

Chanson : Ma Louisianne* Interprète : Zachary Richard



Photo courtesy of David Simpson, Louisiana State University at Eunice

Chanson:	« Ma Louisianne »*
Paroles et musique:	Zachary Richard
Année:	1977
Genre:	La musique cadienne; zydeco
De l'album:	<i>Mardi Gras</i>

***N.B.** As was briefly discussed above, Cajun French does not always resemble the variety of French that you are familiar with. For instance, Zachary Richard spells the title of this song, “Ma Louisiane” as “Ma Louisianne” with two n’s. In this song, you will see a few examples of phrases unique to *le français cadien*, but you won’t be expected to learn them for the test. ☺
Avant d’écouter

A. Remarques:

By now you are familiar with France and its regions, but did you know that there is a French-speaking region in one of Texas’s neighboring states? In Central and Southern Louisiana, there are in fact two main groups of French speakers. The following song, “Ma Louisiane”, focuses specifically on the Cajun people.

B. Questions préliminaires:

What do you already know regarding the Cajun people? Where did they come from? Why did they come? How long have they been in Louisiana?

Contexte culturel:

Les Cadiens

The Cajuns are descendants of the original French colonists in North America. During the 17th Century, French colonists, mostly from Western France, settled the eastern regions of La Nouvelle France. They named this region *L'Acadie*. As time passed, they no longer called themselves *français*, but *acadien*.

In 1755, the British deported the majority of the *Acadien* population and many immigrated to Louisiana. Over time, their name changed from *Acadien* to *Cadien*, which was taken into English as *Cajun*. Even today the Cajuns consider themselves a separate people from the surrounding American communities.

In the early 20th century Cajun children were often punished if they were caught speaking French at school. Little by little, because of the stigma attached to their language, many Cajuns only spoke French at home, and some stopped speaking it altogether. More recently the Cajuns have experienced a new-found pride in their culture and language. Subsequently a movement of Cajun music has developed, and has proven to be one of the strongest forces preserving the Cajun language and culture.

Sources:

Brasseaux, C. (2005). *French, Cajun, Creole, Houma: A Primer on Francophone Louisiana*. Louisiana State University Press : Baton Rouge.

Richard, Z. (2003). *Contre vents contre marées* [DVD]. Equipe Spectra : Montréal.

Further Reading:

Barry Jean Ancelet. "Cajun Music," in *Grove's Encyclopedia of Music* (New York: Grove's, 2001).

Barry Jean Ancelet. *Cajun music and Zydeco: A (Very) Brief Overview*.



Photo courtesy of David Simpson, Louisiana State University at Eunice

Zachary is one of the best-known Cajun musicians of all time. In addition to his music, he has published books of poetry; and he directed a documentary about the history of the Cajun people called "Against the Tide". He also founded the group called *Action Cadienne*, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the Cajun language and culture.

References: <http://www.zacharyrichard.com>; <http://www.actioncadienne.org/>

Avant d'écouter:

A. Fill in the blanks as you listen to the song.

Ma Louisianne*

Words and music by Zachary Richard, 1977



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Oublie voir pas qu'on est Cadien, *Never forget*
Mes chers garçons et mes chères petites _____.

Qu'on était en Louisianne* avant les _____, *That we were*
Et **on sera** ici après **ils sont partis**. *we will be, they have left*

Ton papa et ta mama **étaient chassés** de l'Acadie *were chased*

Pour le grand crime d'être _____.
Ils ont trouvé un beau _____, *they found*

Merci bon Dieu pour _____.

Refrain :

La Louisianne, _____,

Si belle _____, si chaud _____,

Si frais _____, si trempé _____,

Mais moi je suis fier d'être _____.

Oublie voir pas, mes chers _____,

Les manières du vieux temps passé. *customs*

Le ciel et la terre ont beaucoup à nous montrer,
Écoute les paroles des vieux Cadiens.

Après avoir écouté :

A. Compréhension :

1. Find the cajun equivalents for these expressions in the song:

- a. N'oublie jamais _____
- b. ta maman _____
- c. si humide _____

2. Find the French translation of the following in the song:

- a. dear _____
- b. good God _____
- c. proud _____
- d. olden days _____
- e. the sky and the earth _____

3. What things does the narrator tell the children never to forget?

4. Why does he say the Cajuns were kicked out of *L'Acadie*?

5. Translate the chorus

B. Discussion culturelle:

Now that you are more familiar with the Cajuns' story, what are your overall reactions?
Are you familiar with stories similar to theirs?

Why do you think the Cajuns want to maintain their way of speaking?

How does language reflect culture?