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EDITED BY CHRIS STRACHWITZ
WITH SUGGESTIONS FROM MICHAEL DOUCET
COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KATHLEEN JOFFRION

CAJUN CHAMPS

JOE FALCON DEWEY BALFA
NATHAN ABSHIRE

HACKBERRY RAMBLERS
LAWRENCE WALKER
MARC SAVOY

D.L. MENARD
OCTA CLARK
MICHAEL
DOUCET

SAVOY FAMILY
BAND

AND
MORE!



CD-327



CAJUN CHAMPS

Unlike champions in the world of sports or classical music, where we have written documentation going back in time, Champs of Louisiana Cajun music can be judged mainly by the music which they have left behind in the grooves of old phonograph records. Almost nothing was written about Cajun music until about half way through the 20th century and recordings of this vernacular or regional music have only been available for less than eighty years.

The first recordings of Cajun music were made in 1928 by accordionist Joe Falcon who at the time was considered a very modern and popular stylist. The very next year fiddler Dennis McGee in contrast, made recordings in a much older, traditional style. At that time the accordion was the new kid on the block but it soon ruled supreme! Although Joe

Falcon is heard on this CD via a "live" dance hall recording from the early 1960s and several old-style fiddlers are represented, most of the early champs or "pioneers" from the 1920s and 30s have their original work available on various labels devoted to that era.

On this CD collection you will hear the singers, fiddlers and accordionists who I personally (with the help of Michael Doucet) consider the Champs of Cajun music from roughly the 1950s to the present. Let's hear it from challengers and those left out because their work is probably available on other labels, not available to us!

If you are interested in finding out more about the musicians heard on this CD may we suggest the individual Arhoolie CDs (which come with detailed notes) from which the material has been

drawn. There are also several fine books which deal with this music – especially noteworthy is "CAJUN MUSIC – A Reflection Of A People" by Ann Allen Savoy (Bluebird Press – Box 941 – Eunice, LA 70535). Essential viewing is the Brazos Films production, entitled "J'AI ETE AU BAL" (I WENT TO THE DANCE – Roots of Cajun & Zydeco Music) by Les

Blank, Chris Strachwitz and Maureen Gosling, which is now available on Video and DVD (BF 103), with 30 extra minutes of bonus footage on the DVD. May we also suggest this CD's companion disc: "ZYDECO CHAMPS" (Arhoolie CD 328) which features many of the best Creole musicians.

Chris Strachwitz – 2004



© Chris Strachwitz

Joe Falcon (accordion) with Lionel Leleux (fiddle) & Theresa Falcon (drums) at a dance in Kaplan, La.

THE CHAMPS & THEIR MUSIC

- 1. AMEDE TWO STEP** (Marc Savoy – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band: **Marc Savoy** – accordion; **Ann Savoy** – guitar; **Michael Doucet** – fiddle; plus **Doug Lohman** – bass & **Paul Laughridge** – drums. Recorded at a concert in Minneapolis, MN. (From Arhoolie CD 481 “Sam’s Big Rooster”)



The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band



Luderin Darbone's Hackberry Ramblers

© Chris Strachwitz

- 2. GRAND TEXAS** (P.D. arr: Chuck Guillory – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
Chuck Guillory – fiddle; **Papa Cairo** – vocal & steel guitar; plus electric guitar, bass, drums, and second fiddle. (From Arhoolie CD 473 “Grand Texas”)
- 3. LA VIEILLE CHANSON DE MARDI GRAS** (P.D. arr: Wade Frugé – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
Wade Frugé – fiddle; **Ann Savoy** – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 476 “Old Style Cajun Music”)



Chuck Guillory at a Savoy Music Center jam session

© Chris Strachwitz

- 4. T’ES PETITE, MAIS T’ES MIGNONNE** (P.D.)
Wallace “Cheese” Read – fiddle & vocal; with accordion & guitar. Recorded at a house party by Dr. Harry Oster. (From Arhoolie CD 359 “Folksongs Of The Louisiana Acadians”)
- 5. CREOLE STOMP** (P.D.)
Joe Falcon – accordion; **Lionel Leleux** – fiddle; **Theresa Falcon** – drums; **Allen Richard** – guitar. Recorded at the Triangle Club in Scott, La. (From Arhoolie CD 459 “Cajun Music Pioneer”)
- 6. CROWLEY WALTZ** (Lulu Langlinais – Johnnie Allen Music)
The Hackberry Ramblers: **Luderin Darbone** – fiddle; **Lennis Sonnier** – vocal & guitar; **Edwin Duhon** – bass. (From Arhoolie CD 399 “Jolie Blonde”)

7. BOSCOE STOMP (P.D.)

Lawrence Walker – accordion & vocal
and his Wandering Aces
(From Arhoolie CD 427 “Cajun Honky
Tonk”)

8. EN BAS DU CHENE VERT

(D.L.Menard – Tradition Music Co., BMI,
Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
D.L.Menard – vocal & guitar; **Dewey
Balfa** – fiddle; **Marc Savoy** – accordion;
Jerry Whiten – bass.
(From Arhoolie CD 312 “Under A
Green Oak Tree”)



Hector Duhon & Octa Clark

© Chris Strachwitz



D.L. Menard

9. ALLONS A LAFAYETTE (P.D.)

Harry Choates – fiddle & vocal;
Johnnie Mae Smirle – piano; **Joe
Manuel** – banjo; **B.D.Williams** – bass;
Eddie Pursley – guitar.
(From Arhoolie CD 380 “Fiddle King Of
Cajun Swing”)

l to r: Cyp Landreneau, Revon Reed, Jerry DeVillier, Adam Landreneau & Isom Fontenot



© Chris Strachwitz

10. LA VALSE DE MINUIT (P.D.)

Cyprien Landreneau – accordion; **Adam
Landreneau** – fiddle & vocal; **Jerry
Devillier** – harmonica; **Revon Reed** –
triangle. (From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun
Fais Do Do”)

11. MADELEINE (P.D.)

Isom J. Fontenot – harmonica
(From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais
Do-Do”)

12. LA VALSE SOLEIL COUCHE (P.D.)

arr: Octa Clark – Tradition Music Co., BMI,
Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
Octa Clark – accordion & vocal; **Hector
Duhon** – fiddle; **Michael Doucet** –
guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 9018 “Old
Time Cajun Music”)

13. LOUISIANA STOMP (P.D.)

Floyd LeBlanc – fiddle & vocal with
guitar and bass. (From Arhoolie CD 427
“Cajun Honky Tonk”)

14. LA BRANCHE DE MURIER (P.D.)

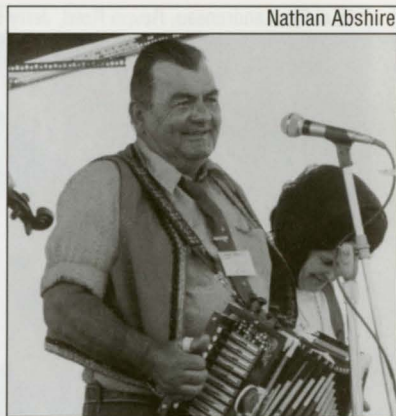
The Breaux Brothers: **Amade Breaux** – accordion & vocal; **Ophy Breaux** – guitar (From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do Do”)

15. MA NEGRESSE (P.D.)

Nathan Abshire – accordion & vocal; **Dewey Balfa** – fiddle & vocal; **Rodney Balfa** – guitar; **Basile Marcentel** – triangle. Recorded at the Frontier Bar in Basil, La. (From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do Do”)



Amade & Ophy Breaux



Nathan Abshire

© Chris Strachwitz

16. PETITE FILLE DE LA CAMPAGNE (P.D.)

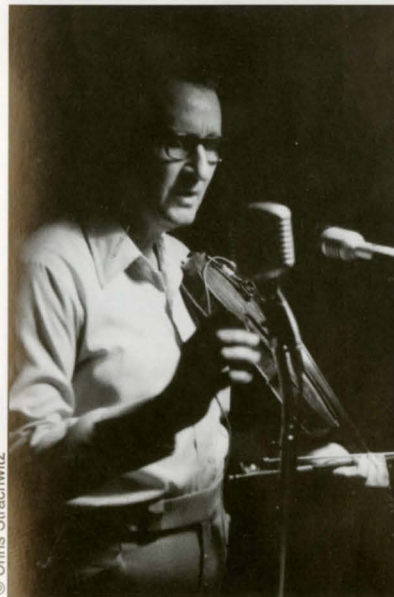
Dewey Balfa – fiddle & vocal; **Marc Savoy** – 2nd fiddle; **D.L. Menard** – guitar; **Jerry Whiten** – bass. (From Arhoolie CD 312 “Under A Green Oak Tree”)

17. CONTREDANSE (P.D.)

Austin Pitre – fiddle & vocal; **Lurlin Lejeune** – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 359 “Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians”)

18. CANNON BALL SPECIAL (P.D.)

Nathan Abshire – accordion & vocal; and his Pine Grove Boys. (From Arhoolie CD 373 “French Blues”)



Dewey Balfa

© Chris Strachwitz



Austin Pitre

© Chris Strachwitz

19. JOLIE BLONDE (P.D.)

Austin Pitre – accordion & vocal; **Will Balfa** – fiddle; **J.W. Pelsia** – steel guitar; **Preston Manuel** – guitar; **James Pitre** – drums; Recorded at the Silver Star between Opelousas and Ville Platte, La. (From Arhoolie CD 452 “Opelousas Waltz”)

© Chris Strachwitz

20. ONE STEP A CHAUMONT (P.D.)
Wallace "Cheese" Read – fiddle & vocal; **Marc Savoy** – accordion; **John Stelly** – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 415 "Cajun House Party")

21. WADE'S BLUES (Wade Frugé – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
Wade Frugé – fiddle; **Marc Savoy** – accordion; **Ann Savoy** – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 476 "Old Style Cajun Music")



Wade Frugé and his wife

© Chris Strachwitz



Wallace "Cheese" Read

22. SAM'S BIG ROOSTER (Marc Savoy – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
The Savoy Family Band: **Marc Savoy** – accordion; **Ann Savoy** – guitar & vocal; **Wilson Savoy** – keyboard; **Joel Savoy** – fiddle. Recorded at a concert in Chicago, Ill. (From Arhoolie CD 508 "Cajun Album")

© Wilson Savoy



The Savoy Family Band: (l to r) Joel, Sarah, Marc, Ann & Wilson

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