



Ten Records that Changed my Life

(excerpt)

Who could ever have expected to discover that some of the most exciting dance music ever recorded was still being played among the Creole population of a tiny island in the Indian Ocean? Seychelles 1 : Dances et Romances de l'Ancienne France (Kamtole des Isles Seychelles) (Ocora 558 534) is the final entry on my list (though I could go on and on), but by no means the meanest. To say I was gobsmacked on first hearing is the understatement of the decade. Only subsequent research revealed that the performers were formally constituted as the Anse Boileau Kamtole Band, and were still (twenty years ago, at any rate) performing regularly in a hotel context for tourists, in tandem with a female quadrille demonstration team. It is hardly surprising that this fact was played down in the sleeve notes to the Ocora issue, for the music is so old at its core that such a revelation would have been simply redundant. Fiddles, guitars, banjo-mandolin and bass drum with cymbal are overlaid with the most rhythmically-inventive triangle ever, the complex playing being all the more admirable for the performer simultaneously calling the dance instructions. The notes suggested that in the past (the featured items were made in 1977) the 'accordeon' (for which read 'melodeon'), 'which is becoming ever rarer [on the island]', had formerly been an integral part of the music. Recordings made slightly later, and released on Anse Boileau Kantole Band : Seychelles - Musique Traditionelle (Palm, no number)

and Souvenir of Seychelles Camtole Music Introducing The Anse Boileau Camtole Band (Dasco DAS 006), restore the instrument and what a great addition it proves to be. This is essentially archaic dance music, originally performed in England and thence throughout the European continent during the eighteenth century, filtered through the vernacular tradition and transformed beyond all recognition into something truly spectacular.

Keith Chandler - 22.12.06

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