



WACO BROTHERS & PAUL BURCH GREAT CHICAGO FIRE

RELEASE DATE: APRIL 24, 2012

A Chicago band known for its muddy work boots, anarchic stage shows and fondness for committing musical “pure butchery” (the New York Times’ words, not ours) may seem an odd match for the stylish craft and classicism of a Nashville songwriting treasure, but that’s just what came to be on the new album *Great Chicago Fire*.

Great Chicago Fire is a happy collaboration borne out of label mates, **Paul Burch**, a progenitor of the ‘90s Nashville Lower Broad scene, and the **Waco Brothers**, the Lenin-esque statue in the Square where the avenues of punk, country and rock-n-roll intersect, sharing pitchers of Guerro’s margaritas in Austin, TX at SXSW. Maybe it was the salt, maybe it was the heat, maybe it was the parade of cowboy boot shoppers and industry moguls passing before their eyes on South Congress Avenue, but two distinct creative energies decided to explore what music they could make together. Sharing songwriting, performing and production credits, it’s the Wacos’ first new material since 2005’s *Freedom and Weep* and puts Paul’s voice at the front and center of their mighty sonic assault; it’s a willing collision of energy and ideas, of different voices, possibilities and permutations.

It turns out that the rawness and rowdiness of the Waco Brothers, so at home in the blue collar and punk rock dives of Chicago, shares an emotional camaraderie with the traditionally minded and archetypal stories and songs Nashville’s Paul Burch has skillfully produced in his career, with both styles benefiting in surprising ways. The anthemic bluster of the Wacos, exemplified on the title song—with the whiff of T. Rex in its grooves—adds muscle to the thoughtful eloquence of the Burch penned “Monterey” and the galloping “Transfusion Blues,” while the Appalachian echoes in “Up On The Mountain” move from the holler to the pub.

On the flipside, Jon Langford’s jittery first-wave punk urgency on “Cannonball” is tempered by Burch’s deft touch with the

piano and hand jive percussion; don’t even get us waxing about the tremolo guitar and those saucy sweet backing vocals by **Tawney Newsome** and **Bethany Thomas**.

With Burch’s inborn pop leanings as a polestar, the Wacos show they not be all fistfight energy, as with their closing time wistfulness on the gorgeous and lush “Flight to Spain.” Similarly, Deano’s meaty hooks and rust belt lyricism on “Give In” and “On The Sly” would fit right in at the Nashville watering hole shrine Tootsie’s Orchid Lounge. Wrapping it all up with *the sun’s about to come up and it’s time to go home giddiness* of a night spent jamming with friends is a bleary and joyful singalong version of Bob Dylan’s “Hard Rain’s Gonna Fall.”

The Waco Brothers, in case you haven’t been paying attention are the tireless **Jon Langford (Mekons, Pine Valley Cosmonauts, Skull Orchard)**, **Steve Goulding (Mekons, PVC, Graham Parker & the Rumour)**, **Alan Doughty (Jesus Jones)**, **Deano (Dollar Store, Wreck)**, **Tracy Dear (World’s Greatest Living Englishman)** and **Joe Camarillo (Hushdrops)**. Through eight albums on Bloodshot, the Wacos have blurred the line between country and punk with music brimming with grim romanticism, and joyous, near ecstatic, drunken stomps.

Paul Burch and his fabulous WPA Ballclub released two albums on BS, as well as several compilation tracks—including a duet with the legendary Ralph Stanley. His most recent album, the self-released *Words of Loves: Songs of Buddy Holly* made USA Today’s Top 10 “Pick of the Week.” Paul has collaborated with artists in every musical genre including **Mark Knopfler, Ralph Stanley, Lambchop, Exene Cervenka, Beverly Knight, and Vic Chesnutt**, and joined **Jeff Tweedy, Elvis Costello, and George Jones** on a GRAMMY-nominated album by **Charlie Louvin**. Burch also served as music consultant to the PBS film “The Appalachians” and composed *Last of My Kind*, a soundtrack to Tony Earley’s New York Times bestseller “Jim the Boy.”

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Please visit:
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Dear Jon. Deano, Paul, and all the Waco Brothers.

Your paltry record sales have inspired me to suggest a rock collaboration, one which the world has never heard the likes of before. The record shall be titled GREAT CHICAGO FIRE and should aim to be between the 14th and 25th best rock albums ever made. Good luck. I believe in you.

Sincerely,

"L"

Owner, Bloodshot Records

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