

DEAN ZUCCHERO

ELECTRIC CHURCH FOR THE SPIRITUALLY MISGUIDED

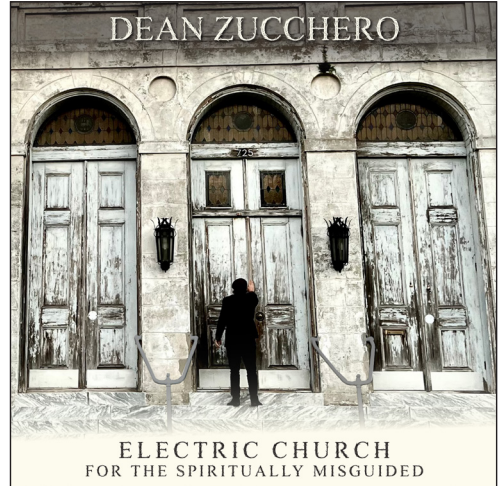


Veteran bassist, composer and producer Dean Zucchero has constructed a production edifice to showcase his savvy songwriting by conjuring up the righteousness of the New Orleans music congregation and realizing it on record.

Spanning a broad spectrum of sub-genres, *Electric Church for the*

Spiritually Misguided is a sanctuary for all those who've fallen astray in the abyss of "musical monotheism." As a sidestep from the "neo-adherence" to the rigid convention of "the blues," *Electric Church* generates a unified spirit through a collection of voices. The shift finds light via the Holy Trinity of songwriting, musicianship and production.

Zucchero commissioned the services of nine of his favorite regional vocalists who each croon a tune: New Orleans' Blues statesman Johnny Sansone, Mississippi Soul-Blues legend Johnny Rawls, Zydeco master Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes and rising stars Jonathon "Boogie" Long and Ghalia Volt, to name a few. Add two instrumentals to the track list and you have the 11-song album.



TRACK LIST

1. **Big Boss Boy**
2. **Independence Day**
3. **Craft Beer**
4. **Last Minute Packer**
5. **Empty Postbox**
6. **La Belle Poursuite**
7. **Stack It**
8. **Fascist Love**
9. **DBA**
10. **Mortal Man**
11. **American Dream**

All songs written, arranged, and produced by Dean Zucchero.

Big Boss Boy — ft. Johnny Rawls

Independence Day — ft. Dale Spalding

Craft Beer — ft. Jonathan "Boogie" Long

Last Minute Packer — ft. Ghalia Volt

Empty Postbox — ft. Sunpie Barnes

La Belle Poursuite —

ft. John Fohl / Joe Krown

Stack It — ft. Johnny Burgin

Fascist Love — ft. Leslie Smith / Papa Mali

DBA — ft. Jason Ricci

Mortal Man — ft. Johnny Sansone

American Dream — ft. Jeremy Joyce



PUGNACIOUS
RECORDS

The album opens with a bang thanks to hit-master Johnny Rawls who lay vocals down on Zuccherò's cut "Big Boss Boy." The lyrical tale follows a young nightclub owner who attracts the romantic interest of a female employee. She plays him for his wealth, but slowly we discover double agency at work as the gospel choir echoes a comical Greek tragedy chorus: "You can't fool him girl, as much as he fool you..." With Rawls' swagger and the crushing mid-tempo groove laid straight by New Orleans' most coveted session/touring drummer, Terence Higgins, Zuccherò further punctuates the downbeat with hypnotic bass rhythms reminiscent of old-school R&B players Jerry Jemmott (B.B. King) and Chuck Rainey (Aretha Franklin). The track's cherry on top is the cameo of Delmark Records' premier guitarist Johnny Burgin who riffs and bends in traditional Chess style above a cheeky rhythm guitar track that nods to the mid-70s Nile Rodgers' act "Chic."

You'll also witness harp-demon Jason Ricci firing up chromatic runs on a funky bass-driven instrumental entitled "DBA"

The track "Fascist Love" tells the story of an initially glamorous Italo-European romance that eventually falls to toxic, authoritarian proportions. New Orleans veteran vocalist Leslie Smith dials up her inner Joan Jett/Melissa Etheridge rocker to deliver a performance that's extremely dynamic. The song's fierce guitar tracks are performed by Papa Mali who paves an intersection of vintage rock guitar roadsters Jimi Hendrix, Jimmy Page and even Leslie West of the band Mountain.

"Empty Postbox" showcases world-renowned Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes. Instead of his notorious role as Zydeco accordionist/French-creole vocalist, Barnes dons the parts of bluesy troubadour with a Delta harp in hand, unfolding his porch prowess with a harmonica

style akin to that of the legendary Sonny Boy Williamson and a vocal chant that arouses the spirits of folk-blues originator Lead Belly. The harp pops and breathes with colorfully improvisational buoyancy between four frisky vocal verses written by Zuccherò that tease, "oh cinnamon mama, please allow me your spice, come sprinkle my porridge one time and make me taste twice." Straddling the line of comedy and tragedy, Zuccherò leaves the listener in suspense to determine the outcome of the love affair. Instrumentally, "Empty Postbox" is recorded in duo with Zuccherò laying down a lazy-shuffle bass line while Barnes delivers the vocals and harp in traditional question-answer format. Pure and honest, "Empty Postbox" is powerful in its simplicity.

Later in the album Johnny Burgin reappears as lead guitarist and vocalist belting and bending out Freddie King-like tones on "Stack It," a cut reminiscent of the 1970s Shelter Records. Zuccherò again accompanies with a tastefully sweeping bass track that Stax bassist "Duck" Dunn would be proud of.

"Mortal Man" harkens back to the Joe Walsh James Gang of the late 1960s with its grinding legato riff and a sneaky intermittent odd meter that sustains bold momentum throughout. The track features vocalist Johnny Sansone who barks and spits the painfully revealing lyrics of imminent death with sheer intention and identification. Zuccherò plays "the final show" for both artist and laymen with metaphoric and physical visitation then closes the story with organ instrumentation clutching the main riff while Sansone soliloquizes life-reflection and justification. It's powerful, philosophical and beyond convention yet still in essence a 12-bar blues structure akin to the Howlin' Wolf classic "Little Red Rooster."

Hence, the "Musical Polytheism" of *Electric Church for the Spiritually Misguided*.

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appreciation for melody, lyrical craftsmanship, arrangement, improv and an overall connection with urban multiculturalism finds deep prominence in his record.

After a nine-year residency in Europe touring with NY blues gunners The HEALERS!, feat: Thomas Buck-Nasty and Italy's premier pop-jazz group Sugarpie & The Candymen, Zuccherro returned to the States in 2013 and set up shop in New Orleans where he has reconnected with urban diversity, but this time of a different flavor.

He passionately embraced the rich resources of the Crescent City through an ever-abundance of local gig-work and soon-to-be international tour-work with the legendary Cyril Neville (The Meters and Neville Brothers), as well as with other local giants such as Little Freddie King, Johnny Sansone, Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes, Mason Ruffner, Mama's Boys and currently Ghalia Volt, with whom he enjoyed production, bass and co-write credits on her first two albums for Ruf Records—the critically acclaimed "Let the Demons Out" and chart-topper "Mississippi Blend" hit #3 on the Billboard Blues Charts on three different occasions. Zuccherro also added two bass tracks and one co-write on Volt's latest top 10 Billboard Blues charting record "One Woman Band."

Amassing such experience and exposure, Zuccherro adopted the "New Orleans" slant to rhythm & blues, rock & roll and trad-jazz while also synthesizing the more indigenous genres of Louisiana music such as Indian funk, zydeco, cajun and most of all, Louisiana blues, with its stylistic tentacles extending east to neighboring Mississippi and as far north as Memphis and Chicago.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Hailing originally from the streets of East Village, New York City, Zuccherro cut his teeth in the bustling, industry-driven Manhattan music scene where songwriting and studio recording chops have long since been revered and rewarded. Cultivating these traits in the city's local dive-bar and cabaret music incubators such as CBGBs, The Bitter End, Dan Lynch Blues Bar, The Bottom Line and Manny's Carwash, with rock act Major Domo as well as local blues heroes Michael Powers, Popa Chubby, Sweet Georgia Brown and Frankie Paris, to name a few, Zuccherro's consequent

A newfound “gumbo” layered atop a historic base of exertive urban art and culture permeates Zuccherò’s album with all contours of the musical melting pot set aflame; yet still there remains a calm simmer of the most basic ingredient we’ve all come to appreciate in music—“The Blues.” Whether it be New Orleans, Mississippi, Chicago or British derivation, all sub-genres are inherent and proper in this wholesome record. Indulge without reservation.

Eight weeks into the Covid pandemic, Zuccherò “broke the silence” by organizing and hosting what came to be called “Acoustic Blues Series” at his go-to establishment, Bratz Y’all, a German bistro with a spacious beer garden in the Bywater of New Orleans. Acting as program director, promoter and house bassist, Zuccherò was reunited stage-side with many of his “inactive” colleagues, ultimately providing weekly employment, a creative outlet and entertainment to a city that was ailing from seclusion and the dormancy of its once-thriving live music culture. The musical events (reaching four nights per week) were conducted in strict accordance with New Orleans’ Covid guidelines. The local patrons and jam-friendly musicians were eager to come out to enjoy and support the cause.

The popularity of the “Blues Series” soon enabled a wider reach to New Orleans’ talent usually on tour that time of the year. They too came to enjoy the social outlet, the European-style hospitality, and the extra few bucks from the performances.

In April, the suspension of the city’s most popular musical event “Jazz Fest” further lowered the socio-economic morale of the locals. An idea entered Zuccherò’s head: why not host a mini Jazz Fest in the beer garden just for New Orleanians that could be safely operated within the city’s Covid mandates?

Done.

Zuccherò phoned his cronies (annual Jazz Fest invitees, among others), and with the financial support of the restaurant, a tent, tables and a stage were set-up for the presentation of two full weekends of admission-free live music. Zuccherò consequently served again as program director and supporting bassist for each of the 18 acts scheduled, ranging in styles from blues, jazz, zydeco, funk, R&B and R&R. Attendance was a maxed-out number of music-lovers, and the camaraderie within the musicians’ community deepened even further.

Through these projects the cornerstone was naturally becoming set for a new solo album by Zuccherò—one that would showcase his own music through the portal of the extensive musical talent of New Orleans, in particular those who came together to muzzle the musical silence during the dark, early hours of the 2020 pandemic.

As Johnny Sansone put it when asked by Zuccherò if he’d sing and play harp on a track on the upcoming record: “It’d be my honor... You have the support of a lot of people right now.”



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