



Reviews

Ma mie tant blanche, chansons folkloriques acadiennes/ Acadian Folksongs. Available from The CFMS Mail Order Service, P.O. Box 4232, Stn. C, Calgary, T2T 1N5 (\$8.00 for CFMS members, \$10.00 otherwise, plus \$2.00 shipping). **Performed by Charlotte Cormier, accompanied by Donald Deschênes.** Produced by Ronald Labelle and Donald Deschênes.

Mamie tant blanche is a delightful recording, full of musicality and devoid of artifice or pretense.

The 17 selections were chosen from the Anselme Chiasson collection, *Chansons d'Acadie*, published in a series beginning in 1942 and continuing through recent years to a total of 8 volumes, including one from the Magdalen Islands. Normally, one might look askance at a recording of songs culled from printed sources, but with Charlotte Cormier and Donald Deschênes, both experienced collectors, scholars and performers, the songs are in expert hands.

Charlotte's clear, pleasantly strong voice is heard to its best advantage in this intimate setting, a cappella or with Donald's sensitive, unobtrusive guitar accompaniment and his occasional singing on refrains. At a time when so many performers seem to feel that a song cannot be recorded without complex harmonies or unusual instrumental arrangements, it is refreshing to hear these fine songs speak for themselves.

Charlotte and Donald have chosen such diverse themes as the lyric "La bergere qui chante" with its haunting, repetitive melody, to the rather grisly children's song "La poulette a Colin" with its bilingual refrain, to the locally composed "La mine de platre," the story of a disastrous mining enterprise in Cheticamp, Cape Breton. "La belle francoise," well-known throughout French Canada, appears here with its tragic story sung to a milling song tune with a drinking song refrain, while the title song of the album, "Ma mie tant blanche," may go back several centuries but is no longer sung in France.

The jacket notes include complete texts for each song, and background information on the selections in both French and English. There is a brief, useful bibliography, and researchers will be glad to see a title concordance for use with Conrad Laforte's *Catalogue de la chanson folklorique française*. I would have liked to see the volume/page references for the Chiasson edition from which the songs were taken; as it was, when comparing the performances with the printed version I had to check through each volume to find them.

Altogether, this is a small gem of a record which stands up admirably well to repeated listening. I hope that it is only the first of a series.

Judith Cohen
Université de Montréal