



CREOLE STRING BEANS

Shrimp Boots and Vintage Suits

(Threadhead Records)

01 October 2011 — by David Kunian



Really, is there more to life than *Shrimp Boots and Vintage Suits*? The shrimp boots, a symbol of life here on the Gulf of Mexico, sum up that rocking Gulf Coast sound that made for hit after hit in studios from Rampart Street to Crowley. This quartet with honking horns (including baritone saxophone, the Gulf Coast R&B secret weapon, doubling or adding a bass line, played by Derek Huston) play straight-forward party rock, as consistent in style as a vintage suit.

The Creole String Beans split this set between well-picked covers and authentic-sounding originals. Songs such as guitarist Rick Olivier's dance call-out "Funky Spillway" and Brian Rini's "Sally Put a Spell on Me," with its rollicking piano reminiscent of Huey Smith or early Allen Toussaint, duplicate that 1950s and 1960s sound so well that they seem like long-lost 45s. As for covers, bassist Rob Savoy gets listeners to remember what made swamp pop so good when he sings John Fred's "Shirley." This album peaks with its killer version of Ernie K-Doe's rediscovered "Here Come the Girls," which has a tight, almost martial arrangement, raucous group vocals, and an attitude that will get even the worst wallflowers stepping and shaking on the dance floor.

In and of itself, this is a great recording, but the fact that there are still musicians making and playing classic New Orleans R&B with the Gulf Coast sound bodes well for fans of this music as well as those uninitiated to this wonderful genre.

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