

## POST ROCK

WOLF MAIL PROMISES A NEW SONG-BASED DIRECTION FOR HIS NEXT AUSTRALIAN VISIT

Around eight years ago, at the Rainbow Hotel in Fitzroy (where I seemed to spend a lot of my time), a mate and I accidentally found Canadian guitar slinger Wolf Mail. Here was a man who tickled my guitar bone so mightily, it's never been the same since. Here was a man who had such an easy mastery over his instrument and such a fluid style all of his own, I felt like others must have felt when they first saw Hendrix or Stevie Ray Vaughan. Since that night, Mail has graced our shores a few more times (that was his first time over in Australia), and we're lucky enough to have him back once again for the Great Southern Blues festival next month.

Since that night then, Mail has added to his already impressive chops. If at all possible, he's gotten better, he's grown as a musician, and, as he tells me, it's now not just about that guitar, it's about the songs and the music and the feeling you (and he) get when it all falls together. "Yeah, it used to be about guitar playing," Mail concurs with a smile. "But now I just want to play good songs, it's just me changing I guess." The main reason this has happened, is because Mail has incorporated into his band a second guitarist – probably one of the hardest gigs in the world methinks, but a move that's seen Mail able to expand his musicality.

"Yeah, I have introduced another guitar player, because my influences are changing and I think my music now calls for a more rock 'n' roll kinda vibe, like the Black Crowes or the Rolling Stones," he explains. "So with that calling, I need to play with a second guitarist and kinda turn it into a different gig." Since he was last here in 2007, Mail has taken this different gig of his all around the world, as is his wont – he's certainly not afraid to tour, and indeed, it forms a very large part of what he does as a musician. "Well, first of all when I release an album, I have to get out

there to promote it," he smiles, getting the business side of things out of the way.

"The main thing, though, is to share the music I love with other people," he goes on. "To make them feel as good as I do." Having seen the man play before, and in the cosy confines of the Rainbow, I can attest to the fact that his music does make you feel good. Really good. Where Mail is drawing from then, what he's feeding off and launching from that *does* make you feel good, is the blues. Whilst he is making more of a foray into rock 'n' roll these days

used to listen to albums, Elmore James and old Fleetwood Mac with Peter Green, and at that time, I didn't know what blues was, I was like, nine or ten years old, but what I remember is how I *felt*, you know? Something in my stomach was going, 'Ooooh, yeah'. So I started playing guitar, and kinda connected the two and so thought, 'This is what I want to do, to use that instrument to *feel* just like I do when I listen to those guys'. Since he was ten years old then, Wolf Mail has been slinging that guitar, and as one listen to

anything he's released will confirm, he's got what it takes to induce the aforementioned feeling. Ten fold.

To the now then, and the man's newest recording, his third studio effort, *Electric Love Soul*. This is a record which captures what he spoke about earlier, that more rock 'n' roll sound, that more expansive sound that enables him to hone his songcraft and his lyrics – an evolution indeed. "Well first of all, I used the same producer here I used on my first record, *Solid Ground* (2002), and he helped with all the arrangements, so I think the production work is a lot better and I'm a lot happier with the sound," he explains. "Plus, I had a lot more time to put into the making of this record, which was fantastic... so yeah, so far so good, we'll see how it goes."

If it's anything like that balmy night back at the Rainbow, it'll be a face-

melter for sure, and a more refined one at that. Wolf Mail is on the up and up, and if you didn't think that was possible, well, think again.

**Wolf Mail plays the Great Southern Blues Festival, October 1-3, full tour dates in the Gig Guide on page 44.**

YOUR BLUES IS IN THE MAIL



(particularly on latest record, *Electric Love Soul*, his third), it's the blues that informs all that he does, which is hardly surprising really.

"The first thing that *drew* me to the blues was a feeling," Mail muses. "My mother