

DISCourse with Bill Polonski

Didier Delahaye evokes l'esprit de Brassens

This is Didier Delahaye's second album of Brassens music; the first, *Didier Delahaye Sings Georges Brassens*, was released in 2004. In this, *Brassens REDUX: In brief*, Delahaye continues his passion of interpreting the work of French poet and musician Georges Brassens with verve and aplomb.

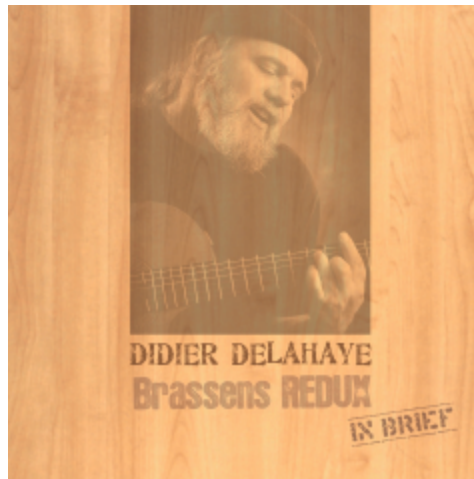
For the uninitiated, Brassens is to France what Woody Guthrie, Bob Dylan and Pete Seeger are to America or, perhaps more close to the mark, Leonard Cohen is to Canadian music. By any account he is a far more complex songwriter than most.

The music of Brassens is in itself an archetype and his legacy of song has made him the undeniable voice of 20th century French music. No less than 50 doctoral dissertations are credited to the subject of Brassens and his poetry has been translated into 20 languages.

By the simple act of bringing the poetry of Georges Brassens to a Yukon audience, Delahaye is surely enriching our culture. It is as if someone had decided to recreate a vintage wine in our neck of the woods and present it for the world to taste. This music is from a talented interpreter and scholar of music.

In this volume, Delahaye generously gives the English-only listener a taste of Brassens language in his translated versions of *The Gorilla*, *In my Heart's Backyard*, *Natural Mate* and *Poor Martin*. Thus more than half the songs are translated into English for our enjoyment and perhaps first lyrical listen to Brassens.

The musical interpretations have expanded the solo styling of the originals. The added vocals of Marie-Hélène Comeau and the violin of Keitha Clark add to the bass of Matt King, stick bass of Pat Braden and the drums of Ed White to create a real group effort... a more French Canadian kitchen feel if you will.



With this expanded lineup Delahaye is able to tap into the gypsy swing of *L'amour marin*, support *Poor Martin* the gravedigger in his toil with violin improvisations and help *The Gorilla* shuffle and groove in search of his ultimate judgment.

Like a log alight on a roaring fire, Delahaye warms your soul with a rich, sonorous singing voice. His delivery in French and English is, like the original Brassens, distinctively enunciated and articulated to perfection.

Recorded by Laurie Malo at Rainbow Studios, these recordings have a beautiful presence that brings Didier Delahaye and his group into your listening space. This CD has a very intimate feeling to it and suits the subject matter exquisitely.

As an added treat, Delahaye has an extensive website to complement this CD at www.brassensredux.com. From here you can read more of Brassens' life and work.

Didier Delahaye will be performing as part of the entertainment for the Canada Winter Games at ATCO Place (that's the big tent on Second Avenue, in Whitehorse) Sunday, March 4, at 12:45 pm.

The CD is available at Rose Music, CD Plus, Mac's Fireweed Books and Whitehorse General Store or from his website.