



For Immediate Release

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Louisiana Dance halls on Display for Festivals Acadiens et Créoles 2016

Exhibit, symposium and film to focus on Cajun dance hall and Zydeco clubs, along with the musicians who played them, as part of the official FAetC lineup Oct. 13-16.

Lafayette, LA, July 12, 2016 - Each year, Festivals Acadiens et Créoles honors some aspect or person that has made a significant impact on our culture. For 2016, the dance hall is getting its due. While the festival's music schedule always includes local bands known to pack the floors at area dance halls, a photography exhibit and symposium will further explore these places and their importance in our culture.

John “Pudd” Sharp classifies a dance hall as a place where bands played and people danced. “That’s good enough for me,” he says. Sharp is responsible for the The Louisiana Dancehalls Project, which serves as a central place to find information via LouisianaDancehalls.com. While working for the Center for Louisiana Studies, Sharp discovered dance hall songs like “Hicks Wagon Wheel Special” and “Pine Grove Blues” in the archives. “These songs, you hear them quite a bit, and I thought I’d like to see what these places looked like,” he says.

Photos and information on the state's dance halls were scarce, so Sharp began compiling what he could find as part of a fun side project. Almost 1,700 dance halls later, and he's still going. Along with photographer Philip Gould, whose book *Ghosts of Good Times* about dance halls past and present will be published by UL Press in September, Sharp is curating an exhibit at A. Hays Town House at the Paul and Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum titled “Cajun Dance Hall & Zydeco Clubs.” Opening Sept. 4 as part of Festivals' Official Poster and Pin Unveiling, the exhibit will run through Oct. 16 and feature photographs of dance halls like the Blue Moon Club in New Iberia and Slim's Y-Ki-Ki in Opelousas, along with historic artifacts, photos and documents.

Gould, who has been capturing area dance halls since 1974, says his collection of photographs combined with Sharp's artifacts “enrich one's understanding and appreciation of dance halls. They held amazing importance in terms of the community and what was going on. It was a place to unwind, it was a place to drink, dance, visit — everything.”

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Gould and Sharp will also be participating in panels during a “Cajun Dance Halls & Zydeco Clubs: Then & Now” symposium at Vermilionville on Oct. 13. Sharp's presentation "Bloody Buckets, Twice Drunk Beer, and Losers' Gumbo” — with a title that comes straight from dance hall lore — will explore what a dance hall is, where dance halls were located and their common characteristics.

Gould's presentation in conjunction with *Ghosts of Good Times* co-author Herman Fuselier and moderated by Dr. Michael Martin will recount memories and stories of South Louisiana's dance halls, followed by a booksigning.

In addition, the symposium will include a roundtable discussion on the cultural significance of dance halls from the musician's perspective and a book talk by Elista Istre, author of *All Creoles: Exploring A South Louisiana Culture, Identity, and Heritage*.

Closing out the day on Oct. 13 will be a film premiere of “First Cousins: Cajun and Creole Music in South Louisiana” by Moriah Istre at Angelle Hall. Packed dance floors and private moments with some of the region’s most beloved musicians reveal the passion so many share for Louisiana’s French culture. Inspired by Goldman Thibodeaux, “First Cousins” honors the fascinating musical heritage and enduring relationship of Cajuns and Creoles.

Istre says her project began eight years ago by filming the last performance of Walter Mouton as the house band at La Poussiere. The film uses history as a foundation to talk about the music and features such stalwarts as Thomas “Big Hat” Fields, Steve Riley, Wayne Toups, Rockin Dopsie Jr., Terry Huval, Jeffrey Broussard, Nathan Williams Sr., Lil' Nathan and D.L Menard. (A “First Cousins” event at Vermilionville on Aug. 4 from 6-10 p.m. will feature the movie trailer and live music.)

“The film is actually giving a historical and cultural context for the roots of the music and how Cajun and Creole music overlap and how they're very distinct,” Istre explains. “They're not close enough to be siblings, but they're definitely related enough to be first cousins.”

An after party will follow the film premiere and then Festivals weekend kicks off Oct. 14 with the cutting of the boudin and Lil Nate & the Zydeco Big Timers followed by Roddie Romero and the Hub City All-Stars with special guests Lil Buck and Sonny Landreth on the Festival Stage.

The official FAetC schedule will be released later this summer. Registration is now open for the Festivals Run “Tour Des Atakapas” via Eventbrite, and opportunities to become a Festival Friend and a sponsor can be found at www.festivalsacadiens.com/info/volunteer-sponsor/. Keep up with more Festivals news by following Festivals Acadiens et Créoles on Facebook at www.facebook.com/festivalacadiens/ or Twitter and Instagram @festsacadiens.

Special Events Schedule

Sept. 4-Oct. 16

Cajun Dance Hall & Zydeco Clubs

A. Hays Town House at Paul & Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum

Curated by Philip Gould and John "Pudd" Sharp

Friday, Sept. 4

Opening Reception with Official Poster and Pin Unveiling

A. Hays Town House at Paul & Lulu Hilliard University Art Museum

6-8:30 p.m.

Thursday, Oct. 13

Cajun Dance Halls & Zydeco Clubs: Then & Now Symposium

Vermilionville

9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

9 a.m.: Introductions by Dr. Michael Martin, Dr. Barry Ancelet and Pat Mould

9:15-10:15 a.m.: John "Pudd" Sharp on Bloody Buckets, Twice Drunk Beer, and Losers' Gumbo: The Louisiana Dancehalls Project

10:30-11:30 a.m.: Philip Gould and Herman Fuselier, authors of *Ghosts of Good Times* moderated by Dr. Michael Martin

11:30 a.m.-Noon: *Ghosts of Good Times* booksigning with Philip Gould and Herman Fuselier

Noon: Buffet lunch at La Cuisine de Maman

1:30-2:45 p.m.: Roundtable discussion on the cultural significance of dance halls featuring Cajun and Zydeco music from the musician's perspective with Ray Abshire, Sonny Landreth, Lil Buck and Pat Mould, moderated by Dr. Barry Ancelet

3-4 p.m.: Elista Istre, author of *All Creoles: Exploring A South Louisiana Culture, Identity, and Heritage*

4 p.m.: *All Creoles* booksigning with Elista Istre

Film Premier of First Cousins: Cajun and Creole Music in South Louisiana

Angelle Hall at UL Lafayette

7-8:30 p.m.

After Party TBA

Photo Credit: Southern Club on US 190 in Opelousas, La., 2012, ©Philip Gould.

Festivals Acadiens et Créoles presented by Capital One 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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