

Book portrays pre-election Parti Quebecois

By STAN FISHER

Writing about contemporary history, somebody said, is a bit like skating across a newly frozen lake . . . you're very apt to end up in ice water right up to your assumptions.

Journalist-Author Peter Desbarats would probably agree for in the introduction of his latest book "Rene . . . A Canadian in Search of a Country" (McClelland and Stewart, 1976, 223 pp, \$10.00) and repeated on the jacket-cover for a good measure is this

statement: "The idea of Rene Levesque negotiating the future of Canada with Pierre Trudeau is too far in the future to be anything but wildly speculative — but how potent that prospect is!"

What may have seemed wildly speculative in July '76 is not nearly so inconceivable following election results last week in La Belle Province.

Crystal ball shortsightedness aside, this slim volume is not to be dismissed lightly and will be compulsory reading for anyone in-

terested in what has been happening in Quebec during the past decade or so (what do those French Canadians want, anyway?) and is likely to unfold in the next few years. Compulsory reading, but not difficult, for Desbarats writes like the well-trained journalist he is with an occasional touch of the poet and always the well informed perspective of somebody who really knows of what he speaks.

The title would lead you to believe it is a biography but it is really more of a political profile... and not just of the man but of the

province. Mr. Levesque gave up any semblance of a private life years ago and became strictly a political animal: This book is a true-to-life adventure story of how that animal developed, survived and finally prospered. And in the telling the reader gets a very detailed picture of the political dreams and realities of the province Levesque now leads.

The cast of supporting actors in the play (Pierre Trudeau, Jean Lesage, Jean Marchand, Robert Bourassa (remember him?) and many others) is impressive and the dialogue between them, richly

laced with anecdote and whimsical observation, weaves sense out of the turbulent period of Quebec history between the start of the "Quiet Revolution" and Rene's recent Big Win.

The chapter titles somehow give a hint of the style in which the material is presented (The Virgin Birth of the Parti Quebecois; Yawn at the Top; Quoting the Unquotable; etc.) and the final one is not only an obvious cue for a sequel publication but may express the fears and hopes of many readers.

It is "The Discipline of Power."

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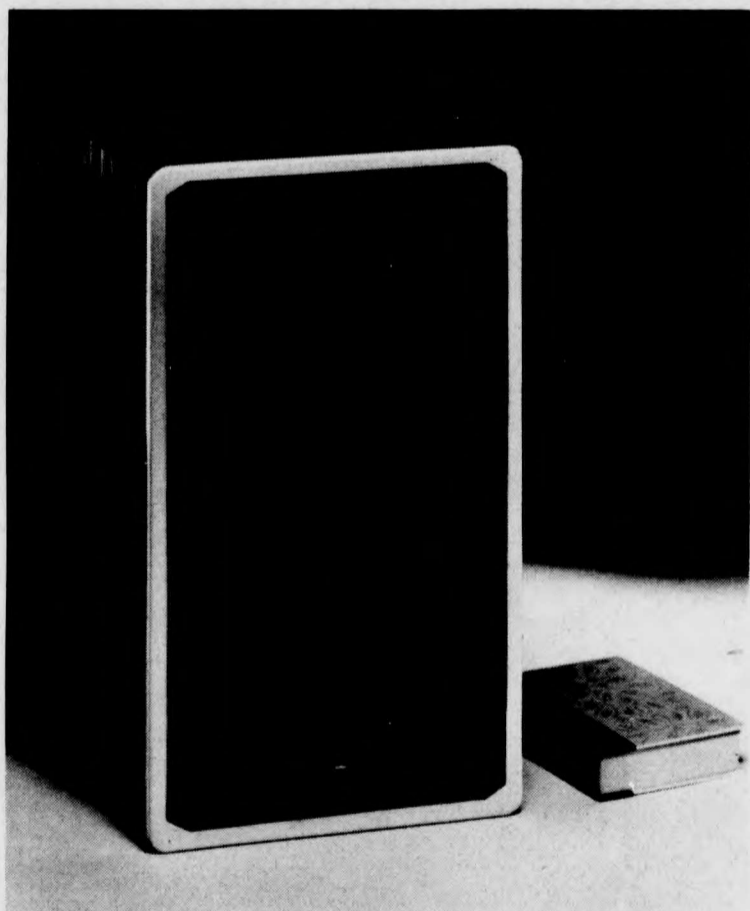


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Records

Jim Wall Live! (A&M-Horizon)

What would you think if you were simply told that this album had one guitar, bass and percussion. Under the modern rock climate, you'd probably think the artist was another three man ranch, a-la-Rush. Nothing of the sort; the bass is acoustic, the drums carry a steady pace through countless changes of style, and the guitar is the most melodic I have heard since Charlie Christian. Not only that, this whole journey through musical heaven was recorded live last year, at Bourbon Street right here in Toronto.

Accompanied by Ed Bickert and Don Thompson, both members of the Boss Brass, Hall does nothing less than a superb effort in both quick-picking, and oh-so-smooth melodic lines, very mellow, and well recorded.

Like all albums in A & M's jazz label, Horizon this one contained a rare pleasure; enjoyable (and plentiful) liner notes.

Hall Live blends improvisation with regular structure so smoothly it's hard to tell when the switch is being made. Hall has since recorded a second Horizon, but the atmosphere and quality of Live has endeared it to me as the best guitar album I've heard in years.

Evan Leibovitch
Garbarek-Stenson Quartet
"Dansere" (Polydor-ECM)

If you consider yourself a progressive jazz connoisseur, then the "Dansere" album by Jan Garbarek, Bobo Stenson Quartet is a must for your collection. One of the many good features to this album is that there are no false pretenses.

The music is progressive jazz with an almost classical construction. All of the material is arranged and composed by Garbarek who plays an assortment of saxophones on the album. Bobo Stenson is very smooth in his piano playing, while Palle Danielson (bass) and Jon Christensen (drums) give the quartet its full and rich sound.

The real guts of "Dansere" lies in its musical depth. One can listen to this album over and over again without being sure of discovering the musical message of Garbarek's compositions.

Pressed in the U.S. and recorded in Norway, the album is on the ECM label, an offshoot of Polydor specializing in progressive jazz.

D.W. Chodikoff

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