

CLIFTON CHENIER



The
King
of
Zydeco

SINGS THE BLUES



The Chenier brothers at a French dance at Verbum Dei Auditorium in Los Angeles in 1972 - photo by Hank Lebo.

Clifton Chenier came out of the French-Creole culture of Southwest Louisiana and put Zydeco music on the world's map of musical delights. Clifton is the undisputed King of ZYDECO, a marvelous mixture of Afro-American rhythms and singing drenched with Cajun waltzes and two-steps with the accordion out front leading the celebration. The Blues are an important and essential element of Zydeco and Clifton Chenier is one of the very best blues singers with an expressive strong voice and an inventive improvising accordion style.

On this particular record, which like all Clifton Chenier albums was made at one session, live, like at a dance, Clifton was in wonderful voice 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 at the time because I couldn't understand the lyrics which he sang in French (Arhoolie LP 1024). It's a wonderful slow blues Clifton made up on the spot in the studio when we recorded it that first time in French. 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 Amade Ardoin, who was the first black Creole accordionist to make records (note Old Timey LP 123). The first side ends with one of Memphis Minnie's most popular records from the 1940s which Clifton takes for a fine ride!

The second side opens with an emotional blues, MY LITTLE ANGEL, followed by the only real ZYDECO number on this album 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' apparently refers to a young man going to a dance even though his shoes have holes and since he can't afford new ones he puts paper in his shoes. Even though he is poor, the young man does not care what the girls' mother says, he is going 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 popularized by Bertha "Chippie" Hill, and gets a first class Chenier treatment.

The late jazz critic Russ Wilson in reviewing Chenier's first performance in Berkeley, Calif. in 1966 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 Wingy Manone. WORRIED LIFE BLUES, sometimes titled SOMEDAY BABY, closes the album and it's a classic by Big Maceo Merriweather who made it a hit in 1941.

Clifton Chenier has recorded many other albums which are all still available from Arhoolie Records. Some of his best numbers are also available on a Compact Disc (Arhoolie CD-301:Clifton Chenier: "Sixty Minutes With The King Of Zydeco"). Les Blank produced a fine film called "Hot Pepper" which is now available on video and Arhoolie Records is just about to release 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. Additional information including interesting interviews, photos, several of Clifton's best known songs, and a complete listing of all the recordings he has made are included in the remarkable book: "Cajun Music - A Reflection Of A People" by Ann Allen Savoy.

(Chris Strachwitz - 1987)



CLIFTON CHENIER

Sings The Blues

Side A:

AIN'T NO NEED OF CRYIN'
(Every Day Is The Same)*

ROSEMARY

BROWN SKINNED WOMAN *

DONE GOT OVER *

GONE A LA MAISON *

BE MY CHAUFFEUR

Side B:

MY LITTLE ANGEL *

PAPER IN MY SHOE

BLUES AFTER HOURS *

TROUBLE IN MIND

IN THE MOOD

WORRIED LIFE BLUES

Clifton Chenier - accordion & vocals

Cleveland Chenier - rubboard

Robert St. Julian - drums

with probably Joe Morris - bass

and Cleveland Keyes - guitar

* composed by Clifton Chenier and
© by Tradition Music Co. (BMI)

Cover photo by Roy C. Ames
Back liner photo by Hank Lebo

Cover by Elizabeth Weil

These recordings were originally made by Roy C. Ames in Houston, Texas on April 1, 1969 and first released on Prophecy and Home Cooking labels

Walter Andrus -engineer

Re-issue produced by Chris Strachwitz

© & P 1987 by Arhoolie Productions Inc.

For our complete 70 page CATALOG listing hundreds of Blues, Zydeco, Cajun, Country, Folk & Ethnic LPs, Cassettes, CDs, and Videos plus a copy of the latest Down Home Music Co. Newsletter send \$2 for postage to:

ARHOOIE CATALOG -10341 San
Pablo Avenue - El Cerrito, Ca. 94530, USA

AEH 1097 A



CLIFTON CHENIER
"Sings The Blues"

Produced by Roy C. Ames &
Chris Strachwitz

1097 A

1. AIN'T NO NEED OF CRYIN' (4:08)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
2. ROSEMARY (3:20)
(Bartholomew-Domino, Travis Music BMI)
3. BROWN SKIN WOMAN (4:50)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
4. DONE GOT OVER (2:55)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
5. GONE A LA MAISON (3:23)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
6. BE MY CHAUFFEUR (3:17)
(Minnie Lawlar)

© & © 1987 by Arhoolie Productions Inc.

L-28136

ARH 1097 B1



CLIFTON CHENIER
"Sings The Blues"

Produced by Roy C. Ames &
Chris Strachwitz

1097 B

1. MY LITTLE ANGEL (4:07)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
2. PAPER IN MY SHOE (4:40)
(Chavis-Shuler - TEK Music BMI)
3. BLUES AFTER HOURS (3:30)
(Chenier - Tradition Music Co. BMI)
4. TROUBLE IN MIND (3:57)
(Richard M. Jones)
5. IN THE MOOD (2:50)
(Garland-Razaf)
6. WORRIED LIFE BLUES (3:24)
(Merriweather)

© & © 1987 by Arhoolie Productions Inc.

L-28136-7