the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band

Sam’s Big Rooster

the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band

Sam’s Big Rooster
The Savoy-Doucet cajun band

"SAM'S BIG ROOSTER"
(Le Gros Guime a Sam)

1. SAM’S BIG ROOSTER (Le Gros Guime a Sam) (3:56) (Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music Co. - BMI)

2. BE CAREFUL, YOU’RE BREAKING MY HEART (Attention, C’est Mon Coeur Qui Va Caser) (4:14) (Aldus Roger - Flat Town Music - BMI)

3. TWO STEP POUR MILTON ADAMS (3:41) (Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

4. SHE MADE ME LOSE MY MIND (3:13) (Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

5. MARDI GRAS JIG (6:03) (Aldus Roger)

6. DURALDE (3:40) (Iry Lejeune - Tek Music Co.)

7. LES CULOTTES A LOLLYPOP (Lollypop’s Underwear) (2:37) (Gerard Dole - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)


9. SI TU VEUX AMUSER (If You Want To Have Fun) (2:50) (Marc & Ann Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)


11. ALTON’S TWO STEP (2:36) (Traditional, arr. by Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music)

12. LA VALSE D’EVA (4:18) (Wade Frugé - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)


14. JOLIE BASSETTE (3:40) (Canray Fontenot - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

15. DOG GUIDRY MEDLEY ("Tit Maurice" & "Doc’s Fiddle") (3:27) ("Doc’s Fiddle" - Michael Doucet / Do-Say Music Co.)


17. HOP, SKIP, AND JUMP (4:14) (Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

18. C’ETAIT DESSUS UN TRISTE SAMEDI (It Was on a Sad Saturday) (2:11) (Ann Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

19. AMÉDÉ TWO STEP (Two Step Pour Amadée Ardoin) (6:40) (Marc Savoy - Tradition Music Co. c/o Bug Music - BMI)

* = Live cuts.

The Savoy-Doucet Band came together in the late seventies, after Ann Allen married Marc Savoy and Cajun music in 1977 and moved to the heart of Cajun country in Eunice, Louisiana. Marc was involved in various groups at the time, including a trio with guitarist D. L. Menard and fiddler Dewey Balfa. Over the next few years the new trio evolved out of the constant jam sessions at Marc’s place. Michael and Marc had met in the early 70’s, when Michael had taken a trip from Lafayette to introduce himself to Marc, who already had a reputation as an advocate of traditional Cajun music and culture.

With this, the fourth Savoy-Doucet CD release, their collective sound is familiar enough that the individual elements that make it up might be taken for granted. Of course the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, but each trio member brings special talents to the mix. Besides contributing solid guitar work and most of the vocals, Ann chooses many of the older songs that the group performs from her vast collection of older records. She also writes convincingly in the idiom, as songs like “Party Girl’s Blues” and “It Was on a Sad Saturday” on the present collection demonstrate. The ability to compose new material that sounds traditional is something that’s much rarer and more demanding than might be supposed. Ann and Marc, individually and together, have made many memorable contributions in this regard. It can only be called a wonderful accident of nature that Ann’s voice is so well-suited to Cajun music. Her natural timbre is remarkably like that of Acadian singers, and she has picked up stylistic devices like falling at the end of phrases so well that it is all second nature by now. Like Marc and Michael, her knowledge and love of the music is immeasurable, as anyone who has had the pleasure of spending time with her book, “Cajun Music: A Reflection of a People,” can attest.

Michael Doucet’s matchless fiddle work is one of the most important ingredients of the Savoy-Doucet gumbo. He has not only mastered the standard stylistic elements of Cajun fiddling, like the characteristic slides and double-stops, he has contributed innumerable little extensions of the vocabulary. Besides this kind of evolution of the music from within, Michael also throws in licks that have been imported from bluegrass and Western Swing when he feels the urge. And then there are licks that defy categorization, like the wild stuff he gets into on “Mardi Gras Jig.” It is always revealing to compare the Savoy-Doucet versions of the older songs to earlier recordings, and Michael’s playing on Iry LeJeune’s “Duralde” is a good example.
Michael’s fiddling here is definitely based on what Wilson Granger did on LeJeune’s record, but he manages to capture the feel of the original without actually copying it. Most of the really great traditional music in the world works this same way. Ralph Stanley, for example, studied the records of Charlie Poole and Grayson & Whitter, and on the occasion of meeting Roscoe Holcomb queried the older man about the “real, old way” that certain songs were sung. Robert Johnson’s music was solidly based on the work of Charlie Patton, Son House, Leroy Carr, and others. Often passages that sound like what the earlier players might have done are actually completely different in terms of instrumental technique. For this reason the contributions of traditional players are often overlooked, though they are far more significant than the empty technical displays that many “contemporary” instrumentalists use to impress their audience.

In the category of “special guest performer” is Marc and Ann’s son Joel, who plays bass on most of the tracks. This record also marks Joel’s debut on fiddle. He plays lead on “Alton’s Two Step,” for example, has been recorded by Joel Sonnier and Steve Riley, and many have assumed it was actually written by the legendary artist for whom it is named, Amédé Ardoin (whose great recordings can be heard on Arhoolie 7007). This is, of course, a great if back-handed compliment to the composer.

Marc Savoy is, of course, a master of this kind of original-traditional playing, having grown up in the culture and crusaded tirelessly about Marc’s playing are the great rhythmic flexibility and his ability to somehow be irresistibly forceful and heartbreakingly pretty at the same time. Marc also writes some great songs, like “She Made Me Lose My Mind” or the unique title track here, and his instrumentalists are widely played by other Cajun artists, not only in Louisiana but throughout the country and even abroad. “Amédé Two Step,” for example, has been recorded by Joel Sonnier and Steve Riley, and many have assumed it was actually written by the legendary artist for whom it is named, Amédé Ardoin (whose great recordings can be heard on Arhoolie 7007). This is, of course, a great if back-handed compliment to the composer.

In the category of “special guest performer” is Marc and Ann’s son Joel, who plays bass on most of the tracks. This record also marks Joel’s debut on fiddle. He plays lead on “Alton’s Two Step.”

From such an auspicious start I think it’s safe to assume we’ll hear lots more of Joel in the years to come. He also supervised the recording, which was done at the Savoy’s outdoor kitchen. The love of the tradition is evident in everything this exemplary group performs, and that includes every aspect of the music, from the saddest of ballads to jolliest of good-time tunes. Sometimes, especially when playing for dances, the group is augmented by musicians they have gotten to know in their numerous tours over the years. The wide-open feeling of these occasions is captured on two live tracks here, recorded in Minneapolis with members of a fine local group, The Bonetones Cajun Band. It’s hard to sit still for these tracks!

Duck Baker
January, 2000
Richmond, California

1. SAM’S BIG ROOSTER
(Le Gros Guime a Sam)
(Marc Savoy)

When Marc’s mother was a small child there lived in her neighborhood a farmer by the name of Sam who had an unusually large red rooster. As the rooster’s fame spread people began referring to anything unusual as “le gros guime a Sam” (Sam’s big rooster)!

Marc, being an astute observer of nature, thinks we can learn a lot about human nature by watching animals’ habits.

Moi je cours les poules tous les grands jours
Que ca pond des oeufs pour Sam manger
Ma crete est rouge et mes eperons sont grands
Ma viande est dur mais c’est ca, ca prend.

C’est mon qui chante au barre du jour
Tous les matins quand ca fait noir
Ca fait le soleil vouloir se lever
Ca fait les poules envie de saucer

Si j’arrete de faire to us ca que je dis
Je vas deviner gumbo dans le bol a Sam.

Me, I chase chickens all the day long
So they’ll lay some eggs for Sam to eat
My comb is red, my spurs are long
My meat is hard, but that’s what it takes.

It’s me who sings at the break of day
Every morning when it’s still dark
That’s what makes the sun want to come up
That’s what makes the chickens want to jump up and down.

It takes all that and a little bit more
To be the cock in the chicken yard
If I stop doing all the things I’ve said
I’ll become gumbo in Sam’s big bowl.

STOP
2. BE CAREFUL, YOU'RE BREAKING MY HEART
(Attention, C'est Mon Coeur Qui Va Casser)
(Aldus Roger)

This is an old Aldus Roger song, beautifully sung on the original record by our friend, drummer Vernon Bergeron.

2. Look out, we are getting separated
2. Look out, it's my heart that's going to break.
2. Every day it keeps me thinking
2. Look out, it's my heart that's breaking.
2. Every day thinking,
2.每 night crying
2. Look out, we are separating
2. Look out, it's my heart that's going to break.
2. Every day looking for you
2. Every night praying for you

3. TWO STEP POUR MILTON ADAMS
(Marc Savoy)

Milton Adams is one of the last of the very talented accordion players representing the dance bands of the 1950's and '60's. Although he is directly responsible for a major part of the survival of Cajun accordion music and in the teaching of many of the younger generation, Milton goes today largely unappreciated and un-noticed. Marc wrote this tune in his honor.

3. J'avais une tite fille dedans le village
3. Elle disait, ouais, qu'elle m'aimais
3. Quand mon j'étais là il y avait rien de plus beau
3. Tout quelque chose était bon jusqu'à j'suis parti.
3. Quand j'arrivais un dimanche matin
3. Je l'ai trouvé avec un autre
3. Moi, j'ai perdu ma bonne idée
3. C'est là, ouais, que moi, je l'ai tiré.
3. Aujourd'hui, mon j'suis perdu
3. Et dans les bois après me sauver
3. Il y a plus de chance pour me pardonner
3. Aujourd'hui toute ma vie est gaspillée.

4. SHE MADE ME LOSE MY MIND
(Marc Savoy)

Marc wrote the words to this song in the 1960's when he first recorded it with D.L. Menard doing the vocal.

4. I had a little girl in the village
4. Who said she loved me
4. When I was there there was nothing more beautiful
4. Everything was good until I left.
4. When I got there one Sunday morning
4. I found her with another
4. I lost my mind
4. I took my gun and shot her.
4. Today I'm lost and
4. In the woods trying to save myself
4. There's no chance that I will be pardoned
4. Today all my life is wasted.

5. MARDI GRAS JIG
(Aldus Roger)

Originally recorded by Aldus Roger, then by Marc and Dewey Balfa in the 1970's, this simple, one chord little tune just rocks! This cut was recorded live in Minneapolis at the Medina Ballroom with our great friends from the Bonetones Cajun Band, Doug and Paul.
6. DURALDE
(Iry Lejeune)

Here Michael sings and fiddles one of our favorite Iry Lejeune songs. Originally this was recorded as a fiddle song but Marc plays it on a D accordion in the key of G.

Dis bye-bye à ton pop et ta mom, malheureuse,
Pour t’en revenir, mais ouais, m’rejoindre là bas à
Duralde
Tu m’avais promis, fait des promesses,
de revenir me rejoindre, catin,
Avant trop longtemps moi je te vois après t’en revenir.

‘Gardez donc, tu croyais, ta famille aurait toujours
Pris pour toi, parce ce que tu m’as fait quitter catin,
À bien jongler, toi, tu vois, pour toi même, bébé
Tous nos chagrins qu’on est après se passer,
Ça fait pas de bien.

C’est trop tard pour les enfants s’en revenir,
Se lamenter pour toi, c’est toi qu’a fait la grosse erreur
Tu m’as dit, toi, bébé, tu voulais plus me voir
C’est trop tard, tu vas revenir peut-être un bonjour.

Say bye-bye to your pop and your mom, unhappy one
And come back to the house to meet me, over in
Duralde.
You promised me, made me promises,
to come back
Before too long, I see you returning.

Look, you thought your family would always
Take up for you, because you made me leave,
But now, think well and you will see for yourself
That all these sorrows we’re going through
Aren’t doing anyone any good.

It’s too late for the children to come back crying for you
It’s you who made the big mistake
You said, baby, you didn’t want to see me anymore
It’s too late, maybe you’ll come back some day.

7. LES CULOTTES A LOLLYPOP
(Lollypop’s Underwear)
(Gerard Dole)

One of the earliest appreciators, scholars, and European players of Cajun music is the French musician/writer Gerard Dole. Besides his many recordings of rare Cajun tunes he has written many great Cajun style tunes. This is one of them that he sang at a party outside of Paris – it won our hearts. Marc woke up the next morning whistling the tune, and in keeping with the Cajun style, figured it out and added a “turn” or “B” part.

C’est pas tout qui’ un qui connait,
les culottes à Lollypop
Les petites et les grandes, les culottes à Lollypop
Les longues et les courtes, les culottes à Lollypop
Les grosses et les fines, les culottes à Lollypop.
(Etc. Les blanches et les noires,
les rouges et les jaunes..)

Not everybody knows
Lollypop’s underwear
The small and the big, Lollypop’s underwear
The long and the short, Lollypop’s underwear
The coarse and the fine, Lollypop’s underwear
(The white and the black, Lollypop’s underwear
The red and the yellow, Lollypop’s underwear..)

8. J.B.’S WALTZ
(arranged by Michael Doucet)

Michael heard the late great Cajun fiddler J.B.Fusilier playing this piece on a collection of string band 78’s (Arhoolie CD 7014 - “Cajun Breakdown”). He took the basic melody and played it through several other keys!
9. SI TU VEUX AMUSER
(If You Want To Have Fun)
(Marc & Ann Savoy)
Marc composed the bridge on this song. He had heard a zydeco song that was similar to the other part. The song is played in "G" on the "D" accordion. Ann put some Creole words to the melody, vaguely based on the Louis Jordan song, "Let The Good Times Roll."

He, tout quinqu'un, allons amuser
Si tu veux amuser te gain pour dépenser largent
Reste pas la après galoper ta bouche
Tu vis juste un fois et quand tu mouri t'es gone.

He, everybody, let's have some fun
If you want to have fun, you've got to spend some money!
Don't stand there, running your mouth,
You only live once and when you die you're gone.

Quitte les bons temps rouler, quitte les bons temps rouler
Mais je fou pas mal si t'es vilaine ou beau
Quitte les bons temps rouler, quitte les bons temps rouler
Mais je fou pas mal si t'es vieux ou jeune.

Quitte les bons temps rouler, quitte les bons temps rouler
Bien, je fou pas mal si tu es vilaine ou beau
Quitte les bons temps rouler, quitte les bons temps rouler
Mais je fou pas mal si tu es vieux ou jeune.

10. LA BONNE VIE
(The Good Life)
(Marc & Ann Savoy)
Marc wrote the melody of this waltz as another tribute to the late, great Amédé Ardoin. Once he had composed the lovely melody Ann wrote the words about how the simple things around us in nature speak a simple truth. Our son, Joel, plays lead fiddle on this song, backed up by Michael.

Je m'ai réveillé sur l'avant jour
J'ai entendu les chouettes criés
Et ça disait dans leur langage
La vie est belle, la vie est bonne.

I got up before daylight
I heard the owls crying,
They were saying in their language,
"Life is beautiful, life is good."

J'ai travaillé dans les clos
J'ai vu les plantes après pousser
Et ça disait dans leur langage
La vie est belle, la vie est bonne.

I worked in the fields
I saw the plants pushing up
And they said in their language,
"Life is beautiful, life is good."

La 'rite lumière dans ma maison
Ma belle famille autour de la table
Ouais,
Et ça disait dans leur langage
La vie est belle, la vie est bonne.

The little light in my house
My beautiful family around the table
They are saying in their language,
"Life is beautiful, life is good."

Et tous les soirs quand ça fait noir
Les étoiles brillent dedans le ciel
Et ça disait dans leur langage
La vie est belle, la vie est bonne.

And every night when it gets dark
The stars shine in the sky
And they say in their language,
"Life is beautiful, life is good."

11. ALTON'S TWO STEP
(arranged by Marc Savoy)
When the Cajuns first saw amplified instruments they were mystified as to where the sound was coming from. Marc recalls a local farmer who wanted an electric guitar, so he cut the end off the guitar cable and wired a wall plug to it. When he plugged it in to the wall he almost electrocuted himself. The first night Marc heard this song he was twelve years old and was at a party at a camp. A guest, Alton Landreneau, was playing his Monarch accordion into an amp, the first amp any of them had ever seen! This impressed Marc so much that he never forgot the tune. He and his father went home and tried to figure out how it was possible to have an electrified accordion. They thought the amp was pushed by the air in the bellows!
12. LA VALSE D'ÉVIA
(Wade Fruge)
We learned this tune from our dear deceased friend, Wade Fruge. His cousin Evia taught it to him. (Check out Wade singing it on his CD, Arhoolie 476)

13. PARTY GIRL’S BLUES
(Ann Savoy)
Ann wrote this song about liking to stay out all night just to have fun. It’s a song for all you night owl party dolls.

Hier au soir j’étais au bal,
J’étais mais moi toute seule
Plus personne qui voulait, mais rester,
Mais j’suis partie quand le soleil s’est levé.
J’ai pus un sou dedans ma poche
Ça tracasse pas ma bonne humeur
J’ai m’amusée mais presque toute la nuit
Ouais, j’ai quité quand le soleil s’est levé.

Mon vieux cheval il est proche cerveau
P’us de mais dans mon magasin
J’ai tout vendu mes affaires
Pour m’amuser jusqu’au bout de la nuit.
Mon linge est tout froncé
Et mes cheveux est tout mélangé
Il y a plus rien pour me tracasser
Je vas rester jusqu’au soleil levé.

Last night I was at the dance,
I was all by myself
No one wanted to stay, but
I left when the sun was coming up.
I don’t have a penny in my pocket,
but that doesn’t worry my good humor,
I had fun all night
And left when the sun was coming up.

My horse is nearly dead,
no more hay in my barn,
I sold everything I had
To have fun all night.
My clothes are all wrinkled,
and my hair is all tangled,
There’s nothing left to worry me
I’m gonna’ stay ‘til the sun comes up.

14. JOLIE BASSETTE
(Canray Fontenot)
We have always loved this tune by Canray Fontenot, “Pretty Little Short Woman!”

15. DOC GUIDRY MEDLEY
Doc was one of the greatest fiddlers to come out of Scott, Louisiana. He composed many of the most well known Cajun songs, among them “Colinda.” Michael put together this tribute to Doc, and Joel Savoy plays second fiddle on it. The medley consists of “Tit Maurice” and “Doc’s Fiddle.”

16. UN TRAMP SUR LA RUE
(The Tramp on the Street)
Popularized by the late great Molly O’Day in the country music field but adapted or cajunized by Nathan Abshire.

Un jour j’étais assis et j’étais assis a jourdu’hui, je m’ai mis à ringer
À qu’a arrivé des anées passés,
J’abandonné tout ça j’aimais pour me tourner et entraîner
Aujourd’hui j’après mourir comme un tramp sur la rue.

Un jour j’étais assis et j’étais assis à jourdu’hui,
Et là il y a qui qu’un qui a mis sa main sur mon épaule,
Et quand je m’ai tourné pour voir, c’était un belle 
tite fille
Et elle m’a dit, “Pop. C’est moi qui est ta fille.”

Moi je m’ai mis à observer, je m’ai mis à pleurer
Ça a cassé mon cœur en deux, ça change mon idée,
De voir ça j’avait fait, condamné tout ça j’aimais
Aujourd’hui j’après mourir comme un tramp sur la rue.

One day I was sitting thinking
About what happened years ago,
I abandoned my family to go off and roam
And today I am dying like a tramp on the street.

One day I was sitting, being a bum
And someone came up to me and put her hand on my shoulder
When I turned to look, it was a beautiful young girl,
And she said, “Pop, it’s me, your daughter.”

I started looking, I started crying,
That broke my heart in two, it changed my mind,
To see what I had done, condemned everyone I loved
And today I am dying like a tramp on the street.

17. HOP, SKIP, AND JUMP
(Marc Savoy)
Marc wrote this rocking accordion two-step.
18. C'ETAIT DESSUS UN TRISTE SAMEDI
(It Was on a Sad Saturday)
(Ann Savoy)
Ann wrote this song about the horrors of Hurricane Audrey in 1957.

It was on a sad Saturday,
a day that totally changed my life
God got angry,
broke up Grand Isle with his sea.

The sea came in the night
and took our three babies,
Our tears and cries fell,
but the sea continued to ruin everything.

On the boards of our destroyed house,
among the dead we floated,
And then our only dear son
was bitten by a snake.

Oh, yes, my dear, we were saved,
but without family and with no more spirits,
When God wants to send his waters,
listen, tremble, don't turn your back.

19. AMEDÉ TWO-STEP
(Ann Savoy)

Though we had recorded this song when Marc first composed it, we loved this recording of it with
the Bonetone's bass player Doug Lohman and their drummer Paul Laughridge. Marc says he would
gladly hitch-hike to Minneapolis to play with Doug and Paul.

Produced by the Savoy - Doucet Cajun Band
Executive producer: Chris Strachwitz
Recorded by Joel Savoy at Studio Savoie Faire near Eunice, La. (This same small outdoor kitchen was the home of many great Cajun music parties throughout Marc's childhood in the back of his parents' home)
Mixed by Anthony Daigle Audio - Lafayette, La.
Mastered by Mike Cogan / Bay Records - Berkeley, Ca.

the musicians:
Marc Savoy - accordion (& vocal on #1)
Ann Savoy - guitar (& vocals on # 2, 4, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, & 18)
Michael Doucet - fiddle (& vocals on # 6 & 18)
Joel Savoy - bass, & lead fiddle on # 10, 2nd fiddle on # 11 & 15.

All photos by Philip Gould, except page 9
photo by Max from St. Louis.

Transcriptions, translations, and comments
on each song by Ann Savoy

Graphic Design by Morgan Dodge
© & © 2000 by
Arhoolie Productions Inc.

Also available by the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band on Arhoolie Records:
CD/Cass 316 “Two-Step d’ Amédé”
CD 389 “Home Music with Spirits”
CD/Cass 418 “Live! At the Dance”

ARHOOLIE RECORDS
Blues • Cajun • Tex-Mex • Zydeco • Country • Jazz • Regional • World Music
For our complete illustrated catalog of CDs, Cassettes, Videos & more, send $3 to:
Arhoolie Catalog, 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito, CA 94530, USA
To order by phone, call toll free: 1.888.ARHOOLIE (1-888-274-6654)
website: www.arhoolie.com • e-mail: mail@arhoolie.com
The Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band, featuring accordionist Marc Savoy, singer/guitarist Ann Savoy and fiddler Michael Doucet, are no doubt the premier traditional Cajun band active today. This CD spotlights not only this trio’s remarkably tight interplay resulting from having played together for almost 20 years, but also their individual talents as soloists. Most of the 19 cuts were recorded by Joel Savoy in the family’s small studio near Eunice, La. but two “Live” cuts (*) are also included. Booklet includes lyrics to the songs in French and English.