

# Wade Frugé - Old Style Cajun Music

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(The Mardi Gras Song)
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(fiddle solo)
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25. Frugé's Waltz (2 fiddles)

**WADE FRUGÉ** - fiddle; vocal on 9 & 24

**VORANCE BARZAS** - vocals on (\*)

**ANN SAVOY** - guitar & vocals on (#)

**MARC SAVOY** - accordion; guitar on 16 - 21; fiddle on 22

**TINA PILIONE** - bass; fiddle on 8

**MICHAEL DOUCET** - guitar on 24; fiddle on 25

1 - 15 recorded at Master Trak Studios in  
Crowley, La. in 1988

16 - 21 recorded by Chris Strachwitz in  
Eunice, La. in 1979

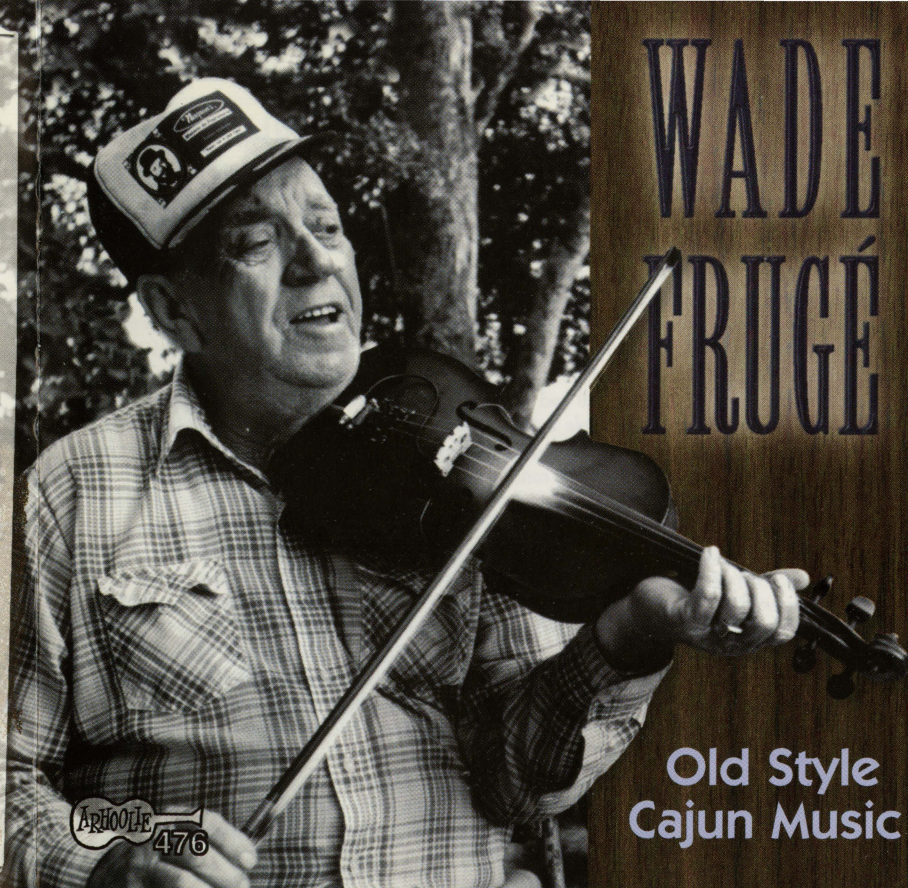
22 & 23 recorded by Chris Strachwitz in  
Eunice, La. in 1983

24 & 25 recorded by Chris Strachwitz in  
Eunice, La. in 1989

Notes and transcriptions by Ann Savoy  
Produced by Chris Strachwitz  
Cover photo by Chris Strachwitz  
Graphic Design by Morgan K. Dodge



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Old Style  
Cajun Music





# Wade Frugé

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## Old Style Cajun Music

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When you get right down to it you couldn't get more old style than Wade Frugé. Born in 1916 in Tasso (near Eunice), Louisiana, Wade learned his tunes mostly from his grandfather Napoleon "Babe" Frugé. The style (which he jokingly calls "yokedy-yokedy") consists of delicate grace notes, piercing chords, and a rocking of the bow from treble to bass strings and back to treble. "They didn't have no names for them songs. They played them all and my grandfather learned them from people before him. That makes them about two-hundred years old..." Besides his grandfather's tunes Wade plays all the traditional Cajun standards plus some wailing blues numbers he picked up from black fiddler Douglas Bellard (who came from the Ville Platte area) and a left handed black fiddler in front of Nick's Bar in Eunice. For income, Wade has farmed and trained wild horses his whole life.

Music has been mainly seen as house party entertainment to Wade. It was at a house party at Joel Savoy's house that accordionist Marc Savoy first heard him. Wade and Marc remained friends and Marc would often get Wade to play his beautiful tunes for people passing through from other places. This is Wade's first and only

recording and a long awaited one by fans of rare, traditional fiddle music.

On the first 15 selections Wade is joined by singer Vorance Barzas of Grand Louis. Son of the late accordionist Maurice Barzas, Vorance has played on the local dancehall scene since the age of twelve. For thirty-five years he played every Saturday night with his father and the Mamou Playboys at Snook's Dancehall in Ville Platte. A diehard traditionalist, Vorance says he only plays his drums with brushes as was popular in the old days, and he only sings the "original" high, powerful style. Both Iry LeJeune and Dewey Balfa had a great influence on his singing. Also appearing on this record are Marc and Ann Savoy of Eunice who often play dances with Wade in the area and on bass, Tina Pilione, who now lives in Eunice.

In addition to the tunes on the original LP record, Chris Strachwitz has gone through his tapes which he recorded over the years at the Savoy home where Wade was a frequent guest and has selected ten more performances by Wade. These last ten selections show Wade the way he usually played – by himself or with just a guitar or second fiddle to back him up.

### "The Milk Cow Is Dead" (Caillette Est Crêvée)

Wade learned this song from Michel Leger, an old man who had a corn mill. Wade and his grandfather had gone to get some corn ground and sat on the porch drinking water and listening to "Nonc Michel" play a strange song about a cow that got its head smashed in. Wade, being only six years old at the time, never forgot it. This song has also been recorded by Michael Doucet on his "Beau Solo" album (Arhoolie CD/C 321)

Soleil après se coucher caillette est pas tiré  
Les enfants après pleurer, il y en a rien pour manger.  
J'ai cherché tout, j'ai pas pu la trouver  
Je connaissais pas quoi je v'as faire si caillette s'en  
revient pas.

La femme après revenir, elle revient en pleurant  
C'est la elle m'a dit que caillette était crêvée  
Caillette est crêvée dans le clos à Nonc Michelle  
Les quatre pattes amarées et la tête écrasée.

The sun is setting, the cow isn't milked  
The children are crying, there's nothing to eat.  
I looked everywhere, I couldn't find her  
I don't know what I'm gonna' do if the little cow  
doesn't come back.

The wife's coming back, she's coming back crying  
That's when she told me that the milk cow was dead.  
The little cow died in Uncle Michael's field  
Her four feet tied up and her head smashed in.

### "La Valse à Wade Frugé"

Wade learned this tune from a woman named Evia. Her words were different but he loved the tune and made up some words to tell his own story.

Gardez donc, chère bébé, quoi c'est y a eu  
Moi, je connais c'était moi qu'étais pas bon,  
O, j'suis icite après mourir dans les misères,  
Par rapport à tout ça que mon je t'ai fait.

Mon, j'aimerais te voir encore un fois avant de mourir  
Te demander des pardons pour ça j'ai fait  
Mon, je connais ma vie est gaspillée chère,  
Par rapport à tout ça que mon je t'ai fait.

Viens me rejoindre, chère bébé, j'après mourir  
Je va's mourir toujours en te regrettant  
Je connais je va's jamais, jamais te revoir  
Je va's mourir avec toi dedans mon coeur.

Look, dear baby, what's happened  
I know it was me who was no good  
Oh, I'm here dying in misery  
All because of what I did.

I'd like to see you again before dying  
To ask your forgiveness for what I've done  
I know my life is wasted, dear,  
All because of what I've done to you,

Come to meet me, dear baby, I'm dying  
I'm gonna' die longing for you  
I know I'm never, never gonna see you again  
I'm gonna die with you in my heart.

YOU USED TO HAVE SOME is also known as T'EN A EU TU N'AURAS PLUS.  
GRANDFATHER'S TUNE is also known as DEPUIS L'AGE QUINZE ANS .  
LA VALSE À WADE FRUGÉ is also known as JE VA'S MOURIR.  
THE MILK COW IS DEAD is also known as CAILLETTE EST CRÊVÉE.  
WADE'S BLUES is also known as FRISONS D'UN SAMEDI APRÈS MIDI which translates  
into English as THE CHILL OF A SATURDAY AFTERNOON.  
CATCH MY HAT is also known as TRAPPE MON CHAPEAU.  
VIENS ME CHERCHER is also known in English as COME AND GET ME.  
FOND DE CULOTTE, NONC ADAM in English means THE SEAT OF YOUR PANTS.

On # 24 Wade starts out to play THE MILK COW IS DEAD but then sings the words to LA  
VALSE À WADE FRUGÉ!

Ann Savoy - 1988

### Editor's up-date:

Wade Frugé died on June 23, 1992. This CD presents his legacy as one of the fine traditional Cajun fiddlers and contains not only the entire Arhoolie LP 5044, originally issued in 1989, but also an additional ten selections never before released. In order to give the listener a better picture of Wade Frugé's music and repertoire, I went through the tapes I had made

of him over the years – mostly at Marc Savoy's house or store – and selected the best cuts from various get-togethers. These are sparse performances, haunting to my ears and in a way more typical of his music. Thanks to Marc Savoy and Michael Doucet for backing Wade on these more informal performances.

Chris Strachwitz - 1998

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left to right:  
Ann Savoy,  
Tina Pilione,  
Wade Frugé,  
Vorance Barzas,  
Marc Savoy



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In addition to all the tunes on the original LP record, we have added ten selections by Wade playing at the Savoy's home where Wade was a frequent guest. Recorded over a ten year period in a place where Wade felt at home these cuts have only Marc Savoy or Michael Doucet backing him up.

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