

BEAUSOLEIL

Allons a Lafayette



1. ALLONS A LAFAYETTE
2. TOUS LES DEUX
POUR LA MEME
3. PAUVRE HOBO
4. MON VIEUX WAGON
5. LA JOLIE BLONDE
6. JOHNNY CAN'T DANCE
7. J'AI ETE AU ZYDECO
8. LES BLUES A CANRAY
9. J'AI MARIE UN OUVRIER
10. LA VALSE DU VACHER
11. LA TABLE RONDE
12. SHOO, BLACK
13. CANRAY'S
BREAKDOWN
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BALFA
16. LA VALSE DES
JONGLEMONTS
17. LE BAL A
CHATAIGNIER

#1 - 13: Michael Doucet - fiddle & vocals; David Doucet - guitar (and vocal on #2); Errol Verret - accordion; Tommy Comeaux - mandolin & guitar; Sonny Landreth - dobro & slide guitar; Billy Ware - percussion; Tommy Alesi - drums; Tina Pilione - bass; Canray Fontenot - fiddle & vocals on #8, 11, 12, & 13. Recorded in Crowley, La. June 15, 1985.

#14 - 17: Michael Doucet - fiddle & vocals; David Doucet - guitar; Billy Ware - triangle & spoons; Robert Vignaud - bass; Errol Verret - accordion. Recorded in Lafayette and Eunice, La. May 19 & 20, 1981.

#8, 11, 12, & 13: composed by Canray Fontenot and © by Tradition Music Co. (BMI). All other titles arranged by Michael Doucet and © by Tradition Music Co. (BMI).

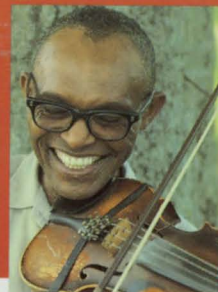
Produced by Chris Strachwitz & Michael Doucet.

Cover photos by Elemore Morgan, Jr.
Cover by Elizabeth Weil

#13 previously unreleased; all other selections were originally issued on Arhoolie LP/C 5025 and 5036.

Beausoleil

ALLONS A LAFAYETTE & MORE AVEC CANRAY FONTENOT



Over 60 Minutes of
CLASSIC
CAJUN
MUSIC



BEAUSOLEIL

“Allons A Lafayette” & More with Canray Fontenot

Michael Doucet was born in Scott, Louisiana, near Lafayette, on February 14, 1951. His interest in both the past and future possibilities for Cajun music and culture in modern south Louisiana is unique and important. This area is a region of the United States that is filled with contrasts between the way things were and the way things appear to be going. South Louisianans have seen their French-speaking population and cultural traditions dwindle as the vast marsh, swamp and prairie landscape is increasingly utilized—some would say brutalized—for oil and natural gas exploration and petrochemical production in lieu of the subsistence and commercial fishing and trapping and farming of the first half of the century. One is tempted to compare south Louisiana with the Brazil in “Tristes Tropiques” as described by Claude Lévi-Strauss, where the Jungle and native

cultures are confronted by the bulldozer and mass society. Yet, despite the new problems of boomtown economies, water and air pollution and rapid cultural change, one takes heart in little things: the fact that all 7-11’s in south Louisiana seem to sell boudin (rice and pork sausage). French ethnicity and language are no longer universally sources of shame or insecurity, and most relevant here, Cajun music in all forms has made a great comeback and can be widely heard in dancehalls and on the radio.

As a musician, Michael is in a unique position as part of the first generation of Cajuns highly literate in English, yet also affected through their families by the folk tradition. Well into the twentieth century, literacy in French was available through Catholic schools to the children of planters, substantial farmers and merchants. However, rural Louisiana Cajuns

and Creoles were usually not taught to read and write the language. The formalized transition to English, with corollary discouragement of oral French, reached its peak during the advent of widespread public schooling in the Twenties and Thirties and continued until the late Sixties. It is hard to find a person in the thirty and over age bracket today who does not have a horror story about being punished for speaking French on the public school grounds. Even where French was taught in the schools, there was often a split between local usage and what was considered appropriate grammatical usage. Michael, who learned French from his grandmother and great aunt, commented on the problems at school. “Even in high school when we were learning Parisian French, there was always this conflict about how you said something. They were always putting you down. To me it was an oral language and not a written language. Learning to read and write is fine, but being Cajun shouldn’t mean putting up walls. I’d learn one thing in school and

go speak to someone at Grandmother’s house and it wouldn’t be the same at all.”

Yet Doucet was brought up between the persistence of a folk culture and the growth of a literate society, and as such, he is very different from many musicians of previous generations. Rather than being isolated in one community with access to the oral tradition of one or two master musicians or, at best, the 78’s of Cajun music recorded in the Thirties, he has grown up at a time when the music has been marketed extensively on records, radio and TV in south Louisiana. Thus, he has had the opportunity to learn in person from a variety of recognized “old masters” such as Dennis McGee, Will, Rodney, and Dewey Balfa, Canray Fontenot, and Hector Duhon and “younger masters” like Marc Savoy. He has also listened to the 78’s of Amédé Ardoin and Leo Soileau, among others. Perhaps most important, he has been able to seek out the relatively unknown violin masters throughout the region, such as Bé Bé and Calvin Carrière. Varise Connor, and

Bradford Gordon through his own fieldwork. In addition to his research into the music, Michael also had the influence of oral folk tradition in his childhood days. He heard, for example, Lawrence Walker of nearby Duson and the great Octa Clark of Justice community just south of Scott (both are accordion players).

On his mother's side of the family, Michael learned the classical and popular traditions of music. On his father's side, he counts Uncle T-Will Knight as a key influence. Uncle Will was a fiddler, but he encouraged Michael to play banjo and then guitar. Michael's sister Paulette was interested in the American folk music revival movement, and this had an effect as well. A particularly important friend and fellow musician has been Bessyl Duhon. Duhon played traditional Cajun music with his father, Hector, in Octa Clark's Dixie Ramblers. Bessyl also played Fifties Gulf Coast boogie with a series of bands from the Riff-Raffs to the Swing Kings and was in some ways Lafayette's first musically eclectic Cajun rocker with folk roots.

It was later with Bessyl and others that Michael would play in the incredibly creative and regionally popular band, Coteau.

In high school, aside from playing the requisite marching band music, Michael continued to form musical ideas in collaboration and competition with Ralph Zachary Richard. Michael and Zachary had played together since age 12 and formed the Bayou Drifter Band in the early Seventies. In New York in 1974 the band recorded an LP for Electra that was not released. In the same year they went to France. Michael was particularly interested in the French folk music movement and was shocked and delighted to find various American expatriates such as Roger Mason and Steve Waring as well as French musicians like Michel Hindenoch and the group Grandmère Funibus Folk, all with an interest in Cajun music. "At this time Louisiana was a virtual desert for young people seeking antiquarian creativeness in Cajun music, so it blew my mind to hear a band in France with six fiddles playing "Jolie Blonde." Zachary and Michael

split musically at this point, as Zachary was interested in fronting a French rock band. He later became popular in Canada as a French purveyor of rock and roll with some Louisiana trimmings and a lot of Mick Jagger influence. After further inspiration and encouragement from British traditionalists Robin and Barry Dransfield, Michael decided to go back to Louisiana. "I saw the parallel of the English-speaking peoples' folk music and realized you had to play what you want and feel and not have a complex about not playing typical American Appalachian or Western Swing." Back in Louisiana Michael joined up with Bessyl Duhon and Kenneth Richard to form Beusoleil and to play his own brand of revival "black and tan" Cajun music. Shortly thereafter another group also emerged, with some members from Beusoleil, called Coteau. Beusoleil was popular at folk festivals, in small clubs in the United States and on the Canadian and European folk scene (they went to France in 1976 as part of the France-Louisiana Bien Aimée Cultural exchange). However, it was Coteau—

the first "cosmic Cajun" band to fuse traditional Cajun music with hardcore Gulf Coast rock—that brought the young south Louisiana crowds back into dancehalls like Boo Boo's in Breaux Bridge and Jay's Lounge in Cankton. The band was anchored to tradition by Bessyl Duhon, who sang and played violin. The other side of the group was more rock and country oriented. In the words of one observer at the time, "Coteau sounds like a 17th-century band playing 21st-century music." Suddenly tradition seemed avant-garde. Despite great regional acclaim, the disappointment of unconsummated record deals and the group's internal pressures toward musical diversity blew the lid off the pot, and Coteau disbanded in 1977. Beusoleil, however, the traditional musical alter ego of Coteau, persisted.
(Nick Spitzer-1981)

Canray Fontenot has long been hailed as the greatest black Louisiana Creole fiddler of our time. His infectious smile has appeared on countless festival

posters, Louisiana travel brochures, and even in Newsweek magazine as the epitome of a minstrel fiddler possessed by the nebulous power of music. His saga, however, is not an easy one for him to tell.

Canray constructed his first violin at the age of nine. It was a cigar box with strings fashioned from a new screen door and a hickory branch with horse-tail hair for his bow. As Canray tells it, "Nonc Adam (Canray's father) was a hard man to please musically because you had to play everything so exact. One day I was playing my fiddle behind the house when he turned the corner, stopped, and asked me where did I get that contraption? I told him that I had made it myself. He was kind of shocked because I had always gone some place alone when I was learning. But he assured me if I could play a tune he would get me a real fiddle. He must have liked the sounds, although I'm sure he was real surprised hearing a melody coming out of that cigar box! Anyway, he traded three dozen eggs and one sack of flour to Deo Langley, a real fine In-

dian fiddler, for a bright red fiddle. After about a year I started sitting in with my father and Alphonse Lafleur, my old pop's fiddler who really showed me how to second the accordion."

Canray's parents both passed away when he was barely fourteen. Adam chose not to record his music or leave any earthly account of his stay thus limiting his teenage son to be his only musical legacy. Canray took it upon himself to leave school to find work to support himself, put his younger sister through school, and further his musical inheritance by continuing to play the French dances inspired by his father.

Canray remembers playing twin fiddles with Joel Victorian, his mother's father, who encouraged the young fiddler to continue their family's string-music tradition. "You know, I first started my string band in the late '30s with George Lenard and Paul Frank. We would play a lot and not just French, everything we heard like boogie-woogie, western swing, some jazz, tunes that would make everybody happy. Blues? Oh, not too much because

they weren't allowed with the 'respectable' people at the house dances, but we would play a couple at the saloons."

Around this period, Canray teamed up with his longtime friend, accordionist Alphonse "Bois-Sec" Ardion who, in his own right, had also digested the music of Nonc Adam, Amédé Ardoin, and other musicians of the community. Together they put their own ingredients into the old-time music and forged their own style which was heard throughout Southwest Louisiana via their "live" radio broadcasts from KEUN in Eunice into the late 1950s. Many times they shared dance jobs with the Zydeco musicians, Clifton and Cleveland Chenier at Freeman Fontenot's place in rural Basile. Later, through the field research done in the early sixties by Ralph Rinzler, Canray and Bois-Sec were invited to the Newport Festival in 1966 and consequently made their first recordings on their way home.

Michael and Beausoleil relished the honor of playing with Canray Fontenot. In 1984 they played to a sold-out house at New York's Carnegie Hall. Michael

also played mandolin or guitar on Canray's (Arhoolie 5031) album and both are seen in the Brazos Films documentary on Cajun & Zydeco music: "J'ai Ete Au Bal" (I Went To The Dance) available on video from Arhoolie Records.

(Michael Doucet)

Many songs can be found in Ann Savoy's superb book: "Cajun Music—A Reflection of a People" (Bluebird Press—Box 941—Eunice, LA 70535).

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2. TOUS LES DEUX POUR LA MEME
(For The Same Girl)

Both of us are for the same girl
Neither me nor you will have her
Both are for the same girl
Neither me nor you will have her
It's no use for you to say no
You'll always have to say yes
It's no use for you to cause me sorrow,
You will still have to marry me.

I left the house
With my jug hanging from my saddle horn
The pistol in my pocket
And my life in my hand
I left to look for you
To bring you to the house
It's no use to say no
You'll always have to say yes

Transcriptions and translations by Ann Allen Savoy
from her "Cajun Music: A Reflection of a People"
(Eunice, La. Bluebird Press, 1985).

4. MON VIEUX WAGON
(My Old Wagon)

When I was young, yes, I used to go to the dance
I went to the dance once a week
I went to the dance every Saturday night
I went to the dance in my old wagon.

When I was young, I went to the dance
I went to the dance to find myself a girl
Made love for three hours at a time
We got married forty years ago.

We got married on a Saturday
We went to the dance that Saturday night
We had fun till the break of day
Then I took her home in my old wagon.
I went there in my old wagon.

Transcriptions and translations by Sharon Arms
Doucet.

8. LES BLUES A CANRAY
(Canray's Blues)

Oh, I've only loved one little woman
Her name was Lorida
I did everything I could,
But Lorida was no good.
She made me work for years.
She got all that I had
She took me for a good car,
I bought her a new car
Then she took my automobile
And went running around with one after another,
Lorida, Lorida

There was just one thing in the neighborhood
She took everything I had,
She bought a donkey,
She paid fifteen dollars for a donkey,
Now Lorida is gone,
She left me with just a donkey.

She played around with all my friends,
She lied, oh how she lied!

Everyday's the same now
I'm all alone and Lorida's gone.
Hey, Lorida, there will come a day
When you're gonna cry,
You'll ask for your old man
And you, you'll be way too late.

Now me, I've met a lot of women
But the way you treated me,
I only mistrust one woman
I always think she's going to hurt me.

Transcriptions and translations by Sharon Arms
Doucet.

9. J'AI MARIE UN OUVRIER
(I Married A Carpenter)

(She) I married a carpenter
I who was such a spirited girl
But it was just to escape
Without getting into trouble.

(He) Then leave your working husband
And come along with me
Come along with me
To the banks of the Tennesseee

(She) To the banks of the Tennesseee?
And how will you support me?

(He) I have three big ships
That sail the seas
That sail the seas
And thus you won't have to work.

At the end of three days,
Three days and three weeks,
The beauty began to cry
For want of her family.

(He) Don't cry, my beauty,
I'll buy you a dress of yellow silk
I'll buy you a dress of yellow silk
That will be the color of gold and silver.

(She) I'm not crying for your gold
Not for your gold or for your silver,
I'm crying for my family
That I've left far behind.

(He) I'm leaving today, my beauty,
And when this ship disappears
Oh, there will be a mainsail
Never to be seen again.

On the banks of the Tennesseee,
You'll kiss your dear little baby,
Oh, you will kiss it
Never to be seen again.

Translations by Sharon Arms Doucet.

11. LA TABLE RONDE
(The Round Table)

Drink three rounds around the table,
Drink three rounds around the table.

Let's go find, find, find, find, find
Something to entertain ourselves with, like old friends
Something to entertain ourselves with, like old friends
Let's go find, find, find, find.

One of our biggest drunkards was sick in bed,
So put him under a table full of glasses
And pour him a drop from time to time.

Let's go find, find, find, find.

A poured drop is to satisfy him,
A poured drop is to satisfy him.

Let's go find, find, find, find....

Transcriptions and translations by Sharon Arms
Doucet.

12. SHOO, BLACK

Shoo, Black (hog)! Shoo, Black!
Shoo, Salmas Bertrand's black hog.
Be quiet, be quiet,
Be quiet with Grandpa's billygoats.

Charles Hebert is hiding in the mosquito net,
(He's) watching our stags, he's watching through the net,
Be quiet, be quiet, be quiet with Grandpa's billygoats.

Shoo, Black! Shoo, Black!
Shoo, Salmas Bertrand's black hog.
Be quiet, be quiet,
Be quiet with Grandpa's billygoats.

(This song is about a thief, Charles Hebert, who is trying
to steal Salmas Bertrand's black hogs and Grandpa's
billygoats.)

Transcriptions and translations by Sharon Arms Doucet.

14. DONNEZ MOI PAULINE

O yaie, donnez-moi Pauline
O Pauline, c'est la seule que moi j'aimais.
O Pa Janvier, donnez-moi Pauline
O 'tite Pauline, elle est la plus belle.

O dis pas ça si tu va la mettre dans un couvent
Chère bébé, comment je va faire moi tout seul?
Mais dans un couvent il faudra prier au bon Dieu
Au bon Dieu ça va faire
Tous les jours et toutes les nuits.

O Pa Janvier, donnez-moi Pauline
O tu connais bien, c'est la seule que moi je peux avoir.
O dis pas ça, Pauline n'est pa là
Ouais, dans la terre, ouais trois jours, 'y a pas
longtemps.

O joline, comment je va faire tout seul?
Chère Pauline, t'es enterrée
O yé yaie, comment je va faire?
O bon soir, bon soir, chers 'tits yeux noirs
Pauline, je suis pour toi
Si enterrée, je t'aime quand même.

14. GIVE ME PAULINE

O yaie, give me Pauline
O Pauline, she's the only one I've ever loved.
O Pa Janvier, give me Pauline
O Pauline, she's the most beautiful of all.

Oh, don't say that you're going to put her in a convent
Babe, what would I do all alone?
In a convent you must pray to the good Lord
Pray to the good Lord
Every day and every night.

O Pa Janvier, give me Pauline
O you well know, she's the only one for me.
Oh, don't say that, Pauline's not there
In the ground, three days isn't long.

O my beauty, how will I make it alone?
Dear Pauline, you're buried
O yé yaie, what will I do?
Good night, good night, dear little black eyes
Pauline, I'm yours
Even if you're buried, I love you anyway.

15. TWO-STEP A WILL BALFA 15. WILL BALFA TWO-STEP

Chère bébé, t'as fait du mal
O yaie, quoi t'as fait?
Tu étais la après danser
Avec un autre tu va tomber
Chère bébé, j'ai pour toi,
Toute ma vie je t'espérais
Oui, si tu veux m'aimer
O yaie, ça fait frémir.

O yé yaie, mon coeur fait mal
A cause de toi, ma chère Joline.
Pourquoi t'as, t'as fait du mal?
O yaie, fais pas ça.

O bébé, la plus jolie
Moi je voudrais juste de dire
Si tu veux danser avec moi
O bébé, c'est ça fait bien.
Hé Will!

17. LE BAL À CHATAIGNIER

Chère bébé oublie ça
Tout j'ai dis asteur fâché
Oui j'ai fâché ouais après toi
Chère bébé tu maltraité
Oui t'as dansé toute la nuit
Avec un autre, pourquoi t'as fait?
Oui t'as jamais répondu
Chère bébé, je peux pas oublier.

Gardez donc, oui bébé
Ouais tout ça t'as maltraité
Si tu veux aller avec moi
Peut-être je va te pardonner
O bébé, oui bébé
Tu connais je va t'aimer toujours
Chère bébé, la plus jolie
Pourquoi t'as pas dansé avec
moi?

Babe, you've done me wrong
Oh yaie, what have you done?
You were there dancing
With another, you're going to roll
Babe, I'm yours
All my life I've waited for you
Yes, if you'll love me
Oh yaie, it makes me shiver.

O yé yaie, my heart aches
Because of you, dear Joline.
Why have you done me wrong?
O yaie, don't do that.

Oh darling, the prettiest of all
I just want to tell you
If you want to dance with me
Oh babe, that makes it all right.

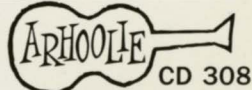
17. CHATAIGNIER BALL

Babe, don't forget
Everything I just said, angry
Yeah, I'm mad at you
Babe, you've done me wrong.
Yes, you danced all night
With someone else, why did you do it?
Yeah, you never answered me
Babe, I can't forget it.

Look, baby
How you've mistreated me
If you want to come with me
Maybe I'll forgive you
Oh babe, oh babe
You know I'll always love you
Babe, the prettiest of all
Why didn't you dance with me?

Beausoleil

ALLONS A LAFAYETTE & More with Canray Fontenot



Over 60 Minutes of Classic CAJUN MUSIC

1. **Allons A Lafayette** (Let's Go To Lafayette)
2. **Tous Les Deux Pour La Meme** (For The Same Girl)
3. **Pauvre Hobo** (Poor Hobo)
4. **Mon Vieux Wagon** (My Old Wagon)
5. **La Jolie Blonde**
6. **Johnny Can't Dance**
7. **J'ai Ete Au Zydeco** (I Went To The Zydeco)
8. **Les Blues A Canray**
9. **J'ai Marie Un Ouvrier** (I Married A Carpenter)
10. **La Valse Du Vacher** (Cowboy Waltz)
11. **La Table Ronde** (The Round Table)
12. **Shoo, Black**

13. **Canray's Breakdown**
14. **Donnez Moi Pauline** (Give Me Pauline)
15. **Two Step A Will Balfa**
16. **La Valse Des Jonglemonts** (The Pensive Waltz)
17. **Le Bal A Chataignier** (The Dance at Chataignier)

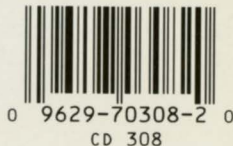
MICHAEL DOUCET—violin; accompanied by BEAUSOLEIL with special guest CANRAY FONTENOT (vocal and fiddle on #8, 11, 12, & 13). Produced by Chris Strachwitz and Michael Doucet. Cover photos by Elemore Morgan Jr.

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