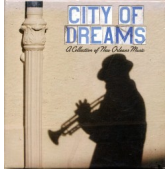


City Of Dreams - A Collection Of New Orleans Music [CD1] (2007)

Written by bluesever

Saturday, 07 January 2017 12:33 -

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Disc 1 - Big Easy Blues 1. Al Johnson – *Carnival Time* (02:39) 2. Marcia Ball, Irma Thomas & Tracy Nelson – *Sing It* (04:18) 3. Chuck Carbo – *Drawers Trouble* (04:27) 4. Johnny Adams – *Just Because* (02:52) 5. Irma Thomas – *Don't Mess With My Man* (02:19) 6. Eddie Bo – *Check Mr. Popeye* (02:12) 7. Joe Jones – *You Talk Too Much* (02:29) 8. Marcia Ball – *Big Shot* (03:55) 9. Davell Crawford – *I Bowed On My Knees* (03:53) 10. Ramsey McLean & Charmaine Neville – *Drink Jax Beer* (03:06) 11. Ruth Brown – *Go On Fool* (04:30) 12. Clarence Brown – *Dollar Got The Blues* (04:37)

Rounder Records began recording New Orleans musicians in 1981 and over a quarter of a century later the label has built up an impressive catalog of Crescent City releases across a wide variety of styles, from rag tag second-line street bands, blues singers, and hard pounding piano soloists to sleek and funky pop, soul, and funk sides. Although this four-disc, 48-track box set is essentially a generous sampler of that extensive catalog, it also functions as a lively and vibrant survey of the pre-Katrina modern New Orleans music scene, a scene shattered and altered by the great storm and its unprecedented aftermath. New Orleans musicians were driven from their homes by the devastation and many of them have been emotionally and financially unable to return. The loss in cultural terms is immeasurable, to say nothing of the crushing personal losses many of these performers endured and continue to endure. So, while it is virtually impossible to listen to this set without falling under the shadow of Katrina, it is nonetheless a joyous, exuberant journey through a city whose music is like no other place on earth. The first disc centers on blues and R&B selections, the second on street and festival bands, the third features funk and soul sides, while the fourth offers up solo pianists demonstrating the various dimensions of the distinctive New Orleans piano style. What isn't here is much jazz, although it's safe to say that everything that is included is informed by it in one way or another. The recordings are well done, with bright sound and a delightful immediacy, and tracks like Eddie Bo's "Check Mr. Popeye," Clarence "Gatemouth" Brown's horn-driven "Dollar Got the Blues," the vibrantly scuffling "It Ain't What You Think" by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Walter "Wolfman" Washington's "Funk Yard," Tuts Washington's solo piano version of the poignant (especially given recent events) "Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans," and the hard charging blast of "Go to the Mardi Gras," complete with some pretty

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nifty whistling by the immortal Professor Longhair, are timeless gems by any standards. Upbeat, vibrant, elegant, and so full of life that one wonders how this music could ever possibly pass from this earth, City of Dreams reminds us not to take anything for granted, and certainly nothing as grand as the music of New Orleans. It isn't brick and mortar, steel beam or strung wire, but the music of Crescent City is more precious and lasting than any of those things. It'll take a lot more than Katrina to blow it away. On that you can hang your hat. ---Steve Leggett, AllMusic Review

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