

Lawrence "Black" Ardoin

Tradition Creole

A logo for Arhoolie 9012, featuring the word "ARHOOOLIE" in a stylized font with a keyhole shape to its right, and the number "9012" below it.

1. BAYOU TWO-STEP (2:40) (Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
2. YOU USED TO CALL ME (3:20) (Clifton Chenier - Flat Town Music Co.)
3. HAUNTED HOUSE (3:08) (Robert Geddins - B Flat Music Co.)
4. COFAIR (2:40) (A. Ardoin & John Delafosse - Tradition Music Co.)
5. MATILDA (3:40) (G. Khoury & Thierry - Combine Music Co.)
6. I'VE BEEN THERE (3:00) (Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
7. BLACK'S WALTZ (3:22) (Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
8. AY, AI, AI (2:57) (Clifton Chenier - Tradition Music Co.)
9. NONC EDWARD (3:40) (Ardoin/Chenier - Tradition Music Co.)
10. WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GANDER (4:55) (S. Simien - Flat Town & Sid Sim Music Cos.)
11. EVERY NOW AND THEN (TOU LE TON SON TON) (3:25) (Clifton Chenier - Tradition Music Co.)
12. WALKING DOWN THE INTERSTATE (3:25) (Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
13. THE LONELY WALTZ (3:25)(Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
14. MIDLAND TWO STEP (2:42)(Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
15. MY BABY DON'T WEAR NO CLOTHES (2:20) (Lawrence Ardoin - Tradition Music Co.)
16. TALK TO YOUR DAUGHTER (3:30) (J.B. Lenore)

Lawrence "Black" Ardoin -
accordion & vocals

Edward Poullard - fiddle (& vocal on #16)

Donald Ray Ceasar - drums

Joseph Landry - bass

Dallas DeVille - lead guitar

Clarence Le Day - guitar

Alfred Pete - rubboard

Sean Ardoin - sax

#7, 8, 9, & 10 previously unissued.

Other titles originally released on Arhoolie
LP/C 1091

Produced by Chris Strachwitz

Recorded and mixed by Mark Miller in
Crowley, La. (May 1984)

All photos © by Chris Strachwitz (cover taken at a
benefit dance at church hall in Basile, La.)

Graphic Design by Morgan Dodge

Tradition Music is adm. by BUG Music Co. (BMI)

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On my first visit to Houston, Texas in the summer of 1959, folklorist Mack McCormick introduced me to a unique and delightful regional dance music which was then known variously as French, Zydeco, La La, or simply Push & Pull! During that and subsequent almost yearly visits to Texas and southern Louisiana, I drank a lot of beer at taverns like Irene's (off Washington) listening to the accordion band in the corner as you entered. One night Willie Green, who played a triple row accordion, had a concertina player second him and a third man sitting behind him scraping the rhythm on a washboard. They played mostly low-down blues, fast two steps and waltzes. On Sunday afternoons a Zydeco contest was held just off Dowling Street where, depending upon the performers, the

music was on the one hand harder, like Herbert Sam and his amplified accordion, and on the other hand more laid-back and pure rural Louisiana Creole "French" with all songs sung in patois. I was fortunate enough to be able to record several of these ex-Louisiana musicians (Arhoolie CD 307: Zydeco - The Early Years) during those formative years of the genre. To my ears the best music in Houston was played by musicians (both blues and French) who had grown up in the fields and woods of central/east Texas and southwest Louisiana and who had come to the big city to find better jobs and a more tolerant environment.

One night a few years later, Lightning Hopkins took me to hear a man he called "cousin Cliff" at a beer joint in "French Town" near the ship

channels on the southeast side of Houston. There, in the corner of this little juke was a tall black man with a huge piano accordion on his chest, plugged into an amp, accompanied only by a drummer. He was singing mostly low down blues with a strong, emotional voice but I couldn't understand a word of it - it was all in a thick French patois! The man's name was Clifton Chenier, and he asked me that same night to cut some records which we did the next day, even though I was as broke as he was! Over the years I was fortunate enough to be able to record Clifton on many occasions and he soon became known as the undisputed King of Zydeco.

Meeting Clifton Chenier and some of the other musicians in Houston soon led me to follow their footsteps back to their roots in Louisiana. I got acquainted with many wonderful people who were all

part of this remarkable Creole culture which not only had given rise to this music we now call Zydeco, but who carry on all kinds of rural traditions as well as maintaining their unique creole language.

Perhaps the most memorable musicians I met in the older, rural style, were accordionist Alphonse "Boi Sec" Ardoin and his fiddler Canray Fontenot. I think we met through Revon Reed and Paul Tate who were conducting a wonderful "live" program over radio station KEUN every Saturday morning from an old gambling casino just across the highway west of Mamou! Later they moved to the Lakeview Park in Eunice and the program is still alive today - but from Fred's Lounge in Mamou. Over the years "Bois Sec," Canray, and their family band made recordings for me (Arhoolie CD 445: "La Musique Creole" by "Bois Sec" and Arhoolie CD 381: "Louisiana Hot Sauce" by



DALLAS DEVILLE, EDWARD POUILLARD, DONALD RAY CEASAR, LAWRENCE "BLACK" ARDOIN AND CLARENCE LE DAY. 1984.

Canray Fontenot). On "Bois Sec's" recording, made in 1973, several of his sons took part including Lawrence Ardoin on drums, Morris Ardoin on guitar, and Gustav Ardoin on bass. From time to time I would hear the brothers play at dances and at the annual New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. Over ten years later in the spring of 1984, I was suddenly confronted by Lawrence Ardoin and the band you hear on this recording, playing with incredible unity and spirit at the Festival, that I went up to them and asked if they might want to record for me. Not only was Lawrence singing and playing accordion better than ever but he had with him a fine fiddler whom I had heard a few years earlier with the Nolton Simien band from Church Point: Edward Poullard! Edward also happens to be the brother of a fine accordionist living in the San Francisco area: Danny Poullard who has been playing with the Louisiana Playboys and the California Cajun Orchestra, popular at many of the Louisiana Creole and Cajun functions in Northern California.

Lawrence Ardoin, born November 17, 1946 in Durald, La. is one of the younger sons of master Creole musician Alphonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin. Lawrence used to play drums in the Ardoin Family band and only switched to the accordion, at brother Morris' suggestion, in 1975 after his older brother Gustav was killed in an accident. Gustav had been a fine accordionist and his untimely death left the family without the traditional lead instrument. "Bois Sec" had retired from playing dances around 1975 and these weekend traditions soon fell on Lawrence's shoulders.

Lawrence is married to Jo Ann and they have three children. The oldest son Sean (heard on a couple of cuts on this album) plays sax and accordion, daughter Erica was also picking up on the accordion and even "the baby" (at the time of this recording session) Chris, was already

trying to learn! Since then, young Chris Ardoin and his band Double Clutchin' has become the star of the Ardoin family with father Lawrence kept busy as their manager. Grandfather "Bois Sec" has also recently released a new CD with Balfa Toujours and is apparently not planning to retire soon!

The songs on this album include new ones by Lawrence such as I'VE BEEN THERE, BAYOU TWO STEP, BLACK'S WALTZ, WALKING DOWN THE INTERSTATE, THE LONELY WALTZ and MY BABY DON'T WEAR NO CLOTHES and reworkings of others which legendary Creole singer Amédé Ardoin already sang back in the 1920s and 30s such as COFAIR and MIDLAND TWO STEP. In between are local hits by Clifton Chenier like EVERY NOW AND THEN (Tu Le Ton Son Ton,) YOU USED TO CALL ME and AY, AI, AI. Then there are Bayou area

standards, the big south Louisiana hit MATILDA sung here in French and Lawrence's unique rendition of Rockin' Sidney's big hit WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE GANDER, which was never originally released on Lawrence's LP. You also get the fine J.B. Lenore blues, TALK TO YOUR DAUGHTER sung by Edward Poullard, and the 1950s classic penned by Bob Geddins, HAUNTED HOUSE (which is also sung in French)!

Here you have one of the finest Louisiana Creole bands who have continued to entertain dancers and listeners along the Louisiana/Texas

Gulf Coast with a wonderful mix of songs you can dance to - mostly sung in the authentic regional Creole French patois.

Although today primarily busy guiding the career of his son, Chris Ardoin, Lawrence tells me that the guys heard on this record still get together whenever the demand arises and we hope that the re-release of this album on CD will stir up new interest in the sounds of this remarkable, talented, and unique band.

Chris Strachwitz – 1984,
re-written – October 1998



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LAWRENCE "BLACK" ARDOIN • Tradition Creole

Lawrence, a son of legendary Creole accordionist "Bois-Sec" Ardoin, is not only the proud father of Zydeco's rising young star, Chris Ardoin, but also a fine accordionist, singer, composer and performer, as you will hear on this re-issue of a classic album of authentic Louisiana French Creole music with 4 extra bonus cuts never before issued.



Lawrence "Black" Ardoin - accordion & vocals

Edward Poullard - fiddle (and vocal on #16)

Donald Ray Ceasar - drums

Joseph Landry - bass

Dallas DeVille - lead guitar

Clarence Le Day - guitar

Alfred Pete - rubboard

Sean Ardoin - sax



"My favorite Lawrence Ardoin album – this traditional set includes great fiddle accompaniment by Edward Poullard"

– Michael Tisserand, author of "The Kingdom of Zydeco"

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