

***C'était la plus jolie des filles: Répertoire des chansons d'Angéline Paradis Fraser. Recueilli et présenté par Donald Deschênes (Montréal, Les Quinze Editeurs, 1982. 240 pages, musique)***

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commémoratives, les croix votives et les croix possessoires. Les coutumes (pp. 98-103) qui se rattachent à ces lieux bénits varient. La tendance est de s'y réunir autant par intérêt que par reconnaissance.

Bref, cette étude d'ethnographie québécoise rendra beaucoup de service grâce à une "analyse formelle" d'une précision exemplaire (pp. 130-383). Tous ceux qu'interroge la persistance des lieux sacrés dans une civilisation qui ne les appelle guère trouveront, dans ce livre abondamment illustré, d'heureux dessins qui déjà appellent un au-delà du signe qui se nomme *l'espace sacré, la sacralité de la nature et la religion cosmique* (Eliade). A l'abondante bibliographie du début, ajouter peut-être: *Le monde des symboles*, dans la collection *Zodiaque*, pp. 365-372; le *Dictionnaire de spiritualité*, II, pp. 2569 ss, sur les sens des dévotions à la croix.

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**C'était la plus jolie des filles:  
Répertoire des chansons d'Angéline  
Paradis Fraser**

Recueilli et présenté par Donald  
Deschênes  
(Montréal, Les Quinze Editeurs, 1982. 240  
pages, musique)

Donald Deschênes' book is an example of the fairly new trend among anthropologists and ethnomusicologists to explore the repertoire of one individual. The bulk of the work is a beautifully presented selection of 90 songs, chosen from among the 165 which constitute Deschênes's taped collection.

A short biography of Mme. Fraser, an analysis of the repertoire, as well as concordances, glossary and a bibliography, complete the volume.

"C'était la plus jolie des filles" is an attractive book on many accounts. Throughout the book, the text is a delight to read: lucid, well written, at times positively lyrical, it conveys the author's unmistakable respect and affection for his informant and her songs. This sympathy is no accident. Deschênes was born in the very village —now closed— where Mme. Fraser lived, and he spent considerable time working in a senior citizens' community centre of the area. Himself a performer of traditional music, Deschênes has presented his collection in a way that is both accessible and scholarly. The transcriptions of music and text are set out in a clear, logical fashion which makes the songs easy to sing and to study. The typeface, as well as the musical calligraphy by Manon Gaudreault, also contributes to the collection's attractiveness, but in the matter of illustrations I would have preferred more of Charlotte Cormier's photographs and fewer of Louis Tremblay's imaginative but curiously lifeless drawings.

Because the book is above all a collection, it is perhaps unfair to quibble about the length of the introductory sections. Nevertheless, I did feel let down by the brevity of the discussion of Mme. Fraser's life, the relation of her repertoire and style to that of other singers, and her own perception of her rôle. For me, the six pages devoted to her biography and ideas provide just enough information to make one wish for more.

As well, there are several minor inconsistencies in the selection and presentation of the songs. These 90 examples were chosen from among 165, but aside from the rejection of most of the "composed" songs — which is not adequately justified — the only criteria of selection offered are value judgments: "beauty" and "originality" are not defined. Especially when the repertoire

of one singer is being studied, it might, in fact, be more helpful if some songs were included which the collector did not find particularly beautiful or especially related to the folk tradition, in order to give the reader a more complete picture of Mme. Fraser's own attitude towards her repertoire.

The transcriptions, as mentioned, are a pleasure to read for the most part. However, I did find that the decision not to tie short values together unless they are sung over one syllable unfortunate, as several short values written separately obscure the clarity of the line. In the matter of metric markings, I would have found a metronomic indication sufficient, e.g., 1.= 100, instead of shifting time signatures back and forth several times inside one song, which I find misleading. I was also puzzled by the fact that, while most songs were given a metronomic tempo indication, some were marked merely "moderato" or "presto". The musical analysis, necessarily brief for the purposes of the book, is concise and to the point; perhaps it could be extended in a further study and compared with other repertoires as more information on individual singers becomes available. I would have preferred, though, to have the short notes on each song placed together with the song instead of grouped together at the back of the book.

These minor criticisms must not be allowed to detract from my first and continuing reaction to "C'était la plus jolie des filles" — that it is a book to be treasured, an important addition to the published work on Franco-Canadian music, and, as is not usual, one of equal value to musicologists and performers of folk music. It is my hope that it will both stimulate more work of this sort to be done and attract the attention of many *interprètes*,/myself included, to bring the songs back to their public.

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### **Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert: A Festschrift**

*Edited by Kenneth S. Goldstein and Neil V. Rosenberg*

(St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1980. Pp. ix + 395, 11.95 paper.)

Of those who spearheaded the advancement of folklore studies on this continent in the sixties and seventies, few had the audacity, courage and perspicacity of Herbert Halpert, who in 1962 dared to leave the comforts of mainland academe to move to St. John's Newfoundland and lay the foundations of English Canada's first Department of Folklore at the Memorial University of Newfoundland. The success of that venture is very much a personal triumph that has also touched in very meaningful ways all Canadian folklorists and influenced indelibly the direction of folkloristics in Canada today.

This *Festschrift*, then, brings together an assortment of twenty-six articles written by associates and students in celebration of Professor Halpert's pioneering efforts and years of devotion to folklore studies. The collection is introduced by a biographical sketch and classified bibliography of Herbert Halpert's works; both pieces are provided by a close colleague, Professor Neil V. Rosenberg, who has worked with Halpert over many years to help establish the teaching and research program in folklore at Memorial University. The articles themselves are arranged straightforwardly in alphabetical order by author although a thematic presentation according to subject area would have enhanced the volume's obvious value as an overview of current trends in Anglo-Canadian and Anglo-American folkloristics. In this regard, for instance, one can not help but note the pervading concern with folksong — the subject of ten of the articles (for example, the contributions of Helen Creighton, Edith Fowke, Edward D. Ives, and others). Six