

A *BluesWax* Reprint

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Terrance Simien
Across The Parish Line

BluesWax Rating: 8 out of 10

Zydeco Extra

Terrence Simien is one of our most-beloved Cajun-Zydeco performers. He is blessed with a wonderful voice that sometimes sounds a bit like Aaron Neville. Besides being responsible for blending Reggae and Caribbean-flavored music into his own brand of Zydeco, Simien's love of Folk music has produced Zydeco cover versions of some of our favorite songs. Terrence Simien has just released his seventh album on the Aim label titled, *Across The Parish Line*.

Always the innovator, Simien opens and closes the CD with remixed bonus versions of "Ta Pa Gonne Avec Ca," which he sings in French. Whether the remixed dance or Hip-Hop versions appeal to you is a matter of personal taste, but the remainder of the album is Terrence Simien at his best. "You Should Know Your Way By Now" is a personal anthem to his Creole roots. The vocal harmonies make it sound like a fresh-running stream. Paul Simon adds his harmony on the next track, "You Used To Call Me," a Clifton Chenier standard.

The version of "Corrina" that follows is given the Caribbean treatment that gives the song new life. "Corinna" dates back to Blind Lemon Jefferson, but Terrence appropriately credits this arrangement to Taj Mahal and Jesse Edwin Davis, as everyone from Bob Dylan, John Kay, and Eric Burdon have all made their claim. Terrence Simien's original percussion-based version of "Ta Pa Gonne Avec Ca" follows and this version remains my favorite. Next Terrence pays tribute to Bob Dylan as he covers Dylan's "Mississippi." "Only one thing I did wrong/Stayed in New Orleans a day too long."

"Nobody But You," "Dance Everyday," and "Pet De Kat Krewe" are all Terrence Simien originals, co-written with keyboardist Danny Williams. Also covered is the 1982 Grammy-winning song "Always On My Mind." Here, it is a duet with Marcia Ball. Pedro Luis Ferrer's "Como Vivire, Mi Cholita" (covered by Charlie Musselwhite a few years ago on his *Continental Drifter* album) and Robbie Robertson's "Twilight," featuring Rick Danko and Garth Hudson, are standout tracks. "Closer To You" was co-written with actor Dennis Quaid. Another highlight is Terrence's version of Randy Newman's "Louisiana 1927."

This album will lift your spirits, and be sure to catch Terrence Simien when you cross The Parish Line.

Richard Ludmerer is a contributing editor at BluesWax

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