



# Louisiana Music: A Journey From R&b To Zydeco, Jazz To Country, Blues To Gospel, Cajun Music To Swamp Pop To Carnival Music And Beyond

*By Rick Koster*

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**Louisiana Music: A Journey From R&b To Zydeco, Jazz To Country, Blues To Gospel, Cajun Music To Swamp Pop To Carnival Music And Beyond** By Rick Koster

What is it about Louisiana that breeds and attracts musicians? There are literally hundreds of them—Dr. John, Harry Connick, Jr., Randy Newman, Trent Reznor, the Neville family, the Marsalis family—all part of a tradition going back to Louis Armstrong, Fats Domino, Professor Longhair, Jelly Roll Morton, Buddy Bolden, and Mahalia Jackson. Tackling the monumental task of surveying the lush musical landscape of the state, Rick Koster examines all of the ingredients that went into creating this hotbed of talent—the social influences, the musical traditions, the food, the drink, the *heat*—and introduces us to the stars, both local and national, who have emerged. Discover the past and present of jazz, rock, zydeco, R&B, gospel, blues, country, and straight-up rock 'n' roll; learn too about the styles unique to Louisiana, like voodoo music, swamp pop, second-line brass bands, and Mardi Gras Indian tribes. With the laid-back charm and easy appeal that defines the state, Koster has created a survey as uniquely and teeming rich with sound and story as the place itself.

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### Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Koster, journalist and author of *Texas Music*, has assembled a dizzying amount of information on the music and musicians of Louisiana, past and present. Because he covers blues, traditional jazz, rap, rock, pop, Cajun, Creole, zydeco, country, traditional folk, carnival, and voodoo music not to mention modern jazz, classical, gospel, and brass band music in fewer than 400 pages, the book suffers at times from overgeneralization. Some influential musicians (e.g., Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton) also receive short shrift. But everyone from Buddy Bolden to Britney Spears is here; and as long as the reader doesn't mind Koster's too frequent corny one-liners and use of very wide and somewhat biased brushstrokes in painting his picture of one of the most important musical regions in America, this is a serviceable overview. The bibliography includes information on contemporary artists' web sites, which hints at Koster's emphasis on modern music in the text. As a general-interest book, this is recommended for public libraries, especially those with patrons interested in travel and/or popular and folk-based musical styles. It may also be of some interest to academic libraries, but they certainly would do better with other more in-depth studies of individual musicians and genres associated with Louisiana. James E. Perone, Mount Union Coll., Alliance, OH

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From [Booklist](#)

Louisiana's diverse musical heritage requires Koster to cast a wide net. It includes brass bands, early and modern Cajun, zydeco (the "Music of Voodoo," a chapter title avers), gospel, country, classic and modern jazz, piano-based rock 'n' roll, and hip-hop. Koster spews fascinating nuggets, such as the connection between the Neville Brothers and the 1976 album by the Wild Tchoupitoulas, which made them, if they weren't already, "the most famous Mardi Gras Indian tribe of all time." Y' see, Tchoupitoulas leader George "Big Chief Jolly" Landry was the Nevilles' uncle, and the tribe's LP was the brothers' first record together (most but not all the young Nevilles were in the Meters at the time). Elsewhere, Koster limns the erstwhile Ernest Kador Jr., who as Ernie K-Doe proclaimed himself "Emperor of the World" and recorded the N.O. classic, "Mother-in-Law." Little Richard, Louis Armstrong, Leadbelly, and Trent Reznor are some of the other legends Koster treats, and an extensive bibliography rounds out this asset for popular music collections.

*Mike Tribby*

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About the Author

**Rick Koster** is a journalist and the author of *Texas Music*. He lives in New London, Connecticut.

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