

JEFFERY BROUSSARD – ARTIST STATEMENT

My name is Jeffery Broussard. I was raised in Frilot Cove, LA. My father, Delton Broussard, was a sharecropper and bandleader of Delton Broussard & The Lawtell Playboys. I grew up playing drums in his band. Over time I learned to play each of the other instruments in the band, and by my teenage years, I settled on the accordion as my favorite. My mother, Ethel Broussard, sang traditional Juré songs around the house. Even though my parents only spoke French when they didn't want me to understand them, I learned it anyway and I sing the majority of my music in French now. I am the youngest of eleven children. All of my brothers play instruments and all of my sisters sing and some of them play instruments, too.

Music is a gift that God gave me to pass on. Music is in my genes, in my blood. I inherited it from my parents. I know nothing else better to do. It is a tradition that I have been in all of my life and I want to continue carrying my Daddy's legacy. I do it because it's something that I enjoy. I do it to make people happy, and myself. I don't want our traditions to die.

I quit school after the seventh grade. When I quit school, all I did was farming and playing music, I did this to help try to make ends meet. I come from a big family and I'm not ashamed to say it, but we needed the money.

I don't only play music just to play, I play from my heart. Half of the time when I'm playing, it's like my hands leave my body, I don't even know what I am playing. Any songs that I play, I add what I think will make the melody more beautiful. There is a lot of me that goes into the music that I play, I guess you could say I am very creative.

One of the main reasons why I wanted my own band was to play traditional music. I love my music and I love my culture. I am proud and honored to be a part of it. By playing traditional music, that is my way of giving back to my community, to my culture, and to get others interested in the music, in other parts of the country, and to fulfill my Daddy's dream.

I do it to keep our traditions going because the music being played today is not traditional music. I want to continue doing what I'm doing because really there are not very many traditional musicians left. I am the only one besides Geno Delafosse who is playing traditional Zydeco music. There are only five Creole fiddlers left, that's what gave me the interest to pick up the fiddle and start playing, because I felt that it was needed.

It makes me happy to see my music make people happy. It reminds me of how things were when I was growing up. That's something that a person should never turn their back on. My goal is to make it in the music world and to keep our tradition going, to continue making people all over the world happy. Of course I enjoy playing for the older folks because that's where the music comes from, the older generation of Creoles.

I hope to get more of the younger generation interested in our music and our culture, by sticking to our roots. I'm afraid that if the music isn't done properly and correctly, that it will fade away. I wouldn't want that to happen and I am going to do whatever I can do to keep that from happening. I am teaching my children to play music, and other younger relatives.

I believe in helping other musicians. I always give people chances. I have taught many of the younger generation of Zydeco musicians and whenever I see one of them at my shows, I will always call them up on stage and give them a chance to shine. I've always been very supportive of benefits for anyone in the community. I donate my time, have been doing that all of my time. I left from Louisiana and drove to Rhode Island to do a benefit for free for victims of Hurricane Katrina. That's how much I love music and how much I love making people happy.

From the band Zydeco Force, there are lots of my songs that other bands have re-recorded, not only Zydeco musicians, but Cajun musicians, too. I feel honored that other musicians want to play my songs. That's making my music live from me – when I'm gone my music is still going to live through all of the other musicians who have learned from me.

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