

CD RELEASE SEPT 9, 2022 | ROCHELLE RECORDS

The Hungry Williams Say Let's Go!

MILWAUKEE-BASED BAND
CHANNELS NEW ORLEANS
1950S R&B SOUND THAT SWINGS



Milwaukee, WI - Back in 1995, Milwaukee-based drummer John Carr heard a great CD playing at a bar, and asked the bartender what it was. Behold, it was the recently released Chess New Orleans anthology. At that precise moment, The Hungry Williams was born; and now they bring to the world their new CD, *Let's Go!*, releasing September 9th on Rochelle Records. Distribution for the new album will be through AMPED (ampeddistribution.com).

John Carr bought a copy of the New Orleans anthology that week, thus beginning a fascination with '50s R&B music. Carr knew lots of New Orleans music, such as Lee Dorsey, Huey "Piano" Smith, Allen Toussaint, and the Meters. But this was a whole different vibe. It SWINGS, hard. There's a Caribbean flavor, too, that was nothing like he'd heard before. THAT is the sound Carr has chased ever since. In fact, The Hungry Williams just might be the best New Orleans-sounding band NOT from the Crescent City that you've ever heard!

By 2015, Carr had played with everyone and anyone in town, earning the reputation as "Milwaukee's Ringo." But the itch for a hard swinging, horn driven band with that Latin flair had never subsided. He had a name picked out, in honor of one of the best New Orleans drummers ever, Charles "Hungry" Williams. But most importantly, Carr knew who to create a band with.

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First up were vocalist Kelli Gonzalez and bassist Mike Sieger. Carr and Sieger have been playing together in various incarnations since 1991. No rhythm section is tighter and livelier than these two. "Mike and I play joined at the hip," enthuses Carr. "We each have our own flavor of keeping the beat, and the simpatico between us means we come up with something relaxed and happy." Sieger recruited Carr into a zydeco outfit featuring Kelli Gonzalez as lead vocalist. There, Carr found in Gonzalez someone who knew '50s R&B even better than he does.

Next came Carr's good friend and guitarist/vocalist Joe Vent. They'd come up together in the '80s, playing the New Wave guitar-based pop of the day. In the '90s, Vent led his own band and ran Don't Records, at the time the home of local heroes Paul Cebal and Willy Porter. By 2015, Vent was ready for a change of pace.

So was keyboardist Jack Stewart, former bandmate of Carr's in local jump bluesers, The Uptown Savages. Stewart started in the '60s playing in blues-based jam bands, then in the '70s he started Milwaukee's first punk rock band, Death. The Uptown Savages played for nearly 20 years, and when that was done, Stewart happily agreed to join Carr's new project.

The core was in place: a group of like-minded musicians ready to bring the swing to the masses that don't know what they'd been missing. They

SONG LIST

- 1 | **MARDI GRAS DAY**
3:35 Written by John Carr and Kelli Gonzalez, Ravi Jankar Music
- 2 | **MOVIN' ON**
2:21 Written by Jack Stewart
- 3 | **YOU'D BETTER FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER FOOL**
3:17 Written by Nugetre and Dowd, Cotillion
- 4 | **ONE MONKEY DON'T STOP NO SHOW**
3:32 Written by Singleton and McCoy, Songs of Universal, Inc. and Raleigh Music Publishing
- 5 | **GEE BABY**
3:15 Written by Joe Joseph and Alvin Tyler, Ace Publishing
- 6 | **BOSS MAN**
3:42 Written by John Carr and Kelli Gonzalez, Ravi Jankar Music
- 7 | **BIG MOUTH BETTY**
2:53 Written by Kelli Gonzalez
- 8 | **OOOH-WOW**
2:27 Written by Montrell-Sandy, Venice
- 9 | **THEN I'LL BELIEVE**
2:29 Written by D. Johnson, Ron Publishing
- 10 | **669 (ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE BEAST)**
5:47 Written by John Carr, Kelli Gonzalez, and Joe Vent, Ravi Jankar Music / Donkey Hotay Music

played a couple hundred shows and recorded an album. Things were looking good until ... COVID.

Plans to promote their 2019 debut, Brand New Thing, were derailed. A Christmas EP, Mambo Santa Mambo, was in the can, and was released mid-pandemic. But, what to do in the meantime? Figure out how to practice online (which they did, eventually), and maybe write some originals. Carr, Vent, and Gonzalez started sharing their ideas electronically, and lo and behold, four new tunes emerged; plus a lot of great new covers worked out together, in cyberspace. Carr decided a new album is in order.

One day, Carr heard a song by the California Honeydrops that gave him chills, because it was the sound he'd always had in his head: a relaxed, authentic performance, the sound of instruments together in a room, along with the warmth that vinyl collectors love. Thanks to the internet, within 24 hours Carr was in touch with Jacob LaCally, the engineer behind that sound. A plan was hatched: LaCally would come to Milwaukee in September, 2021, to spend three days recording an album, all together, in one room, without headphones. Carr nearly wept with gratitude. This could be the album he always knew he could make, but didn't know how.

For the Let's Go! Recording sessions, Carr brought in their favorite saxes: Jason Goldsmith on tenor, and Casimir Riley on baritone. Fun fact: Carr is the second in a three generation line of Milwaukee drummers. Goldsmith came from Carr's dad's 18 piece jazz orchestra; Riley from Carr's son's band. Like they say, it takes a village.

The recording process was a joy, Joe Vent says. **"Once we got the room and the vibe locked-in, we were nailing takes. It was the best recording situation: no thinking, just playing. The lines between instruments were incidental; we played these songs as a band, not individuals. That's always been our goal."**

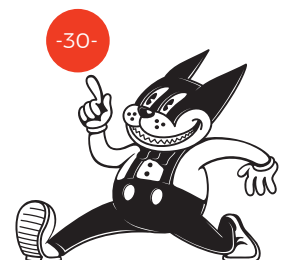
LaCally's influence was key. Jack Stewart says, **"It was great recording as a band and allowing the room sound to be present and not isolated. Along with being a great engineer, Jacob LaCally has a true understanding of the music we play. His input and suggestions on the music itself, not just the recording process, were on the money and enhanced the overall product."**

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