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by Lee Zimmerman

John "Pops" Dennie Gives Music and Messaging Equal Emphasis

John 'Pops' Dennie's new album *I've Got Something To Say* offers an array of different styles anchored in vintage country sounds that also veers to rock, blues and pure folk finesse. Dennie addresses a number of pertinent issues facing the nation today, but to his credit, he maintains his deliberation and determination while still putting the melodic possibilities before all else.

Songs such as "Rose Garden," "I've Got Something to Say" and "Here We Are" come across as rallying cries for justice, dignity and decency, but beyond that, Dennie fans a feeling of emotion and engagement through a variety of ballads that bring his feelings to the forefront of the delivery. The sobering "Long Black Cadillac Train," the gentle and sublime "You Can't Hear Me," the affecting "Creole Lady," the mournful "Loving You Like Old Times," and the rambling, first-person narrative "Gonna Move" share an unbridled urgency but also manage to negate any preaching, posturing or politicizing that might have tempered the effort overall.

In that sense, Dennie might best be compared to artists like John Prine and Jackson Browne, stoic singers and songwriters who convey an aptitude and attitude that still make room for enticement and enjoyment. Like those singer/songwriters that populated the musical environs of the late '60s and early '70s, Dennie's best considered a traveling troubadour, one who shares his songs from a personal perspective and finds an unbridled resolve in each of those entries. He's also something of a populist pundit, a rugged and resourceful individual who hews to a desire to emulate the style that drove both the masses and the musicians during the singer/songwriter movement from early on. Granted, Dennie doesn't have the recognition factor afforded his contemporaries, but with *I've Got Something To Say* finds him staying true to its title.