

Kermit Ruffins - The Big Butter & Egg Man (1994)

Written by bluesever

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1 *I'll Drink Ta Dat* 3:54 2 *Big Butter And Egg Man* 4:06 3 *Besame Mucho* 4:07 4 *Out Of Left Field* 4:46 5 *Undertaker Man* 3:59 6 *Leshianne* 3:08 7 *Struttin' With Some Barbecue* 4:17 8 *If You're A Viper* 3:10 9 *Li'l Liza Jane* 3:53 10 *West Indies Jazz Dance* 3:57
Trumpet, Vocals – Kermit Ruffins Drums – Jerry Anderson Piano – Dwight Fitch Saxophone – Roderick Paulin Trombone – Corey Henry Tuba – Philip Fraizer

With his outgoing personality, New Orleans-style trumpet playing, and likable singing style, Kermit Ruffins has the potential to develop into a new Louis Prima. This CD from Justice hints at his potential, but it is quite erratic. Some of the songs (particularly those featuring the tenor of Roderick Paulin) are too modern; Ruffins's solos are streaky, and the varied material does not all succeed. Best are such good-time numbers as "I'll Drink Ta Dat," "The Undertaker Man" and "Li'l Liza Jane," although one wishes that this rendition of "Struttin' with Some Barbecue" were a lot stronger. ---Scott Yanow, AllMusic Review

New Orleans of the '90s has two young trumpeters in their 20s, Kermit Ruffins and Nicholas Payton, who resemble the greatest New Orleans trumpeter of them all, Louis Armstrong. Payton, who bears the closest physical resemblance, does the best job of echoing Satchmo's piercing, adventurous jazz solos. Ruffins, whose physical resemblance is less exact, is the heir of Armstrong as pop entertainer--the warm singer, the charming joker, and the tuneful trumpeter. Six of the 10 tracks on Ruffins's second solo album, *The Big Butter & Egg Man*, are vocal numbers, and it's on those that he bridges the gap between New Orleans jazz of the '20s and New Orleans R&B of the '50s. This is most obvious on "Li'l Liza Jane," an old Dixieland standard which was later recorded by Fats Domino and the Neville Brothers. Ruffins and his two former bandmates in the ReBirth Brass Band--saxophonist Roderick Paulin and tubaist Philip

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Frazier--get a Dixieland horn arrangement swinging, but the gospel-ish vocals and syncopated dance beat come straight out of R&B. The same approach of sophisticated harmonies, infectious rhythms, and exuberant humor is applied to the old Tin Pan Alley title tune, to Stuff Smith's 1930s marijuana song "If You're a Viper," and to Ruffins's guided tour of his hometown, "I'll Drink Ta Dat." The four instrumentals, featuring music by Armstrong, Ellington, and Ruffins, are perfectly respectable, but it's Ruffins's vocal showcases which separate him from the pack. ---Geoffrey Himes, Editorial Reviews

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