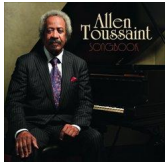


## Allen Toussaint – Songbook (2013)

Wpisany przez bluesever  
Środa, 25 Czerwiec 2014 16:28 -

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01. Introduction ( 0:54) 02. It's Raining ( 3:57) 03. Lipstick Traces ( 2:05) 04. Introduction to Brickyard Blues ( 0:39) 05. Brickyard Blues ( 3:29) 06. With You In Mind ( 3:31) 07. Who s Gonna Help Brother Get Further ( 4:10) 08. Sweet Touch of Love ( 1:58) 09. Holy Cow ( 3:02) 10. Introduction to Get Out Of My Life, Woman ( 0:12) 11. Get Out Of My Life, Woman ( 3:01) 12. Freedom for the Stallion ( 4:11) 13. St. James Infirmary ( 2:23) 14. Introduction to Shrimp Po-Boy, Dressed ( 0:12) 15. Shrimp Po-Boy, Dressed ( 3:17) 16. Soul Sister ( 2:41) 17. All These Things ( 3:42) 18. We Are America/Yes We Can ( 4:06) 19. The Optimism Blues ( 2:51) 20. Old Records ( 3:38) 21. Certain Girl Medley: Certain Girl/Mother-in-Law/Fortune Teller/Working In The Coal Mine ( 3:15) 22. It s A New Orleans Thing ( 3:07) 23. I Could Eat Crawfish Everyday ( 2:37) 24. There s No Place Like New York ( 2:26) 25. Southern Nights (13:00) Allen Toussaint solo performer.

Allen Toussaint has probably written your favorite song, and you didn't even know it. His new album, the remarkable, amazing Songbook, is a live recording (including a DVD of the performance) of Allen Toussaint, a piano, and his venerable back catalogue. His songs have been covered by such diverse artists as The Rolling Stones, Glen Campbell, Warren Zevon, Devo, Irma Thomas, and The Who. Listening to Songbook, you can't help but marvel at his songwriting brilliance.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Allen Toussaint was flooded out of his home and studio and relocated to New York City. There he began to perform solo shows at Joe's Pub, resurrecting songs he hadn't performed in years, honing his live show, and developing a passionate following outside of New Orleans. Songbook is taken from those Joe's Pub shows; an intimate, warm set of songs written by Toussaint that were made popular by other artists.

The album kicks off with a beautifully bluesy "It's Raining," written for Irma Thomas. Replete

with tinkling of rain on the keys, it is a splendid opener. Did you know Allen Toussaint wrote “Lipstick Traces (On A Cigarette)?” Indeed he did, under the pseudonym Naomi Neville, and he turns in a jolly performance of it, his piano the only accompaniment, save for the woman who repeatedly yells “whoa” between the songs. (She was obviously having a wonderful time and that’s lovely, and I might have been, on occasion, the “whoa” woman. It’s one of the difficulties of recording a live show—you can’t control how the audience responds. And sometimes they yell “whoa” between songs. I’m glad she had a good time.)

Toussaint’s piano is rich and expressive on his passionate “Get Out My Life Woman,” which was covered by possibly every artist that ever recorded (according to Wikipedia). “Who’s Gonna Help Brother Get Further” is a gamboling call and response with the audience.

The songs explicitly about New Orleans are delightful: “Shrimp Po Boy, Dressed” is a gleeful snapshot and makes a shrimp po boy with “a cold, cold beer” sound like the best idea ever. “It’s A New Orleans Thing” is a love song to the Crescent City over the melody from “Tipitina” with the reminder “It doesn’t leave you just because you leave town.” The companion piece “I Could Eat Crawfish Everyday” features some brilliant vocal gymnastics in a joyful meditation on Southern Food.

Toussaint’s “Certain Girl Medley: Certain Girl/Mother-In-Law/Fortune Teller/Working In A Coal Mine” is a wonderful revelation. The quartet fits together perfectly, and his bouncy performance, with call and response from the audience again, because of course, you have to sing along, is a delight from beginning to magnificently flourished end.

I’d never noticed how beautiful the lyrics to “Southern Nights,” the same one covered by Glen Campbell, were. Slowed down and marvelous, it is a true love song to the South. Toussaint ends the album with “Southern Nights” and a spoken word interlude of his reminiscences of growing up in New Orleans. It is funny and transporting and dreamy and wistful. I feel like I should write him a thank you letter for sharing that with us, his audience.

Allen Toussaint is an American treasure. Songbook is an indelible record of his songwriting and performing brilliance, and I fervently hope that this brings him even more renown and passionate fans. He, like so many New Orleans hometown heroes, shouldn’t go unsung.  
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