

Prairie Ronde

So where are we now? We have travelled for a decade and a half along the various byways of Cajun music, some new, some worn, others almost forgotten but happily rediscovered. Did we just follow the trails that a posse of other musicians already had explored and left? Did we discover new paths going along? And what tracks are we leaving behind on this vast prairie of music?

It is easy for us to get a bit philosophical about cajun music. Especially since the culture is not ours and we don't benefit from daily experience. It doesn't impose a direct genetic or cultural footprint on us and the music we make. Simply put, we're Europeans, not Cajuns.

But the music still puts a spell on us. It grabs us like a tenacious little crawfish and holds us in a tight grip.

That's why we still come to Louisiana, renewing friendships with many fine and awe inspiring musicians. We happily participate in camps and workshops and every time we carry a new spark of inspiration back to Holland, where the flat, wet countryside reminds us of our friends from far away. That's why we play Cajun music at home – to express our love and longing for the land and people of Louisiana, and to honor our mentors in the music. Once this music claws into your soul, it never lets loose.

But how can one 'understand' the music? You can talk about it. Put some thorough research into it. Dig into history. Google the web. We have also tried to retrace the steps that other musicians took, hoping to catch a glimpse of the source. We nurture these inspirations and we hope that they cry forth in our playing and singing.

After doing all that (and we admit: sometimes we got a bit carried away) at the end of the day we still end up with this:

Just play the music and get into the groove.

Play it and listen to what you do.

And most of all: have fun and share a good time with the listeners and dancers. Isn't that what's it about?

On this album, our third, we wanted to honor those musicians and songs that surprised us but might not have come into view at first glance. Though 'obscurity' initially seemed to be the guiding principle for selecting songs, like a bride we eventually ended up with a good measure of something old, something new, something borrowed, and something blue(sy)...

We explored other niches of Cajun music, which led us to French-Creole influences, a particular kind of harmony, the juré singing approach, prairie influences and fiddle tunes. We are especially indebted to Bee Fontenot, Canray Fontenot, The Carrière Brothers, Adam & Cyp Landreneau and Blind Uncle Gaspard.

Though we are traditionalists, we know that there is no such thing as one tradition. During our years together as a band we eventually feel more free to interpret the music our way, and not stick to duplicating the way others already played it. They already did it, so there is no point in trying to do the same! We have tried to develop a more free style of playing, perhaps a bit more raw and ragged. Which is quite a bridge to cross, to be honest.

So where are we now?

Prairie Ronde is more than the particular piece of flat land in Louisiana. It represents our search for music and inspiration. Our 15 years of making Cajun music has taught us that the journey itself is the goal. That's where we are. For now.