**CAJUN**

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songs and musicians: “Cajun Music - A Reflection of a People.”

Said Ann: “This music is strictly a hobby – we play around the country maybe a dozen times a year. We love to go visit friends and play when the spirit is right.”

What the Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band plays is infectious, toe-tapping music that has been part of the culture for hundreds of years. There are elements of French folk and country dance music as well as Canadian-French. The songs are sung in Cajun-French patois.

Marc Savoy learned to play and sing as a child by listening to the old Cajun musicians. There is even a Germanic influence, which occurred when German farmers brought the accordion to the bayou country at the end of the 19th century.

Marc Savoy explained: “The thing that’s hardest to get across is that this music was part of everyday existence. People would play at weddings and social functions. On Saturday nights the old guys would pull their fiddles off the walls. The playing was all built around the home, it was nothing to make a big deal about.”

Ann Savoy pointed out that there is a resurging interest in Cajun culture among the younger generation.

Michael Doucet, in his mid-30s, is an example of a musician who has learned the older Cajun musical tradition from its masters.

Doucet also pays a more modernized Cajun style, mixed it times with Gulf Coast rock ‘n’ roll.

But Marc Savoy does not blend or modernize the true Cajun music and he remains a purist by choice, he explained. Ann met Marc in 1976 at a national folk festival at Wolftrap, Va., though born in St. Louis and reared in Virginia, she opted for life in Cajun country.

“I fell in love with the music and in love with Marc,” she said. “Once that happened, I said, ‘That’s it, I’m leaving.’ Now I rarely go out. I still live in the country, under the huge oak trees with the chickens and the fresh eggs.”

Marc added with a chuckle, “Once she drank the bayou water there was no turning back.”

**HERITAGE**

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American folk music was not historical or scholarly, he explained. He just liked the real work by non-professional American performers. Strachwitz, tall, blond and 54, admits readily that he cannot play a note on any instrument.

“Toubor mainly with blues in the beginning – with Lightnin’ Hopkins, who was living in Houston in 1951,” he said. “I wanted to find out where in hell this good stuff was coming from; I was intrigued. It was a world totally alien to me.”

Strachwitz knows he will never get rich with Arhoolie Records. The new Savoy-Doucet record of Cajun music will sell a couple of thousand albums. But Strachwitz will keep the album in his Arhoolie catalogue for years and it will sell steadily, unlike the faddishness of pop music.

“Somehow I got lucky and have been able to make a living at this. To warrant making more money, I would have to cater to more popular tastes. But the real music does sell consistently,” Strachwitz himself admitted that his drive to record ethnic music is obsessive. “I’m a disseminator, in a way like a preacher, an evangelist who is saying ‘Come to my church.’

The Arhoolie Records catalogue is available by writing Strachwitz at 10341 San Pablo Ave., El Cerrito 94530.

— William Johnson