

Music Review: Amp Fiddler-Amp Dog Knights



Amp Fiddler's *Amp Dog Knights* resumes his work as a funk-oriented master of cool. *Amp Dog Knights* is Fiddler's second album after returning from an 11-year hiatus with *Motor City Booty* in 2016. Fiddler's contemporary funk connects with Black pop from the '70s up to the present. "Return Of The Ghetto Fly" appeared on *Motor City Booty* and is reworked with a beat from J.Dilla and a rap from Slum Village's T3 to accompany singer Neco Redd. The newer version is a harder head nodder with the fierce strut of a Detroit hustler in its rhythmic stride. The hip-hop elements coalesce into Fiddler's soulful terrain fluently enough to make the different styles sound like one genre. *Amp Dog Knights* is a winter release but the music has the warmth and nonchalance associated with summer. "Good Vibe" is organic deep house enlivened by Fiddler's gritty half-rasp in the middle of an upbeat arrangement ideal for the dancefloor or a ride in a convertible. Fiddler's affection for house is no less than his penchant for other sounds like '70s soul. "Put Me In Your Pocket" belongs in a Blaxploitation film because Fiddler's falsetto, the James Brown-influenced horns and the succession of lazy Wah-wah modified guitar riffs recall some of the best soundtracks of the era. Dames Brown, Will Sessions and Chris Bruce are featured on "Put Me In Your Pocket" among the plenty of company Fiddler has on *Amp Dog Knights*. His brother Bubz Fiddler is featured on the melancholic "Through Your Soul" that also has J.Dilla's touch.

"No Politics" is a soothing needed escape from the world's madness lead by Redd's unrestrained request to

forget about stressful concerns amidst light keys and understated percussion. The three renditions of "Alright" have two uptempo remixes from Waajeed that are ideal for club nights and the other one's slower pace and lack of a more defined electronic sound will please the R&B traditionalists. Fiddler's emphasis on dance music is revisited again with the new Moodymann collaboration "I Get Moody" a soulful piece of ambient house given texture by Moodymann's unscripted vocals. *Amp Dog Knights* is a continuation of the tone initiated on Fiddler's 2003 *Waltz Of A Ghetto Fly* with equal parts funk, R&B and house. Fiddler's admiration for the stylish city slicker produced an album that is a bit more carefree than WOAGF but no less appealing.

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