

# JOHNNY NEEL (REVIEWS)

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## **Gritz: Spring 2003 Issue Down South Jukin'**

Johnny Neel has recorded a long improv CD while in Italy with W.I.N.D. and some jazz players. Johnny Neel and the Italian Experience will be a long jam between Neel and the power rock blues trio W.I.N.D. Something between blues, jazz, improvisation and some solo cuts, with piano and voice. In other Neel news, Johnny has a brand new jam disc out with Gov't Mule drummer Matt Abts called X2. Be sure to visit the band website at [www.x2jamband.com](http://www.x2jamband.com)

## **Quarternotes Reviews/Michael Buffalo Smith X2 Matt Abts and Johnny Neel [x2jamband.com](http://x2jamband.com)**

And now for something, completely different. A couple of guys sitting around jamming. And jamming well, I might add. Matt Abts of Gov't Mule - one of the best drummers out there - rocks out with Johnny Neel on piano and organ. Johnny, a former member of the Allman Brothers Band and a much sought after producer and studio musician, improvises on nine tracks that sound just great. Three instruments, two great musicians - one solid groove.

## **W.I.N.D.: Hypnotic Dream (ART Suono)/Michael Buffalo Smith [www.wind-band.net](http://www.wind-band.net)**

W.I.N.D. is not only one of the finest rock-n-roll bands in Italy, they are one of the best on planet earth. A three-man power trio, W.I.N.D. returns with a brand new 2-disc release that simply kicks ass. If you thought their 2000 debut release was hot, get set for some third degree scorchin'.

Fabio Drusin is a powerful singer and bassist, Sandro Bencich, a monster drummer, and Jimi Barbiani is one helluva guitarist. Together, they are one of the strongest power trios to hit the scene since Gov't Mule.

Adding to the overall excellence of this release is the presence of Johnny Neel (Allman Bros., Gov't Mule) on the album. Neel plays B-3 and piano on several cuts, and even rocks out on lead vocals on "Boogie Man."

Disc two is labeled as "Bonus Tracks," and includes live tracks, jams and even some cool video of W.I.N.D. and Neel jamming. Very impressive stuff. Sometimes they sound like The Mule, other times they sound absolutely original. True Southern flavor spread across pure Italian rock and roll. An awesome set.

## **The Positive Side/Mike Lawson 4/17/03**

**As seen in the Noblesville Times**

**X2**

[www.johnnyneel.com](http://www.johnnyneel.com)

[www.x2jamband.com](http://www.x2jamband.com)

[www.mule.net](http://www.mule.net)



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Former Allman Brothers Band organist, Johnny Neel, and Gov't Mule drummer, Matt Abts, make up this mind-tingling musical experience. It weaves in and out of jazz meets funk and surprisingly, the duo offer an interesting array of improvised melodies and beats that doesn't leave you wearily wandering but perhaps, merely pondering.

## **Johnny Neel – Late Night Breakfast/Mick Rainsford JN-2000-1**

'Late Night Breakfast' introduces the talents of keyboard player/vocalist Johnny Neel, whose curricula vitae includes stints with Dickey Betts and Gregg Allman's reunited Allman Brothers Band, whilst his songs have been recorded by artists like Ann Peebles and John Mayall, also co-writing the Allman's smash hit 'Good Clean Fun' in 1990. With a background like that you just know that this guy is going to be talented, as this set's fusion of blues, R&B and Southern roots music testifies.

The set opens with the churning, funky R&B of 'Full Tank Of Love,' Neel's gruff and vibrant vocals underpinned by his rocking New Orleans styled piano. The influence of the Crescent City's musical heritage is a predominant factor on this set, and raises it's mantle again with Neel's Dr. John styled piano on the Fats Domino influenced rocker 'Good Lovin' Is Hard To Find', Neel's own harp adding a bluesy edge to this particular gumbo; the influence of Dr. John again evident in Neel's vocal inflections on the mellow title track, where Rick Vito's haunting guitar adds a late night feel.

'Don't Want To Discuss It' is an out and out funky stomper with hard riffing horns, pure rock'n'roll piano, and chanted backing vocals underpinning Neel's Otis Redding influenced vocals; 'Come Round To Me' maintains this groove as it melds Chuck Berry with Crescent City R&B; whilst 'Caught Me On My Blindside' harks back to his Allman days, with it's pulsing bass lines, wailing harp and feral fretwork. 'Murdered By Love' opens with an 'early hours of the morning' feel replete with rolling piano and moaned/growled vocals, before segueing into an intense, churning blues, Neel's harp adding a Muddy Feel to the mix.

Other highlights include 'Willin' To Crawl', an impassioned soul blues with a Clapton feel, and the rocking 50's styled R&B of 'New Where To Be', a catchy number with rattling piano; ensuring that this impressive set will appeal to fans across a wide spectrum of blues genres. <http://www.johnnyneel.com/>