

The Cajun Company "LA ROBE DE ROSALIE"

When I first met Bas van der Poll I had no idea he had a four person acoustic traditional Cajun band in Holland called "The Cajun Company". That was when six of us shared a cabin on the edge of the swamp at Lake Fausse State Park, near St. Martinville. Cajun music lovers from all over the United States and the world had descended on this spot in April 2001 for the first "Dewey Balfa Cajun and Creole Heritage Week". This very tall, ruggedly handsome and friendly musician was there to further master his accordion and vocal skills in the midst of Cajun culture and the best Cajun music teachers there are.

This CD was recorded in 2001 in Louisiana and released in 2001, but was not considered by the Cajun French Music Association for their "Prix Dehors de Nous Award" until 2003. There were not enough submissions in 2001 so they were held over and combined with the 2002 submissions. In the 2003 award process this CD was selected as the winner for of all recordings submitted for the years 2001 and 2002. It is truly worthy of high recognition as the best recording for a Cajun recording made outside of Louisiana. It would rank very high among all such recordings ever made. This brings to two, the number of times this band has been recognized by the CFMA, the most for any band not from America. They received the First Runner-up award in 1997 for their first album "Testing One One".

The first thing you notice about this release is the fabulous CD Cover, with its beautiful antique artwork of a young lady in a robe. It evokes emotion immediately. Wow, this must be something very special ! And it is. The cover depicts the subject of the CD's title "La robe de Rosalie", which was chosen by the band to show respect for two unheralded musicians from Durald Adam and Cyprien Landreneau. Inside the cover you will find ten pages about the band's journey to discover the essence of Cajun music and little stories about why they selected each of the 18 cuts on the album. This, added to the accompanying artwork and ten old-time-looking photos, results in a liner that is virtually worth the cost of the CD itself. For example, you learn that the title cut is about a girl who lost more than just a ribbon from her dress while out in the woods with a man. I have always wondered about the Story-behind-the-story of "Bonsoir Moreau". I think now I have it, and it's more than just coming home late and the cows are not yet milked.

Song selection is mostly from the more obscure archives notably the work of the Landreneau cousins, as well as some of the well-known music of Dennis McGee, Iry and Eddie LeJeune, Dewey Balfa, Canray Fontenot and Bois Sec Ardoin. Every dimension of this release is top notch. The fiddle of Pauline Groenendijk is superb throughout. I like the 'tit Fer and fiddle sticks, both played by Herman van Rijn. The 50/50 male/female ratio is rounded out with the skilled and sensitive guitar work of Vera van Heeringen. The CD is

dedicated to their good friend Eddie LeJeune, with whom they spent much time in both Louisiana and Europe. (Monique Neuteboom has since become the band's guitar player.)

Since the recording was made in Louisiana and produced by Dirk Powell, the band had the opportunity to add a twin-fiddle component. They did this live during a late night jam session right by Bayou Teche at "Terre Haute", the home of Dirk and his wife Christine Balfa. Three numbers from that session are included with the classic twin-fiddle sound "Reel de Torchon", "Reel de Manual" and a nice-sounding waltz , "Valse de Jean Beaudreaux", about a farmer, not far from Mamou, who was a serial killer!

The mix is 50/50 between waltzes and two-steps. Among my favorite waltzes are "La Valse à Alida", "Chere Bassette" and "Bonsoir Moreau". The latter number is performed as an accordion/vocal solo by Bas and it prominently features the bass side. The fiddlesticks/fiddle only number, "Indian On a Stump" is wonderful. The "Cankton two-step" is a nice and lively. The "Acadian two-step" is a wonderful instrumental with a nice sound and rocking mood.

The band obviously has a great passion for Cajun music as they have pursued the traditional roots of it for the last ten years. Imagine the amount of money and time they have spent traveling to Louisiana several times. They deserve every success that comes to them and our support by purchasing their music. . The band's website is well worth a visit at www.cajuncompany.net.