

Cajun and Zydeco: Flavors of Southwest Louisiana

A Smithsonian Folkways Music Pathway for students in Grades 6–8.

Teacher's Guide

Lesson Hub 8:
Stylistic Developments in Zydeco Music



Lesson Hub Overview

Zydeco music developed from the music made by African American Louisiana Creoles, and its origins date to the 18th century. Over ensuing centuries, Creole music evolved through cultural exchange with Louisiana Cajuns.

In the early 20th century, Cajun and Creole musicians would play at each other's house parties—known in Creole tradition as a “*fais-do-do*.” Creole bands were typically led by accordion and fiddle and often included triangle and scrubboard for rhythm. The radio influenced Creole music in the 1920s, as musicians incorporated aspects of popular music from the radio (such as syncopation and blue notes from blues and jazz) into their traditional songs. Amédé Ardoin, known as the father of zydeco music, recorded the first examples of this new style in 1929.

By the 1950s, as radio and popular culture found their way further into rural Louisiana, zydeco slowly emerged as its own fully formed genre. Amplification became common, as did new types of accordions. The music became faster, and the words simplified. Clifton Chenier, who began recording in the 1950s, is credited as the inventor of zydeco music. He blended traditional Creole music with the modern sounds of blues, R&B, and rock and roll to create this new genre. Today, zydeco music is alive and well: traditional zydeco dances are still popular in Southwest Louisiana, and modern zydeco musicians continue to incorporate influences from other styles.

In this lesson, students will engage with recordings from the Smithsonian Folkways collection while learning about the stylistic changes that led to the evolution of 20th century zydeco music from traditional (old-time) Creole music.

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Lesson Paths and Student Objectives*



1. **The Origins of Zydeco** (20+ minutes)

- Students will describe some of the early influences that ultimately led to the creation of an entirely new genre called “zydeco.”



2. **Zydeco: The 1950s and Beyond** (30+ minutes).







- Students will identify and describe the musical developments, beginning in the 1950s, that influenced the zydeco “sound.”



3. **Arranging “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales”** (45+ minutes)

- Students will interpret and perform the zydeco standard, “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales.”

*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

1. Path One: The Origins of Zydeco



To Prepare:

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 1 the **Lesson Hub 8 Slideshow** (slides 1–14)
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub landing page. If you can use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.

1. The Origins of Zydeco

A. Creoles* in Louisiana (slide 6)

- Throughout the 19th century, African American Creoles settled in Southwest Louisiana, where they sharecropped the same fields as the Cajuns and entered a long period of cultural exchange.
- Creoles added the unique flavor of traditional African chants, religious “juré” singers, and Caribbean rhythms to the music of the region.

** See Lesson 4 Path 1 for more information on Creole culture in Louisiana.*

B. Cajun and Creole cultural exchange (slide 7)

- The Cajun and Creole musical styles of Southwest Louisiana developed in a parallel fashion.
- Early Creole house parties usually had bands made up of accordion and fiddle, and sometimes a rhythmic element like triangle or scrubboard.
- Listen to “Bébé's Stomp” by the Carrière Brothers to give students an idea of what early Creole music sounded like.

2. Zydeco Begins to Emerge

A. Amédé Ardoin and the influence of blues and jazz (slide 8)

- By the 1920s, at the height of the accordion's popularity, the influence of the radio (primarily blues and jazz music from New Orleans) began to find its way more prominently into Creole music style.
- The recordings of **Amédé Ardoin from 1929** are among the first recorded examples of this new kind of playing.

** See Lesson 4 Path 2 for more information on Amédé Ardoin.*

B. Following in Amédé's footsteps (slide 9)

- Creole musicians like Bois-Sec Ardoin, The Carrière Brothers, and Canray Fontenot began to follow in Amédé's footsteps as this new sound began to emerge.

- Play an excerpt of from the embedded audio track, “Colinda” by the Carriere Brothers. Ask students to think about this question:
 - *What musical sounds do you notice?*
 - Students might indicate that they hear **accordion and fiddle -- syncopation, two-step rhythms**, etc.

3. “La-La”

A. Video: Canray Fontenot, “Barres de la Prison” (slide 10)

- As students watch/listen, have them think about these questions:
 - *How does this “style” compare to the audio recording you just heard?*
 - *How does this style of playing differ from traditional Cajun music?*
- Facilitate a short class discussion based on student responses to these discussion prompts – some suggestions for possible responses:
 - **Similarities between the two tracks:** Both tracks have a laid-back, syncopated rhythm - both feature fiddle and accordion.
 - **Difference from Cajun music:** This style of fiddle playing has a more “bluesy” flavor, elicited by musical techniques such as slides, syncopation, blue notes (notes that are not in the typical scale being played—usually the fifth or seventh notes in the scale are flat), and elongating note duration.

B. Share the embedded information about a style of playing called “La-La” or “Old-Time,” a precursor to zydeco music.

- The term “La-La” primarily refers to Creole music during and right after WWII.

4. **Learning Checkpoint** (slide 13)

- What were some of the musical influences that ultimately led to the creation of a new musical genre called “Zydeco”?
 - **Answer:** Creoles brought influences to SW Louisiana from African chants, religious “juré” singers and Caribbean rhythms. By the 1920s, Creole music began to incorporate New Orleans blues and jazz music popularized by the radio.

2. Path Two – Zydeco: The 1950s and Beyond



To Prepare:

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 2 of the **Lesson Hub 8 Slideshow** (slides 15–33)
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub landing page. If you can use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.
- Optional: Print the student listening log template (find below).

1. Musical Changes in the 1950s

Share embedded contextual information about musical developments (beginning in the 1950s) that influenced the development of zydeco music:

- Radio and amplification (slide 16)
- New types of accordions (slide 17)
- Prominent percussion – new types of scrubboard (slide 18)
- Pop culture and language (slide 19)

2. The Blues Influence in Zydeco Music

A. Share information about Clifton Chenier (slide 20), who fully blended the flavor of his native Southwest Louisiana French Creole music (La-La/Old-Time), with the popular sounds of blues, R&B, and rock and roll in order to create an entirely new genre.

B. Attentive Listening: Compare a blues song and a zydeco song (slides 21–27)

Within this activity, students will listen to two recordings.

i. Listen to “Cash Box Boogie” by Lowell Fulson (slide 22)

As students listen, they should write down anything they notice about the music elements.

- *Instrumentation* – **electric guitar, drums, bass, saxophone**
- *Form/structure* - **AB**
- *vocal timbre* – **none, all instrumental**
- *Rhythm* – **4/4, driving rock n roll rhythm**

ii. Listen to “Louisiana Stomp” by Clifton Chenier (slide 23)

As students listen, they should write down anything they notice about the music elements.

- *Instrumentation* - **guitar, drums, accordion**
- *Form/structure* - **AB**
- *vocal timbre* – **none, all instrumental**
- *Rhythm* – **4/4, driving**

- iii. After listening to both examples, consider facilitating a short class discussion based on the students' interpretations of the musical elements:
- *What similarities do you notice?* – **both use “walking bass” and are all instrumental. Both have repeated instrumental melodies and similar structure, as well as a similar driving rhythm**
 - *How about differences?* **Differences in instrumentation, style, and swing**
 - *How would you classify the genre of each?* – **“Cash Box Boogie” is an example of classic blues or rock and roll. “Louisiana Stomp” is classified as zydeco.**

C. Share answers to questions about the two tracks (slides 24–27)

- The first track was an example **classic blues** (one type of music that was popular on the radio in the 1950s).
- The second track was an early zydeco track by Clifton Chenier
 - Chenier incorporated the “walking” note structure that was common in blues music.
 - However, this track was still clearly intended for dancing.
- Chenier popularized zydeco music, and many artists still follow in his footsteps.

3. ***Optional: Comparing Old-Time/La-La and Zydeco***

Within this activity, students will listen to two different recordings. If you plan to use it, pass out two copies of the listening log, one for each song.

A. Example 1: Listen to “Joe Pitre a Deux Femmes” by Canray Fontenot (slide 29).

As students listen, they should consider these questions:

- *When do you think each song was recorded?* **Before 1950**
- *What type of music is this?* **Old-time / La-La**
- *What do you notice about the lyrics?* **Along with the fiddle, they are the focus – simple lyrics that are repeated. They follow the instrumental melody.**
- *What about the instrumentation?* **The fiddle is the focus, along with a simple drum in the background.**
- *What do you notice about the use of these elements of music: rhythm, form, melody, harmony, texture, and expressive qualities (dynamics, articulation, timbre, tempo)?* **The rhythm is relaxed, slow – form is strophic (AAA) repeated. Dynamics ebb and flow with fiddle and vocals.**

B. Example 2: Listen to “Joe Pitre a Deux Femmes” by John Delafosse (slide 30). As students listen, they should consider these questions:

- *When do you think each song was recorded?* **After 1950 (early 1980s)**
- *What type of music is this?* **zydeco**

- *What do you notice about the lyrics?* **They are simplified even further than the previous version – verses are shorter, chorus is repeated. Vocals are used almost more as an instrument than a feature.**
- *What about the instrumentation?* **Accordion, no fiddle, washboard, accordion and rhythm are the focus as opposed to the vocals**
- *What do you notice about the use of these elements of music: rhythm, form, melody, harmony, texture, and expressive qualities (dynamics, articulation, timbre, tempo)?* **Driving rhythm, much faster and with a consistent dynamic (no ebb and flow), but with same strophic and repeated form.**

C. About the recordings (slide 31): Share information about the two versions of “Joe Pitre a deux femmes.”

- These recordings were two versions of the same song.
- The first track was an example of **Creole old-time (la-la)** . . . something that might have been heard **before 1950**.
- The second track was pure **zydeco** (recorded in the **early 1980s**).

D. Comparing and Contrasting: (slide 32)

- i. Optional:* Have students fill out a “listening log” for each selection.
- ii.* Discuss similarities and differences, leading to this outcome:
The zydeco version takes elements of old-time Creole music and adds the energy, instrumentation, and attitude of rock and roll.

4. Learning Checkpoint: (slide 33)

- What musical developments, beginning in the 1950s, ultimately led to the creation of “zydeco” – an entirely new musical genre?
 - **Answer:** The influence of popular music on the radio created a permanent shift in Creole music beginning in the 1950s. New sounds from rock & roll and rhythm & blues, including amplification and blue notes had a great impact. Songs were simplified and played faster. Zydeco music emerged from the interplay of these influences.

3. Path Three: Arranging “The Snap Beans Aren’t Salty”



To Prepare:

- Read through the Path.
- Preview Path 3 of the **Lesson Hub 8 Slideshow** (slides 35–52)
 - Open the “Launch Slideshow” link on the righthand menu of the Lesson Hub landing page. If you can use a different screen than the students, have them open the “Student Slideshow link, which will not show the notes.
- Print student copies (or prepare to display) the song lyrics / translation / pronunciation guide for “The Snap Beans Aren’t Salty” ([find below](#))
- *Optional*: Print student copies (or prepare to display) the sheet music for “The Snap Beans Aren’t Salty” ([find below](#)).
- Decide how you will structure/customize this “performance” activity in order to best meet the needs of your students.

1. “Les Haricots Sont Pas Salés

- A.** Share the embedded contextual information about the song “Les Haricots Sont Pas Salés” (The Snap Beans Aren’t Salty) (slides 36–37)
- B.** Attentive listening (slide 38): play a short excerpt from the first known recording of the song, by Jimmy Peters & the Ring Dance Singers.
 - i.** As students listen, they should think about this question:
 - *What is your first impression?*
 - ii.** Consider leading a short class discussion before advancing to the next slide for explanation.
- C.** Share more information about the origin of the term “zydeco” (slides 39–41).
 - Play a short excerpt from the Chenier version of this song (slide 41).

2. “Zydeco Sont Pas Salés”: Performance Activity

- A.** Listen to the entire track, while following along with the lyrics translation. (Display or pass these out) (slide 43).
 - Discuss the lyrics: How does the music reflect the meaning behind the words? Students can consider these additional questions:
 - *Do you feel differently about the song knowing what the words mean?*
 - *What role do you think the lyrics played in making this song a success?*
- B.** The next part of this performance activity can be as simple or complex as you’d like . . . use the suggestions provided below to facilitate a meaningful music-making experience for your students (and feel free to customize along the way).
 - i.** *Speak the words in rhythm*: (slide 44)
 - Consult the provided [sheet music](#) to help your students with this task.

- If appropriate for your students’ musical ability, they can read the rhythmic notation, directly from the sheet music.
 - The phonetic pronunciation of the words is shown on this document (and on the previous lyrics sheet).
 - If your students are younger/inexperienced, consider speaking the words one line at a time, and having the students echo you.
- ii. Harmonic analysis:** (slide 45): Play the track again . . .
- This time, ask students to raise their hand each time the chord changes.
 - This song’s harmonic structure is based on a I-V-I chord progression, which is extremely common in folk and popular music.
 - There are only two chords in this song: G major and D major.
 - If needed, review the basics of harmony and chord progressions with your students.
- iii. Optional Reflection Question** (slide 46):
- *What about this song makes it uniquely “zydeco”?*
 - **Possible answers:** the instrumentation (accordion, washboard, electric guitar and drums), the rhythm (fast, danceable 4/4), the lyrics (in French, but a very simple and somewhat nonsensical phrase that is repeated in a rhythmic fashion that almost functions as an instrument than a story telling device), simple form, influence of blues elements in the accordion breaks.

3. **Optional: Arrange a Class Version of “Zydeco Sont Pas Salés”**

- A. Customize a class arrangement based on the interests and skills of the students in your class (slides 47–48). Students could:
- Play a percussion instrument (holding down the song’s duple meter/two-step feel),
 - Play a chordal instrument (strumming the I-V-I chord progression),
 - Play the melody* (e.g., piano, guitar, violin, wind instrument, etc...),
**Learning the melody by ear is preferable to stay true to the zydeco tradition. However, if you don’t have time, sheet music is provided (see teacher’s guide).*
 - Sing!
- B. Once students are playing the song comfortably, encourage them to try trading improvised solos (rhythmically or melodically).
- C. **More Optional Extension Activities:** (slides 48–50)
- *Rehearse, refine, and present* your class arrangement of “Zydeco Sont Pas Salés” for a live audience (or record it).
 - Ask students to reflect on these questions (slide 49):
 - *What is the feel of your arrangement of this song?*

- *Did you stick to a traditional “zydeco” style?*
- *Did you add elements of older styles (like la-la/old-time)?*
- Next time, consider trying to perform “Zydeco Sont Pas Salés” with more of a “Cajun” feel . . . or . . . add the influence of the students’ favorite types of music.
 - For an example of the “Cajun feel”, listen to Joe Falcon’s version of “Hip et Taïaut” (pronounced Hihp ay Tahee-yoh)—which is said to be the Cajun version of this song (slide 50).

4. **Learning Checkpoint:** (slide 51)

- Where did the term “zydeco” come from?
 - **Answer:** The term "Zydeco" comes from an old Creole saying, "Les Haricots Sont Pas Salés"—"Les Haricots". When spoken quickly and with a Creole accent, this phrase often came out sounding like "Zydeco". After Clifton Chenier's version of this classic song became a hit, the term “Zydeco” became synonymous with the entire genre, and Zydeco music was born.
- How did your version of “Zydeco Sont Pas Salés” reflect the stylistic characteristics of zydeco music?
 - **Answer:** Answers will vary.

2014 National Music Standards Connections

MU:Pr4.2.a Explain how understanding the structure and the elements of music are used in music selected for performance.

- Can I explain changes in the ways in which the elements of music were used by Creole musicians as the 20th century progressed?
- Can I describe how the music elements were used in Clifton Chenier’s version of “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales”?

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

- In what ways did my class’s arrangement of “Zydeco Pas Sont Sales” reflect zydeco style? Was our arrangement influenced by other styles/genres?

MU:Pr4.3.a Perform a selected piece of music demonstrating how their interpretations of the elements of music and the expressive qualities (such as dynamics, tempo, timbre, articulation/style, and phrasing) convey intent.

- Did we create an interpretation “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales” that honored the stylistic characteristics of zydeco music?

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

- Can I rehearse my part in “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales” and show improvement over time?

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

- Can I accurately perform my part in my class’s arrangement of “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales”, while staying true to Clifton Chenier’s version of this song?

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

- Can I describe differences between Old-Time/La-La and zydeco?

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

- Can I identify and explain the stylistic developments that changed the sound of Creole music throughout the 20th century—ultimately leading to the creation of an entirely new genre (zydeco)?

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 identify and interpret the ways in which Creole musicians’ application of music elements and expressive qualities changed as the 20th century progressed?

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

- How did my interests, knowledge, and skills influence the part I chose to play during the performance activity?
- Can I explain why so many zydeco musicians have chosen to record their own version of the song “Zydeco Sont Pas Sales”?

MU:Cn11.0.7a Demonstrate understanding of relationships between music and the other arts, other disciplines, varied contexts, and daily life.

- Can I explain the historical, cultural, and social context of the stylistic changes Creole music experienced during the 20th century?
-

Additional Reading and Resources

- Blank, Les, and Maureen Gosling. 1973. *Dry Wood*. Vimeo video, 37:00. Produced by Flower Films. Special thanks to John Lomax, Jr. and Chris Strachwitz. Retrieved from Folkstreams. <https://www.folkstreams.net/films/dry-wood>
- Garnier III, D'Jalma. 2015. "The Musical and Cultural Roots of Louisiana Creole and Zydeco Fiddle Tradition through Canray Fontenot." *Folklife in Louisiana*. http://www.louisianafolklife.org/LT/Articles_Essays/lfmzydecofiddle.html.
- Louisiana Educational Television Authority. 1984. "Southwest Louisiana Zydeco Festival." Video, 29:00. Hosted by Rob Hinton. Retrieved from the Louisiana Digital Media Archive (min 18–21). http://ladigitalmedia.org/video_v2/asset-detail/LFOLK-401-03_Zydeco.
- Louisiana Educational Television Authority. 1982. "The Soul of Louisiana Music." Video, 27:40. Retrieved from the Louisiana Digital Media Archive (min 2:15 – 7:30). Retrieved from http://ladigitalmedia.org/video_v2/asset-detail/LFOLK-118.
- Oliver, Rick, and Ben Sandmel. 1999. *Zydeco!* Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi.
- "Roots of Fire: Lil Nathan & The Zydeco Big Timers." YouTube video, 01:30. Posted by Roots of Fire, July 12, 2016. https://youtu.be/Kos_DdIScEQ.
- Savoy, Ann. 1984. *Cajun Music: A Reflection of the People, Vol. I*. Eunice, LA: Bluebird Press.
- Strachwitz, Chris. 1989. "Zydeco." Liner Notes for *Zydeco Volume 1: The Early Years 1949-62*. Arhoolie Records ARH00307. <https://folkways-media.si.edu/docs/folkways/artwork/ARH00307.pdf>.
- Tisserand, Michael. 1998. *The Kingdom of Zydeco*. New York, NY: Arcade Publishing.

Worksheets

Student Listening Log

Musical Selection (Title): _____

Type of Music/Time Period: _____

Composer/Music Makers: _____

<i>People</i>			<i>Sound</i>			
Meaning	Use	Transmission	Instruments	Time	Pitch	Structure

Zydeco Sont Pas Salés (*Lyrics/Pronunciation/Translation*)
 Performed by Clifton Chenier, Translation by Ann Allen Savoy
 Key of G

Verse 1:

Translation :

G	
O, o, maman <i>Oh, Oh, mah-mahn</i>	Hey, everything's okay? -But it's good, boy -Everything's great? Oh yeah, let me have some fun with that! -Oh, man, let's zydeco Let's run it and have a good time
G	
Quoi t'as fait avec ton nég <i>Kwah tah fay ah-vehk tohn nehg</i>	Oh, Mama What did you do with your man?
G	
Zydeco est pas salés <i>Zah-dee koh ay pah sah-lay</i>	The snap beans aren't salty
G	
Zydeco est pas salés <i>Zah-dee koh ay pah sah-lay</i>	The snap beans aren't salty
D	
T'as volé mon traîneau <i>Tah voh-lay mohn treh-noh</i>	They stole my sled
G	
T'as volé mon traîneau <i>Tah voh-lay mohn treh-noh</i>	They stole my sled
G	
'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i>	Come a hip and a hound
G	
'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i>	Come a hip and a hound
D	
'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i>	Come a hip and a hound
G	
'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i>	Come a hip and a hound

<p>Verse 2:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>O, o, maman <i>Oh, Oh, mah-mahn</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>O, o, maman <i>Oh, Oh, mah-mahn</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p>He, maman <i>Ay, mah-mahn</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>O, o, maman <i>Oh, Oh, mah-mahn</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">G</p> <p>'Garde hip et taiaut <i>Gahrd hihp ay tahee-yoh</i></p>	<p>Oh mama</p> <p>Oh mama</p> <p>Hey, mama</p> <p>Oh mama</p> <p>They stole my sled</p> <p>They stole my sled</p>
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Zydeco Sont Pas Salés (Sheet Music)

Zydeco Sont Pas Salés

Transcribed by Mark DeWitt
2021

voice part

Clifton Chenier
1965 recording (ARH 09053)

Intro

G **16**

Piano accordion etc.

o - ma -
oh__ mah-

Verse 1

19 D D G

am quoi t'as fait a - vec ton nèg'? Zy - de - co est pas sa - lés
ahm - kwah tah fay ah vehk tohə negh zah dee koh ay pah sah lay

25 D G

zy - de - co est pas sa - lés T'as vo - lé mon trai - neu t'as vo - lé mon trai - neu
zah dee koh ay pah sah lay tah voh lay mohə treh noh tah voh lay mohə treh noh

31 D

'Gar - de hip et ta - ïaut 'Gar - de hip et ta - ïaut 'Gar - de hip et ta - ïaut
gahr duh hihp ay tahee yoh gahr duh hihp ay tahee yoh gahr duh hihp ay tahee yoh

37 G **Solo 1** **35**

'Gar - de hip et ta - ïaut o - ma -
gahr duh hihp ay tahee yoh oh__ mah

Verse 2

76 D G

am o - o - Hé, ma - man! O -
ahm oh oh - - ay mah mahə oh__

82 D G **Solo 2** **40**

- ma - man! T'as vo - lé mon trai - neu t'as vo - lé mon trai - neu!
__mah mahə tah voh lay mohə treh noh tah voh lay mohə treh noh

Verse 3

128 **Solo 3** **16**

Whoa - ba - by, o ma - man - ma - man!
oh mah mahə mah mahə

Zydeco Sont Pas Salés Chord Chart Clifton Chenier 1965 recording (ARH 09053)

Key of G, 4/4 time

Approximately 210 beats per minute

Read left-hand column first, left to right, top to bottom, then middle, etc.

each chord symbol has a duration of one measure

underlined chord symbols are a ½ measure (2 beats)

some chord changes in middles of measures not marked

Section¹

Intro 1 1 1 1
5 5 5 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1 1 1

Verse 1 5 5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1

Solo 1 1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1

Bridge 5 5 5 5
5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1

Verse 2 5 5 1 1
1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1

Solo 2 1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1 1

Bridge 5 5 5 5
5 5 5 5
1 1 1 1 1
5 5 1 1
1 1
5 5 1 1
1 1 5 1
1 1 5 1

Verse 3 5 5 1 1

Solo 3
Bridge 5 5 5 5
5 5 5 5
5 5 1 1
1 NC NC 1^{Δ7}

The “bridge” sections highlighted in yellow are variable-length improvisations on the 5 chord (D major, in the key of G). They get progressively more extended, while the rest of the accordion solo and the vocals become more condensed as the song draws to a close. The class could play with these ideas of variable-length sections without trying to follow the recording exactly.

¹ This chart uses conventions from the Nashville Number System.

Zydeco Sont Pas Salés Clifton Chenier 1965 recording (ARH 09053)

Key of G, 4/4 time
Approximately 210 beats per minute

each chord symbol has a duration of one measure
underlined chord symbols are a ½ measure (2 beats)

Verse 1

				G Oo ma-
-am',	D	<u>D²</u>	quoi t'as fait avec ton	G nèg'?
lès	G	Zydeco est pas sa-	lès	G T'as volé mon trai-
neau	D	T'as vo-lé mon trai-	neau	G Garde' hip et ta-
ïaut	G	Garde' hip et ta-	ïaut	G Garde' hip et ta-
ïaut	D	Garde' hip et ta-	ïaut	<u>G³</u>

Verse 2

				G Oo ma-
-am',	D	Oo ma-	-am',	G Eh-
-eh maman!	G	Oo-	oo maman!	G T'as vo-
lé mon traineau!	D	T'as vo-	lé mon trai-neau	G

Verse 3

Whoa mam!	D	baby,	D	o	G	ma-man, ma-man	G
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² For simplicity's sake, this half-measure could be eliminated in class performance

³ For simplicity's sake, this half-measure could be expanded to a full measure in class performance