

# The Paul Pope Band!

## (Remember Molkie Cole?)

By Helen Marketti

*On Saturday, April 21, The Paul Pope Band will be doing a reunion show at The Winchester in Lakewood. Rock to the great memories of songs such as Midnight Moses, Broken Hearts and many, many more...*

Paul Pope's music history with Cleveland, Buffalo, and beyond, spans several decades with Molkie Cole and various incarnations of The Paul Pope Band. He has been in the Cleveland music scene since 1979 and has kept rockin' for more than thirty years.

"I always knew I wanted to be a musician by the time I was eight years old," said Paul. "It seems as early as I can remember my parents had bought me a toy guitar of some sort at Christmas. I had an uncle who played guitar in the Marine Corps Band. I think seeing my uncle play made me want to learn to play. I never thought about playing another instrument.

I kept focused on the guitar and have been playing since second grade."

"I remember listening to Hank Williams and Elvis Presley as a kid. I used to think I was Elvis Presley (laughs). I also thought Les Paul, Chet Atkins and BB King were spectacular. I would listen to their records and play along with them as much as I could. While my brothers were playing board games and playing outside, I was playing my guitar instead. I remember playing guitar at least five hours a day."

Paul continues, "Back then, I could only play the first three strings because my hands were too small to reach the bottom strings. The first song I learned to play was Red River Valley. In grade school, I had a three-piece band and we played House of the Rising Sun at a talent show. I also played in folk masses every Sunday at church. I even taught a couple of nuns how to play guitar. I was also an altar boy. I guess you could say I was a goody-two-shoes...boy did that change!"



Paul in the Early Days

(laughs)

Molkie Cole was a band that was together for seven years. They opened for national acts such as Kansas, Meat Loaf, Cheap Trick, Ted Nugent, Dr. Hook and more.

The group disbanded when Paul became ill even though he wishes they had kept going. "We had a big show scheduled at Navy Pier in Chicago. We were to open for ELO, Seals & Crofts and a few other big names. We could have had the Chicago market which would have launched things for us," said Paul. "At the time I had a hernia and mono. I still wanted to play but it didn't work out."

"Molkie Cole was geared more towards being a stage show," explains Paul. "I wore the makeup.

Molkie Cole was more like a rock and roll circus, which is kind of portrayed on the album cover. Many people do not know that a guy named Neon Park did our album cover. He did album covers for Frank Zappa, too."

Turning his focus on The Paul Pope Band, Paul has kept moving forward with his band, projects and now the reunion show. "We will pretty much be covering the history of all the years I have been doing this. It will incorporate Molkie Cole favorites and The Paul Pope Band."

"I was actually shunned by major record labels because they said I sounded 'too Beatle-ish'. Funny too, that was around the same time The Rembrandts came

out and they were more Beatle-ish than I was," said Paul. "I think The Paul Pope Band's music is a clash of Joe Walsh, The Beatles, Tom Petty and a little of Alex Harvey mixed in there, too. I think if I had to pick an all time hero it would probably be Joe Walsh. He was with the James Gang when their first album came out. I used to go see them all the time. I was very captivated by what was going on. Ironically, as I was watching them, Tom Kriss was the bass player and he ended up playing with me for four years."

"I have had several different versions of The Paul Pope Band. It has been ongoing since 1979 or so. It's nice when Billy Sullivan is able to play with us. He had been with me for years. He is now with Peter Noone and Herman's Hermits. It's nice that he and I can get together every couple of years and play together. Billy had some dates open and suggested we do some reunion gigs so I made a few calls and everyone seemed receptive."

Paul continues, "What I had wanted to do for the reunion gig was to remix my first solo album because it was pretty much both Billy and I on that album. I've got most of the old mastered tapes for it but it's in a weird format and the machines I had ordered from e-bay were destroyed when they were delivered to

me so there went that idea for now," explains Paul. "I still intend on getting that done at some point. We also plan to cover material that people haven't heard in years as well. We will also be covering Billy's original material."

Paul still keeps working on new material when time allows. "I do plan on putting out at least one more CD or two. I have got notepads filled with song ideas. It's just a matter of following through with it. It's always been fun writing with Billy Sullivan. Actually, I enjoy writing with other people more than being by myself. When you work



Molkie Cole Era

with others, you can get a song idea and take it in so many different directions. I like to do the music before the lyrics."

"I'm finally finishing up the studio in my house," said Paul. "You know, it's funny because I have had several public studios. I had a studio when I was out in Los Angeles and produced many bands. I have produced about 60 albums for other people. None of which really made it big but never the less it was a lot of fun. I still have my ole 16-track machine. I have since updated to the 32-track. I have done a great deal of engineering and producing for other people."

For the April 21 reunion show at The Winchester, the lineup will be Paul Pope, Billy Sullivan, Don Krueger and Bill March.

"Our rehearsals are going great," said Paul. "I'm really looking forward to this. For our fans that have followed us and stayed with us all these years, we are not going to let them down. It's going to make for quite an expanded night. It's going to be a full evening, just like the old days."

For more information:  
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Paul Pope today.

Taken by Cheryl Reeves.