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EDITED BY CHRIS STRACHWITZ
WITH SUGGESTIONS FROM MICHAEL DOUCET
COVER ILLUSTRATION BY KATHLEEN JOFFRION
 Unlike champions in the world of sports or classical music, where we have written documentation going back in time, Champs of Louisiana Cajun music can be judged mainly by the music which they have left behind in the grooves of old phonograph records. Almost nothing was written about Cajun music until about half way through the 20th century and recordings of this vernacular or regional music have only been available for less than eighty years.

The first recordings of Cajun music were made in 1928 by accordionist Joe Falcon who at the time was considered a very modern and popular singer. The very next year fiddler Dennis McGee in contrast, made recordings in a much older, traditional style. At that time the accordion was the new kid on the block but it soon ruled supreme! Although Joe Falcon is heard on this CD via a "live" dance hall recording from the early 1960s and several old-style fiddlers are represented, most of the early champs or "pioneers" from the 1920s and 30s have their original work available on various labels devoted to that era.

On this CD collection you will hear the singers, fiddlers and accordionists who I personally (with the help of Michael Doucet) consider the Champs of Cajun music from roughly the 1950s to the present. Let's hear it from challengers and those left out because their work is probably available on other labels, not available to us!

If you are interested in finding out more about the musicians heard on this CD may we suggest the individual Arhoolie CDs (which come with detailed notes) from which the material has been drawn. There are also several fine books which deal with this music - especially noteworthy is "CAJUN MUSIC - A Reflection Of A People" by Ann Allen Savoy (Bluebird Press - Box 941 - Eunice, LA 70535). Essential viewing is the Brazos Films production, entitled "J'AI ETE AU BAL" (I WENT TO THE DANCE - Roots of Cajun & Zydeco Music) by Les Blank, Chris Strachwitz and Maureen Gosling, which is now available on Video and DVD (BF 103), with 30 extra minutes of bonus footage on the DVD. May we also suggest this CD's companion disc: "ZYDECO CHAMPS" (Arhoolie CD 328) which features many of the best Creole musicians.

Chris Strachwitz - 2004

Joe Falcon (accordion) with Lionel Leleux (fiddle) & Theresa Falcon (drums) at a dance in Kaplan, La.
THE CHAMPS & THEIR MUSIC

1. AMEDE TWO STEP (Marc Savoy – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band: Marc Savoy – accordion; Ann Savoy – guitar; Michael Doucet – fiddle; plus Doug Lohman – bass & Paul Laughridge – drums. Recorded at a concert in Minneapolis, MN. (From Arhoolie CD 481 “Sam’s Big Rooster”)

2. GRAND TEXAS (P.O. arr: Chuck Guillory – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
Chuck Guillory – fiddle; Papa Cairo – vocal & steel guitar; plus electric guitar, bass, drums, and second fiddle. (From Arhoolie CD 473 “Grand Texas”)

Wade Fruge – fiddle; Ann Savoy – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 476 “Old Style Cajun Music”)

4. T’ES PETITE, MAIS T’ES MIGNONNE (P.O.)
Wallace “Cheese” Read – fiddle & vocal; with accordion & guitar. Recorded at a house party by Dr. Harry Oster. (From Arhoolie CD 359 “Folksongs Of The Louisiana Acadians”)

5. CREOLE STOMP (P.O.)
Joe Falcon – accordion; Lionel Leleux – fiddle; Theresa Falcon – drums; Allen Richard – guitar. Recorded at the Triangle Club in Scott, La. (From Arhoolie CD 459 “Cajun Music Pioneer”)

6. CROWLEY WALTZ (Lulu Langlinais – Johnnie Allen Music)
The Hackberry Ramblers: Luderin Darbone – fiddle; Lennis Sonnier – vocal & guitar; Edwin Duhon – bass. (From Arhoolie CD 399 “Jolie Blonde”)
7. **Bosco Stomp** (P.O.)  
**Lawrence Walker** – accordion & vocal and his Wandering Aces  
(From Arhoolie CD 427 “Cajun Honky Tonk”)

8. **En Bas Du Chène Vert**  
(D.L. Menard – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)  
**D.L. Menard** – vocal & guitar; **Dewey Balfa** – fiddle; **Marc Savoy** – accordion;  
**Jerry Whiten** – bass.  
(From Arhoolie CD 312 “Under A Green Oak Tree”)

9. **Allons a Lafayette** (P.D.)  
**Harry Choates** – fiddle & vocal;  
**Johnnie Mae Smirle** – piano; **Joe Manuel** – banjo; **B.D. Williams** – bass;  
**Eddie Pursley** – guitar.  
(From Arhoolie CD 380 “Fiddle King Of Cajun Swing”)

10. **La Valse De Minuit** (P.D.)  
**Cyprien Landreneau** – accordion; **Adam Landreneau** – fiddle & vocal; **Jerry Devillier** – harmonica; **Revon Reed** – triangle.  
(From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do Do”)

11. **Madeleine** (P.D.)  
**Isom J. Fontenot** – harmonica  
(From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do-Do”)

12. **La Valse Soleil Couché** (P.D.)  
**Octa Clark** – accordion & vocal; **Hector Duhon** – fiddle; **Michael Doucet** – guitar.  
(From Arhoolie CD 9018 “Old Time Cajun Music”)

13. **Louisiana Stomp** (P.D.)  
**Floyd LeBlanc** – fiddle & vocal with guitar and bass.  
(From Arhoolie CD 427 “Cajun Honky Tonk”)

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**Image Notes:**  
- The image contains photographs of artists:  
  - Lawrence Walker with his accordion and voice.  
  - D.L. Menard with his guitar and voice.  
  - Harry Choates and Octa Clark with instruments.  
  - Cyprien Landreneau playing accordion.  
  - Isom J. Fontenot with the harmonica.  
  - Floyd LeBlanc with his fiddle and voice.
14. LA BRANCHE DE MURIER (P.O.)
The Breaux Brothers: Amade Breaux – accordion & vocal; Ophy Breaux – guitar (From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do Do”)

15. MA NEGRESSE (P.O.)
Nathan Abshire – accordion & vocal; Dewey Balfa – fiddle & vocal; Rodney Balfa – guitar; Basile Marcentel – triangle. Recorded at the Frontier Bar in Breaux, La. (From Arhoolie CD 416 “Cajun Fais Do Do”)

16. PETITE FILLE DE LA CAMPAGNE (P.O.)
Dewey Balfa – fiddle & vocal; Marc Savoy – 2nd fiddle; D.L. Menard – guitar; Jerry Whiten – bass. (From Arhoolie CD 312 “Under A Green Oak Tree”)

17. CONTREDANSE (P.O.)
Austin Pitre – fiddle & vocal; Lurlin Lejeune – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 359 “Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians”)

18. CANNON BALL SPECIAL (P.O.)
Nathan Abshire – accordion & vocal; and his Pine Grove Boys. (From Arhoolie CD 373 “French Blues”)

19. JOLIE BLONDE (P.O.)
Austin Pitre – accordion & vocal; Will Balfa – fiddle; J.W. Pelsia – steel guitar; Preston Manuel – guitar; James Pitre – drums; Recorded at the Silver Star between Opelousas and Ville Platte, La. (From Arhoolie CD 452 “Opelousas Waltz”)
20. ONE STEP A CHAUMONT (P.D.)
Wallace “Cheese” Read – fiddle & vocal; Marc Savoy – accordion; John Stelly – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 415 “Cajun House Party”)

Wade Frugé – fiddle; Marc Savoy – accordion; Ann Savoy – guitar. (From Arhoolie CD 476 “Old Style Cajun Music”)

22. SAM’S BIG ROOSTER (Marc Savoy – Tradition Music Co., BMI, Admin. by BUG Music Co. – Hollywood, CA)
The Savoy Family Band: Marc Savoy – accordion; Ann Savoy – guitar & vocal; Wilson Savoy – keyboard; Joel Savoy – fiddle. Recorded at a concert in Chicago, Ill. (From Arhoolie CD 508 “Cajun Album”)

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