Thus, he has had the opportunity to learn in person from a
access to the oral tradition of one or two master musicians
or, at best, the 78’s of Cajun music recorded in the Thirties,
notions. Rather than being isolated in one community with
were always putting you down. To me it was an oral language
was always this conflict about how you said something. They
and not a written language. Learning to read and write is fine,
usage and what was considered appropriate grammatical
in high school when we were learning Parisian French, there
there were some real summits musically like the
'Mardi Gras Song', or the way we played 'Acadian Two-Step'.
Desire great regional acclaim, the disappointment of uncon-
summated record deals and the group’s internal pressures
toward musical diversity blew the lid off the pot, and Coteau
disbanded in 1977. Beausoleil, however, the traditional
musical after ego of Coteau, persisted.
Mike has been researching and learning from traditional
French folk fiddlers as well as presenting a folk music-in-the-
schools program with Dewey Balfa since 1976. He now had
a greater chance to open up all the music of the region,
joining with his friend Austin Sonnier to hear and play Creole
jazz & a Bunk Johnson of New Iberia and the Martelles from
Opelousas. The black Creole folk music called zydeco or
c佐ico also was important. Of the black Creole fiddler,
Canet Fonhotten from Welsh, Mike notes, "He was my
black music influence. Canetra is a creative genius."
A first Beausoleil LP was made for Pete Marconi EMI
in France in 1976. The second and best-known LP called “The
Spirit of Cajun Music,” was on Swallow Records in Louisiana.
It featured Mike with European chanteuse Franscoise
Schauber as well as Hector Duhon and Bessiy Duhon
providing a link to local Cajun traditional music. A third LP
was recorded in Jennings and released in Canada as Les
Amis Cadens, at which point the current vocalist, Amnick
Colbert from Belgium, joined the group and added old French
and sacred tradition influences. The band on this LP, in addition
to Mike and Amnick includes: Errol Verret, from Henderson
in the Atchafalaya Basin, a former accordionist with the
undersung Cypress Street Band; Billy Ware on percussion;
Mike’s brother David Doucet on guitar, Tommy Comeaux,
who played mandolin with Coteau in its later stages;
Tommy Alesi on drums and Robert Vigneaux on acoustic bass.
This fourth LP is Michael Doucet and Beausoleil’s best
recording because they have adhered more closely to the
tradition and have also developed their own style to a greater
degree. If this sounds like a contradiction in terms, give a
listen as they “Did Beausoleil!”

Nicholas R. Spitzer
Folklorist, State of Louisiana
Baton Rouge, December 1981

TWO-STEP A WILL BALFA (+)
DONNEZ MOI PAULINE (+)
LE TWO-STEP A MIDLAND (+)
LA VALSE DES JONGLEURS (+)
ACADIAN BLUES (+)
LE BAL A CHATAIGNIER (+)

ADIEU ROZA (+)
SI J’AURAI DES AILES (+)
AWESOME OSSUN TWO-STEP (+)
MADAME SOSTAIN (*)
L’AFFAIRE DE PERRODIN (*)
LES PETITS YEUX NOIRS (*)
LE BOZO TWO-STEP (*)

Michael Doucet—fiddler & vocals (and mandolin solo on B7)
David Doucet—guitar
John "Billy" Ware—triangle and spoons
Robert Vigneaux—bass
Errol Verret—accordion
Tommy Alesi—drums (*)
Tommy Comeaux—mandolin (*)
Amnick Colbert—vocal & recorder (*)

Transcriptions and translations of the songs are inside the jacket.
Produced by Chris Strachwitz & Michael Doucet
(+ recorded at St. Mary’s Chapel, Lafayette, La.
May 19, 1981
(+ recorded at Marc Savoy’s Music Center, Eunice, La. May 29, 1981
both sessions recorded by Chris Strachwitz on a Nagra IV-S tape recorder with two Neumann KM 861
microphones.
(*) recorded at Master Trak Sound Studios in Crowle, La. May 26, 1981
Mike Miller—engineer.

PRODUCER’S NOTE
This album started when I asked Michael Doucet to help me
record an anthology of Cajun Fiddle Styles (Arhoolie 5028)
where, besides some of the best old-timers, I wanted to include
several selections by Michael himself since he is one of the
best contemporary Cajun fiddlers with a highly individualistic style.
The focus of the Fiddle anthology is on the fiddlers and their
styles with only minimum accompaniment. As we started to
record at St. Mary’s Chapel, where Michael works, I was
absolutely knocked out by the sound of just Michael with only
his brother on guitar and occasional bass, and playing the
song. We both liked the sound and kept recording quite a
number of tunes. As other members of Beausoleil walked in that
night it was obvious that we should make a full album of this
remarkable aggregation and here is the result—hope you enjoy it

(Chris Strachwitz)
Cover photo by Philip Gould (author of the excellent
photo book LES CADENS D’ASTEUR-Today’s Cayuns)
Cover by Epp Productions: Wayne Pope, Art
Director; Dennis Kiernan, Designer

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Transcriptions and Translations
by Ms. Sharon Arms

Valse a Will

Chère bébé, t'as fait du mal
O yaie, quoi t'as fait?
Tu étais là après danser
Avec un autre tu va tomber
Chère bébé, j'ai pour toi,
Toute ma vie je t'espérais
Oui, si tu veux m'aimer
O yaie, ça fait frémir.

O yé yaie, mon coeur fait mal
A cause de toi, ma chère Joline.
Pourquoi t'as, t'as fait du mal?
O yaie, fais pas ça.

O bébé, la plus jolie
Moi je voudrais juste de dire
Si tu veux danser avec moi
O bébé, c'est ça fait bien.
Hé Will!

Will's Waltz

Babe, you've done me wrong
Oh yaie, what have you done?
You were there dancing
With another, you're going to roll
Babe, I'm yours
All my life I've waited for you
Yes, if you'll love me
Oh yaie, it makes me shiver.

O yé yaie, my heart aches
Because of you, dear Joline.
Why have you done me wrong?
O yaie, don't do that.

Oh darling, the prettiest of all
I just want to tell you
If you want to dance with me
Oh babe, that makes it all right.

Pauline

O yaie, donnez-moi Pauline
O Pauline, c'est la seule que moi j'aimais.
O Pa Janvier, donnez-moi Pauline
O 'tite Pauline, elle est la plus belle.

O dis pas ça si tu va la mettre dans un couvent
Chère bébé, comment je va faire moi tout seul?
Mais dans un couvent il faudra prier au bon Dieu
Au bon Dieu ça va faire
Tous les jours et toutes les nuits.

O Pa Janvier, donnez-moi Pauline
O tu connais bien, c'est la seule que moi je peux avoir.
O dis pas ça, Pauline n'est pas là
Ouais, dans la terre, ouais trois jours, 'y a pas longtemps.

O joline, comment je va faire tout seul?
Chère Pauline, t'es enterrée
O yé yaie, comment je va faire?
O bon soir, bon soir, chers 'tits yeux noirs
Pauline, je suis pour toi
Si enterrée, je t'aime quand même.

Pauline

O yaie, give me Pauline
O Pauline, she's the only one I've ever loved.
O Pa Janvier, give me Pauline
O Pauline, she's the most beautiful of all.

Oh, don't say that you're going to put her in a convent
Babe, what would I do all alone?
In a convent you must pray to the good Lord
Pray to the good Lord
Every day and every night.

O Pa Janvier, give me Pauline
O you well know, she's the only one for me.
Oh, don't say that, Pauline's not there
In the ground, three days isn't long.

O my beauty, how will I make it alone?
Dear Pauline, you're buried
O yé yaie, what will I do?
Good night, good night, dear little black eyes
Pauline, I'm yours
Even if you're buried, I love you anyway.
Midland Two-Step

O chère bébé, gardez-donc mais quoi tu m’as fait
T’as fait la misère, o chagrin
Ouais chagrin que moi j’ai eu
Oh, the pain that I’ve felt
O he ‘tit coeur, ‘y a pas personne qui veut les voir.
I’m all alone at my house
Mais moi j’ai seul à la maison
Veux t’en aller ouais avec moi?
Do you want to go with me?
O, mais gardez donc le chagrin que tu m’as fait
Chère bébé, mais je mérite pas ça
Oui catin malheureux
Heartless woman
O ouais plus belle t’es plus belle
Your beauty isn’t pretty any more
Pourquoi faire mais les misères
Why do you make me miserable
Mais ouais dans moi
Oh me
Et moi tout seul je t’espérais.
All alone I waited for you.
O ’y a pas longtemps, ‘y a pas longtemps
Que moi je t’ai vue, chère bébé
All alone in the house
Mais moi t’ai donc emmenée
For aller ouais ensemble.

Acadian Blues

Chère bébé, tu connais
Babe, you know
Tu m’as fait les promesses
You made promises
Fait les, o les promesses
Made promises
Comment je va faire, comment je va faire
What will I do, what will I do
Moi tout seul a la maison?
All alone in the house?
Toi, t’as fait les promesses
You made promises
Chère bébé longtemps
Babe, a long time ago
Ouais longtemps passé
Yes, a long time ago
Comment je va faire, mais comment je va faire
What will I do, what will I do
Ouais tout seul à la maison?
All alone in the house?

Bal à Chatagnier

Chère bébé oublie ça
Babe, don’t forget
Tout j’ai dis asteur faché
Everything I just said, angry
Oui j’ai faché ouais après toi
Yeah, I’m mad at you
Chère bébé tu maltraité
Babe, you’ve done me wrong.
Oui t’as dansé toute la nuit
Yes, you danced all night
Avec un autre, pourquoi t’as fait?
With someone else, why did you do it?
Oui t’as jamais répondu
Yeah, you never answered me
Chère bébé, je peux pas oublier.
Babe, I can’t forget it.
Gardez donc, oui bébé
Look, baby
Ouais tout ça t’as maltraité
How you’ve mistreated me
Si tu veux aller avec moi
If you want to come with me
Peut-être je va te pardonner
Maybe I’ll forgive you
O bébé, oui bébé
Oh babe, oh babe
Tu connais je va t’aimer toujours
You know I’ll always love you
Chère bébé, la plus jolie
Babe, the prettiest of all
Pourquoi t’as pas dansé avec moi?
Why didn’t you dance with me?

Chataigner Ball

Babe, don’t forget
Everything I just said, angry
Yeah, I’m mad at you
Babe, you’ve done me wrong.
Yes, you danced all night
With someone else, why did you do it?
Yeah, you never answered me
Babe, I can’t forget it.
Look, baby
How you’ve mistreated me
If you want to come with me
Maybe I’ll forgive you
Oh babe, oh babe
You know I’ll always love you
Babe, the prettiest of all
Why didn’t you dance with me?
Adieu Roza
Adieu Roza, je suis content t'es pas ma belle
Adieu Roza, je suis content t'es pas ma soeur
Adieu Roza, o demain c'est pas dimanche
Juré ma Lord...

Si J’aurais des Ailes
Et où mais moi je va
Mais ça je conviens pas
O si j’aurais des ailes
Comme tous les hirondelles
J’irais me reposer
J’irais me reposer
O près de toi la belle
Pour raconter mes peines
Pour raconter les peines
Et ensuite des amitiés.

Allons à la cantine
Pour boire et bien rire
Et bien de se divertir
O nous et nos amis

O parlez-nous de boire
Non pas de mariage
Mais quand tu te maries
On est là de s’ennuyer
Toujours en regrettant
Ces jolis temps passés.

Quand je vois ton chère figure
O près de là la mienne
O ça me fait frémir
Apportez-li là dans la terre
O ces beaux cheveux bouclés
Tu pourrais être la plus belle
Aux yeux de si canailles.

Madame Sosthène
O Madame Sosthène, mais donnez-moi Elida
C’est la seule que moi j’aime
Depuis l’âge de quatorze ans.
Si tu veux pas me la donner
On fais serment, on va la voler
On va la cacher sous mon manteau
On va l’emmener à la maison.

O Madame Sosthène, mais donnez-moi Elida
C’est la seule que moi j’aime
Depuis l’âge de quatorze ans.
Si tu veux me la donner
On fais serment, on va la soigner
On va la ramener à la maison
Finir mes jours avec mon nègre.

Goodbye Roza
Goodbye Roza, I’m glad you’re not my girl
Goodbye Roza, I’m glad you’re not my sister
Goodbye Roza, tomorrow’s not Sunday
Swear, my Lord...

If I had wings
Everywhere I go
Nothing suits me
If only I had wings
Like the larks
I would land

I would land
Next to you, my beauty
To tell you all my troubles
To tell you all my troubles
And then my love for you.

Let’s go to the cantine
To talk and laugh
And have a good time
We and our friends

Let’s talk about drinking
Not about marriage
When you get married
You get bored
And always regret
The good old days.

When I see your sweet face
Next to mine
It makes me shiver

Bring it down to earth
Oh those pretty curls
You could be the most beautiful
With your naughty eyes.

Madame Sosthène
Oh Madame Sosthène, give me Elida
She’s the only one I’ve loved
Since I was fourteen years old.
If you won’t give her to me
I swear I’ll steal her
I’ll hide her under my coat
And take her home.

Oh Madame Sosthène, give me Elida
She’s the only one I’ve loved
Since I was fourteen years old.
If you will give her to me
I swear I’ll take care of her
I’ll take her back home
And finish my days with my girl.
Les Petits Yeux Noirs

À ce matin j’étais
Assis sur mon lit
Après se pleurer avec un cœur aussi cassé
Parce que j’avais rêvé
À mes chers ’tits yeux noirs
Qui a parti et va jamais revenir.

Cet après-midi j’étais assis
Dessus ma galerie
Après guetter le soleil après se coucher
Et je m’ennuie et j’adore
Mes chers ’tits yeux noirs
Qui a parti et va jamais revenir.

Little Black Eyes

This morning
I sat on my bed
Crying with a broken heart

Because I had dreamed
About my dear little black eyes
Who left and is never coming back.

This afternoon I sat
On my porch
Watching the sun go down
And I’m sad and I adore
My dear little black eyes
Who left and is never coming back.

THE SONGS

Two-Step à Will Balfa was learned from the late Will Balfa, a member of the well-known Balfa Brothers musical family from Basile. Donnez-Moi Pauline is from Eunice violinist Dennis McGee. McGee, of Scotch, French, and American Indian descent, maintains a modal quality mingled with black influence in much of his music. The result here is this dirge-like blues waltz, truly a unique south Louisiana musical form.

Le Two-Step à Midland can also be heard as a 78 recording by Amédé Ardoin, the first extensively recorded black Creole recording artist (on Old Timey LP 124), who played zydeco and a variety of Cajun styles, and also recorded with Dennis McGee. Wooden spoon percussion by Billy Ware, behind Errol Verret’s accordion and Doucet’s violin, creates a distinctly European dancehall feeling.

Le Valse des Jonglements (The Pensive Waltz) is from Varise Connor of Lake Arthur, a man of Irish and French descent with old-time Southern stringband influence in his fiddle style.

Acadian Blues is a classic synthesis of Cajun melody and blues tonality and rhythm. Mike learned the song from the recordings made in Louisiana by Alan Lomax in the late 1930’s on behalf of the Library of Congress. The performer on the Lomax tape was Wayne Perry of Bayou Sauvage.

Mike says Le Bal à Chataignier presents the view of a musician at a dance in this settlement in Evangeline Parish watching his favorite girl from the bandstand while he must continue playing. His only recourse is to sing about the situation. Mike learned versions of the tune from both Dennis McGee and Canray Fontenot. His dramatic solo with slides, blues tone and syncopations seems particularly influenced by the latter.

Adieu Roza, from Dennis McGee, shows how strongly the latter has been influenced by black Creole zydeco. It features a steady back beat on guitar and accordion with high-speed staccato melodic figures played and sung by Doucet. Mike also adds his own intensified jazz rhythm improvisations.

Si J’Aurais des Ailes (If I Had Wings) was learned from a recording made in the Sixties by Ralph Rinzler and singer Edius Nacquin from Reddell in Evangeline Parish (Rounder 6002 "Louisiana Cajun French Music from the Southwest Prairies, Vol. 1"). It is also known as Parlez-Nous à Boire, made popular by the Balfa Brothers.

Ossun Two-Step is named for a tiny town in Lafayette Parish and is humorously called “Awesome Two-Step” by the band. The shift from the traditional style, in which this was once recorded on 78 by Joe Falcon (on Old Timey LP 100), to full band Cajun improvisation reminiscent of the Coteau sound is evident here in the complementary drumming mixed with Cajun instrumentation and acoustic lead guitar.

Madame Sosthane features a duet vocal by Mike and Annick Colbert. The recorder played by Annick and the vocal style are more like the earlier Beausoleil sound with its allusions to Continental French folk revival music.

L’Affaire de Perrodin is a quick, old-time two-step with the Doucet brothers on violin and guitar, and triangle by Billy Ware. Les Petits Yeux Noirs (Little Black Eyes), a waltz associated with accordionist Lawrence Walker, is performed here as a vocal duet. Mandolin and recorder add to a folk revival old-time sound.

Le Bozo Two-Step is actually an uptempo version of La Derniere Valse (The Last Waltz). The tune pulls together Cajun music, swing, bluegrass and boogie in a hot melange with strong solos all around as an appropriately eclectic ending to this LP and a forecast for future tradition.