



Austin Pitre

Austin Pitre was born February 23, 1918, in the town of Ville Platte, Louisiana. His parents were Joseph Vige Pitre and Marie Aliza Pitre.

Austin's father played the fiddle and needed an accordion player to make music with him at the house dances and the *fais-do-dos*. Austin received his first accordion as a birthday present at the age of six from his father. Austin's father also built a practice fiddle for him from a cigar box.

At the age of 12, Austin was playing the accordion and fiddle. He bought his first violin by selling flower and vegetable seeds. His creative musical mind brought him into the genius realm; a real master, leader and showman for Cajun music. He was the first to play the accordion standing up without a strap. He could play the accordion over his head, behind his back, and between his knees. By the age of 20, he had his own band named "Austin Pitre and the Evangeline Playboys," who was booked to play clubs within a fifty-mile radius.

He recorded with J.D. Miller in Crowley, Louisiana, Big Mamou Records in care of Floyd's Record Shop, Harry Oster through Arholle Record Company, and Sonet Recording Company.

He had a broadcast for four years on Opelousas radio station KSLO. He also had a program on Eunice's KEUN. In the late 1960s to early 1970s he played for the "Pete Ford Hour" on KLFY in Lafayette, Louisiana.

In June of 1972, Mayor J.E. Sudduth of Lake Charles, Louisiana, presented Austin with a special award for being the first Cajun band to perform in the city's new Civic Center.

In 1974 and 1976, Austin was a guest player at the America Folklife Music Festival in Washington, D.C. March of 1981 saw Austin on tour for three weeks to different parts of the United States.

On April 8, 1981, Austin Pitre died at his home in Elton, Louisiana.