

CHANNING ARMOUR: Aspiring to be the Next “Big Thing” in New Orleans Music

By Dean M. Shapiro, Senior Editor

Experts in the field of genetics speculate that talent in the performing arts flows through the genes and is embedded in the DNA of the recipient. If so, Channing Armour is the lucky beneficiary of his musical gifts. A cousin on his mother's side of the family was the legendary Rock and Roll pioneer Fats Domino.

PHOTO BY NOLAN MARSHALL JR.



“When I was young, I met him a few times at his house on Caffin Street,” Channing recalled in a recent interview. “My parents brought us over there and he played the piano and sang for us a few times. His music flows through my veins and inspires me.”



Now in his mid-50s, Channing, a native New Orleanian from the Gentilly neighborhood, is making the rounds of the city’s music clubs, festivals, and other events as a multitasking singer, songwriter, and producer. Some of his recent songs are receiving airplay on local radio stations and podcasts. A single that he dropped recently, “I Want to Get to Know You,” has been generating rave reviews both online and in print.

A flooring contractor by trade, Channing is working on his third album, following the success of his first two, “I Remember When” and “Keep it Moving.” Commenting on the upcoming album’s progress, he said, “It’s coming along great,” but he was quick to note that “a lot of people are telling me to keep putting singles out. I guess that’s the wave now. I have 16 songs to go but they’re telling me to slow down and just keep dropping singles. I’ve dropped five of them so far.”

When asked what subjects he likes to explore in his original compositions, he unhesitatingly responded, “life, love, and laughter. Happy times.” Occasionally, though, he will cover a song by popular artists like Michael Jackson, Marvin Gaye, Babyface, or a group like DeBarge. All of his productions and recordings are done in his home studio.



The second oldest of four boys born to James and Betty Armour, Channing enjoyed an active childhood growing up in Gentilly’s 8th Ward. “All the neighborhood guys played sports,” he said. “Baseball, basketball, and football. Anywhere we could. In the street, backyards, and on the (Stuart R.) Bradley Elementary School playground. There were about a hundred guys and only about five girls. If there’s one thing, I can say about that neighborhood it’s that it kept us active and that was a good thing.”

Channing’s first experience with music was at Bradley Elementary located at Benefit and Humanity streets. “A teacher named Ms. Brown started the choir there and I sang in it,” he said. From there he went to Charles J. Colton Middle School on



COVER STORY

St. Claude Avenue and sang in their choir as well. Moving up to Francis T. Nicholls High School, from which he graduated, his musical mentor there was Ernest Paul.

Going on to Southern University in New Orleans, he left after a few semesters, deciding instead to continue following the flooring installation trade at which he had been working for several years prior. “I was



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHANNING ARMOUR

making good money as a contractor and so I chose that instead of staying in college,” he explained. “I’ve now been doing it for 30-plus years.”

But, even though he spent most of his time working at his day job, Channing never lost his taste for music or his drive to perform it. Teaming up eight years ago with a childhood friend, Rick David, with whom he performed at talent shows in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the two of them formed Rick David and The Funky Five. The group performed all over the city and throughout the New Orleans/Gulf South Region.

Finally breaking out as a solo artist, Channing has appeared onstage with such icons as Sharon Martin, Rockin’ Dopsie Jr., Corey Henry, James Andrews, and others. He enjoys working with whichever musicians happen to be on the stage when he comes up to the microphone. His music is inspired by a multitude of genres, including old-school soul music, R&B, zydeco, and even popular musicals.

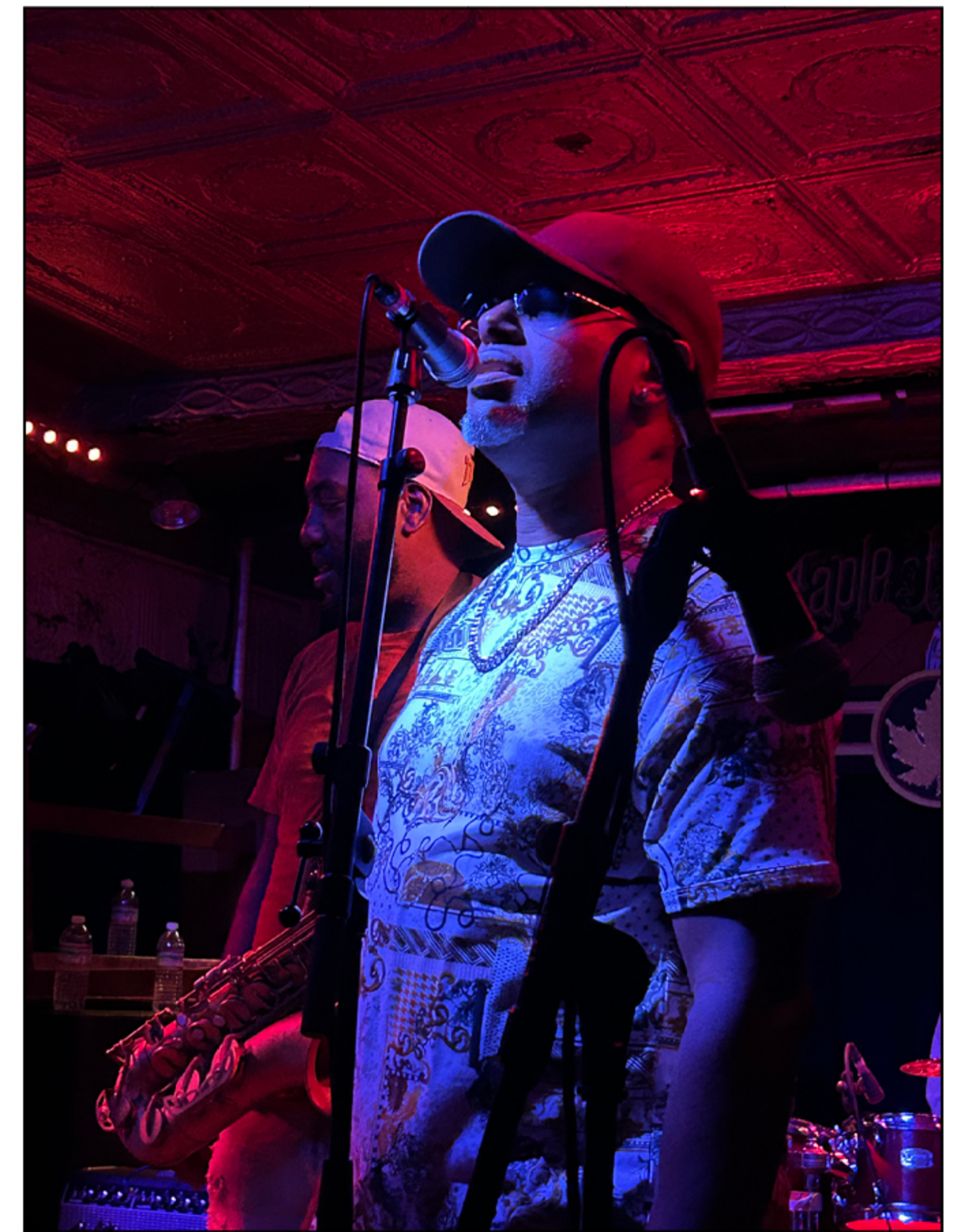
“I love doing ballads, but I also have a lot of mid-tempo and up-tempo songs in my repertoire,” Channing said. “I don’t want to be put in a box, so basically, I just do all kinds of music. Whatever comes to me, I do it.”

He has even produced and sung some second-line songs, two of which have been released as singles. One of them is called “Child Support” and the other one is “That NOLA Footwork”

“I’ve been performing on what seems like every other weekend lately,” Channing said. “I just keep getting called and I love it.”

And, like many musicians who draw much of their inspiration from a special person in their lives, Channing has his inspirational muse as well. Her name is Natalie Marshall, the daughter of Orleans Parish School Board Member Nolan Marshall Jr., who is also a renowned local photographer.

“To be honest, she is my ‘Everytary.’ That’s what I call her,” Channing said. “I don’t call her my secretary. She’s my



girlfriend, first and foremost, and she helps me with everything I do. We’ve been together for five years. We were friends at first and now we’ve made it official. She’s the best thing that’s ever happened to me.”

In his free time, Channing enjoys dining out and making the music club scene around town, listening to local bands. He also loves traveling, especially to Navarre Beach, Florida where a friend of his has a condo.

“I like to go there and to Pensacola and take in some of the local clubs,” he said. “They play my music for me, so I try to do that at least three or four times a year.”

Shortly after being interviewed for this story, Channing boarded a seven-day cruise to Cozumel and Progreso, Mexico, and the Cayman Islands.

Wrapping up, Channing said, “I just want the people to know that I’m going to keep making music. I’m going to keep entertaining people. Everyone says I have great music, so I might be the next big thing coming out of New Orleans if everything works out. I really hope so.”

And those of us here at Breakthru Media magazine agree!

To book Channing Armour for your event, email him at channingarmour@gmail.com or text Natalie Marshall at (516) 984-5452. To learn more about him and his upcoming events go to <https://channingarmour.com>.