



Greely, David

Fiddler and Vocalist

David Greely is a versatile Breaux Bridge based fiddler and vocalist who plays Cajun, country, swing, Irish, and traditional style fiddle. A longtime member of the popular Cajun band, Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys, he sometimes performs solo or with old-time country bands like the Evening Star String Band.

Born in Baton Rouge in 1953, David grew up in Denham Springs, Louisiana and played gospel and country music for years. His grandfather, Eddie Theriot, was a farmer and amateur Cajun fiddler from Ascension Parish. David has played Cajun music since 1985. He learned first from recordings and then later from friends and colleagues from the Mamou area. His favorite artists included Dewey Balfa and Varise Connor. He says he learned to play from Dewey Balfa, Steve Riley, Vorance Berzas, and recordings.

Motivated by a desire to study and promote the growth of the traditional music of his ancestry, he applied for and received a Louisiana Folklife Apprenticeship grant that he received in 1992. The grant was for the study of Cajun fiddle playing and traditional songs with master Cajun musician Dewey Balfa. David says, "Dewey Balfa's music moves me more than any other Cajun artist. He relates his knowledge of the music, culture, and lifestyle of his people richly and eloquently." This apprenticeship enabled Greely to study Mr. Balfa's extraordinary fiddling style and technique and expand his repertoire of Cajun songs. His apprenticeship enabled him to learn more about traditional Cajun culture and the background of these old songs.

He began playing with Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys after meeting Steve during a Saturday morning jam session at the Savoy Music Center in Eunice. David Greely's vocals and fiddle style are an important component of the band's sound today. Greely says, "I would like to find a way to get more people interested in Cajun music. I'd like to find a way of having it still belong to Louisiana and belong to everybody at the same time." In addition to his several recordings with the Mamou Playboys, David Greely has a solo album, *La Taille des Ronces*, which was released in 1991 and dedicated to his grandfather's memory. The band's latest album, *La Toussaint*, has been enthusiastically received by critics and listeners.

With the Mamou Playboys, he has performed at festivals, concerts, and dances throughout the United States, Canada, and Europe. He has also performed with the Evening Star String Band at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and on the Piney Woods Opry show. He says he is available for solo performances when, the Mamou Playboys, are not touring.

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