

= Tipitina =

" Tipitina " is a song written and made famous by Professor Longhair . The song has been widely covered , and the Professor Longhair version was recorded in 1953 for Atlantic Records . " Tipitina " was first released in 1953 and rereleased on the album New Orleans Piano in 1972 . The song , which is considered a New Orleans music standard , was added to the US National Recording Registry in 2011 because of its cultural significance . The subject of " Tipitina " is unknown . The New Orleans music venue , Tipitina 's , was named for the song , and Tipitina 's Foundation bears the Tipitina name .

= = Background = =

Pianist Henry Roeland " Roy " Byrd , known as Professor Longhair , was a prominent New Orleans musician . He played syncopated music that combined blues , ragtime , zydeco , rumba , mambo and calypso . His singing was characterized as hoarse . His peripatetic recording career began in 1949 with " Mardi Gras In New Orleans " and " She 's Got No Hair " with a group credited as " Longhair and his Shuffling Hungarians . " A year later at Mercury Records and Roy Byrd & his Blues Jumpers rerecorded " She 's Got No Hair " as " Bald Head " , which broke through as his only national R & B hit . In 1953 , at Atlantic Records , he recorded " Tipitina " , which is now regarded as his " signature song " .

= = Details = =

The melody is derived from Champion Jack Dupree 's " Junker 's Blues " . Rolling Stone described the song as a " rumba @-@ style track " that has become a quintessential New Orleans standard . According to the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame , which inducted Longhair in 1992 , " The hum @-@ along nonsense syllables and stutter stepping left @-@ hand rhythm of ' Tiptina ' is both a symbol and staple of New Orleans music . "

Allen Toussaint described learning the song as a " rite of passage " . The subject of the song is unknown . Among the speculated subjects are a place and a person . Hugh Laurie recorded a cover of the song around the time of its selection to the National Recording Registry . He commented about the mystery as follows : " I thought it was better not knowing . It adds to its mystique and its power to make me laugh and cry all in one go . "

After the song 's original release it only became a hit in New Orleans . However , it was not that successful in the rest of the United States . The 1953 Professor Longhair version and the 1972 Dr. John version are both considered " Classic non Hot 100 songs " .

= = Critical response = =

In 2011 , the song was included in the National Recording Registry . Byrd received a Grammy Hall of Fame Award for this song . The song was listed among the 500 Songs That Shaped Rock in 1994 by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame . The song was also listed in the 1001 Songs : The Great Songs of All Time and the Artists , Stories and Secrets Behind Them ( 2006 ) by Toby Creswell as well as the Rock Song Index : The 7500 Most Important Songs for the Rock and Roll Era ( 2005 ) by Bruce Pollock .

The National Recording Registry announcement for this song said the song is " a signature distillation of the musical ideas and personality that inspired and influenced such New Orleans pianists as Fats Domino , Huey " Piano " Smith , James Booker , Dr. John and Allen Toussaint " . According to Creswell , " Tipitina " " marshalled New Orleans rhythm into a sparkling package " .

= = Selected recorded versions = =

The song has been widely covered .

Professor Longhair : from New Orleans Piano ( 1972 , recorded 1953 )  
Dr. John : from Dr. John 's Gumbo ( 1972 )  
Hugh Laurie : from his debut album , Let Them Talk ( 2011 )

= = = Professor Longhair version = = =

The Professor Longhair version was recorded in New Orleans in November 1953 under the name Professor Longhair & His Blues Scholars . According to John Crosby 's Professor Longhair : a bio @-@ discography , performers included Roy Byrd ( vocals , piano ) , Lee Allen ( tenor saxophone ) , Frank Fields ( bass ) , Earl Palmer ( drums ) , and Alvin " Red " Tyler ( baritone saxophone ) . However , the Atlantic Records Discography credits Edgar Blanchard as the bassist . It was released as a single in 1953 and then re @-@ released in 1972 . It is included on several albums including the New Orleans Piano ( 1972 ) , which has two different takes . Other albums that include this version are Martin Scorsese Presents the Blues : Piano Blues ( 2003 ) and Doctors , Professors , Kings & Queens ( 2004 ) .

= = In popular culture = =

A version by Bo Dollis & The Wild Magnolias is in the Bones season 1 episode " The Man in the Morgue " ( an episode set in New Orleans ) .  
" Tipitina " , the November 25 , 2012 season 3 finale of Treme ( a TV series about New Orleans in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina ) , used the song twice .