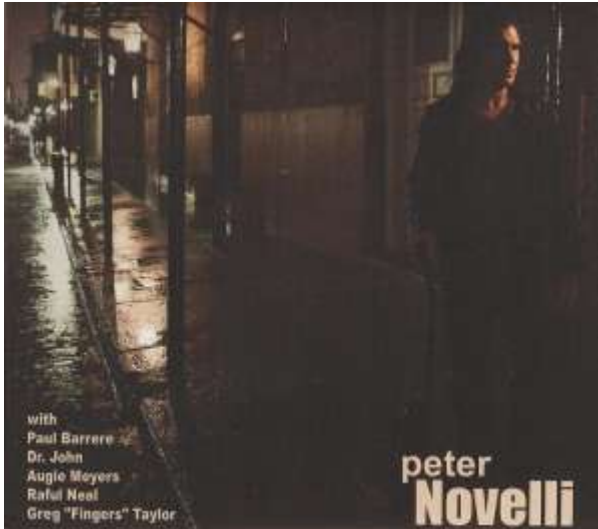


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BLUES BLAST MAGAZINE



Peter Novelli – *Peter Novelli*

peternovelli.com

Time: 72:11

With special guests Paul Barrere, Dr. John, Rafal Neal, Greg "Fingers" Taylor and Augie Meyers, you can't go wrong in releasing a CD brimming with musical vitality. Musician Peter Novelli knows how to cook a mean gumbo and does it quite well in his release simply titled Peter Novelli.

Novelli's guitar work recalls Louisiana's native son Sonny Landreth. Without Landreth's slide shenanigans it's still sweet, direct to the point and doesn't stray into territories of over-indulgence due to tasteful restraint. If you are unable to make it to this year's Mardi Gras or Jazz-Fest, pay it no mind. This music will transport you there with the intoxicating effect of losing yourself in the French Quarter.

Working in a trio format in opening shuffle "Texas Tonk," Novelli sets the pace for original material that is strong in character and avoids musical clichés that can otherwise mar a tasty piece of work.

It's clear that the musical climate of Louisiana plays a role instrumental in Peter's take on things. So why not take on the tune "I'm Going To Louisiana?" Written by Rusty Kershaw, it's a slow simmering Cajun boil of a good time party that you never want to end. Think of a musical meeting between the Radiators and Little Feat.

In mentioning Little Feat, let's not forget their guitarist Paul Barrere who drops in to add his own hot spice of slide guitar to Delbert McClinton's "Lie No Better." If you have a bottle of Southern Comfort nearby, now's your chance to do a shot because it's a happy, funky, slow strut of a tune that can make you forget all about your worldly problems.

Novelli does display a penchant for going into the weird side of things. You can either view "Grand Isle Dawn" as a throwaway cut or Novelli's attempt into creating movie soundtracks. At best it seems suited for a film shot on location in the Louisiana swamp. An updated Cajun version of the movie Deliverance, it's a nocturnal affair blending Novelli's slide guitar, Nelson Blanchard's synth and Curtis Coubelle into a synthesis of sounds that are just right for a full moon rising over the Bayou. It segues just perfectly into the ominous sounding "Wrong Number" with Novelli's solos being short and concise and working in conjunction with the tune to

bolster its framework into funk rock mode.

And what's New Orleans music without Dr. John? The legend himself appears on "Since The Hurricane" showering the tune with his down-home piano mojo that sweetens the track like sugarcane against Novelli's inspired guitar work. Peter's vocals are sandpaper rough but are the thread that holds the songs together.

Certainly some tunes could have been left off for the next release. Obviously Novelli feels with a heavy arsenal of quality tunes, there's no reason to hold anything back. Especially in the B.B. King inflected "Open The Gate" that sees Novelli reaching for sweet tones that hover between Michael Bloomfield bravado and Gulf Coast heat. This might be the only moment Peter is eager to show off chops. But it's nothing flashy and stays aboveboard. While "Bulverde, Texas" shows keyboardist Augie Meyers playing his best carnivalesque runs, this tune could have ended up on the cutting room without any danger of being missed. Soon things are off and running with fine New Orleans party in a tribute to Slim Harpo. The Congo Square fiesta is in fine form with "Te-Ni-Ne-Ni-Nu" that has Dr. John leading the ensemble with piano playing hot as Louisiana Tobasco.

This music is as close to I-10 as you are going get. Novelli assembles a fine cast of musicians to help host a party you would be willing to travel miles too. The problem is once you get there, you just might settle into the backwoods swamp for good.

Reviewer Gary Weeks is a contributing writer. He resides in Marietta, GA.

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