



What I'm Up To: Wayne Kahn and "Zydeco by Birth" (cont'd)

By Wayne Kahn

If Zydeco is the music of a region and culture, it is also the music of families. So it is fitting that Zydeco by Birth will explore the evolution of music and culture through the lens of Roy Carrier's family—the Carrières—a great Creole musical clan of the Atchafalaya Basin with more than a century of oral and recorded traditions.

A goal of the story is to show just how much the La La house dances of the early 1900s gave

sharecropping families a consistent place to put down cultural roots and provided a platform for Creole culture to grow. The family story will contextualize the creativity, resourcefulness, and resilience of Black French Creoles in shaping South Louisiana's current cultural and musical identity through archive film footage paired with new interviews with living Carrière musicians, who continue to play Zydeco, win awards and accolades, and evolve the traditions of those that came before with new influences as each generation joins the family "business." Rarely seen interviews with Carrière elders, historians, and musicologists, combined with songs as performed by different generations, will also be part of the mix. Zydeco by Birth will give audiences an invaluable opportunity to see how Zydeco has evolved and continues to be passed down through generations of families who celebrate Black history, joy, and resilience.

I have been pursuing Zydeco by Birth for a little over two years, getting enough money to digitize the twenty-five year old master tapes. Last month I connected to a 501(C)3 foundation to be the fiscal sponsor. Progress.

ZYDECO by BIRTH:

The Story of the Legendary Carrière/Carrier Family of Southwest Louisiana



In this promotion poster from 1997, the youngest player pictured, Neal, is 8 and the oldest is Bebe at 92. Photo: Courtesy Wayne Kahn