

The GumboProject

What do you get when you combine a pound of dirty New Orleans-style funk with some jazz, then add a dash of soul, some blues straight from the bayou, a few sprinkles of fresh multicultural rhythm, and some nice hot sauce and cook it up right? You get **The GumboProject** – Santa Fe’s own authentic New Orleans-style Funk Band. Led by New Orleans drummer David Waldrop, **The GumboProject** is the long-awaited band that was created to BRING the FUNK to the southwest.

The GumboProject is: David Waldrop on drums and lead vocals, Pablo Champion on bass, and Mark Dempsey on keys and vocals. The band also uses revolving special guests - from saxophone and sousaphone players to washboard players and guitarists - to spice up the flavor. (Hence the “Gumbo” – It’s always a little different, depending on the special ingredients.)

The GumboProject, a relatively new band, has enjoyed great local and regional success from the time they started playing together. They have played regularly from Albuquerque to Taos, have opened for nationally-touring Louisiana acts Big Sam’s Funky Nation, Cedric Watson and Feufollet, Curley Taylor, Johnny Sketch and the Dirty Notes, and Ivan Neville’s Dumpstaphunk, and have been named one of Santa Fe’s “**Best New Bands**” by The Santa Fe Reporter’s Reader’s Poll. Their CD “roux” is receiving great reviews and is in regular rotation on KBAC (98.1 FM) in Santa Fe.

The GumboProject began when David met Mark and Pablo, who were already rehearsing together as a jazz duo. David, who had been writing some songs and working on starting a New Orleans-style funk band in Santa Fe, brought some New Orleans funk to the table, Mark and Pablo loved the feel and sound of the music, and the gumbo was served. The band released “roux”, a 7-song EP, earlier this summer as an “appetizer” and will soon be recording a full-length album. All three members of the band write the songs, and they feel that they each contribute their own, unique sound and ideas to the project. “One of the best parts of this band is that we are all coming from such different places, musically, but when we get together, something really amazing happens because the sound that results is very solid and very powerful,” said David. “One of the comments we get the most often is ‘Wow – that’s a lot of sound from a 3-piece band!’”

David Waldrop is a professional drummer who relocated to Santa Fe from New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina. Known as “Alabama Dave” down south, he played the drums professionally in New Orleans for many years and learned his chops from New Orleans greats such as Johnny Vidacovich, Mean Willie Green, and Russell Batiste. David was the drummer for Mardi Gras Indian Big Chief Monk Boudreaux’s band Big Medicine and for Eric Lindell and played with Louisiana artists Tab Benoit, West Bank Mike and the Fisher Project, John Lisi & DeltaFunk!, members of The Neville Brothers, and Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band, to name a few. He specializes in second-line, jazz, zydeco, blues and, especially, New Orleans-style funk. David was on tour with Zydeco legend Chubby Carrier when Katrina hit, and had to leave the festival circuit to join his family in New Mexico. He met Mark Dempsey and Pablo Champion (who had already been playing together) in Santa Fe and started **The GumboProject** in an effort to give thanks to the people of the southwest for opening their arms and supporting him and his family since Katrina. “Playing New Orleans funk and making people dance is the only real gift I have to give, and I want to share that music with people, wherever I am.”

Mark Dempsey is a slammin’ keyboard player specializing in the vintage style - utilizing the unique sound of the Hammond B3, piano, and clav. He came to Santa Fe two years ago from Cincinnati, where he was the keyboardist for the local favorite Funk-Fusion band Souse, which incorporated the styles of Miles Davis and Herbie Hancock, among others. Prior to that, Dempsey founded the jam band project Travelin’ Barefoot, which had great regional success in the Midwest, twice being nominated for “Best Jam Band” in Cincinnati. Originally from Baltimore, Maryland, Mark has been playing professionally since the age of 16 and his passion for the music he plays certainly shows in his fiery solos and smooth improvisational ability. Mark’s biggest passion is jazz piano. As a young child, he played his compositions in the square in Sell’s Point District of Baltimore. He still composes music on a regular basis. These days, his compositions are inspired by everyone from jazz greats such as Oscar Peterson and McCoy Tyner to bands such as Soulive, Galactic, and Karl Denson’s Tiny Universe, to his one year-old son, Orion.

Pablo Champion is an amazingly gifted classically-trained musician and music teacher. Pablo studied at New York’s Eastman School of Music and is a versatile musician whose musical passion encompasses everything from Bach to Led Zeppelin. Originally from San Marcos, Texas, Champion is an accomplished bassist and guitar

player who also teaches music at Santa Fe's Waldorf School, as well as giving private music lessons. Not only is he an extremely talented funk bass player, his versatility can really be seen in his mastery of the theorbo – a 16th century stringed instrument from the lute family. (How many people can say that?) He explains his musical repertoire by saying that he learned to play blues, funk, and rock and roll, then studied classical for many years, and now has “come back home again.”

Press:

“With a funky depth straight from Frenchmen Street in New Orleans and the tricky fills of its R & B brethren, The GumboProject proves that there is life, love, and groove in the Santa Fe music scene.”

-Gabe Gomez

Santa Fe Radio Host and Music Critic

“The GumboProject is a great band. Lots of fun. Great, funky music.”

Honey Harris, KBAC Santa Fe

“That's some funky stuff. Sounded great.”

“Big” Sam Williams of Big Sam's Funky Nation

R.I.Y.L.:

(Recommended if you like)

The Meters; Galactic; Medeski, Martin & Wood; Mofro; The North Mississippi All-Stars;

The Neville Brothers, Dumpstaphunk, Dr. John.

For Bookings:

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