



Free Festival at The O2

Celebrating New Orleans Music and Culture on
October 24th and 25th 2008

The unmistakable sounds, sights, tastes and styles of New Orleans are set to descend on London later this year when, for two days in October, The O2 will become home to Festival New Orleans. Coinciding with the New Orleans Saints' official NFL game against the San Diego Chargers at Wembley, London is preparing for one of the largest ever celebrations of New Orleans music & culture outside of Louisiana and the USA.

A city steeped in history, New Orleans is famed around the world for the wealth and diversity of its cultural heritage. 'The Big Easy' has a deserved reputation as a party town, where the residents and visitors know how to have a good time and let their hair down. It is this spirit of energetic exuberance that The O2 will welcome in October, as the capital prepares to fully embrace the character of Louisiana's greatest city.

As well as performances from over 20 bands and musicians including *Dr. John, Allen Toussaint, Kermit Ruffins, Marcia Ball, BeauSoleil, The Rebirth Brass Band, John Mooney* and *Buckwheat Zydeco*, the free undercover two day event will feature Louisiana food demonstrations, the *Mardis Gras Indians* and a host of authentic New Orleans attractions, including a recreation of the French Quarter's famous Bourbon Street.

Since opening in June 2007 The O2 swiftly confirmed its position as the world's most popular music venue and is ideally suited to host this extraordinary celebration of New Orleans culture, the first festival ever to be held at the venue. Using all the venues and the full extent of the facilities on offer, The O2 will present music, performance arts, dancing, traditional New Orleans style cuisine and more besides across three stages and one performance area. The venue itself incorporates a 20,000 seat arena, the 2,350 capacity indigO2 venue, the brand new Matter music venue, an eleven screen Vue cinema, twenty bars and restaurants, and much more. The venue attracts up to 50,000 visitors a day, depending on what is on the entertainment schedule.

Lieutenant Governor of Louisiana Mitch Landrieu *"We learned from our research that potential visitors to Louisiana, especially our international friends, wanted more information about what there is to see and do in the state and they especially want to know what Louisiana locals do for fun. We listened and we are bringing Louisiana's unique culture to London with the largest showcase of Louisiana sports, food, music and arts ever seen outside of the borders of the United States."*

Quint Davis, CEO of Festival Productions, Inc.- New Orleans *"This is the largest gathering of Louisiana artists ever assembled for a festival outside of the United States, For about two years Festival Productions and AEG Live have considered producing a major international event showcasing Louisiana culture. With the scheduling of the Saints football game on October 26 by the NFL and the availability of AEG's state-of-the-art O2 facility, we simply couldn't pass up this perfect opportunity to launch Festival New Orleans."*

David Campbell, Chief Executive of AEG Europe, owners and operators of The O2 added: *"Festival New Orleans will be The O2's first festival and will no doubt prove a must see event for the capital. Autumn at The O2 is looking pretty good already and bringing some of the culture and incomparable music of New Orleans to The O2 is a great addition to an already exciting calendar."*

Stuart Galbraith, of Kilimanjaro Live LTD, says, *"New Orleans culture is some of the most famous and festive in the world. We are greatly looking forward to offering a complete New Orleans experience to London, and The O2 is the perfect place to present it."*

Proud partners of the festival include, Louisiana Office of Tourism, Tabasco, Southern Comfort, Marriott London West India Quay and The Greenwich Express by Holiday Inn, all of whom are contributing unique aspects to the event to ensure its success.

Artist line up: Dr John, Allen Toussaint, Buckwheat Zydeco, BeauSoleil avec Michael Doucet, Rebirth Brass Band, Kermit Ruffins and The Barbecue Swingers, Marcia Ball, John Mooney and Bluesiana, The Anointed Jackson Sisters, New Birth Brass Band, TBC Brass Band, Big Chief Monk Bordreaux, Apache Hunters and Hardhead Hunters Mardi Gras Indian Tribes, Young Men Olympia Untouchables Social Aid and Pleasure Club, We Are One Secondliners, New Orleans Mardi Gras Indian Rhythm Section

For full artist details please go to www.theO2.co.uk

For more information or to arrange interviews with any of the artists performing please contact Sheela Bates or Joe Baxter at **Air**, 0207 386 1600 / sheela@airmtm.com or joe@airmtm.com

