***BUCKWHEAT ZYDECO: THE BIO***

*“Stanley ‘Buckwheat’ Dural leads one of the best bands in America. A down-home and high-powered celebration, meaty and muscular with a fine-tuned sense of dynamics…propulsive rhythms, incendiary performances.”*

*--The New York Times*

American musical legend Stanley “Buckwheat” Dural Jr. (a.k.a. [**Buckwheat Zydeco**](http://www.buckwheatzydeco.com/press/)) is the preeminent ambassador of Louisiana’s zydeco music.

If you’ve gotten into zydeco music, or felt its influence, or watched the world celebrate this great aspect of Louisiana culture over the past 30+ years it’s likely been because of Buckwheat Zydeco. Many millions witnessed the excitement when Jimmy Fallon chose him to open the final episode of [***Late Night with Jimmy Fallon***](http://www.nbc.com/the-tonight-show/segments/1021): The show opened “cold” with a tight close up of Buck’s accordion, then – joined by Fallon on guitar and backed by the Roots – they kicked off a rousing rendition of “On A Night Like This.”

That song was the title track of Buckwheat Zydeco’s groundbreaking first Island Records album and was responsible for bringing the unique sound of zydeco into the musical mainstream in 1987. It was also the first major label zydeco record, and a Grammy nominee. No other zydeco artist has come close to selling as many records or exposing the music to more people around the world. The band claims the three largest selling zydeco albums of all time.

Moving in yet another new direction for zydeco music, Buckwheat Zydeco is featured on their own YouTube channel**,** [***Buckwheat’s World***](https://www.youtube.com/c/buckwheatsworld)**.** The series showcases musical performances, and present slices-of-life footage of Buck, the band and friends doing what they do in everyday life in Southwest Louisiana. *Buckwheat’s World* is helmed by Peabody-Award-winning film makers Louis Alvarez and Andrew Kolker, and longtime collaborator, Ted Fox.

In 2014, Buckwheat Zydeco was named the honoree at the Annual New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival and Foundation Gala. Past headliners at this event have included Willie Nelson, Ray Charles, B. B. King, Fats Domino, Smokey Robinson, Bonnie Raitt, Dr. John, and Little Richard. "Zydeco and All That Jazz: A Lifetime Tribute to Buckwheat Zydeco," also boasts an array of zydeco stars including Terrance Simien, C.J. Chenier, Nathan Williams, Rockin' Dopsie Jr., Rosie Ledet and Li'l Buck Sinegal paying tribute to the honoree. In 2013 Buck graced The New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival’s 2013 Congo Square Poster – *Buckwheat’s Zydeco: A Congo Square Tribute to the Spirit of Southwest Louisiana*. Over the years, the Congo Square Posters have become highly sought after collectibles.

Buckwheat Zydeco also started a new sideline as a **blogger for the Huffington Post** posting with Ted Fox. His first post called, [“Mardi Gras Is The Flip Side of the Blues,”](http://huff.to/1ngPAKw) was published in March 2014.

The band celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2009, and capped it with the release of the **Grammy Award-winning Alligator CD, *Lay Your Burden Down***. In February of 2010 the album won for Best Zydeco or Cajun Music Album. Buckwheat Zydeco had been nominated four previous times in three different categories. This was the band’s first Grammy win.

Over the course of Buckwheat Zydeco’s career, Buck has gigged with everyone from **Eric Clapton** (with whom Buckwheat also recorded) and **U2** to **The Boston Pops**. The band performed at **the closing ceremonies of the 1996 Summer Olympics** to a worldwide audience of three billion people. Buckwheat even performed at **both of President Clinton’s Inaugurals**. Recent national television appearances include **PBS’s tribute to Paul Simon** where Buck performed with Lyle Lovett; sitting in with Paul Shaffer on *The Late Show With David Letterman* (and playing “Hot Tamale Baby” for Martha Stewart); and feting Ozzie Ozbourne among other’s on VH-1’s **Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony**. Buck was recently profiled in a ten minute feature by Scott Simon, on **National Public Radio's *Weekend Edition Saturday*.** The band **has appeared six times on *Letterman****,* and on *CNN, The Today* *Show*, *MTV*, *NBC News, CBS Morning News* and many others.Stanley “Buckwheat” Dural, Jr. was born in Lafayette, Louisiana in 1947. He acquired his nickname because, with his braided hair, he looked like Buckwheat from The Little Rascals. His father was an accomplished, non-professional traditional Creole accordion player, but young Buckwheat preferred listening to and playing R&B. He became expert at the Hammond B3 organ, and by the late 1950s was backing Joe Tex, Clarence “Gatemouth” Brown and many others. In 1971 he formed Buckwheat and The Hitchhikers, a 15-piece funk and soul band. Never a traditional zydeco fan when growing up, Buckwheat nonetheless accepted an invitation in 1976 to join Clifton Chenier’s Red Hot Louisiana Band as organist. He quickly discovered the joy and power of zydeco music, and marveled at the effect the music had on the audience. “Everywhere, people young and old just loved zydeco music,” Buckwheat says. “I had so much fun playing that first night with Clifton. We played for four hours and I wasn’t ready to quit.”Buckwheat’s relationship with the legendary Chenier – to whom Buck always pays homage as the King of Zydeco – led him to take up the accordion in 1978. After woodshedding for a year, he felt ready to start his own band under the name Buckwheat Zydeco, and began his recording career with a small local label. By the mid-1980s there were more offers to perform than he could possibly accept. Recordings for Black Top and Rounder followed before Buckwheat befriended New York-based journalist Ted Fox. He championed Buckwheat Zydeco to Chris Blackwell at Island Records in 1986 and became, and remains, Buckwheat Zydeco’s manager.

Buckwheat Zydeco signed a five-record deal with Island and the first product of that relationship, On A Night Like This, produced by Fox, was nominated for a Grammy and the New York Times’ Jon Pareles named it one of the Ten Best Recordings of 1987. The success of these records kept Buckwheat Zydeco on the road and in constant demand.In 1988, **Eric Clapton** invited the band to open his North American tour as well as his 1989 twelve-night stand at London’s Royal Albert Hall. As even more doors opened, Buckwheat found himself sharing stages and/or recording with **Keith Richards, Robert Plant, Willie Nelson, Mavis Staples, David Hidalgo, Dwight Yoakam, Paul Simon, Ry Cooder** and many others, including indie music stalwarts Yo La Tengo on the soundtrack to the **Bob Dylan bio-pic, *I’m Not There***. His **music has been featured in films and television shows** ranging from *The Waterboy, The Big Easy, Fletch Lives, Hard Target, NCIS* to name a few. BET’s #1-rated show, *Comic View*, used his live version of *What You Gonna Do?* as theme music for the program’s 10th anniversary “Pardi Gras” season. He even co-wrote and performed the theme music for the PBS television series *Pierre Franey’s Cooking In America*. **Buckwheat won an Emmy** for his music in the CBS TV movie, *Pistol Pete: The Life And Times Of Pete Maravich*. Buckwheat Zydeco has played manymajor music festivals around the world, including the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, Newport Folk Festival, Summerfest, San Diego Street Scene, Bumbershoot, Montreaux Jazz Festival and countless others.

In 1994 Buckwheat Zydeco became **the first zydeco band to release a children’s record**: the beloved, lively, "Choo Choo Boogaloo." The disc features zydeco originals as well as classics such as "Iko Iko," and "Cotton Fields," and takes parents and children on a musical train tour of Louisiana. The recording won an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Award, boasts dozens of rave reviews from critics and parents, and remains one of the most acclaimed children’s albums of all time.

During the late 1990s and 2000s Buckwheat recorded for his own Tomorrow Recordings label, distributed by the Alternative Distribution Alliance, and maintained an extensive touring schedule. Along with his remarkably talented band, he brings his music to fans all over the world. He won further critical acclaim for albums released on this label. *Trouble*, released in 1998, was called by *People Magazine*, “A propulsive, rollicking, swamp-boogie joy ride.”

The band’s first and only live album, *Buckwheat Zydeco: Down Home Live!*, was released in 2001. As the cover story and lead review in *Blues Access* said: "The good-natured energy that literally pops off of this disc immediately makes you wish you had witnessed the show in person…catches not only every feel-good note but the essential ‘vibe’ of the evening as well…it’s impossible to resist being caught up in the sheer sense of fun and release that *Buckwheat Zydeco: Down Home Live!* draws you into."

2005’s *Jackpot!* took the Bayou State native’s Creole-French rave-ups and soulful breakdowns to new heights worldwide. “Buck has never sounded better, said New Orleans’ *Offbeat*. “As entertaining as any album he's made,” claimed *downbeat*.

*The Washington Post* called it “an accordion-driven party starter, ” and *The Boston Herald*,

“Sizzling...an incandescent album.”

*Offbeat* called the Grammy-winning, *Lay Your Burden Down* “the band’s most adventurous disc yet,” upon its release in 2009. Guests include Sonny Landreth, Warren Haynes, Steve Berlin of Los Lobos (who also produced), JJ Grey and New Orleans’ phenom: Trombone Shorty. It received some of the best reviews of 2009 for a roots/blues album. ***Living Blues* said, "the results are stunning."** *Blues Revue* wrote the album "is as steeped in blues as in the joyous Louisiana soul at the heart of this outstanding, wonderfully diverse set." *Sonicboomers.com*, which named it an "Album Of The Week," called it "a vastly entertaining and appealingly diverse package." *Allmusic.com* says: "Dural's most accomplished and mature album yet…He has given us an album that works both at the dance party and still rings clear the next day when maybe it's time to dig deeper and do a little thinking. **It's the best kind of musical synthesis.**" As *Living Blues* said, "The entire work is **a vibrant testament to Buckwheat Zydeco's spirit**, reminding us that Louisiana's musical heritage has taken all the hurricanes could give. This is an album that can introduce a new generation of music fans to the world of zydeco music and serve as a wonderful reminder about what a great zydeco band can do."

November 2, 2010 saw the release on Music For Little People of, *Buckwheat Zydeco’s Bayou Boogie* – the long-awaited follow up to *Choo Choo Boogaloo*. *Buckwheat Zydeco’s* *Bayou Boogie* features the Grammy Award®-winner in a family dance party collection from the bayou featuring children’s music superstars Laurie Berkner and Dan Zanes, along with Music for Little People label mates Aaron Nigel-Smith and Maria Muldaur.

After *Choo Choo Boogaloo* came out, Bucks says he hears all the time from fans young and old that “I wore that album out when I was a kid” or “that’s how I got into zydeco music” or “we couldn’t get in the car without my children asking me to put on Choo Choo.” Nothing makes him happier than hearing that, and bringing the joys of zydeco to fans all over the world.

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Buckwheat’s World YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/c/buckwheatsworld>

Buckwheat Zydeco official website: [www.buckwheatzydeco.com](http://www.buckwheatzydeco.com)

Buckwheat Zydeco on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BuckwheatZydeco>

Buckwheat Zydeco on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/buckwheatzydeco>

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