



PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. BRICE MILLER

# Making Music New Orleans Style:

**Dr. Brice Miller  
and his family  
promote the  
city's rich  
musical culture**

*By Anita Oubre*

**I**t was standing room only in the main ballroom of a local downtown hotel. Hundreds of attendees cheered, took photos and danced in the aisles. The gentleman at the microphone donning a plaid bowtie had the voice most emcees dream of. In between announcements, he played his trumpet and led a handful of performers on the stage.



His name is Dr. Brice Miller, a musician, composer, educator, lecturer, and owner of The New Orleans Music Company, a premiere family-owned entertainment company. “I am proud to be in a position where I can help the people of the culture take care of their families,” said Dr. Miller, affectionately known as ‘Doc.’ “Since I was in college, I wanted to be the number one provider of authentic New Orleans entertainment services and cultural entertainment in Louisiana. Now, as a Black-owned, woman-owned, educator-owned, and family-run company, we own that title.”

Providing music and cultural performances consistently each week is not the only service The New Orleans Music Company provides. They are a one-stop shop for full event productions including sound, lighting, deejay services, photography, droning and even a mobile bar called Lil’ Whoodie.

“Not only are we making an impact with the cultural economy of the city, I am creating a legacy for my family,” explained Dr. Miller. The business is truly a family affair, with his wife, Shaneeka, and his

four children all pitching ideas with eager excitement. His teenagers provide both photography and videography for the business and an older daughter based out of New York assists with engagement for clients such as AT&T and ESSENCE.

Doing his life’s work did not come by accident. Dr. Miller was brought up in the world of New Orleans music. His father, the late Dwight Miller Sr., was a jazz saxophonist who played with Ernest “Doc” Paulin’s Brass Band, the Soul Brothers Band, and the Pinstripe Brass Band, a band he co-founded. These musicians were “uncles” and consistent role models for him.

The Miller household had a music room, and every evening, homework included not only solving math problems and reading but listening to music as well. “The rule every night was we had to listen to Louis Armstrong’s albums, Olympia, and all the traditional jazz music. That’s when I started taking music seriously.”

As an initially shy teen, Dr. Miller became more confident at his father’s side. His father took him along on professional gigs and sat by his side at the local

watering hole after practice. As he recalled, “I remember being fascinated with guys dancing in street puddles after a rain, banging their fists on stop signs. It was a release – a form of spirituality – and I began to see things differently.”

Dr. Miller studied piano for years and played the drums. “My older brother and I took the Galvez bus to Canal Street every Saturday and attended classes at Werlein’s for Music,” he said. “I had a friend, Mikey, who played the trumpet, so I taught him drums, and in exchange, he showed me the trumpet.”

By eighth grade, Dr. Miller was organizing his own gigs. He was invited to play with The Junior Olympia in the French Quarter, and he liked the feeling of making his own money. It was on the streets of New Orleans that his confidence was developed and refined as he formed the Junior Pinstripes.

He was recruited by the legendary St. Augustine High School band director Edwin Hampton and awarded a scholarship as a proud member of the Marching 100.

“I walked into 54 trumpets, and there I was with my cornet, nervous, but I could



sight-read really good, thanks to Donald Richardson, my band director from Bell Junior High,” Dr. Miller recounted. “By the second week of summer band camp, I was sitting third seat, first trumpet and then in junior and senior years I was section leader. Thanks to Mr. Hampton and assistant director Mr. Ray Johnson (who would later become band director for the two youngest Miller kids) I was being molded to become a leader and prepared to know what it takes to be the best.”



*Dr. Miller at St. Aug.* COURTESY OF DR. BRICE MILLER



PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. BRICE MILLER



*Dr. Miller performing.* COURTESY OF DR. BRICE MILLER

Always an observant young man, Dr. Miller was taking in the lessons that were put in front of him. He felt like the underdog as a “skinny dark-skinned nerd, honor roll student” but that did not stop the determination. Always an entrepreneur, he formed his own music company as a junior at St. Augustine. “I carried around a word processor so I could type up contracts on the spot. My peers were focused on the music. I was focused on the business,” he said.

Those formative years were preparing him for a future in music. Today he performs nonstop with his jazz trio, Mahogany Brass Band as well as Ecirb Muller’s Twisted Dixie.

Dr. Miller has performed all over the world. He is proud to have played at Carnegie Hall three times, plus Kennedy Center, Tivoli Gardens, and the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival consecutively as a band leader since 1991.

A lifelong lover of learning, Dr. Miller received his undergrad degree from Xavier University. He was also awarded his Master’s degree in administration and leadership from Xavier and an interdisciplinary doctoral degree in educational administration and cultural/social anthropology and ethnomusicology from the University of Alabama.

It is said a man’s success can be measured not only by his ability to do something with his own life but also do something with his life that results in the success of others. Dr. Miller is a living model of this success. He has held positions as band director at Sarah T. Reed High School and he was the founding director of jazz and cultural education with the New Orleans Public School System. He also started the film and photography program at The Ellis Marsalis Center.



*Family Photo. Dr. Miller loves wearing silly costumes for all occasions.* PHOTO COURTESY OF DR. MILLER

At the University of Alabama, he served as assistant director for Crossroads Community Center (Office of Diversity), the Office of Community Engagement and Division of Student Affairs, from 2007-2015.

In 2016 Dr. Miller founded ArtsNOLA, a school-based cultural arts learning and engagement program. He also held the position as Director of Cultural Economy for the City of New Orleans in 2018.

Dr. Miller and his family take the time to travel multiple times a year. To relax he enjoys collecting and working on custom cars and hot-rods. He also enjoys renovating the multiple properties he owns and relaxing with a good documentary.

He concludes by saying, “It is a joyful feeling to employ my kids. It is a blessing for them to see how I take care of my community of musicians and performers and for them to see firsthand as they tag along and work beside me just like I did with my own dad. I am confident these experiences will transcend in what they do in their own professional and personal lives as they move forward. I want them to live passionate lives. I wake up every day doing what I love and loving what I do!”

*To contact The New Orleans Music Company, visit them at [www.thenomc.com](http://www.thenomc.com) or <https://thenomc.com/contact/> or email [neworleansmusiccompany@gmail.com](mailto:neworleansmusiccompany@gmail.com)*