

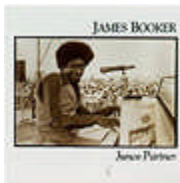
September 2, 2006

Picks
Hit List: Aaron Neville
The singer on his favorite music from his hometown of New Orleans

 By **JOHN JURGENSEN**
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Aaron Neville still hasn't returned to New Orleans. Although he is one of the artists most closely associated with the city, he says he has kept away since Hurricane Katrina hit, in part because of concerns about his asthma, and now lives in Nashville. "I have memories," says Mr. Neville, who has drawn on the city's mix of jazz, gospel and rhythm and blues in his music. The Grammy-winning singer will release a solo album of classic soul songs called "Bring It On Home" this month. Below, some of his favorite music by fellow New Orleans artists.

* * *

James Booker
"Junco Partner" (1976)


"It was like he was born with his fingers connected to the organ," Mr. Neville says of this keyboard player who performed and recorded from the 1950s through the early 1980s, before his death in 1983. Mr. Booker was renowned for his fusion of blues, gospel and even classical styles, but his drug use hampered his career.


Professor Longhair
"Rock 'n' Roll Gumbo" (1977)

Born Henry Roeland Byrd in 1918, this R&B pianist and singer shaped a rollicking style that influenced later players like Dr. John. Signature songs like "Mardi Gras in New Orleans" pervaded the city, Mr. Neville says. "We grew up in the projects where they walked at a certain tempo, like they were walking to the music."


Irma Thomas
"Sweet Soul Queen of New Orleans" (1996)


Mr. Neville says he met this soul singer in the late 1950s when she was a waitress at New Orleans's Pimlico Club. She later began a fruitful collaboration with producer Allen Toussaint, who wrote "It's Raining," one of Mr. Neville's

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favorites.

Davell Crawford

"Born With the Funk" (1999)

Along with bands like Galactic and Dumpstaphunk (led by Mr. Neville's son Ivan) popular on the jam-band circuit, this pianist and singer is among the young acts who have inherited the New Orleans sound, Mr. Neville says: "He's carrying it on."



Huey "Piano" Smith & the Clowns

"High Blood Pressure" (2005)



This New Orleans-born pianist played with Little Richard before forming his own band and recording hits like "Don't You Just Know It" and "Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie Woogie Flu." Mr. Neville says he has this "music you want to dance to" in rotation on his iPod.

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