he says. "I remember that feeling, in an old-school Plymouth."

With such a deep affinity for soul, why didn't McCain try this concept sooner? Atlantic, his former label, had strict rules about such things, he says. Its executives wouldn't have allowed him to stray, in image or in format, when his singles were topping the charts in the 1990s.

"I had a pretty serious publishing deal at the time," McCain says. "It required me to write 90 percent of the material on an album. So it wouldn't have worked, and those folks wouldn't have anything to do with it."

When Saguaro Road and its producer, Tor Hyams, approached him with the idea, McCain says his reaction was visceral and immediate: "Tell me when and where."

The collaboration was fruitful; the result has earned positive reviews. McCain says he's glad he waited for the right time to transform into a soul shouter.

"As a 25-year-old, it would have seemed a little forced, a little strange for me to do this," he says. "At 38, I feel I've earned the right to take a stab at it. No one can say that I'm artistically bankrupt, or that I can't write my own songs. It's my roots."



THE SET LIST

Edwin McCain/Gary Pfaff

Edwin McCain's new album could have been a disaster, but McCain didn't have anything to lose by covering classic soul songs on *Nobody's Fault But Mine*. He's gone mostly unnoticed during the past several years of writing nice, rustic pop. At least a bad album would've gotten him some press.

Instead, McCain gets away with revamping classics like "Can I Get a Witness" and "I Can't Get Next to You"—primarily by reinterpreting the songs with the same fervor of elder, dirty hippies who discovered soul after spirituality failed them in the '60s. (The Allman Brothers Band come to mind, but McCain's directness sounds more like Delaney & Bonnie.) A superstar band helps, too, especially one with original soulsters like Steve Cropper and Ivan Neville. Those types aren't going to tour with McCain, though. Tonight's concert is a humble acoustic show, but that might capture the stark immediacy that helps make the album work.

Gary Pfaff is part Backstreet Boy and part sensitive troubadour. He's often inadvertently hilarious—as when becoming the new Don Ho while singing about tiny bubbles on the title track of last year's *White Stars*—but there's something likable about his earnest take on thoroughly square '70s pop. (Thursday, August 14, at Workplay.)

PREVIEW

YOUR DAILY GUIDE TO ENTERTAINMENT

EDWIN MCCAIN

BY KEITH RYAN CARTWRIGHT
Special to The Post and Courier

Thursday, July 24, 2008

Edwin McCain makes a return to the Lowcountry this weekend.

To state the obvious, Edwin McCain is a familiar face in South Carolina.

His music — recorded and live versions — is equally familiar.



"It was a happening scene for about 10 years," said McCain, whose career emerged on a national level at the same time Charleston was becoming a budding music town. "I've played every incarnation of the Music Farm."

Pretty much everyone in the Lowcountry is aware of the fact that the Greenville native released his first album, "Solitude," in 1993 before signing with Atlantic (Lava) Records and releasing "Honor Among Thieves" (1995), "Misguided Roses" (1997), "Messenger" (1999) and "Far From Over" (2001).

He later released "The Austin Sessions" (2003), "Scream and Whisper" (2004) and "Lost in America" (2006), along with the recently released "Nobody's Fault but Mine."

Saturday night he returns to where his career began with yet another show at the Music Farm.

But this time McCain might not sound so familiar.

"Nobody's Fault" is, to say the least, a bit of a departure for the singer-songwriter known for his rock-'n'-roll sound and the attitude of a tried-and-true troubadour.

Setting aside his rootsy, self-penned hits, McCain's latest offering is a collection of vintage R&B and classic Southern soul songs.

"I never thought I'd make a record like this," said McCain, who added that the idea for the project was first mentioned a few years ago, but it was "age and maturity" that led to his finally tackling it.

Though he admitted he could have never made this record any earlier in his career, he said, "It was amazing to return to that era and mind-set, and to really understand the beauty and absolute brilliance of the music."

The album features songs personally selected by McCain, who drove up and down the South Carolina coast-line with a buddy playing song after song. They would initially listen to about the first 30 seconds of a song – "Some Kind of Wonderful" and "Can I Get a Witness" were all but certain to make the cut – in narrowing the list of potential material down to about 100 songs or so.

Once they had a manageable stack of songs – which either fit McCain's range or had a good vibe to it – the two went back and listened to the songs in their entirety before comparing their list to that of the label, trying to figure which tunes might work.

One artist the folks at Saguaro Road Records really wanted McCain to cover was Aretha Franklin.

"I would have never even thought to consider something like that," said McCain, who added that once you listen to it you realize it works.

The material itself isn't the only difference for McCain and his band – Craig Shields, Larry Chaney, Pete Riley, Dave Harrison and Lee Hendricks – who wanted the new project to have an AM radio vibe with a live feel to it.

Adding to its "charm," they went in and recorded the songs without "overthinking them." And, more importantly, without "overdubbing."

"We recorded two takes and went on to the next one," McCain said. "I don't"



McCain returns to Bele Chere Friday with new CD



It's been two years since Edwin McCain has released a new album, and when he was presented with his latest project, it was one he couldn't refuse. The Greenville, S.C., native quickly accepted the challenge of doing an album of '60s and '70s soul and funk songs, which he released last month. And after the fun he had making the record, don't be surprised if he tries it again. McCain returns to Asheville, playing Bele Chere on Friday night. Not his first Bele Chere

This is McCain's second Bele Chere, his first visit being in 2000. Let's hope things turn out better for him this time. He admitted to fighting the flu during his previous performance. Expect to hear a lot of the songs that McCain is most popular for, including "I'll Be" and "I Could Not Ask For More," as well as songs from his seven records released over the years.
'No Fault but Mine'

Trying to capture more of a live sound, "No Fault but Mine" was recorded in 11 days and features guest artists such as Ivan Neville, Joan Osborne and Steve Cropper. The album was released on June 24, and features 15 songs. McCain and producers spent a lot of time listening to hundreds of songs before deciding on the final selections. "It was somewhere between what I wanted to do, what the producer wanted to do and what the record label wanted me to do," McCain said about the song selections. "Obviously, the really obscure songs were my choice and the record company wanted more recognizable stuff. It all kind of came together perfectly."

Different kind of sound

The latest album is more soul and the selections are from the '60s and '70s eras of music - something that is surprisingly new for McCain. "I never really thought about it, but I should

have been singing soul music all along,” McCain admits. “It is sort of my favorite stuff to do and it just never occurred to me. I’ve been writing acoustic music and it’s been evolving. I should have been playing this kind of music for a while now.”

Expect to hear the song “T.C.B. or T.Y.A.” during Saturday’s set. McCain admits that it’s been a favorite of his from the new record, and has been what the band has been performing the most live.

New projects

McCain was offered a slot in a James Brown tribute album and has plans to keep working on this kind of music for a while. Other than that, though, he admits that his latest projects involve family. “My two small projects are my sons. Between playing music and playing with them, I’m pretty much stocked up.”

‘Pretty much cake’

One of McCain’s fondest memories during recording was the constant supply of birthday cake. Between his birthday and the record label president’s birthday, there wasn’t a shortage of celebrating. “It was kind of like a big birthday party the whole time,” said McCain. “We were eating birthday cake and having a good time. It just had a real laid back feel to it. On most records, everybody is overthinking everything. We just didn’t have time to do that. We just made the record and ate birthday cake.” He summed the record up as being “pretty much cake.”

I don’t think I’ll ever record a record any other way.

“We just kept it in that spirit of ‘let’s do it live’ to make it vibrant, just like a live record, not go back and fix stuff.”

So while you may remember him for hits like “I’ll Be,” “I Could Not Ask for More” and “Hearts Fall,” McCain is seemingly at a point in his career where he’s rediscovering what it was that made him pick up a guitar in the first place.

“For me (“Nobody’s Fault But Mine”) was a blast,” he said, “completely liberating to be playing, singing and interpreting other peoples’ songs just purely for the joy of doing it.”

Keith Ryan Cartwright is a Colorado-based freelance entertainment journalist.

CHARLESTON CITY PAPER



Edwin McCain deserves credit. A decade after scoring a major alternative rock hit with a catchy tune called "I'll Be," the wide-eyed Carolinian has circled back to his earliest musical experiences and generated some deeply American music.

"I'll Be" played a major part in establishing the twangy, collegiate-friendly "Carolina sound" that grew so popular a decade ago with Hootie & The Blowfish. However, the songwriter's brand-new album, *Nobody's Fault But Mine*, reaches way back to the soul and vintage rock 'n' roll sounds from the

earliest days of pop music.

While there's always been a tinge of blue-eyed soul in the Greenville-based musician's more straightforward roots-rock material, this funky new collection is raw, well-arranged, and gutsy — hardly the work of a lightweight strummer repeating himself.

"This is really how I started out, totally influenced by that sort of soul music," says McCain, speaking from the tour bus during his band's trip through Texas last week. He sounds like a normal guy, undistracted or corrupted by the ups and downs of major music biz success, and grateful for the chance to collaborate and play. "I feel fortunate getting to do this and go back to soul music and what I really like. I've been singing in this style for a while with a lot of other stuff — even on some of the stuff that made it to the radio."

McCain describes the new album as a collection of "vintage R&B and classic Southern soul songs." The 15 tracks, produced by Tor Hyams (Joan Osborne, Tricky), take the funkier bits of Motown, Stax, Muscle Shoals, and New Orleans — from Ike Turner and the Temptations to Otis Redding and popular gospel stylings. McCain adds his own earthy vocal style with confidence and feeling.

"It's kind of a funky, old soul record," he says. "It was something I wanted to do for a while. Kevn Kinney [a longtime friend, of Atlanta band drivn' n' cryin'] had been giving me a hard time for a long time about doing a smokin' soul record. I thought, 'Man, I don't know who'd pay for it!' Then a subsidiary of Time-Warner stepped in and said, 'Yeah, we'd love to hear you sing these songs.' It was wild, man — really one of the things that really came together.

It was too cool of an opportunity to pass up."

"I looked at almost 400 songs initially, then I told the label which ones I wanted to do ... then they told me what they wanted to do," he adds. "Between us, it worked out, and we agreed on 15 songs."

The newly established Saguaro Road label was launched by Direct Holdings Americas Inc., which markets and sells audio and video entertainment products under the Time-Life trademark, which it uses under license from Time Warner Inc. "Saguaro Road is dedicated to presenting newly recorded American roots music," says Direct Holdings exec Mike Jason. "When we heard Edwin's song choices, we knew we had both the right artist and the right creative fit."

On *Nobody's Fault But Mine*, McCain managed to collaborate with some seriously heavy blues and soul cats and session players – legendary musicians like guitarist Steve Cropper (of Booker T & The MG's), organist Ivan Neville (of Dumpstaphunk), critically-acclaimed Nashville session drummer Eddie Bayers, and vocalist Joan Osborne. McCain loved the new experience of recording songs originated by someone other than himself – and he especially enjoyed shaping them into a tough, tight, authentically soulful album.

"The way that we recorded the album had a lot to do with the raw sound," says McCain. "When we prepared to go into the studio, we decided to record the songs the way they were originally recorded, which meant setting everything up and just doing it all live with just a couple of takes. There's very little messing around. We were pretty much two takes and out – good and out!"

McCain's current backing includes longtime lead guitarist Larry Chaney, guitarist/singer Pete "Liverpool" Riley, sax player and keyboardist Craig Shields, bassist Manolo "Manny" Yanes, and newly-enlisted drummer Markeya "Tez" Sherard.

"We've got it down to a five piece," McCain says of his band. "Craig obviously has the big sax solo thing going, so it's good that way, but we don't have a whole section going on yet. Maybe if the album starts doing real good, we'll bring one on! This direction certainly is a lot of fun, that's for sure. It's not over-thought, and it isn't thought-provoking. It's just good clean fun."

Edwin McCain*Nobody's Fault But Mine*

For his latest outing, singer-songwriter Edwin McCain said he “took a break from staring into my own bellybutton” to record an album of timeless R&B standards. Of course, you could quibble with song choices (will we ever be able to drive Grand Funk’s version of “Some Kind of Wonderful” from our minds?), but this collection is best judged by its many highlights. McCain bravely tackles Aretha’s “Ain’t Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around),” keeping its infectious horn-driven Memphis groove intact. Nor is he intimidated by the Temptations’ or Faces’ previous versions of “(I Know) I’m Losing You,” driving the tune home with no small amount of desperate abandon.

But McCain would rather have fun with these songs than slavishly recreate them. He has the good sense to recast the overly familiar “I Can’t Get Next to You” as a slow roadhouse blues, and delivers a smoldering guitar-heavy reworking of Sam & Dave’s “Who’s Making Love.” And his goodtime take on Otis Redding’s “The Happy Song (Dum-Dum)” reminds us of McCain’s considerable vocal skills, which are too often overshadowed by his songwriting. It may be an in-between project for McCain, but *Nobody’s Fault* is also a labor of love that you need to have on hand just in case a party breaks out. —BC

By Ed Bumgardner | Journal Reporter
Published: July 3, 2008



Edwin McCain is a musician who loves making music. It's what he does and who he is, which explains how he has maintained his balance in a career that has seen more ups and downs than an express elevator stuck in perpetual motion.

He has been a star – a couple of times. He has been a host of a music show. He has survived the "Say, didn't you used to be" category. He's been signed by and kicked off major labels. It's all the same to him.

He just continues to write earthy, soulful, honest songs, acoustic with trimmings, and people keep coming. To

McCain, that's what it's all about.

His new album, *Nobody's Fault But Mine* visits the music that influenced him – with help from Ivan Neville, Steve Cropper and Joan Osborne. The result is vivacious, booty-shaking skid through the soul archives.

As McCain sets about touring to promote this album, he took time to share with relish five CDs that he loves.

PREVIEW

YOUR DAILY GUIDE TO ENTERTAINMENT

Edwin McCain — "Nobody's Fault But Mine" — (TimeLife)



After years of great original music, it seems that Edwin McCain has gone the route followed by many artists these days, where an album full of cover songs is recorded and released.

Everyone is doing it these days, from Rod Stewart to Patti Smith, to even Bruce Springsteen, who recorded an album of Pete Seeger-inspired folk songs a couple of years ago. These cover projects are usually either really good, or else just plain embarrassing. Fortunately for McCain, "Nobody's Fault But Mine" ends up in the good pile, as McCain uses that rich, soulful voice of his to great effect on songs from the likes of Otis Redding, Al

Green, Wilson Pickett and Marvin Gaye.

Songs on the CD include "Some Kind of Wonderful," "I Can't Get Next to You," "Who's Making Love" and "T.C.B. or T.Y.A." McCain recorded the majority of the album live with no overdubs, and guest artists on the CD include Joan Osborne, Ivan Neville and Steve Cropper.

If you're a fan of '60s R&B, then it will be nobody's fault but yours if you don't check this collection of covers out. (B+)

Download These: "Grits Ain't Groceries (All Around the World)," "Some Kind of Wonderful," "T.C.B. or T.Y.A."



EDWIN MCCAIN

R&B might not be the idiom immediately associated with singer/songwriter Edwin McCain, but that's exactly the territory he's covering with his new CD *Nobody's Fault But Mine*, which was released this week.

It's a special session cut under a deal with Saguaro Road to make this particular project. The CD that many fans are more familiar with was the searing 2006 work *Lost in America*, his ninth project and one of that year's most poignant and hard-hitting works. It had both topical and introspective numbers, yielded three singles (most notably "The Kiss" and "Truly Believe") and was the definitive work that McCain had been building toward throughout his career.

He issued releases on major labels during the '90s, with his biggest single of that era "I'll Be" featured on his second disc *Misguided Roses*. That song also wound up part of the soundtrack for the film *A Cinderella Story*. Then in 2001 McCain made the move to indie status, becoming the first artist to sing with the Nashville-based ATC company, and two years later *The Austin Sessions* was released. It was a solid collection of acoustic numbers.

Still, it's been his tunes over the past three years that have finally helped McCain get some prominent attention. The 2005 single "Hold Out a Hand" that was co-written and performed with Maia Sharp gives all profits to the relief of hurricane victims and became a solid seller on iTunes.

McCain will perform tonight at City Hall (7 p.m., 405 12th Ave. S., 244-2056, \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door) along with Red Wanting Blue.

NOBODY'S FAULT BUT MINE Edwin McCain (Saguaro Road)

The songs, and the sound, of the Stax label and others that put out classic R&B back in the day have lost little of their appeal. They have energy, passion, and great melodies. And occasionally they are brought back to life with particular affection and flair.

Such is the case with this 15-track disc by Edwin McCain. Recorded as near as possible to live in the studio, and with a line-up of musicians that includes Steve Cropper, once of the legendary Booker T. & the MG's, and Ivan Neville, plus other top-drawer players, it crackles with energy and good times.

The sound is a little raw, and that's OK. It suits McCain's gritty vocals, while the pleasure he has spoken of in making this album is palpable. This is a band that sounds like it's having a blast right from the piano-and-guitar driven opener "Can I Get A Witness" and following horn-powered "Happy Song."

There's a touch of the blues on a shuffling "Some Kind Of Wonderful" and soulful "I Can't Get Next To You;" the title track struts to a funky guitar-and-horns groove, and McCain delivers a blistering take on "(I Know) I'm Losing You."

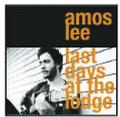
He closes with "I've Got Dreams To Remember," slow and impassioned with lovely harmony vocals and sweet horns adding to the mix. It's a great song - and performance - and a fitting end to a disc that is less reverential than it is reveling in the sound of sweet soul music.

IT

In Tune

The Daily News

THURSDAY, JUNE 26, 2008



AMOS LEE, "Last Days at the Lodge" (Blue Note) ★★☆☆ — I wasn't familiar with neo-soul singer/songwriter Amos Lee until about a year ago. I knew he hailed from Philadelphia and had heard a couple tracks off his self-titled 2005 debut album and 2006's well-received "Supply and Demand" release, but that was about it. Then I had the good fortune of catching his remarkable set at the Austin City Limits Music Festival last September. On record, he's a talented guy. On stage, he's fantastic.

I hoped some of that magic would translate to "Last Days at the Lodge," and I'm thrilled to report that the record more than met my expectations. This is a stellar album that showcases Lee's phenomenal songwriting skills — pay close attention to the lyrics of signature tunes "Truth," "What's Been Going On?" and "Ease Back" to see what I'm talking about — and cements Lee's place among the heavyweights of the genre. Additional keepers include "Street Corner Preacher," "It Started to Rain" and "Jails and Bombs," but you won't go wrong with any of the 11 songs here. Though he's not quite as electric in a studio setting, "Last Days at the Lodge" should tide you over until Lee rolls into the Rex Theatre on Pittsburgh's South Side next month. (JS)



MARC RIBOT'S CERAMIC DOG, "Party Intellectuals" (Pi Recordings) ★★☆☆ — Midway through the debut record by Marc Ribot's Ceramic Dog, I was seriously wondering if I'd be able to find something nice to say about this challenging mish-mash of genres. Sure, the disc-opening cover of the Doors' "Break on Through" is interesting, but the next half hour or so of "Party Intellectuals" was hard to get through. Really hard. And by the time the interminable, experimental jam "When We Were Young and We Were Freaks" finally finished, I was tempted to eject the disc.

I'm glad I stuck around, however, because the second half of the record makes up for the earlier shortcomings. Tunes such as "For Malena," "Pinch," "Girlfriend" and "ShSh ShSh" are very enjoyable and the disc-closing instrumental "Never Better," with its blend of prog and funk guitar (courtesy of Ribot himself), is the best song on the album.

Ribot and bandmates Shalazad Ismaily (bass) and Ches Smith (drums) often stray too far into noisy cacophony of sound territory for my tastes, but Ceramic Dog are capable of making some killer music when they reel themselves in. (JS)



G.G. ELVIS & THE T.C.P. BAND, "Back From the Dead" (Mental) ★★☆☆ — Have you ever wondered what the music of Elvis Presley might sound like played at warp speed with blistering guitars, sketchy vocals and a healthy dose of feedback? Well, wonder no more because the all-star punk collective G.G. Elvis and the T.C.P. Band have done just that with a baker's dozen of the King's best-known tunes.

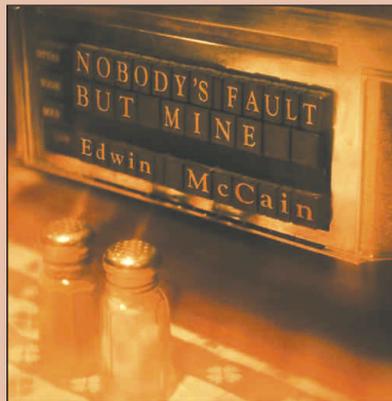
"Back From the Dead" is, essentially, a novelty record featuring members of Bad Samaritans, Ill Repute, NOFX, Stalag 13 and Aggression. The shuck wears thin fairly quickly, so it was wise to keep the record short (30 minutes) and sweet. With stage names that include G.G. Elvis, Elvis of Nazareth, "Has Been" Elvis, Elvis Vicious and Elvis '56 — with costumes to match — it's evident the band is in on the joke.

Among the more enjoyable tunes gathered here are Presley staples "Viva Las Vegas," "In the Ghetto," "Suspicious Minds," "Devil in Disguise," "Burning Love" and, surprisingly to me, a rapid-fire reading of "Wonder of You." Less effective are "All Right Mama," "Blue Suede Shoes" and no punks are going to serve up a better rendition of "My Way" than the Sex Pistols. (JS)



BLACKMARKET, self-titled (No Office) ★★☆☆ — If nothing else, Arizona-based alternative pop quartet Blackmarket have chemistry. After all, vocalist/guitarist Daryl Lamont, drummer Langdon Chieffo, bassist Mikey Emerson and guitarist/key-boardist Jason Brindis have been making music together since they were in middle school. Their self-titled EP, Blackmarket's first U.S. release, is a solid effort by a band that obviously enjoys what they do.

FINE TO A 'FAULT'



McCain scores again with a collection of soulful covers on his eighth studio album

EDWIN MCCAIN, "Nobody's Fault But Mine" (Saguaro Road) ★★☆☆ — I've been a fan of Edwin McCain for more than a decade and often wonder why he never ascended to greater heights in the wake of his 1997 breakthrough single "I'll Be." With a soul-tinged singing voice and the innate ability to write catchy, thought-provoking tunes, superstardom seemed to be the next logical step. Yet it never happened.

The 38-year-old South Carolinian has carved out a fine career over the course of eight studio albums and his loyal fans still flock to see him perform at clubs across the nation. He'll be back in Western Pennsylvania later this summer for an Aug. 6 gig at Greensburg's Palace Theatre.

For "Nobody's Fault But Mine," McCain took a break from writing his own material to record a handful of vintage soul and R&B tunes. He works his way through nearly an hour of covers both familiar ("Can I Get a Witness," "Some Kind of Wonderful," "I Can't Get Next to You") and lesser known ("Grits Ain't Groceries," "Happy Song," "T.C.B. or T.Y.A").

Highlights of the 15-track collection include "Ain't Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around)," "Ninety-Nine and a Half (Won't Do)," "I've Got Dreams to Remember" and the wonderfully bawdy "Who's Making Love." McCain might never become a superstar, but he'll be making quality records for as long as he wants. (Jeffrey Sisk)

almost as good. Yet when Pharrell tries to fly solo, the result is an album like 2006's "In My Mind," which was ravaged by most critics.

"Seeing Sounds" is N.E.R.D.'s third album, and the guys have taken their game up since releasing the good-but-not-great "Fly Or Die" four years ago. This 12-song collection gets off to a strong start with the one-two punch of "Time for Some Action" and "Everyone Nose (All the Girls Standing in the Line for the Bathroom)." There's plenty of electro funk on "Windows," some well-placed crunk on the excellent "Anti Matter" and the Latin-tinged beats on "Kill Joy" make it one of the record's best entries.

There are a few missteps ("Spaz," "Sooner Or Later," "You Know What") but the N.E.R.D. trio make up for the lesser tracks with keepers such as "Love Bomb" and the album-closing "Laugh About It." (JS)



JAMES HUNTER, "The Hard Way" (Hear Music) ★★☆☆ — Poor James Hunter. With his affinity for classic-era soul, this talented Brit would've been a major star in the 1960s. Sadly, he was born a few decades too late. Instead, Hunter has been content to groove along just under the mainstream radar and has a handful of quality albums — not to mention a well-deserved Grammy nomination — to his credit.

"The Hard Way," Hunter's fourth studio release, is another enjoyable effort, though maybe a notch below 2006's superb "People Gonna Talk." (If you haven't heard that remarkable record yet, run straight to your computer right now and download it on iTunes.)

This concise 12-track collection contains more of the blue-eyed soul that has become Hunter's trademark. Standout tracks "Tell Her," "Don't Do Me No Favours," "She's Got a Way" and "Ain't Goin' Nowhere" sound like they could have been written by James Brown, Sam Cooke or Jackie Wilson.

Hunter is joined by an impressive crew of backing musicians that includes saxophone players Damian Hand and Lee Badau. He also recruits New Orleans R&B legend Allen Toussaint on piano for the disc-opening title track and the superb ballad "Til the End."

James Hunter isn't a household name, but albums such as "The Hard Way" are proof that he should be. (JS)



ADELE, "19" (XL/Columbia) ★★☆☆ — You can add 20-year-old London native Adele to a growing list of standout British soul singers (joining Amy Winehouse, Leona Lewis and Duffy) to make a dent in America. She won me over a couple weekends ago with a mesmerizing performance at the seventh annual Bonnaroo Music & Arts Festival in Manchester, Tenn. Any doubts as to her vocal abilities and stage presence were put to rest during a steamy Friday afternoon set.

Adele's debut album, "19," is a great introduction to this talented young artist. Though some try to dismiss Adele as a Winehouse clone, that doesn't do her justice. Their deep, emotion-rich voices sound similar at times — but unlike her famously troubled counterpart, Adele doesn't seem angry at the world all the time.

Tunes such as "Best for Last," "Cold Shoulder," "Crazy for You" and "Melt My Heart to Stone" are tales of heartbreak and love lost — but lack the bitterness we've come to expect from Winehouse. Bonus points for Adele's sensational cover of Bob Dylan's often overlooked "Make You Feel My Love."

A limited edition of "19" includes a five-track "Live at the Hotel Cafe" bonus disc. Adele has the crowd eating out of her hand as she works through keepers "Right As Rain," "That's It, I Quit, I'm Moving On" and her signature tune, "Chasing Pavements." (JS)



A'TRIS, "Lensing" (Offensive Tie) ★★☆☆ — For those of you who may not know about this Boston-based indie rock band, let me introduce A'Tris. Formed in 2003, the group's sound clearly was influenced by artists such as David Bowie, the Decemberists, Radiohead, INXS and Garbage (look closely; you'll find it). "Lensing" is the follow-up to the band's 2007 EP "Of the Commons."

Mason Taylor (vocals/piano), Ben Azar (guitar), Nate Lueck (bass) and Travis Bell (drums) have done a nice job on this 11-track effort.

The emotional piano work and lyrics of "This Moral"

THE AGIT READER

Edwin McCain
Nobody's Fault But Mine
(Saguaro Road)



For artists who have a touch of "blue-eyed soul" it's perhaps inevitable that they'll release a cover album paying homage to their influences. This is the path Edwin McCain follows with the release of *Nobody's Fault But Mine*.

McCain is probably best known for the wedding staple "I'll Be." While no one would mistake it for an R&B song, the style of McCain's vocals definitely does lend to this type of endeavor. Everything about *Nobody's Fault* seems designed to make sure that McCain will win big. The house band is stacked with crack players including Ivan Neville and Booker T. & the MG's rhythm guitarist Steve Cropper. All the tracks were recorded live in one or two takes, which further showcases McCain strengths as a live performer. So why does the record fall kind of short?

Part of the problem lies in the song selection. McCain decided to tackle classic R&B and soul songs by a variety of legendary artists, among them Marvin Gaye, Wilson Pickett and the Temptations. Naturally, when an artist covers a song, there's no way to avoid being compared to the original. Even though McCain throws himself into the songs with gusto, on the more recognizable cuts he doesn't do enough to make them his own. The performances work better on the relatively more obscure songs such as "T.C.B. or "T.Y.A." and the title track because the originals aren't so omnipresent. Another problem is that with such an amazing band, the tracks sound relatively bloodless. The songs are played well and every solo and transition is perfectly placed, but there aren't many wow moments. There are some, such as the guitar work on "Who's Making Love," which has a certain unhinged quality that the record should have had in larger amounts. And "(I Know) I'm Losing You" has an energy that matches McCain's delivery of tense desperation.

There are places where *Nobody's Fault* hits the mark. The duet of McCain and Joan Osborne on Otis Redding's "I've Got Dreams To Remember" has a quiet yearning in the interplay of their voices. And many of the tracks feature at least one moment where McCain tears into the songs with such energy and conviction it's almost shocking. *Nobody's Fault* isn't a bad record and will probably tear down the house when performed live, but it's not quite as great as it could have been.

Dorian S. Ham



Edwin McCain

“Nobody’s Fault but Mine” (Time-Life)

Zack Arias



EDWIN MCCAIN W/THE ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Lou Reed once sang “I Wanna Be Black” with tongue planted firmly in cheek. It’s the rock ‘n’ roll attitude that everyone from Pat Boone to Mick Jagger spends their careers atoning for being black men born into pale, middle class bodies. In recent years Michael McDonald, Marc Broussard, Hall & Oates, Simply Red’s Mick Hucknall and even Michael Bolton, among many others, have reinterpreted R&B classics for crossover (i.e. white) audiences, with varying degrees of success.

Add Edwin McCain to that list for this set of 13 workmanlike soul covers. The South Carolina pop-rocker’s heartfelt voice and sentimental streak won him a place in ‘90s wedding ceremonies with the undying love anthem “I’ll Be,” a song that defines his working-class soul roots. Eleven years, six albums and four labels later, it’s time to get as funky as a folk-popper can get. McCain dips into the catalogs of Little Milton, Otis Redding, the Temptations, Wilson Pickett and Johnny Taylor, among others, to tackle songs already made famous by the original artists—and in the case of “Some Kind of Wonderful,” “I Know I’m Losing You” and “Can I Get a Witness,” subsequent rock ‘n’ roll covers.

McCain acquits himself well; he’s obviously having fun, and the uncluttered arrangements and songs are suited to his gruff, blue-eyed soul voice. Yet while these performances would be acceptable as surprise concert encores, a whole album of them from an artist as B-list as McCain is like empty calories; momentarily satisfying but instantly forgettable. 2 STARS—Hal Horowitz



A little bit of soul

Singer Edwin McCain decided to do things a little differently on his new album, "Nobody's Fault But Mine."

The Greenville native picked 15 songs written by other people.

The disc, which comes out Tuesday, is a tribute to classic blues and soul songs, with McCain's renditions of such tunes as "Can I Get a Witness," made famous by Marvin Gaye, and "I Can't Get Next to You," recorded by both Al Green and the Four Tops.

For many musicians, it's not unusual to perform an album full of someone else's compositions. But for an artist as renowned for his songwriting as his vocal style, it proved to be an interesting challenge, McCain said recently.

"Usually when I write a song, I sort of automatically know how to sing it because it's been in my head for a while," he said. "And cadences and note choice and all of those things are automatic, because I'm just doing what I hear in my head. And then with these songs, it was like, 'Wait a minute, what was that word?' I'd have lyric sheets up in the vocal booth, and I'm trying to figure out how all the syllables fit in one line."

The fact that these were classic songs beloved by millions of fans didn't make it any easier.

"When you're singing an Al Green song, it's hard to go and listen to Al sing, and then think you can even dare to tiptoe into his universe, so it was a little daunting," McCain said.

An album of cover songs is something McCain has wanted to do for a long time, although he jokes that it's the fault of Kevn Kinney, McCain's friend and the front man of Athens rock band Drivin' N' Cryin'.

"Kevn's been hassling me to do a soul record for, like, 10 years," but it never seemed to make financial sense until McCain got a call from Time-Warner's music group, he said. Time-Warner is the parent company of Atlantic Records, McCain's first label, with which he parted ways in 2002.

When the record company suggested an R&B-flavored album, McCain happily said yes. They're releasing "Nobody's Fault But Mine" on a subsidiary label called Saguaro Road.

Choosing which songs to record wasn't easy, McCain said.

"We pored through hundreds and hundreds of songs. ... And of course, my list was a lot more obscure than their list. They wanted to use the most recognizable popular songs that are out there for remakes, and I wanted to do some more obscure stuff that people

wouldn't have heard, just because they're cool songs. And somewhere in the amalgam between those two ideas, this record was born."

Still, he said, it was a whole lot of fun to record the album, especially since the tracks were laid down at downtown Greenville's OMG Studio. They had some heavy-hitting guest musicians in the studio, including singers Joan Osborne and Ivan Neville, as well as guitarist Steve Cropper, the soul icon who co-wrote Wilson Pickett's "In the Midnight Hour" and has performed with everyone from Booker T & the MGs to the Blues Brothers.

The vibe in the studio was very casual, without a lot of pre-production planning or post-production tinkering, much like the originals were recorded four decades ago, he said.

"We really just put the musicians together, went in and played the songs, and let it sort of evolve as we were playing it. Those songs really took on a life of their own, and that's my favorite way of recording. We did two takes of each song, and that was it. There wasn't a lot of fixing of vocals ... we went with the same kind of methodology that was employed when the originals were made."

McCain, who lives in Greenville, is back on the road to promote the album, a pretty normal state of life for a guy who has been playing music since his teens. Even so, the 38-year-old singer acknowledges that life is a little different now that he has two rambunctious toddlers, almost-3-year-old Watt, and Ben, who will be 2 later this month.

Life at the McCain house these days is "rodeo time" from morning to night, but the singer wouldn't trade it for anything.

Parenthood requires a few lifestyle adjustments for anyone who takes the plunge, but McCain says he has been able to find a balance that seems to fit his life and career, even though he misses his wife and kids when he's gone.

"My life has always been predicated on rolling with the punches. I haven't followed a plan in a long, long, long time. So I just find myself going (in a slightly dazed voice), 'Well, OK, here we go,'" he said.

"I'm amazed I get to keep playing music. I didn't expect it to last this long. And to have a career that's lasted like mine has is such a gift, and I'd hate to waste it. So I've created a balance as far as being able to be home for long periods of time and then work for chunks (of time). ... The kids don't know any different, so it's not weird to them."

The Des Moines Register

See Edwin McCain Sunday at People's



See Edwin McCain Sunday at People's

You probably know him best for late '90s hits like "I'll Be" and "I Could Not Ask for More," but Edwin McCain is asking his fans to turn their ears to the '50s and '60s with "Nobody's Fault But Mine." The album is a collection of oldies, some obscure, by artists like Otis Redding, Van Morrison and The Temptations.

"I went through hundreds and hundreds of songs," McCain said in a phone interview. In addition to compilation albums and listening to songs online, he found a reliable source for songs in his own family. "My cousin has a jukebox full of '50s soul music and actual 45s. I sat at his place and listened for hours. I came up with a pretty obscure list, then the record label talked me off the ledge and got me to add some more recognizable songs people would know."

Advertisement

The album offered McCain the chance to collaborate with many guest musicians, including Joan Osborne on the song "I've Got Dreams To Remember" and guitarist Steve Cropper, who co-wrote two of the classics on the album, "Ninety-Nine and a Half (Won't Do)" and "Raise Your Hand." One of McCain's regrets is that his collaboration with Cropper couldn't be done in person; Cropper recorded his parts in his home studio.

McCain is only planning to mix three or four songs off the new album into his live set, so fans wanting to hear his hits won't be disappointed. McCain has heard plenty of his own songs over the years - "I'll Be" is a popular choice on "American Idol" - but he's never let the songs get old for him.

"When I wrote that song I was in a bad place in my life. It was more a prayer than a love song," McCain said. "It ended up pulling me out of a messy situation in my life, so to hear people singing it over and over again, there's a poetry in it. It's almost like a constant reminder not to take myself so seriously, especially when I see it in this silly context with someone butchering it. In the grand scheme of things, it's been a wonderful cosmic joke on me."

NORTHWEST HERALD

Local News and Video for McHenry County, Illinois

McCain plays classic R&B on new CD

By ERIC SCHELKOPF - eschelkopf@nwnewsgroup.com

Singer-songwriter Edwin McCain grew up listening to the music of Wilson Pickett and Marvin Gaye.

"If not for Motown, Earth, Wind and Fire, Tower of Power, Wilson Pickett and Marvin Gaye, I don't know if I would have played music to begin with," McCain said. "That was the first music I was introduced to."

McCain, known for hits like "I'll Be" and "Hearts Fall," pays tribute to his soul roots on his new album, "Nobody's Fault But Mine." The album is set for release on June 24.

McCain is touring the country in support of the new album, and he'll make a stop Thursday at House of Blues.

The House of Blues in Chicago is his favorite place in the country to play.

"The people in Chicago are unbelievable fans of music," McCain said.

"Nobody's Fault But Mine" was recorded in the spirit of a live album.

"The approach we used was, 'Let's go in here and record the songs like they were originally recorded,'" McCain said. "We wanted to set up a band, run the song down twice, and that's it. We were just trying to leave it as organic as possible, not overdub a lot of stuff, and just leave it alone."

And McCain hoped the fans have as much fun with the album as he did making it.

"We are not conquering any great social ills," McCain said. "We're not making any kind of commentary on the state of the world. We're simply cutting some fun songs to listen to."

McCain has sold millions of records since entering the music scene in the early '90s. But he isn't surprised at the success he's achieved.

"It's what I set out to do," McCain said. "To say it was a surprise would mean that we would sort of be betting against ourselves. I think that if there is any element of surprise to this endeavor, it's been the longevity of it."

He also does not live the lifestyle of a rock 'n' roll star. McCain continues to live in Greenville, S.C., where he was born and raised.

“If Target or Wal-Mart doesn’t sell it, I’m not wearing it,” McCain said.

EDWIN MCCAIN

WHEN: 9 p.m. Thursday

WHERE: House of Blues, 329 N. Dearborn St., Chicago

TICKETS: \$21

INFORMATION: 312-559-1212 or www.ticketmaster.com

SOULSHINE



Edwin McCain Releases New Album

Singer-songwriter Edwin McCain is readying the release of his brand new album Nobody's Fault But Mine. The alt-rocker's been making music since the mid-nineties but hit it big with the 1997 album Misguided Roses. The tune "I'll Be" was a top 10 hit for McCain and was featured in the Hillary Duff film A Cinderella Story and in the television series Dawson's Creek.

His new record Nobody's Fault But Mine is due out June 24 and the first single "Some Kind of Wonderful" is available for purchase now at digital music retailers. Here are the rest of the tunes on the album:

"Can I get a Witness"
"The Happy Song (Dum-Dum)"
"Grits Ain't Groceries"
"Some Kind of Wonderful"
"T.C.B. or T.Y.A."
"Ain't Nobody (Gonna Turn Me Around)"
"Ninety-Nine and a Half Won't Do"
"Nobody's Fault But Mine"
"I Can't Get Next To You"
"Raise Your Hand"
"Who's Making Love"
"(I Know) I'm Losing You"
"Good Times"
"I've Got Dreams To Remember"

Writer: Michelle Garcia