

REVIEWS

DR. JOHN AND THE LOWER 911

*Tribal*

[429]

The advance hype on *Tribal* posited it as Dr. John's funkiest and earthiest in years, as if anything Mac Rebennack touches could possibly not be funky and earthy. But there is something to be said for the rest of the hype. The album more than vaguely recalls those early records when he was still billed as "Dr. John the Night Tripper"—a time when his mesh of otherworldly, slinky voodoo and the deepest of indigenous New Orleans rhythms was still so far off the grid that few knew what to make of it. *Tribal* isn't a throwback—Dr. John knows that in post-Katrina NOLA there's no going back (borne out by the anthemic "Only in Amerika"). But on several tracks, particularly the mid-album triad of "Jinky Jinx," "Manoovas" (featuring Derek Trucks on slide guitar) and the title cut, the Doc finds that familiar, ancient place and lives in it long enough to reawaken a mood he created long ago. —Jeff Tamarkin

'The Doc finds a familiar, ancient place and lives in it long enough to reawaken a mood he created long ago.'

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DIGITAL DILEMMAS
ACES OF BASS