



Chris Mulé: guitar, vocals
Aaron Wilkinson: mandolin, guitar, vocals
Sam Price: bass, vocals
Garland Paul: drums, vocals



Honey Island Swamp Band Announces Their New Album, *Wishing Well*

NEW ORLEANS — Great music begins with great songs, and great songs are what the **Honey Island Swamp Band** is all about. When they formed the band, **Aaron Wilkinson** and **Chris Mulé** had already established promising songwriting careers, both individually and as a team. Collaborating with fellow songwriter and **Alligator Records** recording artist **Eric Lindell**, the two were instrumental in the writing for Lindell's acclaimed 2008 release *Low on Cash, Rich in Love*.

With *Wishing Well*, the first full-length release from Honey Island Swamp Band, both musicians bring their songwriting to new levels with their most fully-developed material to date. From the opening bars of the title track to the album's final note, *Wishing Well* covers the entire landscape of southern roots music that has made the band's live shows and eponymous 2007 EP favorites among music lovers of all genres.





Rockers like “Wishing Well” and “Seeds and Stems” evoke *Exile on Main Street*-era Stones, while the mid-tempo funk of “Natural Born Fool” and “Till the Money’s Gone” capture the bluesy soul of Delbert McClinton and early Black Crowes. Classic country fans will recognize the bar-room emotion of “I Can Tell” and “Dark End of the Bar,” while R&B lovers will appreciate the New Orleans flavor of “Killing Me” and the Stevie Wonder-esque “Expression of Love.” Eleven of the album’s thirteen songs testify to the strength of Wilkinson and Mulé’s songwriting, while inspired covers of Washboard Sam’s “Sophisticated Mama” and William Bell’s “You Don’t Miss Your Water” reflect the band’s wide range of influences.

The album was produced by **Tom Drummond**, bassist for New Orleans’ own **Better Than Ezra**. Drummond recorded the album at Ezra’s **Fudge Studio**, where the immediate challenge became whittling down the band’s extensive body of original songs to a manageable album-length recording. After settling on a set of songs representative of the band’s eclectic sound, the core group – Wilkinson on mandolin and guitar, Mulé on guitar, **Sam Price** on bass and **Garland Paul** on drums – took on the task of capturing their live energy on tape.

“It was a pleasure working with a band with such a wide variety of instrumentation,” Drummond says. “We wanted to make the record feel as organic as possible while still taking advantage of modern recording techniques. These guys kept me on my toes for sure. There are some great performances on this album to go along with some great songs.”

To bring their vision to life, the group invited an A-list of friends and former collaborators to get on board for the new record. New Orleans stalwart **Marc Adams** handles the keyboard work, while veteran saxophonist **Jimmy Carpenter (Eric Lindell Band, Jimmy Thackery)** contributes as both player and horn arranger. **Mark Mullins** and **Craig Klein (Bonorama)** round out the horn section, while legendary sousaphonist **Kirk Joseph (Dirty Dozen Brass Band, Backyard Groove)** holds down the bottom on several tracks. Multi-instrumentalist, vocalist and producer **Sean Carey (Eric Lindell Band)** adds his unique harmonica and vocal sounds to several tracks, while the dynamite duo of **Gina Brown (Anutha Level, Tony Clifton)** and **Evelyn Montgomery (Tony Clifton)** takes the band’s vocal harmonies to sultry depths and stratospheric heights. Rounding out this group of extraordinarily talented contributors are accordionist **Greg Schatz (Schatzy)** and clarinetist **Tom Fischer**.

The band will release *Wishing Well* April 17 as part of its debut performance at **New Orleans’ French Quarter Festival**. Performances at the **New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival**, the **Bayou Boogaloo** and the **YLC Wednesdays at the Square** concert series round out a month-long album launch in New Orleans, after which the band will tour nationally in support of the new release.

Visit www.honevislandswampband.com for complete bios, tour dates and additional information.





About the Honey Island Swamp Band

For most of the past decade, **Aaron Wilkinson** and **Chris Mulé** established themselves as top-notch musicians and songwriters, most notably as members of the **Eric Lindell** band. The two were major contributors as both players and writers for Lindell's 2006 **Alligator Records** debut ***Change in the Weather*** and his follow up, 2007's ***Low on Cash, Rich in Love***. "**Lay Back Down**," a Lindell/Wilkinson composition and the first single from *Low on Cash*, debuted at number 13 on the AAA radio charts and was featured in the band's live performance on "**Late Night with Conan O'Brien**." Wilkinson's "**Josephine**" received major airplay as the album's second single, while collaborations between all three musicians have been favorites of DJs in major US markets, internationally and on both **Sirius** and **XM** satellite stations over the past year.

After years of touring around the country and around the world in support of Lindell's releases and with various other bands, Wilkinson and Mulé formed the **Honey Island Swamp Band** as a vehicle for a huge backlog of original songs the two had written but never recorded. The band came together in San Francisco, where both musicians were marooned after Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans. A random encounter with fellow New Orleanians **Sam Price** (bass) and **Garland Paul** (drums) at John Lee Hooker's legendary **Boom Boom Room** on Fillmore Street proved fortuitous as club owner Alex Andreas offered the group a weekly gig on the spot.

Sunday nights at the Boom Boom Room soon became a favorite of Bay Area roots music lovers, who have a long-standing affinity for New Orleans music and musicians. Two months into the residency, sound technician Robert Gatley approached the band with a rare opportunity — he wanted to record a Honey Island Swamp Band album at the legendary **Record Plant** studios in **Sausalito**, where he worked as a sound engineer.

"The tunes and talent were just pouring out of these guys," Gatley says. "I'd been missing that funky bayou sound and Honey Island had the club jumping. I couldn't wait to get them on tape."

The recording came together beautifully, with Wilkinson and Mulé both contributing favorite originals. The album opens with Wilkinson's "Lined Up Losers," a boozy rocker chronicling life on the road and featuring blistering piano work from **Chris Burns**, long time keyboardist for vocalist **Maria Muldaur**. Mulé's "Slip" follows with its signature mandolin riff and the unmistakable pulse of **Dirty Dozen Brass Band** founder and legendary New Orleans sousaphonist **Kirk Joseph**.

A pair of Wilkinson compositions in the middle of the album reflect the band's love of country music; "Cloud Hangin Over Me" offers a wistful longing for home, while "Nadine" tells the story of a young man's fateful love for a turn-of-the-century French Quarter parlor maid. Mulé's "Cast a Spell," the most complex tune on the album, returns to a more contemporary jazz-blues sound, featuring New Orleans saxophonist **Snakebite Jenkins** on tenor sax.





The album concludes with another set of originals from Wilkinson. **Kirk Joseph** returns for the reggae-tinged “Rosaria,” while the rocker “Reincarnation Blues” closes the set. Both have been favorites of DJs on legendary New Orleans radio station WWOZ, enjoying regular rotation on several weekly shows.

2009 has already brought big things for the band, as they mark the release of their first full-length album, *Wishing Well*, with performances at **New Orleans’ French Quarter Festival**, the **2009 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival**, the **Federal Hill Street Festival** in Baltimore, MD, and the **Chenango Blues Festival** in Norwich, NY, among many others.



HONEY ISLAND SWAMP BAND

