

# Pawpaw Fest To Host Zydeco Legend

By Mark Hellenberg

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Zydeco music is one of those uniquely American roots music genres born in the melting pot of Southwest Louisiana.

It's an amalgamation of Cajun music, blues and R&B, sung in French or English, instrumentally led by a rocking accordion and percussively driven by a metal rubboard.

C.J. Chenier, the son of Zydeco pioneer Clifton Chenier (also known as the "King of Zydeco"), joined his father's band in 1978 at the age of 21. He played the saxophone in that prestigious ensemble, The Red Hot Louisiana Band, until his father's death in 1987.

Following in his father's footsteps, C.J. became the heir to the throne; the crown prince of Zydeco. He picked up the accordion, adopted the band and continued his father's efforts to spread Zydeco music around the globe.

Today, C.J. has kept to that mission, traveling the world and releasing several albums. While keeping the spirit of his father alive, he continued to push the boundaries of the genre.

Zydeco has always been a blend of different styles, from French creole cajun waltzes to down-and-dirty boogies. C.J. 's father told him to develop and play his own style and not to merely imitate someone else's.

Chenier's musical style ranges from the traditional sounds of his father to funk and contemporary R&B. C.J. has become not only the ambassador of the Clifton Chenier catalog, but a singer and songwriter in his own right, while at the same time covering material from the likes of Van Morrison, PJ Harvey, Hank Williams and Ray Charles.

Still, C.J. Chenier and the Red Hot Louisiana Band's main motivation for playing live is to get people up on the dance floor and dancing. He doesn't care if people know the "right" way to dance to Zydeco; he just wants them on their feet and feeling the music.

[In an interview](#) with Boston club owner Johnny D., C.J. says that the best way to dance to Zydeco is to "just move something and it all fits."

C.J. Chenier and the Red Hot Louisiana Band will play on the main stage at this year's Ohio Paw Paw Festival on Friday, Sept 14 at 9 p.m. Visit [www.ohiopawpawfest.com](http://www.ohiopawpawfest.com) for details.

