THE ASHTON JONES PROJECT – PRESS AND REVIEWS

**LIVE REVIEW** *DAVID CROKER:* Ever since discovering [The Ashton Jones Project](https://www.ashtonjones.com/)‘s incredible sound earlier this year I have wanted to see them live. And, if you’ve heard them you probably know exactly what I mean. It’s like you can just tell how much fun they are having – even in a studio – and making that come across in a recording is no mean feat. Of course, like any band or artist who generates a strength of impression to that degree, the best experience is sure to be the live one. So, with them heading up the start of [Cambridge Jazz Festival](https://www.facebook.com/cambridgejazzfestivaluk/) 2019 (15th Nov.) it was a chance too good to miss.

Making their way to the stage, Ashton accompanied by his band – all 9 of them – gave an incredible impression as soon as they appeared. Perfectly rocking their appropriate attire, there was indeed a sense of occasion. A sense that something special was about to happen and with a vampish, extended sax-led introduction blending seamlessly into the opener of [**‘Hard Work Dedication’**](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/0SdzBiqfnSFqeZ8nSB3nsW?si=9uvJjEOvQY---gqezLn_mA)it did**.** Delivering the immediate injection of energy we expected, it didn’t disappoint. The band burst into life. As did Ashton. As did the sound. Horn lines aplenty, and vocals on point it was a truly phenomenal way to start and bringing a smile to everyone’s faces, it was clear that like the lyrical phrase of ‘Live that dream,’ they were doing exactly that.

**LIVE REVIEW** *LONDON JAZZ NEWS:* There aren’t many outlets for an excitable soul singer in Ipswich. When he gets the chance, then, **Ashton Jones** likes to give it everything. Anyone wanting to take on the music of James Brown and Stevie Wonder shouldn’t really be giving it anything less. Last week he made it as far as Kansas Smitty’s, for what must have been one of the rowdiest, sweatiest and most exuberant sold-out nights this place has seen. With electrical jump leads attached, this human dynamo could power a medium-sized town. He has an eye-popping vocal range, a hard-grooving band and has just published an album of his own. Some dangerously dance-able original tunes will surely feature in this opening-night extravaganza.

**TRACK REVIEW** *SOULTRACKS.COM:* Whether it’s on an infectious funk party or a mid-tempo R&B ballad, **Ashton Jones** possesses an electrifying voice that immediately engages the listener.  One of Jones' first major breakthroughs came via an Amazon U.K. commercial re-interpreting soul stylist Freddie Scott's late sixties hit, "You Got What I Need."  Then came The Ashton Jones Project (featuring some of the U.K.’s respected musicians who have backed Joss Stone and Beverly Knight), which released an all too brief 3-track self-titled E.P. showcasing their urban musical flavors.  More recently, The Ashton Jones Project has opened for Shalamar and guested alongside acid jazz icons, Incognito, at the 2019 Cheltenham Jazz Festival.

Thankfully for those who can’t make their concert gigs, slowly but surely, The Ashton Jones Project is cranking out new material, such as the funk-until- you-drop words of wisdom, “Hard Work Dedication,” from their upcoming full-length project coming in late summer on Flash Town Records.

Guided by Jones’ take charge performance on the microphone and the nine-piece band that shadows his every gritty vocal move, this **First Listen** spotlight proudly carries the spirit of James Brown and Tower of Power. As Jones’s star qualities and showmanship have won audiences throughout the U.K., U.S. audiences can now witness his superb talents in action with “Hard Work Dedication.”

**ALBUM REVIEW** *VANGUARD ONLINE:* Ashton Jones is a very promising soul and funk artist, based on the evidence of this debut album. It toasts your ass and sets your soles on fire. A really strong voice ranges from gritty, impassioned punches to smooth croons to love-lorn falsetto. Songs range from the outrageously funky to the smooth ballad to the win-that-heart soul blaster.

‘Shelly, Get The Funk Outta Here!’ is a great and funky, horn-punctuated work-out. Added to the brilliant spoken break, it is worth the entrance price on its own: “I’d like to take you to the promised land….where you can spend all of your money on life’s most precious commodities – expensive jewellery, celebrity endorsed eye make up and botox. So you can be as fake on the outside as you are on the inside”. The funky vocals are tight and intense, as is the playing. Similarly, ‘Hard Work Dedication’ funks very hard indeed, punching and sweating, as does ‘Good Thing Guaranteed’, with its ‘wacka-wacka’ guitar sound.

Elsewhere, the album leans more to classic soul, with a funky edge. I’m hearing flavours of Earth Wind and Fire, alongside the funky opener’s Prince influence. ‘How I Feel’ is direct from the seventies, all smooth and full of feeling. Gorgeously produced, this is simply perfect. That voice is exceptionally punchy and soulful. These are original songs and dip into timeless strands of soul, such as the lovers ballad of ‘I Need Love’, running the vocals from soft to falsetto to warm and deep, all in one song. The closer, ‘When You’re With Me’, with an undertone of huskiness, invites a slow end-of-the-night dance and also the hitting of the repeat button on the album. This album gave me a deep pleasure as if Earth Wind and Fire had worked with Stevie Wonder and got Prince in for a guest-spot.