

Dennis McGee
Himself
Transcription





Dennis McGee: Himself

VAL-CD-0011

Transcription

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Track 1: Tous les Deux Pour la Môme

"First waltz I played in all my life." Plays a tune. "Both for the Same- that was the name of the waltz."

Track 2: Rosalie

"I could play that waltz, and when I had learned the waltz well, then I could play this one here" Plays a tune. "That was the waltz 'It's no problem to ask for my daughter if you don't want to make love to her.' It's no problem if he marries her and doesn't love her. To mistreat her- that's no big deal, huh? It's Rosalie who was my marraine, and Gabriel who was my parrain- that's how we start: 'It's Rosalie who's my marraine, and Gabriel who's my parrain, and it's no big deal to ask for the girls if you don't make love to them. It's no big deal to make love to them if you don't marry them. It's no big deal to marry them if you don't love them.' That's the name of the song!"

Track 3: Contredanse

"Then I could play this contradance here." Plays a tune.

Track 4: J'ai un peu dansé les Valsuriennes et les Mazurkas

"Me, I danced the Valsuriennes and Mazurkas a little bit, but not much- Just before I got married. Before my time, they danced mostly the Valsurienne, Mazurka, Polka, and the Galop- listen, I'm gonna play you one..."

Track 5: Galop

Plays a tune. "I'm kinda forgetting it."

Track 6: Valsurienne (Varsovienne)

Plays a tune.

Track 7: Polka

Plays a tune. "That was a mazurka- no a Polka! Your hands swing up like a buzzard trying to take off! "



Track 8: Jim Crow ou Galop

"Then there was a Jim Crow- this one..." Plays a tune. "That was a Galop, a Jim Crow, a Galop- I don't remember anymore to tell you the truth it's a Galop or a Jim Crow, I can't say, I'm mixing them up. That's old, there- since I was little I've heard that. Me, I play it, but I don't know which it is. I don't know why they call that the Jim Crow. They danced that like... they bent their knees like if they wanted to jump, you know, then they jumped on the other foot and came back on this foot. I saw it danced when I was little but I don't remember very well anymore how they danced it."

Track 9: Mazurka

Plays a tune. "That's an old Mazurka- I danced it when I was young. They don't dance that anymore. No one knows how to dance that anymore. I was just a boy- but old enough to make love!"

Track 10: Two-Step: Adieu Rosa

"I'm gonna play a two-step- Adieu Rosa." Plays a tune. "Bye Rosa! Tomorrow's not Sunday! Thank God Rosa's not my sister! That's old old, that. From the blacks"

Track 11: Reel de Coquin

Plays a tune.

Track 12: J'ai quatre manières pour accorder mon violon

"I have 4 ways of tuning my fiddle." Plays a bit (*CGCF). "I tune it like that when I play the Cowboy Waltz"

Track 13: La Valse du Cow-Boy

Plays a tune.

Track 14: Courtilienne (Cotillion)

"I'm playing a Courtilienne- like a Reel- but they call that a Courtilienne." Plays a tune.

Track 15: Valse

"There are just two songs I play like that- I can play a waltz like that." Plays La Valse a Macareaux. "Rosin, rosin... there's no more rosin on the bow- it's all gritty."



Track 16: Reel du Sauvage Perdu

"Have you heard the 'Reel du Sauvage'? You never heard the 'Reel du Sauvage Perdu'? Now I'm gonna tune in a great way you'll never understand!" Tunes his fiddle (*BGDG). Plays a tune. "That's the 'Reel du Sauvage Perdu'...In the woods... The indian was lost and he was playing and playing and playing- playing a song- and the fiddle got all detuned. He stopped playing and it was like this he was playing. He got lost but he was playing the fiddle, and to find his way he played his fiddle until he had his fiddle all detuned- like this. And he found his way and that's why we know this reel... the old indian- he had feathers on his head!"

Track 17: J'ai toute sorte de vieux sang

"Me? Yes I have some indian blood in me- sure. Spanish, too... and Irish... I have all kinds of old stinky blood in me- there's no good blood in me!"

Track 18: La Reel Fâchée

Plays a tune. "Yeah, I played that last night."

Track 19: J'ai appris à jouer le violon

"I was 16 or 17 when I started playing the fiddle. I learned to play from one of my cousins over there; he bought me a fiddle. I'd stay over there, by Ville Platte. One afternoon after dinner he said to me 'I'm going to Ville Platte, Mac.' He called me Mac. 'I'm gonna buy you a fiddle. I see how you wanna learn and I'm gonna get you one.' That was really nice. He went to Ville Platte and bought me a little red fiddle. It was a full-size violin... Me, I didn't know how to tune a fiddle but he knew. He played a little bit of a few old songs. He tuned the fiddle and he gave it to me- bought me a bow and all. He played a song for me to hear and he gave me the fiddle and I went in my room- I had a room there. So I sat in my room and played. In no time- in 6 months- I was playing dances. I like the songs I play because it's from my time- the time of my mom and dad, my old cousins. I don't play anything young, no."

Track 20: La Valse des Ballots

"This is a pretty old waltz" Plays a tune. "That's an old one from my time! They call that the Valse des Ballots. The waddle, you know the little waddle when the danced that... They didn't dance it smoothly, no. They danced that and kinda waddled. They called it the 'Waltz of Waddles'. It's pretty, eh?... When the girl wants, it's pretty. When she doesn't, it's not pretty! Hahahaha..."

Track 21: Reel

"I'll play a reel like that." Plays a tune.



Track 22: Reel de Marcantel

Plays a tune.

Track 23: La Valse à Guilbaud Pelikan

"That's a man who was killed in the Civil War. He played that on his case- on his coffin. They came to kill him and he asked his boss, the captain, to let him play this waltz. He said, 'Alright, play it.' So he sat on his coffin and played the waltz. This one". Plays a tune. "Guilbaud Pelikan the waltz. yeah he was a poor Cajun like me, and they killed him. Because he left the army and they caught him and brought him back- that's how the law was- that he was killed. They put twelve men with rifles, but only one rifle had a bullet in it, and none of them knew which one had the bullet, so know one would know who killed him. They gave twelve guns to twelve men and lined up. He said aim, and then shoot. And they all shot together. There were eleven who had only powder, and only one who had a ball, and there was just one to kill him. The others knew which had the ball in it, but the shooters didn't know. That's how the law was in the Civil War."

Track 24: La Valse à Tolam

Sings a bit, "Jolie 'tite fille... a day's gonna come, unfortunately. You're gonna come back, and I won't be there anymore." Play the tune. "Tolam Waltz- he was an old man. He had asked a friend to play that on a record for him, so he had that on a record. Chuck Guil-lory from Mamou played that. The other's dead- Tolam is dead. They call it Tolam's Waltz. It says, 'A day's gonna come, you're gonna come back and I won't be here anymore. A day's gonna come, you're gonna come back and I'll be gone.' Because him and his wife had separated and he made a song... he said, 'One day you'll come back and I'll be gone.' It's a marriage thing, a song about marriage."

Track 25: Deux violons - Joueurs de violon sur une table

"One fiddle, two fiddles. The triangle started with the accordion, when they started playing accordions. The triangle they called it... Triangle. They beat that if there wasn't a fiddle. Me I didn't play with accordion and fiddle. They played just the accordion and the triangle. The fiddles, we played two fiddles, but didn't have anything to do with the others- just fiddles. They'd sit them on a table in a corner of the house. Two men, two chairs- they sat there. You were up high there and the others were down low dancing- us high on the table over there. You could see everything that was happening in the room. If someone kissed someone, they'd see them and hol-ler at them! hahahaha.... They didn't want that- it was against the law- a severe law. hahahaha It's true or not?"

Track 26: Corina Corina

Plays a tune. Sings a bit, "Corina Corina where you been last night, Corina Corina, you slept outside... hahahaha..."

Track 27: J'ai joué l'accordéon

"Me, when I started playing, I played the accordion. When I was a man- I was married for the first time. And I learned to play well- very well! Better than he who plays with Dewey. And I sang well- that's what helped me with my music, to be able to sing well. When I was young I had a voice like a... like a parakeet."

Track 28: La Marche de la Noce

"I'll play a march here- Joe Falcon made that"

Track 29: La Sauvagesse et le Nèg' violonneur

"In my time, there was an old Negresse (°) who sang, herself and and her man who played the fiddle. It was an indian lady and he was a black guy who had married the her. And she sang very very well, and he played fiddle. They'd go to weddings and she'd sing. She was a good singer."

Track 30: Fais Dodo

"Oh I don't know, I don't remember anymore." Sings a bit, "Go to bed go to bed for mama..."

Track 32: Skip to my Lou

"Skip to my Lou, you remember? You know that?" Sings a bit, " Gone again, Skip to my Lou, Gone again, skip to my Lou my Darling. You don't remember that? You never heard that?" Plays a bit. "Gone again, Skip to my Lou...There were some real old songs when I was young- I've forgotten most of them. I forgot all the ones I knew when I was little. I knew a bunch of them, but I forgot them. When I don't play them on the fiddle they get pushed to the back..."

For all they were worth





Track 33: Le Bal de Maison

"You went and entered the house and you danced a contradance and a waltz. You could dance two dances. Then it was done for the night. You couldn't have fun- sometimes the house was nearly full and before they went through all the dancers- the were arranged, you know- you waited at the door and there was a guy there to place them, and sometimes they'd be placed and sometimes not. If he didn't like them, he'd leave them in back and never place them for a dance, and if he did like them he might place them every two, three or four dances! They'd dance a few and then leave to back soon enough and dance four or five dances during the evening. And there were some that didn't get to dance at all. Sometimes they fought over that- fights started! In my younger years it was all house dances- there were no dance halls. If you had a house they'd come ask to use it, like me- I had a house, and they'd come and ask me to let them use my house for a dance. Alright, so they borrowed my house. They'd leave and go around inviting people all over- girls- for us to have enough people for the dance. They'd all show up a night and there were benches made with planks- you know what that is, huh? Planks? They put blocks upright and put the planks on them and all night the women and girls would sit there. And they'd dance in there. Sometimes it was a big house, sometimes a small one. When it was a big house, there was plenty of room. You know- sometimes they danced as eight, sometimes as twelve. When they danced in groups of twelve it went fast to place the people in the dance. But when it was just a small house, they'd only dance as six and it went slowly, you see. You couldn't go fast. You couldn't go again before the other dancers. The guy who had borrowed the house- it was he who placed the dancers. You come borrow my house for a dance, and it's you the boss of the dance. It's you who places the dancers. Until the dance was over, and after that.. it was over... You'd be the justice for those that were there. If you wanted them to dance, they'd dance and if you didn't want them too, they couldn't! Mmmm mmm, you'd have to leave without dancing."



Track 33: La Jalouserie

"Oh yeah they drank- yeah, Drank, fought... like dogs. Oh, lord. They fought like beasts. Well, it depends. Sometimes two guys went for the same girl. That was trouble, there. The fight would start between two guys and they fought and one would kill the other. There were two friends and one killed the other for that. The jealousy between the guys for the girl and they fought with pistols. They went out in the dark and they had a 'rendezvous'- you know what that is? A 'rendezvous to fight with pistols'?. One had a white shirt- he was wearing a suit. The hole where the shirt came out from the jacket (at the collar) was white. The other saw the little white hole and he shot that little white hole and he cut his heart in half."

*High string to low string

° Speaking here of an Native American midwife named Macareau in the Eunice/Faquetaigue area. She is the midwife who brought my grandfather, Joel Savoy, into this world.

Please note: This recording is unedited from the original master donated to us by Gérard Dôle.



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