

SAVOY FAMILY CAJUN BAND

Carrying on Traditional Cajun Music

The Savoy Family Cajun Band plays honed down, hard-core Cajun music laced with an earthy sensuality. Though the old tunes have been revived and returned to new life intensity in their hands, the Savoy Family Cajun band doesn't play from a studied angle. The musicians in the band, Marc and Ann Savoy and their sons Joel and Wilson, each hold their own as strong individual group members, making up a tight, intense sound.

Marc and Ann, as the **Savoy-Doucet Cajun Band**, have been performing and recording together since 1977, recording five CDs on the **Arhoolie** label. They have traveled all over the world, appearing in all the most prestigious venues, such as the **Newport Folk Festival**, the **Berlin Jazz Festival**, the **Festival of American Folklife** at the **Smithsonian Institution**, the **National Geographic Concert Series**, even the **Queen Elizabeth Hall in London**, England, to name a few. When the Savoy children became old enough to play in a band the **Savoy Family Band** was born, and they began to perform all over, delighting audiences with their familial tightness and raw musical talent. Among their most prestigious gigs are **National Geographic Alive!**, the **Festival of American Folklife** at the **Smithsonian Institution**, the **National Folk Festival**, the **New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival**, and **The Getty Museum** in Los Angeles, which featured the Savoy Family Band in a special concert presentation. In 2007 the Savoy Family were the **honorees** of the acclaimed **Festival Acadien** in Lafayette, Louisiana.

Honors

Marc Savoy has been rewarded the highest honor in the country from the National Endowment for the Arts, the honorable **National Heritage Fellowship Award**. Ann have been nominated twice for Grammys, first for a CD she produced for Vanguard, *Evangeline Made*, secondly for her most recent project with **Linda Ronstadt**. a CD entitled **Adieu False Heart** on the **Vanguard** label which received **two Grammy nominations** in 2007. Ann received the **Botkin Book Award** from the **American Folklore Society** for the book she wrote on the history of Cajun music, *Cajun Music, A Reflection of a People*.

Work In Film and Books

Marc was a featured musician in the film by **Walter Hill** "**Southern Comfort**"(**Warner Brothers**). The Savoy Family was the subject of an award winning film by documentary filmmaker **Les Blank**, "**Marc and Ann**". In recent years T Bone Burnett invited Ann to be involved in working with him in film projects. both as a musician and in production. Under his direction Ann and son Joel appeared in the film "**Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood**" and they perform three songs **on the Warner Brothers Soundtrack**. The Savoy Family Band **performed at the premiere of the film in Los Angeles**. Ann became the **associate music producer** of the film "**All The King's Men**" (**Sony Pictures**) and her sons Joel and Wilson appear with **Sean Penn** as musicians in the film.

Marc and Ann were prominently featured in the **PBS series “American Roots”**, and Ann wrote the chapter on Cajun music in the book that accompanied the series, which was published by **Rolling Stone Press**. Ann was awarded the **Botkin Book Award** for her definitive book on the history of Cajun and Zydeco music.

Performances

Although the Savoy Family Cajun Band insists upon maintaining a more acoustic approach to Cajun music the band can hold its own amongst Cajun music lovers everywhere. In fact, the band loves seeing how much power and sound they can get out of just three or four instruments. In a typical show by the Family Band the group demonstrates the way Cajun music has evolved by demonstrating the early double fiddle - triangle sound or the solo accordion - fiddle sound. Early French ballads are added to the program to show other historic elements prevalent in early southwest Louisiana. Between the songs the Cajun French Ann often briefly translates poetry of the songs so that the feeling can be better understood. Their repertoire is chosen carefully, popular dancehall tunes interspersed with soulful ballads, fiddle or vocal duets, or blues. The songs show the spectrum of Cajun life from sorrow and lost love to nonsense and the joy of dance. The Savoy Family Cajun Band brings the raw energy of the dancehalls of southwest Louisiana to the stage, peppered with humorous and informative anecdotes about life on the Louisiana prairies.

Biographies

Marc Savoy was born and raised in the small Cajun prairie town of Eunice, Louisiana. Drawing inspiration from '*bals de maison*' (house dances) in his father's outdoor kitchen, Savoy obtained his first accordion and began playing it at the age of 12. Playing the instrument led to repairing it and after disassembling enough accordions he began to build them. Playing the accordion has always been a natural part of his life from the dancehall to the home. The musicians with whom he has played Cajun music read like a *who's who* of the finest in Cajun music, from the Balfa Brothers, DL Menard, Doc Guidry to early fiddle master Dennis McGee. Later he played the Texas “Cajun Triangle” dancehalls and recorded some 45 rpms on the legendary producer **Huey Meaux's Crazy Cajun label**.

In 1965 Marc opened the Savoy Music Center in Eunice, which has become a gathering place for local musicians and interested travelers from all over the world. At the store he builds six accordions a month, sending them out to all corners of the globe. Saturday mornings Savoy hosts a jam session at his store.

Marc appeared as a musician in **Walter Hill's** film **Southern Comfort** under the musical direction of **Ry Cooder**. In 1982 he was awarded the prestigious **National Heritage Fellowship** from the **National Endowment for the Arts**. Marc recently appeared in the PBS documentary, **American Roots Series**

A striking feature of Marc's presence is his down-hominess and devotion to preserving Cajun culture. Whether he is playing at his weekly jam session, on a porch, at a dance or festival, it is

all the same. He presents his music in its natural state, no glitz, no Cool Whip, no glamour. Today Savoy travels and plays music either with the **Savoy Family Band** (which features his wife Ann and their two sons, Joel and Wilson) or with the **Savoy Doucet Cajun Band** (featuring famed Cajun fiddler **Michael Doucet** and Ann). He has recorded seven CDs on the **Arhoolie label** and has traveled throughout the US, Europe, and Canada. Some of the festivals the band has performed for include the **Getty Museum**, the **premiere of The Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood**, **three presidential inaugurations**, the **John F. Kennedy Center**, the **Queen Elizabeth Hall in London**, the **Newport Folk Festival**, the **Berlin Jazz Festival**, the **Jambalaya Jam in Philadelphia**, **Cajun Bluegrass Festival in California and Rhode Island**, **Festival of American Music in Oregon**, **Kaustinen Folk Festival of Finland**, **Le Carrefour des Accordions in Trois Rivieres, Canada**, and many more. Savoy loves being in Louisiana where he is known for being an outspoken cultural preservationist, fighting to keep the music pure and unadulterated.

Ann Savoy is a musician, an author, a record producer, and a photographer.

Her most recent recording is the **grammy nominated CD of duets with the legendary Linda Ronstadt, "Adieu False Heart"** (Vanguard). Also as a musician she appears with her son Joel in the film **Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood** and performs, under the **production of T Bone Burnett**, three of the twelve cuts on the accompanying **soundtrack on Sony Music**. She has played guitar, fiddle, and accordion and traveled throughout the world with her husband accordionist **Marc Savoy** and fiddler **Michael Doucet** in the **Savoy Doucet Cajun Band**. She also records and travels with her all-woman band **The Magnolia Sisters**. Recently she and husband Marc have begun to perform with their talented sons in the **Savoy Family Band**. She has recorded eight CDs on the **Arhoolie and Rounder** labels, three CDs on the **Vanguard label**, and **one on Memphis International**. Ann's latest project is her gypsy swing band, **Ann Savoy and her Sleepless Knights** featuring her two sons **Joel and Wilson Savoy** as well as jazz guitarist **Tom Mitchell**, fiddler **Kevin Wimmer**, and four of the **Redstick Ramblers**, **Chas Justus**, **Eric Frey**, and **Glenn Fields**.

Some of the festivals where Ann has performed include the **Getty Museum**, **Merle Fest**, **three presidential inaugurations**, the **John F. Kennedy Center**, the **Queen Elizabeth Hall in London**, the **Newport Folk Festival**, the **Berlin Jazz Festival**, the **Jambalaya Jam in Philadelphia**, **Cajun Bluegrass Festival in California and Rhode Island**, **Festival of American Music in Oregon**, **Kaustinen Folk Festival of Finland**, **Le Carrefour des Accordions in Trois Rivieres, Canada**, and many more.

In film Ann became the **associate music producer** of the film **"All The King's Men"** (**Sony Pictures**) and her sons Joel and Wilson appear with **Sean Penn** as musicians in the film. **Ann Savoy and her Sleepless Knights performed for the film premiere of All The King's Men**.

Ann composed a song for the film which appears in the film, **"O Comme Les Nuits Sont Longues"**, which is featured prominently in the soundtrack of the film, **performed by Ann Savoy and her Sleepless Knights**.

Besides appearing in the film **Divine Secrets of the Ya Ya Sisterhood**, the Savoy Family Band performed at the premiere of the film in Los Angeles.

Ann has appeared in many documentaries on the subject of Cajun music, most recently PBS series **American Roots Music**, and with her husband was the subject of Les Blank's film, **Marc and Ann**(Flower Films).

As a **record producer** for **Vanguard Records**, she produced the **Grammy nominated** tribute to Cajun music, **Evangeline Made**, featuring, among others, pop and folk idols **Linda Ronstadt, John Fogerty, Richard and Linda Thompson, Nick Lowe, and Rodney Crowell** performing traditional Cajun tunes. Her second project for Vanguard, a tribute to Creole and Zydeco, entitled **Creole Bred**,featuring, among others, **Taj Mahal, Cyndi Lauper, Tom Tom Club, David Hidalgo,Sweet honey In The Rock**, came out in May 2004. In 2003 she produced a CD entitled **Water From the Well** for the state of Louisiana showcasing all the musical styles found within the Atchafalaya Heritage region. As a writer, she is the author of the **Botkin award** winning book, **Cajun Music, A Reflection of a People**, a book which chronicles the history of Cajun and Zydeco music through interviews, biographies, historic and current photographs, and song transcriptions. She wrote the chapter on Cajun and Zydeco in the recently released book, **American Roots Music, Rolling Stone Press**, as well as authoring numerous articles on Cajun music and historic CD booklets.

Joel and Wilson Savoy, the sons of Cajun musicians Marc and Ann Savoy, have been raised among all of the greats in Cajun music. Both boys speak fluent French since it is a language still incorporated in the daily life of southwest Louisiana. As a baby Joel sat in **Dewey Balfa's** lap as he played the fiddle, and he played with the legendary fiddlers **Dennis McGee and Wade Fruge**, frequent visitors to the Savoy home, where all of the finest musicians of most folk cultures eventually came to visit. Joel began playing Cajun fiddle 11 years ago, and has since performed around the world with **The Savoy Doucet Cajun Band, The Red Stick Ramblers(which he founded), and The Savoy Family Band**, at events such as festivals, presidential inaugurations, music camps, concerts, etc. He is on over 12 albums with numerous bands and has produced and engineered others from his home studio in Eunice in which he hand built most of the electronic equipment.. He also plays mandolin, lap steel, banjo,and drums.

In 2002 Joel started his own record company to record cutting edge Louisiana performers. The company, **Valcour Records**, has produced four CDs to date. Check his website for more info-www.valcourrecords.com. He is also an accomplished Cajun fiddle teacher, and has taught at some of the top music camps in the world for five years. He teaches guitar and fiddle from home on a regular basis.

He has been hired as a musician on-screen in two major motion pictures (**The Divine Secrets of the YaYa Sisterhood- Warner Bros., and All The Kings Men- Sony Pictures**), and he has been on these soundtracks as well, performing with his family and also **T Bone Burnett** and **Allison Kraus**.

His hobbies include languages (he learning Italian and Spanish), hiking, rock climbing, antiquing, tennis, cooking, and fishing.

Wilson Savoy, the youngest son of Marc Savoy and Ann Savoy, has made music since before he could walk. As though learning by osmosis in the womb, Wilson could whistle and hum complicated Cajun melodies note for note before he could even speak. He began playing boogie-woogie and blues piano, inspired by Louisiana-native, **Jerry Lee Lewis**, at the age of 10, and took up the accordion after graduating from high school. His major influences are his father, **Amede Ardoin**, and **Iry Lejeune**. He and his brother, Joel, appear as musicians in a scene with **Sean Penn** in the upcoming **Sony picture**, “**All The King’s Men**”. Besides being a musician on fiddle, accordion, piano, bass, and guitar, he is an avid filmmaker, and has produced films of many of the finest bands in SW Louisiana. (www.almenafilms.com) When he isn’t making and producing music videos and short biographies he is traveling with his dynamic young band, the **Pine Leaf Boys**, who recently signed with **Arhoolie Records**.