

DELTA GROOVE

MUSIC, INC.

BOBBY JONES

Louisiana native Bobby Jones began his musical career as a blues singer in Chicago, earning his stripes on the vibrant blues scene there in the late '50s and early '60s. Years of exposure to performances by the likes of Howlin' Wolf and Muddy Waters in local clubs during their prime years provided him with the basis for a style that is now equal parts deep Delta Blues and gospel-inflected soulful testifying. Although he worked steadily in the clubs on the south and west sides of the city, and for a time was featured vocalist with Chicago's already-legendary band The Aces (formerly Little Walter's band, featuring brothers Dave and Louis Myers), Jones never made it into the recording studio as a band leader during the early phase of his musical career. His only recordings from this era came when he was featured as a guest vocalist on mid-'60s album project called Chicago Blues Union, along with the cream of Chicago's young blues talent including Mike Bloomfield, Charlie Musselwhite, Barry Goldberg and Harvey Mandel. Eventually Bobby drifted away from the blues scene, and although he continued to sing and has kept his voice in strong shape, for all practical purposes he was retired from music as a career for many years. In the early '80s he began a slow comeback, initially releasing an LP on a small label aimed towards the contemporary Southern Soul market. He followed this up with a handful of self-produced soul CDs in the '90s, which highlighted a deeply soulful singing style more powerful than ever. His song "Somebody Stole My Freak" (released under the name "Bobby Jonz") gained some attention at the 'stepper's sets' on the soul circuit, but things slowed down again by the turn of the decade.

So when his friend, founding Mannish Boys pianist Leon Blue, brought him along just to hang out during The Mannish Boys recording session in 2007, Jones was not just off the radar of most contemporary blues fans - no one at the session except Leon even knew he was a singer. He was just "Leon's buddy Bobby". Jones sat quietly in the background all day, until during a lull in the action Leon mentioned that Bobby was a singer while introducing him around, and asked if he could get up and do a number. Upon his arrival veteran Chicago blues guitarist Jody Williams, who was also guesting on the session, recognized Bobby from the old days in Chicago, and the two embraced like long-lost brothers. Jody's endorsement helped seal the deal, and when Bobby got up and performed with the band, everyone present was stunned by the power and soulfulness in his delivery. The Mannish Boys producer and leader Randy Chortkoff was so impressed that even though the band already had two excellent frontmen in Finis Tasby and Johnny Dyer, he invited Jones to join the band on the spot. Bobby was so pleased by the turn of events that when the band took a break, he went out to lunch and wrote a new song to commemorate the occasion.

This chance encounter resulted in Bobby's debut as a featured vocalist with The Mannish Boys, with a couple of songs on their "Big Plans" release in 2007. However with Johnny Dyer scaling back his touring schedule in recent times, Jones has become an increasingly important part of the band's live performances. So when The Mannish Boys entered the studio for their follow-up, "Lowdown Feelin'", Bobby Jones was spotlighted in a much larger role, fronting the band on seven songs. At these same sessions, taking advantage of the gathered all-star line up featuring The Mannish Boys plus special guests Junior Watson, Al Blake, Lynwood Slim and Fred Kaplan, Jones recorded his debut solo release for Delta Groove.

This time the spotlight is all on Bobby Jones, a seasoned veteran who is still young and vibrant enough to rock the house with the best of them. With the versatility to move from gritty Howlin' Wolf-style rockers to subtle, gospel-inflected moaners with equal amounts of conviction and full-throated soul, Jones is a force to be reckoned with on the modern blues scene, both as a permanent member of The Mannish Boys and as solo artist leading his own band.