

SE Texas bursts with music talent

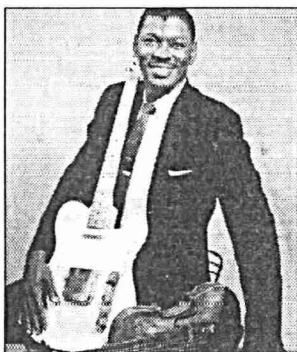
With a Grammy nomination this year, C.J. Chenier joins the illustrious list of area artists who have been recognized nationally for their music.

Among the award-winning musicians who have drummed up local pride are these — a mix of genres, ages and instrument choices. The common thread is their incredible talent.



Marcia Ball

Ball, an R&B artist from Orange, has been nominated five times for the Grammy with the latest one this year for her album "Roadside Attractions." She has won eight Blues Music Awards.



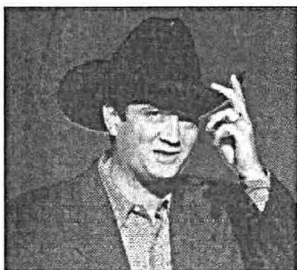
Clarence 'Gatemouth' Brown

Brown was born in Vinton, La., but grew up in Orange. He returned to Orange after 2005's Hurricane Katrina destroyed his home in Slidell, La., and died about a month later. His music styles range from blues and country to jazz, Cajun music and R&B. He won a Grammy in 1982 for his album "Alright Again."



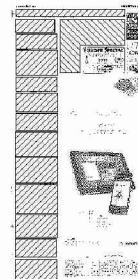
Kim Burrell

Houston's Burrell is nominated for a Grammy for her gospel album "The Love Album." Her fusion of jazz and gospel won her a Gospel Music Excellence Award and a Stellar Award in 2000.



Tracy Byrd

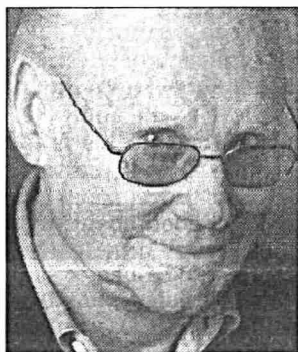
Vidor-born Beaumont resident and country crooner Byrd was discovered at age 20 while singing a cover of Hank Williams' "Your Cheatin' Heart." He won an Academy of Country Music Award in 1996 for his song "The Keeper of the Stars."





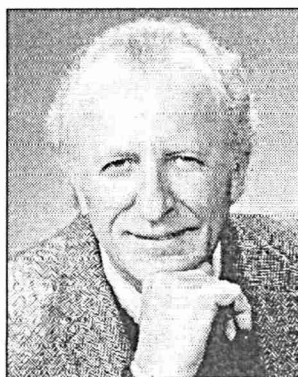
Mark Chesnutt

Chesnutt's music has made the Billboard Hot Country Songs charts multiple times through his decades-long career. The Beaumonter won the CMA Horizon Award in 1993, which recognized him as best new artist that year.



George Jones

Another Vidorian, Jones has made headlines for his wild antics offstage but is notable for his long country music career. Jones has won Grammys, Country Music Awards and Academy of Country Music Awards, was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1992 and was honored at the Kennedy Center in 2008.



Bob McDill

A graduate of Lamar University, McDill has written songs for country hotshots ranging from Alan Jackson to Waylon Jennings and Jerry Lee Lewis. Co-written by McDill, Pam Tillis's "All the Good Ones Are Gone" won a Grammy in 1998. McDill, who is from Walden, was also named Nashville Songwriters Association Songwriter of the Year in 1985.



Maurice Woodward 'Tex' Ritter

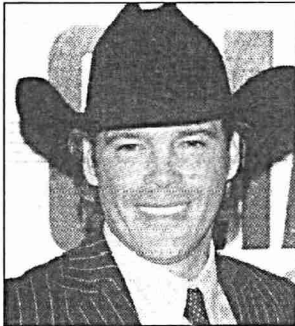
A South Park High School alum, the Murvaul-born and Nederland-raised Ritter sang the songs and played the part of the Old Western cowboy. The actor and singer won an Oscar for "High Noon" in 1953. The ACM's "Tex Ritter Award" now is given to major motion pictures that display or use country music. He was the father of actor John Ritter.

**Percy Sledge**

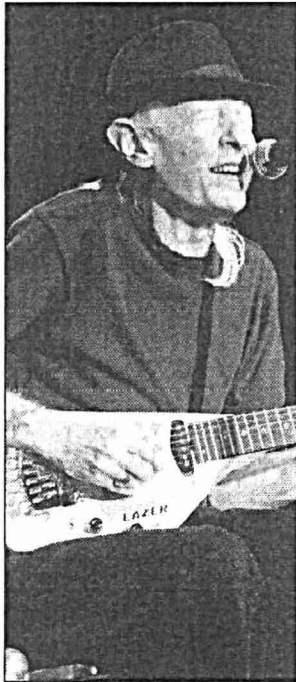
Although born in Leighton, Ala., Sledge has lived in Baton Rouge since the 1960s and frequently plays Beaumont events. The R&B and soul artist is best known for his hit, "When a Man Loves a Woman," along with a slew of other love songs. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005.

**Billy Joe 'B.J.' Thomas**

Thomas, who is from Hugo, Okla., won the Oscar for Song of the Year in 1968 for what might be the best weather-related song ever, "Raindrops Keep Falling on My Head." Although born in Oklahoma, Thomas was raised in Houston.

**Clay Walker**

We're back to Vidor. Popular country music artist Walker won the Radio & Records' Best New Male Artist when he debuted in 1993. Since then, he has made the Billboard dozens of times and been nominated for the Academy of Country Music award and American Music Awards.



Photos from Enterprise files, the Museum of the Gulf Coast and The Associated Press

John 'Johnny' Dawson Winter III and Edgar Holland Winter

Johnny Winter has produced three Grammy-winning albums for blues musician Muddy Waters as well being nominated for several Grammys for his other albums. In 1988, Winter was inducted into the Blues Hall of Fame. His younger brother, Edgar,

has 20 of his own albums and has been involved in collaborative efforts as well. His work spans the genres of rock, jazz, blues and pop and he has twice been nominated for Grammys. The two grew up in Beaumont, where they attended Beaumont High School.

— Julie Chang/The Enterprise