

# PLAINS CHIPPEWA/METIS MUSIC FROM TURTLE MOUNTAIN

**Native**

**Drums**

**Fiddles**

**Chansons**

**&**

**Rock  
& Roll**



# Plains Chippewa/Metis Music from Turtle Mountain

Drums, Fiddles, Chansons, and Rock and Roll

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Abridged edition of Folkways 4140 (a double LP) originally issued in 1984

Recorded, compiled and annotated by Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman

Produced in collaboration with the North Dakota Council on the Arts

## Part I: Pembina Chippewa Drum Songs

1. Soldier's Honor Song 3:46
2. New Grass Dance Song 3:07
3. Rock Dance Song 2:16
4. Go Homing Song 2:21
5. Love Song/Round Dance 2:19
6. Buffalo Song 1:28
7. Many Eagle Set Sun Dance Song 2:08

## Part II: French Songs, from Elders to Children

8. Le matelot de Montréal/The Sailor from Montreal 1:49
9. Chanson à boire/Drinking Song 0:28
10. Le garçon le moins heureux/The Most Unhappy Fellow 1:14
11. Napoléon Bonaparte 1:01
12. Old Fred's White 99 1:06  
(Fred Parisien, 1984)
13. Adeline 1:25
14. Chanson à boire/Bottle Song 0:42
15. Beau clair de la lune/In the Beautiful Moonlight 0:37
16. Ants, Mosquitoes, and Snowball Fricassé 1:11
17. Le jaloux/The Jealous Man 4:03

18. Le chanson du bataille/Song of the Battle 2:42

## Part III: Fiddle Dance Music

19. Soldier's Joy 1:56
20. Red River Jig 2:02
21. Quebec Reel 1:46
22. Ragtime Annie, Second Change 3:57
23. Woodchopper's Breakdown 2:57
24. Irish Washer Woman 1:18
25. Red Wing 2:14

## Part IV: Contemporary Fiddle, Country Music, Rock and Roll, and Full-circle Fiddle

26. Big John McNeil Hornpipe 1:57
27. Sir John Tupper's March 1:23
28. Singing for a Living 3:25  
(Thomas Belgarde, 1984)
29. One for the Road 3:13  
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30. Glitter and Romance 4:49  
(Rod Poitra, 1984)
31. Space Trip to Nowhere 5:44  
(Rod Poitra, 1984)
32. Bush Music 0:53



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**Today, on the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota, native drum songs thrive side-by-side with songs learned from French fur traders, Scots fiddling, country music, and rock and roll. This recording is a rich portrait of the vital and diverse music of the Plains Chippewa/Metis community.**



**Smithsonian  
Folkways**

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SF40411

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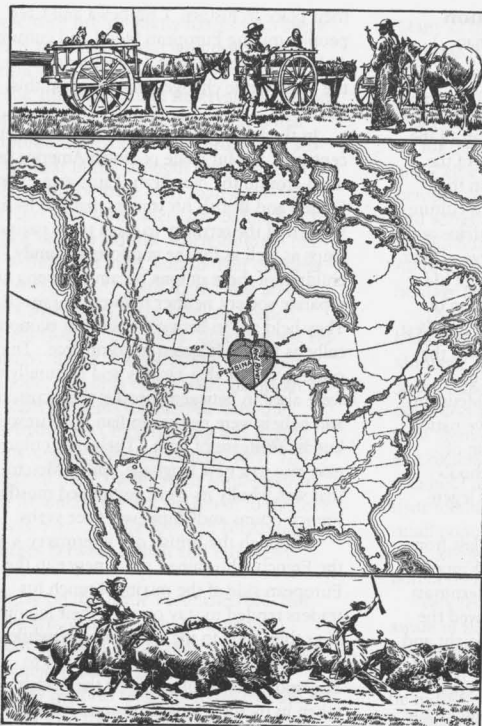
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*Heart of a Continent*

*From the collection of  
Sharon Shope*

## Introduction to the 1992 Edition

By Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman

The Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation in North Dakota is a symbolic—as well as the actual geographic—heart of the North American continent. It is part of the Canadian-United States border region that gave birth to an indigenous American culture evolving from marriages between Indians and Europeans, marriage *à la façon du pays*—“after the custom of the country.” The way of life born of such unions was the foundation of the fur trade and the development of the West from 1670 to 1885; its culmination was the formation of the Canadian province of Manitoba. Manitoba was initially a Metis, or mixed-blood, nation—the only native nation that resulted from the reconfiguration of North America. It was led by the school-teacher-politician-prophet, and now legendary culture hero, Louis Riel.

The tribes of the Plains held the last frontier against Manifest Destiny. The Chippewa and Cree of the Plains were the westernmost of the Woodland Indians, who followed the fur trade from its beginnings to its height and demise. These tribes experienced generations of trade with the Europeans, golden eras, wars, and near extinction. By the time of the buffalo's decline, they knew their fate and

their place in history. Chippewa and Cree people, mixing European blood and culture with their own, became a transitional force in the cataclysmic change inflicted upon this land.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the fur trade of North America centered around the Northern Plains area. Many French and British fur traders married Indian women of the territory to form trade partnerships as well as for the comforts of family. The children of these unions became a strong and separate society, neither Indian nor European. They held an “in between” position economically, as the middlemen in commerce. They came to realize that racially and culturally they were also “in between” people; their customs and beliefs were neither Indian nor European, but an amalgam of both. Their new culture gave rise to a new language, called Metchif, that was wholly its own, comprised mostly of French nouns and Chippewa/ Cree verbs.

Although the British did intermarry, it was the French who gained prominence in the European side of the mixing. French fur traders tended to stay on with their families after their time in the trade was up, while the British often went back to Ontario or to England. The families left by the British were taken in by their Indian relatives who had married French traders. Today there are many

people with British family names who speak French and Metchif and who maintain French/Metis customs.

The Turtle Mountain Reservation is a contemporary microcosm of the cultures that comprised fur trade society. From their stories we hear of the strength and fortitude of the offspring of those early marriages—we learn that they loved their way of life, and had the best of both worlds. Their children married within their kind, and so their customs were perpetuated. With them came an old-belief Catholicism, large families, French *chansons* (songs), fairy tales, superstitions, celebrations, dance, foodways and a full gamut of folklife, blending native with European. The main elements transferred from the Scots/Irish were Celtic fiddling and jigging. All this together was the Metchif way. The strength of these traditions in contemporary Turtle Mountain life is a testament to the love that was born of those first and subsequent marriages between Indian and European peoples.

Today on the Turtle Mountains one can hear ancient *accapella* (unaccompanied) *chansons* telling of King Louis, Napoleon, and the common soldiers of the French army. Musicians perform religious songs that are moral tales for the young, songs of married life, songs for holidays, and drinking songs.

Many of these are basically unchanged from the time they were brought to the Northern Plains from France in the middle eighteenth century. There are also songs and fiddle tunes that come from the fur-trade era, composed by fur traders in the traditional French ballad and Celtic fiddle styles; songs and tunes about heroes like Louis Riel and Gabriel DuMont; and songs about other events great and small: buffalo hunts and battles, loves and loves lost. All of these together tell of Metis life and the heritage and history of these people.

The cultural region of the Metis reaches from Sault St. Marie, Michigan, to Choteau, Montana, across both sides of the United States-Canadian border. The Northern Plains states and provinces are where the Metis cultural identity coalesced and came to political and national unity. Today the Metis of this area hold more tightly to traditional aspects of their folklife because they are a relatively small population within a vast geographic area, where their isolation works for the retention of their culture.

Very few people in the United States are aware of the Metis because our government has consistently refused to recognize them in an official way. In Canada, the Metis have a little more notoriety, coming from the historic fact that one of their provinces was created by the Metis. But even there they are considered



non-status Indians with no government-borne responsibilities. For the most part, Metis live on farms and ranches, in communities of their own, or in neighborhoods within larger communities.

The Turtle Mountains in North Dakota hold the only reservation for Metis in the United States, and that is only because of the goodwill of the Pembina Chippewa (for whom the reservation was created), who allowed them to come, and the United States government, which incorrectly labeled the Metis "Chippewa." The government placed them on the reservation as a way of dealing with a massive political and refugee problem after the Metis's unsuccessful attempt at national independence between 1870 and 1885. At that time the territories of the Northern Plains were up for grabs, pitting Canada and the United States against each other, and both against the Metis and Indians. To this day the people are called Turtle Mountain Chippewa—a government-invented name.

The Columbian Quincentenary offers us an opportunity to reassess our idea of American cultural identity so that it more fully reflects the contributions of America's indigenous peoples and more accurately portrays historic processes. The Metis people of the Northern Great Plains offer us a profound

example, in blood and culture, of the meaning that those events five hundred years ago had for the people of North and South America. That song of change, first sung a half millennium ago on the eastern shores of this hemisphere, still lives. It can perhaps best be heard today at the center of this continent by the descendants of those who lived the epic drama of humanity coming face to face with itself, and merging to become, actually and figuratively, a new people.

This recording is a cultural fingerprint put to disc. It is a record of being for the Turtle Mountain people and a story for all others to know. It is a cross section of the music found today on the Turtle Mountains. From the time these songs and tunes were first created until today, they have been the primary music heard on the reservation. The music is memorable and jubilant; it shows how the love of music has evolved to take in contemporary forms. This is why it has survived over generations.

There is a wealth of material here that gives a sense of the evolution, significance, and vitality of the Turtle Mountain people. Their music is up-close music, made for homes, families, neighbors, and communities. It is performed repeatedly in the cycles of yearly activities. The music represents wonderfully the diversity of this group of people. On the reservation there are special distinc-

tions concerning how it all came together, but, by the ties of history and the structure of reservation life, indeed, it is all together.

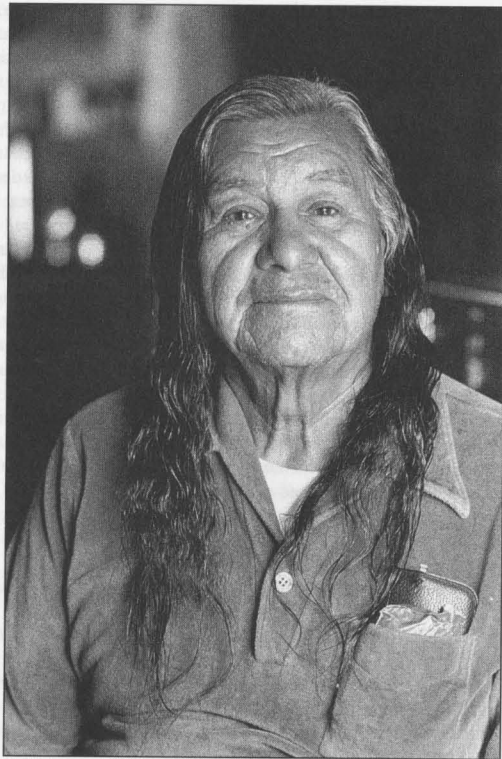
The primary purpose of this recording is to present contemporary music; music that is alive, richly textured, full-bodied, and passionate. By listening to the voices, the presentation and the lyrics, and by envisioning the way performance is integrated into daily life, the listener can begin to feel and understand the intensity, *joie de vivre*, romance, and history that are all part of the substance of Turtle Mountain existence. When you hear these songs and tunes, remember that the music is being played in kitchens, at weddings, New Year's, reservation bars, and daily celebrations. This is music at home with itself. People need vitality and creativity to survive on the margins of a dominant society. Musical traditions help fulfill the spirit for Turtle Mountain people in spite of the disadvantages of reservation life.

The recording of this disc was an event within the community that brought various performers together for three days at a recording site set up at the local reservation high school. On the fourth day a group, "The Boys," traveled to Minot, North Dakota, for a controlled studio recording situation. The rigor of the recording schedule was devised to enhance the freshness and spontaneity of the

music. An effort was made to minimize the imposition of an external aesthetic and the overworking of the material and presentations.

The people recorded here serve as representatives for all the musicians on the Turtle Mountains, and as such, are only a few of the many deserving to be recognized and honored for their roles as bearers of Turtle Mountain culture. For each one on this disc, there are twenty in the region. The music is an expression of the vigor, vision, love and passion of Turtle Mountain life. It blends the ancient with the contemporary, the west with the east, and the red with the white. But more, it's just plain, good music. From the heartbeat sound of the Pembina Chippewa drum to the exploding bass of the rock and roll, this music takes its place with the best of America's cultural heritage.

Francis "Eagle Heart" Cree,  
born 1920: Spiritual and  
Cultural Leader of the  
Turtle Mountain Chippewa,  
photo by Nicholas Curchin  
Peterson Vrooman



## Notes on the Musical Selections

### Part I: Pembina Chippewa Drum Songs

All songs in Part I are performed by the Pembina Chippewa Singers: Francis Cree (born 1920), Boy Joe Fayant (born 1910), and Leo J. Wilkie (born 1935).

Francis said: "Our Grandpa, we're giving you some tobacco, being that we're going to sing, make music."

#### 1. Soldier's Honor Song

Francis said: The words in there mean, "If I could be in the Universe, I'd fly across the ocean." An old lady dreamt about this song in the wartimes. I suppose in World War I. Her boys were overseas in the war. She sang it and then turned it over to the singers. And the singers brought it out and have used it ever since.

#### 2. New Grass Dance Song

#### 3. Rock Dance Song

Francis said: This one's gonna be sung by Joe Fayant. It's an old song from the thirties, somewhere around there. That's a good one. He said, "Watch your women," he said, "We're gonna get drunk tonight." I don't think they got drunk pretty often, but when they got drunk, look out.

#### 4. Go Homing Song

Francis said: This next song is gonna be sung by Joe again. It's a go homing song, we call it. Two of them get together and they dance around. I remember this in the twenties, late twenties. Right around there they started using English words on these songs, you know.

#### 5. Love Song/Round Dance

Francis said: Before 1949 there used to be a Round Dance, Round Dance Singing. And this is a love song, Cree language. That song goes, he said, "You pass by, all the time." He said, "I think you hate me. Don't do that no more."

#### 6. Buffalo Song

Francis said: This song has been sung in the past as a ceremonial song. It's what's called a Buffalo Song. When they had a Buffalo Dance they sang this song there. That one says, "Buffalo, buffalo's coming in," he says, "and he's coming in my home, in my lodge."

#### 7. Many Eagle Set Sun Dance Song

Francis said: This Sun Dance Song here is known in history in one of the biggest Sun Dances ever to be held. This guy who made this Sun Dance is known as Many Eagle Set. He was a Cree Indian. He made that Sun

Dance right here in Buffalo Lodge, west of Towner, fifteen, twenty miles.

Mostly the Sun Dance has only one-pole or two-pole diameter across. Now this had fourteen-poles diameter. There was three thousand people took part in this Sun Dance. That was around the 1860s—1867, I suppose. This is where the song was used. And we pass this song one generation to the other. That's how come I got this song here, *Many Eagle Set Sun Dance Song*. One of my grandsons got that name, Many Eagle Set. Actually it's a family name of ours from my Dad. His dad, it was his uncle that performed that Sun Dance.

## Part II: French Songs, from Elders to Children

### 8. Le matelot de Montréal/The Sailor from Montreal

*Performed by Delia LaFloe (born 1904)*

Delia said: Well it must have been fall. He said, "Grand Dieu, Good Lord," he said, "this fall is long." He was lonesome. He said, "The time is very lonesome and long." Just like he couldn't stand it anymore. I suppose he didn't have any folks. "What I'm sorry for in this world, it's my mother, father, brothers, even my aunties," he said. He said, "The one, most, I love the best is Cloris." And he said, "I love her like myself." It must have been his

wife or girl friend, I don't know. He said he was going back, see. He was not in Montreal at that time. But he was going to go back to Montreal because there was nothing for him over there. He composed that song himself, he said, while on a big ship. And then he said, "Adieu." That was to the Indians. He must have been with the Indians. He said, "Good-bye, the bad people, the Indians." He was leaving to Montreal, ya.

*Grand dieu, tiens, le temps est long.*

*Que le temps qu'il est ennuyant.*

*Je m'en vais laisser les voir pour aller dans mon pays.*

*Pour aller dans mon pays, la ville de Montréal.*

*Pour aller voir m'amie qu'elle est la plus aimable.*

*Toutes les gaies (gaietés) que j'ai dans ce monde/ c'est mon père ou c'est ma mère/donc mes frères et donc mes oncles et mes tantes pareillement.*

*Le cœur de ma Clarisse que j'aime bien comme mama/ j'espère qu'on la verra car elle est la plus aimable.*

*Qui l'a composée la chansonnette?/ C'est un jeune, un matelot.*

*C'était un jour qu'il était en plein voyage*

*qu'il l'a chantée tout du long/ qu'il l'a chantée tout du long qui était bien véritable.*

*Adieu, ma chan' pillée. Adieu, ma chan' sauvage.*

*Good lord, time passes so slowly and weighs so heavily.*

*I am going to return home to Montreal. To see my friend whom I love so much.*

*My mother and my father are among the dearest joys I have in this world/ as are my uncles and my aunts, as is the heart of my Clarisse whom I love as much as my mother. I hope I will see her for I love her so much.*

*It is a young sailor who composed this song one day when he was far away; and he sang it all along, so true it was.*

*Adieu, my stolen song. Adieu, my song of the wild.*

### 9. Chanson à boire/Drinking Song

*Performed by Delia La Floe*

*J'aime à boire, moi quand j'al (je suis) dans ma folie/Comme on voit bien des fois que chacun a sa folie/Un ivrogne comme moi qui aime la bouteille/ prends ton verre et moi le mien, camarade, il faut boire.*

*I love to take a drink when I am in the mood/ as we often see among most folks/ A drinker like myself loves the bottle, and so, my friend/ you must take your glass and I'll take mine.*

### 10. Le garçon le moins heureux/The Most Unhappy Fellow

*Performed by Fred Parisien (born 1916)*

Alvina said: I was at this wedding and he was sitting there and they were singing songs, French songs. And he sang that song and he had great big tears, wiping his eyes. This is about, oh, dear, say 1930s. And what made him cry? That was his dad's song.

Anyway, this man is talking about himself. And he had a girl friend that he really loved. And he couldn't talk to her. Something, I suppose, was keeping him away from her, see, and he felt bad.

Fred said: This is a broken-hearted lover. He can't see his sweetheart. That's what he says, "I'll go to the Rocky and finish my days in a fountain."

*Je suis le garçon moins heureux moins dans ce monde.*

*J'ai ma brune. Je ne peux pas lui parler. Je m'en irai dans un bois solitaire finir mes jours à l'abris d'un rocher./ Dans ce rocher avec une haie, claire fontaine.../ J'avais bon*

dieu, j'avais bon.

Ah! mon enfant, j'aimerais ton coeur si je savais être aimé./ Ah! amis, buvons.

Caressons la bouteille.

Non. Personne ne peut prédire l'amour.

I am the unhappiest fellow in this world. I have a girl friend to whom I cannot speak./ I am going to go away to a hidden woods to finish my days in the shelter of a rock with a hedge and a quiet spring./ There I will be all right.

Ah! my child, I would love your heart if I knew how to be loved./ Ah! friends, let's drink and lift our bottles.

No. No one can predict love.

### 11. Napoléon Bonaparte

Performed by Fred Parisien

Fred said: Well, Napoleon Bonaparte, he conquered the world. For twenty-four hours. But he got wiped out. That's what he says there. "Napoleon exists no more," he says, "but they'll sing his song."

En baissant les pavillons est mort Napoléon./ Napoléon n'existerait plus. Nous parlerons de son histoire./ "Je suis fort, fort bien entouré./ Adieu Français. Adieu la France. C'est pour toujours./ Tous les regrets j'ai dans ce monde c'est ma femme et

mon cher enfant./ Adieu Français. Adieu la France. C'est pour toujours."

The flags are being lowered, Napoleon has died./ He no longer lives. We will tell his story./ "I am surrounded from all sides./ Adieu Frenchmen. Adieu France. Forever adieu./ Of all I miss in this world, it is especially my wife and my dear child./ Adieu Frenchmen. Adieu France. Forever adieu."

### 12. Old Fred's White 99

Performed by Fred Parisien

Fred said: I used to help my grandpa. That's where I first started learning how to make it. I used to be the water boy. That's way back, oh, see, in 1928, I think. I was not very big.

Old Fred sittin' on top of an old hill/ Trying to distill his moonshine/ And when his moonshine is distilled/ All his neighbors will have a good time/ And all the boys that they could drink from his bottle/ They call it the White 99.

And now old Fred is sittin' by his table/ And his bottle is empty again/ Now boys take this drunkard's warning/ Please don't drink Fred's White 99/ And when old Fred is dead and gone/ There'll be no more White 99.

### 13. Adeline

Performed by Fred Parisien

C'était un beau galant qui revient de la guerre.

Il revient de la guerre. C'était bien des années.

Il s'en va tout droit, tout droit chez son père.

"Bonjour, mon très cher père, ma mère aussi, chérie. Je viens vous demander celle que mon coeur aime."

"Adeline est morte. Elle est morte et enterrée.

Son corps dans la terre sainte, son âme en paradis."

Le beau galant s'en va tout droit sur la fosse. S'en va tout droit sur la fosse et s'en va pour prier.

"Répondez-moi, Adeline, pour la dernière fois."

Adeline répond: "Allez boire et chanter. T'en trouveras bien d'autres jeunes et comme moi."

A handsome lad was returning from war after many years away. He went straight to her father's house.

"Hello, my dear father and mother. I've come to ask you for the one I love."

"Adeline is dead. She is dead and buried: her body in the blessed earth, her soul in paradise."

The handsome lad goes straight to her grave where he pleads: "Answer me, Adeline, for the last time."

Adeline answers: "Go drink and sing. You will find others young and like me."

### 14. Chanson à boire/Bottle Song

Performed by Gregory "King" Davis (born 1908) and Alvina Davis (born 1907)

Alvina said: That would be a table song. You could sing it anytime, like for New Year. He says, "When I'm at the table, a round table, and my doll, my girl friend on my knee, if you want to get me stirred up, put the bottle in my hand."

Quand je suis à la table ronde j'ai ma catin sur mes genoux./ Cinq ou six coups qui me jettent à terre./ un coup ou deux qui m'est doux sur les lèvres./ Si voulez-vous me mettre en train, mettez-moi la bouteille dans la main.



When I am at the bar I have my cute friend on my lap./Five or six drinks will knock me out, but one or two is sweet to my lips./ If you want to get me moving, put a bottle in my hand.

### 15. Beau clair de la lune/In the Beautiful Moonlight

Performed by Gregory "King" Davis and Alvina Davis

Alvina said: It was a nice-looking man. He was strolling. And he met three nice-looking girls. And then they told him to get back. They said, "Withdraw, go back."

*A beau clair de la lune, un soir en me promenant,/ J'ai rencontré trois jolies filles./ Elles n'étaient de jolies olondes d'ici./ "Pour moi je suis de loin, beau galant, es-tu rivaux?"*

*One night as I walked by the moonlight, I met three beautiful girls./ They were not young ones from here./ "I am from afar, handsome lad, what are you doing here?"*

### 16. Ants, Mosquitoes, and Snowball Fricassé

Performed by Gregory "King" Davis and Alvina Davis

*(Il y) a le 25 de mai sur la glace un gros béliet qui fricassait des oignons avec des plattes de neige dans l'orielle d'un pigeon dessus le dos d'un lièvre./Un carosse bien agrée, quatre cra-*

*pauds bien atellés, un wawarron poudré, frisé, assis dans ce carosse./ Une fourmi, assise à côté./ Je crois qu'ils vont aux noces.*

*Il avait pour son caller un gros tøn qui jabattait./Il avait pour son cocher un maragouin d'automne qui sacrait comme un charetier./ Grand' cour qu'il faisait-il l'homme.*

*Une sauterelle mal avisée s'en va pour les voir danser./Elle est tombée du haut en bas et s'est cassé la cervelle./ Elle est morte./ Depuis ce temps-là, je laisse la nouvelle.*

*On the twenty-fifth of May a big buck sheep was making fricassé from onions with snowballs on the ice in the ear of a pigeon on the back of a jackrabbit./ In a fancy coach pulled by four well-harnessed toads, sat a bullfrog, powdered, and hair curled./ An ant was seated by his side./ I think they were going to a wedding party.*

*His caller was a large mumbling horsefly and his coachman a large fall mosquito who was swearing like a cart driver./ This buck sheep was acting like a big shot going courting.*

*A grasshopper poorly advised on her way to see them dance, fell and broke her skull./ She died./ Since then I've been spreading the word.*

### 17. Le jaloux/The Jealous Man

Performed by Gregory "King" Davis and Alvina Davis

Alvina said: I learned that from my sister when I was a little girl. She had to learn it from her mother-in-law.

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, où est-ce que tu as été hier soir?/ Cambleur, où est-ce que tu as été hier soir, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari./ J'ai été à la fontaine./ Mon dieu./ J'ai été à la fontaine./ Mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, qu'est-ce que tu as été crier à la fontaine, Cambleur?/ Qu'est-ce que tu as été crier à la fontaine, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari, j'y ai été laver mes bas de laine./ Mon dieu./ J'y ai été laver mes bas de laine./ Mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, avec qui est-ce que tu as été, Cambleur?/ Avec qui est-ce que tu as été, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari./ J'ai été avec ma soeur Marguerite./ Mon dieu, j'ai été avec ma soeur Marguerite./ Mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, ta soeur Marguerite a-t-elle la barbe noire, Cambleur?/ Ta soeur Marguerite a-t-elle la barbe noire, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari, j'ai été chez mon père./ Mon dieu./ J'ai été chez mon père./ Mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, qu'est-ce que tu as été crier chez ton père, Cambleur?/ Qu'est-ce que tu as été crier chez ton père, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari, j'ai été manger des mûrs./ Mon dieu./ J'ai été manger des mûrs, mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, y a-t-il des mûrs dans l'hiver, Cambleur?/ Y a-t-il des mûrs dans l'hiver, Cambleur?*

*Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari, il y a des mûrs chez mon père./ Mon dieu./ Il y a des mûrs chez mon père./ Mon dieu.*

*Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, lève-toi, on va aller voir, Cambleur./ Lève-toi, on va aller voir, Cambleur.*

Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari, la campagne elle était si forte./ Mon dieu./ Et l'on mange jusqu'aux branches./ Mon dieu.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, lève-toi, je te pardonne, Cambleur./ Lève-toi, je te pardonne, Cambleur.

Mon dieu, mon dieu, mon mari./ Ah! que les hommes à quoi est-ce qu'ils sont bêtes./ Mon dieu./ Ah! que les hommes à quoi est-ce qu'ils sont bêtes./ Mon dieu.

Cambleur (round about woman), Marion, where were you last night?/ Cambleur, where were you last night?

My God./ Oh my, my husband./ I went to the spring./ Oh yes./ I went to the spring./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, what did you go fetch at the spring, Cambleur?/ What did you go fetch at the spring, Cambleur?

My God./ Oh my, my husband, I went to wash my woolen socks./ Oh yes./ I went to wash my woolen socks./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, whom did you go with, Cambleur?/ Whom did you go with, Cambleur?

My God. Oh my, my husband, I went with my sister Marguerite./ Oh yes./ I went with my sister Marguerite./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, does your sister Marguerite have a black beard, Cambleur?/ Does your sister Marguerite have a black beard, Cambleur?

My God./ Oh my, my husband, I went to my father's house./ Oh yes./ I went to my father's house./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, what did you go fetch at your father's, Cambleur?/ What did you go fetch at your father's, Cambleur?

My God./ Oh my, my husband, I went to eat blackberries./ Oh yes./ I went to eat blackberries./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, are there blackberries in the winter, Cambleur?/ Are there blackberries in the winter, Cambleur?

My God./ Oh my, my husband, there are blackberries at my father's./ Oh yes./ There are blackberries at my father's./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, get up./ We are going to go and see, Cambleur./ Get up./ We are going to go and see.

My God./ Oh my, my husband, the countryside was so thick, oh yes, that we even ate the branches./ Yes, indeed.

Cambleur, Cambleur, Marion, get up./ I forgive you, Cambleur./ Get up./ I forgive you, Cambleur.

My God./ Oh my, my husband./ Oh, men are really stupid./ Oh yes./ Oh, men are really stupid./ Yes, indeed.

### 18. Le chanson du bataille/Song of the Battle

Performed by Ojibwa Indian School Children, Metha Bercier, coordinator; Dorothy Page, chorder

From the version sung by Joe Decoteau

T'was on the field of battle/ It was a crime of pain/ And all I see is troopers/ It was a sad sight to see

That's when I received a letter/ From my mother dear/ I had an empty ink pen/ To answer my dear ma

It was just as I feared/ I soaked in my blood/ That's when I broke down crying/ My heart will surely die

I took my writing pen and/ I soaked it in my blood/ To answer my dear mother/ The letter that she wrote

When she received my letter/ Written with my blood/ That's when she broke down crying/ She says my son will die

Go down on your knees on the ground/ She told her children/ And pray for your dear brother/ That's in the regiment

"To die; to die; We'll die when our turn comes/ I'd rather die in bravery/ For I will die someday

"Go ring, go ring the bells/ Go ring them soft and low/ And pray for me my dear friends/ For my poor heart has died."

### Part III: Fiddle Dance Music

#### 19. Soldier's Joy

Performed by Fred Allery (born 1922), violin; Lawrence Keplin (born 1924), violin

Fred: You know, there was one tune that this Dan Decoteau had. He said his grandfather

taught him to play that tune. I was twenty years old, maybe. He must have been seventy-five, almost. That's where I learned it from. That's the *Soldier's Joy*. He says, "That's an old tune." And according to that, that's his grandfather, not his dad, that tune would be two hundred years old.

I'm going to stay with them old fellas. And I don't care, these violin players, they want to play more classy, I'm going to stay the way I am. It's not that I can't play the fox-trots they play, I'm just not going to play them.

#### **20. Red River Jig**

*Performed by Fred Allery, violin; Lawrence Keplin, violin*

Fred said: Ever since I can remember, that was the name, *Red River Jig*. And all these old-time players like this Dan Decoteau, he was one of the top players, and this August Swain, at their time, when I was real young. They showed me how to play the *Red River Jig*. There was four of them that played it just exactly the same way. They told me not to ever change. That's the regular old-time way, the way I play. They learned that from their grandfathers, too. I stay the way I learned it from these old fellas. They said, "That's the way it's always been played and don't ever change it." And I never changed it, either.

#### **21. Quebec Reel**

*Performed by Fred Allery, violin; Norbert Lenoir (born 1941), chorder*

#### **22. Ragtime Annie, Second Change**

*Performed by Fred Allery, violin; Norbert Lenoir, chorder*

#### **23. Woodchopper's Breakdown**

*Performed by George Longie (born 1927) caller; Fred Allery, violin; and Norbert Lenoir, chorder*  
George said: Actually, they're all old calls, because from that time they just come down. I go according to what tune he plays. You match the tune. Otherwise, I call and he plays another tune, it sounds like hell. Timing, you got to have your rhythm in there. Don't tell me no different, 'cause I'm older than you...

#### **24. Irish Washer Woman**

*Performed by Ray P. Houle (born 1938), harmonica; Norbert Lenoir, chorder*

#### **25. Red Wing**

*Performed by Ray P. Houle, harmonica; Norbert Lenoir, chorder; Lawrence Keplin, violin*

### **Part IV: Contemporary Fiddle, Country Music, Rock and Roll, and Full-circle Fiddle**

#### **26. Big John McNeil Hornpipe**

*Performed by Mike Page, (born 1939), violin; Dorothy Azure Page (born 1945), chorder*

#### **27. Sir John Tupper's March**

*Performed by Mike Page, violin; Dorothy Azure Page, chorder*

Mike said: It's got more of a bagpipe beat to it. More like a Scottish march. My dad played a tune similar to this. The same thing, make his fiddle sound like a bagpipe. He was telling me...Well, he died in 1956 and in the early forties he'd tell us stories of buffalo hunts. He'd pick up his fiddle, he'd say, "Well, this is the name of this tune, this happened here," and tell us the story about it. Then he'd play it on the violin, see. Like this one march he played similar to this one. He's telling me that when they had that battle, that Riel battle, you know, somebody played that tune to mark that certain day. This march they played, whoever made it up during that battle, they seen a bunch of redcoats coming, marching. The Metchifs made up this tune on the violin then. It was handed down from there.

Tracks 28 and 29 are performed by Thomas Belgarde (born 1958), rhythm and lead vocal; Cary F. Poitra (born 1955), keyboards; Brian Johnson (born 1965), violin, lead, backup vocal; Jim "Cub" LaRocque (born 1953), bass; Dean Malatterre (born 1953), lead; and Clayton Gourneau (born 1962), drums.

#### **28. Singing for a Living**

This is a song about the hard life of a professional musician, who "sings for a living."

#### **29. One for the Road**

#### **30. Glitter and Romance**

*Performed by Rod Poitra (born 1954), rhythm, lead vocal; Cary F. Poitra, keyboard, backup vocals; Richard "Blue Eyes" Trottier (born 1962), lead; Darryl J. Trottier (born 1964), bass; Clayton Gourneau, drums; Thomas Belgarde, backup vocal*

#### **31. Space Trip to Nowhere**

*Performed by Rod Poitra, rhythm, lead vocal; Cary F. Poitra, keyboard, backup vocals; Richard "Blue Eyes" Trottier, lead; Darryl J. Trottier, bass; "Mac" Bailey (born 1962) drums; Brian Johnson, backup vocal*

#### **32. Bush Music**

*Performed by the same musicians as on tracks 29 and 30*

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## Credits

Dedicated to "Little Eagle"  
Produced by: Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman  
Recording Engineer: Bob Larson, Studio 311, Minot State College  
Recorded April 6-10, 1984, in Belcourt, North Dakota  
Mastered by Joe Gastwirt at Ocean View Digital, W. Los Angeles, California  
Design by Carol Hardy  
Cover painting by Walter Piehl  
Reissue coordinated by Anthony Seeger and Matt Walters  
Editorial Assistant: Leslie Spitz-Edson  
Reservation Liaison: Dennis "Badger" Demontigny

The French songs were transcribed by Virgil Benoit with the collaboration of Henri Létourneau. They were translated from the French by Virgil Benoit.  
*Song of the Battle* was translated from the Metchif by Metha Bercier.

A project of the North Dakota Council on the Arts and Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman, with generous assistance from the Folk Arts Program of the National Endowment for the Arts and the Turtle Mountain Tribal College, Belcourt, North Dakota, and contributions from individuals and businesses in the Turtle Mountains.

**Acknowledgements:** Turtle Mountain Community Schools, Ojibwa Indian School, ArtMain in Minot, Hillside Restaurant in Belcourt, Debbie Davis, Carty Monette, Louise Erdrich, Charles Thysell, Businesses of Rolette County, Red Wing Shoe Company, State Historical Society of North Dakota, North Dakota Humanities Council, Minnesota Historical Society; National Endowment for the Arts/Folk Arts Program Staff, North Dakota Council on the Arts Staff, Linda Vrooman Peterson and Hans Per. Also, Tony Seeger, Lori Taylor and Jeff Place of the Smithsonian Institution, Center for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, Folkways Collection, for desiring to see this work reissued. For the work you have put into this, there must be Metchif in you!

**Nicholas Curchin Peterson Vrooman** is Montana State Folklorist and Director of Folklife Programs with the Montana Arts Council. He has also held the position of State Folklorist of North Dakota. He has extensive fieldwork experience throughout the Northern Plains, which is his main area of expertise. His particular interest in Metis culture stems from his belief that it offers us a model of how Indians and Whites have been able to come together, blending their lives, to live in peace and harmony. His wife, Linda, is an educator, and his son, Hans Per Little Eagle, is a heck of a boy.

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Mountain, by Corporal  
Lewis Voelkerer, courtesy of  
Nicholas Curchin Peterson  
Vrooman*