

CAJUN SOCIAL MUSIC



Featuring Nathan Abshire, Mark Savoy,
Hector Duhon and Others

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1. **"Trape mon chapeau** 2:23
2. **Jolie blonde** 2:28
3. **Tout ça c'est dur à croire** 3:38
4. **Chère tout-tou** 3:01
5. **Bosco Stomp** 3:02
6. **J'étais au bal hier au soir** 2:31
7. **Midnight Special** 2:58
8. **La valse de Lawtell** 1:22
9. **Courtableau** 1:44
10. **Un homme marié** 3:03
11. **Mamou Two-Step** 2:23
12. **La valse d'amour** 3:21
13. **Osson Two-Step** 2:59

Originally issued in 1977 as Folkways FA 2621.

Recorded and annotated by Gérard Dole
Digitally remastered by Randy Kling at Disc
Mastering, Nashville, Tennessee.
Cover photograph (La Poussiere, Breau Bridge,
Louisiana) by Philip Gould.
Design by Nancy Jean Anderson.
Art direction by Scott Billington.



Smithsonian/Folkways Records
Office of Folklife Programs
955 L'Enfant Plaza, Suite 2600
Smithsonian Institution
Washington DC 20560

Cajun Social Music

Featuring Nathan Abshire, Mark Savoy, Hector Duhon and Others

1. **"Trape mon chapeau** 2:23
Hadley Fontenot accordion
Sady Courville fiddle
Preston Manuel guitar and vocal
Recorded September 6, 1975 in Mamou
2. **Jolie blonde** 2:28
Milton Mélançon fiddle
Marc Savoy fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire
3. **Tout ça c'est dur à croire** 3:38
Marc Savoy accordion
Milton Mélançon fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Adausas Thibodeaux vocal
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire
4. **Chère tout-tou** 3:01
Nathan Abshire accordion and vocal
Allie Young accordion
Armand Babineaux triangle
Recorded August 27, 1975 in Basile
5. **Bosco Stomp** 3:02
Allie Young accordion
Bessyl Duhon fiddle
Rodney Balfa guitar and vocal
Recorded August 30, 1975 in Basile
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CAJUN SOCIAL MUSIC

*Featuring
Nathan Abshire,
Hector Duhon,
Marc Savoy
and Others*

Of the Louisiana French, the Acadians form the most homogeneous group in the southwestern part of the state. Approximately four thousand settled in the Attakapas country, along the Bayou Tèche, and Lafourche and Vermilion bayous, coming in small groups over a thirty year period after the English dispersion of their Canadian settlement in 1755.

Their descendants, who call themselves Cajuns, remain to a large extent an agricultural people who hold tenaciously to their ways. They quickly absorb, it seems, nearly every alien who comes in contact with them. Like the land, they are prolific.

The ball has been assuredly the epitome of leisure activity for generations. A traveller witnessed one in the 1870s:

The neighborhood ball is orderly and well conducted, with whole families attending. A section known as 'le parc aux petits' is provided for the babies so that the mothers can keep a careful watch on their older daughters, while the fathers enjoy a quiet game of cards in an adjoining room. The old women also come to play cards, each carrying a bag of coins with her. Some of the mothers are quite young to be relegated to places against the walls; they follow the dance with sparkling eyes. During the evening, a supper of chicken gumbo with rice and hot black coffee is served. When the musicians at length grow weary, they go outside and cry 'le bal est fini.' Otherwise, the dancing Acadians would never go home.

Dennis McGee, a fiddler born in 1893, gave me more details about the house-dances he played in his youth:

Suppose I had a house, well, they came and asked me to lend it for a ball: all right, I gave my consent.



They rode around to invite young girls and at night, they got together. Women sat down on benches they had made with blocks of wood and planks; they watched their daughters, you know, in these days, a girl couldn't go out alone, no. The boy who had borrowed the house, he was the boss until the ball was through. He decided which couple to put together: he stood at the door and when a guy asked him to dance, he placed him. Sometimes he let him dance, sometimes not. If he didn't like him, he left him backwards, so that he couldn't dance. This one he liked, he placed him each two, three or four sets.

Nowadays, dance-halls have replaced the old house-dances, but music is still played traditionally at such social gatherings as gumbos, fricasées, fish-parties, etc. Anyone who can play will bring his instrument and there is at least one capable accordion player and singer per family. One or two more guests will often join on the guitar and the fiddle, forming a one-night band for the pleasure of the dancers and listeners. There will always be a triangle to come in. Although the Cajuns have reshaped their fiddle-based dance tunes to the more limited scale of the diatonic accordion brought in in the late 1800s, there are survivals of older fiddle tunes. (For more details about instruments, dances, and songs, see the notes for *Cajun Home Music*, Folkways 2620.)

The guitar was introduced in the twenties. The first one to use it regularly with the accordion, seemingly, was Cléoma Breaux, Joe Falcon's wife, who recorded extensively from 1928 to World War II. She had many followers and the guitar quickly became part of the rhythm accompaniment which had been supplied so far by the triangle alone.

The now classical combination to play Cajun music traditionally is: an accordion, one or two fiddles, a guitar, and a triangle.

The age of the players presented in this album ranges from mid-thirties, like Marc Savoy or Lurlin Lejeune, to mid-sixties, like Allie Young or Nathan Abshire. I recorded them at gumbos and fish parties during the summer of 1975.

Acknowledgments:

I wish to thank all the dear folks who welcomed me so nicely to Louisiana, and Michèle Brisse, my companion during this field trip. You can write me for further details: Gérard Dole, 10 rue de Bucy, Paris 75006, France.

'Trape mon chapeau

Hadley Fontenot accordion
Sady Courville fiddle
Preston Manuel guitar and vocal
Recorded September 6, 1975
in Mamou

Oh, 'trape mon chapeau, c'est l'heure
j'm'en vas y dir, cher!

Ah yé yaï, malheureuse,
Gardez donc quoi t'as fait
T'as quitté ton vieux nègre*
Moi j'connais j'mérite pas ça, ha ha!

m'ont dit z'y m'aimaient pas
Moi j'connais sont fâchés
'Près gueuler sur la galerie, hi!

Oh, catch my hat, it's time for me to go
he says, dear!

Ah, yé yaï, misery maker
Look at what you did
You left your old nègre*
I know I don't deserve this, ha ha!

Your daddy and your mama
They told me that they didn't like me
I know they are angry
Shouting on the porch, hee!

*Nègre is a term of endearment in both black and white Louisiana French communities.

Jolie blonde

Milton Mélançon fiddle
Marc Savoy fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

Tout ça c'est dur à croire

Marc Savoy accordion
Milton Mélançon fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Adausas Thibodeaux vocal
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

Oh yé yaï, ça c'est dur à croire
Ton pap' et ta mam' m'avaient dit
J'étais pas bon
Oh yé yaï, comment moi j'va faire
'Tit coeur aujourd'hui t'après m'quitter
Mais moi tout seul

Oh yé yaï, it's hard to believe
Your dad and your mom told me
I was no good
Oh yé yaï, what will I do
Li' heart, today you are leaving me
All alone

Chère tout-tou

Nathan Abshire accordion and vocal
Allie Young accordion
Armand Babineaux triangle
Recorded August 27, 1975 in Basile

Hè, chère tout-tou,
Viens m'chercher chère tout-tou
Z'à la maison
Hè, chère tout-tou
Tu m'as quitté pour t'en aller
Z'avec un autre

Hè, chère tout-tou,
Mois j'm'ennuie oui de toi
Chère tout-tou
(Pas d'ma faute, nègre!)
Hè, chère tout-tou
T'as quitté ta chère maison
Pour t'en aller

(Ha hey!)

Hè, chère tout-tou,
T'y connais j'mérite pas ça
T'après faire
Hé, chère tout-tou
D'écouter tous les conseils
De tous les autres, bébé!

Hey, dear tout-tou,
Come and find me, dear tout-tou
At home
Hey, dear tout-tou
You left me to go away
With another one

Hey dear tout-tou
I miss you
Dear tout-tou
(It's not my fault, nègre!)
Hey, dear tout-tou
You left your dear home
To go away

(Ha hey!)

Hey, dear tout-tou
You know that I don't deserve
What you are doing
Hey, dear tout-tou
You listened to all the advice
Of all the others, babe!

**"Tout-tou" is a term of endearment that is literally translated as "all in all"—as in "you are my all in all."*

Bosco Stomp

Allie Young accordion
Bessyl Duhon fiddle
Rodney Balfa guitar and vocal
Recorded August 30, 1975 in Basile

Y en a des tites brunes
Oui y en a des tites blondes
Oui y en a qu'assez noire
Que l'diable veut pas les voir
Ça va t'faire des misères
Ça va t'faire des accroires
Ça va t'faire les aimer
Puis là ça tourne le dos
Ca qui m'fait du mal à moi

Y en a des tites brunes
Oui y en a des tites blondes
Oui y en a qu'assez grosses
Que l'diable veut pas les voir
Ça va t'faire des misères
Ça va t'faire des accroires
Ça va t'faire les aimer
Puis là ça t'casse le coeur
Ca qui m'fait du mal tite fille

There are some little brunettes
There are some little blondes
There are some who are dark enough
That the devil doesn't want to see them
They will make you miserable
They will make you believe them
They will make you love them
Then, they turn their back on you
That's what hurts me

There are some little brunettes
There are some little blondes
There are some who are fat enough
That the devil doesn't want to see them
They will trouble you
They will make you believe them
They will make you love them
Then, they break your heart
That's what hurts me, li'l girl

J'étais au bal hier au soir

Marc Savoy accordion
Milton Mélançon fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Adausas Thibodeaux vocal
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

J'étais au bal hier au soir
Tout z'habillé z'en noir
Si l'occasion se r'présente
J'vas r'tourner demain soir, ho!

I went to the dance last night
Dressed all in black
If the opportunity offers
I'll go back tomorrow night, ho!

Midnight Special

Allie Young accordion and vocal
Hector Duhon fiddle
Bessyl Duhon guitar
Recorded September 24, 1975
in Basile

Hé yaï, tout partout où moi j'(ai) été
Hier au soir mais pour te voir
Tite fille t'étais pas là
Oh jolie, ça qu'a toi, mais aujourd'hui
Quand même tu veux mais t'en r'venir
Tite fille moi j'veux pas t'voir

Hé jolie, aujourd'hui moi j'après t'voir
Quoi c'est ça, m'aussi heureuse
Tou' les misères que tu m'as fait
Oh jolie, prépare toi, mais aujourd'hui
Quand même tu veux mais t'en r'venir
Tite fille moi j'veux pas t'voir

Hé yaï, everywhere I went
Yesterday night to see you
Li'l girl, you were not there
Oh, pretty one, what's up with you
today
Even if you want to come back
Li'l girl, I don't want to see you

Hey, pretty one, today I can see
That you are so happy
Despite all troubles you gave me
Oh, pretty one, get ready, because
today
Even if you want to come back
Li'l girl, I don't want to see you

La valse de Lawtell

Milton Mélançon fiddle
Marc Savoy fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

Courtableau

Nathan Abshire accordion and vocal
Armand Babineaux triangle
Recorded September 1, 1975
in Basile

S'en aller sur l'Courtableau tit monde*,
Pour ramasser des écocos, yé yaï
Pour faire du feu, bébé,
Pour faire bouillir les tourloulous
S'en aller sur l'Courtableau tit monde
Pour ramasser des écocos, yé yaï
Pour faire du feu bébé
Pour faire bouillir des ouaouaron

S'en aller sur l'Courtableau tit monde
Pour ramasser des écocos tit monde
Pour faire du feu bébé
Pour faire bouillir les écrivisses
S'en aller sur l'Courtableau tit monde
Pour ramasser des écocos yé yaï
Pour faire a'la flamme bébé
Pour faire bouillir des cocodrilles

Let's go to Bayou Courtableau, li'l one
To collect dry wood, yé yaï
To light a fire, babe
To boil crabs
Let's go to Bayou Courtableau li'l one
To collect dry wood, yé yaï
To light a fire, babe
To boil frogs

Let's go to Bayou Courtableau, li'l folk
To collect dry wood, li'l folk
To light a fire, babe
To boil crayfish
Let's go to Bayou Courtableau, li'l folk
To collect dry wood, yé yaï
To light a blazing fire, babe
To boil alligators.

Un homme marié

Allie Young accordion and vocal
Hector Duhon fiddle
Bessyl Duhon guitar
Recorded September 24, 1975
in Basile

J'l'ai rencontrée dans les bals
Elle était après danser
J'ai d'mandé à mes amis
Qui c'était cette chère tite fille
A me r'semblait si mignonne
A passer dans la clarté
Un homme marié avec une famille
Après essayer de courtiser

Elle a couché sa chère tite tête
Sur mon épaule mais en dansant
J'y ai cassé son cher tit coeur
Elle savait pas j'étais marié
C'est pas la peine mais la blâmer
Pour tout ça qu'après arriver
Un homme marié avec une famille
Après essayer de courtiser

I met her in the dance halls
She was dancing
I asked my friends
Who was this dear little girl
She looked so cute to me
As she moved through the lights
A married man with a family
Trying to court

She leaned her dear little head
On my shoulder while dancing
I broke her dear little heart
She didn't know I was married
It's no use to blame her
For all that's happening
A married man with a family
Trying to court.

Mamou Two-Step

Milton Mélançon fiddle
Marc Savoy fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

La valse d'amour

Allie Young accordion and vocal
Hector Duhon fiddle
Bessyl Duhon guitar
Recorded September 24, 1975
in Basile

Moi j'm'endors mais ton tit coeur
Et chère tite fille
Et j'vas l'emmenner avec moi
M'à la maison
Tu m'as tout l'temps si bien soigné
Mais jolie fille
Mais tout j'te d'mande
C'est t'en rev'nir m'avec ton nègre

Tu coup'rais mais tes tits ch'veux
Que j'aime autant
Une tite caresse qui m'travailleur aussi
dur
Tu m'as tout l'temps si bien soigné
Mais jolie fille
Mais tout j'te d'mande
C'est t'en rev'nir m'à la maison

I fall asleep on your little heart
Dear li'l girl
I'll take it
Back home with me
You always cared for me so much
Pretty girl
All I ask you
Is to come back with your nègre

You'd cut a curl of your li'l hair
I love so dear
A caress which troubles me so hard
You always cared for me so much
Pretty girl
All I ask you
Is to come back home.

Osson Two-Step

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Milton Mélançon fiddle
Lurlin Lejeune guitar
Adausas Thibodeaux triangle
Recorded September 1, 1975 in Mire

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