

#RevelsConnects: Musical Connections Episode 3

Josée Vachon: The Traditions of Quebec and Acadia

Maggie Hotzberg, Interviewer

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David: Hello! I'm David Coffin, Artist-in-Residence at Revels, and I'd like to welcome you to Revels Connects, our musical connections series. This set of programs offers intimate 45- minute salon-style performances, with a variety of music tradition bearers. Plus, a companion podcast with the featured artist, hosted by the Massachusetts Cultural Council's Maggie Holtzberg, head of their folk arts and heritage program. This series explores musical traditions from around the world with insights from our guest tradition bearers and performers and a deeper dive into the roots of their music, instruments, and cultural journeys through a curated interview. We are excited to collaborate with the Massachusetts Cultural Council. The Revels Connects Musical Connections series is sponsored in part by a grant from the Ithaka Foundation.

Maggie: Josée Vachon has been sharing the music of her Franco-American upbringing for over 35 years. Accompanying herself on guitar and foot rhythms she performs traditional and contemporary folk songs of Quebec and Acadia as well as her own compositions. Josee has over 12 solo albums, 2 with a band Chanterelle, and countless appearances at folk festivals, concerts, and school residencies. We're pleased to have this ambassador of Franco-American culture here with us today. Josée Vachon, bienvenue à Musical Connections!

Josée: Merci beaucoup! Thank you!

Maggie: You were born into a singing family in Quebec and although your family moved to Maine when you were seven, it sounds like you continued to summer in Quebec. Describe the kind of homemade entertainment that would take place on a typical summer evening with family members.

Josée: My mother was the oldest of eight so it was a big family, I was the oldest cousin of 15 and so... yes, family gatherings were great. My mother, when we moved to Maine, she made a deal with my father that we would summer in Quebec. She was concerned that the language would disappear if we stayed in the states only. And that was wonderful for us. So my summers were in a lake town in Quebec and we had bonfires and chalets that my uncles and aunts would rent every summer and so we sang around bonfires... And naturally, on my mother's side of the family, there were no instruments. It was later that my mother bought me a guitar when I was 15, and so I started bringing guitar accompaniment to the gatherings. But it was always just singing traditional songs but also you know my family loved songs of the 30's- 40's to 60's and then I found myself suddenly hanging out with young people every summer, so of course my teen years, the music of the jukeboxes was what I wanted to introduce to the family and my first experience realizing that traditional music was also contemporary music in Quebec was on the jukeboxes was a band called La Batine S'Oriente. And they had this song that I just loved and so I brought it to a family party. This was during the holidays, more like Christmas time in the kitchen, and I sang the song and my grandmother said, "Oh that's not new at all, your great-grandfather used to sing that." It was called, "Things Have Changed from the Good Old Days." So things really haven't changed THAT much, cause the words were very... you know, kind of young women were not allowed to kiss and you know until New Year's Eve where they held pinkies and so I just thought these songs were hilarious. But those on the gatherings at that point, my father's mother died when he was two so his father remarried and the stepmother was not into hanging out with the Vachon side of the family. When I was about 16 or 17, there was a huge Vachon reunion and I was almost in tears because my father said, "Alright, I'm going to introduce you to my cousins on that side." And everybody was pulling out fiddles, guitars, harmonicas, and they were singing the real songs, the Terroir, that I think of when I think of lots of clogging, and so on. So I feel like I missed out on that side a lot, and yet love what I got on my mother's side too. Because then of course the holidays we still did the clogging and spoons in the kitchen and so on, but anyways.

Maggie: Well I was going to ask you because that seems like the foot rhythms, I've heard it called Canadian feet, it seems like a very distinguishing sound of the music. Particularly where there weren't instruments. Is that why you think that came about?

Josée: Yeah, I've talked to people about that, I mean fiddlers sometimes were the only band for a dance hall, in the kitchen then there were stories where they would put the fiddler on the chair on top of the kitchen table, and then he would do this beat with his feet as he kept rhythm with his fiddle. My memory of my aunts, you know, after midnight mass would come back to the kitchen with my grandmothers and they would take off their high heels and just clogged in their nylons or their pantoufle, as we say the slippers, but it still made plenty of racket. And I always see them as keeping the rhythm of our songs that way.

Maggie: I've also heard the term, in terms of say, Cape Breton dancing or, you know, Acadian maritime, close to the floor, where the stepping is very much a part of that, and it made me think of the relationship to the music you were raised with.

Josée: Yeah, that's interesting, I've never heard of that but it makes sense. That rhythm for me is... I'll hear any tune in 4/4 time and I find myself clogging naturally and that's how I used to teach myself, I'd listen to the radio and just be practicing cause I could pick up spoons quickly, I think that when we do hand rhythm we can do quickly, it just becomes very natural. But feet, it's muscle memory. So I practiced it a lot and finally, it just became second nature without thinking about it.

Maggie: Well it's a wonderful sound and it's very uplifting and like I said, distinctive. Well thinking historically In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which actually isn't that long ago, many French Canadians left Quebec to find work in New England in the mills and the logging camps. I was wondering was that a factor in your own family? Is that why you moved to Maine?

Josée: No actually, I'm doing a story for a French newspaper on this because my father was a railroad man and most Franco-Americans in New England definitely came by

train but they came directly to textile millwork all around. So I've performed in every mill town in New England because there's always a little Canada there somewhere. But yeah, we didn't come till the sixties and my father worked for the Canadian Pacific Railroad, my grandfather worked for the Canadian Pacific, actually both sides. And so Brownville Junction Maine was the center of Maine where the railroad went through from Montreal to Halifax and so if my father was called east to New Brunswick we wouldn't see my father and Quebec for a couple weeks sometimes, so my mother finally agreed to move to Brownville Junction. So I was raised there, not realizing there were... I knew there were French names in town, but we were the only family that the kids still spoke French because I guess we were the new immigrants.

Maggie: Well, being raised in Brownsville Junction, was it difficult to hold on to your French in retrospect?

Josée: Thanks to Mom, I tell her that it's one of the greatest gifts she gave us, she insisted on French in the house. Because of that, though, it took her years to learn English. And she did have two French-speaking friends in town. And she didn't work, or the jobs were in Bangor, Maine, like 50 miles away. So, yeah, it was difficult and yet it wasn't because we spoke French in the house. But my brother and I, your schooling ends up being your language of school. So for my brother and me, it was always in English because it was our peer language. But then we would just turn right around and speak French to mom. But then we could speak French to each other, it was very strange.

Maggie: But I've often heard some people that I know in Montreal will flip back and forth in the same sentence.

Josée: Oh yes! And actually, I hear that in northern Maine a lot, the Acadians in northern Maine are still quite fluent, and perfectly bilingual. The first time I went up people were speaking in French and in English as if nothing had happened. And I'm like "Oh I love this cause I can totally understand both sides." But then I thought, "What a way to not stop talking!"

Maggie: And I love that you mention the little Canadas. I'm familiar with the one in Lowell but I am aware that spotted all throughout New England there are such things. And actually that I was wondering if the songs you learned within your family were familiar to Franco-American audiences throughout New England.

Josée: That's a great question because I was going to... when I started singing in college, it was really word of mouth that I sang in French. And I never thought... I was going to be a French high school teacher, that was my degree, but word of mouth kept spreading that there was a young... I think there were three who sang French around New England around that time. I started going to the different towns and I would sing the songs I had grown up with and there were places that...I find like Waterville, Maine, Lewiston Maine, Biddeford, they knew my songs. Looking back now I realize that the songs came with families from various towns in Quebec, from regions. I would try another to sing the same song that I would sing in Lewiston, I'd go to Springfield Massachusetts, or Chicopee or Woonsocket Rhode Island and they would just look at me like oh that's cute but they didn't know it and I thought *How can that be, everybody knows that song!* I'm convinced that songs did come with you know, when the mill workers, when a family would come to a town they would go back and tell family, "There's work in Lowell, there's work in Springfield," and then half the town would move, cause actually half the province of Quebec moved to New England.

Maggie: Yeah well, and I also wondered if the traditional folk songs of Quebec differed that much from those of Acadia, you know, from the Canadian Maritime Provinces, maybe that was why?

Josée: Yeah, that's possible. There are a lot of Acadian songs that were familiar, but then I hear different versions in Quebec. the same themes, and of course the old French songs are, you know, medieval France, and they came here with the settlers and it was a way to preserve the language. I think songs were always a way to and also the rhythms of the work and so on. But yeah, like my grandmother always loved to sing *Partons La Merabelle*. It's an old sea song from Acadia but the Quebecois do a different, like different version word-wise and melody-wise and so it's obvious that

songs... you know I'm not a folklorist by any means, but I love collecting, collecting, collecting. It's obvious that songs are an oral tradition and develop with various... the choruses suddenly change you know, with the same exact storylines, so yeah.

Maggie: Sometimes musical success has a lot to do with timing. Tell us about what was going on in New England in the United States during the late 1970's and early 80's that helped launch your Franco-American singing career meaning, you know, singing in French schools and performing at French Canadian Festivals.

Josée: Yeah, I mean it's as I said, you know I was going to be a French teacher but I worked for a French newspaper on campus, I went to the University of Maine in Orono, and that was my discovery of Franco-Americans for the first time, that I was not unique. Wow! And 17% of the campus was French-speaking even! And they were mostly students from northern Maine Aroostook County so there was an Acadian accent and then there were the Lewiston, Biddeford, Augusta, Waterville that had more Quebecois roots, like me. And my boss was from the Bois region of Quebec, where my mother is from. And when I came in out of curiosity he, his eyes just you know he was just beaming with the idea, ooh, a new immigrant. And the newspaper was very much of, we wrote in French, English or Frenghish, you know, the important thing for us was to express our roots in our culture and what we think about today. I would share the songs during parties and then with my boss. There were 18 French festivals in New England at the time. I mean that, I know today when I tell young people this, they're like, "what?" So there was a demand, the festivals, there was over 700 organization from like *unintelligible* clubs, to, you know, the snowshoe club of somewhere in Maine. There were so many organizations that just wanted entertainment and so I just started traveling like this, it was great. And in Quebec, of course, you know, there was a lot of the separatist movement going on so I suddenly became very involved in representing New England's French because I was not Quebecois anymore. My schooling was in New England. I learned math in English, I mean, my studies were in English. Even my accent has changed over all these years, and when I go back to Quebec, they even think I'm more Acadian. And I think it's just a mix of the accent that I've developed living here.

Maggie: What happens when you go to France, what do they hear in your voice?

Josée: Because I studied French, let's not forget, I do try to standardize my French... and I think that's a Franco-American habit, my boss used to do it too. If a French Ambassador or someone called, his accent would change immediately and I look at him like "What are you, why are you speaking so Francaise?" And he'd laugh and say, "I'm not even aware of it." It's insecurity among Franco-Americans because we were told, or we were often asked, "Which French do you speak?" And I had never heard that you know, growing up with my parents and family life in Quebec. And I realize that to Americans, are they ever asked "which English do you speak?" I have British friends who say, "you don't speak English, you speak American".

Maggie: Can you give us an example of an... I wonder if you can do that, could you give us either a song or lyrics of the Quebec vs. Acadian vs. Francaise?

Josée: Yeah I mean little things, like the first time I was in a French class, that the first thing I can think of is the teacher could hear my accent was more Quebecois and she asked me to spell a word with lots of 'Rs' in it. And I went, "Repeté". And she goes, "Tres bien, not try to say, air" And I was just dumbfounded, I was like, "Okay, I have a music ear sure..." Well I went home thinking, "What the heck just happened? I have an accent?" So, in a different class, a student wrote about a potato harvest that happened in Aroostook County, and he talked about "patats" because that's what he... and she circled in red every time he used the word and said "pommes de terre" And he stood up and goes "Madame, I'm sorry but I've been picking patats since I was three, and I can't go home now to my father and say, "How was the pommes de terre harvest this fall?" They'd be like, "Where are you from?"

Maggie: It's so relevant today you know. I, this is reminding me, I lived for many years in the Deep South and, you know, middle-aged women in Athens Georgia were apologizing to me about their accent, it's like, "Are you kidding me? This is your home, this is how you speak, this is how people speak here." So it's this way in many parts of the world.

Josée: And that insecurity, I mean it really does cause insecurity to people, and I know so many young Franco-Americans who, they were young at my age, once upon a time. But they would say, “No, I don’t speak French anymore, it’s not the right French, so I just wanted to get rid of it. I don’t want to speak like my parents or my grandparents”. And I think, “What a loss! This is so...” And so I find that all the songs I’ve written over the past, in my career, have tended to be about anything about the language, the loss of the language... or the pride in the language 'cause even older Franco-Americans like in Lewiston Maine, when I started singing, and I’m singing, you know, singing in French. But singing is like the way the Beatles sang American songs, you don’t hear an accent when you’re singing necessarily, you’re singing the language. And so these older women would come up to me and say, “I just don’t speak French as well as you.” So that just bothered me and I think that I found myself just inspired, my whole career has been to bring pride to who we are, and I’m really not a Quebecois anymore. I do consider myself a Franco-American, like it was my upbringing. With the great influence of summers in Quebec, yes. But still I do find that I try to revolt against being told that I didn’t speak the right French. But it’s true, I can’t help myself when a French someone would come up to me and I will standardize... I remember being in France and someone said, “I hear a little accent, are you from Toulouse?” But then as soon as I would say a word like, “I have a hard time doing this, J’ai du mal à le faire” And they’d go, “AH! You’re from Canada!” Instead of saying, “J’ai du mal” Which is the “right” French way of saying it. Again- see? The “right”.

Maggie: Right! It’s so ingrained in you.

Josée: It’s still ingrained. And it just drives me nuts. Haha!

Maggie: That’s fascinating, oh my god. I also wanted you to talk about growing audiences for your music outside the Franco-American community in New England, and is this what helped inspire your co-founding of Chanterelle?

Josée: Absolutely, it started with... I used to host a cable TV show in Manchester, New Hampshire called "Bonjour." And we thought, you know, cable TV, last a year or two...and it went twelve years! We filmed every week for twelve years.

Maggie: That's amazing!

Josée: Yeah, I think that the last one I remember was show number 500. But we would interview different guests and I lived in Amherst at the time, Amherst, Massachusetts, and someone said, "oh you should invite Donna Ebere. She's a great fiddler." And I said, "Ebere? How come I haven't met her yet?" And she said she used to see my name in the papers in Amherst and thought I was Spanish, cause she thinks "Jose".

Maggie: Haha!

Josée: She didn't connect it either and so I invited her on the show and she said doesn't speak French anymore because my grandfather wanted to assimilate ,and we lost the language, and so I prepared her with a few French answers for just a couple questions and then she played. And then I had a gig in Greenfield Massachusetts and I was terrified because I had never played to an English-speaking audience before. I had always played just to my culture, and I was like," How am I going to still do an hour and a half of this." and so I called Donna and said, "Would you like to do this gig with me?" and I thought great, I'll have fun, I'll clog, and all those fiddle tunes, I'll finally have the energy that I want to add to my show. And she goes "Can I bring my guitarist? She knows all my tunes." and Liza Constable showed up and we decided to prepare a song which was the only French song Donna had learned to sing in French. And we decided to work out a three-part harmony. And then we just looked at each other and went, "That's a nice sound!" Who would have thought, 'cause our voices are so different from one another. So we became Chanterelle that night. Chanter, "to sing", and elle for three women. It was very inspiring, and I loved the idea that I was going to expose my culture to a wider audience that way. We even went to perform in Quebec at the time, this was years ago, but there were no women bands singing traditional music. So it's very unique, so we feel like we brought something first and here we were doing traditional

songs and three female voices, and now there, I mean there are dozens and dozens, it's great. So we always wonder if we were an inspiration to them, you know?

Maggie: You most definitely were, I mean that's what I meant about timing and you just hit this at an amazing time. I also remember years ago, when I first came to work at Mass Cultural Council... Jill Lindsay, I found this brochure of this wonderful-looking tour called "Women's Singing Traditions" of which you were a part. Tell us a little bit about that because in that case, not only were you singing outside of your home community, you were paired with other traditions.

Josée: It was such a fun experience, we toured some of the great halls all around New England for an entire year, basically. We were six cultures if I recall. I can't name them all now, of course. Irish...

Maggie: There was Greek...

Josée: Yes! Myself, French-Canadian, Portuguese fado singer...

Maggie: Bulgarian?

Josée: Bulgarian and... Gospel. And we had just about 15-20 minutes to perform each, the music of our culture. It was called The Women Singing Traditions Tour of New England, and the important thing was that we sing songs that women sang. And so that also became an inspiration for me because I had never thought about, well, what do women sing in my culture? So I started really researching... And I found the same patterns over and over were there, I mean we have a ton of traditional songs about a lot of drinking songs, and songs about religion and anti lawyers. But then there were "la mal marrierte", badly married off women. And I found hundreds of women complaining, "My father, I'm the only daughter, and my father forced me to marry this man, and..." I think women wrote these therapeutic songs at the time. And I found versions that were in my family repertoire, not realizing it, how come I wasn't singing them before?

Maggie: And also back in 2016, I believe you were the lead singer for the Acadian-Cajun Christmas Revels. So I was wondering what struck you about the Cajun music during that show's run, and was it like meeting long-lost relatives?

Josée: Huh, that's an interesting question, cause I truly, when George Emlen first called me I said, "I'm not Acadian, just so you know... But I do sing a lot of Acadian songs from..." You know, I get so many songbooks that people like, I have one right there I just want to show you. But you know people hand me books from their family, handwritten. I must have a dozen of these that they just say, "I found this in the Attic would you like them?" and "yes of course" but of course, there's no music in there, just lyrics. So yes, songs, my repertoire has been song requests that I've accumulated through my almost over 35 years of performing and so the Acadian songs from northern Maine, I suddenly, when I would try singing them like again, Woonsocket or Springfield, they were not known. But if I sang them in Fitchburg or Fall River, they were known. And those I realize were Acadian regions, also. So anyway, he goes, "Perfect just give us some songs and some ideas," and Lisa Ornstein had worked at The Acadian Archives in northern Maine, Fort Kent. So I suggested that he contact her for more information 'cause she was truly the specialist in these songs. And it was a blast I mean, you know, the Acadian Revels is... once you go, once you're in it, especially, you're hooked. I haven't missed a show since. But we lived in Pennsylvania for 12 years and it was not easy to come up... but even when I lived in Amherst, we didn't tend to go. I'd heard of them, but it was Boston... you know, it was too far away for an evening.

Maggie: Right and how do you stay in touch with the community now that you're living back in Mass, you're living in Framingham now, right?

Josée: Yes.

Maggie: How do you, especially in these times... or with your family... up in Canada?

Josée: Yeah in Canada for sure, my parents are still alive, 86 and 88. I'm very lucky my mother is a very modern grandmother, she loves to Skype, so that helps a lot. I Skype

her everyday pretty much, so that maintains my French too in these times. I have been recording concerts for a few things. Of course, musicians are struggling, so many things there are canceled, but a few places have asked if I could record from home, so I've done an hour concert in my living room and that was fine with them. It was just, maintaining the event, and the get-together. A lot of people have asked me for gifts, to record a special song for their loved one right now as encouragement, that this will be over soon. And, sure, I mean what else do we have to do? And it's great 'cause it is keeping me finding out, what kind of songs do they want? 'Cause I do prepare a different repertoire for each event. And I find in some ways, when I'm traveling, 'cause touring, you know, you sort of create a setlist, and especially with Chanterelle, our setlist, and you don't want to be throwing something totally new to the band and say, "I want to try this." Sometimes I would do it and they would give me a dirty look like "We're not ready," and I'd say, "It's okay, I'll do it acapella 'cause I know they wanna hear this." And it would happen but otherwise, for recordings at home, I'm thinking, "Hey, if I can't see if the audience likes the song or not, I'm just going to try it!" Because I want to find out if... and then people will write in, you know? They'd say, "I've never heard you do these songs before!" So I'm getting feedback in a strange new way through these home recordings.

Maggie: Yeah I mean, you're such a repository of culture and music, it's phenomenal, and then knowing that you have those notebooks. Those are really important primary source documents.

Josée: Yeah it's amazing, it's amazing how many songs I do know in there. I mean of course, I have, like "*La Bon Chanson*", it was called the good song. It was a 10 volume, a priest back in the 50s was worried because French kids were not learning our repertoire anymore so he put together these songs. But of course, being a priest, what folklorists tell me is that he cleaned up many of the songs.

Maggie: I'm sure he did!

Josée: So sometimes I'll do something and a historian will go, "Did you know... that these words were different?" So that's been fun, and I do find them in some of these handwritten songbooks occasionally. And another thing that I love, when my grandmother was alive, she had lost her eyesight. And so I would come and visit her and say, "I get these songbooks from people but I don't have any music with them." And I would pull out my recording device, and I would start reading to her some of these lyrics. And she'd go, "Oh! Of course!" Then she'd sing it to me. So that really helped because I'd find songs, I'd go, "I love these words, I really want to learn this song... but what is the melody?" And she'd fill in the gaps. It was so fun! And it was a gift to her too cause she was really missing so much.

Maggie: Wonderful! You know and I had this thought the other day, I don't know why, but it's a comparison to cooking; when you find somebody's handwritten recipes, it's very much like finding a tune book of fiddle tunes right or these books of words that you see and you realize how much of what makes it really authentic and wonderful is carried by the person who's actually performing or cooking for you, right? All those little subtleties, it has to be within the person.

Josée: True, true. And it, you know that's where you also see oral traditions do have little changes, right? Cause there was a song that I collected from a woman in Vermont and I sang, it was called *Le Petite Cordonnier*, the little shoemaker. And my grandmother sang it the same way this lady did, but then I heard an Acadian version and my version was lacking one more line in the chorus. But I thought, "Okay, why? Why did that one line get lost or was it added in Acadian?" Who knows? More research, right?

Maggie: Yeah more research! Wow that's wonderful! Back when I was working at Lowell National Historical Park, they have this wonderful French-Canadian week, and we were doing a little folklife series, so we brought in Donna Ebere and two other musicians to perform at the hall there, and for their ham and bean supper, which they had every year. And I'll never forget watching them perform and looking out into the audience and seeing this older man, just enthralled and his feet going the whole time,

and then he pulled out some spoons. You know it was just this wonderful thing to witness and I wanted to ask you about that, and also a little bit about the foodways that always surround those celebrations.

Josée: Yeah, I've performed many times at that festival in Lowell. And the food, yeah the foods, you know... meat pies - tourtier, the baked beans, the sugar pies. Actually, many of my original songs I do bring some of those foods as jokes as part of the... I wrote a song called *Entre Moi*, between me and myself, and I used some of those foods in there and people always come and talk about it and share their stories and their versions, of course. There are versions of food and there are versions of songs, right? But I think we were talking about performing in various places, like Donna, when I was doing the Acadian Revels, Megan Henderson had asked if there were any upcoming concerts that she could see what kind of music I did, and Leominster Library was doing a performance and so I told her that would be a good one to come to 'cause there would be so many Acadians in Leominster, Fitchburg, and the place was just filled. They had set up 30 chairs, and as I said, we had close to 200 people. And they're just setting up chairs here and there... And everyone sang along, I couldn't have picked a better show for Megan to hear.

Maggie: That's great! Are you familiar with Cody's Beans in Lowell? Or the famous beans?

Josée: No I mean my grandfather made the, I think he made the best baked beans...

Maggie: Tell us about his beans!

Josée: You know, you had to have a ham bone, of course, there was not even any ham on it, just the fat of it. And maple syrup, although he would always cook with the maple syrup, but we always added molasses to it too cause it wasn't sweet enough for us. My grandmother actually taught my grandfather to cook. He was a lumberjack for a long time, my grandfather, Blair, on my mother's side. But then the work was getting so hard and he was a small man, naturally, he was getting really... and a job came up on the

railroad, again, they were looking for a cook. And she said, "You're taking this." And he's like, "I don't cook!" And she said, "I'm gonna teach you." And she taught him, pies, baked beans, a few things. He became a better cook than she was. And it was amazing! My mother said that he would take over the role over the Christmas meal, she would have a few pies, but his were cherry pie and his raisin pie...? I don't know, did we have raisin pie in the states? We must somewhere...

Maggie: Somewhere we must.

Josée: Yeah! My favorite! And sugar pie.

Maggie: What is sugar pie?

Josée: My grandmother's recipe was, she made four or five pies out of it. 3 cups of brown sugar, 2 cups of white sugar, and a cup of cream. Stir it together in a double pie crust... and I think she probably threw an egg in there just to give it something healthy! Hahaha, It's amazing how when you grow up, your tastes do change I still love it but... my brother and I could split a pie in half and eat. And today it's a sliver for me, you know, I can take a sliver at a time. I know better, I guess.

Maggie: That's awfully sweet! As we wrap up I was wanting to ask you if there's something I haven't thought to ask that you'd like to add to this conversation.

Josée: Wow, I feel like we've really, and I'm a talker as you can say, I just go off in different directions constantly. No, I think for me it's been wonderful, I feel like I've been blessed to do this career for so long. And I'm still performing... not 18 festivals anymore, it's true. And I admit that I still find the most pleasure in singing when it's an almost totally Franco-American audience, because I know I don't have to explain the song. And then all the innuendos, the little humor is caught. Because some things just don't translate at all, expressions... and somebody asked me once, "Do you think in French or in English?" And I think it depends on what the subject is. I think that there are some things that you can't explain well in English, so you do find it's easier to explain it in

French, and so my jokes among the Franco-American audience will definitely... I look for bilingual clean jokes as much as I can cause my mother would be devastated if I shared some of my uncle's jokes. Haha!

Maggie: Well that's great! I look forward to being able to see and hear you sing in person in the near future. Thank you so much for talking with us!

Josée: Thank you! Thank you, it's been a pleasure, Maggie.