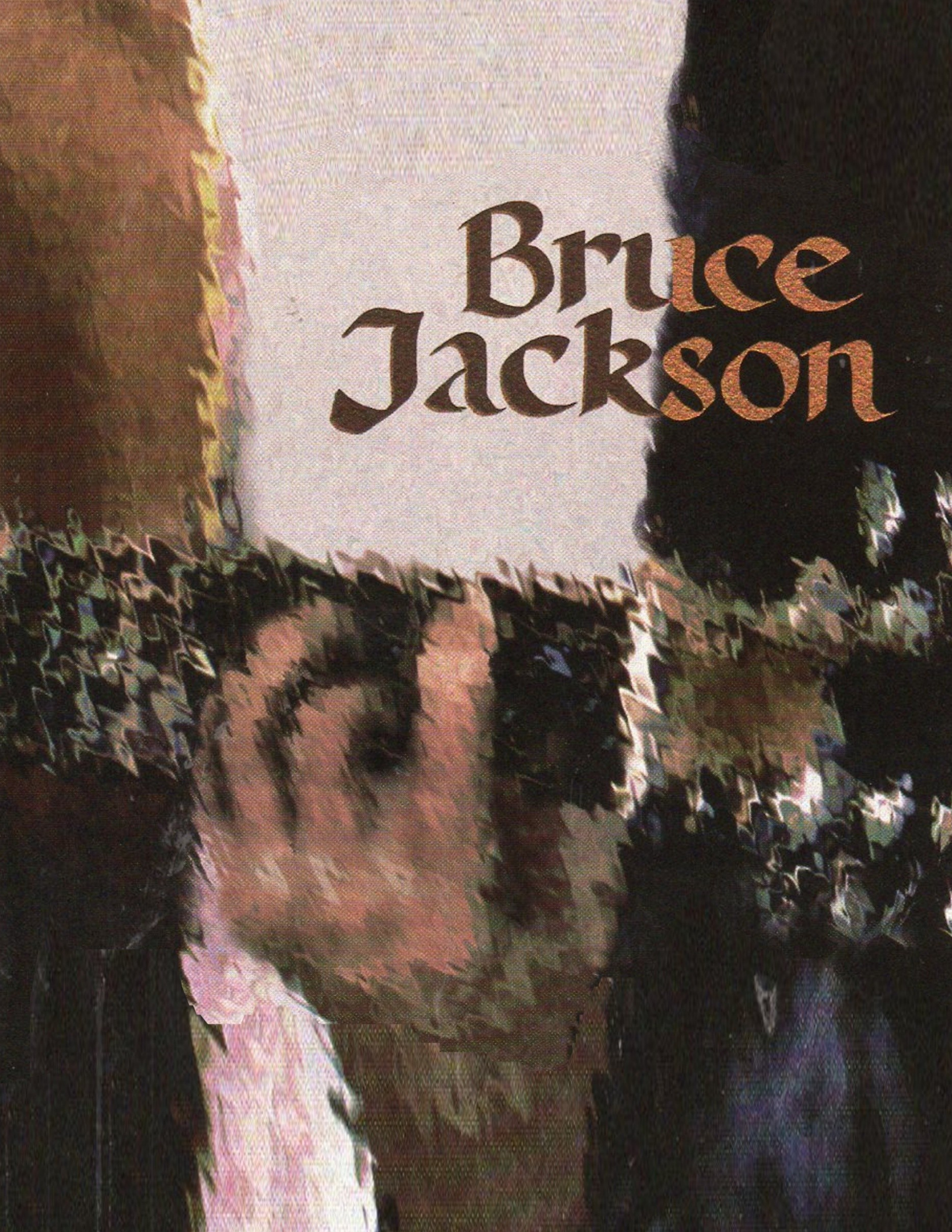

Bruce
Jackson

Bruce Jackson

1. Kevin Goes off to School (2:45) ♦ 1998
2. The Revenge of the PacMan (2:47) ♦ 1978
3. Swing (3:39) ♦ 1976
4. Manneken Pis (2:37) ♦ 1982
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8. Cottage Industry (2:45) ♦ 2000
9. Strings (2:14) ♦ 2000
10. The Honey Bun Rag (2:36) ♦ 1999
11. Jacksons Jig (2:40) ♦ 1978
12. Sonata for Three Guitars (6:24) ♦ 1974-1997

Bruce Jackson
guitars, banjo, mandolin, percussion
Isabelle Cossette
flute (Swing)
Bruce Murchison
violin (*Manneken Pis*)
Line Vachon
recorder (*Manneken Pis*)
percussion (*Cottage Industry, Jacksons Jig*)
Philippe Warin
congas (*The Revenge of the Pacman*)

Recorded and mastered by Bruce Jackson
at Bob Lake Studio, Saint-Calixte, Qc.
Artwork by Kevin McKenna
Album first released in 2001
"Swing" first released in 2026
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1. Kevin Goes off to School (2:45)

Acoustic guitar: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: The first section in a major key portrays the joys of going back to school, with enthusiasm and eagerness portrayed in lively fingerpicking. A more foreboding middle section follows in a minor key, symbolizing the hard times we inevitably experience in our school years. The song ends happily in a major chord.

Composed in Montréal, Qc., 1998. Dedicated to all those who go back to school in midlife, hoping to start up a new life and a new career. The "Kevin" in this piece can be a six-year old schoolboy or a forty-year old husband and father.

2. The Revenge of the PacMan (2:47)

Acoustic guitar, slide guitar, hairpin guitar: Bruce Jackson
Conga: Philippe Warin

Listen for: An island mood with frisky rhythms. The instruments in this piece convey fun and happiness. A slide guitar evokes a Hawaiin guitar. Watch out for the hairpin guitar, which consists of a hairpin laced through its strings of a normal guitar, making it sound like a steel drum from Trinidad.

Composed in Chicoutimi, Qc., 1978. Written on the road in a hotel room. The perfect setting for composing music. This piece seeks to mimic the frenetic movements of the PacMan, the original video game.

3. Swing (3:39)

Acoustic guitar, lead guitar, slide guitar: Bruce Jackson
Flute: Isabelle Cossette

Listen for: Smooth, lyrical chords that borrow both from jazz and the blues. A lead guitar steps in and maintains this fusion. As the tempo picks up, Isabelle Cossette complements the melody on her flute. She sometimes echoes the guitar and sometimes plays around it.

Composed in Sherbrooke, Qc., 1976. Influenced by the melodic pieces of Bruce Cockburn that combine melody and rhythm on one guitar.

4. Manneken Pis (2:37)

Acoustic guitar: Bruce Jackson
Violin: Bruce Murchison
Recorder: Line Vachon

Listen for: A medieval mood created by this piece in G minor. The guitar uses an open G minor tuning, producing a powerful resonance. Bruce Murchison's violin and Line Vachon's recorder complement the medieval mood with their harmonies. This piece is unique in that it incorporates string bends in this *musique ancienne*.

Composed in Brussels, Belgium, 1982, while on tour with Jim Corcoran. *La grande place* in Brussels provided the medieval setting that inspired this piece. The famous statue of Manneken Pis can be found near *La grand place*.

5. Clark Beans (2:24)

Acoustic guitar, five-string banjo: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: The double-picking technique on guitar requires the thumb to play a double bass line while the fingers pluck the melody. This melody includes a distinctive string bend. The song ends with a touch of humour with a simple twist of the tuning peg.

Composed in Sherbrooke, Qc., 1974, this is an instrumental in the genre of Bruce Cockburn's famous piece *Foxglove*. The song features an antique Fairbanks banjo, a Jackson family heirloom. Bruce Jackson learned to play music at the age of eight on this banjo.

6. Caravan (3:07)

Classical guitar, slide guitar, mandolin, percussion: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: A blend of Spanish and American cultural traditions in the interplay of classical and slide guitar. The mandolin uses the *pennate* technique, the rapid-fire tremolo strokes common in Italian music.

Composed in Sherbrooke, Qc., 2000. This piece is typical of Bruce Jackson's interest in European influences and moods in music. A simple way of embarking on a journey.

7. Michigan Lake (2:43)

Acoustic guitar: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: A melody executed using harmonics on the guitar. *Michigan Lake* depicts musically a walk along the beach of Lake Michigan at sunset where the sun is producing a myriad of sparkles on the waves. The guitar harmonics mimic these sparkles.

Composed in South Haven, Michigan, 1976. This piece also was released on Jim Corcoran's album *Têtu* in 1983. This album won the Felix award for best folk album of the year. A version was also recorded by Simon Proulx in 2016 in his album *Dimanche*. Simon Proulx cites Bruce Jackson as an influence in his musical career.

8. Cottage Industry (2:45)

Five-string banjo: Bruce Jackson
Bodhran and stomp: Line Vachon

Listen for: Banjo picking in two musical styles – American and Celtic. The first half of the piece moves along in the 4/4 style typical of American bluegrass and folk music, with the high fifth string of the banjo producing the sound known as the "banjo roll". The second section switches to the 6/8 time frequently used in Celtic music. The bodhran, a traditional Celtic drum, supports this rhythm.

Composed at Saint-Calixte, Qc., 2000. The *Bruce Jackson* album was recorded principally at Bob Lake Studio, located in Bruce Jackson's cottage. The title of this piece is thus fitting.

9. Strings (2:14)

♦ Watch the video ♦

Acoustic guitar: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: The bass line and the melody line move independently of each other, the thumb playing the bass and the fingers playing the melody. Whereas in *Clark Beans* the bass as a rhythmic function, in *Strings* the bass line has a melodic function. This piece took years to master before recording. Practice makes perfect!

Composed at Montréal, Qc., 2010. *Strings* is released here for the first time in this web reissue of the *Bruce Jackson* album. As an instrumental piece, it fits perfectly *a posteriori* in this collection.

10. The Honey Bun Rag (2:36)

Twelve-string guitar: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: Twists and turns in melody and counterpoint. Ragtime music features melodies bouncing off each other in surprising syncopations. Indeed, the word “rag” is an abbreviation of “ragged”, indicative of its seemingly awkward and disorganized construction. Don’t be fooled, everything is under control!

Composed at Montréal, Qc., 1999. It is customary to play ragtime music on a twelve-string guitar, due to the pioneering work of the American blues legend Leadbelly. Many thanks go out to Kevin McKenna for lending me his magnificent Guild twelve-string guitar for this piece.

11. Jacksons Jig (2:40)

Acoustic guitar: Bruce Jackson
Bodhran: Line Vachon

Listen for: Hammer-ons and pull-offs. Hammer-ons consist of your left finger pushing down on the fretboard to make the string resonate without plucking the string. Conversely, pull-offs consist of by pulling off your left finger off the fretboard to make the string resonate. Furthermore, Jacksons Jig gets its vibrant tone from its open C tuning played high on the fretboard with a capo.

Composed at Sherbrooke, Qc., 1978. Titled “Jacksons Jig”, much to the confusion of Bruce’s musical friends, since many other songs called “Jacksons Jig” exist in the Irish music repertoire. Anything can happen once you’ve counted down and start playing!

12. Sonata for Three Guitars (6:24)

Classical guitar, acoustic guitar, twelve-string guitar: Bruce Jackson

Listen for: A suite played on classical guitar, steel-string guitar, and twelve-string guitar. This piece consists of several melodies brought together in a coherent suite.

Composed at Thetford Mines, Sherbrooke and Montréal, Qc. 1974-1997