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FRENCH QUARTER FEST 2013 FOCUS: CREOLE STRING BEANS

01 April 2013 — by [Brett Milano](#)

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When is a cover band not a cover band? When the covers they play are so cool and so obscure that it takes [some kind of brilliance](#) to even dig them up.

Such is the repertoire of the [Creole String Beans](#), who specialize in the late-'50s/early-'60s heyday of New Orleans R&B and swamp pop. Their setlists are full of buried treasures from Fats Domino, John Fred, Frankie Ford and more. For Halloween they might do "Morgus the Magnificent," which Dr. John and Ronnie Barron once cooked up to salute that TV ghoul. And they leave Louisiana long enough to do "It Comes to Me Naturally," one of those NRBQ songs that should be a standard but isn't.

"There's a mission here to keep these songs alive," says bassist Rob Savoy, who cofounded the band with singer/guitarist (and in his other life, photographer) [Rick Olivier](#). "These songs were all made to be listened and danced to live, and as time goes on some of them start to fade away. People of all generations respond to them, and we want to do them right."



That's not to say they only play deep cuts. They pulled out "Sea Cruise" when [Jimmy Buffett](#) joined them at a Saints tailgate party; and they know plenty of hits. "You can't be too clever for your own good and become inaccessible," Savoy explains. "If we're playing a wedding, we might do [the Coasters'] 'Poison Ivy' because it's fun—we tell people it's the version they and their grandma grew up with." They're also throwing in their own songs; their second CD *Shrimp Boots & Vintage Suits* (Threadhead) has a few originals that could pass for '60s nuggets. "That's an osmosis thing, when you play it so much it becomes ingrained."

Savoy and saxophonist Derek Huston spent years on the road, respectively with Cowboy Mouth and the Iguanas, but their goals for the String Beans are more modest. "We'd love to tour Europe and get some trips for ourselves and our families, but I've got no desire to get in the van again," Savoy says. "One of the blessings of this band is that we have jobs and kids, but we can come to this on a Wednesday or a Saturday night, play the Rock 'n' Bowl or the Chickie Wah Wah and look forward to it. Our goal is to keep music alive on a regional basis."

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