



Hog Branch Bio (Short Version)

Should you ever need a lift, a new Austin quintet called Hog Branch can help get you back into the groove — and I mean, right now! This grooving soul/blues outfit combines jazz-filled heart with country soul on their self-titled debut album, *Hog Branch*, on Blue Vada Records (June 10, 2022 release).

Trying to nail down this eclectic group is no easy task. The genres and taglines that the band have garnered since their formation in 2018 include **Wetlands Soul**, **Funk From The Farm**, **Country Soul No Limits** and **Bacon Grease Grooves**. You can hear bits of all these on their debut release, recorded at Ice Cream Factory Studios by Matt Parmenter. Hog Branch covers all the swampy turf you might imagine. And the ten songs on *Hog Branch* create a nostalgic 1970s gumbo, spicing the peak elements of 70s FM Gold with modern swagger and contemporary worldview.

Founder and touring veteran Rick Watson initially formed Hog Branch to honor his piano-playing Momma, Carolyn Rose. She started him in music lessons early and raised him on a diet of gospel, rock-n-roll, swamp pop, and boogie-woogie. He recalls hearing her play hymns on Sunday mornings on the upright Baldwin at Shiloh Church — just hours after listening on Saturday night from the gravel parking lot of a rural Louisiana dancehall where his parents danced inside to Fats Domino. Hog Branch is the creek that divides the family farm from that little country church where she played and is now buried. But it's also the border where conflicting styles meet in harmony.

As Rick heard Momma yell to Daddy at a Jerry Lee Lewis show at the "Music Box" in Gonzales, Louisiana, many many moons ago, "You were born knowing how to dance to this music!"

Links

Web: HogBranch.com
Label: BlueVadaRecords.com
Instagram: @HogBranchGrooveBand
Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/HogBranch>
Twitter: @HogBranchGroove
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HogBranchGrooveBand>

Review copies (digital and/or physical) available upon request.

Media contact: Arthur Richard, hogbranch@gmail.com

Hog Branch Bio (including info about band members and album tracks)

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The quintet's instrumental interpretation of "Let The Music Take Your Mind" (a song by Kool & The Gang covered in 1973 by Grant Green) leads off the album. Hog Branch filters the songs funk and jazz roots through the lens of New Orleans rhythm & blues. From the first beats, Hog Branch serves up the musical proclamation, Let the party commence!

"Getting To The Groove" — the first single — is an original funk tune in the spirit of Maceo Parker (available on all streaming platforms and at BlueVadaRecords.com on May 27). The track is introduced by drummer Michael Bahan with a slinky bassline added from founder Rick Watson. Then the band shares vocals, imploring the listener to "Give it everything you got" — after all, that's what the band is doing on this hip-shaker track! Smoking solos from guitarist Matt Schmidt and keyboardist Dave Aaronoff are bookended by soaring bridges courtesy of saxman Willie D (aka Will Daniel). Guest guitarist Nick Gonzales adds Prince-like syncopated flavor to "Getting To The Groove" as well.

Improvisation has been a main ingredient in the recipe from Day 1, and the band continues to "embrace the chaos" in recording and live shows today. A prime example is the album closer on *Hog Branch*, the Scofield-penned "Hottentot" which was recorded live at The Boat in Austin — when the band was stretching out and had no idea the song was being recorded. At one point you can hear Rick encourage Willie D on sax, "C'mon!"

The remaining songs on Hog Branch, as you might expect, cover a lot of musical ground. Highlights include original tunes "Tahitian Pearl" a blues from Willie D, Dave Aaronoff's heartbreaking ballad "Walking Papers", a signature funk instrumental called "Hog Branch Strut", the Latin-tinged "Afraid I'll Wake" (featuring The Gin Racers' Nicole Tenneyuque and NYC drummer Rubin Nizri), and the sultry "Slow Grind" sung by Matt Schmidt. The follow-up single from the album is the Crescent City traditional "Careless Love" featuring Matt Schmidt's vocals and six-string work.

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