

Cajun music and culture on tour in China

March 31, 2014 10:00 AM New Wave staff
newwave@tulane.edu

Public radio's "[American Routes](#)" has organized the first-ever tour by a Louisiana French band to mainland China. Jesse LÃ©ge, Joel Savoy & Cajun Country Revival are performing April 11-12 at American Cultural Centers, U.S. Consulates and clubs in Guangzhou, Harbin, Nanjing and Shanghai. [Nick Spitzer](#), "American Routes" producer and professor of American studies and anthropology at Tulane University, is artistic director.



Fiddler Joel Savoy and accordionist Jesse LÃ©ge are Louisiana Cajuns who are touring China. LÃ©ge has played and sung French songs for over 40 years in Gulf Coast dance halls, and Savoy has won one Grammy Award and seven nominations. (Photo by Mike Melnyk)

Cajun Country Revival includes fiddler and guitar player Stephen "Sammy" Lind and bassist and singer Nadine Landry.

In addition to the musical performances, Spitzer will conduct oral history workshops and give lectures on French Louisiana culture. Cajun filmmaker Conni Castille will show and discuss her documentaries *I Always Do My Collars First*, a film about ironing, and *T-Galop: A Louisiana Horse Story*.

Spitzer says of the Cajun music and culture tour, "Our American Routes Abroad series is 'vernacular cultural diplomacy.' It brings great traditional artists from diverse American communities to China and elsewhere. It's gratifying to see Chinese audiences react to American traditional cultures."

In May, the Campbell Brothers, masters of the sacred steel guitar, will tour China under the auspices of American Routes Abroad.

"American Routes," produced at Tulane University, received a Taiji award from the Chinese Conservatory of Music for preservation and presentation, and previously organized U.S.-China exchange programs with a cowboy band, traditional New Orleans jazz and seminars on comparative cultural policy.

The tour is supported by the U.S. State Department, the National Endowment for the Arts, Tulane University and the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation. U.S. audiences will be able to hear the results on future "American Routes" programs.