



## Piano *QUADRILLE CANADIEN*

**(BIOGRAPHY)** ANTOINE DESSANE (1826-1873) was studying at the Paris Conservatoire by age ten and became a favourite of the director [Luigi Cherubini](#). After a concert tour in Europe and the USA, he returned to France to pursue compositional studies with [George](#)

[Onslow](#). In 1849 he accepted the position of organist at Notre-Dame Basilica in Quebec City succeeding [T. F. Molt](#). He worked as a cellist, pianist, and organist and his wife, a singer, quickly became involved in the city's musical life. Until 1865 when the Dessanes moved to New York for four years, he not only taught but conducted members of the Société harmonique in orchestral works by Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven and others and founded the Septett Club, a string and wind ensemble. **(BACKGROUND)** Soon after his arrival in Canada Dessane took a fishing excursion on the St-Charles River and was delighted to hear persons singing folksongs as they went about their daily duties. Some of these folksongs subsequently became the basis of the individual dances in the *Quadrille canadien*. Originating in the English country dance of the sixteenth century, the quadrille arrived at the French court near the end of the seventeenth century and from there entered dance repertoires which came to Canada. **(PUBLICATIONS)**

Quebec: J. et O. Crémazie, 1855. [CMH 1](#), 94-98. **(MUSIC)** This composition follows the usual five sections of the quadrille according to [metre](#) and tempo, each of which inherited names from France: *le pantalon* was initially named after an old French air used for pantaloons in Italian comedy; *l'été* (summer) was a complicated dance used around 1800 whose name was transferred to the quadrille; *la poule* (hen) was a dance imitating the actions of the fowl; *la pastourelle* (pastoral) a section based on folk tunes; and a fast gallop to end. For each one Dessane has indicated the title of the specific French-Canadian folksong whose tune he has used, usually for the second part after the first set of double bar lines, but sometimes has the tune or a portion of its chorus section at the beginning as in Nos. 3 and 5. **(FURTHER READING)** Simonne Voyer, *La Danse traditionnelle dans l'est du Canada: quadrilles et cotillons*, Quebec City: Université Laval, 1986.

