

"Born in a Second Line":

Glen David Andrews shares
New Orleans musical heritage
with the world

By Dean M. Shapiro

Over a long, stellar career filled with honors, awards and international accolades, Glen David Andrews has just added another milestone to his list of accomplishments: his own namesake record label!

The New Orleans born-and-raised trombonist and vocalist with possibly the most distinguished musical lineage in the city's history, is touting his latest release, a digital album titled "Live in My Living Room" on the Glen David Andrews Records label (a subsidiary of Louisiana Red Hot Records). Recorded live in his French Quarter living room during the COVID-19 quarantine, the album is already making the rounds and available for downloading from Andrews' Facebook page and website.

Backed by the six-piece Glen David Andrews Band plus himself on vocals, Andrews penned five of the disc's eight cuts. These include the lead track, "Treme Hideaway," a tribute to a music club recently opened by his older brother, Grammy Award-winning drummer Derrick Tabb of the Rebirth Brass Band, in the city's musically rich 6th Ward where the two of them grew up.

As he explained in the accompanying liner notes, "This album was done to give you the experience of my live shows. Due to the current situation we couldn't go in the studio to record this record, but nothing can stop the Spirit of the New Orleans musicians so we decided to record it live."

Despite being unable to perform in clubs, go on tour or play for special events, Andrews has not been idle. "At the present time I've got five other records going, three of them completed with some minor details to be done," he said. "I'm working with some other members of the Andrews families who are in other bands. So we're sending music back and forth. I'm really excited about having my own label and even more excited



Photos Courtesy of Glen David Andrews

that I'm able to keep working through this whole pandemic."

According to Andrews, he and his band were among the first New Orleans musicians to perform live streaming from yards and porch parties at private residences. Starting with socially distanced audiences of 12-15 people, he and his band now draw upwards of 35-50 people. The band itself is taking precautions, situated 12 feet apart when playing and, during rehearsals, they wash their hands and disinfect every 15 minutes or so.

"I feel really humble that God would give me the opportunity to be able to do this and keep persevering because a lot of people are really struggling hard these days, especially musicians," Andrews said.

Awakening daily at 5:30 a.m., Andrews starts his day with a meditation and, weather permitting, a five-mile walk, usually along the river levee. Then, back at home, it's time to get to work, practicing his horn or composing new songs, often while white or red beans are cooking on the stove. Swearing off pork products and other fatty foods, Andrews, at 40 years old, acknowledges that he has become more health conscious in recent years. He also acknowledges having dealt with various addictions, and now he is actively involved in Narcotics Anonymous, following their regimen and tuning in to their Zoom streaming program twice a day.

"Recovery is not the easiest thing to deal with but now I'm doing amazing things. What I'm doing only inspires me more to keep going and keep moving forward, trying to keep my head on tight," Andrews said.

With music as his focus, he soldiers on, doing what he enjoys best, writing, composing, practicing and recording, always taking on the next challenge and trying to set a good example for his only child, a five year old daughter. "Overall, I love myself enough



to change my life now and I have a child who's looking up to me," he mused. "My father wasn't in my life at all so I refuse to give her what was given to me."

Born and raised in Treme, Andrews' family history has been well-documented by music historians. Surrounded since childhood by some of New Orleans' most renowned musical legends, he can trace his family pedigree as far back on his mother's side to jazz pioneer and trumpeter, Buddy Bolden. Many of Andrews' ancestors performed in some of the city's earliest jazz and brass bands and this tradition has continued right up through the present. He himself has played in a number of them, as have his brother and his well-known cousins, trumpeter James Andrews and Troy "Trombone Shorty" Andrews.

As he proudly proclaims, "Jesus was born in a manger. I was born in a second line."

Accolades for Andrews have come from all over the world and especially in his hometown.

"Glen is one of the giant talents of New Orleans music," said producer Quint Davis of the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival where Andrews has performed numerous times.

Among his proudest accomplishments is an award from the National Endowment for the Arts as a member of the Treme Brass Band. He also takes pride in making it onto the ballot for the Grammy awards on two occasions with his own band.

With nine CDs to his credit and more on the horizon, Andrews looks eagerly forward to performing live and touring again when the current pandemic has passed over. As he stated, "Man, a year of my life hasn't gone by that I haven't gone to a new country, except for this year and I'm not counting this year out yet," he said.

Andrews was proud to share the memories he has from touring and performing with such icons as Tuba Fats, Bob French, "Uncle" Lionel Batiste, Harold Dejean and many others. "These guys were my idols. I wanted to be like them, growing up and I got more than that. I got to actually play with them."



But, as much as Andrews enjoys playing jazz and brass band tunes, he keeps his tastes open to other musical genres. Several years ago, he met world-renowned young soprano and self-styled "free-spirited opera singer," Amy Owens, and the two of them hit it off immediately. They performed together at the past two JazzFests and are expecting to start on a CD together in August.

And so, at the end of the day, despite the world touring, the honors and awards, the widespread recognition and many accomplishments, Glen David Andrews is devoted, above all, to his beloved home city. As he proudly proclaims, "New Orleans is the only place you're ever going to live where you can be a part of living, breathing history and culture.

How does he feel about it? He answers, "To be totally honest with you, I've always felt humble. I never took any of it for granted."

To book the Glen David Andrews Band for your porch party or other special event contact him at andrewsglen754@gmail.com. You can also visit him on Facebook at <https://glendavidandrewsband.bandcamp.com/>

