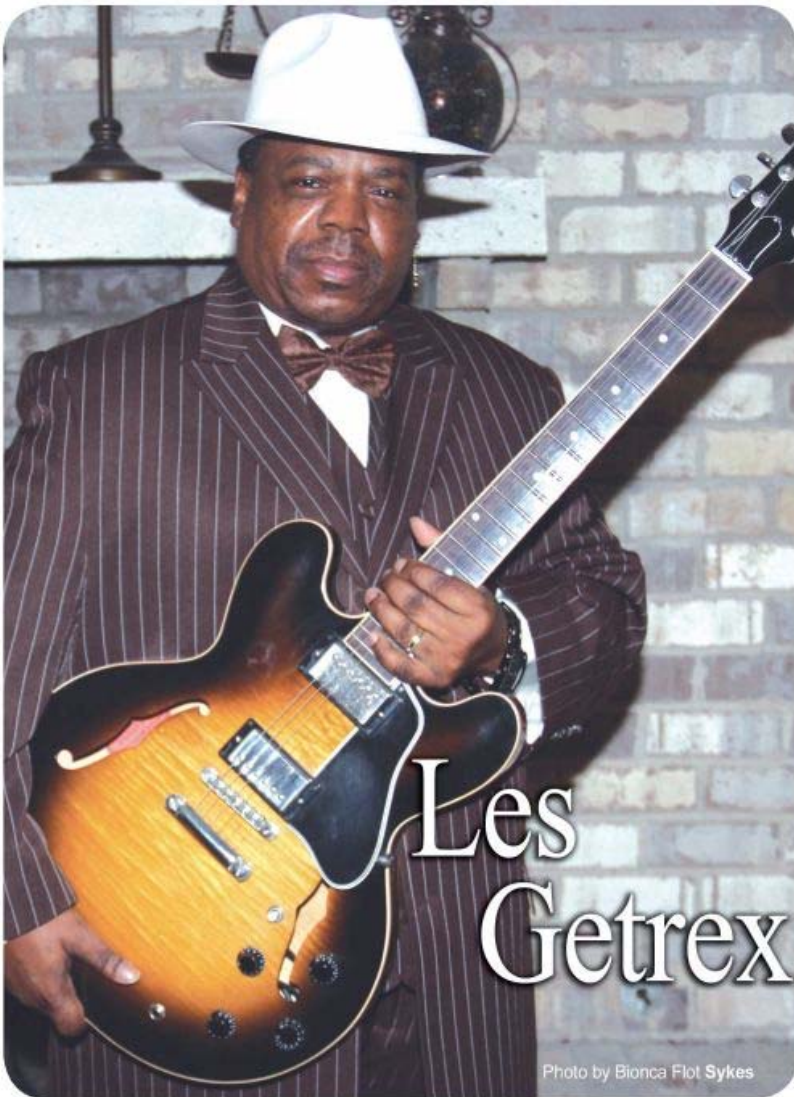

One Of New Orleans' Best-Kept Secrets



started playing trumpet in elementary school and continued through high school.

Les recalls, as a kid he could not sing in public. As he explained, "I was always shy when I had to sing in front of people. That all changed when I went into the military." Les was drafted in the army, where he began singing professionally. Returning home from the army, he worked as a doorman at a local hotel. Les remembers the day a young man approached and asked him if he would be interested in buying an acoustic guitar. He quickly said "yes" and purchased the guitar. "I always wanted to play guitar. Whenever I listened to Jimi Hendrix, I knew that I would play guitar one day," he recalled.

Shortly after acquiring the guitar, Les decided to quit his job at the hotel. He purchased music books and secluded himself from almost everyone. His only desire was to master the guitar. In describing this experience, Les explained, "I went into hibernation and taught myself to play guitar. My style is unorthodox; I'm left-handed, but I play guitar with my right hand and I don't use a pick." By 1975 Les had the confidence and the skills to join a band, Burnt Toast and Coffee, and purchased his first electric guitar. He has been playing this instrument ever since.

Music legends took notice of his talent and hired him to play in their bands. Les has played guitar with Johnny Adams, Barbara George, Ernie K-Doe, Rockin' Dopsie Senior and Junior and The Zydeco Twisters and Fats Domino, just to name a few. Les has great memories of all the musical icons that he has performed with, but he recalls one gig in particular that always stands out. Les describes that experience:

For more than thirty years, New Orleans' born and bred Les Getrex has been defining his own style of blues through his vocals and guitar. BreakThru Media Magazine had the pleasure of sitting with Les and his loving and supportive wife, Jacqueline. It was an honor to speak with one of New Orleans' best-kept secrets. This interview started with prayer from which evolved a sense of comfort.

Easy to talk with and open to all questions, Les proclaimed his love for God, his wife, family, and music. He grew up in the Sixth Ward, a neighborhood of New Orleans that is known for a deeply rooted musical history and culture that continually gives birth to some of the most talented musicians on the planet. Les is no exception. He

"I will never forget the very first night I played with Fats Domino. We were in Las Vegas at The Desert Inn Hotel. I was playing when, all of a sudden, the spotlight was on me. I was supposed to do a solo. The song was 'Sentimental Journey'. Now how does a guitar player solo on 'Sentimental Journey'? Well, I nearly froze. I managed to get through it. I have never been so scared in all my life. That night, when we finished the gig, I went to my hotel room and I learned the mode to play that solo. I was ready the next night." For Les, that defining moment gave credence to the motto he now lives by, "Always be prepared for the unexpected."

Les has traveled throughout the U.S. and abroad. He has performed at The Chicago Blues Festival, Bumper Shoot Jazz Festival, Kankakee

River Blues Fest, Umbria Jazz Summer Festival and headlined at Days of Blues Guitar. Les has recorded three CD's: Fall in Love, 300 Miles, and Les Getrex Sings the Classics which was recorded by longtime Sound of New Orleans Records producer, Gary Edwards, at Studio in the Country. You can hear Les Getrex and Creole Cookin' six nights a week at the Blues Club on Bourbon Street.

The band includes Raymond Fletcher on keyboards, Angelo Nocentelli on bass, Sidney Pocket on drums and Lisa Lee on vocals. This year, Les will perform at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival for the first time as Les Getrex and Creole Cookin'.

Although he has played Jazz Fest before with local artists such as Marva Wright, Fats Domino, and Ernie K-Doe, to name a few, this time will be special. Les explains, "I'm a musician, so I have always wanted to play the New Orleans Jazz Fest, leading my own band. I have been waiting for this moment all of my life. I have played jazz festivals all over the world. Some I have headlined, but I have never played Jazz Fest in my home town with my own band; everything that's in me is going to come out".

Break Thru Media has a sneaky suspicion that after this year's Jazz and Heritage Festival, everybody will know one of New Orleans' best-kept secrets.

—Roslyn Nocentelli Flot



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