



CREOLE FOR KIDZ AND THE HISTORY OF ZYDECO

Applause Series Curriculum Guide
February 12-13, 2018

 **DES MOINES
PERFORMING ARTS**

CIVIC CENTER • STONER THEATER • TEMPLE THEATER • COWLES COMMONS

CREOLE for KIDZ

AND THE History of ZYDECO

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the return Applause Series presentation of *Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco*. In this foot-stomping, interactive performance designed especially for kids, Grammy Award-winner Terrance Simien entertains and educates about the Creole culture of south Louisiana through spirited Zydeco music. Give your students an unforgettable multicultural experience as they explore Zydeco's unique fusion of African, French, Spanish and Native American musical styles.



Vergie Banks' Creole inspired painting, used on Terrance Simien's *Creole for Kidz* album cover.

We hope that this study guide helps you connect the performance to your classroom curriculum in ways that you find valuable. In the following pages, you will find contextual information about the performance and related subjects, as well as a wide variety of discussion questions and activities. As such, we hope that you are able to "pick and choose" material and ideas from the study guide to meet your class's unique needs.

See you at the theater,

Des Moines Performing Arts Education Team

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GUIDE CONTENTS

About the Applause Series
Page 3

Going to the Theater
Page 4

**Civic Center Field Trip
Information for Teachers**
Page 5

Vocabulary
Page 6

About the Performance
Page 7

About the Artist: Terrance Simien
Page 8

About the Frottoir
Page 9

The History of Zydeco
Page 10

Creole History
Page 11

Creole Culture
Page 12

**Connecting Iowa to Louisiana:
The Mississippi River Basin**
Page 13

Pre-Show Exploration
Pages 14-15

**Post-Show Discussion and
Assessment Activities**
Page 16-18

Resources and Sources
Page 19

This study guide was compiled and written by Michelle McDonald and Karoline Myers.
Based on the 'Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco' study guide by Terrance Simien & The Zydeco Experience

ABOUT THE APPLAUSE SERIES



TAKE THOUSANDS OF IOWA STUDENTS OUT OF THEIR CLASSROOMS, PLACE THEM IN A THEATER, SPRINKLE THE STAGE WITH WORLD-CLASS PERFORMERS, AND WHAT DO YOU HAVE? A RECIPE FOR LEARNING THAT REACHES NEW LEVELS OF POSSIBILITY—FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS.

WE CALL IT THE APPLAUSE SERIES.

BRINGING ARTS EDUCATION TO LIFE

The Applause Series is a flagship education program of Des Moines Performing Arts. Since its launch in 1996, more than a half million students and teachers have attended school-time performances as part of the series. You are joining us for the 22nd season of school performances!

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Each year, more than 55,000 students and teachers attend an Applause Series performance. The actual cost per person is \$8, but thanks to the caring contributions of donors, schools pay just \$1 per ticket. By removing the financial barriers to participation, donors introduce a whole new generation to the power of arts in action. That means stronger schools and communities now and in the future.

TICKET TO IMAGINATION

The Applause Series annually delivers 60 age-appropriate performances for pre-school to high school students. The impact stretches far beyond the Des Moines metro, reaching schools in over 35 Iowa counties. The theater becomes the classroom. One-hour matinees energize students to imagine new ways of creative expression, cultural diversity and even career opportunities.

BEYOND THE STAGE

For many Applause Series performances, we offer the opportunity for schools to go deeper by exploring an art form or theme that connects with what is seen on stage. Invite a professional teaching artist into the classroom or visit another cultural destination in Des Moines to help students make more meaning of a piece of theater.

ABOUT DES MOINES PERFORMING ARTS

Des Moines Performing Arts is central Iowa's premier not-for-profit performing arts organization.

More than 300,000 guests attend performances and events in our four venues each year:

- ◇ Civic Center, 2744 seats
- ◇ Stoner Theater, 200 seats
- ◇ Temple Theater, 299 seats
- ◇ Cowles Commons (outdoor plaza)

Guests experience a wide variety of art forms and cultural activities, with presentations ranging from Broadway, comedy, professional dance, to family programming.

Des Moines Performing Arts education programs serve more than 75,000 Iowans annually.

Programs for schools, such as the Applause Series and teacher professional development, help enliven students' learning. Public education programs such as master classes, workshops, Q&A sessions and summer camps allow audience members and aspiring artists to make meaningful and personal connections to the art they experience on our stages.

GOING TO THE THEATER



ATTENDING A LIVE PERFORMANCE IS A UNIQUE AND EXCITING OPPORTUNITY! UNLIKE THE PASSIVE EXPERIENCE OF WATCHING A MOVIE, AUDIENCE MEMBERS PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN EVERY LIVE PERFORMANCE.

WHAT ROLE WILL YOU PLAY?

YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

Artists on stage are very aware of the mood and level of engagement of the audience. As such, each performance calls for a different response from audience members.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

- ◇ What kind of live performance is this (a musical, dance, or concert)?
- ◇ What is the mood of the performance? Is the subject matter serious or lighthearted?
- ◇ What is the mood of the artists? Are they happy and smiling or somber and reserved?
- ◇ Are the artists encouraging the audience to clap to the music, move to the beat, or participate in some other way?
- ◇ Are there natural breaks in the performance where applause seems appropriate?

REMEMBER....

THE THEATER IS DESIGNED TO MAGNIFY SOUND. EVEN WHISPERS CAN BE HEARD!

DID YOU KNOW?

ALTHOUGH NOT REQUIRED, SOME PEOPLE ENJOY DRESSING UP WHEN THEY ATTEND THE THEATER.

THEATER ETIQUETTE CHECKLIST

- Do not bring food, drinks or chewing gum into the theater.
- The use of cameras and recording devices are not permitted.
- Turn off and put away cell phones and other electronics before the performance begins.
- Do not text during the performance.
- Respect the theater. Keep your feet off of the seats and avoid bouncing up and down.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- Talk only before and after the performance.
- Use the restroom before the performance or wait until the end.
- Remember that this is a special experience. The artists are creating something just for you. Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists — they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. **Enjoy yourself!**

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION



WE WANT YOUR FIELD TRIP TO BE SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL!

PLEASE READ BELOW FOR IMPORTANT TIPS AND DETAILS TO ENSURE A GREAT DAY.

GET ORGANIZED

- ◇ Double-check that all students, teachers, and chaperones were included in your ticket order. Request an adjustment if your numbers have increased. We want to make sure we have enough seats for you!
- ◇ Tickets are not issued. Bring a copy of your invoice, which will serve as your group's "ticket".
- ◇ Schedule arrival for 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This allows time to park, cross streets, find your seats, and go to the restroom.

Let drivers know that Applause performances are approximately 60 minutes, unless otherwise noted.
- ◇ Remind chaperones that children under the age of three are not permitted in the theater for Applause Series events.

DIRECTIONS/PARKING

- ◇ The Des Moines Civic Center is located at 221 Walnut Street, Des Moines, Iowa.
- ◇ Directions from I-235: take Exit 8A (Downtown Exits) and the ramp toward 3rd Street and 2nd Avenue. Turn onto 3rd Street and head south.
- ◇ Police officers stationed at the corner of 3rd & Locust Streets will direct buses to reserved street parking near the Civic Center.
- ◇ Buses are not allowed to drop groups off in front of the theater. Contact us in advance if there is a special circumstance.
- ◇ Buses remain parked for the duration of the show. Drivers must be available to move the bus immediately following the performance.
- ◇ Personal vehicles are responsible for securing their own parking on a nearby street or in a downtown parking ramp.

QUESTIONS?

We are happy to help!

Please contact us at:
education@dmpa.org
515.246.2355

ARRIVAL/SEATING

- ◇ An usher will greet you at the door and ask for your school name.
- ◇ Each group will be assigned a specific location in the theater based on various factors. An usher will escort you to your section.
- ◇ Your school may be seated in multiple rows. Adults should position themselves throughout the group.
- ◇ Allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging student seats or taking groups to the restroom.

This helps us seat efficiently and better start the show on time.

IN THE THEATER

- ◇ In case of a medical emergency, notify the nearest usher.
- ◇ Adults are asked to handle any disruptive behavior in their group. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- ◇ Please wait for your group to be dismissed by DMPA staff prior to exiting the theater.

VOCABULARY



Accordion: old world instrument used in native and folk music all over the globe. It is a key instrument of Zydeco music.



Youtube.com

frottoir: percussion instrument fashioned after a washboard, often played with spoons or bottle openers.



Louisianafolklife.org

Oil painting of a Zydeco band by contemporary American artist Ealy Mays, 2012.

Mardi Gras: festival celebrated before Ash Wednesday with parades, balls, music, costumes, and masks in Louisiana and Brazil.



Partycity.com

ABOVE: Typical Mardi Gras masks in colors green, purple and gold.



Crawfish.org

Crawfish are used in many Creole dishes.

crawfish: freshwater crustacean, also known as crayfish; resembles a small lobster.



Leitesculinaria.com

ingredient is okra.

gumbo: a stew or thick soup, usually containing chicken or seafood, in which the primary



selinawamucii.com

okra: a tall-growing, warm-season vegetable that is a

flowering plant. Comes from the same family as a Hollyhock; often fried or used in gumbo.

Creole: a multiracial, multicultural group of French, Spanish, Native American, and African people native to southern Louisiana and traditionally speak French.

culture: beliefs, values, learned behavior, language, and customs of a group passed on from generation to generation.



Creativeword.uk.com

heritage: something handed down from the past.

indigenous people: an ethnic group who live in a specific geographic region with which they have the earliest known historical connection.

lineage: the ancestors from whom a person is descended.

Zydeco: Creole music which draws on Native American, French, Spanish, and African musical styles, performed with the frottoir, accordion, and other instruments.



lemoji.com

represents the royal family of France.

Fleur de Lis: decorative symbol resembling three iris petals bound together. Traditionally represents the



ABOVE: Louisiana is bordered by the states of Mississippi, Arkansas, and Texas, as well as the Gulf of Mexico.

Louisiana: state in the southern United States on the Gulf of Mexico.



Zydecocrossroads.org

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



In this interactive performance designed especially for kids, Grammy Award-winner Terrance Simien and his Zydeco band take us on a tour of south Louisiana's rich Creole culture, history and music.

Students will have an unforgettable multicultural experience as they explore Zydeco's unique fusion of African, French, Spanish and Native American music styles.

Run Time: 60 minutes

THE MUSIC

Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience Band perform foot-stomping, hand-clapping Zydeco—the vibrant music of the Creoles from southern Louisiana. Drawing on a tradition that fuses elements of Native American, French, Spanish, and African musical styles, Simien and his band add their own unique flavor to the music of their roots, “blend[ing] the exotic sounds of the past with the contemporary music of today” (*House of Blues*).

Audiences around the world can't help but dance and clap as they listen to Simien's soulful vocals and highly rhythmic style.

THE HISTORY

Simien performs Zydeco music as a way to preserve and honor his cultural roots. Throughout this interactive performance Simien will weave in the history of early Zydeco music and its pioneers. Stories will paint a picture of the rural community where the Creoles settled 300 years ago as some of the first families of Louisiana.

In addition, students will learn about the origins of the word 'zydeco,' the meaning of Mardi Gras, and discover the frottoir—an instrument created specifically for Zydeco. The audience will gain appreciation for the simplicity of life and the colorful celebrations of the Creoles who are said to be one of the most complex rural sub-cultures in North America.



Student plays the frottoir during a performance with Terrance Simien.

THE INSPIRATION

Simien's live program for young audiences is based largely on his 2002 album *Creole for Kidz: The History of Zydeco*, which was designed to present the history and culture of the Creole people in a format accessible to children. He plays tribute to the great musicians who came before him, while also singing about the day-to-day joys of Creole life in songs about Creole cooking and crawfishing. Many of the same songs and lessons are introduced to young audiences in the live stage version.



ABOVE: Terrance Simien plays the accordion while performing a Zydeco number.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: TERRANCE SIMIEN



Terrance Simien is an eighth-generation Creole, and his family is one of the earliest to have settled in the rural area of St. Landry Parish, the center of French-speaking Creole country in southwestern Louisiana.

BEGINNINGS

Simien's early music life was influenced by two places in the heart of his community. The first, St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, is where Simien learned to love the spiritual side of making music. The second was a little building called Richard's, a roadhouse known throughout Louisiana for its party music. Although very different from one another, both places instilled in Simien a deep love of music.

When Simien was an early teenager, the indigenous music of the Creole was in danger of dying out. Terrance wanted to preserve this music. His parents bought him his first accordion. He recorded Zydeco shows on the radio, took the tapes to his room, and practiced until he learned the material. Before long, Terrance was recruiting band members from his community, and they played at local dances. By the time Terrance was 17, he left his hometown and began to perform throughout Louisiana and Texas.



PASSING IT ON

In his travels, Simien met many of the great Zydeco pioneers, such as Clifton Chenier (see page 10). Not only did he get to experience their music, several of them mentored him as a young musician, helping him to become one of the most gifted and knowledgeable Zydeco artists today.

Simien now mentors a new generation of Zydeco musicians and continues to ensure that Zydeco music lives on.

"I really try my best to keep the music uniquely Louisiana and uniquely Creole. I want to keep it authentic and real — like it's supposed to sound."

-Terrance Simien

TODAY

Simien has performed over 5,000 concerts, toured over 40 countries, and performed for over a million people during his career. He has produced 7 albums and received numerous awards, including a Grammy. His music has been featured on the radio, used in TV commercials, and appeared in over a dozen films.

DID YOU KNOW?

Disney's *The Princess and the Frog* Soundtrack features Simien as the guest artist in the song "Gonna Take You There" where the fireflies play the accordion and frottoir.

ABOUT THE FROTTOIR—THE ICONIC RUBBOARD



Mastersoftraditionalarts.org

The frottoir (pronounced fwahht-twah), also known as the rubboard, was invented in America specifically for Zydeco music and is a signature instrument of this style. Frottoir means “friction strip.”

HISTORY

The frottoir is a relative of the laundry washboard, used to wash clothes by hand. It consisted of a wood frame and a series of metal slats that the clothes could be scrubbed against. Many folk musicians around America would also use the washboard as a percussion instrument. Players would hold the washboard and tap or scrape bottle openers, thimbles or spoons across its ridged surface to create rhythms.

In 1946, Clifton Chenier (see page 10) had an idea to improve the washboard as an instrument. While traveling with his brother, Chenier met a metal worker named Willie Landry along a roadside in Port Arthur, Texas.

The story goes that Chenier knelt down and sketched his idea in the dirt, asking Landry, “Can you make one like that?” Landry replied, “I can make anything you want!” and soon created the first frottoir.

THE DESIGN

Like the washboard, the frottoir has a ridged surface, but there are several key differences. The frottoir is made entirely out of metal. While the washboard had to be held by hand, the frottoir is designed so that the player can wear it like a vest. The metal at the top of the frottoir is shaped into hooks that the player can place on their shoulders to secure it to their body, leaving both hands free to play the instrument. Bottle openers are usually used to play the frottoir because they create a sound loud enough to be heard over the other instruments in the Zydeco band.

ABOVE: Clifton Chenier (accordion) performs with his brother Cleveland (frottoir).

TODAY

The Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington D.C. added the frottoir to its collection in 2002. It is considered to be one of the only instruments invented in the United States. In addition to Zydeco musicians, many popular rock and country bands, such as ZZ Top, Shania Twain, and Bruce Springsteen, have also used the frottoir in their music.

BELOW: The frottoir can be played with bottle openers, spoons, thimbles, or metal finger picks, as seen below.



Louisianatravel.com

THE HISTORY OF ZYDECO



Booksandideas.net

Zydeco is the indigenous (native) music of the French-speaking Creoles of southwest Louisiana, and it is a blend of many sounds and types of music.

Zydeco combines rural blues and jazz, uses Native American and Afro-Caribbean rhythms, and is sometimes sung in French as well as English.

THE NAME

Not all historians agree about the origins of the word 'zydeco'. Popular folklore believes it comes from the phrase *les haricots sont pas salés*, which means the "snapbeans are not salty." This phrase describes times that were so hard for the rural Creoles that they couldn't even afford seasoning for their food. The first part of the phrase (*les haricot*) sounds like the word Zydeco when spoken very quickly. While a fun story, most academics believe the word Zydeco is actually rooted in several African words that mean "dance": *Zai'co laga laga*, *zariko* and *zari*.

EVOLUTION

It has been said that the only constant about Zydeco music is that it is constantly changing.

Juré

The earliest form of Creole music is called *juré*. (*Juré* translates into the English word "jury.") In *juré*, a singer would use music to testify to their audience about the hardships of their day, how much they loved their mother or God, or even how their heart had been broken. *Juré* was usually performed in a circle, with everyone gathered around the singer. *Juré* music did not use any instruments. It used only clapping hands, stomping feet, and the voice. All of the words were sung in French.

La-La

In the early 1900s Creole music evolved into a form called *La-La*, which was often performed at "house dances." Furniture would be moved out into the yard so there would be room inside the house to dance. Families down on their luck would charge ten or fifteen cents for admission and sell gumbo and homemade lemonade. *La-La* music was performed using a washboard, spoons, fiddle, triangle, and an accordion and was sung in French.

ABOVE: Creole musicians from the 1930s hold an accordion and washboard.

BELOW: Clifton Chenier, "King of Zydeco"



Zydeco

Creole music was changed radically in the 1950s and 1960s by a musician named Clifton Chenier. He was the first to incorporate blues and rock 'n' roll with indigenous Creole music, creating his own contemporary style of Zydeco. He blended the old with the new by singing in both French and English and was one of the first Zydeco artists to play with an entire band. Chenier is no longer alive, but is still considered the "King of Zydeco."

Many Zydeco artists today continue to push the boundaries, adding rock 'n' roll, R&B, reggae, funk, soul, blues and other urban styles to the traditional Creole music.

Creole music, which was once a form of storytelling that used few or no instruments, has evolved into a powerful sound enjoyed by millions around the world. Most find it impossible to sit still while listening to the spirited music known as Zydeco.

CREOLE HISTORY



ABOVE: Creole women in 1935, Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. Photo by Ben Shahn

Creoles have lived on the prairies in southern Louisiana for over 300 years. Many cultures converged to create the unique Creole culture.

THE PEOPLE

- ◆ **Native Americans** were the first peoples to inhabit North America. The Chitimacha, Coushatta, Houma, and Tunica-Biloxi tribes lived in Louisiana long before the Europeans arrived.
- ◆ The **French** were the first Europeans to arrive in Louisiana. They controlled the area for most of the 1700s. Creoles still speak the French language today.
- ◆ The **Spanish** took over the Louisiana colony west of the Mississippi River in 1762.
- ◆ **Africans** arrived in Louisiana when they were brought to America as slaves. Unlike much of America, where African traditions were oppressed, the French and Spanish living in Louisiana applauded the uniqueness of African culture. As a result, traditional West African dance, gatherings, music, and food were allowed to thrive in Louisiana. These traditions strongly influenced the unique Creole culture.

A UNIQUE CLASS

As the various peoples came together, a distinct culture and people emerged, but the Creoles did not fit a racial or cultural category. They were neither European immigrants, nor African slaves; neither black nor white. Instead, they were free people of color and lived as a separate class from the dominant whites and enslaved black Africans.

As the Creole population grew, the French established the Code Noir in 1724. It placed restrictions on the Creoles, but gave them one important privilege that enslaved Africans did not have: the right to own land. Creoles could build strong, independent communities.

The U.S. took control of the area in 1803 through the Louisiana Purchase. After the Civil War ended, Union officials refused to recognize the lineage that made up Creole culture. The U.S. government racially identified those with African ancestry as black. Creoles had to deny their French, Spanish, and Native American roots and give up their place in society. However, since they owned land, had better access to education, and could navigate being free in a white man's world, they became leaders within their new community.

CREOLES TODAY

Today, the term "Creole" refers both to an ethnicity and a culture. As an ethnic group, Creoles are multiracial. Due to their unique ancestry, the skin tones of Creoles range from white to black and all shades in between. As a culture, Creoles have created their own authentic cuisine, architectural styles, and music styles. As a people, they have made important contributions to shaping the history and cultural identity of the entire state of Louisiana. January 22nd is now considered Creole Heritage Day in Louisiana and is a day to celebrate the rich culture of the Creole people.



A little one celebrating the Creole culture.

CREOLE CULTURE



mardigrasneworleans.com

The rich Creole culture has brought many important traditions, authentic cuisine and unique music styles to Louisiana and to the United States.



ABOVE: beads show the colors of Mardi Gras. Purple symbolizes justice, green symbolizes faith, and gold symbolizes power. Image: holidaypartysos.com

FOOD

One of the best known dishes loved and prepared by the Creole people is gumbo, which is a soup or stew. Although there are many different kinds of gumbo, the main ingredient is usually okra. The word 'gumbo' comes from an African word for okra.

LANGUAGE

The French language is still used throughout many parts of Louisiana. Below are some common expressions you might hear if you went to visit:

C'est tout (Say too): That's all.

Merci (Mare see): Thanks.

Ça c'est bon (Sa say bohn): That's good.

Ça va (Sa va): That's enough.

Joi de vivre (Jhwa da veev): Joy of living.

Laissez les bons temps rouler (Lay-say lay bohn tohn roo-lay): Let the good times roll.

MARDI GRAS

Mardi Gras is a world famous celebration that takes place in New Orleans, Louisiana (and other parts of the world) every year. During Mardi Gras, dozens of parades and balls occur throughout New Orleans. People wear extravagant costumes and masks. Everyone wears purple, green, and gold—the colors of Mardi Gras. Parade-goers catch beaded necklaces and other trinkets from the passing floats. Families enjoy picnics and live music.

Mardi Gras means "Fat Tuesday." In medieval France, it was forbidden to eat meat during Lent, the forty-day period leading up to Easter in the Christian Church. Because of this, people would always feast the day before Lent began. This day became known as "Fat Tuesday." Many Creoles continue to make sacrifices during Lent. Some give up eating meat or other things they enjoy; children sometimes give up candy.

THE FLAG

The Creoles have their own flag to honor their heritage. Each section represents part of Creole identity.

- ◆ The white fleur de lis on blue represents the French heritage.
- ◆ The flag of Senegal (green, yellow, and red with a green star) represents the African heritage.
- ◆ The flag of Mali (green, yellow, and red), also represents the African heritage.
- ◆ The Tower of Castille (castle with three towers) represents the Spanish heritage.
- ◆ The sections are bound through a white cross, which represents the Creoles' Christian faith.



Pining.com

The Louisiana Creole flag.

CONNECTING IOWA TO LOUISIANA



Americancruiselines.com

Think about the streams, creeks, and rivers near your home and school. Where does this water come from? Where does it go?

Learn how the water we have here in Iowa travels all the way to Louisiana, the home of the Creoles.

WHAT IS A WATERSHED?

Iowa is located within the largest watershed in the United States—the Mississippi River Basin.

A watershed is the land that drains water from an area into its waterways. Some drain a single valley or an entire basin that is made up of many streams, creeks, and rivers.

Picture a watershed as a bowl. When liquid is put in a bowl, it all collects at the bottom, because a watershed is determined by the layout of the land. The boundaries of watersheds, known as ridges, are always the highest point in an area of land. The water has to flow downward from the ridges into the watershed below.



WHAT IS A BASIN?

A group of watersheds that drain into an even larger watershed is called a basin. In a basin, the watersheds nest inside each other like a set of bowls. This is because water in each watershed flows into a small creek or stream. Those creeks and streams eventually flow into rivers, which join even bigger rivers. There are 57 watersheds in Iowa. All of Iowa's watersheds drain into one of two larger basins: the Upper Mississippi Basin or the Missouri Basin. These two basins flow into the largest U.S. watershed of all: the Mississippi River Basin.

MIGHTY MISSISSIPPI

The Mississippi River Basin extends from the Mississippi River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west. The entire state of Iowa lies within the Mississippi River Basin. Water from every watershed within the Mississippi River Basin eventually reaches the Gulf of Mexico at a location just southeast of New Orleans, Louisiana. From the snow that lands and melts off the playground, to rain that drips from the eaves of a house, to the water that runs off farmers' fields, all of Iowa's water makes this journey before entering the Gulf of Mexico, eventually passing through Louisiana—the home of the Creoles and Zydeco music.



Growlermag.com

The headwaters of the Mississippi River begin in Itasca State Park, which is located north of Park Rapids, Minnesota.

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION

1) SOUND EXPLORATION

Best for: Grades K-2

Goal: To explore and describe different sounds

Explanation: The frottoir is related to the washboard, a common household item that is used as a musical instrument in several styles of folk music. In this lesson, students will explore and describe sounds created by other common items. (This activity works best if done by small groups so that students can hear the individual sounds they create.)

Activity:

1. Stock your classroom with items that students can use to create various sounds. Ideas include pots, plastic containers, cooling racks, boxes, glasses of water, bottles, and different kinds of utensils. Try to include a variety of materials and textures.
2. Invite students to choose two items (a larger item and a utensil usually works best).
3. What kinds of sounds can they make using the two items?
4. Ask students to share two or three words that describe the sound that they created.
5. Now invite students to change one element of their sound. (How does the sound change if they tap a box with a spoon instead of scraping it across the top? What if they use a plastic spoon instead of a wooden spoon?) Ask them to describe how the sound changes.
6. After every student has had a chance to explore making different sound combinations, play a piece of music on your classroom CD player. Invite the class to play along with their new instruments.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why would people use common items, like the washboard, as a musical instrument?
2. Are the sounds you created similar to any musical instruments that you know?
3. What types of things made the sound change? (Consider action taken, strength of action, type of material, whether the item was bumpy or smooth, etc.)
4. Do you think Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience Band will play some instruments you have never seen before?

2) DESIGN A FLAG

Best for: Grades K-6

Goal: To understand the meaning behind the Creole flag

Explanation: The Creole culture has its own unique flag. Every element of the flag represents something about their culture (see lower right). In this activity, students will think about their own community or family and design a flag to honor where they come from.

Activity:

1. Invite students to examine the Creole flag (seen here and on page 9). Review with them the meaning behind each of the elements.
2. Ask students to think about what a flag would look like if it were designed to represent their family or community (pick one to focus on for younger students).
3. Have students brainstorm a list of characteristics of their family/community that they could include on their flag. For example: traditions, music or food from their cultural background, important people, etc.
4. Provide students with a rectangular piece of paper. Ask them to design a flag using the ideas that they brainstormed. (You may choose to instruct them to divide their flag into four sections like the Creole flag to encourage them to use multiple elements.)
5. Invite students to use crayons, colored pencils, markers, or paint to complete their final flag design.
6. Have students write (or dictate) a sentence or two about their design which can be displayed next to their completed flag.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think it is important to the Creoles to have a flag?
2. What does the Creole flag have on it? What does it tell us about what is important to the Creoles?
3. What did you include on your flag design and why?



Louisianacreoleinc.org

PRE-SHOW EXPLORATION, pg. 2

3) MAP IT OUT

Best for: Grades 3-6

Goal: To visualize how the Creole culture was created

Explanation: The Creoles are members of a unique multicultural group that has lived in Louisiana since the early 1700s. As a class, students will use a world map and yarn to illustrate how different cultural groups from around the world contributed to the creation of the Creole culture.

Activity:

1. Invite students to read the 'Creole History' section of the study guide, found on page 11.
2. Using a world map, determine where Louisiana is located and mark it with a pin. This will become the central point of your web.
3. Next, ask students to identify the different cultural groups that contributed to the creation of the Creole culture and why each came to be in Louisiana.
4. As you discuss each cultural group, determine where the group's country/continent of origin is located. Mark the location with a pin. (Don't forget to represent the Native Americans already living in Louisiana.)
5. Illustrate the manner in which the cultural groups converged by using yarn to connect each point to the central pin.

Discussion:

1. Have you ever taken a trip? What is the difference between taking a trip and moving to a new place?
2. Who traveled the furthest to arrive in Louisiana? Who traveled the least?
3. Why do you think the different cultural groups came to Louisiana? Did they all have a choice?
4. Do you think it was important to each group to keep their culture? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever taught something new to a person you've just met? Have you ever learned something new from a person you've just met?

As a follow-up activity, have students ask their parents or grandparents about their cultural background. Repeat the mapping exercise using a different color of yarn and the same world map. Invite students to locate the countries of their families' origins and connect them to a pin representing your community.

4) MY OWN INSTRUMENT

Best for: Grades 3-6

Goal: To understand the factors that influence a musical instrument's creation

Explanation: The frottoir was created specifically for Zydeco music. Students will use knowledge of musical instruments and other sounds to invent a new musical instrument.

Activity:

1. As a class, brainstorm a list of musical instruments. Make a list on the board of different instruments students can name.
2. Discuss the list the class made on the board. Are there instruments that are similar? How are they similar? How are the instruments different?
3. Review with students the information about the frottoir found on Page 9 of this guide. Ask students to think about how the frottoir was created.
4. Remind students that the frottoir was inspired by the washboard, a household item that musicians used as a percussion instrument. Invite students to consider common items around their house or classroom. What kinds of sounds can be made with these items? Make an additional list of ideas on the board.
5. Now invite students to think about how elements of the instruments and sounds could be combined to make a new instrument. Using their ideas, ask students to invent a new instrument.
6. Have students draw a picture of their new instrument.
7. Beneath their picture, students should write a brief description of their instrument. Ask them to share the instrument's name, what it is made out of, what type of sound it makes, how it is played, and why it is shaped the way that it is.

Discussion:

1. How is your new musical instrument similar to an existing musical instrument? How is it different?
2. What styles of music does your musical instrument usually play? Could it play any other style? Why or why not?
3. Why did you design your instrument the way you did? (color, shape, etc.)
4. Do you think Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience Band will play some instruments you have never seen before?

POST-SHOW DISCUSSION AND ASSESSMENT

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What instruments do you remember from the performance? What did they sound like?
2. Were there any instruments you saw during the performance that were new to you? Which ones?
3. Can you remember how the frottoir was invented? How did the frottoir enhance the performance?
4. Are there other instruments you know of that come from a specific culture or musical style?
5. Did the performance remind you of anything you have seen, heard or experienced before? If so, in what way?
6. How did the music make you feel?
7. Can you remember any of the songs or stories that Terrance Simien shared in the performance? What was the message of these songs?
8. What other things did Terrance Simien share that will help you remember about the Creoles?
9. In what languages were the Zydeco songs performed?
10. Why do you think it is important to Terrance Simien to share Zydeco music with audiences?
11. Did you learn or hear anything during the performance that reminded you of the Creole flag? What was it?
12. Can you think of other examples of people from different places coming together? (Think about the different backgrounds in your classroom or community.)



Terrance Simien working with children in schools.

1) WRITE A LETTER

Goal: To reflect on the performance experience and to practice writing skills.

Explanation: In this activity, students will write a letter about their experience to either the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts education donors whose support keeps Applause Series tickets accessibly priced for school groups.

Materials:

- ◇ Paper
- ◇ Writing utensil

Activity:

1. After attending the performance, discuss the experience with your students. Use the following discussion questions to guide the conversation:

- ◇ How did the performance make you feel?
- ◇ What surprised you about the performance?
- ◇ What do you think was the main message or idea of the performance?

2. Next, invite students to write a letter to the performers or to Des Moines Performing Arts donors about their theater experience.

Example letter starter:

Dear Terrance Simien // Dear Donors...

My favorite part of the show was...
While watching the show I felt... because ...
If I could be in your ensemble, I would ...

3. Mail the letters to:

Des Moines Performing Arts
Attn: Education Department
221 Walnut Street
Des Moines, IA 50309

Follow-up Questions:

1. What did you include in your letter? Why did you want to share that particular idea?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES, pg 2.

2) MAKE YOUR OWN FROTTOIR

Best for: Grades K-2

Goal: To explore Zydeco culture by creating a homemade frottoir instrument, much like the Creoles did using washboards in their homes.

Explanation: Follow the steps below to have students create and decorate their own frottoir instruments.

Materials:

- ◇ Legal size file folders
- ◇ Markers
- ◇ Ribbon
- ◇ Crayons
- ◇ Glitter/sequins/rhinestones
- ◇ Yarn
- ◇ Heavy string
- ◇ Hole punch
- ◇ Plastic spoons

Activity:

1. Cut off the larger side of the file folder by cutting along the crease.
2. Fold the sheet into about 6 one-inch pleats. (Start by folding one pleat at the bottom, turn the sheet over and use the previous pleat as a guide to fold the next, etc.) Leave about two inches at the top.
3. Decorate the space with your name or your very own Zydeco name!
4. Decorate the rest of the frottoir with markers, jewels, or other craft items.
5. Punch a hole in each of the top corners to lace yarn through so you will be able to hang the frottoir around your neck when you play.
6. Play your frottoir with the handles of plastic spoons.

Discussion:

1. What did you like about making the frottoir? What was challenging?
2. Why did you use the colors & decorations that you chose?
3. What did it feel like to play the frottoir? Was it what you expected?
4. What do you remember about the frottoir from the performance? How is your frottoir the same? How is it different?

3) INSTRUMENTS AND SONGS

Best for: Grades K-2

Goal: To identify instruments and songs from school, home, and the performance.

Explanation: Terrance Simien listened to many different kinds of music as a young person—at church, at home on the radio, and at clubs. He taught himself to play the accordion when he was 14 years old. In this activity, students will explore music in their own lives.

Activity:

1. Invite students to think about the different songs and instruments they know.
2. Ask them to draw a picture of the instruments or to write the names of the songs.
3. Beneath their drawings, ask them to write (or dictate) where they have experiences these instruments and songs, with whom they have experienced them, and whether they are important to them in their lives in some way.
4. Invite students to share their completed projects with one another.

Discussion:

1. How did you learn about the instruments you drew? Do you know how to play any of the instruments?
2. Where did you learn the songs you wrote down? (school, home, other) With whom do you sing these songs?
3. What instruments do you remember from the performance? What did they sound like?
4. Did any of the instruments look or sound like the ones you talked about in class? Which ones?
5. Can you remember any of the songs or stories that Terrance Simien shared in the performance? What was the message of these songs?
6. What languages were the Zydeco songs performed in?

ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES, pg. 3

4) DESIGN A CD COVER

Best for: Grades 3-6

Goal: To explore and communicate the unique characteristics of Zydeco and the Creole culture

Explanation: Vergie Banks is a well-known artist whose art is inspired by the culture of her home state of Louisiana. One of her paintings is used on the cover of Terrance Simien's album *Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco*. Using what they've learned about Creole culture and Zydeco music, students will create a CD cover for Terrance Simien's next album.



Vergie Banks' painting, used on the Creole for Kidz album cover.

Activity:

1. Tell students to pretend that Terrance Simien has asked them to design a new CD cover for his next album. He wants the CD cover to celebrate his Creole culture and to reflect the spirit of Zydeco music.
2. Have students read/review the 'About the Artist,' 'The History of Zydeco' and 'Creole History' sections of the study guide (found on pages 8, 10-11).
3. Ask students to identify several important images that came to mind as they read through the material. Compile a list of their answers on the board. (Examples: the frottoir, the Creole flag, house dances, etc.)
4. Ask students to sketch several design ideas on scratch paper.
5. When they have settled on a final design, have them create their final rendition on good paper. They may use crayons, colored pencils, or markers to finish their cover.
6. You may also ask them to create a list of song titles or a title for the entire album.
7. Have students imagine that they are going to present their design to "Terrance," played by you. Use the discussion questions below to ask them about their design.

Discussion:

1. What elements did you include in your design and why?
2. Are there other elements that you considered but did not use?
3. Why did you use the colors you chose?
4. Why should I choose your design and title?
5. What does your design tell a potential buyer about

5) MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN

Best for: Grades 3-6

Goal: To understand the physical connection between Iowa and Louisiana by examining watersheds.

Explanation: Because Iowa lies in the Mississippi River Basin, the rain that falls in Iowa flows into the Mississippi River and travels through New Orleans before reaching the Gulf of Mexico. In this activity, students will explore how watersheds work.

Activity:

1. Review 'Connecting Iowa to Louisiana – The Mississippi River Basin' (see page 13) with your students.
2. To create your own watershed, collect various sizes of rocks. Arrange the rocks in a plastic washtub to build mountains and valleys. Cover the rocks with a plastic garbage bag.
3. Ask students to guess the route "rainwater" will take and where it will pool in your model.
4. Test students' predictions by using a watering can or a small spray bottle to make it "rain" on your model. Discuss their observations.
5. Finally, use a variety of local, state, and national maps to trace the path of water that falls on your community.

Discussion:

1. What did you notice about the watershed model? How did the water travel?
2. How many watersheds do you think were in the model?
3. If all our water ends up in Louisiana, what else of ours do you think ends up there? (pollution, soil, etc.) Is that good or bad? Why?
4. We explored how water from areas all over the central United States comes together as part of the Mississippi River Basin. How is this similar to the way Zydeco fuses different musical styles? How is this different?

Find your local watershed:

EPA Surf Your Watershed
<http://cfpub.epa.gov/surf/locate/index.cfm>

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



BOOKS

GRADES K-3:

Dinosaur Mardi Gras
by Dianne De Las Casas

Down in Louisiana
by Johnette Downing

Gaston Goes to Mardi Gras
by James Rice

Gator Gumbo
by Candace Fleming

P is for Pelican
by Anita Prieto

The Story of Ruby Bridges
by Robert Coles

Why the Crawfish Lives in the Mud
by Johnette Downing

Zydeco Zoom
by Theresa Singleton

GRADES 3-6:

Celebrating Louisiana
by Jane Kurtz

The Creole and the Caterpillar: A Book of Poetry, Creole Recipes, Love, and Louisiana Culture
by Theresa Styles

The Louisiana Purchase: A History Just for Kids
by KidCaps

RESOURCES

Interview: Terrance Simien
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwmCWMXRT4A>
Terrance Simien speaks about "My" Louisiana.

Sesame Street "It's Zydeco" Video Clip
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TqNyMzW4y00>
Appropriate for younger children. Muppet characters sing a song about Zydeco, pointing out variations in musical styles, dynamics, and tempos.

Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience.
<http://www.terrancesimien.com>
Explore videos and photos from Terrance Simien's band. The album "Creole for Kids and the History of Zydeco" is available for purchase.

The Mississippi River: National Geographic
<https://mississippiriver.natgeotourism.com/guide>
Interactive map of the Mississippi River. Learn about the region and read articles from local voices.

The Princess and the Frog Video Clip
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3mDfFe1nuE&feature=youtu.be>
See the movie clip Terrance Simien plays "Gonna Take You There".

"Today is Monday in Louisiana" by Johnette Downing
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wd5WR0p0SAQ>
Watch this book read on YouTube in song form.

SOURCES

Bryant Watershed Education Project. www.watersheds.org

Key of Z Rubboards. www.zydecorubboards.com

Mardi Gras New Orleans. mardigrasneworleans.com

Southern Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival. www.zydeco.org

Terrance Simien *Creole for Kidz* Study Guide.
<http://www.terrancesimien.com/creole-for-kidz/>