

Chubby Carrier's

Z Y D E C O A-Z

INGREDIENTS

**A SPICY CUP OF SOUL,
A DASH OF HISTORY,
AND A HINT
OF CURIOSITY**





ZYDECO A-Z EDUCATIONAL GUIDE

Why choose this program for your group?

- Provides Louisiana cultural experience
- Louisiana students will gain state pride
- Enhances musical knowledge
- Peek inside history of zydeco and Creole culture

What can you expect during a Zydeco A-Z presentation?

- 1) Explanation of zydeco music
- 2) How zydeco started
- 3) Musical instruments used in zydeco music
- 4) Demonstration of Accordion and Rubboard
- 5) Audience participation



ZYDECO LIFE

Directions: This story is meant to be read aloud or shared with the class prior to Chubby Carrier's Zydeco A-Z Presentation. It gives some basic information about Chubby's life and about zydeco music, which will help pique the curiosity of the students.

Many years ago, before the age of iPads and video games, there lived a young boy in rural southwest Louisiana. In some ways, this young man was a lot like boys today. He liked to play outside, riding his bike or throwing the football with his buddies. Most of the time, the little boy played outside, probably to keep him away from the possibility of irritating his mother. But sometimes there were special events held indoors, when everyone in the community was invited to come inside for a house dance.

What's a house dance, you ask? A house dance was a common occurrence in many Creole communities.

Listen to this: They would take all the furniture and put it outside! No, they weren't moving, or buying new furniture. They put the furniture outside in order to make room for a party! You see, people would come from all over, bringing their instruments and a covered dish to share. Everyone would dance to the music in the empty house. This was a way for neighbors, family and friends to pass a good time together.

The little boy always looked forward to a house dance, not so much because he wanted to dance but because he loved to watch the musicians play all of their instruments. As soon as he heard the music start up, he would leave his friends and the football behind and run inside to listen to the music. His mother would make him dance a little, but his favorite part was watching and learning how to play instruments, like the accordion.

What kind of music do you dance to today? Maybe you like hip-hop music or rap. Some people like to dance to rock music, while ballroom dancers sway back and forth to more classical forms of music. But at a house dance, you would not hear any of these types of music played.

The type of music played at the house dances the little boy attended is called Zydeco. Most people agree the word zydeco is derived from the French phrase *les haricot sont pas sale*, which means "snap beans are not salty."



ZYDECO LIFE

Can you figure out what that phrase means and how it gave zydeco music its name?

The Creole people used to say that times were so difficult there was not even enough money to buy salt to flavor the snap beans. If you say the first two words of the French phrase, les haricot (pronounced “lez hi dee co”), it rhymes with the word zydeco. No one knows exactly why this phrase came to be the name of the music, but perhaps it is because so many of the songs were about heartbreak and hardships of living life.

By the time the little boy was 10 years old, he was playing the drums in his father’s band. But he really wanted to play the accordion. Before long, when the boy was about 12 years old, he started to learn to play the accordion.

The little boy wasn’t so little any more. Like most boys, he had dreams of what he wanted to do when he was grown up. One of his dreams was to play football in the NFL. Another dream was to play zydeco music. Which dream do you think came true?

Well, he didn’t play football. But he did get to play lots of zydeco music! In fact, he started playing with a band and traveling the world once he had graduated from high school. Zydeco music has taken the boy to faraway places like Africa where he saw pyramids and rode a camel. He played his accordion all over Europe, as well as all over North and South America. The boy even won a Grammy Award for his Zydeco Music in 2010.

Zydeco is a happy music. It’s infectious and catchy. Zydeco music has a lot of energy, so it makes great dance music. With unique instruments, like accordions and rubboards, zydeco music sounds like the life of the party. It’s the same music that the little boy first enjoyed at the house dances he attended at his home in rural southwest Louisiana.

Do you know who this little boy is?

Chubby Carrier is a well-known zydeco musician. He grew up in Churchpoint , Louisiana, and really did attend house dances as a young boy. Just like you, Chubby liked to have fun with his friends and enjoyed playing football and riding his bike. He dared to dream big and today he is living the life he always hoped to live ... playing zydeco music and making people happy.

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Possible questions for Chubby during the Q & A portion of the presentation:

What is your earliest memory of zydeco music?

Where do you find inspiration for your songs?

What is your favorite song?

Who is your favorite zydeco artist?

What do you consider your greatest accomplishment?

What steps do you take when writing new music?

How did blues music influence zydeco music?

Can you demonstrate “4 in the Floor” versus “double clutch” drumbeats?

What is the difference between zydeco and Cajun music? Can you play a song from each genre?

Can you play an example of old French La-La music? How is it different from current zydeco?

Can you demonstrate jure' music?

Would you demonstrate the difference between a downbeat and an upbeat?

Suggestions for Extended Learning Activities



Math Activities

~Determine the age of each artist (listed on Influential Zydeco Artist Page) based on their date of birth and date of death (or current year if they are still living)

~Find the average age and the mean age of the artists, as well as the oldest and youngest

Social Studies/
History/Geography
Activities

~Locate the hometowns of each artist on a Louisiana map. Are these towns located in one general area or are they spread over the entire state?

~Look at photos of old washboards. How were they used? How do you think they came to be used as a musical instrument?

~Research one of the Zydeco Artists. Write a paragraph to answer the following questions: Where did they grow up? When did they begin to play music? Which instruments did they play? What was their stage name? What is their birth name?

Language Arts/
Writing Activities

~Imagine you need to describe zydeco music to someone who has never heard it before. What words would you use to describe how the music sounds? How does this music make you feel?

~ Compare and Contrast zydeco music to another genre of music. (i.e.: zydeco and Cajun or zydeco and blues)

Suggestions for Extended Learning Activities



Music
and Art
Activities

~ Listen to a CD of zydeco music. Draw while you listen and let your drawing express the feelings you experience while you listen.

~ Make paper zydeco instruments using the following suggestions:

- * *Paper Harmonica:* Fold an index card in half. Use your lips to blow on the open end. Experiment with light, medium and hard breaths to produce buzzing sounds.
- * *Shoebox Fiddle/Guitar:* Place several rubber bands across an open shoebox. Strum the bands with fingers to create music.
- * *Paper Washboard:* Accordion fold a piece of aluminum foil (about the size of a piece of construction paper). Each fold should be about an inch in width. Punch two holes at the top corners. Use a piece of yarn to make a neck strap.
- * *Paper Accordion:* Accordion fold a piece of construction paper to create the bellow of an accordion. Each fold should be about an inch in width. Take another half-sheet of construction paper and cut it in half again (width-wise), giving each child two $\frac{1}{4}$ strips of construction paper. Glue one piece of each end of the accordion to create the keyboard. Draw on the buttons and keys with markers or crayons.

~ Use the internet or library to research the parts of the accordion. What instrument, small enough to fit in the palm of your hand, is related to the accordion?

~ Research which zydeco musicians use piano accordions and which ones use button accordions.

~ Research what other styles of music make heavy use of the accordion.

Advanced
Research
Activity

This information can be shared with students before or after presentation as needed.

WHAT IS ZYDECO?

Zydeco is the music of the African-American multi-racial Creole French speaking people of Southwest Louisiana. Zydeco used to be called “Creole” or “French La La” music.

Many people say the word “zydeco” is derived from the French phrase “les haricot sont pas sale” which means, “snap beans are not salty” describing that times were so difficult there was not enough money to buy seasoning for food. When the first two words of the phrase are spoken in regional French, it sounds like zydeco, les haricot (spoken “lez hy dee co”). With that said, there is a possibility that the word is rooted in African languages.

Zydeco music has evolved from its simplest form called juré, in which field workers would gather to sing about their day, heartbreak, to give thanks, or profess their love for God with hand-clapping, foot-stomping and singing in French into an infectious, high-energy dance music known world-wide. The life of the party is the accordion and rubboard also known as the frottoir, along with guitar, bass and drums.

It was common in many early Creole households to have a house dance on the weekends. To make room for dancing the furniture was moved out of the house, and the musicians would pull out the instruments for a Southwest Louisiana good time.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ZYDECO AND CAJUN MUSIC?

While both genres sing in French and include the use of accordion, drums, bass, and guitar, there are many differences.

Zydeco music is on the downbeat and is a fusion of blues, R&B, soul, rock-n-roll, African, Native American and Caribbean. Secondary instrument is the rubboard (frottoir).

Cajun music has more country, bluegrass, waltz, two-step influences and leans more toward the upbeat. Secondary instrument is the fiddle.

ACCORDION

The accordion originated from Germany and has also been called the Melodeon. In 1822, a German instrument maker, Christian Buschmann invented the “Hand-aeoline”. In 1829, a Viennese instrument maker, Cyrillus Damian made some changes to the “Hand-aeoline” and patented it as the accordion. There are different types of accordions used in zydeco music such as the single, double, and triple row button accordions as well as the piano accordion. They are tuned diatonic or chromatic with whole or half notes.

Even though the accordion was brought here by the Germans, most musicians today prefer Italian made accordions.

This information can be shared with students before or after presentation as needed.

RUBBOARD OR FROTTOIR

This instrument originated as the old time washboards used for washing laundry. Musicians would use it as an instrument held between their legs and played with thimbles or bottle openers. Later on, straps or ropes were added to the musician could wear the washboard around their neck.

Today we have stainless steel rubboards with curved extensions at the top to go over the shoulders. This idea came from Cleveland Chenier, Clifton's brother, who are legends. Clifton is considered to be the "King of Zydeco".



Evolution of Zydeco

Before early 1900's	Simplest form called juré: Hand claps, foot stomps and voice, no instruments. Indicative of African immigrants. French
1800's-Early 1900's	Creole music / French music / French La La: Sounded like current day Cajun music (i.e. Amedee Ardoin). Acoustic Accordion, Fiddles, Triangle. French
1940's-1970's	Named Zydeco by Clifton Chenier: Full amplified band with Accordion, Rubboard (Frottoir), Guitar, Bass, Drums. Later he added a horn section. Blues, R & B, Funk, Soul, African, Native American, Caribbean influences. French and English
1980's-1990's	Nouveau Zydeco: (i.e. Beau Jacques) Full amplified band with Accordion, Rubboard, Guitar, Bass and Drums. Double clutch drum beats and four in the floor drum beats. French and English
Millenium	Can be comprised of any of the above combinations, as well as additional instrumentation such as keyboards, or other musical influences including Mardi Gras, Reggae, Rock-n-Roll, Latin, Swing Out, Rap, or Hip-Hop. Primarily English



Glossary of Terms

A cappella	without instrumental accompaniment.
Accordion	a portable musical instrument with metal reeds blown by bellows, played by means of keys and buttons.
Acoustic	not having electrical amplification
Amplified	increase the volume of (sound), especially using an amplifier
Cajun	a member of any of the largely self-contained communities in the bayou areas of southern Louisiana formed by descendants of French Canadians, speaking an archaic form of French or relating to the Cajuns, especially with reference to their folk music (typically featuring the concertina, accordion, and fiddle) or spicy cuisine
Chromatic	relating to a musical scale that has all semitones
Creole	a person of mixed black and European, especially French or Spanish, ancestry who speaks a creolized form of French
Diatonic	a musical scale (as a major or minor scale) comprising intervals of five whole steps and two half steps
Downbeat	The first beat of a measure.
Juré	syncopated a cappella songs
Rubboard	A) board having a corrugated surface on which clothes can be rubbed in the process of laundering. B) Music: A similar board used as a percussion instrument.
Upbeat	an unaccented beat, especially immediately preceding a downbeat
Zydeco	a kind of African American dance music originally from southern Louisiana, typically featuring accordion and rubboard.

Influential Zydeco Artists

1) Amedee Ardoin	1898-1942	Near Basille, LA in Acadia and Evangeline Parish
2) Clifton Chenier	1925-1987	Opelousas, LA in St. Landry Parish
3) Canray Fontenot	1922-1995	L'anse Aux Vaches, LA in Acadia and Evangeline Parish
4) Joseph "BeBe" Carriere	1908-2001	Lawtell, LA in St. Landry Parish
5) Eraste "Dolan" Carriere	1900-unknown	Lawtell, LA in St. Landry Parish
6) Calvin Carriere	1921-2002	Lawtell, LA in St. Landry Parish (<i>Eraste's son</i>)
7) Bois Sec Ardoin	1915-2007	Duralde, LA in Evangeline Parish
8) Dennis McGee	1893-1989	Eunice, LA in Acadia and St. Landry Parish
9) Fernest Arceneaux	1940-2008	Carencro, LA in Lafayette Parish
10) Boozoo Chavis	1930-2001	Lake Charles, LA in Calcasieu Parish
11) Willis Prudhomme	1931-	Kinder, LA in Allen Parish
12) John Delafosse	1939-1994	Duralde, LA in Evangeline Parish
13) Beau Jocque	1952-1999	Kinder, LA area in Evangeline Parish
14) Rockin Sidney	1938-1998	LeBeau, LA in St. Landry Parish
15) Buckwheat Zydeco	1947-	Lafayette, La in Lafayette Parish
16) Roy Carrier	1947-2010	Lawtell, LA in St. Landry Parish
17) Rockin Dopsie Sr	1932-1993	Carencro, LA in Lafayette Parish

Use this information for additional activities

