

Marcus Belgrave | *Marcus Belgrave Presents*
A Tribute to New Orleans, Ray Charles and the Great Ladies of Song
Featuring Joan Bow & Charlie Gabriel

Marcus Belgrave and DJMC Inc – www.marcusbelgrave.net

Marcus Belgrave has released a new compact disc and it's my pleasure to give it a spin. This is a swinging, exuberant, good time recording, with a party atmosphere, that is determined to let the good times roll. The first track, "Tailgate Ramble", by Johnny Mercer and Wingy Manone, a 1940's classic, is a grand introduction to what is to follow with Joan Bow on lead vocal backed up by her co-stars, singing "It's your last chance to dance, get up". The band is cooking behind her, boogie woogie piano and horns screaming with great dynamics. The song is finished much too soon, Mr. Belgrave makes an impassioned announcement, to sit back, relax and... the next song kicks in, "Let The Good Times Roll" — a wonderful rendition. Mr. Belgrave is leading a cast of talented musicians through jazz standards, classics and some rare gems. The supporting cast stands up and delivers.

Mr. Belgrave is an excellent trumpeter; his chops are still right up there with the best, as displayed on "Life Is So Peculiar." He also sings in this tune and has a style of vocalizing that is very similar to the great Satchmo. Mr. Belgrave has toured with Ray Charles, performed with Ella Fitzgerald, Charles Mingus and Max Roach. He has recorded with McCoy Tyner, David Newman, Art Hodes, David Murray and Gerri Allen. On this session, he guides the band through some classics, performed with new fresh interpretations and arrangements.

Charlie Gabriel on tenor saxophone and clarinet was born in New Orleans and is a fourth generation New Orleans jazz musician. The recording features some fine playing by Mr. Gabriel on clarinet. "The Mooche" is a highlight for Gabriel and trombonist Phil Ranelin. Charlie Gabriel is a long time associate of Mr. Belgrave's, playing regularly in Belgrave's Louis Armstrong Tribute Orchestra. Mr. Gabriel has the right feel for the music and brings a joyful swinging sound to all of the songs he is featured on. The horn section arrangements, sound, tone and quality are all excellent thanks to Marcus Belgrave, Cassius Richmond and Charlie Gabriel.

Joan Bow kicks on “You Don’t Know Me” she puts out tremendous energy that you feel deep down in your soul. The band backs her up with just as much, if not more, passion. And on the next song, the classic “Unchain My Heart” Joan Bow delivers a vocal performance that holds nothing back and tears at your heart.

The energy on this recording is excellent, here is hoping that the band will perform some live shows in support of the album. The rhythm section of Bill Meyer on piano, Marion Hayden on bass and Gayelynn McKinney on drums do a superb job of driving every song with just the right amount of subtlety or panache as is required. All of the horn players are first rate. The song selection is priceless and the good times just keep on rolling.

report by Paul J. Youngman – KJA Jazz Advocate

The musicians

Marcus Belgrave – trumpet, vocals
Charlie Gabriel – tenor saxophone, clarinet, vocals
Joan Bow – vocals
Bill Meyer – piano
Marion Hayden – bass
Gayelynn McKinney – drums
Cassius Richmond – alto saxophone
Phil Ranelin, Keith Dewitt, Steve Hunter – trombone

The tracks

1. Tailgate Ramble 2. Let The Good Times Roll 3. Life Is So Peculiar 4. You Can't Lose A Broken Heart
5. My Sweet Hunk Of Trash 6. Sweet Substitute 7. The Mooche 8. You Don't Know Me
9. Unchain My Heart 10. Drown In My Own Tears 11. Cheek To Cheek 12. Tailgate Ramble

We welcome your comments and feedback

Paul J. Youngman



The Live Music Report

youngman@thelivemusicreport.com

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