**Cajun Folk Songs Historical Information**  
(taken from the composer's notes)

Cajuns are descendants of the Acadians, a group of early French colonists who began settling in Acadia (now Nova Scotia) around 1604. In 1755 they were driven out by the British, eventually resettling in South Louisiana. Today there are nearly a million French-speaking descendants of the Acadians living in Louisiana and parts of Texas, preserving many of the customs, traditions, stories, and songs of their ancestors.

Although a rich Cajun folksong tradition exists, the music has become increasingly commercialized and Americanized throughout the twentieth century, obscuring its original simplicity and directness. In response to this trend, Alan and John Lomax traveled to South Louisiana in 1934 to collect and record numerous Cajun folksongs in the field for the *Archive of Folk Music* in the Library of Congress. By doing so, they helped to preserve Cajun music in its original form as a pure and powerful expression of Louisiana French Society.

"La Belle et le Capitaine" and "Belle" can both be heard in their original versions on the Lomax recordings (Swallow LP-8003-2, Swallow Records Co., Ville Platte, Louisiana). "La Belle et le Capitaine" tells the story of a young girl who feigns death to avoid being seduced by a captain. Its Dorian melody is remarkably free, shifting back and forth between duple and triple meters. In this arrangement the melody is stated three times. The third time an original countermelody is added in flutes, oboe, clarinet, and trumpet.

"Belle" is about a man who goes away to Texas only to receive word of his sweetheart's illness, forcing him to return to Louisiana. Finding her unconscious upon his return, he pawns his horse to try to save her, to no avail. The folk melody is sometimes varied rhythmically, texturally, and coloristically, and an original melody (see mm. 12-21) is added for variety.
French lyrics from both songs and their english translations

LA BELLE ET LE CAPITAINE

1) Le plus jeune des trois,
   L'a pris par sa main blanche--
   "Montez, montez, la belle,
   Dessur mon cheval gris;
   On logit chez mon père,
   Je vous amenerai."

2) Quand-e la belle'-z-entend,
   Elle s'est mite à pleurèze,--
   "Soupez, soupez, la belle,
   Prenez, oui, z-appétit,
   Auprès du capitaine
   Vo' passerez la nuit."

3) Quand-e-la bell'-z-etend
   La belle est tombée morte,--
   "Sonnez, sonnez, les cloches,
   Tambours, violons, marchez,
   M'amillionette est morte
   J'en ai le c&156;ur dolent."

4) "Et où l'enterreront-ils?"
   "Dedans l'jardin d' son père,
   Sous les trois feuilles de lys;
   Nous prierons Dieu, chers frères,
   Qu'elle aille en Paradis."

5) Au bout-e de trois jours
   La bell' frappe à la porte,
   "Ouvrez, ouvrez, la porte,
   Cher père et bien-aimé,
   J'ai fait la mort trois jours
   Pour sauver mon honneur."

(Translation)
1) The youngest of all three took her white hand and said, "Fair damsel, mount my gray horse and I will take you to the house of my father where we will stay together."
2) When the damsel heard these words, she began to weep, and he said, "Eat, fair damsel, be of good cheer, for this night you will stay with a fine captain."
3) When the damsel heard these words, she fell to the ground like one dead, and he said, "Ring the bells, play drums and violins; my little sweetheart is dead and I have a doleful heart."
4) And they said, "Where shall she be buried?" "In the garden of her father beneath the three leaves of the lyly. We pray to God, dear brothers, that she may fly to Paradise."
5) When three days had passed, the damsel knocked on the door of her father's house and said, "Open the door, dear and beloved father, for three days ago I chose death to save my honor."
BELLE

1
Mais si j' une belle ici, Belle,
C'est par rapport à to, Belle,
Mais si j' une belle ici, Belle,
C'est par rapport à toi, Belle.

2
J'ai pris ce char ici, Belle
Pour m'en aller au Texas, Belle,
J'ai pris ce char ici, Belle
Pour m'en aller au Texas, Belle.

3
Y avait just' trois jour, Bel-
Le, que j'étais là-bas, Belle,
J'ai r'çu-z-une lettre de toi, Belle,
Que t'étais bien malade, Belle.

4
Que t'étais bien malade, Belle,
En danger de mourir, Belle,
J'ai pris ce char encore, Belle,
Pour m'en r'venir ici, Belle.

5
Quand j'arrivais à toi, Belle,
T'étais sans connaissance, Belle,
Je m'en ai r'tourné d'abord, Belle,
Je m'en ai r'tourné là-bas, Belle.

6
J'ai emporti-qué mon ch'val, Belle,
Pour te sauver la vie, Belle,
O si j'ai plus Henry, Belle,
C'est par t'avoir aimée, Belle.

7
S'abandonner c'est dur, Belle,
Mais s'oublier c'est long, Belle,
S'abandonner c'est dur, Belle,
Mais s'oublier c'est long, Belle.

(Translation)
1 If I've a babe in town, Babe,
It's just when you're around, Babe,
If I've a babe in town, Babe,
It's just when you're around, Babe.

2 I caught a long slow freight, Babe,
Bound out for Texas state, Babe,
I caught a long slow freight, Babe,
Bound out for Texas state, Babe.
3 Three days I hung around, Babe,
That lonesome Texas town, Babe,
You wrote you's sick in bed, Babe,
Rags wrapped all round your head, Babe.

4 Said you was sick and low, Babe,
Said you was dyin' slow, Babe,
I hopped that long slow freight, Babe,
Bound for Lou's'ana state, Babe.

5 When I got off that train, Babe,
You couldn't call my name, Babe,
And I turned right around, Babe,
Then I was Texas bound, Babe.

6 My bronc' I had to sell, Babe,
So I could get you well, Babe,
Because between the two, Babe,
I'd always pick on you, Babe.

7 It's not so hard to go, Babe,
But to forget is slow, Babe,
It's not so hard to go, Babe,
But to forget is slow, Babe.