

# Cajun and Zydeco: Flavors of Southwest Louisiana

*A Smithsonian Folkways Music Pathway for  
students in grades 6-8.*



## ***Teacher's Guide***

*Lesson Hub 3:  
The Role of "Louisiana French" in  
Cajun and Zydeco Music*

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### **Lesson Hub Overview**

Louisiana cultural identity—especially as it relates to Cajun and zydeco musics—largely revolves around the French language. France's colonization of the Americas took hold in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As French territory expanded, so too did the use of the French language. French speakers in different parts of Louisiana developed unique dialects, or ways of speaking, based both on French and their places of origin.

The Acadians, descendants of French settlers in eastern Canada, carried their native language to southwest Louisiana, where it evolved over time into what is now known as "Cajun French." The Louisiana Creole language is also an amalgam, combining French vocabulary with African syntax. Efforts are underway to preserve all these local dialects.

Since Cajun French and Louisiana Creole are spoken languages (as opposed to written), *colloquialisms* (informal words or phrases) are common in daily speech and in music.

In this lesson, students will engage with the French language as it is spoken in southwest Louisiana and gain an historical understanding of its use in Cajun and zydeco musics. Students will listen for French colloquialisms in music and arrange and perform the French-language Cajun standard, "J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte!"

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## Lesson Paths and Student Objectives\*



1. **Louisiana French** (20+ minutes)
  - Students will explain why French is the language of Cajun & Zydeco music.









2. **Listening for Colloquialisms** (approx. 30 minutes)
  - Students will identify colloquialisms in Cajun & Zydeco music.



3. **Jouer et Chanter! (Play and Sing)** (30+ minutes)
  - Students will arrange and perform the French-language Cajun “standard”, *"J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte!"*

\*Note: The learning icons used above signify the type of learning used in each Path. Keep in mind that these Paths are not intended to be sequential; rather, teachers or students may choose which Paths they'd like to use from each Lesson. The time estimate given for each Path indicates "in class" time. The + indicates there are optional extension activities and/or a suggested homework assignment.

While all learning types ( History and Culture,  Music Listening,  Music Making and Creation, and  Creative Connections) fulfill 2014 National Music Standards, non-music teachers will be able to use  History and Culture and  Creative Connections Paths without specific musical knowledge.

## Teaching Plan

- Throughout this lesson, consider learning these French/Cajun terms and trying to use them during this lesson:
  - *Allons* [Ah-loh(n)]: Let's go.
  - *Ça c'est bon* (Sa say boh(n)): That's good.
  - *Ça va* (*Sa va*): How are you? And it's also the response "I'm well."
  - *C'est tout* (Say too): That's all.
  - *Cher* [sha]: A term of endearment usually used with women, similar to "dear" or "sweetheart." Ex. "Would you like another cup of coffee, *cher*?"
  - *Laissez les bons temps rouler* [Lay say lay boh(n) toh(n) roo lay]: Let the good times roll. With more than 400 festivals each year, this saying embodies the fun-loving nature of Louisiana.

### OR

- For older students, consider a "scavenger hunt" activity in which the students hunt for French words that have found their way into regular American English. Give them 2 minutes to find as many as possible.

## 1. Path One: Louisiana French



### **To prepare:**

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 1 of the **Lesson Hub 3 Slideshow** (slides 4–15).  
Open the "Launch Slideshow" link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub 3 landing page. (*If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the "Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.*)

### **1. Language and Identity:** (slide 5)

- A. Pose the following questions for the students to consider:
- *Can you think of any other regions in the US where a language other than English is spoken?*
  - *Why is language a crucial piece of cultural identity?*

- B. Lead a short discussion based on student responses.

#### **Guiding thoughts for teachers:**

- Language informs the way we think and how we relate to the world around us.
- The social function of communication (which fosters group identity) provides the means through which cultural identity is passed down through generations; it helps form a sense of community and relationships.

## 2. The French Language Crosses the Ocean: (slides 6–10)

- A. Share information embedded within the slideshow about the ways in which the French language expanded across the Americas and landed in southwest Louisiana. Topics include:
- The French colonization of the Americas (slides 6–7)
  - “La Louisiane” (slide 8)
- B. “Cajun French” (slide 9)
- Read about the Acadian exile and “Cajun French.”  
(Additional contextual information is included in the teacher’s notes on the slideshow.)
  - Listen to a spoken example of “Cajun French.”
- C. “Louisiana Creole” (slide 10)
- Read about the Louisiana Creole language.
  - *Optional activity:* Listen to a song that incorporates Louisiana Creole, “Mô Kèr Kassé,” performed by Hiram Sampsy and the Bad Habits.

## 3. Oral Traditions and other Factors: (slides 11–14)

- A. Share information embedded in the slide show about other factors that played a historical role in the development of Cajun and zydeco music.
- Local dialects: oral traditions (slide 11)
  - Language, persecution, and perseverance (slide 12)
  - The Louisiana French Renaissance (slide 13)
- B. French dialects in modern-day Louisiana (slide 14)
- Read information on slide.
  - *Optional activity:* watch a video that features a contemporary Cajun/zydeco band, Jeffery Broussard & The Creole Cowboys.

## 4. Learning Checkpoint: (slide 15)

- What are two French dialects that are still spoken in southwest Louisiana?  
**Answer:** Cajun French and Louisiana Creole
- Why is “French” still a big part of Louisiana cultural identity (and thus Cajun music and zydeco music)?  
**Answer:** Many Louisianans trace their roots to earlier settlers of Louisiana, including
  - Cajuns, descendants of the Acadians (French Canadians from Nova Scotia who were forced to leave Canada in Le Grand Derangement) and French colonizers from Europe – all speakers of French.

- The Creole people have mixed ancestry: French, African, Spanish, and Native American, which led to the creation of the Louisiana Creole language.

## **2. Path Two: Listening for Colloquialisms**



### **To prepare:**

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 2 of the **Lesson Hub 3 Slideshow** (slides 17–31).  
Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub 3 landing page. (*If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.*)
- Print the song lyrics/translation/pronunciation document for each student: [“Two-Step de Eunice”](#) and [“Co-Fe”](#) (find below).

### **1. Opening Discussion: Listening for Colloquialisms** (slides 17–19)

- A. (slide 18) Definition of colloquialism
  - Provide students with a description/definition of the word “colloquialism.”
  - Then, prompt students to think about this question:
    - *Can you think of any English-language colloquialisms?*
- B. (slide 19) After leading a short discussion, show them the **word cloud**.

### **2. Cajun French and Louisiana Creole Colloquialisms:** (slides 20–25)

Share the embedded information about interesting French colloquialisms that often appear in Cajun and zydeco songs.

### **3. Listen for Cajun Colloquialisms (Attentive Listening).** (slides 26–27)

- A. (slide 26) Play the embedded recording (“Two Step de Eunice” by Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band)
  - As students listen, prompt them to raise their hand if they recognize any French colloquialisms (without looking at the lyrics).
- B. (slide 27) Pass out the [song lyrics/translation/pronunciation guide](#) and listen again.
  - This time, direct students to underline the colloquialisms they find.
  - A “teacher’s version” of these lyrics (with the colloquialisms highlighted) can be [found below](#).
  - **Optional Extension Activity:** Practice your French!  
Have students read the lyrics aloud as a group (or with partners), one sentence at a time, using the pronunciation guide.

### **4. Listen for Creole Colloquialisms (Attentive Listening)** (slides 28–29)

- A. (slide 28) Play the embedded recording (“Co-Fé” by John Delafosse).

- As students listen, prompt them to raise their hand if they recognize any French colloquialisms (without looking at the lyrics).
- B. (slide 29) Pass out the [song lyrics/translation/pronunciation guide](#) and listen again.
  - This time, direct students to underline the colloquialisms they find.
  - A “teacher’s version” of these lyrics (with the colloquialisms highlighted) can be [found below](#).
  - *Optional Extension Activity:* Practice your French!  
Have students read the lyrics aloud as a group (or with partners), one sentence at a time, using the pronunciation guide.

### 5. Discussion: Compare and Contrast (slide 30)

- Prompt students to compare these recordings by using one (or more) of the discussion prompts provided in the slideshow.
- **Or** students might discuss these questions with a partner or in a small group.
- **Or**, depending on their age, students could also provide a written response.

### 6. Learning Checkpoint: (slide 31)

- What is a colloquialism?
  - **Answer:** Colloquialisms are words or phrases that are not formal or literary and are typically used in ordinary or familiar conversation.
- Why are French colloquialisms used so frequently in Cajun and zydeco music?
  - **Answer:** Since Cajun French and Louisiana Creole are primarily spoken languages (as opposed to written), colloquialisms are common in daily speech and music.

### 3. Path Three: Jouer et Chanter! (Play and Sing)



#### To prepare:

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 3 of the **Lesson Hub 3 Slideshow** (slides 33–43).  
Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub 3 landing page. (*If you are able to use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.*)
- Print the “[J’ai Passe](#)” song lyrics/translation/pronunciation guide document for each student (find below).  
*Optional:* Print the [sheet music](#) for “J’ai Passé .”

#### 1. **The Role of Louisiana French in Cajun and Zydeco** (slides 34–37)

- A. (slide 34) In this Path, you will engage French language through music by learning a popular Cajun "standard" called "J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte!" (I Passed In Front of Your Door) by Dewey Balfa, Marc Savoy, and D.L. Menard.
- B. Attentive listening: Meaning in “J’ai Passé Devant Ta Porte!”
  - (slide 35) Ask students to listen to the embedded recording. As they listen, they should think about these questions:
    - *What do you think this song is about?*
    - *Do the musical sounds provide any clues about the song’s meaning?*
  - (slide 36) After leading a short discussion based on student responses, play this recording again.
    - This time, students will follow along with the English translation (embedded in the slideshow).
    - Ask them to consider this question: *What story do these lyrics tell?*
- C. Share contextual information about the song (**in the slideshow**) and consider leading another short discussion based on student responses if time allows. (slide 37)

#### 2. **Rhythm and Harmony in Cajun Music**: (slides 38–40)

- A. Engaged listening: Rhythm (slide 38)
  - Pass out the [lyrics/translation/pronunciation guide](#).
  - Play the embedded song. As students follow along, they can gently pat the rhythm of the words.
    - Prompt them to observe any consistent rhythmic patterns – *what is the time signature and overall rhythmic feel?*
    - **Find the [sheet music](#) below.**



- When they are ready, ask them to hum or sing along.
  - *Optional:* Students can notate rhythmic patterns and/or read the sheet music.
- B. Attentive and Engaged Listening: Harmonic Analysis
- (slide 39) Share embedded contextual information about this song’s harmonic structure.
    - This song’s harmonic structure is based on a **I-IV-V chord progression**, which is extremely common in folk and popular music.
    - The three chords used are **G major, C major, and D major**.
  - (slide 40) Listen to the recording again. This time the students should focus on the changing harmonies.
    - Consider having them hold up one finger for the “I” chord, four fingers for the “IV” chord, and 5 fingers for the “V” chord.
    - If students play a chordal instrument (such as ukulele, guitar, or piano), consider having them play along.
3. **Arranging and Performing “J’ai Passé”:** (slides 41–42)
- A. Within this culminating activity, students will choose a way to participate in the class’s rendition of “J’ai Passe.” Consider having students choose from the following options:
- Option 1: Play a percussion instrument.  
Your job is holding down the song’s triple-meter feel (waltz).
  - Option 2: Play a chordal instrument (piano, guitar, ukulele)  
Strum the I-IV-V chord progression.
  - Option 3: Play the melody.  
On piano, guitar, violin, wind instrument, etc...  
*(Learning the melody by ear is preferable. However, if you don’t have time, sheet music is provided).*
  - Option 4: Sing!  
Utilize the phonetic pronunciation provided on the lyrics sheet.
- B. Return to the audio track as a guide as you collectively arrange, practice, and perform this song.
4. **Learning Checkpoint:** (slide 43)
- What types of choices do musicians (like yourselves) make when they create their own arrangements of familiar/popular tunes/standards (hint: think about musical elements and expressive qualities)?
    - **Answer:** Answers will vary depending on students (e.g., rhythm, melody, form, tempo, dynamics, timbre, texture, instrumentation, articulation, etc.).

## **2014 National Music Standards Connections**

***MU:Pr4.1.a Demonstrate and explain how the selection of music to perform is influenced by personal interest, knowledge, and context, as well as their personal and others' technical skill.***

- Can I provide rationale for the part I chose to play in the class arrangement of “J'ai Passe”? (How does this part relate to my personal interests, knowledge, personal, and others' technical skills)?

***MU:Pr4.2.a Demonstrate understanding of the structure and the elements of music (such as rhythm, pitch, form, and harmony) in music selected for performance.***

- Can I demonstrate understanding of musical structure and the elements of music by performing my part in “J'ai Passe” with rhythmic, melodic, and/or harmonic accuracy?

***MU: Pr4.2.c Identify how cultural and historical context inform performances***

- How did the context of our classroom performance differ from the context in which Cajun and zydeco music is often performed?

***MU:Pr4.3.a Demonstrate and explain how intent is conveyed through interpretive decisions and expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, timbre, and articulation/style)***

- In what ways did we convey intent through our interpretative decisions and expressive qualities as we performed “J'ai Passe”?

***MU:Pr5.1.b Rehearse to refine technical accuracy and expressive qualities to address challenges, and show improvement over time.***

- Can I practice and improve my performance (of J'ai Passe) over time?

***MU:Pr6.1.a Perform the music with technical accuracy to convey the creator's intent.***

- Can I perform my part in “J'ai Passé” with technical accuracy, “in-the-style-of” Cajun music?

***MU:Re7.1.a Demonstrate and explain, citing evidence, how selected music connects to and is influenced by specific interests, experiences, purposes, or contexts***

- Can I explain the meaning of the word “standard”, as it relates to music repertoire?
- Can I explain why Cajun and zydeco music was (and still often is) sung in French?

***MU:Re7.2.a Explain how the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of contrasting pieces.***

- Can I compare the ways in which the elements of music and expressive qualities relate to the structure of “Two-Step de Eunice” (Cajun) and “Co-Fe” (Zydeco)

***MU:Re7.2.b Identify and compare the context of music from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods.***

- Can I identify colloquialisms in Cajun & zydeco musical examples?

***MU:Re8.1.a Describe a personal interpretation of how creators' and performers' application of the elements of music and expressive qualities, within genres and cultural and historical context, convey expressive intent.***

- Can I describe how the performers' application of the elements of music and expressive qualities provide clues about the song's meaning?

***MU:Cn10.0.a Demonstrate how interests, knowledge, and skills relate to personal choices and intent when creating, performing, and responding to music***

- Can I explain why Cajun and zydeco music was (and often still is) sung in French?
- Can I explain the meaning of the word "standard", as it relates to music repertoire?

***MU:Cn11.0.a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.***

- Can I explain how Cajun French and Louisiana Creole developed?
  - Can I explain why colloquialisms are common in Cajun and zydeco music?
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## **Additional Resources**

Fowler, Ken, producer. 1996. *Louisiana Legends*, “Michael Doucet.” Video, 25:27. Aired February 14, 1996, on Louisiana Public Broadcasting. Hosted by Gus Weill. Retrieved from the Louisiana Digital Media Archive.

[http://ladigitalmedia.org/video\\_v2/asset-detail/LLOLG-1201](http://ladigitalmedia.org/video_v2/asset-detail/LLOLG-1201).

LaFleur, Donna, producer. 2010. “French Dictionary-Louisiana: The State We’re In.” Video, 08:35. Aired on February 2, 2010, on Louisiana Public Broadcasting. Retrieved from the Louisiana Digital Media Archive.

[http://ladigitalmedia.org/video\\_v2/asset-detail/LSWI-3323-FrenchDictionary](http://ladigitalmedia.org/video_v2/asset-detail/LSWI-3323-FrenchDictionary).

Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. n.d. “Office of Cultural Development Resources (CODOFIL).” Accessed March 18, 2022.

<https://www.crt.state.la.us/cultural-development/codofil/resources/index>.

Louisiana Division of the Arts. n.d. “Folklife in Louisiana.” Accessed March 18, 2022.

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Valdman, Albert, Kevin J. Rottet, Barry Jean Ancelet, Richard Guidry, Thomas A. Klingler, Amanda LaFleur, Tamara Lindner, Michael D. Picone, and Dominique Ryon, eds. 2010. *Dictionary of Louisiana French: As spoken in Cajun, Creole, and American Indian Communities*. Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.

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## Worksheets

### “Two-Step de Eunice” Song Lyrics and Translation

Performed by the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band, Translation by Ann Allen Savoy

Verse 1:

**Hé-y-yaie, chère, jolie,**

*[Hay-ee-yahee, shya zhoh-lee]*

**Gardez donc quoi ta fait**

*[gar-day dawnk kwah tah fay]*

**Moi, j’suis la dans les misères**

*[moh, shoo lah dahn lay mee-zehrs]*

**Jolie, je peux pas t’a voir**

*[zhoh-leezh puh pah tah vwahr]*

**Moi, je peux plus dormir le soir**

*[Mohzh puh plooh dohr-meer luh swahr]*

**Avec tous mes jonglements**

*[Ah-vehk too may zhohn-gluh-mahn]*

**Et mon chagrin que j’ai pour toi**

*[Ay mohn shah-grehn kuh zhay pohr twah]*

**Catin, oublie pas ça**

*[Cot-tan oo-blee pah sah]*

Verse 2:

**Moi, je voudrais que toi tu me dis**

*[Mohzh voo-dray kuh twah toom dee]*

**Pour toi-meme voir quo’ faire que toi**

*[Pohr twah mehm vwahr kuh - fehr kuh twah]*

**Tu m’as mis dans tant chagrin**

*[Too mah mee dahn than shah-grehn]*

Translation:

Hey, dear pretty one

Look what you’ve done

Me, I’m there in miseries

Pretty one, I can’t have you

Me, I can’t sleep anymore at night

With all my thoughts

And my sadness that I have for you

Catin, don’t forget that.

Me, I’d want for you to say to me

To see for yourself why you,

You put me in all this sadness

**Que moi je suis toujours dedans**  
*[Kuh mwah, shoo too-zhoor duh-dahn]*

That I'm always in.

**Tu m'as toujours maltraité**  
*[Too mah too-zhoor mahl-tray-tay]*

You've always mistreated me,

**Fait des choses que je méritais pas**  
*[Fay day shohz kuh zhuh meh-ree-tay pah]*

Done things I didn't deserve.

**La, peut-être, ces 'tites affaires**  
*[Lah puh-teht, say teets ah-fehr]*

Maybe, after all, these little things  
 you've done

**Sont toutes tes grosses erreurs**  
*[Sohn too tay grohs eer-ruhr]*

Are all your big mistakes.

## “Two-Step de Eunice” song lyrics and translation

(Teacher’s Version) \*colloquialisms in yellow

As performed by Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band

Translation by Ann Allen Savoy

Verse 1:

**Hé-y-yaie**, chère, jolie,  
[Hay-ee-yahee, shya zhoh-lee]

**Gardez donc** quoi ta fait  
[gar-day dawnk kwah tah fay]

**Moi, j’suis la dans les misères**  
[moh, shoo lah dahn lay mee-zehrs]

**Jolie, je peux pas t’a voir**  
[zhoh-leezh puh pah tah vwahr]

**Moi, je peux plus dormir le soir**  
[Mohzh puh ploo dohr-meer luh swahr]

**Avec tous mes jonglements**  
[Ah-vehk too may zhohn-gluh-mahn]

**Et mon chagrin que j’ai pour toi**  
[Ay mohn shah-grehn kuh zhay pohr twah]

**Catin**, oublie pas ça  
[Cot-tan oo-blee pah sah]

Verse 2:

**Moi, je voudrais que toi tu me dis**  
[Mohzh voo-dray kuh twah toom dee]

**Pour toi-meme voir quo’ faire que toi**  
[Pohr twah mehm vwahr kuh - fehr kuh twah]

**Tu m’as mis dans tant chagrin**  
[Too mah mee dahn than shah-grehn]

Translation:

Hey, dear pretty one

Look what you’ve done

Me, I’m there in miseries

Pretty one, I can’t have you

Me, I can’t sleep anymore at night

With all my thoughts

And my sadness that I have for you

Catin, don’t forget that.

Me, I’d want for you to say to me

To see for yourself why you,

You put me in all this sadness

**Que moi je suis toujours dedans**  
*[Kuh mwah, shoo too-zhoor duh-dahn]*

That I'm always in.

**Tu m'as toujours maltraité**  
*[Too mah too-zhoor mahl-tray-tay]*

You've always mistreated me,

**Fait des choses que je méritais pas**  
*[Fay day shohz kuh zhuh meh-ree-tay pah]*

Done things I didn't deserve.

**La, peut-être, ces 'tites affaires**  
*[Lah puh-teht, say teets ah-fehr]*

Maybe, after all, these little things  
 you've done

**Sont toutes tes grosses erreurs**  
*[Sohn too tay grohs eer-ruhr]*

Are all your big mistakes.



## “Quo’ Faire / Co-Fé” song lyrics and translation

Performed by John Delafosse, Translation by Ann Allen Savoy

Verse 1:

**Bye Bye à ta maman,**  
[Bah bahee ah tah mah-mahn]

**Bye Bye à ton papa**  
[Bah bahee ah tohn pah-pah]

**Jolie mais t’est ‘tite fille**  
[Zhoh-lee may tay teet fee]

**Quoi donc que mon je va’s faire**  
[Kwah dohn kuh mohnzh vah fehr]

**Quitté pour t’en aller,**  
[Kee-tay pohr tahn ah-lay]

**Aller-z-avec un autre**  
[Ah-lays ah-vehk uhn oht]

**Gardez donc ayou mon je v’as aller**  
[Gar-day dawnk ayoo mohnzh vah ah-lay]

**Oui, mais malheureuse**  
[Ooe, may mahl-uh-ruhz]

Verse 2:

**Bye Bye à ta maman,**  
[Bah bahee ah tah mah-mahn]

**Bye Bye à ton papa**  
[Bah bahee ah tohn pah-pah]

**Quo’ Faire tu fais tout ça**  
[Kuh Fehr too fay too sah]

**Mais, toi, mais tout t’as fait**  
[May, twah, may too tah fay?]

Translation:

Bye-Bye to your mama,

Bye-Bye to your papa,

Pretty one, but you’re a little girl,

So, what am I gonna do,

You left to go,

To go with another,

But me, I’m gonna go,

Yes, unhappy one.

Bye-Bye to your mama,

Bye-Bye to your papa,

Why did you do that,

Do all you did?

**Quitté pour t'en aller,**  
*[Kee-tay pohr tahn ah-lay]*

**Aller-z-avec un autre**  
*[Ah-lays ah-vehk uhn oht]*

**Hé-yaie, mais t'es 'tite fille**  
*[Ah-yah-ee, may tay teet fee]*

**Quoi donc, dis, moi, je va's faire**  
*[Kwah dohn, zhdeek mohn zhuh vah fehr]*

You left to go,

To go with another,

Hey, but you're a little girl,

Say, so what am I gonna do?

## Quo' Faire / Co-Fé Song lyrics and translation

(Teacher's version) \*colloquialisms in yellow

Verse 1:

**Bye Bye à ta maman,**  
[Bah bahee ah tah mah-mahn]

**Bye Bye à ton papa**  
[Bah bahee ah tohn pah-pah]

**Jolie mais t'est 'tite fille**  
[Zhoh-lee may tay teet fee]

**Quoi donc que mon je va's faire**  
[Kwah dohn kuh mohnzh vah fehr]

**Quitté pour t'en aller,**  
[Kee-tay pohr tahn ah-lay]

**Aller-z-avec un autre**  
[Ah-lays ah-vehk uhn oht]

**Gardez donc ayoo mon je v'as aller**  
[Gar-day dawnk ayoo mohnzh vah ah-lay]

**Oui, mais malheureuse**  
[Ooee, may mahl-uhr-ruhzh]

Verse 2:

**Bye Bye à ta maman,**  
[Bah bahee ah tah mah-mahn]

**Bye Bye à ton papa**  
[Bah bahee ah tohn pah-pah]

**Quo' Faire tu fais tout ça**  
[Kuh Fehr too fay too sah]

**Mais, toi, mais tout t'as fait**  
[May, twah, may too tah fay?]

Translation:

Bye-Bye to your mama,

Bye-Bye to your papa,

Pretty one, but you're a little girl,

So, what am I gonna do,

You left to go,

To go with another,

But me, I'm gonna go,

Yes, unhappy one.

Bye-Bye to your mama,

Bye-Bye to your papa,

Why did you do that,

Do all you did?

**Quitté pour t'en aller,**  
*[Kee-tay pohr tahn ah-lay]*

You left to go,

**Aller-z-avec un autre**  
*[Ah-lays ah-vehk uhn oht]*

To go with another,

**Hé-yaie, mais t'es 'tite fille**  
*[Ah-yah-ee, may tay teet fee]*

Hey, but you're a lil' girl,

**Quoi donc, dis, moi, je va's faire**  
*[Kwah dohn, zhdeek mohn zhuh vah fehr]*

Say, so what am I gonna do?

## J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte (I Passed in Front of Your Door)

Lyrics, pronunciation, chords, translation

As performed by Dewey Balfa, Marc Savoy, and D. L. Menard

Translation by Ann Allen Savoy

Waltz,  $\frac{3}{4}$  time

Chord progression: I-V-IV

Key of G

### Verse 1:

**G**

**J'ai passé devant ta porte**

*[Zhay pah-say duh-vhan tah pohrt]*

### Translation:

**I passed in front of your door**

**D**

**J'ai crié "bye-bye, à la belle,"**

*[Zhay kree-ay bah-bahee lah behl]*

**I cried out, "bye-bye, beautiful one"**

**G**

**C**

**Y a pas personne qu'a pas répondu**

*[Ee ah pah pehr-sohn kah pah ray-pohn-doo]*

**No one answered.**

**G**

**D**

**G**

**Oh y yaie, mon coeur me fait mal**

*[oh ee yahee, mohn kuhrm fay mahl]*

**Oh, my heart hurts me.**

### Verse 2:

**G**

**Moi, j'ai été cogné-z- à la porte**

*[Mwah, zhay ay-tay kohn-nyay zhah la pohrt]*

**I had been knocking at the door,**

**D**

**Quand ils ont ouvert à la porte**

*[Kahn eez ahn oo-vehr. lah pohrt]*

**When they opened the door,**

**G**

**C**

**Moi, j'ai vu des chandelles allumées**

*[Mohn zhay voo day shahn-dehl ah-loo-may]*

**Me, I saw some lighted candles**

**G**

**D**

**G**

**Tout le tour de son cercueil**

*[Too luh-toor duh sohn sehr-kuhr]*

**All around her coffin.**

# J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte (I Passed in Front of Your Door)

Sheet Music, courtesy of Ann Allen Savoy

## MON COEUR T'APPELLE ("J'ai Passé Devant Ta Porte") as sung by Cleoma Breaux Falcon

Music transcribed by Ann Allen Savoy  
Lyrics transcribed by Ann Allen Savoy

Key of G  
(1st Position)

J'ai pas - sé de - vant ta porte , J'ai cri -  
 (Zhay pah - say duh - vahñ tah pohrt , Zhay kree -  
 - é , "Bye - bye , la belle ;" 'Y a pas per - sonne qu'a  
 (- ay , "Bah - bahee , lah behl ;" Ee ah pah pehr-sohn kah  
 pas ré - pon - du , oh y yaïe , mon coeur me fait mal .  
 ( pah ray-pohñ -doo , oh ee yahee , mohñ kuhrm fay mahl.)