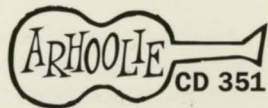


CLIFTON CHENIER

Clifton Sings the Blues



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(Every Day is the Same) (4:08)
2. **ROSEMARY** (3:20)
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WOMAN** (4:51)
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15. **FALKSY GIRL** (4:20)
16. **EASY, EASY BABY** (3:05)
17. **TANTE NA NA** (4:00)
18. **DO RIGHT SOMETIME** (3:35)
19. **HIGHWAY BLUES** (3:20)

Total Time: 71:00

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Clifton Chenier - accordion & vocals
with:

#1-12: Cleveland Chenier - rubboard; Robert Peter (St. Julian) - drums; and probably Joe Morris - bass; and Cleveland Keyes - guitar. Original recordings produced by Roy C. Ames in Houston, Tx. on April 1, 1969, and originally issued on Prophesy, Home Cooking, and Arhoolie LP 1097.

#13-19: Cleveland Chenier - rubboard; Robert Peter (St. Julian) - drums; John Hart - tenor sax; Stanley "Buckwheat" Dural - piano & organ; Joe Morris - bass; Paul Senegal - guitar. Original recordings produced by Chris Strachwitz at Sea-Saint Studios in New Orleans, La., on April 25, 1977, with assistance from John Lumsdaine and originally released on Arhoolie LP 1078.

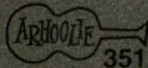
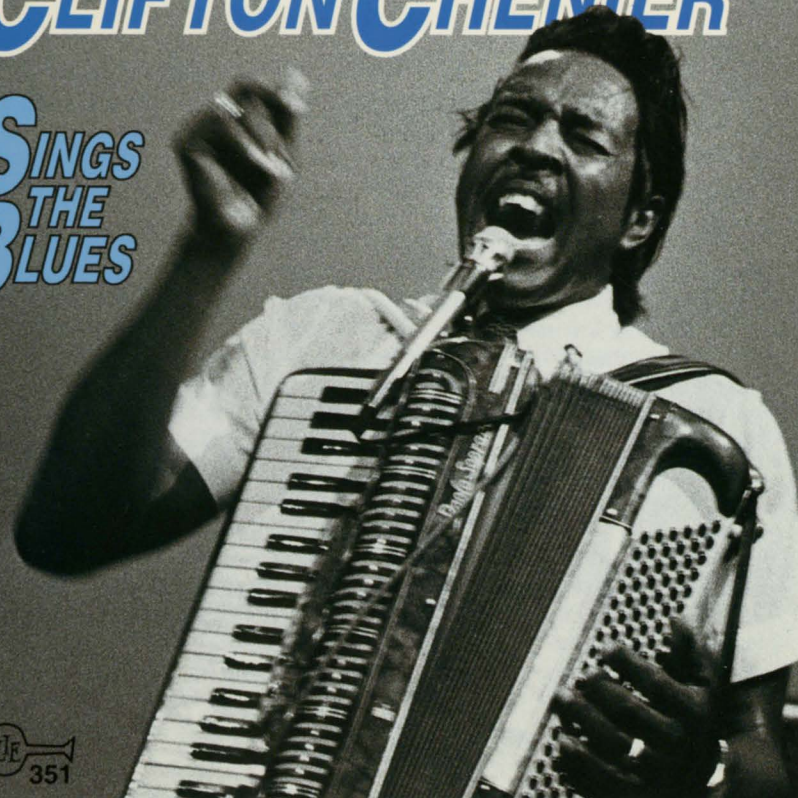
CD Re-issue produced by Chris Strachwitz
Cover photo by Edmund Shea
Cover design by Wayne Pope

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CLIFTON CHENIER

SINGS THE BLUES



CLIFTON CHENIER

"Clifton Sings the Blues"

Clifton Chenier came out of the French-Creole culture of South-west Louisiana and put Zydeco music on the world's map of musical delights. Clifton was the undisputed KING of ZYDECO, a marvelous mixture of Afro-American rhythms and singing mixed with Cajun waltzes and two-steps and with the accordion out front leading the celebration. The Blues have always been an essential element of Zydeco and Clifton Chenier was one of the very best singers of the Blues.

The first twelve selections on this CD, (originally produced by Roy Ames), like almost all of Clifton Chenier's albums, were made at one session. Clifton made records like he played dances. He would kick off whatever new tune he had planned for the session and then not stop unless the engineers had trouble putting it down right on tape. He would hardly ever record a second take

because he put all his feelings, emotions and energy into that song – just like when he played a dance. Clifton was in wonderful voice for this session and really singing the Blues. The opening number *Ain't No Need of Cryin'* is an English version of the first regional hit Clifton had on Arhoolie which I titled *Louisiana Blues* (ARH CD 301 & 329) when we recorded it in 1965 because I couldn't understand the French phrase Clifton was trying to tell me! I don't speak French and so it wasn't until much later when Ann Savoy transcribed and translated the song for inclusion in her book **Cajun Music - A Reflection Of A People** that I saw that the title should have been *Tous Le Jours Je Parle Des Memes Choses* which translated to roughly *Every Day I Talk About The Same Things!* It's a wonderful slow blues Clifton made up on the spot in the studio when we recorded it that first time.

Next is *Rosemary*, the song Fats Domino made so popular in the 1950s. Clifton has long admired the Fat Man from New Orleans and has recorded several songs in his style. *Brown Skinned Woman* is based on an older blues but Clifton puts his own stamp on it. After the instrumental *Done Got Over*, Clifton sings *Gone a La Maison* (Gone To The House) in French. This is one of Clifton's favorite compositions and probably based on the singing of **Amédé Ardoin**, who was the first black Creole accordionist to make records (note ARH Cass 9056). This is followed by **Memphis Minnie's** most popular song from the 1940s which Clifton takes for a fine ride! An emotional blues, *My Little Angel*, is followed by the only real Zydeco number from that session, *Paper in My Shoe*. This song probably goes back to the 1920s or 30s but was first recorded by Wilson **"Boozoo" Chavis** in the early 1950s and became the first Zydeco hit along the Gulf Coast. The "paper in my shoe" theme harks back to a poor young

man going to a dance even though his shoes have holes in them. He can't afford a new pair and so he puts paper in his shoes to keep out the wet and cold. Even though he is poor, the young man does not care what the girl's mother says, he is determined to dance with her anyhow. Clifton sings this popular song in both French and English. *Blues After Hours* is not the well-known Avery Parish instrumental but a Chenier original sung with lots of feeling. One of the classic Blues from the 1920s, *Trouble in Mind* follows. It was originally popularized by Bertha **"Chippie" Hill**, and here gets a first class Chenier treatment.

In reviewing Chenier's first performance in Berkeley, California, in 1966, the late jazz critic Russ Wilson said: "Chenier is an adept instrumentalist and the riffs he sets up in the bass while playing a solo line in the treble at times sounded like a miniature Basie band." You hear an example of this full sound when Clifton dishes out the old Glenn Miller hit *In the Mood*, which was first recorded under the title *Tar*

Paper Stomp by New Orleans trumpeter **Wingy Manone**. *Worried Life Blues*, sometimes titled *Someday Baby*, closes the session and it's become a Blues classic since it was originally composed and recorded by **Big Maceo Merriweather** who made it a national Blues hit in 1941 (note ARH/FL CD 7009).

The last seven selections constitute most of the songs recorded in New Orleans about eight years later when Clifton had probably his very best band ever with the remarkable **John Hart** on tenor sax. The band also included a young keyboard player who not long thereafter went on his own and has since then made quite a name for himself as "**Buckwheat Zydeco**." During his stay with Chenier's Red Hot Louisiana Band, "Buckwheat" also did many of the band's arrangements, which really did not exist in the earlier days when Clifton would play the whole show barely giving the guitarist a short solo spot!

(Chris Strachwitz -1987)

Arhoolie recordings by Clifton Chenier:

CD/C 301 "60 Minutes with the King of Zydeco"

CD/C 313 "Live at St. Marks"

CD/C 329 "Louisiana Blues & Zydeco"

CD/C 339 "King of the Bayous"

CD/C 345 "Bon Ton Roulet"

CD/C 347 "Bogalusa Boogie"

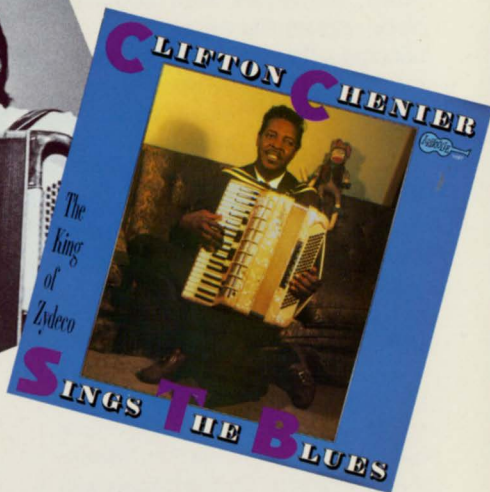
CD/C 350 "Out West"

CD/C 355 "Live at Montreux"

Arhoolie Productions has released a video of some of Clifton's best filmed performances entitled: **Clifton Chenier - The King Of Zydeco** which includes footage from Chenier's appearance at the San Francisco Blues Festival, the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, and some rare TV shots from local Louisiana stations.

VHS #401 - \$19.98 plus \$3.00 shipping.

Les Blank produced a fine film featuring Chenier called **Hot Pepper** which is now available on video.



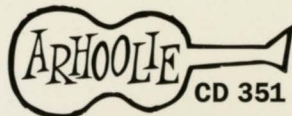
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