

Cover Art: The Mad Turk

**THE GHOST OF PONTCHARTRAIN
EXPANDED EDITION
TRACK LIST**

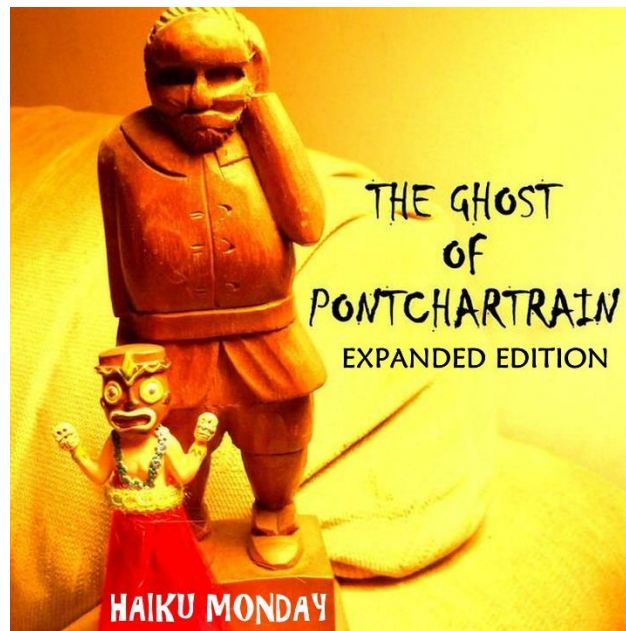
01. South to Louisiana
02. I Am the Ghost of Pontchartrain
03. Little Girl Blue
04. Neutral Ground
05. The Devil Takes the World
06. Preacher Man in the House
07. Carousel of Stars
08. Mama Legba's Déjà vu
09. Sammy's Ghost Parade
10. City of the Dead
11. Midnight in the Preacher's Room
12. Evening Prayers for Little Girl Blue
13. Incident on Annunciation Street
14. Every Dog Has His Day
15. Mama Legba Throws the Bones
16. A Day Late & A Dollar Short
17. Across the River to Algiers
18. A Moment of Redemption
19. Murder on the Highway
20. Last Train Home
21. All the Way to Yazoo (in a body bag)
22. Great Day in the Morning

MIND SMOKE



RECORDS

HAIKU MONDAY INTERVIEW: IMAGINARY SOUNDTRACKS



Mind Smoke Records Promotions Director, Judy Fleenor-Sheets, recently sat down with the members of Haiku Monday; Alex Maes (Guitars, Vocals), Rudy Schnee (Drums, Percussion, Programmed Drums), Don Reintier (Bass), and Margaritte (Keyboards, Programmed Brass, Vocals, to discuss their latest Mind Smoke Records release, The Ghost of Pontchartrain Expanded Edition.

Judy: I've listened to the album at least several times now and my first reaction to the album is that all of the songs seem to tell one big story.

Alex: Well Judy, from the start of this project, we had all decided that it would be fun to write an imaginary soundtrack.



Judy: An imaginary soundtrack?

Alex: Yes. We wanted to write a soundtrack to a film that didn't exist. Early on we envisioned an imaginary soundtrack to a film about a ghost in New Orleans. It's a real mind-movie of sorts. I mean, haven't you ever been sitting on the couch, staring out the window, and you start daydreaming; and suddenly, you find yourself creating a film in your head?

Judy: Why, yes, I believe I've done that once or twice! The other day, you mentioned that the group started working on this project in 2002. Were all of the songs written prior to the recording sessions or did the band write just one or two pieces and then let the other songs develop naturally during sessions for the album?



Margaritte: Originally, I started composing on a synthesizer but I wasn't really happy with the string and orchestral sounds so the rest of the band helped me block out rough drafts of many of the songs and then we put the project on hold for a little while. We released a version of the album in 2012 but it basically wasn't fully conceived at that point in time. Over the years, I would come back to this project from time to time but it was just last year when I started working with Orchestra and String Section Emulators that things began to move ahead at a quicker pace. So, we're now releasing what we call The Ghost of Pontchartrain: The Expanded Edition that includes all of the tracks that didn't make it onto the original release.

Judy: The album contains a very cohesive collection of musical themes. What was the overall inspiration for this project?

Margaritte: To me, it was always a soundtrack to a film I was seeing in my head. I'm sure you've noticed that many of the

tracks are around 2 minutes long or under; that seemed best for dreaming up little movie scenes in our heads.

Alex: Our original inspiration for the material came from the many trips we all made to New Orleans over the years. Each one of us noticed that there was a certain vibe that hung in the air of that city. There's a palpable sense of mystery that flows along the cobblestone streets in the French Quarter.

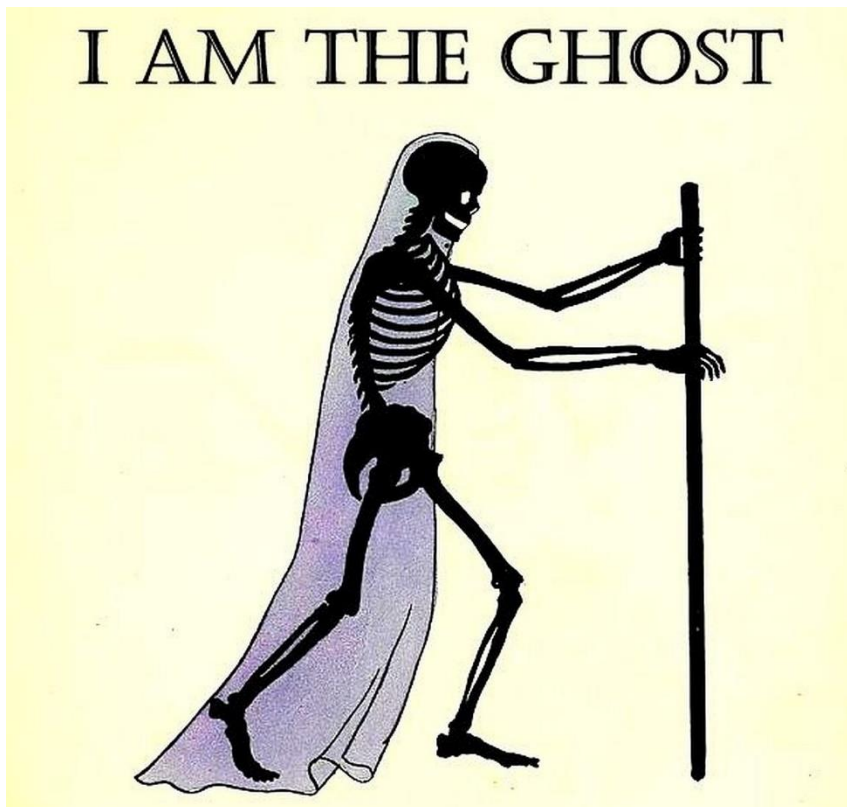
Judy: Was your overall vision of an imaginary soundtrack difficult to impart to all the members of the band along with any other musicians you brought in to help with the project?

Margaritte: Everybody was on board with the imaginary soundtrack theme from the get-go. Once I began working with those Emulators, things started to come together nicely. It's worth noting that since we all use the same recording software in our home studios, we were able to work on a lot of our individual parts separately which also helped move things along in a speedy manner. Once I had all the music back in my home studio, I would edit the parts a bit and then Alex would come over and we put each track together as we went along. In a certain way, putting this album together like this was almost like time travel for me.

Judy: Time travel?!



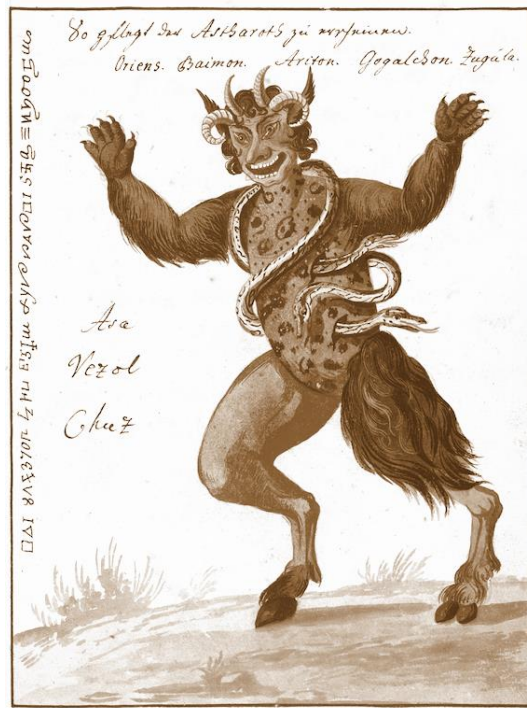
Margaritte: Bien sur! One day, a song is nothing but a bare bones type of thing and then...poof! Rudy would add drums or percussion and then...poof! Don would put down some bass parts and so on.



Judy: What other players did you ask to play on this album?

Alex: I was lucky enough to bring in Little Slim Lavarro to do the lead vocal on I Am The Ghost of Pontchartrain track. Margarite ran his vocal through a simulator and that gave the track a nifty "ghost" voice! Also, Little Slim sang a little scat vocal on All the Way to Yazoo (in a body bag) and played all of the blues guitar riffs on the City of the Dead track.

Don: It was my choice to bring in Alex's brother, Victor Maes, who played some horn parts for the project. That provided a lot of color to some of the tracks. I've done a lot of gigs and sessions with Victor and he always hits the right groove.



Judy: Did anyone outside of the band write any of the songs?

Alex: Why yes, a matter of fact! Johnny Pierre, our record label boss, penned a tune called *The Devil Takes the World*. When he heard what we were working on he sent me a digital file of the song. After listening to the song several times, we all realized that the dark mood of the song would be a perfect addition to the project. The track dates from 2009 when JP was working on the Biscuit Kings album, *Hambones & Trombones*. It was supposed to be on that album but it didn't make the final cut. What we did with the original track was strip it of everything but the bass parts. The way we wanted to integrate the song into our album was to

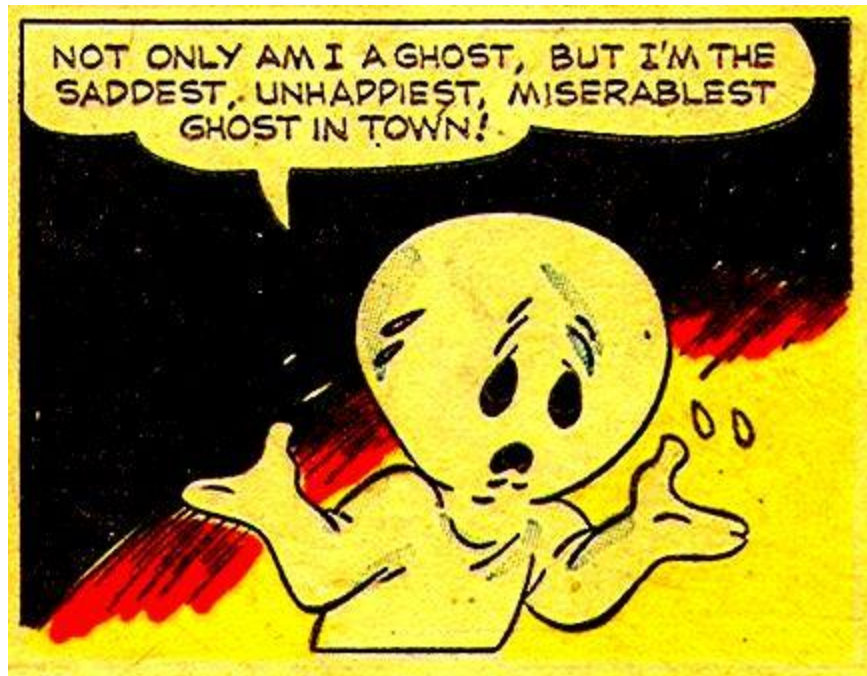
develop it as a sparse instrumental. Margaritte wrote some string charts for song and the only original element of the song that we kept was the parts by Biscuit King bassist, Jeff Goldstein. The song has a darkness that just seems to overwhelm the listener.



Judy: Tell us about some of the characters that appear in The Ghost of Pontchartrain project?

Alex: Well, at first, I imagined a ghost named Sammy Thibodeaux returning home to New Orleans. Originally, I had a little ragtag lyric for one of the first songs; *Sammy Thibodeaux is my given name, I was born on the banks of Lake Pontchartrain, I'm coming home tonight with my ball and chain, I am the ghost of Pontchartrain.* It was almost like a child's schoolyard song actually. From there, Margarite and I started writing purely instrumental pieces with the ghost character in mind.

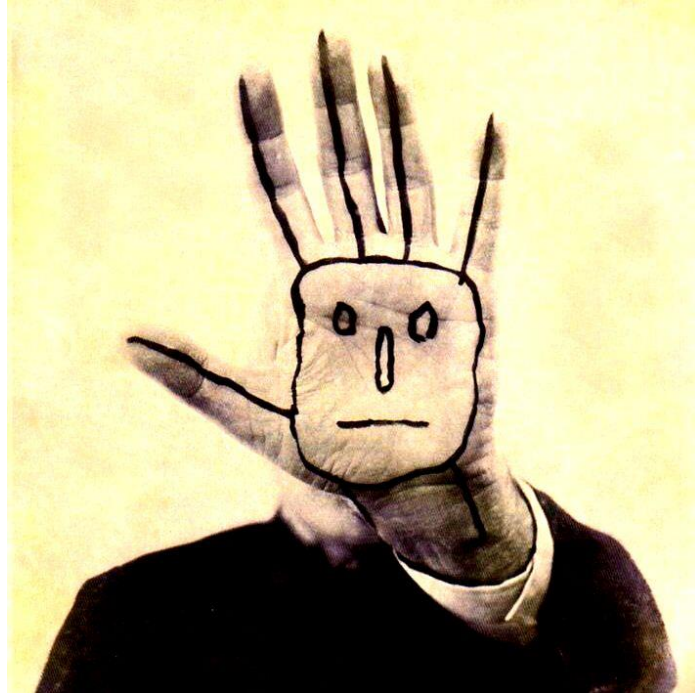
Margaritte: Within a short space of time, we developed two other main characters; The Preacher, a local minister who seemed to have one foot in heaven and the other in hell, Mama Legba, a creole voodoo spiritualist and Little Girl Blue, a young girl who may or may not be Sammy Thibodeaux's daughter.



Judy: Have any of you ever had any actual experiences with a ghost?

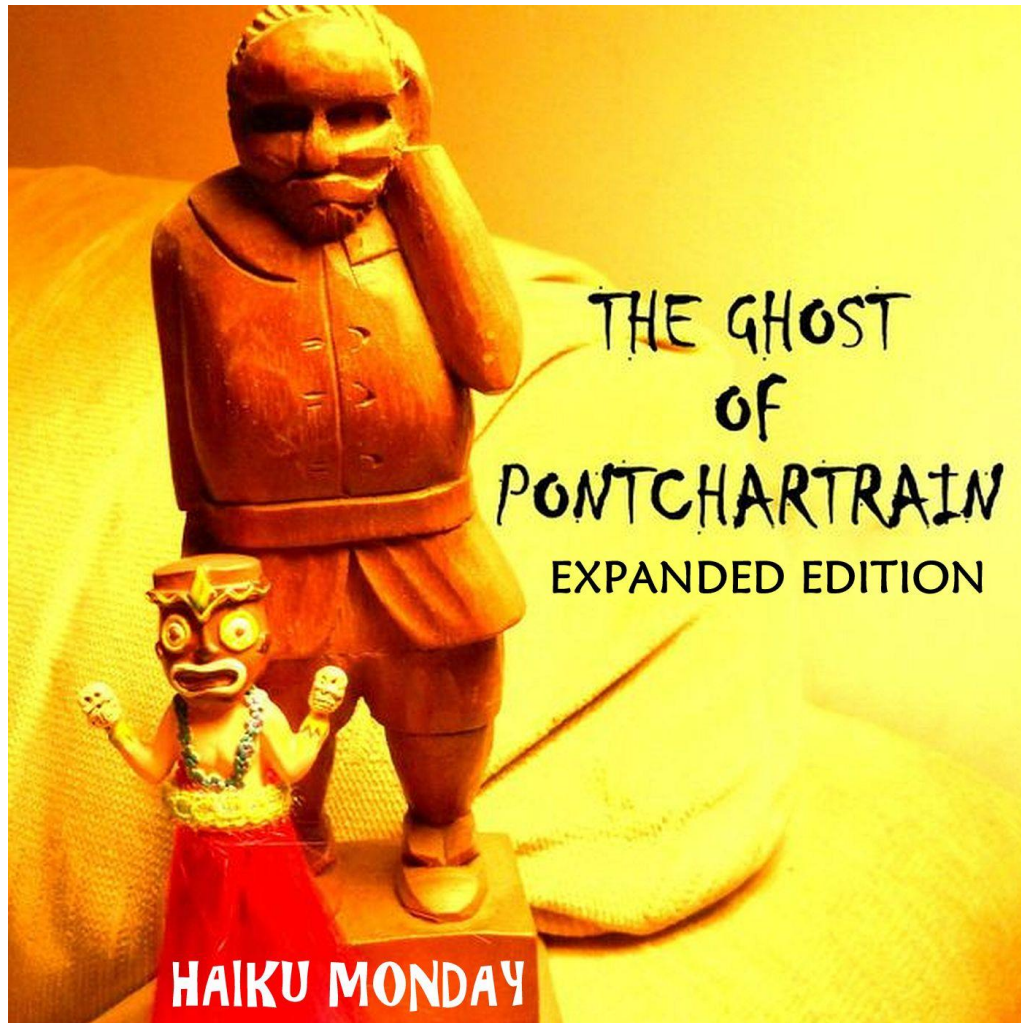
Don: There might have been a couple of sightings when I was coming home from a club date in the Quarter. Random shadows appearing by the side of the road. You know, that sort of thing.

Rudy: I certainly have and I'll never forget it! When I was living in New Orleans back in the early 90's, there was this old lady who would push a little wishing well around on wheels throughout my neighborhood. Every time she came by my house, the temperature dropped 20 degrees and I felt really cold. One Halloween night, she freed 13 black cats from a big cage that overran the whole neighborhood! I'm damn sure she was ghost!



Judy: Any final thoughts on *The Ghost of Pontchartrain Expanded Edition*?

Margaritte: I expect that some people who listen to this album might imagine a much different mind-movie than what my imagination conjures up when I listen to this music. I think that might be a good thing though, n'est-ce pas?



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THE MIND SMOKE RECORDS STORY

In 2007, after decades of working in the music business, I decided it was time to cast my proverbial fate to the wind by creating a music publishing company called Mind Smoke Music. A short while later, I was looking for a way to promote the music that was being administrated by my publishing company so I created a record label called Mind Smoke Records. Besides releasing recordings of my own songs, I've also released archive recordings by the Freelance Vandals and M.C. Osso along with some recordings by Haiku Monday (conceptual pop), the Biscuit Kings (Americana) and Little Slim & the Eyeballs (21st Century blues). The rapidly changing landscape of the music industry, the rise of instantly accessible digital music formats and DIY internet promotion were some of the reasons that led to the formation of these two companies. Besides all of that hoop-dee-doo, I mainly thought it would be fun to start my own record label!

My motto is: *"The music business should always be about imagination."* Sincerely, [Johnny Pierre](#)

