

For Immediate Release



***Cha Wa* Combines New Orleans Street Music Traditions
of Mardi Gras Indians, Brass Bands, and Funk Music
on New Studio Album *Spyboy***

**Featuring
Lead Singer Spyboy J'Wan Boudreaux
and guests Big Chief Monk Boudreaux and Nigel Hall,
plus Producer Ben Ellman**

New Orleans, Louisiana – Monday, March 26, 2018 – The Crescent City’s explosive ensemble *Cha Wa* will release its sophomore studio album *Spyboy*, featuring its 21-year old lead singer **Spyboy J’Wan Boudreaux**, on Friday, April 27, 2018. *Spyboy* is an impeccable blend of traditional New Orleans street music styles transformed into a modern mix of fiery, toe-tapping sounds. The album drops in advance of the band’s headlining performance at the **New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival** on the Jazz & Heritage Stage (April 28). A collection of classic compositions, two covers (“Hey Baby” and “Soul Rebel”), and seven newly written, brass-infused songs, *Spyboy* was produced by **Galactic’s Ben Ellman** and features special guests **Big Chief Monk Boudreaux (The Wild Magnolias, HBO’s Treme)**, **Nigel Hall (Lettuce, Nth Power)**, and **Danica Hart**. Interviews are available upon request.

Dating back to the late 1800s, the Mardi Gras Indian tradition began when African-American men first marched in Native American dress through the streets of New Orleans on Mardi Gras day. The tradition, which includes a host of songs shared among the various tribes, has been kept alive for over a century and is as vital as ever. Over the course of the last half century, Mardi Gras Indians have influenced the biggest names in New Orleans music: The Meters, Dr. John, the Marsalis family, the Neville Brothers, Trombone Shorty and others. The most prominent Mardi Gras Indian today is Monk Boudreaux, the Big Chief of the Golden Eagles tribe, and his grandson (who holds the position of Spyboy in the tribe) J’Wan Boudreaux is stepping up to propel their culture forward. Add in healthy doses of brass band and funk music, and you have the sound of Cha Wa!

Breaking out on the inimitable NOLA music scene, Cha Wa was founded by drummer **Joe Gelini** after he paid his dues playing behind Monk Boudreaux and other iconic Crescent City artists. The band is unique in combining three of the major threads of New Orleans music, and the fact that its members compose original songs in that vein. With songwriting contributions to *Spyboy* from band members **Joe Maize, Thaddeus ‘Peanut’ Ramsey, Ari Teitel and Clifton ‘Spug’ Smith**, along with J’Wan and Gelini, Cha Wa ignites an entire new generation with contemporary anthems set ablaze by its high-flying ensemble.

Big Chief Monk Boudreaux guests on two songs. One, “Visible Means of Support,” which Monk wrote along with Gelini, recalls the days of the Jim Crow South when Monk would be unlawfully stopped by the police as a young man while simply walking on the street. The cops would invoke an archaic law (which required a ‘visible means of support’) and if Monk couldn’t produce a paystub or proof of employment, he would be thrown in jail. As the lyric goes, “I used to go to jail every weekend, just because the color of my skin...if I didn’t pay the bail, didn’t pay the fine, I would have to do the time.”

“Get On Out The Way” depicts an Indian tribe coming down the street, and emphasizes that there is only one thing to do: move. “Golden Crown” pays tribute to the patriarch of the tribe, as the Big Chief is the only one with a golden crown. The song “Geechie Boom Boom” is for two mentors: Norwood ‘Geechie’ Johnson, who introduced the bass drum to The Wild Magnolias, and J’Wan’s cousin Boom Boom, one of NOLA’s most in-demand drummers.

It is common among New Orleans brass bands to cover pop songs (such as Rebirth Brass Band’s “Casanova” or Hot 8 Brass Band’s “Sexual Healing”). Cha Wa’s rendition of “Hey Baby” is sung as a duet between J’Wan and Danica Hart. With Hart’s vocals high up in the mix, Cha Wa introduces a female perspective to challenge standard gender roles. Meanwhile, J’Wan’s take on the Bob Marley classic “Soul Rebel” is an act of resistance against oppression.

With a heritage that is Choctaw, Cherokee and African American, J’Wan thanks Native Americans for being the first to take in runaway slaves on his spoken-word track “J’Wan’s Story.” And “Chapters” is a song J’Wan wrote which reflects on his own life history.

Whereas “Cha Wa” and “Spy On Fiya” turn up the heat at the start of *Spyboy*, the classic track “I’ll Fly Away” closes out the album in dedication to former band member Steve Malinowski, who unexpectedly and tragically passed away from an aneurysm the night of a Cha Wa concert. “I’ll Fly Away” is sung acapella by Malinowski’s friend Danica Hart.

The result of this intoxicating mix of spirit and soul is *Spyboy*!

Cha Wa ***Spyboy***

1. Cha Wa
2. Get On Out The Way
3. Hey Baby
4. Spy On Fiya
5. Visible Means Of Support
6. J’Wan’s Story
7. Chapters
8. My Indian Red
9. Can’t Cage A Bird
10. Soul Rebel
11. Geechie Boom Boom
12. Golden Crown
13. I’ll Fly Away

Media Contact: Jesse P. Cutler, JP Cutler Media, jesse@jpcutlermedia.com, 510.338.0881

###