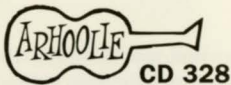


ZYDECO CHAMPS



1. **Clifton Chenier:** *Josephine Par Se Ma Femme* (Clifton Chenier) From CD/C 339 "King of the Bayous"
2. **Clifton Chenier:** *Black Gal* (Clifton Chenier) From CD/C 345 "Bon Ton Roulet & More"
3. **C. J. Chenier:** *My Baby Don't Wear No Shoes* (C. J. Chenier) From CD/C 1098 "My Baby Don't Wear No Shoes"
4. **Clifton Chenier:** *Hungry Man Blues* (Clifton Chenier) From C 1078 "Red Hot Louisiana Band"
5. **John Delafosse:** *Joe Pete Got Two Women* (J. Delafosse & C. Fontenot) From CD/C 335 "Joe Pete Got Two Women"
6. **Amédé Ardoin:** *La Valse De Ballard* (P. D.) (Not previously reissued)
7. **Lawrence Ardoin:** *Midland Two-Step* (Arranged by L. Ardoin) From C-1091 "Lawrence Ardoin and His French Zydeco Band"
8. **Lawrence Ardoin:** *I've Been There* (L. Ardoin) From C 1091 "Lawrence Ardoin and His French Zydeco Band"
9. **Canray Fontenot & Bois Sec Ardoin:** *Les Barres De La Prison* (C. Fontenot) From CD/C 381 "Canray Fontenot: Louisiana Hot Sauce-Creole Style"

10. **Bois Sec Ardoin & Canray Fontenot:** *Petite Et La Grosse* (Arranged by A. Ardoin) From C 1070 "La Musique Creole"
11. **Paul McZiel & Wallace Gernger:** *I'm Sad and I'm Blue* (McZiel & Gernger) From Arhoolie LP 1012 "Blues 'N' Trouble"
12. **Clarence Garlow:** *Bon Ton Roula* (Garlow) From CD/C 307 "Zydeco Vol. 1, The Early Years."
13. **Ambrose Sam:** *I'm Going Away* (A. Sam) From Arhoolie LP 1090 "Zydeco Vol. 2 - Ambrose Sam/Swallow Band"
14. **Sam Brothers 5:** *Lafayette Special* (L. Sam) From C 1081 "Lafayette Zydeco"
15. **Herbert "Good Rockin'" Sam:** *Good Rockin' Boogie* (H. Sam) From C 1081 "Lafayette Zydeco"
16. **Sam Brothers 5:** *S. B. 5* (Sam Brothers) From C 1081 "Lafayette Zydeco"
17. **Preston Frank & Leo Thomas:** *Mon Chere 'Tite Monde* (P. Frank) From Arhoolie LP 1090 "Zydeco Vol. 2 - Ambrose Sam/Swallow Band"
18. **Leo Thomas & Preston Frank:** *Shake What You Got* (L. Thomas) From Arhoolie LP 1090 "Zydeco Vol. 2 - Ambrose Sam/Swallow Band"

(Continued on page 5)

ZYDECO

champs



Clifton Chenier
John Delafosse
Amédé Ardoin
C.J. Chenier
Sam Brothers 5
Canray Fontenot
"Bois Sec" Ardoin
Lawrence Ardoin

Ambrose Sam
and more



ZYDECO CHAMPS

As the title indicates, *Zydeco Champs* includes many of the past and present heavyweights of Zydeco on its card. Culled from the vaults of Arhoolie Records, this collection presents a solid one-two punch of the historic and enjoyable black French dance music of Southwest Louisiana.

While most listeners are by now familiar with how Zydeco music sounds, some are still not exactly sure how this accordion-led music came to be referred to as "Zydeco." The word *zydeco* is Creole slang for *les harlots* (snap beans), and was used in the title of a traditional Creole song called *L'Harlots Sont Pas Sales* (The Snap Beans Aren't Salty). Today in Southwest Louisiana, Zydeco not only refers to the music but also to the party that goes along with the food, drinking and dancing that goes along with the music.

The Zydeco champ who reigned the longest was without doubt the late **Clifton Chenier**. There is really no way to overstate Chenier's importance in the development of Zydeco. Not only did he provide nearly all of the major stylistic changes Zydeco has undergone, but he made the style one of America's best known regional music

forms. Understandably he always has been, and always will be, referred to as the "King of Zydeco."

Five tracks, from various periods of Chenier's career are found here. The knockout opener is the stripped down, *Josephine Par Se Ma Femme*, which recalls the early sound of Zydeco. While this track was recorded relatively recently (1970), Chenier's accordion was backed only by a rubboard and drums — similar to the way he heard Zydeco played when he was a child.

Black Gal, which features Clifton's uncle Morris "Big" Chenier on fiddle, also recalls the formative days of Zydeco. As primitive as it sounds, *Black Gal* was a hit in the South in 1967, becoming Chenier's best-selling single as it appeared on several different labels.

Chenier was a tireless performer and two live tracks recorded in 1971 are also included. *Zydeco Cha Cha* and *Tu Le Ton Son Ton* both demonstrate the staggering punch Chenier and his Red Hot Louisiana Band displayed on stage. To emphasize the strong influence blues had on Chenier, and how he could interpret it to fit Zydeco, this

anthology includes the tour-de-force *Hungry Man* from 1978.

An obvious heir to Clifton's title is his son **C. J. Chenier**. Appropriately C. J. covers two of his father's most popular tunes: *Banana Man* and *My Baby Don't Wear No Shoes*. A long time member of Clifton's Red Hot Louisiana band, C. J. took over the group after his father's death in 1987 and has since forged his own successful recording career on Arhoolie and Slash Records.

An early inspiration to the elder Chenier was the great **Amédé Ardoin**, the first black Creole musician to record back in 1928. Ardoin's emotive accordion sound would influence generations of Zydeco and Cajun musicians. *La Valse De Ballard* was dubbed from a rare 78 rpm recording and it offers a unique glimpse at modern Zydeco and Cajun roots.

A cousin of Ardoin's, "**Bois Sec**" **Ardoin** carries on the tradition of Amédé. Also an accordionist, Bois Sec teamed with **Canray Fontenot** to play house dances and record together. *Les Barres De La Prison* and *Petite Et La Grosse* are representative of their haunting sound. Another Ardoin relative, **Lawrence Ardoin** contributes the boisterous *Midland Two-Step* (which underlines Zydeco's major purpose —

dancing!), and *I've Been There*.

Although it didn't feature an accordion, many music historians credit **Clarence Garlow's** *Bon Ton Roula* as the first Zydeco hit because it charted in 1950. Featuring a calypso beat and rhythm and blues instrumentation, the lyrics to *Bon Ton Roula* neatly describe just how much fun you can have at a Zydeco dance.

Because very few pre-mid-1960s commercial Zydeco recordings exist, music historians have had to rely on field recordings to document the development of the style. Understandably, *Zydeco Champs* includes several which date from 1961 and were recorded by Chris Strachwitz at Zydeco dances. One of the best of these tracks was provided by accordionist **Paul McZiel** who contributes *I'm Sad and I'm Blue*. An obscure artist, McZiel plays in an energetic style that has always identified Zydeco music.

Other field recordings include **Ambrose Sam's** rough-and-ready *I'm Going Away* and his brother **Herbert's** *Good Rockin' Boogie*. Considered two of the founding fathers of Zydeco, the Sams' tracks might lack the professional polish provided in a recording studio but they certainly aren't lightweight by any means.

To further demonstrate the fact that Zydeco is often passed down from

successive generations—as if the Chenier and Ardoin examples weren't enough—this anthology includes two tracks from Herbert Sam's son's contemporary group **The Sam Brothers 5**. *Lafayette Special* and the short but sweet *S. B. 5*—both instrumentals—display the influence of their father and also Clifton Chenier's modern touch.

Two other challengers on this set include **Preston Frank** and **Leo Thomas**. While their names aren't familiar outside of Louisiana's Zydeco circuit, they team up on *Mon Chere 'Tite Monde* and *Shake What You Got* to capture the ever-popular authentic downhome Zydeco sound.

The last artists presented here are **John Delafosse** and the Eunice Playboys who are currently one of the most popular and authentic Zydeco bands in South Louisiana. Of course Delafosse's calling card, *Joe Pete Got Two Women*, is here as is *The Mardi Gras Song*, which features some powerhouse accordion.

So there you have it. Twenty-two rounds of great Zydeco that is sure to T.K.O. any listener. But then what did you expect? All of these artists are truly Zydeco Champs.

Jeff Hannusch — March 1992

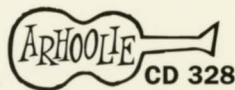
(Jeff Hannusch is the author of I Hear You Knockin': The Sound of New Orleans Rhythm and Blues)

Zydeco On Arhoolie:

- CD/C 301 CLIFTON CHENIER
"The King of Zydeco"
- CD/C 307 ZYDECO "The Early
Years" (1961-1963)
- CD/C 313 CLIFTON CHENIER
"Live At St. Mark's"
- CD/C 329 CLIFTON CHENIER
"Louisiana Blues & Zydeco"
- CD/C 331 & CD/C 332 J'AI ETE AU
BAL (I WENT TO THE DANCE)
"The Cajun and Zydeco Music
of Louisiana Vol. 1 & 2" (Com-
plete performances from film
soundtrack)
- CD/C 335 JOHN DELAFOSE
"Joe Pete Got Two Women"
- CD/C 339 CLIFTON CHENIER
"King of the Bayous"
- CD/C 345 CLIFTON CHENIER
"Bon Ton Roulet"
- CD/C 347 CLIFTON CHENIER
"Bogalusa Boogie"

ZYDECO CHAMPS

50 Years of Louisiana's Black French-Creole Dance Music



Over 60 Minutes of Classic ZYDECO

1. **Clifton Chenier:** *Josephine Par Se Ma Femme*
2. **Clifton Chenier:** *Black Gal*
3. **C. J. Chenier:** *My Baby Don't Wear No Shoes*
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10. **Bois Sec Ardoin & Canray Fontenot:** *Petite Et La Grosse*
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17. **Preston Frank & Leo Thomas:** *Mon Chere 'Tite Monde*
18. **Leo Thomas & Preston Frank:** *Shake What You Got*
19. **John Delafosse:** *Mardi Gras Song*
20. **C. J. Chenier:** *Banana Man*
21. **Clifton Chenier:** *Zydeco Cha Cha*
22. **Clifton Chenier:** *Tu Le Ton Son Ton*

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