



For Immediate Release
Pat Mould
337-739-9404
kjncchef2013@gmail.com

What's New for 2018 at Festivals Acadiens et Créoles

Focus on French language, more ways to pay & Music Cities concert on the agenda this year.

Lafayette, LA, August 29, 2018 – Just two short months away, Festivals Acadiens et Créoles is gearing up for a celebration of language and music this year.

As we make new advancements at the festival—adding a symposium, art exhibit, official run, Anniversary Stage and expanded programming in recent years—we also remember our heritage and the past performers who helped us get to where we are today. This year's theme of “Lyrics & Language” celebrates *L'héritage lyrique de Caesar Vincent* and the 50th anniversary of CODOFIL. Our 2018 poster and pin artist Randall LaBry depicts Vincent as a lone figure on horseback in his original artwork, and a CD of reinterpretations by contemporary Louisiana French musicians will honor Vincent's lyrical legacy.

“This year, we are celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana, and the legacy of French songs and performances that have been preserved and spawned during the last half-century,” says Board President Barry Jean Ancelet. “In 1974, CODOFIL sponsored the first Tribute to Cajun Music concert that eventually evolved into Festivals Acadiens et Créoles, creating a platform that has nurtured performance and creativity in French. Since its creation in 1968, CODOFIL's programs to teach French in elementary and middle schools and its efforts to preserve and promote French cultural activities in the state have produced several generations of young people who are able to not only sing the old songs, but to create new ones within the context of ongoing and constantly evolving Louisiana French tradition. We are celebrating this treasure trove of oral poetry, some from the past, including ancient ballads from the repertoire of Caesar Vincent, and others from the ongoing creative process that is still producing new songs today.”

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More details and a full schedule of events is listed below. Festival dates are Oct. 11-14, 2018. As always, our festival takes place in Girard Park and is FREE and open to the public. More information can be found at www.festivalsacadiens.com, where those who want to show their support can sign up to become a Festival Friend or volunteer.

Lyrical Legacy of Caesar Vincent

Each year, the festival celebrates a different aspect of our culture and the people who work so hard to preserve our Cajun and Creole heritage. This year, Festivals Acadiens et Créoles's theme is *L'héritage lyrique de Caesar Vincent*. Vincent is best known for his version of the song "Travailler, c'est trop dur," which translates to "Working's too hard," that he sang and recorded for folklorist Harry Oster in 1957. He was born in 1882 in what is now Leroy in rural Vermilion Parish. He supported five children and a wife through sharecropping, but he was also known to break into song just about anywhere, including in the grocery store or the funeral home. He never owned a car and traveled through his small world mostly on foot or on horseback. Vincent died before receiving any outside recognition for his music.

He recorded 23 songs for USL musicology graduate Catherine Blanchet in 1953 and 37 for Oster four years later. He also sang in a French song contest at the 1953 Dairy Festival in Abbeville. "La fille aux oranges" is his other "hit" song that has been recorded by Marcie Lacouture and Veillée, and the New Brunswick-based Acadian group Vishtën recorded a YouTube version of his "Tobie Lapierre." Unlike some of the other celebrated Louisiana French ballad singers, Vincent died just before the documentary films and festivals of the 1970s that turned such tradition bearers into cultural icons. His recordings have recently begun to attract the attention of contemporary Cajun and Creole performers, so finally, this Louisiana French treasure is getting his due. A musical tribute to Caesar Vincent is on the lineup for Oct. 13 at Scène Ma Louisiane from 1-2 p.m., and Festivals Acadiens et Créoles will produce a CD of recent reinterpretations of Vincent's songs to be sold during the festival and on the website.

Titled "Work is Too Hard, and Love is a Cheat: The Lyrical Rebellion of French Folksong in Louisiana," our free symposium on Oct. 11 will be held in partnership with the Center for Louisiana Studies at UL Lafayette, the Dr. Tommy Comeaux Endowed Chair in Traditional Music and CODOFIL. From 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Hilliard University Art Museum's A. Hays Town Building, folklorist and emeritus professor Dr. Barry Jean Ancelet will discuss little-known balladeer Caesar Vincent, in addition to a panel discussion on French language education and activism in relation to lyrical composition, and a brown bag keynote address by Roger Mason, renowned musician and song-hunter.

Our exhibit "Louisiana French: Myths and Movements," opening Sept. 7 at the Hilliard University Art Museum's A. Hays Town Building in collaboration with CODOFIL (The Council for the Development of French in Louisiana), will highlight the progress made in the changing attitudes of the last half century. CODOFIL has gathered a mix of historical documents, videos, audio clips and works of art to reveal a Louisiana *francophonie* that is alive and thriving.

Official Artist Randall LaBry

This year's Official Festivals Acadiens et Créoles Pin and Poster Artist is Kaplan native Randall LaBry. A teacher in Lafayette Parish School System's Talented Visual Arts Program, LaBry has been drawing

and painting the people and places of South Louisiana since the late 1970s.

Having grown up in Vermilion Parish, LaBry has something in common with this year's honoree Caesar Vincent. When it was suggested he portray the Cajun folk singer on horseback coming down a country lane, LaBry drove the backroads around Leroy, Meaux and his hometown of Kaplan in search of the right spot. The lane he eventually found was halfway between the birthplaces of his parents.

LaBry's original art for the 2018 poster is simple but striking. Oak trees in varying shades of green provide a leafy backdrop for the lone figure of Vincent riding his horse. LaBry painted in gouache on site in the afternoon sun but worked on the lone rider figure and horse in his studio. He viewed old photos to help him imagine Vincent wearing work khakis and a cowboy hat, and it's that figure that carries over into the 2018 pin design.

The 2018 pin and poster will be unveiled on Sept. 7 at Hilliard University Art Museum's A. Hays Town Building from 6-8 p.m., with the unveiling held at 6:45 p.m.

Parking & More Ways to Pay

Festivals Acadiens et Créoles is making it even easier for festival-goers to purchase tickets for drinks this year. All ticket booths throughout the park will be equipped with credit card capabilities, so that anyone can pay by credit card or cash. ATMs will be located on site as well, as cash is needed for the Bayou Food Festival and Louisiana Craft Fair.

Patrons are also advised that everyone who orders an alcoholic drink will be asked to show their ID each time. No wristbands will be used on site, and beverages will not be served without a proper ID. We ask that everyone leave their ice chest at home and support the festival by purchasing a cold beverage.

Due to UL Lafayette Homecoming, our shuttle from Cajun Field will not be available this year. We will be compiling comprehensive information about parking for our website and pocket guide, but we encourage those attending to park on the UL Lafayette campus in the Girard Park Circle Parking Tower or Earl K. Long lot across from the main stage. Handicapped parking is available in the Recreational Center parking lot, and a bike corral is also located on-site at the park.

Music Cities Opening Concert

The largest and most extensive global gathering on the topic of “music cities” is happening in Lafayette this year. Coinciding with Festivals Acadiens et Créoles week, Music Cities Convention will be held at Acadiana Center for the Arts Oct. 11-12. This year's convention theme is “Diversity & Improving Our Cities and Communities Through Music.”

Thursday's activities will culminate in an opening concert at Warehouse 535 in collaboration with Festivals Acadiens et Créoles, Lafayette Convention & Visitors Commission and CREATE. Open to the public, this Lafayette musical showcase will feature local musicians, along with some of the artists

featured on the “Lyrical Legacy of Caesar Vincent” album. Musicians include Jourdan Thibodeaux, Cedric Watson, Kelli Jones, Megan Brown, Steve Riley, Sam Broussard, David Greely, Julie Williams, Lil Buck Sinegal, Chris Stafford and more. The concert from 7-9 p.m. is open to Music Cities attendees at no charge and to the public for a fee.

Important Dates For 2018

All events are free and open to the public (except Tour Des Atakapas and Music Cities Concert)

Friday, Sept. 7: Poster & Pin Unveiling & opening of Hilliard University Art Museum exhibit “Louisiana French: Myths and Movements” from 6-8 p.m.; exhibit will be on display in the A. Hays Town Building through Oct. 14.

Wednesday, Oct. 3: “Louisiana French Oral Poetry: Past and Present” from 6-8 p.m. at Hilliard University Art Museum.

Wednesday, Oct. 10: “Exploring Francophone Culture” from 6-8 p.m. at Hilliard University Art Museum; panel discussion hosted by CODOFIL about the history of their organization and the importance of francophone culture in Louisiana.

Thursday, Oct. 11: “Work is Too Hard, and Love is a Cheat: The Lyrical Rebellion of French Folksong in Louisiana” symposium from 8:30 a.m.-1 p.m. in the A. Hays Town Building; Music Cities Opening Concert at Warehouse 535 from 7-9 p.m.

Friday, Oct. 12: Festivals Acadiens et Créoles opening with cutting of the boudin at 5 p.m.; Friday Night Fais Do Do with a 30 For 30 Anniversary Celebration featuring Chubby Carrier and the Bayou Swamp Band and Steve Riley & the Mamou Playboys.

Saturday, Oct. 13: Tour Des Atakapas Race & Duathlon at 7 a.m. and Festivals Acadiens et Créoles all day.

Sunday, Oct. 14: French Mass at 9 a.m. and final day of Festivals Acadiens et Créoles and CODOFIL's “Louisiana French: Myths and Movements” exhibit.

Save the date for Festivals Acadiens et Créoles Oct. 11-14, 2018!

Festivals Acadiens et Créoles can trace its roots back to the first Tribute to Cajun Music Festival organized by CODOFIL in 1974. Festivals was officially established in 1977 with components of music, food and crafts. Since then, it has grown into a multi-day event taking place during the second full weekend of October each year in Lafayette, La. Festivals operates as a nonprofit corporation and is run by a community board and volunteers.

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