



## ACTIVITY 1: LEGENDARY MUSICIANS OF THE SOUTHEAST

[Adapted with permission from Louisiana Voices Unit VI, Unit 6](#)

*Where you come from is what you are. Whatever you are, be that. Don't try to be more than you are, and you'll always make it. Don't go above your means. What fits you, stick with it, you know. That's what I did. I figured French music fit me and I stayed with it. Rock & Roll didn't get me that Grammy. Zydeco got me that Grammy. Maybe that's going to show some of the young ones that's where it's at, right here. People don't know that. It's here. Just got to do something with it, that's all.*

— Clifton Chenier, zydeco musician, St. Landry Parish, Louisiana

**Grade Level:** 4-8

**Curriculum Areas:** English Language Arts, Music, Social Studies

**Purpose of Lesson:** This lesson introduces students to traditional musicians of the Southeast who have won recognition such as state or national awards. In this lesson students will hear traditional music, and read, write and create projects about traditional artists. This section provides an overview to many of the musicians featured in the “Rhythm & Roots” exhibit.

### Lesson Objectives

1. Students gather information on selected heritage award recipients.
2. Students convey their research findings orally, in writing, and with technology.

**Time Required:** Three to five 45-minute class periods

**Materials:** This lesson involves Internet research, or if musicians are well known, print resources at a library. Alternatively, students may research and interview local musicians. If your students will be doing interviews, you may need digital or 35mm cameras, video recorders, tape recorders or notepads and pencils as well as appropriate fieldwork research forms. Print and duplicate any worksheets that you will be using. Refer to [Unit II](#) of **Louisiana Voices**.

**Technology Connections:** Internet connection

## [Spreadsheet Directions](#)

## [Adaptation Strategies](#)

### National Standards

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS: MUSIC

- [NA.5-8.6 Listening To, Analyzing, and Describing Music](#)
- [NA.5-8.8 Understanding Relationships Between Music, The Other Arts, and Disciplines Outside the Arts](#)
- [NA.5-8.9 Understanding Music in Relation to History and Culture](#)

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS: LANGUAGE ARTS

- [NL-ENG.K-12.1 Reading for Perspective](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.2 Reading for Understanding](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.3 Evaluation Strategies](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.4 Communication Skills](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.6 Applying Knowledge](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.7 Evaluating Data](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.8 Developing Research Skills](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.12 Applying Language Skills](#)
- [NL-ENG.K-12.9 Multicultural Understanding](#)

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS HISTORY, GRADES K-4

- [Standard 6](#): Regional Folklore and Cultural Contributions That Helped to Form Our National Heritage

#### NATIONAL STANDARDS HISTORY, GRADES 5-12

- [Era 10 Contemporary United States \(1968 to the present\)](#)
- [Standard 2](#): Economic, social, and cultural developments in contemporary United States
- [All National Arts Standards](#)
- [Background Information for the Teacher](#): The South's rich and varied culture has produced a host of legendary musicians from many different musical styles and from every state. Unlike many exhibits on Southern music, "Rhythm & Roots" is organized by themes, rather than by types or genres of music. In order to focus on musician biographies in this lesson, however, students may need an introduction to either the instruments or the genres or types of music the musicians in this lesson perform. This might best be done in a library or media center with the assistance of the school specialist or librarian, as there are many bad Web sites, as well as good ones, dealing with music, and a rich variety of print and electronic resources, documentary recordings and films. One excellent starting place for online research for upper grades is

[Smithsonian Global Sound](#), which has a searchable database for all sorts of music, online listening and informative, downloadable liner notes.

Students may not have heard of many of the musicians in this lesson and, therefore, might not consider them "legends" because in students' worlds, the people aren't "famous." [Legends](#) can exist within groups and may not be known popularly to outsiders. The term "legend" need not only refer to someone who has entered the popular canon. It is important to stress the different contributions of each individual to the cultural mix of southeastern music, even if they aren't "famous" to the students. These figures have attained legendary status because of their contributions to their musical genre, their awards and recognitions as musicians, their innovation within their traditions and their significance to future generations of musicians.

One suggested focus for this lesson is to emphasize winners of state and national heritage and governor's arts awards. The nation's highest award for traditional musicians is called the National Heritage Fellowship given by the National Endowment for the Arts. The NEA defines the National Heritage Fellowship: **"As part of its efforts to honor and preserve our nation's diverse cultural heritage, the National Endowment for the Arts annually awards one-time-only National Heritage Fellowships for master folk and traditional artists. These fellowships are intended to recognize the recipients' artistic excellence and support their continuing contributions to our nation's traditional arts heritage."** Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama have special state heritage award programs that honor musicians. These programs have biographies accessible on the Internet (see list below). Individual state's award criteria are available at the respective Web sites. Kentucky, Louisiana, Tennessee and Mississippi honor traditional musicians through Governor's Arts Award Programs (biographies are not currently accessible on the Web). There are also various specialized awards for specific regions or styles of music. Links for some of these awards are listed below. Even without special programs, every area has a musical group or musician who has a special place in local or state music tradition.

Who are the treasured musicians in your community, state, or region? In this activity, students may create "Musical Legends" or "Musical Treasures" cards using Internet research on musicians featured in the "Rhythm & Roots" exhibit or others in state and national heritage award programs. Or, they may research musicians in the local community who they feel are "musical legends" who continue a form of Southern roots music.

## SOURCES OF MUSICIAN BIOGRAPHIES BY CATEGORY

### Heritage Award Recipients

#### [Alabama Folk Heritage Awards](#)

## [Florida Heritage Awards](#)

### [National Heritage Fellowships](#)

See "Recipients 1982-Present" link. Use Internet Explorer's "find" tool (under "edit" or other search tool) to find names from your state and the year of award. Review profiles by year to find a profile of a particular Heritage Fellow; National Heritage Fellows 1982-2007 ([link to PDF and to order hard copy](#))

### [North Carolina Heritage Awards, see recipient database link](#)

### [South Carolina Jean Laney Harris Folk Heritage Awards](#)

## OTHER RESOURCES

### [American Roots Music / Oral Histories](#)

### [American Routes / Interviews](#)

### [Country Music Hall of Fame](#)

### [Georgia Music Hall of Fame Inductees](#)

### [International Bluegrass Music Museum Hall of Fame Inductees](#)

### [Kentucky Music Hall of Fame](#)

### [Louisiana's Legendary Musicians: A Select List](#)

## Student Worksheets

### [Musical Legends Résumé Cards](#)

### [Constructing a Musical Legend Résumé Card](#)

## Assessment Tools

Production Rubric [page 1](#), [page 2](#)

## Evaluation Tools/Opportunities

### Summative

#### 1. [Production Rubric](#)

### Products

1. Musical Legends Cards
2. Radio Programs
3. Hallway Display
4. Web pages
5. Oral Reports
6. Musical Legends Map
7. Performing Famous Songs
8. Posters
9. Commemoration Models
10. Music Legend Memorials
11. Puppet Performances
12. Social Studies Textbook Entries
13. Musical Legends Survey
14. Spreadsheet and/or Graph of Survey Results

### **National Heritage Fellows Featured in “Rhythm & Roots”**

Dewey Balfa, Cajun fiddle, Louisiana

Clifton Chenier, zydeco accordion, Louisiana

Walker Calhoun, Cherokee music and dance, North Carolina

McIntosh County Shouters, Gullah ring shout, Georgia

Wade Mainer, old-time banjo, North Carolina

Bill Monroe, bluegrass mandolin, Kentucky

Eddie Pennington, thumbpick guitar, Kentucky

Irvan Perez, Isleno decimas, Louisiana

Jean Ritchie, Appalachian heritage, dulcimer, ballads and songs, Kentucky

Earl Scruggs, bluegrass banjo, North Carolina

Otha Turner, African American fife and drum, Mississippi

### **State Arts Award or Heritage Recipients Featured in “Rhythm & Roots”**

Jennings Chesnut, mandolin maker, South Carolina

James “Super Chikan” Johnson, blues musician and instrument maker, Mississippi

Snuffy Jenkins, old-time banjo, South Carolina

Bobby Henry, Seminole traditions, Florida

Willie King, blues guitar, Alabama

Konstantinos Maris, Cretan lyra, Florida

Bo McGee, blues harmonica, Alabama

Dock Rmah, Vietnamese music, North Carolina

## Early Innovators Featured in “Rhythm & Roots” “Early Innovators” Panel

Dewey Balfa, Cajun fiddle, Louisiana  
Birmingham (Alabama) Quartet Sound  
Clifton Chenier, zydeco accordion, Louisiana  
Thomas A. Dorsey , gospel music, Georgia  
Dewitt “Snuffy” Jenkins, old-time banjo, South Carolina  
Bill Monroe, bluegrass mandolin, Kentucky  
Earl Scruggs, bluegrass banjo, North Carolina  
Arnold Schultz, blues, Kentucky  
James D. Vaughan, Southern gospel, Tennessee

**To Prepare:** Visit the Web sites in **Technology Connections** above to familiarize yourself with some of the musical legends from the Southeast or your state. Think about which musicians you are familiar with and plan to use recordings in the classroom to allow students to listen to the music. Some of these musicians have recordings available online. Refer to the [glossary](#) for appropriate vocabulary to describe the musical genres (note: this glossary comes from “Louisiana Voices” and some styles specific to other regions of the Southeast or to new immigrant music will not be included here). The school librarian media specialist and music specialist may have books, recordings and equipment that will help you.

### 4th and 8th Grade Activities

1. Pique students' interest in starting research by first playing some excerpts from music by a traditional music legend from various regions in the Southeast. You can use [the Rhythm & Roots Resources List](#) for links to streamed audio and radio programs, if you don't have access to music in other formats. Before students can complete the worksheet for this lesson, they need to do research on musicians and their biographies in the classroom listening center, school library or at home and on the Web sites in Technology Connections above. Students who don't know any legends can choose from the list above. If these sources are written above your students' reading ability, refer to the [Adaptation Strategies](#) for ways to adapt and modify them to levels that students can understand.

2. The [Musical Legends Résumé Cards](#) worksheet helps students understand exactly what a "legend" is, and provides two examples of what makes a traditional musician legendary. It also gives them a format to interpret information that they find. Students can make their own charts with names and accomplishments of legendary figures they have researched by following the directions on the [Constructing a Musical Résumé Card](#) worksheet. NOTE: “Important Recordings” may not be an appropriate category for many heritage award winners. You may wish to change this or add another category, such as “Instrument Plays” or some other category of your choice.

Technology Option: See the [Louisiana Greats Trading Cards](#) for a similar activity and instructions for making a trading card. Although this card is set up for Louisiana Greats, it can easily be adapted to any state or the entire southeastern region. Display cards on

a wall or bulletin board with an appropriate map. Attach a string from each card to the corresponding town in Louisiana (or other state) of the artist's origin.

3. After they have researched legends, have students prepare a summative activity that shares their results with others. Examples could include a radio program, hallway display, Web page, oral report, or written paragraph.

4. Use the [Production Rubric](#) to evaluate performances for one or more of the suggested activities in this lesson. After introducing an activity, such as producing a radio program, writing an essay or performing a song with a puppet, review and explain the rubric, making sure students understand the performance standards. If desired, have audience members provide feedback statements on page 2 of the assessment after the production or performance.

#### 4th Grade Explorations and Extensions

1. Make your own musical legend sheets and attach them to a map, locating where the musicians come from.

2. Research the most famous recordings or songs of a chosen musician. Perform or play one of these songs for your classmates.

3. Research whether there is a local musician in the community who is considered a legend and whether the community has commemorated him or her with a plaque, statue, exhibit, hall of fame, museum, festival or event. Create your own poster, presentation, model or Web site representing the significance of the monument or commemoration. Research whether other communities have commemorated their local musical legends.

4. Design a town memorial for your favorite traditional music legend. Which town would it go in? Where would you put it? What would it be made of? Would you charge admission? How would you raise money to commemorate the musical legend? You may create a drawing, model or plan for your memorial, or you may design a Web site.

5. Make a puppet of one of these legends, and perform a song using the puppet.

#### 8th Grade Explorations and Extensions

1. Design and conduct a survey to see how many students in your school have heard of these musicians. You may also survey school personnel, family members and other adults. Tabulate results in graph form or on a spreadsheet. How would you increase people's knowledge of these musicians and their importance to musical and social history? Students can learn how to sort and tabulate results on the [Spreadsheet Directions](#) worksheet.

2. Design a Web site for your favorite musician.

3. Use the [Production Rubric](#) to evaluate performances for one or more of the suggested activities in this lesson. After introducing an activity, such as producing a radio program, writing an essay or performing a song with a puppet, review and explain the rubric, making sure students understand the performance standards. If desired, have audience members provide feedback statements on page 2 of the assessment after the production or performance.