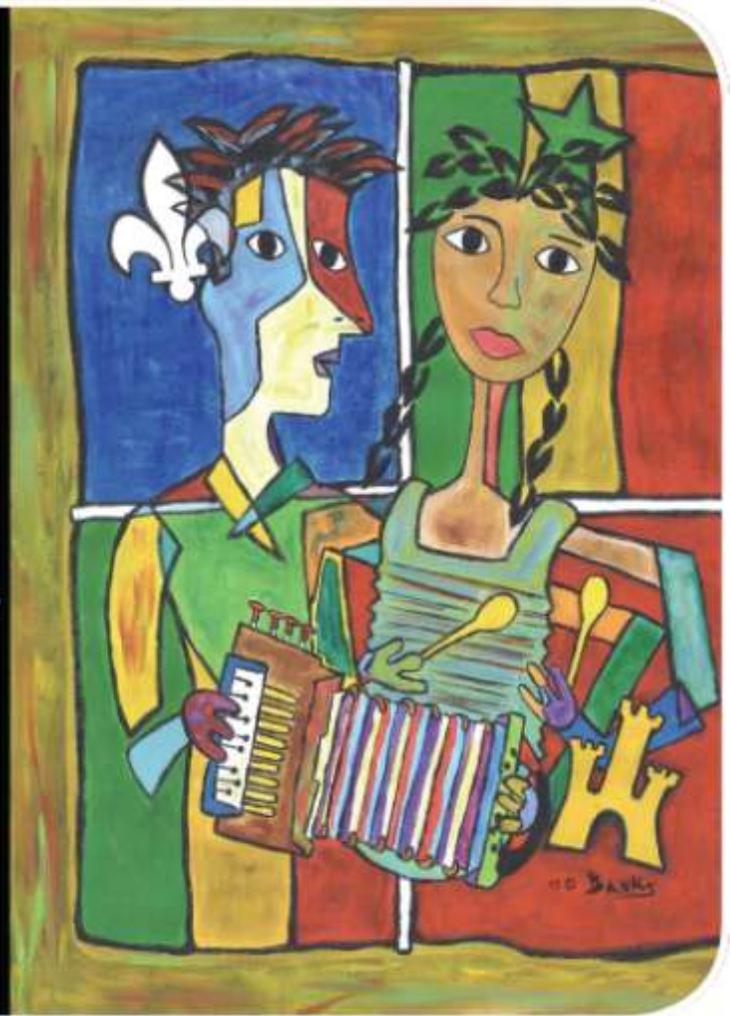


CREOLE
FOR KIDZ
AND
THE
HISTORY
OF Zydeco



Applause Series CURRICULUM GUIDE
CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES

MAY 14, 2010

Dear Teachers,

Thank you for joining us for the Applause Series presentation of *Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco*. We are very pleased that you have chosen to share this special experience with your students and 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 that tie into several curriculum areas. Some pages are appropriate to reproduce for your students; others are designed more specifically with you, their teacher, in mind. 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. As a final note, we have indicated grade level ranges on each of the included Activities and Discussion Question sections, but you should also feel free to adapt any of the activities in this study guide as you feel will be appropriate and meaningful for your students.

See you at the theater,
Civic Center Education Team

Support for Civic Center education programs and the Applause Series is provided by:

Alliant Energy, American Republic Insurance Company, Bradford and Sally Austin, Bank of America, Citigroup Foundation, Continental Western Group, EMC Insurance Companies, Jules and Judy Gray, Greater Des Moines Community Foundation, John Deere Des Moines Operations, Richard and Deborah McConnell, Pioneer Hi-Bred - a DuPont business, Polk County, Prairie Meadows Community Betterment Grant, Target, U.S. Bank, Wells Fargo & Co., Willis Auto Campus/Lexus of North America, and more than 200 individual donors.

GUIDE CONTENTS

About the Civic Center
Page 3

About the Performance
Page 4

The History of Zydeco
Page 5

The Frottoir
Page 6

About the Artist
Page 7

Creole History
Page 8

Creole Culture
Page 9

**Connecting Iowa to Louisiana:
The Mississippi River Basin**
Page 10

Vocabulary
Page 11

**Activities and
Discussion Questions**
Pages 12-18

Going to the Theater
Page 19

**Civic Center Field Trip
Information for Teachers**
Page 20

Resources and Sources
Page 21

This study guide was compiled and written by Karoline Myers; edited by Emily Gruis and Eric Olmscheid.
Based on the 'Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco' study guide by Terrance Simien & The Zydeco Experience

ABOUT THE CIVIC CENTER OF GREATER DES MOINES



The Civic Center is a private, nonprofit organization and is an important part of central Iowa's cultural community. The institution is a cultural landmark of central Iowa and is committed to engaging the Midwest in world-class entertainment, education, and cultural activities. The Civic Center has achieved a national reputation for excellence as a performing arts center and belongs to several national organizations, including The Broadway League, the Independent Presenters Network, International Performing Arts for Youth, and Theater for Young Audiences/USA.

Four performing arts series currently comprise the season—the Willis Broadway Series, Prairie Meadows Temple Theater Series, Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield Family Series and the Applause Series. The Civic Center is also the performance home for the Des Moines Symphony and Stage West.

Through its education programs, the Civic Center strives to engage patrons in arts experiences that extend beyond the stage. Master classes bring professional and local artists together to share their art form and craft, while pre-performance lectures and post-performance Q&A sessions with company members offer ticket holders the opportunity to explore each show as a living, evolving piece of art.

Through the Applause Series—curriculum-connected performances for school audiences—students are encouraged to discover the rich, diverse world of performing arts. During the 2009-2010 season, the Civic Center will welcome more than 28,000 students and educators to 11 professional productions for young audiences.

.....
Want an inside look? Request a tour.
.....

Group tours can be arranged for performance and non-performance dates.
Call 515-246-2355 or visit civiccenter.org/education to check on availability or book your visit.
.....

DID YOU KNOW?

More than 250,000 patrons visit the Civic Center each year.

The Civic Center opened in 1979. We just celebrated our 30th birthday!

The Civic Center has three theater spaces:

- *Main Hall, 2735 seats*
- *Stoner Studio, 200 seats*
- *Temple Theater, 300 seats (located in the Temple for the Performing Arts)*

No seat is more than 155 feet from center stage in the Main Hall.

Nollen Plaza, situated just west of the Civic Center, is a park and amphitheater that is also part of the Civic Center complex. The space features the Brenton Waterfall and Reflection Pool and the Crusoe Umbrella sculpture.

The Applause Series started in 1996. You are joining us for the 14th season!

ABOUT THE PERFORMANCE



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 to experiencing live Zydeco music, 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.

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. The CD is narrated by the oldest tree in the bayou who has witnessed the development of Creole culture, beginning in slave times to the present. Simien performs music to illustrate the narrative, providing examples of Creole music played at early house dances and its evolution throughout the south. 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.



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

Image courtesy of lsue.edu

THE HISTORY OF ZYDECO MUSIC



Zydeco is the indigenous music of the French-speaking Creoles of southwest Louisiana. Zydeco is a blend of many sounds and types of music. It 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 this is a fun story, most academics believe the word Zydeco is rooted in the several African words that mean "dance": *Zai'co laga laga*, *zariko*, and *zari*.

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

Evolution

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

Juré

The earliest form of Creole music is called juré music. (*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 the sounds of 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." At a house dance, furniture would be moved out into the yard so that 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, homemade beer, and lemonade. La-La music was performed using the washboard, spoons, fiddle, triangle and an accordion and was sung in French.

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. He was also one of the first Zydeco artists to play with an entire band, adding drums, bass, guitar, keyboards, and even horns. Although Chenier is no longer alive, he is still considered to be the "King of Zydeco."

Each Zydeco artist today has their own distinct style. Many, like Terrance Simien, continue to push the boundaries of the form, adding the sounds of 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. Whether you experience Zydeco at a concert or festival, through a commercial or in a film, audiences everywhere have one thing in common—most find it impossible to sit still while listening to the spirited music known as Zydeco.

ABOUT THE FROTTOIR—THE ICONIC RUBBOARD



The frottoir (pronounced fwah-twah), also known as the rubboard, is the signature instrument of Zydeco music.

History

The frottoir is a relative of the washboard. A washboard was used for washing 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 or thimbles across its ridged surface to create rhythms.

In 1946, Clifton Chenier (see page 5 to learn about Chenier) 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!” Based off Chenier’s design, Landry 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 the frottoir 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.

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.

Frottoir means
“friction strip.”

ACTIVITY: MAKE YOUR OWN FROTTOIR

You can make your very own frottoir out of a legal-sized file folder by following these steps:

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.

ABOUT THE ARTIST: TERRANCE SIMIEN



Beginnings

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

Simien's early music life was influenced by two places in the heart of his community. The first was St. Ann's Roman Catholic Church, where Simien learned to love the spiritual side of making music. Simien was equally influenced by a little building just down the road known as Richard's (pronounced *Reeshard's*), a wild roadhouse known throughout Louisiana for its "low down, tail shaking" party music. Although very different from one another, both places instilled in Simien a deep love of music.

When Simien was a teenager, the indigenous (native) music of the Creole people was in danger of dying out. Most young people thought it was just the music of the "old folks," but Terrance wanted to preserve Zydeco music. When he was 14 years old, his parents bought him his first accordion. He would record the Zydeco shows on the radio, take the tape to his room, and practice until he learned the material.

Before long, Terrance was recruiting band members from his community, and they began to play at local dances. By the time he was 17, he left his home town and began to perform throughout Louisiana and Texas.

"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

Passing it on

In his travels, Simien met many of the great Zydeco pioneers, such as Clifton Chenier (see page 5). 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.

Just as Simien was mentored by the great Zydeco musicians before him, he has assumed that same role to a new generation of Zydeco musicians. By mentoring young musicians, Simien continues to ensure that Zydeco music lives on.

Today

Simien has performed over 5,000 concerts, toured in over 40 countries, and performed for over a million people during his career. He has produced 7 full-length albums and received numerous awards, including a Grammy for "Best Zydeco or Cajun Music Album." His music has been featured on the radio, been used for television commercials, and appeared in over a dozen films. Disney recently featured Simien's music in the animated movie "The Princess and the Frog" in a scene depicting fireflies playing the accordion and frottoir.



Image courtesy of terrancesimien.com.

CREOLE HISTORY



The People

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

- ◆ **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 survive openly in Louisiana. These traditions strongly influenced the unique Creole culture.

A Class of Their Own

As the various peoples in Louisiana came together, a distinct culture and people emerged. However, the new Creole culture did not fit any of the racial or cultural categories. The Creoles were not European immigrants, and they were not African slaves. They were neither black nor white. Instead, the Creoles were free men of color and lived as a separate class from the dominant whites and the enslaved black Africans.

As the Creole population grew, the French decided they needed special laws for them. In 1724, the Code Noir was established. It placed many restrictions on the Creole people, but it gave Creoles one important privilege that enslaved Africans did not have: the right to own land. Having the right to own land allowed the Creoles to build strong, independent communities.

It was not until the Civil War ended in 1865 that social conditions radically changed for the Creoles. Union officials refused to recognize the distinct lineage that made up the Creole culture. Because the U.S. government racially identified all persons with African ancestry as black, the Creoles were

forced to deny their French, Spanish, and Native American roots. The Creoles had to give up their special place in Louisiana society that they had held for over 150 years. However, because the Creoles already owned property, had received better access to education, and knew how to navigate being free in a white man's world, they soon 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 (food), their own architectural styles, and their own musical style. 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.

Food

Above: Creole men prepare for an afternoon of fieldwork. Image courtesy of frenchcreoles.com.

THE CREOLE CULTURE



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. In fact, 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.

Cher (Sha): Dear (term of endearment).

Merci (Mare see): Thanks.

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

Ça va (Sa va): That's enough.

Joie 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.

Allons (Al lohn): Let's go.

Mardi Gras

Mardi Gras is a world famous celebration that takes place in New Orleans, Louisiana every year. During Mardi Gras, dozens of parades and balls occur throughout the city of New Orleans.

People wear extravagant costumes and masks. Everyone wears purple, green, and gold—the colors of Mardi Gras—and 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. 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.

Above: A woman in costume takes part in a New Orleans Mardi Gras parade. Which of the Mardi Gras colors is she wearing?
Right: The Creole flag,
Image courtesy of mardigrasneworleans.com.

The Flag

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

◆ The white fleur de lis on the blue field in the upper left represents their French heritage.

◆ The upper right section is made up of the flag of Senegal (green, yellow, and red with a green star) in honor of Creoles' African heritage.

◆ The lower left section is made up of the flag of Mali (green, yellow, and red), also in honor of Creoles African heritage.

◆ The Tower of Castille in the lower right section honors the Creoles' Spanish heritage.

◆ The sections are bound through a white cross, which represents the Creoles' Christian faith.



CONNECTING IOWA TO LOUISIANA



THE MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN

Think about the streams, creeks, and rivers near your home and school. Where does this water come from? Where does it go? Would you be surprised to learn that the water we have here in Iowa travels all the way to Louisiana, the home of the Creoles? This is because 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. Watersheds come in all shapes and sizes. Some drain a single valley or an entire basin that is made up of many streams, creeks, and rivers.

It can be helpful to picture a watershed as a bowl. When you put liquid in a bowl, it all collects at the bottom. This is 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.

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. For example, 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. (A watershed is always named after its biggest river or stream.) These two basins flow into the largest U.S. watershed of all: the Mississippi River Basin.

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.

The water from all the watersheds within the Mississippi River Basin eventually enters the Gulf of Mexico at a location just southeast of New Orleans, Louisiana. From the snow that lands and melts off your playground, to the rain that drips from the eaves of your house, to the water that falls on farmers' fields across the state, all of Iowa's water makes this journey, eventually passing through the home of the Creoles and Zydeco music—before entering the Gulf of Mexico.



Map courtesy of watersheds.org

VOCABULARY



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

Louisiana: a state in the southern United States on the Gulf of Mexico. The United States took control of the area in 1803 through the Louisiana Purchase. Baton Rouge is the capital, and New Orleans is its largest city. Population: 4,490,000.

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

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

Frottoir: a ridged percussion instrument made of metal and played with bottle openers or spoons. The frottoir was invented in America specifically for Zydeco music.



The frottoir.

Culture: the beliefs, values, learned behavior, language, and customs of a group of people passed on from generation to generation

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

Heritage: something handed down from the past

Mentor: a person who teaches or advises

Code Noir: rules and regulations passed by in 1724 that restricted many rights of free Creole men and women but allowed them to own land

Lineage: the ancestors from whom a person is descended

Mardi Gras: a festival celebrated in New Orleans with parades, balls, music, costumes, and masks



Fleur de Lis: decorative symbol resembling three petals of an iris bound together. The fleur de lis traditionally represents the royal family of France.

Left: The Fleur de Lis. Have you seen this symbol anywhere else before?

Tower of Castille: a symbol resembling a castle with three towers, traditionally used on flags, banners, and coats of arms in regions of Spain.

Cuisine: a style of food or cooking

Gumbo: a stew or thick soup, usually containing chicken or seafood, in which the primary ingredient is okra.

Right: A bowl of traditional gumbo. 'Gumbo' means okra in an African language.



Watershed: the land that drains water from an area into its waterways

GRADES PRE K-2: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Sound Exploration

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.)

Curriculum Connections: Music

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

Before the Performance/After the Activity

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?

After the Performance

1. What instruments do you remember from the performance?
2. How did each of these instruments look or sound?
3. Did the performance remind you of anything you have seen or experienced before?
4. How did the music make you feel?

GRADES PRE K-2: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Instruments and Songs

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.

Curriculum Connections: Music

Activity:

1. Invite students to think about the different songs and instruments that 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 experienced 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

Before the Performance/After the Activity:

1. What do the instruments you brainstormed sound like?
2. Do you know how to play any of the instruments?
3. How did you learn about the instruments? Did you see them being played?
4. In what style of music do you find these instruments?
5. Where did you learn the songs you wrote down? (school, home, other)
6. With whom do you sing these songs?
7. When do you sing these songs?
8. What language do you use to sing these songs?

After the Performance:

1. What instruments do you remember from the performance? What did they sound like?
2. Did any of the instruments look or sound like the ones you talked about in class? Which ones?
3. Can you remember any of the songs or stories that Terrance Simien shared in the performance? What was the message of these songs?
4. What languages were the Zydeco songs performed in?

GRADES PRE K-2: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Design a Flag

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.

Curriculum Connections: Visual Arts, Culture

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: landscape of where they live, wildlife, important industries, 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

After the Activity/Before the Performance:

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?
4. What would strangers be able to learn about your family/community if they saw your flag?

After the Performance:

1. Did you learn or hear anything during the performance that reminded you of the Creole flag?
2. Why do you think sharing Zydeco music is important to Terrance Simien?
3. What other things did Terrance Simien share that will help you remember about the Creoles?



Upper left: white fleur de lis on blue represents French heritage.
Upper right: Senegal flag (green, yellow, red w/ star) represents African heritage.
Lower left: Mali flag (green, yellow, red) represents African heritage.
Lower right: gold Tower of Castille on red represents Spanish heritage.
Center: white cross binding sections together represents Christian faith.

GRADES 3-5: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Map It Out

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.

Curriculum Connections: Geography, Culture

Activity:

1. Invite students to read the 'About the Creoles' section of the study guide, found on page 8.
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.
3. 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.)
4. Illustrate the manner in which the cultural groups converged by using yarn to connect each point to the central pin.
5. Use the 'Before the Performance' discussion questions at right to reflect on the activity.

Discussion

Before the Performance/After the Activity:

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?
6. What types of things do you think the different cultural groups shared with one another in Louisiana?

After the Performance:

1. What did you learn about the Creole culture?
2. Why is the Creole culture unique?
3. Why do you think it is important to Terrance Simien to share Zydeco music with audiences?
4. Can you think of other examples of people from different places coming together? (Think about the different backgrounds in your classroom or community.)

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. Ask students to compare their classroom web with the web they created for the Creole culture.

GRADES 3-5: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: My Own Instrument

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.

Curriculum Connections: Music, Culture

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? Are there instruments that are different? How are they different?
3. Review with students the information about the frottoir found on page 6 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

Before the Performance/After the Activity:

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?

After the Performance:

1. Do you think your instrument would have fit in with the concert? Why or why not?
2. Describe any instruments that were new to you.
3. Can you remember how the frottoir was invented?
4. How did the frottoir enhance the performance?
5. Are there other instruments you know of that come from a specific culture or musical style?

GRADES 3-5: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Mississippi River Basin

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.

Curriculum Connections: Geography, Science

Activity:

1. Review 'Connecting Iowa to Louisiana– The Mississippi River Basin' (see page 10) 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

After the Activity/Before the Performance:

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? What observations led you to this conclusion? (If water hit a "mountaintop" or ridge in the model and traveled in more than one direction, it is likely that there was more than one watershed.)
3. Think about signs of watersheds. Can you think of examples of any of the following in the neighborhood surrounding your home or school: a damp spot that might collect water; a stream of water and its tributaries; a gully created by water; a sign of erosion; and/or a structure that would block or change the flow of water?
4. 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?

After the Performance:

1. 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?
2. Did you think about the way water connects us here in Iowa with the peoples of Louisiana during the performance? If so, how did that make you feel as you listened and learned about the Creole culture?

Find your local watershed:

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

Iowa Department of Natural Resources Watershed Atlas
www.iowadnr.gov/mapping/maps/watershed_atlas.html

GRADES 3-5: ACTIVITIES AND DISCUSSION



Activity: Design a CD Cover

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.

Curriculum Connections: Visual Arts, Culture

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 Creoles,' 'About the Artist,' and 'The History of Zydeco' sections of the study guide (found on pages 5, 7-8).
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 at right to ask them about their design.

Discussion

Before the Performance/After the Activity:

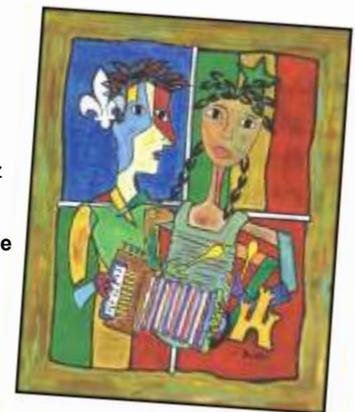
1. What elements did you include in your design and why?
2. Are there other elements that you considered but did not use?
3. Why did you use the colors you chose?
4. Why should I choose your design and title?
5. What does your design tell a potential buyer about my music?

After the Performance:

1. Did you feel your CD design captured the spirit of Terrance Simien's performance? Why or why not?
2. Are there elements of your design that you would change if you were to do it again?
3. Visit artist Vergie Banks' website (www.littleredtricycle.com) and look at her many paintings depicting the Creole culture. Are there elements in your design that are similar to her work? What is different? (content, style, color, etc.)
4. Why do you think it is important for both Vergie Banks and Terrance Simien to celebrate Louisiana culture?
5. Are there ways that you celebrate the culture of your family or community?

Vergie Bank's Creole inspired painting. It was used on Terrance Simien's *Creole for Kidz* album cover.

See more examples of Vergie Banks' art at www.littleredtricycle.com.



GOING TO THE THEATER . . .



YOUR ROLE AS AN AUDIENCE MEMBER

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. As they act, sing, dance, or play instruments, the performers on stage are very aware of the audience's mood and level of engagement. Each performance calls for a different response from audience members. Lively bands, musicians, and dancers may desire the audience to focus silently on the stage and applaud only during natural breaks in the performance. Audience members can often take cues from performers on how to respond to the performance appropriately. For example, performers will often pause or bow for applause at a specific time.

As you experience the performance, consider the following questions:

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

THEATER ETIQUETTE

Here is a checklist of general guidelines to follow when you visit the Civic Center:

- Leave all food, drinks, and chewing gum at school or on the bus.
- Cameras, recording devices, and personal listening devices are not permitted in the theater.
- Turn off cell phones, pagers, and all other electronic devices before the performance begins.
- When the house lights dim, the performance is about to begin. Please stop talking at this time.
- **Talk before and after the performance only.** Remember, the theater is designed to amplify sound, so the other audience members and the performers on stage can hear your voice!
- Appropriate responses such as laughing and applauding are appreciated. Pay attention to the artists on stage—they will let you know what is appropriate.
- Open your eyes, ears, mind, and heart to the entire experience. Enjoy yourself!

*GOING TO THE THEATER information is adapted from the Ordway Center for the Performing Arts study guide materials.

CIVIC CENTER FIELD TRIP INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS



Thank you for choosing the Applause Series at the Civic Center of Greater Des Moines. Below are tips for organizing a safe and successful field trip to the Civic Center.

ORGANIZING YOUR FIELD TRIP

- Please include all students, teachers, and chaperones in your ticket request.
- After you submit your ticket request, you will receive a confirmation e-mail within five business days. Your **invoice will be attached to the confirmation e-mail.**
- Payment policies and options are located at the top of the invoice. **Payment (or a purchase order) for your reservation is due four weeks** prior to the date of the performance.
- The Civic Center reserves the right to cancel unpaid reservations after the payment due date.
- Tickets are not printed for Applause Series shows. Your invoice will serve as the reservation confirmation for your group order.
- Schedule buses to arrive in downtown Des Moines at least 30 minutes prior to the start of the performance. This will allow time to park, walk to the Civic Center, and be seated in the theater.
- Performances are approximately 60 minutes unless otherwise noted on the website and printed materials.
- All school groups with reservations to the show will receive an e-mail notification when the study guide is posted. Please note that study guides are only printed and mailed upon request.

DIRECTIONS AND PARKING

- 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 are stationed at the corner of 3rd and Locust Streets and will direct buses to parking areas with hooded meters near the Civic Center. Groups traveling in personal vehicles are responsible for locating their own parking in ramps or metered (non-hooded) spots downtown.
- Buses will remain parked for the duration of the show. At the conclusion, bus drivers must be available to move their bus if necessary, even if their students are staying at the Civic Center to eat lunch or take a tour.
- Buses are not generally permitted to drop off or pick up students near the Civic Center. If a bus must return to school during the performance, prior arrangements must be made with the Civic Center Education staff.

ARRIVAL TO THE CIVIC CENTER

- When arriving at the Civic Center, please have an **adult lead your group** for identification and check-in purposes. You may enter the building through the East or West lobbies; a Civic Center staff member may be stationed outside the building to direct you.
- Civic Center staff will usher groups into the building as quickly as possible. Once inside, you will be directed to the check-in area.
- Seating in the theater is general admission. Ushers will escort groups to their seats; various seating factors including group size, grade levels, arrival time, and special needs seating requests may determine a group's specific location in the hall.
- We request that an **adult lead the group into the theater and other adults position themselves throughout the group**; we request this arrangement for supervision purposes, especially in the event that a group must be seated in multiple rows.
- Please allow ushers to seat your entire group before rearranging seat locations and taking groups to the restroom.

IN THE THEATER

- In case of a medical emergency, please notify the nearest usher. A paramedic is on duty for all Main Hall performances.
- We ask that adults handle any disruptive behavior in their groups. If the behavior persists, an usher may request your group to exit the theater.
- Following the performance groups may exit the theater and proceed to their bus(es).
- If an item is lost at the Civic Center, please see an usher or contact us after the performance at 515.246.2355.

QUESTIONS?

Please contact the Education department at 515.246.2355 or education@civiccenter.org. Thank you!

RESOURCES AND SOURCES



Classroom Resources:

Websites:

Terrance Simien and the Zydeco Experience: <http://www.terrancesimien.com>

Audio and Video:

“Creole for Kidz and the History of Zydeco” Album: available for purchase at <http://www.terrancesimien.com>

“It’s Zydeco” Video Clip: viewable at <http://www.sesamestreet.org>; search “It’s Zydeco”
Appropriate for younger children. Muppet characters sing a song about Zydeco, pointing out variations in musical styles, dynamics, and tempos.

Study Guide Sources:

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

Southern Louisiana Zydeco Music Festival: www.zydeco.org

www.lafayettetravel.com

Information on the cultural groups of southern Louisiana, including common French phrases used in the region.

Mardi Gras New Orleans: mardigrasneworleans.com

Key of Z Rubboards: www.zydecorubboards.com

Frottoir history.

LSUE: <http://web.lsu.edu/acadgate/music/tsimien.htm>

Review and description of Terrance Simien’s album ‘Creole for Kidz.’

Bureau of Land Management: http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/res/enviro_ed/watersheds.html

Watershed information and activities.

Bryant Watershed Education Project: www.watersheds.org

Watershed information and lesson plans.