Montréal

©Wade Hemsworth, reprinted with permission

Ch. 1. Ho-cha-la-ga, sweet con-fuence of wa-ters; Ho-cha-la-ga, my home chez
2. Ho-cha-la-ga, quel doux mé-lange des fleu-ve-s, Ho-cha-la-ga, my home chez

nous

3. A Mon-tré-al, Mon-tré-al, la vieille ville Ma-rie de Mon-tré-al.

Bon-jour, good day, sha-lom, sa-go skan-e-go-go, Sa-go-ley, skan-e-go-go, Mon-tré

4. Mon-tré-al, Mon-tré-al, ma vieille belle fri-pon-ne Mon-tré-al.

Mach nisht fun mir kein nahr, j’té dis, I will you! 5. Mon-tré-al, Mon-tré-al, say you’d

miss me-een for a lit-tle while. Tu m’trîche mais j’t’aime quand même, I’m

lost and I love you. Oh
Hemsworth loves this city. This was apparent in the tone of his voice when he responded to our question about how he'd come to be aware of the music of India: “Well, I lived in a big city! I lived in Montreal...” Had we forgotten that or were we unaware of the significance? Introducing this paean in The Songs of Wade Hemsworth, Hemsworth notes that the full diversity of the city couldn’t be captured in a song, so he restricted himself to the four most influential: French, English, Yiddish, and Iroquois. “Montreal” is a difficult song, perhaps, as the author himself says, "too difficult ever to become popular," but we agree with him that it's "fun," and we hope someday to hear it tackled by an art or jazz singer!

Unfamiliar phrases in Yiddish and Iroquois phrases may need pronunciation clues for most readers; herewith are the phrases, with Hemsworth’s phonetics and some translations.

Iroquois:
Sago skan-e-gogo (say 'go skana'-go'go), the formal greeting, "How do you do, sir?"
Sagoley, skan-e-gogo (sa-go'-ley skana'-go'go), the informal greeting, "Hi! How you doing?"
Yiddish:
Menschen (like "mention"), "men," "people," or "good people."
Men lekt nisht kein honnik (as it appears in English, though kein is pronounced "kine"), "One licks not some honey," i.e., "Things aren’t as good as they may seem."

Mach nisht fun mir kein nahr (mach rhymes with "lock,"the "u" in fun as in "put," kein as before), "Don’t make a fool of me."

Montréal, Montréal,
La vieille ville Marie de Montréal.
All things to all menschen,
Pea souper, maudit bloke.

À Montréal, Montréal,
Toi vieille vache laitière indocile;
Soul quickening milk,
But men lekt nisht kein honnik.

Oh Hochelaga,
Sweet confluence of waters’
Hochelaga my home
Chez nous.

À Montréal, Montréal,
La vieille ville Marie de Montréal.
Bonjour, good day, shalom, sago skan-e-gogo.
Sagoley, skan-e-gogo, Montréal!

Montréal, Montréal,
Ma vieille belle fribonne Montréal.
Mach nisht fun mir kein nahr,
J’te dis, I tell you!