

DR. MICHAEL WHITE



TRICENTENNIAL RAG

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1. Frenchmen Street Strut - 4:39
2. Blues On The Bayou - 3:18
3. Tricentennial Rag - 4:48
4. On Mardi Gras Day - 4:13
5. I Saw Jesus Standing In The Water - 7:16
6. Loneliness - 3:22
7. What I Wouldn't Do To Be With You - 5:25
8. Instigator's Lament - 4:13
9. Sassy Creole Woman - 5:07
10. Mandeville Stomp - 2:53
11. When The Saints Go Marching In - 7:25



The tricentennial of New Orleans is the perfect time to reflect on this culturally rich city's most important original artistic contribution: jazz. Evolving from its late 19th century African American origins to inspire the spirit of a 1920s "Jazz Age" America before evolving into later styles and influencing popular music, jazz has had a unique meaning as the voice and spirit of its birthplace. At first it was a black folk form that was both an exciting new dance music and a bold example of democracy with its characteristic freedom of expression, improvised ensemble playing and emphasis on individuality within a collective. It became a community music that accompanied every type of function imaginable. Although the authentic New Orleans jazz style is rarely heard today, its musical principles and way of expressing life's beauty and complexities remain timeless. As such this music is a valid source of artistic expression, dancing or just listening for enjoyment. The classic 1920s recordings of Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet and King Oliver, as well as the exciting "revival" style of musicians like Bunk Johnson and George Lewis (first recorded in the 1940s) serve as inspiration for this collection of mostly new original songs (which also draws from a wide range of musical influences and personal experiences).

FRENCHMEN STREET STRUT – named after Morton's childhood street and the current "in" place for local music and nightlife – uses various up-tempo blues choruses highlighted by solos and improvised ensemble playing.

BLUES ON THE BAYOU is a medium clarinet blues with a minor section inspired by images of and legendary occurrences on New Orleans' still popular Bayou St. John. **TRICENTENNIAL RAG** both engages and departs from traditional ragtime forms and was conceived as a "modern" 21st century rag. Its infectious repeated four-bar main section was as much influenced by pop music as by early jazz and rags. **ON MARDI GRAS DAY** is based on lively brass band music and activities during a typical carnival. The words recall a day filled with parades, beads, doubloons, red beans and rice, and seeing the Mardi Gras Indians and the Zulu parade "until there's no more sun on Mardi Gras Day."

Influenced by the "revival style" of up-tempo hymns, **I SAW JESUS STANDING IN THE WATER** tells the story of someone grieving from loss saved from self-destruction by a vision of Jesus, who inspires a renewed sense of purpose and joy in living. The vocal and instruments build in an intense exchange that feels similar to songs at traditional black church services. **LONELINESS** is a trio song that begins with a loose, somber, reflective musical statement before concluding with an in-tempo theme that conveys a sense of strength and determination to move forward. **WHAT I WOULDN'T DO TO BE WITH YOU** is a joyous "flirt song" in the tradition of old pop love songs. Its catchy melody and vocal brags of the things a sly musician would do to get a beautiful young lady he spies from the bandstand. **INSTIGATOR'S LAMENT** begins with a medium-tempo minor section and moves into a

Middle Eastern-flavored theme before resolving into a medium-tempo blues vehicle for solos and ensemble interplay. **SASSY CREOLE WOMAN** was inspired by the combination of grace and sauciness that characterize many traditional New Orleans creole women. The opening clarinet moan is a recollection of their judgmental stares followed by the usual "Laaawwd have mercy!"

MANDEVILLE STOMP is a Morton-inspired trio number named for the small city across Lake Pontchartrain from New Orleans where many early jazz musicians played. The song's ragtime feel is spiced with Charleston and Latin rhythms. This recording's only non-original theme, **WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN**, has been the most popular song identified with New Orleans and early jazz. We decided to give this traditional standard a different treatment – opening with a slow clarinet dirge statement (in the major key), followed by an original phrase to introduce the up-tempo section; then comes a rousing vocal and set of rhythm section solos, followed by a clarinet and drums engagement in a minor key / tom-tom duet before the song returns to the usual major mode to close out.

I hope that you enjoy our efforts to keep New Orleans jazz both traditional and fresh. God bless. All the best.

- Dr. Michael White

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DR. MICHAEL WHITE - clarinet on all songs

RICHARD ANDERSON - trombone on #4, 5 and 7

ALEXANDER R. BELHAJ - guitar on #6

DETROIT A. BROOKS - banjo on #1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9

MARK BROOKS - bass on #5, 6, 7 and 11

LEON "KID CHOCOLATE" BROWN - trumpet and vocal on #7

SHAYE COHN - cornet on #1, 3 and 8

DAVID L. HARRIS - trombone on #1, 3, 8 and 9

HERMAN LEBEAUX - drums on all songs except #6

KERRY G. LEWIS - bass on #1, 2, 8 and 9, sousaphone on #3

STEVE PISTORIUS - piano on all songs except #6

DIMITRI SMITH - sousaphone on #4

GREGORY STAFFORD - trumpet and vocal on #4, vocal on #5 and 11

SEVA VENET - banjo on #4 and 11

BASIN STREET RECORDS

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All music and lyrics by Michael G. White (MGW Jazz Publishing (ASCAP), Patti Rae Publishing (ASCAP)) except
“When the Saints Go Marching In” (Traditional, Public Domain).

Recorded on March 21 and 23, 2018 at The Living Room Studio, New Orleans, LA.

Recorded by Mark Bingham and Chris George. Mixed by Mark Bingham at Nina Highway Studio.

Mastered by Paul Orofino at Millbrook Sound Studios.

Graphic design and manufacturing by Diana Thornton, Crescent Music Services, www.crescentmusic.com.

Cover photo by Eric Waters. See the recently published book: *Freedom's Dance: Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs in New Orleans*.

Photographs by Eric Waters and text by Karen Celestin. LSU Press (2018).

*This recording is dedicated to the memory of my aunt Natalie Forcia (1925-2014)
and my nephew Christopher Brady (1983-2015).*

*Thanks to God the Creator for the gift of music and the “gumbo pot” of song ideas.
Thanks also to everyone who worked on this project and made it possible.
Special thanks to all of our fans and supporters.*

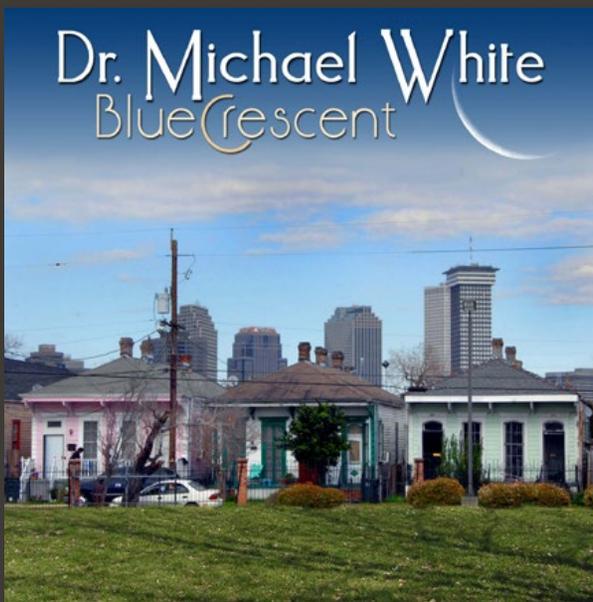
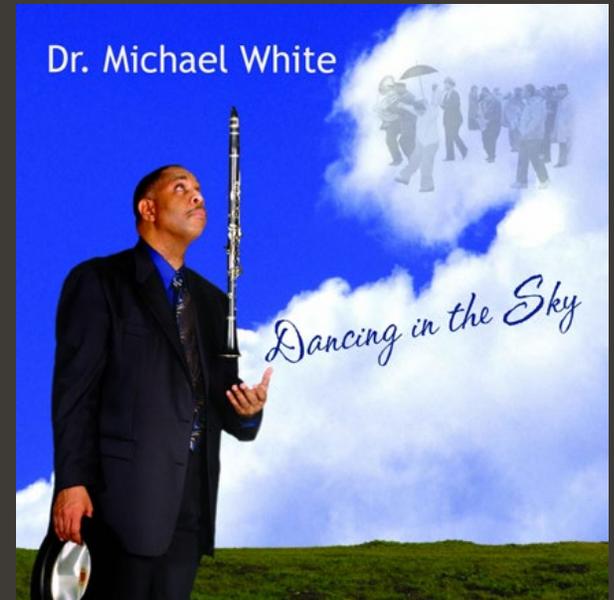
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We greatly appreciate their partnership and their support of the live music culture of New Orleans.



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