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## David Johansen brings Buster Poindexter back to the Carlyle

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"It's the most fantastic gig there ever was in the history of showbiz," says [David Johansen](#), sounding like he's reading over the phone excerpts of the rave reviews in *The New York Times* and other publications from his most recent [Buster Poindexter](#) appearance at the ritzy Café Carlyle.

Ethnomusicologist Johansen is talking about Poindexter's return to the Carlyle, this time for two weeks—Feb. 10-21. He first did a late show there a year ago on Halloween, did another one last May, then did a week of dinner shows last October—when the rave reviews came in. When he returns there next week, it will have been almost two years since he first revisited his celebrated lounge lizard alter ego Poindexter, initially at the Cutting Room, then at other Manhattan clubs including City Winery.

"The Carlyle reminds me of the old Tramps at 15th St.," says Johansen, who performed a sneak preview of the Carlyle show Monday at a [Soundcheck Pop-Up session](#) at WNYC's Greene Space. "It has the same kind of intimacy and vibe, so I'm very comfortable there."

<http://www.examiner.com/article/david-johansen-brings-buster-poindexter-back-to-the-carlyle>

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When Johansen debuted his Buster Poindexter show in the late 1980s, he played regularly at local clubs including the long-gone Tramps and Bottom Line, as well as on *Saturday Night Live* with the house band. He had a big hit in 1987 with a cover of Arrow's *soca* classic "Hot Hot Hot," and released four albums as Poindexter, his Banshees of Blue big band then starring the likes of Tony Garnier, now Bob Dylan's longtime bassist; longtime Bruce Springsteen violinist/vocalist Soozie Tyrell, and guitarist/banjoist/mandolinist Brian Koonin, Johansen's longtime collaborator.

Still featuring Koonin, the new Poindexter band is a five-piece.

"The Buster show is really not the same as when it was a big, bombastic extravaganza," says Johansen. "I hate to use the word, but we're doing a more *mature*, jazz band kind of thing: We rock better than anyone, but the attitude is like that of jazz people."

As for taking Poindexter on the road, Johansen, reflecting on his surprisingly successful resurrection in 2004 of his pioneering '70s pre-punk [New York Dolls](#) band, isn't so sure.

"I did one show with the Dolls--and then made three albums and traveled all over the world with them several times in eight years," he says. "It was a lot of fun, but *please*: Essentially what I've managed to do is create a show that can only play in New York. So if you want to see it, babe, you have to come to *us*—unless it's some grand hotel like the Carlyle that wants to put us up for two weeks! But this getting up and feeling like you got hit by a truck business is in the past. Now I'm getting a little New York-centric and like having a place where we can keep our stuff."

Meanwhile, Johansen and Koonin continue performing David Johansen shows as a twosome—so long as they're within "comfortable driving distance." And while they perform an unrecorded original tentatively titled "Wandering Spirit Prayer"—a breathtaking, contemplative song about life and death—Johansen generally doesn't work on new songs until he needs to make a CD.

"I have a lot of songs in my head," he says. "They're just not formulated."

