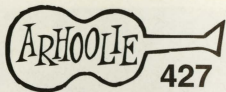


Cajun Honky Tonk

The Khoury Recordings - The Early 1950s



Nathan Abshire:

1. CRYING PINEGROVE BLUES
2. CHERE TE MON

Lawrence Walker:

3. MAMOU TWO-STEP
4. COUNTRY WALTZ

The Texas Melody Boys:

5. OLD TIME WALTZ
6. AIN'T NO MORE

Harry Choates:

7. VALSE DE LAKE CHARLES
8. JOLIE BLON'S GONE

Floyd LeBlanc:

9. ORPHAN WALTZ
10. LOUISIANA STOMP

Lawrence Walker:

11. TU LE DU PO LA MAM
(Both For the Same)
12. TON PAPA TA MAMA MA STA
DA ALL *(Your Mom and Dad Threw Me Out)*
13. EVANGELINE WALTZ
14. RENO WALTZ
15. BOSCOE STOMP

The Musical Four Plus One:

16. TRAN LA EZY

Vincent & Cagley:

17. LAWTELL TWO-STEP

Elise Deshotel with Dewey Balfa:

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20. LA VALSE DE COURAGE
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Shuk Richard & Marie Falcon:

22. LE COTE FAROUCHE DE LA VIC
23. JOLE BRUN
24. MADAME ENTELLE TWO-STEP

Lawrence Walker:

25. WALTZ OF REGRET
26. WANDERING ACES SPECIAL

Total Time: 75:02

#5, 6, 7, 12, 19, 22, & 24 previously available on ARH LP 5008
#8, 9, 10, 15, & 16 previously available on ARH LP 5013
Remastered from original 78s, 45s, and acetates by Chris Strachwitz with audio restoration by George Morrow, using the No Noise system.

#1 courtesy of Dave Sax (This selection is also listed on ARH CD 373 as by Nathan Abshire, but due to an editor's error, "Criminal Waltz" by Amédé Breaux is actually heard in its place.)

Original recordings produced by George Khoury
Recorded in Lake Charles, La.
Re-issue edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

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CAJUN HONKY TONK

FEATURING THE ORIGINAL RECORDINGS OF

Lawrence Walker

AND THE FIRST RECORDINGS OF

Dewey Balfa

FROM THE
1950's



THE KHOURY
RECORDINGS



Cajun Honky Tonk

The Khoury Recordings - The Early 1950s

It may seem hard to comprehend now, but by the early 1950s the **Khoury's** label, with its subsidiary **Lyric**, was the biggest Cajun record company in Louisiana and East Texas. Not that the competition was too hot. In Louisiana J.D. Miller was already cutting Cajun music for his **Fais Do Do** and **Feature** labels, and Eddie Shuler was doing likewise on **Folk-Star** and then **Goldband**. Texas labels like **Gold Star**, **Macy's**, **Opera** and **TNT** were also dipping their toes in the Cajun waters. On the national front there had been minor interest only from **De Luxe** records of New Jersey and **Modern** records of Los Angeles—gone were the days of major label participation from the likes of RCA Victor and Columbia. And current Cajun record supremo Floyd Soileau, of **Swallow** Records, was still in knee-pants.

The owner of Khoury's Records was George Khoury, a diminutive man of Turkish extraction who seems to have been more a businessman than a natural record person. His main virtue was of being in the right place at the right time—

when Cajun music was booming in the post World War II era. Happy Fats told me in 1979: "Cajun music became popular in the forties. I think it was because Cajun musicians came out of the cracks. It was hard to find (young) musicians during the war because everybody was in the army, fighting overseas, and the older people were the Cajun music players. So they came out and started playing, and it was Cajun music. And Harry Choates recorded 'Jole Blon,' that was another thing." Other early hits were "Love Bridge Waltz" by Iry LeJeune and "Pinegrove Blues" by Nathan Abshire.

The whole Cajun music scene of the time was nurtured by a flourishing club network riding on the post-war economic boom, fueled in East Texas and Louisiana by the burgeoning oil industry. Fiddler Dewey Balfa recalled playing "eight dances a week, Sunday afternoon, Sunday night, and Monday through Saturday night." Making records was a great way of advertising dances, for you could get radio and juke box plays if you tried hard enough. Record sales rarely went beyond the local Cajun audi-

ence due mainly to the language barrier and the fierce down-home nature of the music, and even then there were not many record players in Cajun country (Eddie Shuler has told me that an early Iry LeJeune 78 sold 3,500 copies—and that was a "big hit").

George Khoury had started in the recording business in 1949 by financing Virgil Bozeman's **OT Records**, named after the hillbilly group the Oklahoma Tornadoes (there are OT tracks here by Harry Choates and Floyd LeBlanc). George's near neighbor Eddie Shuler told me in 1979: "Virgil Bozeman came here (to Lake Charles) with his cowhorn operation out of San Antonio and things were so good he just wound up staying here. George Khoury was his sponsor, so to speak, because he didn't have that much money. He was a good salesman, he had a lot of gab, because being a cowhorn salesman he *had* to have a lot of gab!"

Shuler continued, giving a vivid impression of the local recording processes of the period: "There wasn't no tape recorders in those days, you had to cut the thing on acetate disc so you'd go into the radio station (often KPLC, Lake Charles) and give the engineer \$10 and a bottle of booze and he'd make you an acetate—'course you gotta take your own acetate. I'd go down to

the wholesale supply house and buy a little pack of acetates, Presto or something like that. Then we'd put the acetate on, well if one of 'em had a bubble in it they'd have to throw it away and put another one on. And that's the way you cut records in those days, you'd put an acetate on the recording machine, a disc cutter, and make your record. And then the tape recorders came out. . . The records at that time sold for 49¢ a piece, they cost 15¢ to produce, labels and all!" (laughs)

After the George Khoury-financed OT records hit with Nathan Abshire's "Pinegrove Blues," Khoury decided to form his own record operation around 1949 from premises at 328 Railroad Avenue, Lake Charles, immediately opposite the once-thriving railroad station. He was already selling records in his store and had a jukebox distribution business, giving him a good feel for local musical tastes. With Cajun recordings not exactly in plentiful supply the Khoury/Lyric record labels were a logical addition to his business enterprise. Said Eddie Shuler smilingly in 1979: "George had a record shop all the time. . . that was the only record shop in Lake Charles, that was it. They had to go there to buy their records, and he had the total business. I think he did pretty good in the

record shop, and then he was a lucky rascal. Everything he got hold of would be a hit!"

George Khoury attracted Cajun musicians from Beaumont, Texas, through Lake Charles and out east toward Jennings. Stylistically, the western swing influence was still strong but the earthier accordion sound was making a comeback after being eclipsed for many years. In time Khoury had a strong roster headed by accordionists Nathan Abshire and Lawrence Walker, with other Cajun artists including Elise Deshotel and the Louisiana Rhythmaires (with a young Dewey Balfa on fiddle making his recording debut) Amar Devillier and the Louisiana Jambaleers, Shuk Richard and his Louisiana Aces with Marie Falcon, The Texas Melody Boys, Will Kegley and Crawford Vincent.

Hackberry Rambler Crawford Vincent remembers: "Mr. George started out a lot of Cajun bands, I mean like Lawrence Walker, Nathan Abshire, even Jimmy 'C.' Newman. I recorded for him two songs, I never did do well, they didn't make no hit. But I was still proud I made 'em, because, you know, it's a souvenir for my grandchildren. But Mr. Khoury he started a whole bunch of guys. You see he's had Marie Falcon, Shuk Richard, he's had Will Kegley—that song we made, me and Will Kegley,

he put that out.

"But Mr. Khoury, man, that man had a big business. He was big because he had like 'Mathilda' which was Cookie and the Cupcakes, and he had Jimmy Newman on there, and then he made a hit with that 'Sea of Love' by Phil Phillips and they made a movie with that tune."

Those national swamp-pop hits by Cookie and the Cupcakes and Phil Phillips came in 1959, long after George Khoury had stopped recording Cajun music (which was in a bad trough at the time due to the accelerating Americanization process). In the mid-sixties Khoury wound up his recording activities altogether, but he deserves much credit for all the pioneering Cajun (and other) sounds he released.

As Arhoolie boss Chris Strachwitz noted in the "Cajun Music: The Early 50s" LP of Khoury's masters in 1969, "Some of these recordings are perhaps technically not of the best quality but I have always felt that it's not the technical part that counts but the spirit and the feeling of the musicians—and both were undeniably present in generous amounts on these classic performances!"

(John Broven, November 1994)

Discography:

1. **CRYING PINEGROVE BLUES** by Nathan Abshire & The Pinegrove Boys; vocal by Jake Miere (Khoury 701A)
2. **CHERETE MON** by Nathan Abshire & The Pinegrove Boys; vocal by Nathan Abshire (HR 103)
3. **MAMOU TWO-STEP** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 601B)
4. **COUNTRY WALTZ** by Lawrence Walker; vocal by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 601A)
5. **OLD TIME WALTZ** by The Texas Melody Boys; vocal by Pee Wee Pitre (Khoury 500B)
6. **AIN'T NO MORE** by The Texas Melody Boys; vocal by Pee Wee Pitre (Khoury 500A)
7. **VALSE DE LAKE CHARLES** by Harry Choates (OT 107)
8. **JOLIE BLON'S GONE** by Harry Choates (OT 107)
9. **ORPHAN WALTZ** by Floyd LeBlanc (OT 104)
10. **LOUISIANA STOMP** by Floyd LeBlanc (Khoury 700B)
11. **TU LE DU PO LA MAM** (Both For the Same) by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 607A)
12. **TON PAPA TA MAMA MA STA DA ALL** (Your Mom and Dad Threw Me Out) by Lawrence Walker; vocal by Mitch Davy (Khoury 607B)
13. **EVANGELINE WALTZ** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 615A)
14. **RENO WALTZ** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 623B)
15. **BOSCOE STOMP** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 616B)
16. **TRAN LA EZY** by The Musical Four Plus One; vocal by Eddie Duhon (Khoury 609B)
17. **LAWTELL TWO-STEP** by Vincent & Cagley (Khoury/Lyric 605B)
18. **LA VALSE DE BON BAURCHE** by Elise Deshotel & the Louisiana Rhythmaires vocal & fiddle by Dewey Balfa; Elise Deshotel – steel guitar; Esther Deshotel – drums. (Khoury 618B)
19. **LE TWO-STEP DE VILLE PLATTE** by Elise Deshotel; same as # 18, add Maurice Barzas – accordion (Khoury 618A)
20. **LA VALSE DE COURAGE** by Elise Deshotel; vocal by Dewey Balfa (Khoury 619B)
21. **LA VALSE DE TAMPER TATE** by Elise Deshotel; vocal by Dewey Balfa (Khoury 620B)
22. **LE COTE FAROUCHE DE LA VIC** by Shuk Richard & His Louisiana Aces; vocal by Marie Falcon (Khoury 621A)
23. **JOLE BRUN** by Shuk Richard; vocal by Marie Falcon (Khoury 621B)
24. **MADAME ENTELLE TWO-STEP** by Shuk Richard; vocal by Marie Falcon (Khoury 622A)
25. **WALTZ OF REGRET** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 648A)
26. **WANDERING ACES SPECIAL** by Lawrence Walker (Khoury 606A)

Cajun Music on Arhoolie CDs & Cassettes:

- CD/C 308 BEAUSOLEIL w/ Michael Doucet "Allons A Lafayette & More!"
CD/C 312 MARC SAVOY, DEWEY BALFA, D.L. MENARD "Beneath A Green Oak Tree"
CD/C 316 SAVOY-DOUCET CAJUN BAND "Two-Step D'Amede"
CD/C 321 MICHAEL DOUCET "Beau Solo"
CD/C 322 BEAUSOLEIL "Parlez-Nous a Boire & More"
CD/C 331 VARIOUS ARTISTS "J'AI ETE AU BAL - Vol. 1" The Cajun and Zydeco Music of Louisiana Vol.1
CD/C 332 VARIOUS ARTISTS "J'AI ETE AU BAL - Vol. 2" The Cajun and Zydeco Music of Louisiana Vol. 2
CD/C 356 THE CALIFORNIA CAJUN ORCHESTRA "Not Lonesome Anymore"
CD/C 359 VARIOUS ARTISTS "Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians" C. Guillory, "Cheese" Read, I.J. Fontenot , and others
CD 373 NATHAN ABSHIRE & THE PINE GROVE BOYS "French Blues"
CD 380 HARRY CHOATES "Fiddle King of Cajun Swing"
CD/C 381 CANRAY FONTENOT "Louisiana Hot Sauce Creole Style"
CD/C 389 SAVOY-DOUCET CAJUN BAND "Home Music with Spirits"
CD/C 397 MICHAEL DOUCET & BEAUSOLEIL "The Mad Reel"
CD 399 HACKBERRY RAMBLERS "Jolie Blonde"
CD 415 WALLACE "CHEESE" READ "Cajun House Party"
CD/C 418 SAVOY-DOUCET CAJUN BAND "Live! At The Dance"
CD/C 5040 BEAUSOLEIL "Hot Chili Mama"
CD/C 5041 ERIC & SUZY THOMPSON "Adam & Eve Had The Blues"



Photo: Chris Strachwitz



Photo courtesy Tim Knight

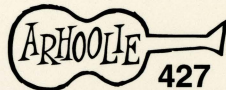
Left: Nathan Abshire; right: Harry Choates



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Cajun Honky Tonk

The Khoury Recordings - The Early 1950s



Up to 78 Minutes of Historic CAJUN Music

Nathan Abshire:

1. CRYING PINEGROVE BLUES (2:48)
2. CHERE TE MON (2:38)

Lawrence Walker:

3. MAMOU TWO-STEP (3:03)
4. COUNTRY WALTZ (3:00)

The Texas Melody Boys:

5. OLD TIME WALTZ (2:08)
6. AIN'T NO MORE (1:52)

Harry Choates:

7. VALSE DE LAKE CHARLES (2:49)
8. JOLIE BLON'S GONE (2:54)

Floyd LeBlanc:

9. ORPHAN WALTZ (2:51)
10. LOUISIANA STOMP (2:45)

Lawrence Walker:

11. TU LE DU PO LA MAM (*Both For the Same*) (2:48)
12. TON PAPA TA MAMA MA STA DA ALL
(*Your Mom and Dad Threw Me Out*) (2:44)
13. EVANGELINE WALTZ (3:05)
14. RENO WALTZ (2:50)
15. BOSCOE STOMP (3:13)

The Musical Four Plus One:

16. TRAN LA EZY (2:56)

Vincent & Cagley:

17. LAWTELL TWO-STEP (2:29)

Elise Deshotel with Dewey Balfa:

18. LA VALSE DE BON BAURCHE (4:11)
19. LE TWO-STEP DE VILLE PLATTE (2:52)
20. LA VALSE DE COURAGE (3:00)
21. LA VALSE DE TAMPER TATE (3:04)

Shuk Richard & Marie Falcon:

22. LE COTE FAROUCHE DE LA VIC (2:42)
23. JOLE BRUN (2:47)
24. MADAME ENTELLE TWO-STEP (2:57)

Lawrence Walker:

25. WALTZ OF REGRET (2:24)
26. WANDERING ACES SPECIAL (2:28)

Total Time: 75:02

Original recordings produced by George Khoury
Recorded in Lake Charles, La.

Re-issue edited and produced by Chris Strachwitz

Cover by Wayne Pope

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