

Created by: Edward F. Nesta

Mel Melton and New Orleans Releases

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What says more about New Orleans than music? The sounds of blues, jazz, swing, rock and pop waffle through the French Quarter, as well as many venues around the City of New Orleans, but what I look forward to hearing when I visit New Orleans, or think about New Orleans, are the blues, jazz, Zydeco, and Cajun sounds. I was able to get my New Orleans music fix during my trip to the third annual [Southern Comfort Tales of the Cocktail](#) conference in August of 2005.

I have 3 releases to review this month. I lead off with an excellent blues, Zydeco, Cajun, and swamp sound, which I follow-up with 2 releases comprised of multiple artists in a "sampler" format. For those readers who are looking for a cross-section of music that reflects the roots of New Orleans, then read please read on.

My first selection is by [Mel Melton & the Wicked Mojos](#) entitled **Papa Mojo's Roadhouse**, which was released under [Louisiana Red Hot Records](#). Papa Mojo's Roadhouse is a cross-section of New Orleans music covering blues, Zydeco, Cajun, swamp bop, also dubbed "New Orleans Dance Hall Music", and displays the energy that makes the New Orleans sound so special. The release moves you along the road of New Orleans genres and keeps the energy flowing throughout. Mel leads off with one of my favorite New Orleans sounds, Zydeco, with the track *Zydeco Razzle*, and what a lead track to start the journey. Mel follows *Zydeco Razzle* with *Papa Mojo*, *Juke Joints & Honkytonks*, *Missing You Baby*, *Il's Sont Parti*, *Funky Nola*, *Pray For Day*, *Mama Mamou*, *What I Say*, *Bunkie Boogie*, and *Song For Laurel (Lagniappe)*. It is no surprise that Mel Melton has cooked up another great release with the band the Wicked Mojos, as Mel is an award-winning Cajun chef, also nicknamed the "The Zydeco Chef", who is working on a new cookbook, just completed a TV pilot for a cooking/music show and still finds time to create the great sound of New Orleans with Papa Mojo's Roadhouse.

The second selection is a celebration of jazz, blues, and swing New Orleans style, entitled **Putumayo Presents New Orleans** on the [Putumayo World Music](#) label. With music legends such as Louis Armstrong, Dr. John, Deacon John, Preservation Hall Hot 4 with Duke Dejan, Louis Prima, and many others, this is a great compilation of music to get your blood flowing, your feet tapping and your parasol dancing in your hand. Classic songs like *Tin Roof Blues*, *Basin Street Blues* (Dr. John's rendition), *Going Back to New Orleans*, *Basin Street Blues* (Louis Prima's rendition), *I Gotta Right to Sing the Blues*, *Drop Me Off in New Orleans*, *Wrap Your Troubles in Dreams*, *Give it Up (Gypsy Second Line)*, and *Bye & Bye/Saints*; I enjoyed spinning through the classics and reliving fun times in New Orleans through every song.

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My third selection is the **Basin Street Records 2005 Festival Sampler** on the [Basin Street Records](#) label. The release is a combination of pop, New Orleans brass band, the full New Orleans Jazz Orchestra with all 17 members backed by an 80 voice choir, Latin, jazz, blues, funk and African music played by prominent musicians who have, or are playing within the New Orleans music scene. Throughout the release you can hear the influence that the New Orleans sound has on the musicians regardless of the genre. Artists such as Kermit Ruffins with the Rebirth Brass Band (*It's Later Than You Think*), Los Hombres Calientes: Irvin Mayfield and Bill Summers (*Carnival (Havana)*, and *Estan Tocando, Pt. 2*), Irvin Mayfield with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra (*The Elder Negro Speaks*), Dr. Michael White (*Algiers Hoodoo Woman*), Headhunters (Yekola), Jason Marsalis (*He Who Swings de Rumba Clave*), Henry Butler (*The Game Band Street*), Jon Cleary and the Absolute Monster Gentlemen (*Pin Your Spin*), and Theresa Andersson (*Lie to Me*). Some great new sounds are popping up across New Orleans so if you are looking to venture out beyond the classics then this is a great release to hear what is "happening" out in the New Orleans music scene. You may be wondering what my favorite track or tracks were; Theresa Andersson plays a hot violin on her pop release *Lie to Me*, and John Marsalis drums and "snares" his way on his compilation *He Who Swings de Rumba Clave*.

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