



Jo-El Sonnier

Jo-El Sonnier was born in Rayne, Louisiana, October 2, 1946, to French speaking sharecroppers.

He began playing his brother's accordion when he was three years old. By the time he was six years old he had earned his own fifteen minute radio show in Crowley, Louisiana. As he grew his love for music increased as well as his ability with the accordion. Singing only in French his Cajun heritage was evident. When he was eleven years old he recorded his first record, "*T Yeux Bleu.*" In 1984, Rounder Records released Sonnier's, "Cajun Life," an album of traditional material that earned for him a Grammy Award nomination. He received Grammy nominations in 1997 for his album, "Cajun Pride," and in 2001, "Cajun Blood," best Traditional Folk Album. Jo-El's most famous song is "Tear Stained Letter."

In 1995 Jo-El was awarded "Male Vocalist of the Year" and won "Song of the Year" by the Cajun French Music Association. At the "Golden Music Awards," Jo-El was awarded "Male Vocalist of 1999." and the "Song of the Year" for "Here to Stay," which he co-wrote.

In addition to being an accomplished musician and song writer he plays the accordion, bass guitar, acoustic guitar, drums and harmonica. He continues to record and perform his traditional French music to Crowds around the world. He has played to audiences through out North and South America and Europe.

Jo-el's culture is of utmost importance to him and he continues to record music to give back to his people insuring his heritage doesn't die.