



UC DAVIS PRESENTS
Community Outreach Program

• 2000-2001 School Matinee Series •

Geno Delafosse and French Rockin' Boogie

Friday, November 3, 2000
Freeborn Hall, UC Davis, 11:00 am

Dear Teachers:

We hope you will find this Teacher's Guide helpful in preparing your students for what they will see and hear at the Geno Delafosse School Matinee. The Guide provides background information on the artist and a review of theater conventions and audience protocol. The matinee, which is specially designed for children, will introduce this exciting Louisiana zydeco band performing its hybrid mixture of traditional Cajun music with blues and rhythm and blues stirred in!

The performance can provide a number of departure points for various areas of study, including the arts, humanities, American and world history and the appreciation of different cultural perspectives and traditions.

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The Sacramento Bee
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**GENO DELAFOSE
& FRENCH ROCKIN' BOOGIE**

Geno Delafose, nicknamed the “Creole Cowboy,” typically sports a large black cowboy hat, stiff-collared shirt, jeans, and prominent belt buckle. Delafose hails from the town of Eunice, deep in southwest Louisiana’s bayou country. He was born to the music, as son of the late, great zydeco accordionist John Delafose. Geno’s music and style is greatly influenced by American Country music. Young Geno began performing at age seven, playing the rubboard in his father’s band, John Delafose & The Eunice Playboys. He soon moved to the drums and, eventually, the accordion. On that instrument, Geno Delafose has been called a “triple threat” because he can play the piano accordion, Cajun accordion and triple-row accordion.

In 1994, Geno Delafose formed his own band, French Rockin’ Boogie. The musicians include Delafose’s cousins Germaine Jack on drums and Steven Nash on rubboard, Charles Prudhomme on rhythm guitar, Pops Espre on bass and Bobby Broucard on lead guitar. French Rockin’ Boogie has quickly emerged as one of the most exciting young bands in zydeco, with a rocking style that combines classic Cajun music with blues and rhythm and blues. “I’m pretty traditional,” Delafose admits, “but I can step it up when I want to.” For inspiration, Delafose always returns to the music of the great performers of the pre-zydeco tradition: Canray Fontenot, Clifton Chenier, Iry LeJeune, Amedee Ardoin, for example. Like his predecessors, Delafose also sings in both Creole French and English.

These days, Geno Delafose and French Rockin’ Boogie are headlining in national musical venues, like the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and touring Europe and North America. Profiled in the Smithsonian/PBS Television documentary *River of Song*, Geno Delafose is praised as “a standard-bearer for traditional zydeco.”

CAJUN AND ZYDECO MUSIC

Louisiana is **Cajun** country! While its settlers have undergone periods of economic depression and struggle, its cultural inheritance is rich, colorful, and uniquely inspired. The word “Cajun” derives from “Acadian,” the name for a resident of Acadia, the 17th century

French settlement in northeastern Canada (the area now known as Nova Scotia). After the British forced out large numbers of the Acadian settlers in 1755, many made their way slowly across the North American continent until they eventually came to settle in what is now the state of Louisiana. Over the generations, Acadian society was influenced by other settlers in the region. This is true of the musical inheritance as well, which derives from French folk traditions, European contradances, Caribbean, Native American, Spanish and Creole traditions.

A popular Cajun expression exhorts: “Laissez les bon temps rouler!” or “Let the good times roll!” The exuberance of the saying is evident in the music and in the reaction of its aficionados. Cajun accordionist Marc Savoy claims, “The people are not interested in the music for the sake of music. They’re interested in the atmosphere this music creates, so that they can socialize, and relate to one another. Music is the glue that holds the whole culture and society together.”

The fiddle is the founding instrument in Cajun music. A typical early group would have included two fiddlers, one to play the melody and the other to provide backup. These early musicians played French and Canadian tunes, reels and mazurkas. The accordion, guitar and triangle were adopted in the early part of the 20th century. The accordion was popular because it could be heard above the conversation and noise of the dancehalls and community gatherings. The musical style, however, was forced to change somewhat to accommodate the accordion’s limited chordal range. Cajun bands came to adapt popular American songs, primarily what would come to be known as country music. During the 1930s, under the influence of Western Swing bands in nearby Texas, Cajun bands enlarged to include mandolin, piano and banjo.

From the 1940s to the present, Cajun bands have “plugged into” the electronic age to include the electric guitar and bass, amplified accordion, electric steel guitar and drums. During the 1960s, the revival of folk music allowed Cajun musicians to return to the more traditional repertoire and to commit to singing in the French Cajun tongue. Today, fans of the music can partake of Louisiana’s best at the annual Festivals Acadiens in Lafayette and the Zydeco Festival in Plaisance.

The terms “Cajun” and “zydeco” are often linked. **Zydeco** is an outgrowth of Cajun music as developed by Louisiana’s black musicians. The late zydeco bandleader Rockin’ Dopsie defined zydeco as “a little jazz, a little blues, a little French and a little rhythm and blues, all mixed together.” Accordionist Clifton Chenier developed the zydeco style during the 1950s; he recorded more than 100 albums before his death in 1987. The term “zydeco” has an odd etymology, or origin. A corruption of *les haricots* (runner or green beans), the term was lifted from a line in an old Creole song, “Les haricots sont pas sales” (the green beans aren’t salty). Chenier changed the lyrics of the song to “Zydeco sont pas sales!”

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For information on the music, consult *World Music: The Rough Guide*; “Ultimate Gumbo: Cajun, Zydeco and Swamp: The Sounds of Louisiana,” pp. 613-625.

Useful web sites:

www.cajunculture.com

contains the *Encyclopedia of Cajun Culture* and other Cajun resources

www.evangelineweb.org

contains information on Cajun culture, history, music and dance. Check out the section entitled “Cajun and Zydeco music in California”

www.usl.edu/Departments/center.La.Studies

the site for the Louisiana Studies Department

PREPARING YOUR CLASS

The American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) completed his well-known epic poem “Evangeline: A Tale of Acadie” in 1847. Longfellow set his fictional Cajun lovers, Evangeline and Gabriel, at the time of *Le Grand Derangement*, the 1755

British expulsion--and subsequent diaspora--of the Acadian settlers from their home in northeastern Canada. The two lovers become separated on their journey to Louisiana and are only reunited years later when Gabriel is on his deathbed. In his scholarly appraisal *In Search of Evangeline: Birth and Evolution of the Evangeline Myth*, Dr. Carl Brasseaux offers the following assessment: "Since its release in 1847, Longfellow's epic poem "Evangline" has shaped the international image of the Acadians. Generations of American and Canadian school children learned that 'Evangeline' was a thinly veiled historical saga, a great North American tragedy in which obscure individuals played major roles. For many Acadians, "Evangeline" is a literary testimonial to their ancestors' ultimate triumph over the devastating Diaspora of 1755. For the Acadians, the epic injects through its portrayal of the suffering endured by exiles a human element sadly absent from the existing historical literature on *Le Grand Derangement*."

Ask your students to read Longfellow's poem and to consider the ways in which episodes in American history can be transformed by the arts into national myth and even, in the case of Evangeline, a cultural icon.

ATTENDING THE THEATER

What is expected of student audiences at the matinee:

- * enter the auditorium quietly and take seats immediately (*note that all matinees for 2000-2001 have reserved seating.*)
- * show courtesy to the artist and other guests at all times
- * demonstrate appreciation for the artist's work by applauding at the appropriate times
- * refrain from making unnecessary noise or movements
- * please eat lunch before or after the performance to avoid disruption;
- * relate any information acquired from the pre-matinee discussion to the new information gained from the matinee.

What you can expect of your experience in a performing arts theater:

A theater is a charged space, full of energy and anticipation. When the house lights (the lights that illuminate the audience seating) go down, the excitement level goes up! Theaters are designed so that the voices of the singers and actors and the music of the musicians can be heard. But this also means that any sound in the audience: whispering, rustling of papers, speaking and moving about, can be heard by other audience members and by the performers. Distractions like these upset everyone's concentration and can spoil a performance.

The performers on stage show respect for their art form and for the audience by doing their very best possible work. The audience shows respect for the performers by watching attentively. Applause is the best way for audience members to share their enthusiasm and to show their appreciation for the performers. Applaud at the end of a performance! Sometimes the audience will clap during a performance, as after a featured solo. Audience members may feel like laughing if the action on stage is funny, crying if the action is sad, or sighing if something is seen or heard that is beautiful. Appreciation can be shown in many different ways, depending upon the art form and the culture(s) of the people in the audience. While the audience at a dance performance will sit quietly, other types of performance invite audience participation.

THINK ABOUT IT!

Talking with your teacher, friends and family about a performance after attending the theater is part of the experience. When you share what you saw and felt you learn more about the performance. You can now compare ideas and ask questions and find out how to learn even more. Here are some questions to think about:

- 1) How would you describe Cajun music to a friend?
- 2) What feelings did you have while you listened to the music?
- 3) What did you like best about the concert and why? Was the program different from what you expected? How?
- 4) Write a poem expressing your impressions of the performance: what you saw (the musicians and instruments); what you heard (the music of the accordion, drums, and guitar); and the kinds of feelings and thoughts you had during the concert.

CAMPUS RESOURCE GUIDE

The University of California, Davis campus is a very beautiful and interesting place to visit, and there are many learning experiences available to young student visitors. We have listed some of these below. While on campus, consider taking advantage of these resources. The enclosed campus map can help you find the locations.

Transportation and Parking Services (TAPS) 752-8277

Private cars may park in several lots on campus for \$4.00. Please call Sandy Morgan (752-7657) to arrange for bus parking.

Places to Eat (Please call ahead if you have a large group)

Coffee House, Memorial Union (752-6622)

Silo Student Union (752-1900)

Carl's Jr.	Sub City
Pizza Hut	Brennan's Coffee
Taco Bell	Le Crepe

Art Galleries (Please call ahead for current exhibits and possible tours)

Design Gallery (Walker Hall) is an innovative space known for its exciting exhibitions of design-related objects such as architecture, textiles, and folk art. 752-6150

Richard L. Nelson Gallery (Art Building) is located south of Shields Library. It is well known for its regularly changing exhibitions of historical and contemporary works of art. 752-8500

Fine Arts Collection (Art Building) represents various historical periods and cultures as well as houses the Davis campus' major collection of art.

Craft Center (South Silo) provides opportunities for workshops and classes in woodworking, weaving, jewelry-making, art and graphics, computer imaging, ceramics, photography, silk-screen printing, welding, leather-working, stained-glass, and other crafts. There is always a display of students' work. 752-1475

C.N. Gorman Museum (Hart Hall) features changing exhibitions of works by Native American and other diverse artists. 752-6567

Memorial Union Art Gallery (Memorial Union), 2nd Floor exhibit. 752-2885

Campus Tours Available

The Tram provides a one-hour tour of the campus for 20-40 people. Reservations should be made one week in advance. The pick-up is at the Buehler Alumni and Visitor Center on Old Davis Road. 752-8222

Animal Barn Tour Program tours are offered during the Spring for classes K-5. The tours consist of visits to three campus locations where cows, pigs, and horses can be observed. Student guides conduct the tours, providing information on the animals. 754-8111

Peter J. Shields Library (located south of the Quad) houses collections in the humanities, arts, social sciences, biological sciences, agricultural sciences, mathematics and computer science. It is one of the premier research libraries in North America. 752-6561

Bohart Museum of Entomology has an educational program about insects. The 60 minute tours can be arranged by appointment only. The museum is located in the Academic Surge Building. Tours use permanent and hands-on exhibits as well as live insects for demonstrations. The primary objective of the educational programs is to teach children about insects, particularly (1) their enormous diversity in form, color, behavior, (2) their impact on daily human life, (3) their importance in ecosystems, and (4) their general harmlessness. Contact Steve Heydon, 752-0493.

California Raptor Center has an on-site program to increase the public's awareness of raptors (birds of prey) and their environment. The facility has a museum containing displays, exhibits, and hands-on materials. The Center is located in South Davis. 752-9994

Davis Arboretum is an 80-acre public garden on the UC Davis campus. The Outdoor Education Program is geared particularly for K-6 class visits and uses the "guided discovery" approach to increase children's awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the natural world. 752-4880

Equestrian Center (located on Garrod Road near the Veterinary Medical Teaching Hospital) provides instruction in both English and Western riding along with training in horse care and stable management. 752-2372

Environmental Horticulture Teaching Gardens, located on Old Davis Road next to the Alumni Center, are open to the public and include common and unusual species of trees, shrubs, ground covers, perennial, and bedding plants. The arrangement of plants is based on botanical and horticultural principles rather than on design principles. Tours last a half hour and are suitable for 5th grade through high school students. 752-0349

This Teacher's Guide was written by ANETT JESSOP, Graduate Program Coordinator,
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