Cajun Music Tribute Slated For March 26

Jimmy C. Newman, Clifton Chenier and Blackie Forestier are among the stars who will highlight the Tribute to Cajun Music at 7 p.m. March 26 in Blackham Coliseum sponsored by the Council for the Development of French in Louisiana in cooperation with the Smithsonian Institution.

Hosea Philips, honor professor of Acadian Studies at USL, will narrate the program which will be Rufus Thibodeaux, Nathan Abshire, Merlin Fontenot, Bois-sec Ardoin, the Balfa Brothers, Mark Savoie, S.D. Courville, Dennis McGee, Lionel Leleux, and Inez Catalan.

CODOFIL Chairman James Domengeaux said "It is only fitting that we pay homage to these great Louisiana musicians of the past and present who have kept the language alive through their music which is being sought and imitated all over the world today." The concert will be free to the public.

Ralph Rinzler, head of the Folklore Section of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, said Cajun music is among "the most highly original art forms in the United States."

CODOFIL hosts the program in conjunction with the Association of the French Speaking Journalists of the World meeting here.

French in Louisiana was neglected for years but says Domengeaux "The storm, which lasted a hundred years, has now passed and the language is coming out of hiding, it is finding its way back into the sunlight. It is being reintroduced in the public schools, it is being played on the radio stations, it is being heard once again on the streets of our bayou towns and villages from where it had virtually disappeared. And it is being learned avidly by those of our brethren who are not born of French-speaking ancestors."

A Montreal newspaper described Cajun music on a background of accordion rhythm: "Languid, moaning fiddles communicate a sound of great sorrow by a grating of the bow on the strings peculiar to North America. The lament is punctuated and refined by a long note of a wailing harmonica. The lyrics culminate in a shout which is both shrill and modulated, an extended shout, quasi-voluptuous, the shout of pain in liberty."