Big Bad Voodoo Daddy - Louie Louie Louie (2017)

01. Dinah 02. Oh, Marie 03. Is You Is, Or Is You Ain't My Baby 04. Jack, You're Dead 05. Whistle Stop 06. Choo Choo Ch'Boogie 07. Basin Street Blues 08. Jump, Jive An' Wail 09. Knock Me A Kiss 10. Struttin' With Some Barbecue 11. Five Months, Two Weeks, Two Days 12. Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens 13. When The Saints Go Marching In Scotty Morris - vocals, guitar Kurt Sodergren - drums Dirk Shumaker - bass, vocals Andy Rowley - baritone saxophone, vocals Glen «The Kid» Marhevka - trumpet Karl Hunter - saxophone, clarinet Joshua Levy - piano Tony Bonsera - trumpet Alex «Crazy Legs» Henderson - trombone

Although still largely associated with the '90s neo-swing movement, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy have long outrun that moment's MTV zeitgeist and spent the 2010s deepening their jazz roots. The past decade-and-a-half have found them branching out, exploring New Orleans blues, Cajun, and second-line traditions on 2003's Save My Soul, and paying tribute to legendary Harlem bandleader Cab Calloway on 2009's How Big Can You Get? In this spirit of reinvestigating their influences, the band's 11th studio album, 2017's urbane and upbeat Louie Louie Louie, finds them celebrating three of their biggest musical heroes: Louis Armstrong, Louis Prima. and Louis Jordan. Here, the band round up a nicely curated set of tunes popularized by the three "Louies" and inject them with their own zesty brand of jump blues. Some of the song choices are deliciously on the nose with cuts like Jordan's "Ain't Nobody Here But Us Chickens," Prima's "Five Months, Two Weeks, Two Days," and Jordan's "Jack, You're Dead!," feeling like well-loved road covers the band have played hundreds of times. Others, especially Armstrong's Herculean "Struttin' with Some Barbecue" and the suavely refined "Basin Street Blues," with their nuanced harmonies and tricky horn lines, vibrate with a sense of danger and ambition as if the band had dared themselves to make them their own. Thankfully, they do. Elsewhere, we get equally compelling takes on "Dinah," "Choo Choo Ch'Boogie," "Knock Me a Kiss," and more. It's also fun to hear the band put their own stamp on one of the biggest anthems of the neo-swing movement, Prima's "Jump, Jive an' Wail," popularized in 1998 by the Brian Seltzer Orchestra. Still centered on lead singer/guitarist Scotty Morris, Big Bad Voodoo Daddy have settled into a warm, crisply delivered style of swing that's studio savvy and precise while also full of in-the-moment improvisation and an overall live-sounding aesthetic. Helping to achieve this aesthetic is longtime pianist Joshua Levy, who supplied all the

arrangements on Louie Louie Louie. Also impressive are bandmembers trumpeter Glen "The Kid" Marhevka, alto and tenor saxophonist Karl Hunter, and baritone saxophonist Andy Rowley, who all get plenty of room to solo. The result is an album that strikes a balance between Jazz at Lincoln Center-style adherence to tradition and dynamic, pop-informed bravura showmanship. ---Matt Collar, AllMusic Review

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