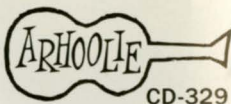


# CLIFTON CHENIER

"Louisiana Blues & Zydeco"

Over 60 Minutes of Classic Zydeco Music



CD-329

1. Zydeco Sont Pas Sale
2. Lafayette Waltz
3. Louisiana Two Step
4. Clifton's Waltz
5. Louisiana Blues
6. Why Did You Go Last Night
7. Eh, 'Tite Fille
8. Banana Man
9. Hot Rod
10. It's Hard
11. I Can Look Down at Your Woman
12. I Can't Stand
13. Monifique
14. Johnny Can't Dance
15. I Lost My Baby (In French)
16. Pepper In My Shoe
17. Can't Go Home No More
18. Wrap It Up Zydeco

Total time: 64:40

All songs by Clifton Chenier and © by Tradition Music Co. (BMI) except #7 published by ATV/Venice Music Co.

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Produced by Chris Strachwitz

#1-5 & 7-12 originally issued as ARH 1024 "Louisiana Blues and Zydeco." #13-18 originally issued as the B side of ARH 1038 "Black Snake Blues." (The A side of ARH 1038 is now on Arhoolie CD-350.) #6 originally issued on ARH 1018.

Selections #1-5, & 11  
Clifton Chenier – vocals and accordion  
Cleveland Chenier – rubboard  
Madison Guidry – drums  
Recorded at Gold Star Studios, Houston, TX  
May 11, 1965; Doyle E. Jones – engineer

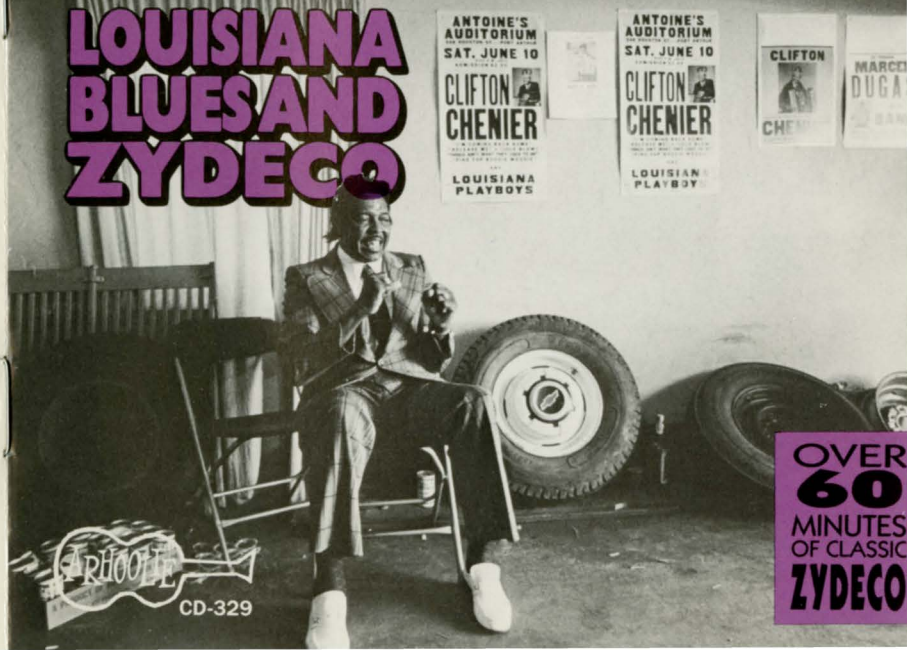
#6  
Clifton Chenier – vocal and accordion  
Elmore Nixon – piano  
Bob Murphy – drums  
Recorded February 8, 1964 in Houston, TX

#7-10, 12  
Clifton Chenier – vocal and accordion  
(harmonica on tracks #10 & 12)  
Elmore Nixon – piano  
Cleveland Keyes – guitar  
Fulton Antoine – bass  
Robert St. Judy – drums  
Recorded at Gold Star Studios, Houston, TX  
May 11, 1965; Doyle E. Jones – engineer

#13-18  
Clifton Chenier – vocals and accordion  
Cleveland Chenier – rubboard  
Robert St. Judy – drums  
Felix James Benoit – guitar  
Joe Morris – bass  
Recorded at Sierra Sound Laboratories  
in Berkeley, CA October 10, 1967.  
Bob DeSousa – engineer

# Clifton Chenier

## LOUISIANA BLUES AND ZYDECO



CD-329

OVER  
**60**  
MINUTES  
OF CLASSIC  
**ZYDECO**



Cleveland Chenier

CHRIS STRACHWITZ

## Clifton Chenier

This record brings you the popular dance music of the black Creoles who live along the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast. They call the music "Zydeco" and during his life time Clifton Chenier was the best and most popular exponent of it. The roots of Zydeco reach back into the French origins of Louisiana Cajun and Creole music. As the blues became an increasingly important element of black popular music in the 1920s and 30s, so did the blues permeate the Creole music in southwest Louisiana. The accordion is the lead instrument in Zydeco music and the singing is usually in Creole French patois, especially the older numbers: the waltzes, two-steps, and "French" blues. Clifton Chenier sang the more modern selections in English yet retained the very unique Zydeco sound and Creole phras-

ing. He took the older Creole musics he heard as a child, mixed them with the contemporary black music of his era and in the process virtually invented Zydeco. He popularized this gumbo like no one had ever done before taking it around the world.

"Zydeco Sont Pas Sale;" (Snapbeans Ain't Salty) is based on one of the oldest Creole tunes and it apparently gave rise to the term "Zydeco" as used today. The exact origins of the phrase are a bit hazy but the title of the old song was: "Les Haricots Sont Pas Sale" meaning: "snap beans - not salty" and the phonetic spelling of the French *Les Haricots* has become Zydeco. Today Zydeco not only refers to this musical style but to a gumbo-like dish with many ingredients - just like the music. Zydeco also has a meaning similar to the Acadian term "Fais-dodo"



and refers to an outdoor party/country supper with dancing, drinking, eating and good times in general. These events have also been referred to as "La-Las" and Zydeco has been called "La-La Music," and many simply called it "French music."

Born on a farm near Opelousas, La. on June 25, 1925, Clifton recalled hearing his father Joseph Chenier play accordion at many a dance. He would play tunes like "Colinda," two-steps, waltzes, and many of the traditional Acadian tunes. Clifton grew up helping his parents work in the cotton, rice, sugar, and corn fields. As far back as he could recall, Clifton had wanted to be a musician. In 1946 he followed his older brother Cleveland to Lake Charles, La. where they both got jobs in the oil refineries. They began playing occasional music jobs and at times made good money in tips by playing outside the refinery gate at quitting time for fellow

workers on their way home.

The music Clifton heard around him was mostly traditional "French" and he recalled hearing records by Amede Ardoin – "the first black man to play blues on the accordion." He also heard others who never recorded: Jesse and Zozo Reynolds, Izeb Laza, and Sidney Babineaux (Sidney Babineaux along with several other early pioneers of zydeco can now be heard on ARH CD 307). Clifton learned many tunes from them though he heard other types of music as well and the first piece he recalled playing on the accordion was Joe Liggins' "The Honeydripper." Clifton's uncle Morris "Big" Chenier, who played guitar and fiddle and operated the Horseshoe Club in Lake Charles, was also a strong influence on him (ARH CD/C 345).

In 1947 Clifton and his wife Margaret, whom he had met in 1945 while working as a cane cutter in New Iberia, went to

Port Arthur, Texas where he worked for the Gulf and Texaco oil refineries until 1954. On weekends he would play music at house parties and local juke joints and dance halls. One day J.R. Fulbright, legendary record scout and producer of his own label from Los Angeles, Calif., came through the area and heard Clifton play out in the country and told him: "You play too much accordion to be in these woods." He recorded Clifton's first records at KAOK, a Lake Charles radio station (now available on ARH CD 307). Although sales of these and subsequent records were largely confined to the Gulf Coast region, "It gave me a name" as Clifton put it, and in 1955 Specialty Records issued "Ay Tee Fee" which became a national R&B hit and established Clifton Chenier as a rhythm and blues artist throughout the country. Clifton and his band went to Los Angeles and played the 5-4

Ballroom. Later he went on tour with various R & B acts and by 1956 had become a full-time musician.

(Chris Strachwitz – 1965/1990)

Copy editing by Dix Bruce

Note: Sidney Babineaux, Clifton Chenier, Willie Green, and many of the other early pioneers of Zydeco can be heard on ARH CD/C 307 "Zydeco, The Early Years" and Arhoolie ARV-401 "Clifton Chenier: The King of Zydeco" lets you see almost an hour of the King at his best! (\$30.00)

Photo of Lightning Hopkins with Clifton Chenier on pages 4 and 5 by Chris Strachwitz

Cover by Wayne Pope

Cover photo by Howard Brainen

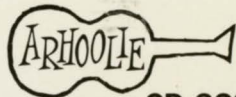
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Clifton Chenier – vocals and accordion;  
Cleveland Chenier – rubboard; and the Red Hot Louisiana Band

Produced by Chris Strachwitz  
Cover by Wayne Pope  
Cover photo by Howard Brainen

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Arhoolie Productions Inc.

Clifton Chenier (6/21/1925 – 12/12/1987) was the undisputed King of Zydeco, who literally invented the genre. He took Louisiana's rural Creole music from the house dances to concert halls around the world. This disc contains Clifton's first album released in 1965 (Arhoolie 1024) as well as the B side of "Black Snake Blues" (Arhoolie 1038) plus "Why Did You Go Last Night."

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