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OMAR DYKES' RUNNIN' WITH THE WOLF
TO BE RELEASED ON JULY 9 VIA MASCOT
LABEL GROUP'S PROVOGUE RECORDS

New York --- The Mascot Label Group has announced a July 9 release date for Omar Dykes' **Runnin' With The Wolf** via the company's Provogue Records. Dykes, and his dynamic Austin-based ensemble, has recorded 14 classics immortalized by Howlin' Wolf alongside an original that is the title track. The band leader shares, "I do my little versions of the songs. If Howlin' Wolf was a 500-pound steel anvil, then I'm a little piece of steel wool that fell out of the pack."

Dykes has been making swaggering, celebratory electric blues rock out of America's live music Mecca, Austin, Texas since 1976. He was born from the Blues rich heritage of McComb, Mississippi in 1950, and formed the band Omar & the Howlers in 1978. He enjoys a worldwide following that stretches both coast to coast in North America, and across the European continent. Dykes reveals, "We've done good over there (Europe) for about 30 years. They can listen to Madonna followed by Bo Diddley and it's just fine. They also like their Howlin' Wolf over there too." This release is the tenth with Provogue, and follows **Blues Bag** (1991, solo album), **Live At Paradiso** (1992), **Courts of Lulu** (1993), **Muddy Springs Road** (1994), **World Wide Open** (1995), **Southern Style** (1996), **Swing Land** (1998), **The Screamin' Cat** (2000), and **Big Delta** (2001). Following his debut **Big Leg Beat** (1980), Dykes' breakthrough release was **I Told You So** in 1994. Through the years, he has recorded for multiple record companies, and with the release of his 23rd album **Runnin' With The Wolf**, he returns to the label where he spent the majority of the 1990s.

Dykes and his Howlers have approached the repertoire in a manner that is true to the original compositions, but they steer clear of replicating the tracks. Raw emotion, and his signature gruff vocals make the songs feel original without losing the essence of what has made them so special for decades. He offers, "We're not going to play a Howlin' Wolf song just like it was played back in the day because we can't. Nobody can do it since for one thing, nobody can play the guitar like Hubert Sumlin, who must have come here from a hovercraft. When I first heard Hubert play, I swore he was from outer space because there is no one like him. The same goes for Howlin' Wolf. Hubert was the perfect guitarist for Howlin' Wolf." Dykes continues, "My intent was not to copy the songs but to stay close to the spirit. I tried to modernize the songs. I didn't want to do what some guys do, which is poke holes in the speakers and get that exact guitar sound. Why copy something note for note and follow every little detail, when it's already available in the

original form? That's exactly how I feel. I wanted to have fun with songs that I've loved ever since I was a kid."

Dykes and company nail the sensual rhythm of "Do The Do." They approached "Wang Dang Doodle" inventively adding a rockabilly guitar line for a twist making it their own. With "Little Red Rooster," they approached it as a trio. He offers, "I always loved that song. It's been covered to death but how can you not do 'Red Rooster' if you're recording a Howlin' Wolf album. That was song number one for me. I didn't take it too far away. I just thought it would be cool to try it as a three-piece. It worked going spare. I had so much fun with it."

Fun is an apt adjective to describe the project. It's certainly a labor of love for Dykes, who doesn't have to record a covers disc. The burly charismatic figure has already made a Jimmy Reed record, but he's not an interpreter first and foremost. The prolific Dykes, who sounds like no other singer, has plenty of original material in the can. But he chose not to go in that direction, and opted to honor one of his heroes. He states, "I still have songs. I'll have them out sooner or later. I'll do my own stuff anyway and this is just something on the side. I did Jimmy Reed, who I love and adore. Now it's time for Howlin' Wolf. There was never anyone like him."

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