

RECORDED AND EDITED BY OWEN R. JONES, JR.



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4253

MUSIC OF THE ALGONKIAN

Woodland Indians

Cree Montagnais Naskapi



ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4253

Side 1

Band 1. Hunting Song - Sebastian McKenzie
Band 2. Bear Hunting Song - Sebastian McKenzie
Band 3. Explanatory Monologue - Sebastian McKenzie
Band 4. Two Hunting Songs - Sebastian McKenzie
Band 5. Two Hunting Songs - Sebastian McKenzie
Band 6. Three Hunting Songs - Joseph McKenzie
 a. Hunting Season Is Almost Here
 b. I Saw A Woman
 c. The Wind Is My Father
Band 7. Hunting Song - Joseph McKenzie Jr.
Band 8. Hunting Song - Greg McKenzie

Side 2

FE 4253 B

Band 1. I Hunt With My Sons
Band 2. I'm Happy When I Catch A Caribou
Band 3. The People Are Coming To Dinner
Band 4. Father Said That I Must Sing
Band 5. I Sing Until I Catch Something
Band 6. I Shot A Caribou
Band 7. I Shot A Caribou
Band 8. In The Winter I Hunt All The Time
Band 9. I Went On A River With My Canoe
Band 10. We Will Go To The Bush-You And I
Band 11. I See Where To Go Hunting In My Dreams
 Bands 1-5 - John Piastutete
 Bands 6-11 - John Enish

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

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a letter

10 Sept 64

Arrived in Schefferville 28th evening of August. We sat in the iron-red mud under drizzling skies eating our cold Campbell's and bread supper, then reported in to the Mounty station for a place to sleep. Arrive: our first benefactor, George Hackwell, a mine-worker who offered his shack near the Indian reservation. The following morning George's friend and foreman, Monsieur George Falardeau, asked if we'd like to pass some time at his fishing camp some forty miles north in the bush. There we had wonderful fishing - a gross of Brook Trout in one day - and found a few cold Indian camps with bleached bones of animals scattered about. After a week of this frustration of no flesh and blood Indians, we arrived back in town, saw Father Sear - the Catholic potentate on the Indian settlement - who introduced us to one Sebastian McKenzie, a 78-year old Montagnais Indian. In 1911 he left Sept-Îles (on the St. Lawrence) for the interior and, for a number of years, was manager of the Hudson Bay Company trading-post at Fort McKenzie. (The Indians apparently change their names after they've done something bad, or when they're sick so that the evil spirits can't find them.) McKenzie sang a couple of hunting songs, a couple of "remembering people" songs, and related some episodes from his very colorful life. All these songs (sung by one individual) derive their words from a dream the individual had. These dreams they believe to be true, as well they might, because they do come true. The tunes are in-born, naturally. McKenzie's English is only occasionally intelligible (though he does speak passable French), thus the few stories he told are not commercially usable. There are a few other Indians - mostly Nascopie - who speak better English, but these people are shy, and it will take time before we can get them on tape. In many instances they feign ignorance of English. McKenzie gave me one important fact: all Indian songs (dream songs) except those sung at weddings are sung in the bush before and after the hunt. I've asked him if we might go along with a hunting party into the bush, but he's sceptical: "One, only one of you, maybe." But when we get to know them better this attitude may change. Also gifts may help. They're very poor.

We intend to stay until the weather forces us southward. According to reliable local sources this weather will occur with determination in three weeks to a month.

Sincerely yours,

Owen Jones

notes

The Cree, Montagnais, and Naskapi songs in this album were recorded September, 1964 at an Indian settlement in Schefferville, P.Q., Canada.

They are not ordinarily sung for general amusement except when they accompany a dance. Even then it is more the drumbeat and not the song itself which is important to the dance. Rather they are sung by a hunter to assure good fortune in his hunting, which, in the past, was the Ungava Peninsula Indian's only means of subsistence. These songs are 'personal' songs in that they are verbalized sleep-dreams of the singer. One man does not sing the dreams of another.

Today, under the influence of white man's culture young Indians in the settlement mock, ridicule these songs and dances which were so important to survival.

There are two types of drum beats that accompany these songs. The difference is explained by a Nascapi hunter at the beginning of band side two. The two-beat accompanies the dance; the steady, non-accentuated beat accompanies the hunting song. In both cases the words originate in or describe a dream.

A single skin wooden drum is played by the singer. Stretched equatorially across the face of the drum is a thin length of gut on which is threaded 3 or 4 one inch long ptarmigan quill tips. The quill tips are spaced about two inches apart and lie flat on the face of the drum. A second such snare lies on the opposite side of the skin in a longitudinal direction. These snares (meequals) produce the buzzing sound which at first gives one the impression that the reproduction he hears is somehow distorted.

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side one

Band 1. Song by Sebastian McKenzie

Not translated (sang this song 30 years ago)

Band 2. Song by Sebastian McKenzie

Sings of hunting black bear in the winter time. A sharpened pole is poked through the snow and wakes the sleeping bear who, as he emerges, is shot.

Band 3. Sebastian McKenzie

That's all hunting song that. Dream that. See? Wake up in the morning, some dream that he me understand what kind dream. Maybe some otter, maybe some fish, maybe some Caribou, maybe some - anything that. No make, Indian, that him alone: dream that. All Indian like that. Some make a song for fun. This kind of song no myself made: in my sleep that. Some Indian he like only tent, like the same as before Indian in the bush. No house. When him do that like the same like before, dream him all the time true; and here inside not so much true that him dream.

- Funny that he can't make him - man him - Indian that - he can't make like the same white man: anything he sing that him, everything sing that. Indian not the same. That's dream, that him. That him true song. When no dream, and then him sing, a man lie. White man - everything what he sing that no dream - he's lie.

Band 4. Two songs by Sebastian McKenzie

Not translated

Band 5. Two songs by Sebastian McKenzie

Not translated

Band 6. Joseph McKenzie (Sebastian's brother)

- (a) I can feel that it is hunting time soon. It's a good feeling. It will be a good hunting year.
- (b) I woke early in the morning to go hunting. When I went outside I saw a nice woman. Nobody knew who the woman was.
- (c) As I walk in the bush, hunting, a big wind comes. The trees bend and there is a loud noise. A nice noise. It is my father. He is a good friend.

Band 7. Joseph McKenzie, Jr.

Translator:

"These songs are not for fun. They are for his hunting; for his life. If he sings them for fun, he won't be successful in his hunting. He will not tell you the words that he sang."

Band 8. Dreg McKenzie (also Joe McKenzie's son)

side two

Band 1.

Talking: I'm going hunting with my family next week. Maybe I'll catch an Otter or Martin. That's why I sing.

Singing: I'm going to try to catch something for my family this winter. I'm going to hunt with my two sons.

Band 2.

When I see a Caribou, if I catch him, I'll be happy. That's why I sing: so I can catch something.

Band 3.

I hear the people coming to dance. They are laughing. It is a good sound.

Band 4.

When I was young - before I was married - the first time I went to hunt - Father was still alive - he said "if you want to catch something you have to sing." When I was young I used to stay inside. Then one day I said "I am going to hunt. I am going to stay outside all the time to hunt."

Talking: That's why I sing - when I walk outside if I want to catch anything - that's why I sing. (same song continues)

Band 5.

If I don't catch something after I sing, then I shall sing again. (repeat) Sometimes I sing and catch. Then I sing and don't catch. I sing again and I catch.

Band 6. John Enish

I shot a Caribou. I never miss when I shoot a Caribou.

Band 7. Same words as Band 6.

Band 8.

In the winter I can catch anything: Mink, Otter, Martin, Caribou. I stay outside all the time. If I don't catch something, I sing. Then I catch something.

Band 9.

I went on a river with a canoe. The canoe didn't make any trouble because I sang a song before I went on the river.

Band 10.

We will go to the bush - you and I. Maybe you will catch something, maybe I will catch something. I will sing. You will sing. Tomorrow maybe you will catch something, maybe I will catch something. I will catch something. Because I am a man.

Band 11.

Whenever I want to catch anything hunting or trapping, I see where it is when I'm sleeping. That's why I catch things.