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New Orleans Jazz Scene

Laissez les bons temps rouler – NEW ORLEANS!

Where do you go to capture your mojo? You go to New Orleans, where every night the ebb and flow of life pulses on the streets of the French Quarter, and where the music floats on your ear like the drinks float on your lips - smooth. The following recommendations come from Willie O'Neal, of L&L Enterprises, who specializes in New Orleans music and can be found in the Historic French Market (lotorious72@yahoo.com).

Where better than New Orleans to hear the Blues, **The Bourbon Street Blues** by **Charles Jacobs**. This CD is true New Orleans in a "Box;" all you need to do is add the cocktails and you have a Bourbon Street party, beads are optional. Charles has been performing along Bourbon Street for years, and uses his instinct to judge the audience each night and sometimes each hour, and he loves the challenge. You can hear how this musical chameleon uses his unique showmanship to ensure he gives the audience an experience they won't forget. He starts the musical journey with the soft ballad *Part Time Love*, which gets you rocking slowly to the his guitar and vocals, then he moves into the more poignant *Everyday I have The Blues*, which gets the juices flowing, but be careful not to spill your drink as you move to this song. The selections glide between soft ballads and pulsating blues renditions, with classics such as *The Thrill Is Gone*, *Sex Machine*, and my favorite on the CD, *Rainy Night in Georgia*. Breakout the Hurricanes, stir up some Sazeracs, and get ready to have a great evening of Blues with Charles Jacobs on Guitar and Vocals, Dwayne Nelson on Drums, Tony Bass on Bass and Nick Farkas on Hammond Organ.

Following the Blues flow, Willie O'Neal recommended **Selwyn Copper & Hurricane Blues Band's Louisiana Swamp Blues**, which was recorded in where else, New Orleans. Selwyn has a way of making his guitar not only sing the blues, but feel the blues, and when you blend in his vocals and the harmonica of Harmonica Red you have blues with an attitude. There are 14 songs on this compilation, with 9 Selwyn renditions, which makes this a unique and special CD. My favorite song is *Squalin'*, which features Harmonica Red whaling away on the harmonica accompanied by some hot guitar playing by Selwyn. Other great songs, all Selwyn renditions, are *Put My Trust in You*, *Woke Up This Morning*, *Hurricane Blues* and *Europa*. Full of attitude and blues, and recorded by outstanding musicians, this is music beckoning for a party to erupt. Make sure you have your dancing shoes on when you put this on the player.

When talk turns to Blues, people talk of **Robert Johnson**, who was covered on **Eric Clapton's** tribute CD **Me and Mr. Johnson**. Thanks to Mr. Clapton who introduced Robert Johnson's music back into the mainstream of blues music. True aficionados of Blues, such as Mr. O'Neal, will direct you to **Robert Johnson's** album entitled **Cross Road Blues** (Eric Clapton fans should note the album's title). Mr. Johnson only recorded 29 songs, and 16 of them can be found on Cross Road Blues, of which many were covered on Mr. Clapton's Me and Mr. Johnson release. What makes this set of songs so special is the timeframe of the early 1930's along with Robert Johnson's tragic history; he died at the age of 37. The tough times coupled with the hard life on the road can be felt through the music and vocals, and as Mr. Clapton stated, "He seems to be singing for you personally." Songs such as *When You Got a Good Friend*, *Kindhearted Woman Blues*, *Me and the Devil Blues*, *32-20 Blues*, *Hellhound On My Trail* and of course *Cross Road Blues* show off the artistry that had a lasting effect and influence on so many great musicians like Eric Clapton, Muddy Waters, Bob Dylan and Keith Richards. Robert Johnson is The Blues.

Thank you to Willie O'Neal for this journey through the roots of Blues and the Blues of New Orleans. Laissez les bons temps rouler – Let the good times roll.

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