



Peter Novelli – *Louisiana Roots & Blues*

Self Release

www.peternovelli.com

13 tracks / 62:26

I must have listened to Peter Novelli's *Louisiana Roots & Blues* a dozen times, and I hear something new each time I run through it. This is his self-released sophomore album, and it is a corker! There are thirteen solid tracks, and over an hour of quality music that is inspired by the

Sportsman's Paradise state. Though I think I hear a little Lone Star state in there too...

Peter Novelli is a class act, and a first rate guitarist and singer. He has been playing guitar since he was a kid, and was inspired by a diverse cadre of guitarists, such as B.B. King, Mike Bloomfield, Eric Clapton and Gatemouth Brown. That is a murderer's row of 6-string talent! He is joined on this release by Chris Chew on bass, Darryl White on drums, Joe Krown on Hammond B3 and piano, and Elaine and Lisa Foster on backing vocals.

Louisiana Roots & Blues lives up to its name but you will also find some zydeco, a little swamp-style boogie and plenty of blues rock. Peter has also taken lyrical inspiration from his adopted hometown of New Orleans, and there are plenty of Crescent City references. The laid back Louisiana vibe also carries over to the tempo and you will have a hard time finding a fast track on this CD. This is cool with me because I like music that can help me wind down after a long day at work, and this one goes great with a La-Z-Boy chair, a tumbler of scotch and some strategically dimmed lights.

The album starts with "Shadow Man," which from the first notes has some of the thickest electric guitar tone you will ever hear. After a minute or so, Peter's vocals come in over the driving bass line, the B3 and a heavy snare. He has the ability to affect different voices to meet the needs of whatever song he is singing, and for this one he chooses a menacing growl. His first solo in the album is tasteful and restrained, fitting in perfectly with this slow blues rocker.

The next song up is "Dyin' by the Numbers" which is sung from a coroner's point of view as he laments the waste of life from violence, and we get to hear the Foster ladies echo his sentiments. A few guests appear on *Louisiana Roots & Blues*, and they are unerringly placed exactly where they need to be. On this track we are treated to the lap slide guitar of Chris Thomas King, who also appears on the next song, "Elysian Breakdown." King provides some killer tones and melodies for the mix, and his interplay with Novelli makes for an entertaining listening experience.

If I had to choose a favorite track on this CD it would probably be “Eyes Talk” which has a lot of great elements to it, including Joe Crown’s honky-tonk piano, Novelli’s Randy Newman-esque voice, and the lovely harmonies of Elaine and Lisa Foster. This is a classic southern-fried whiskey joint blues tune. A close second would be his cover of John Hiatt’s “Lovin’ a Hurricane” which starts out with that unmistakable stacked guitar riff and delivers the goods that are expected when one re-records a beloved classic. Well done!

The most fun track is “Zydeco Lady” which has bouncy syncopated guitars and traditional Louisiana percussion and beats. The listener is treated to the accordion of Chubby Carrier who can transmit a natural tone from what had to be one of the more difficult instruments I have ever tried to play. Peter plays around a bit with Carrier as the song fades away, and they certainly work well together.

Peter gives us two instrumentals to end the CD, and they are do-overs of “Treme 3 A.M.” and “Dyin’ by the Numbers.” Without vocals these two tracks allow the listener hear how clean and smooth Mr. Novelli’s guitar style really is, not to mention Shamarr Allen’s horn. I have already added these tracks to the mix for my next party, as I think they really set a positive mood.

Louisiana Roots & Blues is packed from front to back with cleverly-written, well-performed and slickly-produced songs. You should really think about picking up a copy of the CD, and for sure get out and check out his live show. He seems to be always gigging in and around Louisiana!

Reviewer Rex Bartholomew is a Los Angeles-based writer and musician. His blog can be found at rexbass.blogspot.com.

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