



Lee Benoit

Lee was born Bradley Dale Joseph Benoit in 1959 to Neva Touchet and Ozone Joseph Benoit, Jr. and was raised in Crowley, Louisiana by his grandmother, Cidalise Mayer Benoit. After graduating from high school Lee joined the United States Marine Corps and served from 1976 to 1979. In 1978 he married his childhood sweetheart, Valerie Ann Guillory, and they raised two children.

Lee started playing Gospel music at the age of five on an organ given to him by his grandmother. At the age of twelve he learned the guitar and formed a band playing Country and Southern Rock influenced by Creedence Clearwater Revival, Lynyrd Skynyrd, and Hank Williams. He also learned to play the bass guitar in his teens. When Lee was 29, inspired by Wayne Toups, he learned to play the accordion and henceforth added Cajun music to his repertoire. J. D. Miller signed him in 1993 as a recording artist with the Master-Trak label in Crowley, Louisiana where he recorded his first three Cajun albums. *“Avec Amis”* in 1994 was nominated for “Best First Album” and the song, “Valerie”, was nominated for “Song of the Year”. *“Live at Vermilionville”* was nominated in 1998 in five categories and won “Song of the Year” with the song *“La Visite”*. In 2000, Lee recorded *“Dis 'n' Dat”*, also winning “Accordionist of the Year”. In 2002 Lee earned the CFMA's “President Award”. In 2005 at his home studio Lee produced, recorded, mixed and mastered his fourth album, *“Ma Petite Femme”*, containing 12 songs, 8 of which are originals. With the title song, *“Ma Petite Femme”*, the Cajun French Music Association awarded Lee with “Male Vocalist of the Year”, “Accordionist of the Year” and “Song of the Year”. In 2006 he also received nominations for “Best Recording of the Year” and “People's Choice”. In 2011 Lee was presented with the “Heritage Award” and in 2013 the coveted “Award of Excellence” for promoting the use of proper Cajun language and assisting young musicians in their recordings of traditional Cajun music.

Lee Benoit always managed to bring unique melodies and lyrics into his songs as he strived to produce new Cajun music. His 2014 release “For the Generation to Come”, contains all new original songs and also includes a new version of the song he wrote for his wife, “Valerie”, one of most frequently played love songs on Cajun Radio.