

GLEN DAVID ANDREWS

"One of the giant talents of New Orleans."

Quint Davis, Producer, New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, May 1, 2009

GLEN DAVID ANDREWS hopped down from an outdoor stage at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival in May, leaving his trombone behind. He sang in a powerful raspy voice, inflected with just a hint of Louis Armstrong. Segueing from one song to another - the controversial 1920s classic "**Black and Blue**" to the more recent brass-band tune "**Cell Block Nine**," for example - he sprinkled each with improvised lyrics. "It's my time," he shouted between numbers.

Andrews, 30, has a lanky 6-foot-4-inch body and a mercurial personality. The brass-band music and traditional jazz he was raised on are still his greatest loves. "The musicians that played in my neighborhood, they brought me out of the womb," he says, not by way of metaphor. According to his mother, Vana Acker, when she was pregnant, Anthony "Tuba Fats" Lacen, a traditional-music icon and mentor to many musicians, came by and blew his horn outside the house. He said the sound of the tuba would induce labor. Glen David was born the next day.

As a young boy, whenever a second-line parade passed by, Andrews tagged along with his older brother, Derrick Tabb, who is now the snare drummer with the Rebirth Brass Band. Back then, Andrews played bass drum. At 12, he picked up the trombone. Rather than studying formally, he absorbed musical skills from neighbors such as "Frogman" Joseph, Harry Nance, Harold DeJean and other local heroes - "the cream of the crop," Andrews says. Soon he was playing for money alongside Tuba Fats in Jackson Square, in the middle of the French Quarter.



He was recruited into a brass band led by his younger cousin, Troy Andrews, and played in both the New Birth, Lil Rascals, and Tremé brass bands, among others, lending equal measures of musicianship and showmanship to each. Now he fronts his own high-powered ensemble that veers from traditional jazz to gospel, rock, blues and funk, all in the same show.

"Aside from being a great musician, Glen David has absorbed a fading tradition," says Ben Jaffe, who runs Preservation Hall, where Andrews will be returning for a regular turn in the fall. "He's a link for his generation to something important., but he also has a rare enthusiasm and energy that makes it all special and exciting for even casual listeners." Though most contemporary brass-band musicians have embraced the more funk and pop-oriented sound of say, the Rebirth band, a shift that began some 30 years ago, Andrews always includes some of the old hymns, spirituals and trad-jazz tunes in his performances. He released a live gospel CD, "**Walking Through Heaven's Gate**", on Threadhead Records in 2009, probably the first CD to have captured on record the entrancing quality of Andrews' performances at venues like Jazzfest, Lincoln Center, Preservation Hall, Tipitina's, and most powerfully of all, on the streets, where it all began.

He's appeared in **HBO's Treme**, playing himself and performing one of his original tunes, **Knock Wit Me**. He has also appeared in numerous documentaries, including **Faubourg Tremé: The Untold Story of Black New Orleans**, by Lolis Eric Elie, Swiss filmmaker Peter Entell's chronicle of the controversial, post-Katrina proposed closing of St. Augustine Church, **Shake the Devil Off**, and Spike Lee's two epics about Katrina, **When the Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts**, and **If Da Creek Don't Rise**.

some excerpts from
Jazziz 9/08 by Larry Blumenfeld

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