**REVIEW**

*Raffi: SINGABLE SONGS and MORE SINGABLE SONGS* (Troubadour Records, TR 002-C1 and TR 004).

When you are a pre-schooler who wants to collect records like big kids, there is only one Canada-wide star—Raffi (wonder why he doesn’t sell posters: he’d really clean up!).

Both “Singable Songs” and “More Singable Songs” (hereafter known as SS and MSS), are a lesson to those of us who aspire to entertain pre-schoolers. They are deceptively simple, both in presentation and accompaniment, and the kids love them.

Interview with four-year-old:
ME: Do you have a favourite record?
HER: (holding up two fingers) That many.
ME: Want to show them to me?
HER: Want to listen?

For the next forty minutes I sat on a bedroom floor, squished between a toy box and the bed with a kid on my knees, singing loudly and tunelessly in one ear, while Raffi, courtesy of the record player, accompanies her in my other ear (serves me right for not believing my own kids).

Both records are a mixture of good traditional, composed and adapted songs that appeal generally to four- and five-year-olds (six- and seven-year-olds do enjoy them but won’t always admit it). I personally would like to see more real Canadian content, but that is being picky, as Raffi has a pleasing variety of songs.

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**THE SKYE COLLECTION**

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P.S. We welcome any correspondence regarding this and future publications.

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Raffi’s low-key approach is non-threatening to the most timid child and the simplicity of his material makes every pre-schooler say they “know” his songs, even if they’ve never heard them before. MSS is more sophisticated musically than SS and slightly more relaxed. Raffi is joined by Ken Whitely on some tracks of both records and also by several children—not a trained school choir, thank God, but honest-to-goodness kids that sing well because they like the songs. The words of the songs are on the sturdy, fold-out cover and many songs can be used effectively by play school and kindergarten teachers as teaching points (i.e. “The Sharing Song” on SS or as a way of getting rid of the fidgets—“Shake My Sillies Out” on MSS).

Warning: presenting a pre-schooler with a Raffi record does not end with it being constantly played. The kids then drag you down to his next concert. At the end of each concert he sells his latest record. After you have lined up with five hundred other parental suckers, your child grabs the record off you, rips off the cellophone and launches her/himself into the mob around Raffi while he signs every record. Eventually you get home, exhausted, and guess who beats you to the record player?

When you’ve spawned several children, this scene is repeated ad nauseam. See you next time you’re in Edmonton, Raffi.

*Andy Spalding*

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