



Down Home Groovin'

With Big Al and the Heavyweights

Times are very challenging right now. There can be no doubt about that. This pandemic is robbing us of our loved ones, the economy is tanked worldwide, once bustling cities now look like ghost-towns, businesses are closing down while many will likely never reopen, jobs are on hold, millions have no income and are in need of food, and to top it all off, we are hunkered down in our homes, wondering when this nightmare will end. Left with only our thoughts, it is all too easy to slip into a deep funk and lose all hope. It is worth remembering, that out of significant pain, some of the best musical genres in the world arose, weaving tales of hardship set to music, that penetrates the depth of our collective souls.

The blues originated in the Deep South in the post Civil War era, conveying stories of the pain of slavery and the toll it took on African descendants, while combining African musical traditions, African-American work songs, spirituals, chants, and ballads, as a means of powerful story-telling.

Zydeco music is a genre endemic to southwest Louisiana, from primarily French Creole speakers, blending the blues, rhythm and blues, and the indigenous music of Louisiana Creoles and Cajuns.

Roots music is a very broad category of music that includes music from the varied origins of American life. It includes bluegrass, old time music, folk music (particularly from Appalachia), Cajun, and Native American music, while serving as a basis for rock and roll, rhythm and blues, and jazz.

While these genres originate from very different people with varied styles of music, they have one thing in common... they give a voice to the collective pain of poverty, hardship, loss, and the hope for something better.



Big Al and the Heavyweights was originally formed in 1993, by founding members Al Lauro (Big Al), and Warren Haynes, before Warren joined the Allman Brothers and Gov't Mule. They were then called the *Unknown Blues Band*. Big Al and Warren met while performing in country outlaw, David Allan Coe's band. They soon found a common interest; a mutual passion for the blues.

Wild Tchoupitousas Daytona Blues Video

<https://youtu.be/SwSTi8iAky0>

The band has been featured on national television, after Emeril Lagasse heard their album *Hey, Hey Mardi Gras*. They performed on “Emeril Live”, with that episode ranking number 7 for that week’s most popular cable television show, reaching 43 million people nationwide.

The band has produced seven albums, and blends many forms of roots music, on their latest album, *World Full of Trouble*. Their latest album includes blues, gospel, New Orleans R&B, Zydeco, and country styles. The album features an eclectic blend of 12 powerful tracks, that will appeal to all tastes.

House Party Video

https://youtu.be/_NkkOsAMfls

World Full of Trouble artists include Big Al on drums, Dean Galatas on bass, Destin Thibodeaux on harmonica, Lance Younger on guitar/vocals, and Wayne Lohr on keyboard/vocals. Guest performers on the album include Bob Margolin and John Lisi on guitar, Jason Ricci on harmonica, Lance Ellis on saxophone, Greg Shatz on accordion, Glenn Sears on percussion, with Cathy Pace and Donna Slayer (*Jezebel’s Chill’n*) on back up vocals. The album was recorded in Slidell, Louisiana and produced by George Cureau Jr, Big Al, and Wayne. The album features original material, with writing credits across the band. The combined talents of Al and Wayne are notable on the majority of the songs.

The title track features Lance Younger and Bob Margolin with twin guitar lead, reminiscent of the Allman Brothers. Wayne sings “Fool For You” while John Lisi’s guitar, Destin’s harmonica, and Lance Ellis’ sax move skillfully around Wayne’s voice. Bob Margolin sings again on “Love so Fine” while Wayne delivers a honky tonk feel with the keyboard. Lance sings lead once more on “Testify” with backup vocals by *Jezebel’s Chill’n*, giving this song a gospel feel. Lance is also the lead singer on “Bayou Life”, with the band’s Louisiana roots really shining through, featuring accordion (Greg Shatz) and buzzing harmonica (Jason Ricci).

Horns are added on “Big Ol Rusty Car”, which is Wayne’s tribute to what he describes as his ‘get me home’ vehicle. The alto sax featured in “Spanish Moss” adds a jazzy feel to this number, while Dwight Breinad’s steel guitar adds a country feel to the amusing, “Mother Trucker”, sung by Lance Younger in a deep country voice, with backup vocals once again by *Jezebel’s Chill’n*.

Wayne is lead vocalist on “Millionaire Baby”, which combines delicate guitar riffs by John Lisi, mighty fine harmonica playing from Jason Ricci, and an awesome horn arrangement, that will give you goosebumps. On the bouncing shuffle “Crazy About You”, Jason and Destin share harmonica duties with Destin also playing

bass. Lance Younger leads on “Two Wrongs Don’t Make A Right”, a swinging number with jazz guitar, swirling organ, and dizzying harmonica. This fantastic album concludes with a soulful, ballad from Wayne, featuring a rich horn arrangement, in “Something Got To Change”, which is my personal favorite. This gem of an album definitely has something for everyone. Listening to this masterpiece will get you out of your head and back into your soul; where healing from all of your collective pain begins and ends.

Visit Big Al and the Heavyweights’ web site to get your copy of *World Full of Trouble*, or any of their seven albums. It is hard to feel down in the dumps while you are listening to music that makes you want to move! This band will really get your feet moving.... *guaranteed!*



<https://bigal.net/store--2>



BIG AL AND THE HEAVYWEIGHTS

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Marcel Anton (Vocals/Guitar/ Percussion)

Marcel Anton aka Marcelo Antonio is a Vocalist, Composer, Guitarist, Percussionist, Actor, Teacher, Mystic and Poet of Native American and New Orleans Creole descent. His schooling included U. of Miami, Julliard, Grove School of Music, where he later taught, U. of La Verne, U. of New Orleans and U.C.L.A. He also studied with Helen McComis, Maria Moreno, Arlee Thornhill, Gil Evans, Lalo Schiffrin, Gerald Wilson,

Henry Mancini, Bill Hollman, Sammy Nestico, Paul Lopez, Larry Coryell, Joe Pass, Pat Martino, Jimmy Wyble, Barbara Simmons and Vincent Bredice. He has worked with PG&E, Albert Collins, Freddie King, Boz Scaggs, Pee Wee Ellis, Van Morrison, Linda Hopkins, Esther Phillips, Jazz Crusaders, Gap Band, Stuart Copeland, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Floyd Dixon, Wille Dixon, John Lee Hooker, Dennis Walker (Producer of Robert Cray and B.B. King), Marva Wright, Allen Toussaint, George Porter Jr., the Ellis family, the Battiste family, the Boute family, Dr. John, Jeff Nadeau, and many other New Orleans music dignitaries. Marcel worked as a session singer and guitarist for A&M records, ghosted or has been on the composing team for nearly a dozen films, produced 10 CDs for Indie labels and artists, taught at the Louisiana Academy of Performing Arts, transcribed indigenous music from Africa and the world over, and has traveled many places world wide to perform.



Wayne Lohr (Vocals/Keyboard)

Wayne spent the last 20 years playing with “The JJ Muggler Band”, making a couple of CDs with them. He was inducted into the Louisiana Music Hall of Fame as part of the band. He recorded the “Down II” record with Phil Anselmo, of Pantera. He also toured with a progressive country band called “Big Cat Daddy”, from Baton Rouge, LA for several years. Wayne played most Sundays at the Salt Bayou Lounger for the “Chicken Drop” and has played on Bourbon Street every Tuesday and Wednesday for the past few years. He is now touring and recording with “Big Al and the Heavyweights”.

Mark Parsons (Vocals/Bass/Guitar)

Mark has been playing music since the age of 12. He plays bass, guitar, and is a vocalist for the band. He is originally from Southern California, but currently resides in New Orleans. He has worked on many cover and original projects. He is currently touring with Big Al and the Heavyweights.



-By Elizabeth M. Lykins

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