

## Comptes rendus / Reviews

### *Books*

**Ian Wallis. *The Story of Ronnie Hawkins and The Hawks*. Kingston: Quarry Press. 288pp. with photos**

I was curious to discover why U.S. President Bill Clinton would refer to Ronnie Hawkins as "... a unique natural resource of our state and nation" when all I could do was identify the Hawk as someone I knew to be one of the veteran musicians of the Canadian music scene and in some ways the founder of The Band. Little did I know that Hawkins hailed from Huntsville, Arkansas. This explained the American connection, and Ian Wallis certainly had many more stories from The Hawk's life to reveal.

The story of Ronnie Hawkins can be considered a story of rock 'n' roll. Born the same year as Elvis and from a long lineage of musical families in the American South, Hawkins claims to have begun working as a musician in 1952. His early life is described as a time of fast cars, women, abandoned studies, nightclubs, military service, and a series of stints in various bands. Hawkins would turn his phys. ed. training to his advan-

tage and become one of the wild men of rockabilly, front The Hawks with Levon Helm on drums and Robbie Robertson on guitar and begin playing the Ontario club circuit. It was the success in Ontario which led to the beginning of a long recording career and kept Hawkins in Canada as the king of Toronto's Yonge Street. There are many tales recounted by Wallis of Hawkins's life in music, all fascinating but too numerous to mention.

While Hawkins is credited with establishing The Band, it is the host of other musicians who have passed through The Hawks which makes Wallis's work an interesting and enlightening read. Wallis presents Hawkins as the instructor and trainer of a generation of Canadian musicians. Of some note are the still active King Biscuit Boy, Crowbar, Full Tilt Boogie Band, David Foster, Larry Gowan, and Pat Travers. Wallis details anyone and everyone who has played under Hawkins's guidance and

relates the stories of tours and the struggle to hold together an ever changing backing band.

Hawkins has shared the stage with many of the greats of rock 'n' roll, performed in The Band's *The Last Waltz*, had an acting career, received a Juno and has been inducted into the Canadian Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and remained the ambassador of rockabilly. What Wallis presents is a captivating portrait of one of Canada's hardest working musicians. Looking behind the story of Hawkins itself, and focusing on the rich historical

**The Seven-Headed Beast and Other Acadian Tales from Cape Breton Island.** Collected by Ansèlme Chiasson, translated by Rosie Aucoin Grace. Wreck Cove, NS: Breton Books, 1996. 190pp.

When one thinks of Cape Breton Island, particularly their traditional folk tales and legends, the obvious first thought that comes to mind is of the Gaelic tales derived from a Celtic tradition that goes back thousands of years into a time in Scotland before recorded history. There is, however, a second tradition that has existed in Cape Breton for centuries and has survived to today, that of the Acadian French, who were expelled from their homes in the Maritimes in the mid-1750s, during the Seven Years' War. Many fled southwards to eventually become the Cajuns of southwest Louisiana, but a small number, after being released from prisons in London and Halifax, settled in such Canadian locales as Prince Edward Island, St-Pierre and Miquelon, and the small, picturesque community of Chéticamp, on the northwestern shore of Cape Breton, with magnificent bays and mountains at its back. Current population around 3,500, Chéticamp has been for two centuries a most formidable bastion of Acadian traditional folklore and customs, especially where proverbs, riddles, folksongs and the telling of traditional folk tales and legends is concerned.

As Donald Deschênes so ably puts it in his brief preface to this collection of traditional Acadian tales, both storytellers and singers were highly respected and sought out within the community and were often the centrepieces at parties and other gatherings. He also gives the readers of these stories a unique and most insightful glimpse into the nature, character and personality of the collector of these tales, a local priest named Ansèlme Chiasson. In turn, Père Chiasson, in his own introduction to the collection, gives us a brief but excellent history of Chéticamp, its people, settlement and cultural development.

Although Père Chiasson collected these tales in the 1950s, it would take nearly 40 years to have them published, first in 1994, under the French title *Contes de Chéticamp*, and two years later under the English title *The Seven-Headed Beast*. For this English publication, two people deserve thanks: Rosie Aucoin Grace, the translator of the tales into English, and Ronald Kaplan, editor of *Cape Breton Magazine* and mystic mainspring of Breton Books. Kaplan himself is no stranger to the world of the traditional folk narrative; it was he who was most instrumental in the publication several years ago of the late Helen Creighton's excellent collection of traditional narratives from her many years of field work throughout the Maritimes.

One important point should be made. Grace's translations were taken directly from the original tapes made by Père Chiasson, tapes in which the language of the tellers is primarily the

tale which Wallis has woven, makes this work stand out as an enjoyable read. Besides, it seems improbable that a biography of The Hawk, the wild man of rock 'n' roll, could in any way be dull. Quarry Press should be congratulated for this addition into their series on Canadian popular culture. And as an afterthought, maybe there was a hint of jealousy in Clinton's remark.

—Oisín McMahon  
Calgary, Alberta

archaic Acadian French of two centuries ago, not the standard French of today. *Contes de Chéticamp*, while retaining the basic flavour and integrity of the original tales, has been presented with standardized French grammar and more polished linguistic touches.

As to the tales themselves, the volume contains 23 examples from the Acadian tradition. Two local storytellers are introduced to the reader: Marcellin Hache and Loubie Chiasson. In a community where storytellers were highly sought after, these two were among the most accomplished of the narrative fraternity. Twenty tales come from the repertoire of Hache, three from Chiasson. The tales came from various sources: some were brought by Acadian settlers to eastern Canada several centuries ago; others were learned at various places where workers would share tales and songs with one another; some were learned from French sailors in various Nova Scotia ports and coastal towns; still others came from storybooks popular among local residents.

The tales included in this collection fall under several varieties of folk narrative. There are wonder tales of the traditional fairy variety, with roots deep in European oral history, filled with magic and marvels. There are romantic and realistic tales where quests may be involved, but without the specific aid of other-world helpers or objects. There are the jokes, amusing anecdotes and "noodlehead tales" that are found in all cultures and are favourites of Acadian raconteurs. Only one animal tale is included, a favourite from the repertoire of Loubie Chiasson, often requested when folks got together to swap tales, a story entitled "The Dog's Remembrance." Among the jocular tales whose plots will be familiar to devotees of the folk narrative are "The Two Fools," "The Statue of Saint Joseph," and my personal favourite, "The Fur Hat Merchant," a tale with medieval roots in which a clever woman induces a perpetual drunkard into burying not only her husband but several lovers as well, not to mention an unlucky parson who blunders into the accident and lives to regret it. How truly international and enduring this tale is and has been may be gauged by the fact that versions have popped up in the *Arabian Nights* as the tale of the hunchback, in the southern US as the story of Old Dryfry, and even in a modern urban legend, the stolen or disappearing grandmother's corpse.

The preponderance of tales in the collection are of either the wonder or the realistic variety. A number of them feature the character of Petit Jean, often known simply as 'Ti-Jean. The youngest of three sons, he is often on a quest to gain a wife

(often a princess or some other lady of high birth or consequence), outwit a tyrannical king, a greedy landowner or some other rich individual, battle against other-world adversaries such as witches, ogres or the Devil, or simply get the better of his two older brothers. Of the wonder tales, several of the more complex and elaborate in plot, imagery and character development include "The Bird of Truth," "The Fountain of Youth" and "The Princess with the Golden Hair." As with the other wonder tales, the Acadian stories are filled with talking animals, enchanted castles and magical rings and other objects, and always the hero or heroine gains his or her desire and lives happily ever after.

Marcellin Hache was such an accomplished raconteur that he would even add his own personal touches to some tales, as for instance where he would point out that, though the castle was a grand place, it was not nearly so grand as his own neighbour's dwelling, or where he would mention that, although he wrote several letters to 'Ti-Jean after the story ended, he could not say for sure whether 'Ti-Jean was still doing well or not!

Of the realistic tales, several deserve special mention. One of Hache's favourites was "A Thousand Dollars For a Dozen Eggs," in which a lad outwits a greedy landlord both in the realm of economics and in that of jurisprudence. "The Shrewd Thief" is an Acadian variant of the international tale known as

"The Master Thief," while "The Mother Without Arms" is Hache's very poignant retelling of a story often known as "The Maiden Without Arms," sometimes referred to as a sub-genre of the Cinderella tale cycle.

Each tale is accompanied by very valuable background information about its occurrence in world folklore, its prevalence or lack thereof in Nova Scotia and within the Acadian tradition, and its importance to the repertoire of the two tellers featured in this volume. In addition, thanks to Donald Deschênes, the volume includes a set of excellent notes, mostly in French, plus a valuable list of the tale types, from the Aarne-Thompson international tale type index. However, with all the pluses of the collection mentioned above, what comes across is that this is, in microcosm, a window upon a most enduring narrative tradition, a wondrous glimpse into the magical world of two fascinating raconteurs, and a glimpse into a world which has too often retreated before the steady advance of progress and modernization. To the Acadians of Chéticamp, long may your stories be told, to gladden those who tell them and enchant those who hear them, and may "happily ever after" always be the order of the day, now and to come.

—Robert Rodriguez  
NYC

## Recordings

Joe Panczerzewski, *Legendary Northwest Fiddler*. VRCD 34. Washington 98112; <[www.bwnet.com/voyager/](http://www.bwnet.com/voyager/)>

Voyager Recordings & Publications, 424 35th Ave.,

There is a healthy portion of pioneer Saskatchewan and North Dakota to be heard on this much-heralded CD, released by Seattle-based Voyager Recordings in 1996. Fiddler Joe Panczerzewski (1905-1991) grew up in North Dakota, but during the formative years of 1921-24 he played in Frances Kelly's dance band, based in Saskatchewan. Even though Joe moved around a lot over the years, learning a number of different fiddle styles, it was Canadian old time fiddling that remained closest to his heart. This recording reflects that first love.

There are 36 tunes on the recording, including ones by Andy De Jarlis, Johnny Mooring and Gerald Bailey. Other Canadian influences include tunes learned from fiddlers Ned Landry and Ed Gyurki. A number of other tunes were learned at fiddle contests in Saskatchewan and B.C. "Cabri Waltz," named after the small town in southern Saskatchewan, was first heard by Joe when he was 8 years old.

One of the tunes is "Alfie's Hornpipe," originally called "Allen's Reel," written by Web Acheson of Ontario. Alfie Myhre of Edmonton played this tune in the 1960 Shelburne fiddle contest, and someone, possibly Joe, heard it there and started playing it at fiddle contests as "Alfie's Reel" and "Alfie's Hornpipe." Today it is to be found in a number of tune books, including a contest book by Mark O'Connor and Benny Thomason, where it is called "Alfie Myhre's Hornpipe." There is a slight error in the liner notes, where Alfie is said to come from Calgary instead of Edmonton.

There are five waltzes, a clog and a polka written by Joe on this CD. "Contessa Waltz" is a good contest tune; Alfie Myhre once played it at a fiddle contest in Calgary. "Barbara's Waltz" was written "as a gesture of friendship" to Barbara Lamb. Barbara was a student of Voyager Records' Vivian Williams. While she was Vivian's student, Barbara briefly taught Mark O'Connor. She is currently the fiddler for Ranch Romance and also played a stint with Asleep at the Wheel.

The recording and backup musicianship quality is generally quite good. This CD was made from field recording sessions. Phil and Vivian Williams have been doing field recordings since the early 1960s, so their field recordings reflect a solid experiential expertise. An interesting file in the Voyager website describes the field recording technical information for this recording and others.

The liner notes include a brief biography. Phil and Vivian Williams write glowingly of Joe Panczerzewski as a friend and as a musical mentor. There must have been something quite remarkable about those pioneer days in Saskatchewan that encouraged Joe to maintain this particular musical style with such heart and loyalty. As much as there is a sound of pioneer days on the CD, there is also a sense of deeply-rooted friendship and community spirit.

—Rod Olstad  
St. Albert, Alberta

Paul Haslem Consort. *Ancient Moon and Rising Sun*. SR9673. Sugo Music, PO Box 1196, El Granada, California 94018; <cddirect@sugamusic.com>

Celtic music appears to have been embraced by New Age labels with an enthusiasm that's, frankly, a little scary. First there are the endless compilations with "Celtic" in the title, which, while they aren't inherently bad in and of themselves, do put forward a rather skewed impression of Celtic music. They invariably collect the quietest and dreamiest cuts from various albums and string them together, so that, even with lively groups such as Dervish and Deanta being represented, you still tend to fall asleep listening to one CD all the way through. Then there are the albums featuring a particular instrument (usually harp, flute, low whistles or hammered dulcimer) that are too often composed solely of twiddly improvisations played against a wash of synth strings.

However, as always, there is good music to be found amongst the fluff, and remember, Stivell's classic *Renaissance of the Celtic Harp* is usually found in the New Age bins these days.

One of the better examples of what can be done with the genre is hammered dulcimer player Paul Haslem's new album. On earlier, self-produced CDs, Haslem covered both the stand-

ards for his instrument (O'Carolan tunes and the like) and some fine original music. *Ancient Moon and Rising Sun* features mostly original material penned by the Ontario-based Haslem, on his own or with guitarist Steve Pasero.

What makes the album so good? Simply put, Haslem is in love with melody. Yes, there are dreamy background washes in places, and improvisational elements, but the former are done with taste, and the latter owe more to jazz in how they play off a strong melody. Instead of drifting away into nebulous New Age Neverneverland, the improvisations enhance and expand upon the melody's original themes.

It also helps that Haslem's consort is made up such fine musicians (acoustic guitar, oboe, percussion, keyboards) and that he's such a clean player himself. On an instrument where the ringing of previously-played strings can overwhelm, Haslem's playing is notable for its clarity. So ignore the New Age packaging and the CD's curious subtitle (*Dulcimer Gothica*), and appreciate the album for what it is: fine acoustic-based, melody-strong music played with great heart.

—Charles De Lint  
Ottawa, Ontario

Erin Cassidy. *The Wind at Play*. CSCD 1001. Carleton Sound, 97 Amberwood Crescent, Nepean, Ontario K2E 7C2; <[http://www.carleton.ca/art\\_and\\_culture/sound.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/art_and_culture/sound.htm)>

Celtic flute albums seem to come in two modes: well-intentioned but twee collections of fey tunes that lie on the sleepier side of dreamy—those where even the jigs and reels are subdued—and strong, impassioned recordings where the dance tunes have a real punch, and the airs lift the heart with their pure beauty. Unfortunately, unless you know the player, you can never be sure which you're getting when you're standing in the store, flipping through the choices in the bins. Which is where, hopefully, reviews such as this can be of some help.

Erin Cassidy has been a fixture on the Celtic scene in Ottawa for years. A slight, short-haired woman, she sits in on a session, unpacks her flute, and one can't help but be startled at the power of her playing. The pub might be noisy, the fiddles and other instruments easily outnumbering her, yet the sound of her flute still cuts across it all: the upper register sweet and pure; the low notes punchy and clear.

Her first album is a mixture of traditional and original tunes, with backing by some of Ottawa's finer musicians: James Stephens on fiddle and cittern, Ian Clark on guitar, John Geggie on bass, Rob Graves on percussion, and others. The traditional tunes aren't the usual standards, but no less worthy for that, and the originals stand up well beside them—Cassidy's own, as well as her covers of pieces such as Paddy Keenan's "Kahir's Kitchen."

And happily, the arrangements are somewhat adventurous as well, setting the tunes in their best light, rather than being different simply for the sake of being clever. So Greek and French tunes mix comfortably with the usual Celtic jigs and reels, or a kalimba provides the rhythm for a slow hornpipe. Lovely stuff, and I'm sure that if you've any interest in the Irish wooden flute, this album won't disappoint you.

—Charles de Lint

Farrell Boyce. *Whatever Happened to that Golden Glow?* RJ Enterprises, 305 Northshore Blvd. West, Burlington, Ontario L7T 1A6

This 1996 recording covers a songwriting period from 1983 to 1994 and includes a variety of styles and moods. It begins with a four (?) track, multi-tracked example of Farrell's musicianship, followed by the title song which has a late-nite, lounge lizard feel, accompanied by a Josh White Jr.-sounding blues guitar played by Phil Kane. In listening to the songs, without the benefit of the introductions usually given by a performer at a live concert, it quickly became apparent that the liner notes are very necessary if one is to properly understand and appreciate the songs. Farrell's poetry, and his arrangements of some of the

songs, especially "Looking For N," with its disturbing content, reminded me of the 1980s recordings of Leon Rosselson on Fuse Records. But, although his quiet and introspective approach was appropriate to this and a number of other songs, it lacked the intensity and power needed especially for "The Hard Rock Men," notwithstanding that the song comes from the perspective of a mine visitor, viewing a long-gone past.

Latin rhythms appear as accents here and there (as does an electric sitar), and the Latin rhythms are, of course, fitting for the celebration of the Brazilian martyr Chico Mendez. One ex-

pects an orchestra to break out during the performance of "A Song for Skedans," but the violin of Steve Fuller fills the gap pretty well. "The Ski Tour Song" continues the tradition of Eastern Canadian music in the vein of Wade Hemsworth and Arthur Scammell; I could have done with this one at some of my ski resort gigs that are now, happily, far back in history. The traditional "Dravons La Gatineau," sung in French, is a celebration of the log drives on the Gatineau, now only a memory, and "Northern Dancer" rather oddly humanizes the mind of the famous racehorse. "Behead" is a clever piece of poetry in song, and Farrell's wry humour is especially apparent in his anti-war-toys song "G.I. Joe Breaks Down and Cries." Amongst these songs are those that put into words and music some of life's aspects that many of us would otherwise take for granted. This is especially obvious in the perceptive "Buffalo Jump." "The Twelfth of March" is about a disastrous Ontario train wreck. The song is limited by its historic content, and the liner notes are, therefore, especially important, but one wishes still that it discussed the cause of the derailment, which a press release ac-

companying the CD gives as having happened near Hamilton in 1857.

I thought that giving the lead vocals to other singers on three occasions—his wife Penny on track 5, Joanne Dear on the Rogers and Hart song "My Romance," and Jude Johnson on "Behead"—was very generous and a nice touch. He shares the music on the CD with seventeen other very competent musicians and singers, including the ones mentioned above, and sixteen of the twenty tracks are originals. Overall the CD is largely introspective. The songs are at times performed in the partly spoken singing style typical of Jake Thackray, but are generally well modulated and complemented by Farrell's rich bass baritone.

A songbook, that includes chords, is available—which is convenient because some of the chords are somewhat out of the ordinary—and, although it is not a high-tech production, it is a useful tool, especially for the potential performer. Cassettes \$10.00, CD's \$15.00, Songbook \$2.00, postage \$2.00.

—Mike Ballantyne  
Cobble Hill, BC

Kitty's Kitchen. Cistin Chitf—Kitty's Kitchen. KITCD 0196. Kitty's Kitchen, 142 Edwin Ave., Toronto, Ontario M6P 3Z9

The late Chris Langan is a legendary figure in the Ontario Irish community. He was a renowned teacher of the Irish pipes, and many of the younger generation of Celtic musicians coming out of Toronto have been influenced and/or inspired by him. In fact, one of the two Toronto branches of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann is named after him. What does that have to do with a record review, you ask? Well, the two principals in Kitty's Kitchen, singer Kate Crossan and piper Debbie Quigley, met through Chris Langan, and the group is named in honour of him (or at least his kitchen).

The group is rounded out by Jack McRae on guitar and bouzouki and Tadhg Ó Muiris on harp and backing vocals. Ben Grossman adds bodhran on the jigs and reels, and Catherine Keenan plays a vielle à roue drone behind a couple of the songs. Tadhg Ó Muiris also contributes a song and an air; the rest of the songs and music are "traditional."

This is not a CD of loud, fast, in-your-face Ashley MacIssac, Eileen Ivers or Great Big Sea Celtic music. The tunes are played at a tempo that allows the beauty of the melody to come across. I like fast playing as much as the next person, but it is nice to hear a group that is interested more in the beauty of the music than in trying to impress us with how fast they can play. This doesn't mean that they can't play fast: "Garret Barry's Jig" is given a good workout at the end of "Charming Blue-Eyed Mary." Piper Debbie Quigley appears to favour jigs, as two of the four instrumental tracks are jigs, "Garryduff Cross/Kerry Jig" and "The Rolling Wave." The whistle is featured on the reel set "The Carrick Castle Lasses/Duke of Leinster," with the bouzouki picking along. The other instrumental track is an air written by the harpist, Tadhg Ó Muiris, "Oileán na nGael," dedicated to the thousands who died in quarantine on Grosse-Île.

Four of the nine songs are sung in Gaelic, the others in English. The CD begins with "The Immigrant's Farewell," a song Kate Crossan learned from her father; it is sung very clean-

ly, with just guitar accompaniment, the pipes coming in only at the end. The production on all of the songs is very uncluttered, keeping the focus on the singing. "Tiomáint an Earraigh," written by Tadhg Ó Muiris, starts with the harp behind the singing, then adds very understated whistle and concertina, which enhances this song of farewell without taking anything away from the singing. Two of the songs, "Charming Blue-Eyed Mary" and "Henry Joy McCracken," are begun a cappella, with the guitar joining in on "Mary" with a harmony line rather than chords, then the pipes and bodhran jump in with the jig "Garrett Barry's" to finish the song off. "Henry Joy McCracken" is a lament for the title character, who was one of the leaders of the United Irishmen in 1798. As befits a lament, the song is basically unaccompanied, with only a drone from the vielle à roue and a little reverb on the voice.

This effect is duplicated in the closing track of the CD, a live recording of "Let No Man Steal Your Thyme," with just vocals and a keyboard drone. Being live, the recording quality of this song is not as good as the rest of the album, suffering from some distortion and popped "P"s. According to the liner notes, the keyboard accompaniment was impromptu, and it does have that feel. After the rest of the material on the CD, which has been carefully arranged and produced, why they would include this song is a mystery. It's not a bad performance, but it just doesn't stand up to the other tracks on the recording.

The overall sound of the CD is very reminiscent of those two great bands from the '70s, the Bothy Band and Planxty. The combination of the pipes and guitar/bouzouki brought back memories of Liam O'Flynn and Donal Lunny/Andy Irvine, and, although Kate Crossan's voice is different from Triona ni Dhomhnaill's, I was struck by the similarity to some Bothy Band vocal tracks.

All told, this is quite a good recording. The performances are very consistent and quite good. The arrangements and pro-

duction (which were done by the group) are excellent, and for the most part serve to enhance the material and the performances. I would certainly recommend this CD to all but the

most hard-core speed and noise junkies, and even they must need to relax and unwind sometimes!

—Derek Lofthouse  
Calgary, Alberta

Les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal (choeur et orchestre sous la direction musicale de Gilbert Patenaude). *Un voyage en Amérique française: Chansons traditionnelles*. ATMA 1000 ALCD 2 1010. Disques ATMA 1000 Records, 835A, rue Querbes, bureau 310B, Outremont, PQ H2V 3X1.

En ma connaissance, il y a longtemps qu'une chorale n'avait pas enregistré de disque de folklore. Viennent d'en enregistrer un les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal, une maîtrise fondée en 1956 pour chanter aux offices de l'Oratoire Saint-Joseph du Mont-Royal, à Montréal. Cette maîtrise compte quelques 160 choristes. Mondialement connue, elle a participé à de nombreux concerts radiodiffusés et télévisés, notamment avec des artistes de renommée internationale comme Zamfir et Luciano Pavarotti.

Il y a près de vingt ans que Gilbert Patenaude dirige les Petits Chanteurs du Mont-Royal. Remarquable pédagogue, on lui doit entre autres deux opéras. Pour ce disque, il a rassemblé 28 chansons traditionnelles canadiennes-françaises tirées d'ouvrages de Marius Barbeau, Benjamin Botkin, Daniel Boudreau et Anselme Chiasson, Helen Creighton, Ernest Gagnon et d'un disque de Marcel Bénétiau. "Ces beaux airs anciens" ne sont pas sans remuer en nous quelques émotions; ils nous ramène sur les routes des découvreurs et des premiers coureurs des bois, au temps "d'une Amérique qui chantait en français."

Pour ce disque, Gilbert Patenaude a choisi parmi nos plus belles chansons traditionnelles, telles *Je me lève à l'aurore du jour*, *Marianson, dame jolie*, *Ah! toi, belle hirondelle*, *L'hirondelle, messagère des amours*, *Bal chez Boulé*, *Lève ton pied*, *Petite galiote*, *La belle qui fait la morte*, *Au bois du rossignolet* et *L'escaouette*. Il a rassemblé tous ces airs dans le but d'en faire une longue suite musicale: les pièces sont brèves et s'enchainent avec force et entrain, à la manière d'un grand voyage en chassé-galerie au dessus de nos contrées sauvages. Les orchestrations et les harmonisations sont faites à la manière d'un grand puzzle, de façon à ce qu'à l'écoute, les pièces s'emboîtent les unes aux autres pour former une formidable fresque musicale. Les mélodies ne sont pas uniquement harmonisées, mais servent de matériau au compositeur pour les exploiter à la manière de thèmes

symphoniques. L'ensemble jouit de beaucoup d'unité et déploie une certaine puissance. En concert, cela doit être particulièrement enlevant.

Patenaude a su mettre en valeur le caractère modal de plusieurs des mélodies avec beaucoup de bonheur, telles *C'est les filles de par chez nous* et *Adieu la ville d'Orléans*. La plupart des harmonisations sont émouvantes et contribuent de façon remarquable au lyrisme des mélodies et des textes, comme dans *Ah! toi, belle hirondelle* et *Dans les haubans*. Par contre, les rythmes endiablés et de marche conviennent fort peu aux chansons *Je me lève à l'aurore du jour*, une véritable pastourelle, et *Marianson, dame jolie*, une plainte triste et dolente. D'autres comme *Beau marinier* et *Au bois du rossignolet* auraient mérité davantage de légèreté. Au contraire, *Dans ma main droite*, une danse enfantine gaie et enjouée, aurait mérité une orchestration beaucoup plus vive. Enfin, M. Patenaude termine son périple par le très bel *Escaouette du Cap Breton* qu'a si bien popularisé Édith Butler. L'orchestration de cette dernière pièce n'est pas sans rappeler celle qu'en a fait pour sa *Suite acadienne* le chef de choeur français Bernard Lallemand.

Les arrangements mettent en valeur chacune des voix. On devine chez les choristes un plaisir évident à les chanter. Les voix jeunes et adultes sont justes et précises. La balance voix/instruments est tout aussi juste, la prise de son remarquable. Le livret qui accompagne le disque contient le texte des chansons, sans malheureusement en indiquer les sources. C'est un disque qui se laisse écouter avec beaucoup de plaisir et une certaine nostalgie. Il est à souhaiter que ces harmonisations seront un jour publiées afin que d'autres choeurs aient aussi le plaisir de les chanter.

—Donald Deschênes  
Sudbury, Ontario

Freddy Dixon. *Tales and Legends of the Ottawa Valley and Canada*. Rodeo RLPCD 8043. Holborne Distributing Co., P.O. Box 309, Mount Albert, Ontario L0G 1M0

Freddy Dixon's second release for Rodeo Records is a tribute to various figures from the history of the Ottawa Valley and other parts of eastern Ontario. Tom Thompson, D.R. Naismith (who invented basketball) and Dixon's father, are all hailed in song, as well as the Rideau Canal and the navvies who built it.

The listener can't miss Dixon's commitment to the music and history of his beloved Ottawa Valley, which he sings about in an unadorned but quite pleasant baritone. Dixon is very much in the country stream of Ottawa Valley music. There are echoes of Stompin' Tom, but Dixon's voice is smoother and reminded me a little of Waylon Jennings. Though he sings well, there isn't a lot here in terms of memorable melodies. Dixon's songs are

far more focussed on story line than upon harmonic invention. This has served many a writer (Woody Guthrie comes to mind, among others), but Dixon's lyrics don't stray far from the literal and didn't have enough colour or bite to keep me interested.

Terry Carisse helped out with production, occasional vocals and co-writing a couple of the tunes. The recording has a straightforward but clean and solid sound, with good performances from a number of Ottawa's finer session musicians. Recommended to anyone who has a soft spot for the culture of this region and its history.

—Steve Fisher  
Turner Valley, Alberta