THE SAVOY-DOUCET CAJUN BAND

"Home Music with Spirits"

1. BOSCO STOMP (Vocal: Ann)
2. AUX NATCHITOCHES (Vocal: Ann & Jeanie)
3. QUELLE ETOILE (Which Star) (Vocal: Ann)
4. LA VALSE J’AIME (The Waltz I Love) (Vocal: Ann)
5. ONE-STEP DE CHAMEAU (Vocal: Michael)
7. RENO WALTZ (Vocal: Marc & Ann)
8. LACASSINE SPECIAL (Vocal: Ann & Jeanie)
9. MON ChERE BEBE CREOLE (Tribute to Dennis McGee) (Vocal: Ann)
10. JOHNNY CAN'T DANCE (Vocal: Michael)
11. LAWTELL WALTZ (Vocal: Ann)
12. EVANGELINE SPECIAL (Vocal: Ann)
13. 'TIT GALOPE POUR LA POINTE AUX PINS (Ride to Pine Point) (Vocal: Ann)
14. 'TITS YEUX NOIRS (Little Black Eyes) (Vocal: Marc & Ann)
15. PORT ARTHUR BLUES (Vocal: Michael)
16. UNE VIELLE VALSE (Hommage A Will Balfa) (Vocal: Marc)
17. CHERE BASSETTE (Vocal: Ann)
18. MELVILLE TWO-STEP
19. JOLIE BLONDE (Vocal: Marc & Ann)

Total time: 68:55

Marc Savoy - accordions & vocals on #7, 14, 16, & 19 (and fiddle on #11 & 17)
Ann Savoy - guitar & vocals
Michael Doucet - fiddle & vocals

with:
Tina Pilione - bass (on # 1, 3 - 6 & 9 - 13)
David Doucet - lead guitar on # 11.
Jeanie McLerie - guitar & vocals on #2 & 8.
Sharon Arms Doucet- washboard on # 16, 18 & 19

Produced by Chris Strachwitz
Song comments by Ann Savoy
Cover by Wayne Pope
Cover photo and hand tinting by Rick Olivier

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I've always thought of Cajun music as a social thing, something which best belonged in the intimacy of a home where it was considered a natural and enjoyable part of the family environment. I think that when you get out and start playing commercially you begin to worry too much about trivial things like whether or not you're in perfect tune, or if your act is polished enough, or if the P.A.'s clean enough, or if your presentation will be well received. You don't need to moan, groan, or twist your face around while you play folk music because that isn't natural and natural is what folk music is all about. You don't have to cut flips or play your instrument standing on your head because that's performing and folks don't perform — they just live.

There's only one thing you have to do and that's love your music with all your heart and know its place in your life. Folk music only works because of the spirit. So come on, folks — let's play some music!

Marc Savoy: Born October 1, 1940, in Eunice, La. Marc became interested in Cajun music at house parties given in his parents' kitchen. He listened to his grandfather play fiddle with Dennis McGee and got and began to play an accordion at the age of twelve. Marc set up a repair shop for accordions and repairing developed into building. He created the “Acadian” accordion, modeled after old German diatonic accordions but widely surpassing them in quality. Marc has played in various groups in Texas and Louisiana and has travelled in Canada, South America, and all over the USA. He has been an important spokesman for the maintaining of traditional Cajun life-styles and music. Today Marc runs the Savoy Music Center and Accordion Factory on the highway east of Eunice, La., where Cajun musicians gather for jam sessions, beer, and boudin, especially on Saturday mornings!

Michael Doucet: Born February 14, 1951, Mike has been playing in Cajun bands since the early 1970s when he formed his first definitive Cajun band, The Bayou Drifters. In the '70s Mike and accordionist/fiddle player Bessy! Duhon formed a band called Coteau which fused traditional Cajun music with hard-core Gulf Coast rock. He has studied traditional Cajun fiddle with various masters such as Dennis McGee, Dewey and Will Balfa, and Canray Fontenot. Mike now leads a popular progressive Cajun band called Beau Soleil and has travelled throughout the US, France, & Canada with this band. He has been an important figure in the renewal of young Cajuns' interest in their own music.

Ann Allen Savoy: Born January 20, 1952, in St. Louis, Missouri, and raised in Richmond, Virginia, Ann has played the guitar since she was 12 years old. A student of French for many years, she lived in Switzerland and France for two years. In 1974 she first came in contact with Cajun music and met and later married Marc Savoy. Ann has played rhythm guitar and sung with Marc since their marriage. Besides raising a family, Ann has compiled the book Cajun Music: A Reflection of a People, a collection of Cajun songs, photos, and interviews published in April of 1984.

Note: The songs Quelle Etoile, Mon Chere Bebe Creole, and Evangeline Special (along with others) are found in Ann Savoy's book CAJUN MUSIC: A REFLECTION OF A PEOPLE VOL.1, Bluebird Press, P.O. Box 941, Eunice, La. 70535.

The Songs:

1. BOSCO STOMP
   This is an all-time favorite.

2. AUX NATCHITOCHES
   This song was learned from Blind Uncle Gaspard. Jeanie McLerie and Ann learned it from an old record and were singing it and when Marc heard it he found the words and the melody to be so beautiful he picked up his accordion and started playing along. (Each verse is repeated.)

AUX NATCHITOCHES

Je ne la vois pas autant que je veux
Par un beau Dimanche je m'ai mis aller la voir
Je l'ai trouvee jolie(ment) malade.
Endormez-vous, sommez-vous

In Natchitoches there lived a brunette
I don't see her as much as I'd like to
On a beautiful Sunday I went to see her
I found her to be very ill.
Are you sleeping, are you dreaming?
3. QUELLE ETOILE (Which Star) (L. Levergne & S. Bergeron, Flat Town-BMI)
This song is particularly beautiful on the accordion. We learned it from songwriter Shirley Bergeron. He heard the tune as a young boy when the Veteran Playboys used to play it under the name Chinaball Special. In the song a man is looking up at the stars, wondering which star is his deceased wife. He is so lonely without her.

4. LA VALSE J'AIME (The Waltz I Love)
This haunting tune has somehow disappeared from the Cajun music since 1936 when Cleoma Breaux Falcon recorded it. I was immediately struck by the unusual beauty of the tune and the sorrow in Cleoma’s voice as she sang it.

5. ONE-STEP DE CHAMEAU
Of all the Cajun musicians of the past, Amédé Ardoin is by far Michael Doucet’s most revered accordion player and singer. This song was recorded by Amédé and Dennis McGee in 1930. We recorded it in the key of Bb so that the tonal relationship of the accordion and the fiddle would sound like the 78 rpm record. Here Mike delivers a gutsy version of the vocals, no doubt with Amédé in mind.

6. BABY AND THE GAMBLER & THE HAPPY ONE-STEP
This song was recorded in 1929 by the elusive Delma Lachney of Marksville, Louisiana. He recorded it on the fiddle, which he played left-handed. His style was very delicate and Mike emulates it here. The words of the song reflect a woman’s viewpoint. We follow the ballad with Dennis McGee’s Happy One-Step.

My baby is sick, bedded down in his bed
My husband is out gambling, surely.
He told me more lies than there are stars.
(2X)

Juste avant j’suis mariée
Mes joues étaient roses
Et après j’suis mariée
(Ils) sont plus vertes que des choux
Ma maman ma dit, “Quo’ faire tu me quittes
Ma chère ‘tit fille pour te marier?”
J’ai répondu, “Ouais, ma chère maman,
Mais tu connais, donc, que je l’aime trop gros.”

Mais surement, si j’aurais connu tout ça,
Mais j’aurais écouter ma chère maman.
Mon bébé est malade, il pleut dans le lit,
Il appelle pour toi mais tu viens pas à lui.

RENO WALTZ
That’s the place where I want to die
in the arms of my loved one,
I ask your forgiveness for what I’ve done
I’d even agree to go to big Gueydon.
Quand je vas mourir j'aimerais que tu viens
Fermer mes yeux, cher 'tit monde pour mon je m'en va
Mon je m'en va dans la terre mais pour toujours
Comme tu connais ça fait du mal jusqu'a jongler.

T'es petite, t'es mignonne,
T'es jalouse, cher 'tit monde, mais je t'aime quand même
Mon je vois plus dans le monde comment je va faire
Y a plus personne à la maison mais pour m'aider.

8. LACASSINE SPECIAL
This song has always been a favorite two-step for accordion players. Jeanie and Ann, in their group the Magnolia Sisters, made the words slightly different to sing from a woman's viewpoint.

9. MON CHERE BEBE CREOLE (Tribute to Dennis McGee)
This song was recorded by Dennis McGee and Sady Courville at their first recording session in 1929. It is a classic of early Cajun vocals and fiddle duets. The words are from Dennis, though slightly re-arranged. Basically it is the story of a person going off to wander along the roads until death because of abandonment by a loved one.

10. JOHNNY CAN'T DANCE
This song has been a favorite instrumental among Cajuns. Michael recently wrote some words to go with the title.

11. LAWTELL WALTZ
This song was first popularized by Harry Choates. One night Marc heard Rufus Thibodeaux playing it and fell in love with it. Ann learned the words from cousin Frank Savoy of Church Point.

When I die I'd like you to come
Close my eyes, dear little world, for me
I'm going
I'm going into the earth for ever
As you know it hurts to even think about it.

You are little, you are cute
You are jealous, dear one, but I love you anyway
I don't see how in the world I'm gonna make it
There's nobody in the house to love me.

Hey, but how do you think
That me I'm gonna' make it
All the time in misery
All the time suffering
All because of your words
Of your words that you said to me.

Oh, your dear ugly way
That you always had
I must forget all that
If you want to stay
With your dear woman

Well, look, you can just take
To the road and go.

Hey, this dear he hears well
Me I'm always there
Thinking about you
Thinking about you
Dear, it's all because of
All these thoughts
You've gotten me into.

Oh, you are leaving me. Yes, today,
Oh, my heart is hurting
You're leaving me down in Louisiana.

Mais gard, mais tu peux voir
Le chemin et t'en aller.
Hé, ce cher mais il entend bien
Mon j'suis tout le temps là
Après jongler à toi
Après jongler à toi
Cher, c'est jusqu'à la porte
A tous ces jonglements
Oue toi, tu m'as mis dedans.
O, ton vieux papa. Et ta bonne vieille maman,
Ils m’ont dit je peux pas t’avoir
Oui, dedans mes bras.

Oh, your old papa. And your good old mamma,
They told me I couldn’t have you
Yes, in my arms.

12. EVANGELINE SPECIAL

This is a really exciting tune for good accordion players to “show off” on. It was memorably recorded by Iris LeJeune in the late 1940s, and by Marc, himself, with Robert Bertrand in the early ’60s. (Incidentally, Robert Bertrand was Iris LeJeune’s drummer.)

Ann has changed the words a little. The story line is: “Last night you left where I was to go off and meet somebody else. Your poppa doesn’t want you to come back when other people give you advice, don’t listen to them!”

13. ‘TIT GALOPE POUR LA POINTE AUX PINS (Ride To Pine Point)

This is an old song that we learned from Adam Hebert. It has also been recorded by Cyprien and Adam Landreneau.

14. ‘TITS YEUX NOIRS (Little Black Eyes) (Lawrence Walker)

This song was written by Lawrence Walker, who is responsible for some of the most beautiful tunes and lyrics composed by a Cajun musician. His songs were very popular with the Cajun people because they were especially fine to dance to. Tits Yeux Noirs is perhaps one of Walker’s best loved tunes because of its unusual and haunting tune and because of its lonely, contemplative imagery.

This morning I found myself seated on my bed,
Crying with a heart so broken,
Because I dreamed about my dear little black eyes,
She left and I’m never going to have her.

Après midi j’suis assis dessus ma galerie
Après puerer, oui, le soleil après se coucher.
Je m’ennuie et j’adore mes chers ‘tits yeux noirs,
Elle est partie et je vas jamais, oui, l’avoir.

15. PORT ARTHUR BLUES

Port Arthur, Texas, is right across the state line, often called “Cajun Paradise.” Dewey Balfa plays a fine version of this song on his fiddle. Here it is recorded with an accordion and Michael Doucet wrote the words.

You told me last night you didn’t want to love me anymore,
Oh, that breaks my heart.
Today I saw you with my good friend
Oh, yaie, the pretty past days.
Dear baby, listen well, remember that I loved you.
Oh, the pretty past times.

Every night I’m thinking of the times that you loved me,
Oh, the pretty past times,
But now I cry just for you, a false friend, a false husband,
Oh, I have a broken heart.
Dear baby, I’m going to tell you the truth,
Oh, you, you know,
Oh, I have a broken heart.
16. UNE VIEILLE VALSE (Hommage à Will Balfa)
This is an old waltz, the origins of which no one really knows. In recent years it came to be known as the Balfa waltz because of a beautiful version of the song recorded by Will Balfa and his brothers. Will and Rodney Balfa died in an automobile accident, and in homage and admiration of his late friend, Will, Marc is recording this song. He plays it on a piano accordion in the key of E flat, perhaps adding an even eerier quality to this ancient and beautiful tune.

Quand j'ai parti de la maison
J'avais fait mon idée,
J'étais parti pour te chercher
Où mourir au bout de mon sang.

Quand j'arrivais à la maison
J'en ai trouvé un autre avec toi
Ça, ça a cassé mon cœur, yaie,
J'aime mieux mourir que voir ça.

Si j'aurais cinq jours dans ma vie
J'en donnerai trois dans les cinq
Pour passer les deux autres avec toi
J'aimerais mourir dans tes bras.

When I left the house
I had made up my mind
I had gone to look for you
Or to die at the end of my blood.*

When I arrived at your house
I found another there with you,
That, that broke my heart,
I'd rather die than see that.

If I had five days in my life
I'd give three of the five
To pass the two others with you
I'd like to die in your arms.

*to bleed to death

17. CHERE BASSETTE
This song has such a beautiful, sad sound to it. We learned it from an old recording by J.B. Fuselier and the sound of it seemed to lend itself simply to a fiddle and an open chorded guitar, so that's how we recorded it late one night.

Chère Bassette tu m'as dit tu m'aimais
Aujourd'hui mon je peux voir c'est pas vrai,
C'était tous des acrobates tu me faisais.

Dear 'short woman' you said you loved me
Today I can see that it's not true.
It was all just things you made me believe.

18. MELVILLE TWO-STEP

19. JOLIE BLONDE
Is there a Cajun song that has been requested, recorded, or imitated more than Jolie Blonde? Well, we just had to do this late night, piano accordion version of it, in two part harmony.

Hey, my pretty blonde, you left me to go off,
To go off with another.
With another old good-for-nothing who doesn't love you better.

Hey, my pretty blonde, to die would be nothing,
It's just staying in the earth forever,
Hey, you criminal.*

*used to mean a person who hurts people and does wrong and doesn't think twice about it.
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Over 60 Minutes of Classic Cajun Music

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