

## **The Band Plays On: "Orleans" Cheers Co-Founder John Hall's Congressional Victory; Continues on its Rare "Work in Progress" Path**

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Orlando, FL (PRWeb) November 21, 2006 -- One of the founding members of the American band Orleans was recently elected to United States Congress (N.Y.-19). John Hall will soon be serving his state and country in Washington DC starting in January. The band has agreed they will forge on, including Mr. Hall in select future shows while continuing with returning Orleans member Dennis "Fly" Amero. Orleans - with both Hall and Amero - will soon release its first live concert DVD. The group will continue to play shows to promote the new studio album, "Dancin' In The Moonlight."

Few popular music groups have been performing and recording with their original members for decades. Even fewer can claim that it has been a vehicle for a future United States Congressman. Orleans, best known for the 1970s hits "Still the One," "Dance With Me" and "Love Takes Time" has done both.

Formed in Woodstock, NY in 1972 by John Hall, brothers Lance and Larry Hoppen and the late Wells Kelly, Orleans quickly engaged itself in socio-political issues, playing to support 1972 presidential candidate George McGovern and at women's rights benefits and the like in between regular gigs. Backstage, conversations amongst the band members were as likely to center on the environment, Viet Nam or Watergate as anything else.

Adding to each other's strengths, John was the most prolific songwriter while Larry Hoppen supplied the lead voice for the radio hits. However, several album tracks featured Hall singing on the subjects of oil dependency (Cold Spell), Nixon's administration (It All Comes Back), etc. --- "issue" songs the entire group was proud to put forth.

After Orleans established national radio popularity, Hall left in 1977 to pursue a solo career. Orleans (Hoppen and Kelly) continued to tour and record; Hall became immersed in the anti-nuclear power movement. He helped raise funds and awareness through MUSE (Musicians United for Safe Energy), which organized 1979's Madison Square Garden "No Nukes" concerts, producing a hit album featuring music megastars such as Bruce Springsteen, the Doobie Bros., Crosby, Stills & Nash, James Taylor and Carly Simon. Hall's song "Power" became the anthem for the movement.

After Wells Kelly's untimely death in 1984, a memorial gig reunited the Hoppens with Hall. Larry Hoppen confides, "It was with that turning point and the perspective it brought that we started to refer to our Orleans project as a perpetual 'work in progress.'" The subsequent album, recorded in Nashville, features appearances by Chet Atkins, Ricky Skaggs, Steve Wariner, Bela Fleck and other Country Music legends. It includes the Hall song "Lady Liberty," which celebrates America's melting pot history and New York's famous symbol of it.

Since 1990, Orleans - John, Lance and Larry - has released three more studio CDs and two others recorded live, while continuing to perform for progressive candidates like Gov. Jerry Brown and Rep. Maurice Hinchey (D-NY, 26th). They appeared at "Woodstock' 94," toured with Fleetwood Mac, REO Speedwagon, Pat Benetar and on their own, here and in Japan.

When John announced to Larry and Lance in late 2005 that he intended to run for Congress, all three made contingency plans: Orleans would play shows with Hall as schedules allowed while simultaneously reintegrating Dennis "Fly" Amero, who had played guitar with Orleans when John went solo earlier on. Hall got busy campaigning while the revamped Orleans toured and, this past July, sang the National Anthem at Fenway Park.

Most recently, the band filmed its first-ever live concert DVD. Due out in early 2007, it features an expanded band including both John and Fly, performing much of Orleans' musical legacy from its three and a half decades.

Bonnie Raitt and Jackson Browne - both of whom Orleans shared the stage with often during the 1970s - as well as many other music stars strongly and publicly supported Hall's congressional bid. As evidenced by his victory, music in general and Orleans in particular have been fertile ground on which to nurture a grassroots political campaign.

Now that Hall will be a U.S. Representative (D-NY, 19th) first and foremost, he and the Hoppens agree that, on the rare occasions when it is possible, all three Orleans co-founders will still gladly reunite. In January 2007, Hall will be sworn into office while Orleans will be playing a fundraising show in Toronto for S.A.S.S, a unique organization that helps develop young Canadian students' songwriting and performance abilities.

To mark its 35th anniversary, in February the band will play in St. Thomas, VI. The show is aptly called "Dancin' in the Moonlight," which is both the title track from Orleans' latest CD and a song on which Larry Hoppen played guitar for the original 1969 recording. Ironically, the promoter of the concert in St Thomas is also the former owner of that very recording studio, which happens to be the place where Larry and John first met!

Orleans, including Hall, will appear on PBS' "My Music" concert series in 2007 (filmed in May 2006) as the journey continues.

On The Web:

[www.OrleansOnline.com](http://www.OrleansOnline.com)

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**Contact Information**

**LISA EICHHOLZER**

Orleans

<http://www.orleansonline.com>

518-466-8900

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