

TKA

BIOGRAPHY
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Dr. Michael White
A NIGHT IN TREME

Dr. Michael White is one of today's primary exponents of classic New Orleans jazz. The unique experiences that the clarinetist has had throughout his career and his ability to articulate the significance and timelessness of the music has made him a highly influential force and performer. Having suffered tremendous losses due to Hurricane Katrina, White has emerged with what promises to be his finest CD, Blue Crescent. This set of new New Orleans music features him, like the Crescent City, determined to rebuild, keeping the classic style not only alive but continually creative, and looking towards both the past with loving memory and the future. Last December, Dr. Michael White had his first break since Katrina. Exhausted from having to deal with personal and professional difficulties, he took time off to stay at the local artist retreat facility, A Studio In The Woods. Thinking about his next recording, he felt suddenly rejuvenated and inspired, writing over three dozen songs within a short period of time. The 36 plus songs represent more than I had written in my whole life, says the clarinetist. In the music what I've tried to do is think about the importance of New Orleans, the history of the Crescent City, the after-effects of Hurricane Katrina, and the future. What I did not want to do was have a maudlin post-Katrina recording with an excess of sadness. Most of the songs are intended to represent the joyous part of New Orleans, the determination to carry on and the music's heritage.

While most New Orleans jazz performances tend to emphasize vintage standards, White wanted to bring the music into the 21st century. He gathered together an all-star group of versatile New Orleans players (including trumpeters Nicholas Payton and Gregory Stafford and drummer Jason Marsalis) and, with the exception of St.

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Dr. Michael White BIOGRAPHY

page 2

Louis Blues and the Carter Family's *Will The Circle Be Unbroken*, performed his new music. While the songs uphold the musical principles of New Orleans jazz, the fresh repertoire is full of variety, subtle surprises, and the influences felt by White in his life. And while a few of the tracks like the mournful *Katrina* reflect the tragedy of the disaster, most of the performances are joyful and optimistic.

Included are original hymns (the exuberant *Sunday Morning* and the somber *He Leads Me On This Journey*), ballads (*Blue Crescent*), dance hall numbers (*Comme Ci, Comme Ca*), a salute to social club parade tradition (*King Of The Second Line*), the Duke Ellington/Barney Bigard-inspired *Majestic Strut*, *Ooh La La* (which is a bit reminiscent of Sidney Bechet), the catchy *Crescent City Calypso*, dirges and stomps, some of which will undoubtedly become standards in the future. A special highlight is White's showcase on his rag *London Canal*

Breakdown. Although New Orleans and Dr. Michael White have suffered through their worst days, both are determined to fight back, move ahead and create further triumphs. *Blue Crescent* is a celebration of survival and the timelessness of New Orleans jazz.

Background

Dr. Michael White, who was born and raised in New Orleans, is related to such pioneering jazz musicians as bassist Papa John Joseph (who was an associate of Buddy Bolden), and clarinetists Willie Joseph and Earl Fouche (who recorded with Sam Morgan in 1927). In addition to being a major performer whose clarinet style is inspired by the Creole and blues playing of Johnny Dodds, Jimmie Noone, Edmond Hall, George Lewis, Barney Bigard and Omer Simeon, Dr. Michael White has many other accomplishments. He has appeared on more than three dozen recordings, including 11 CDs of his own, four of which are on Basin Street Records: *A Song for George Lewis*, *Jazz from the Soul of New Orleans*, *Dancing in the Sky*, and *Blue Crescent*. He has traveled the world, performing in over two dozen countries, and he was the first traditional New Orleans jazz band to play at the legendary Village Vanguard, where he has been a regular for 16 years. After teaching Spanish for over twenty years, White currently holds the Keller Endowed Chair in the

Dr. Michael White BIOGRAPHY

page 3

Humanities at Xavier University. He is also featured in several dozen books, has written scores of essays that have appeared in journals, books and encyclopedias, has worked on over two dozen documentary films and worked with Wynton Marsalis in creating major concert tributes to the early New Orleans jazz greats.

On Blue Crescent as throughout his musical life, Dr. Michael White keeps New Orleans jazz alive not only by celebrating the past but by creating new music in the classic tradition.

<http://www.basinstreetrecords.com/artists/dr-michael-white/>