

JIMMY LESLIE



Surfin' The Swamp

Jimmy Leslie is a San Francisco-based singer, guitar player, and writer who is inspired by classic rock and New Orleans funk. Moving melodies and greasy grooves—the sea and the swamp—converge through unique compositions.

The single “Sweetwater Sun” (featured on A Taste of Triple A’s July compilation) is an excellent example. Through his work with *Guitar Player* magazine, Jimmy met Carlos Santana. He inspired the song, which transports the listener to the Golden Gate via a radiant vocal and a reverb-drenched guitar bed. But the rhythm is brought up from the bayou. Galactic’s funky drummer **Stanton Moore** and bassist **Robert Mercurio** provide the pocket that propels Leslie’s West Coast inspiration.

“When I hired them for a session, I realized it was easier and more fun to suit my songs to their grooves than the other way around,” Leslie says. “So I groomed a group of tunes, and went to Galactic’s studio in New Orleans to record a marathon rhythm section session. I cut more guitar and vocals back in my home studio near the beach.”

Leslie’s songwriting has depth and range. “Sweetwater Sun” is balanced by the brooding “**Southern Line**” and the melancholy “**Sidewalk Diamonds**.” The funk epic “**Wash it Out**” appears on *Fortune Cookies II*, a compilation of the Bay Area’s best.

The San Francisco scene benefitted from an unexpected influx of seasoned musicians when Hurricane Katrina flooded New Orleans. Jimmy began jamming with a group called the **Honey Island Swamp Band**. Leslie’s live ensemble developed from that connection, and has since expanded to include a stable of top-notch players from the Bay to the Bayou. In addition to other venues, Jimmy performs regularly across the street from the fabled Fillmore auditorium at John Lee Hooker’s **Boom Boom Room**, which Leslie calls “A portal between the New Orleans and San Francisco scenes.”

Jimmy actually grew up in Toledo, Ohio, which lies less than an hour south of Detroit. He fell in love with New Orleans when he saw the **Funky Meters** in 1996, but moved to San Francisco in 1998 to pursue a gig opportunity. “I left my heart in New Orleans, and found my soul in San Francisco,” he says.

The material and the audience develop as Leslie’s experience expands. His primary current side project is playing and singing with Shana Morrison (roots singer-songwriter and daughter of Van Morrison). Past projects include: LunaGroove (livetronica), Visitor Jim (Alternative rock with Jim Greer), and Samantha Stollenwerk (singer-songwriter/jam-band). The Jimmy Leslie Connection currently consists of drummer Tony Dunn (Tree of Frogs), bassist Jonathan Herrera (Zigaboo Modeliste, *Bass Player*), and keyboardist Joel Nelson (Bo Diddley). Check the Web sites for the latest show information as Jimmy supports *Surfin’ the Swamp*, and prepares new material for his next release, which will weigh heavier on the swampy side and be called, *Bay to Bayou*.

“Jimmy Leslie drops a funk and pop mix that’s all his own.” –Pacific Sun



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