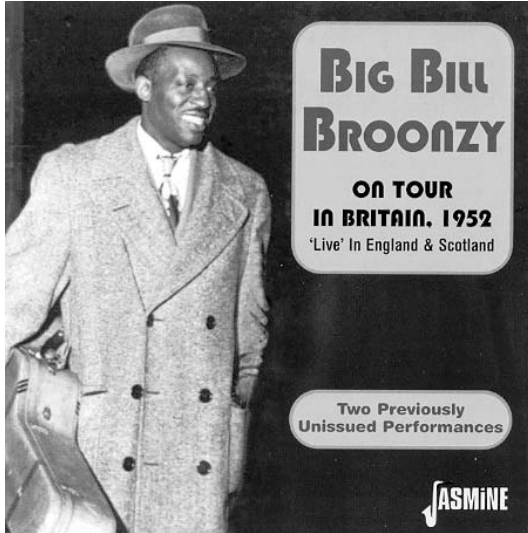


## Recordings

### **Big Bill Broonzy. *On Tour in Britain, 1952.***

Jasmine JASNCD 3011/2. Unit 8, Forest Hill Trading Estate, Perry Vale, London SE23 2LX; <[www.hasmick.co.uk](http://www.hasmick.co.uk)>



This is a double CD of ‘warts and all’ recordings of two concerts given by Big Bill during his lengthy stay in the UK during 1952. The first, in Edinburgh during February of that year, caught Broonzy in a very mellow mood but still struggling to perfect the role of an acoustic folksinger rather than the electric urban bluesman he was back in the USA. He had apparently been asked to demonstrate the variety of black folk music in the Deep South, and he responded by singing a spiritual (“Nobody Knows the Trouble I’ve Seen”), a plantation song (“The Blue Tail Fly”), a folk ballad (“John Henry”), a classic blues (Bessie Smith’s “Back Water Blues”), and a country blues (“Plough Hand Blues”), as well as material popular in Chicago in the thirties. This included Leroy Carr’s “In the Evening When the Sun Goes Down” and several Broonzy originals, including “Louise, Louise”, “Just a Dream” and an anti-racism anthem, “Black, Brown and White”. To judge from his slightly slurred speech, Broonzy was feeling no pain, and his performance was marred by incoherent and excessively lengthy introductions to the songs. His tempos were sometimes very slow, especially during the first half, so this concert lacked momentum. There were still some fine renditions, especially of such Broonzy favourites as “Keep Your Hands Off Her” and “House Rent Stop”, and his skill as a blues guitarist was never in doubt.

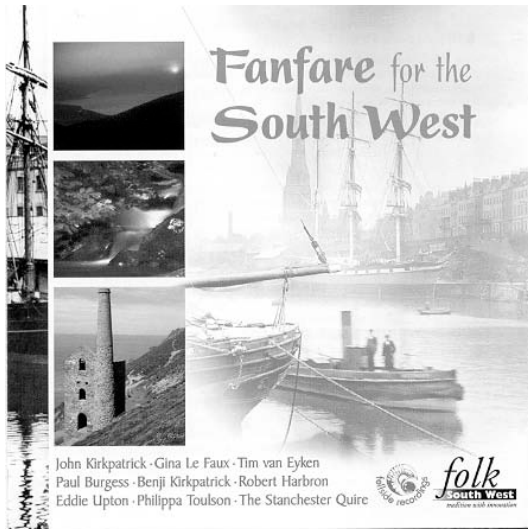
It is nonetheless fortunate that this Edinburgh concert was not the only one to survive by means of an amateur recording on acetate discs. On 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1952 Broonzy played Hove Town Hall, near Brighton in the south of England. The recording quality was not as good, but on the whole the concert was much superior. By now Big Bill was in full command of his ‘folk’ repertoire, and more confident of his audience’s reaction to the songs. The result was a better pacing of his material, although many of the songs were the same as those performed in Edinburgh. Bill had discovered that songs associated with Woody Guthrie were more politically correct than those associated with Burl Ives, so “Going Down the Road Feelin’ Bad” replaced “The Blue Tail Fly”, and the chosen spiritual was one beloved of the British peace movement, “Down By the Riverside”. One of two collaborations with a British Trad band called the Christie Brother Stompers (“I’m Looking Over a Four-Leaf Clover”), was undistinguished and easily forgotten, but, surprisingly, a fast-paced rendition of “Careless Love” with the same band was a great success, thanks in no small part to excellent solos by trumpeter Dickie Hawdon and trombonist Keith Christie. Nonetheless, the highlights of the concert were those blues on which Bill cut loose with his most uninhibited vocals and wailin’ guitar. They included two urban blues standards, “Willie Mae” and “Kansas City Blues”, and Broonzy’s own “Make My Getaway”, perhaps the stand-out performance on these two CDs. Clearly Broonzy was now comfortable with the acoustic format, with exploring his own varied blues roots, and with introducing some of his favourite material from the early years of urban blues in Chicago. We are lucky that this historical performance was preserved on acetate.

It would have been possible to make an excellent single CD of the best songs from these two concerts. I will probably create my own private compilation CD, cutting out all the talk and omitting a few of the less successful performances. Still, I’m glad that Paul Pelletier and Robert Riesman (the brains behind this project) resisted the temptation to do so for this release on the Jasmine label. I dislike tampering with the past – Rounder, please take note – and these Broonzy concerts are most certainly important historical documents that deserved to be presented ‘in the raw’. Robert Riesman, who I believe is working on a new biography of Big

Bill, has contributed an excellent background essay and commentary on the recordings.

*Dave Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Fanfare for the South West.** Fellside FECD 182. Fellside Recordings Ltd., P.O. Box 40, Workington, Cumbria, CA14 3GJ, UK; <[www.fellside.com](http://www.fellside.com)>



Although released on a northern English label, this CD is a project of Folk South West and features revival musicians associated with that admirable organisation, including director Eddie Upton. It can also be purchased direct from FSW, via the website at [www.folksw.org.uk](http://www.folksw.org.uk).

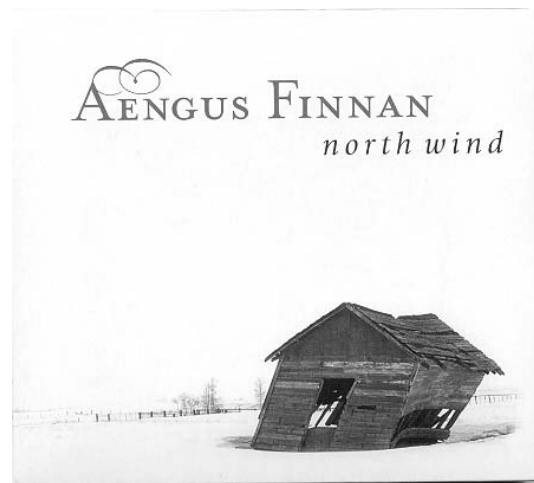
The dominant musical voice and instrumentalist on the CD is John Kirkpatrick, who expertly plays a variety of accordions, melodeons and concertinas. The CD is named after a medley of seven folksongs (including “The Holy Well”, “Searching for Lambs”, “Dark Eyed Sailor”, “Ye Mariners All” and “The Sailor and the Soldier”) mainly collected in the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Somerset by Cecil Sharp and Henry Hammond. Titled “Fanfare for the South West Suite” this medley takes up rather more than half the CD and includes various bridging instrumental tunes composed by Gina Le Faux, one of the musicians performing it. The two solo singers are Eddie Upton and Philippa Toulson; the latter sounds rather tentative, but Upton is in fine voice on “Searching for Lambs” and “Ye Mariners All”. Incidentally, the tunes employed for “Dark Eyed Sailor” and “Greensleeves” are not the best-known ones, and the “Poaching Song” with which the suite concludes is a Gloucestershire version (again collected by

Sharp) of the song better known as “The Lincolnshire Poacher”.

The remainder of the disc comprises jigs, hornpipes and schottisches, plus a few songs from the Stanchester Quire. I couldn’t help feeling that these would have been better performed by individual singers since the Quire makes them sound rather like hymns. On the other hand, I have to admit that the alternation between choir, solo singers and instrumentalists on the “Suite” works well. All told, an interesting and innovative project, in the main well executed, and well worth investigating.

*Dave Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Aengus Finnan. North Wind.** Borealis BCD 148. The Borealis Recording Company Ltd., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, ON M6R 2B2; Tel 1-877-530-4288; <[www.borealisrecords.com](http://www.borealisrecords.com)>



This is a beautiful recording, and it vies with David Francey’s *Skating Rink* as my favourite singer-songwriter CD of the year. Yes, I know the release date is 2002, but I only just now discovered Aengus Finnan, having somehow missed his first CD *Fool’s Gold*, which was issued back in 1999. One of my New Year’s resolutions is to track down a copy of that one. Anyway, *North Wind* is an excellent record, and my only difficulty in reviewing it is to decide which tracks to single out for special praise. I enjoyed the one traditional ballad on the CD, an Ontario version of “Lost Jimmy Whelan” apparently derived from Edith Fowke’s collecting. I was moved to tears by Aengus’ *a cappella* rendition of “O’Shaughnessy’s Lament”, a poignant ballad about a hardrock

miner's loss of his wife in childbirth. I liked the simple poetry of his love songs, in particular "Moon on the Water" and "My Heart Has Wings". And he has a real gift for evoking Canadian landscapes and the call of the road. There are some hard-hitting songs of social commentary here too: take "Ruins" (about the bitter loss of a family farm) or the cover of Maria Dunn's "Orphan Hand" about young children shipped from England and worked as virtual slave labour on the Prairies. The musicianship by (among others) Finnan himself, guitarist David Rogers and multi-instrumentalist Jeremiah McDade is first class, and Jeremiah's soprano sax solo on "Apple Blossom Tyme" is outstanding. The recording is clear and warm, but I did feel that the CD was just a touch overproduced - there is a certain homogeneity to the sound that at first hearing makes a wide range of different kinds of material sound too alike. That was probably intentional, but I still think it was a mistake. Yet don't let my one criticism of a fine CD put you off buying it. This is an exceptional album, and I look forward eagerly to Finnan's next recording. He is a very talented song-writer.

*Dave Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Craig Korth. *Bankview*. SR10402. 939 4A St. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2N 1P8; <ckorth@shaw.ca>; <www.juliekerr.com>**

In the early 21st century, the attempt to place music into specific categories has become an impossible exercise. The boundaries between what was once easily identified as traditional – country, folk, bluegrass, acoustic jazz, etc. – have now become blurred and insignificant. Campus radio stations are adapting to the changes in music blends and musical tastes, while commercial radio stations are still attempting to categorize music to suit their "target demographic". Nevertheless, more and more music listeners are seeking music that appeals to them on the basis of creativity and texture, not hype. Many musicians and small recording companies have changed and, rather than produce formula recordings designed to elicit airplay, they are producing original, dynamic recordings that defy categorization. A fine example of one of these nicely-conceived, interesting, independent recordings is the recently-released *Bankview*, produced by Jim Nunally and Craig Korth. This is a gem of a CD that features the five-string banjo, dobro and guitar of the Alberta-based musician Craig

Korth, a musician who is well known for his work with the bluegrass group Jerusalem Ridge. I would never attempt to categorize *Bankview* other than that it is an amazing demonstration of acoustic music played with drive, enthusiasm, originality and diversity.

There are 13 selections on this CD; eight of them are original instrumentals, two on guitar and four on banjo, composed by Craig Korth. The assorted blends of banjo, guitar, mandolin, acoustic fiddle and upright bass are superb, and Craig achieves a tone on his banjo that many of us who play the instrument can only dream about. An example is the original instrumental "Beyond the Ridge", which Craig co-wrote with guitarist Byron Myhre. The melody has a unique, sensitive bluegrass/folk feel, as the guitar, banjo and mandolin weave in and out of the lead lines. Byron's 1954 Martin D28 guitar, Craig's 1941 Gibson top-tension banjo and John Reishman's Gibson F5 mandolin provide a tone that will make listeners shiver. (Thank you Craig, for including the section "Instruments the Players Used" in the liner notes.)

Each of the original instrumentals on this CD has a story behind it. For example, "Pilot's Rest" was written when Craig was staying in a bed and breakfast of the same name in Yellowknife. One cold sunny afternoon, he was watching planes land on a section of a frozen lake that had been cleared as a runway. This sight inspired an instrumental that features banjo, guitar, fiddle and mandolin solos, changing rhythms, improvisations and ever-evolving textures that provide a sense of time and place. The excellent liner notes on this CD provide the listener with a list of the musicians involved in each selection, along with the story behind each melody. Every selection is definitely unique; for example, the title tune, "Bankview", is an instrumental with a jazz/folk feel that showcases Craig's improvisational acoustic guitar playing. "My Friend Jim" has Craig playing guitar in a hard-driving traditional cross-picking country style. "The Visit" features Craig playing his banjo and achieving excellent tone with a beautiful folk/bluegrass-influenced melody that he composed after a visit with a friend from England. "Meniak Road/Bush in the Peg Hole" is a melody that has a distinct Eastern European feel. "Bridgeland" is jazz-influenced, and "Burnt" is a bluegrass tune played at breakneck speed with virtuosic instrumental solos.

There are two vocals on the CD. "The Ice Runs Through Your Bones" is a country hurting song, written and sung by upright bass player/vocalist Ronnie Hayward, who recently has been working in Eastern Ontario, but with whom Craig has worked in Alberta. Craig's dobro playing on this selection captures the mood of the music perfectly. Perhaps this is the reason that Craig also appears on Ronnie's recordings. The second vocal features Craig's wife, Julie Kerr, singing a duet with Billy Cowsill; they perform "Jackson", a tune recorded by Johnny Cash and June Carter more than 30 years ago. The selection is well done, both vocally and instrumentally; however, I really would have preferred to hear one of Julie's original songs on this CD, simply because Julie Kerr is such a fine singer/songwriter. [See the review of her own CD, *Mornings Like This*, 37.3, p. 37. --JL]

Craig Korth's *Bankview* is an excellent CD which I will enjoy for years to come. I feel it will readily appeal to listeners who enjoy traditional instrumental music and are prepared to ignore categorization and simply enjoy the musical moments. I realize, however, that I have referred to some traditional music categories in this review to help describe some of the melodies. Overall, *Bankview* has the characteristics necessary for a pleasant listening experience: good musicians, acoustic instruments, great melodies, excellent liner notes, originality and no boundaries!

*Allan Kirby, Cobourg, Ontario*

**Rick Lang.** *The Season of My Heart.* HAR CD 10-4. Haley Anna Music, PO Box 424, Kingston, NH 03848; <sales@haleyannamusic.com>

This is a collection of Christmas music, played in the main in bluegrass style, although some songs might be classified as country & western and others as verging on commercial pop. The material is original, the songs written by Rick Lang alone, by Lang and banjo and mandolin player Dave Dick, or by Lang in collaboration with others. It makes a welcome change from the interminable renditions of "Jingle Bells", "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer", "I Saw Mummy Kissing Santa Claus" and the like that one finds so difficult to escape in the month before Xmas. If only department stores and dentists' offices would play this CD instead, Christmas shopping and having one's teeth fixed might be a little less painful. Not that this

offering is in any way outstanding. Ground-breaking it is not, but it *is* pleasant and seasonal, even if it sometimes comes perilously close to musak. Lang perhaps deserves credit as the pioneer of elevator bluegrass. So if you are looking for some new Christmas music performed competently in a sort-of-bluegrassy-way, run out and buy this CD. But don't expect traditional folk carols. Or even a traditional bluegrass sound.

*David Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta.*

**Barry Luft.** *Folksinger's Fire.* 623667-208147. 4316 16A St. SW, Calgary, Alta. T2T 4L5; <bmhluft@telusplanet.net>; <www.BarryLuft.com>

Called "The Grand Old Man of Calgary Folk Music" with tongue only slightly in cheek, Barry Luft has been singing and playing his banjo for some 30 years. Like so many others, he fell in love with the five-string banjo after hearing Pete Seeger; he had already been playing the harmonica from age 5, thanks to his dad.

Luft has a gentle way with a song and with the banjo; simplicity in banjo playing has always struck me as more difficult -- and certainly rarer -- than getting as many notes as possible into each phrase. He also has a grab-bag of some 500 tunes and songs to draw from, and the result on this recording is a thoroughly satisfying collection of unfamiliar versions of familiar songs ("Wild Colonial Boy"), good old chestnuts ("Seeing Nellie Home"), originals ("Florence and the High Steppers") and the old ballads ("Queen Jane"). There is a mix of instruments and styles, including an a cappella rendering of the Nova Scotia ballad "Sydney Coal Fields", thus avoiding the sameness and monotony of some banjo recordings. Luft plays guitar, autoharp, English concertina, harmonica and gourd banjo as well as the five-stringer on this recording; he is ably backed up by various guitarists, fiddlers, whistle players and singers. Barry loves getting people to sing with him (Pete's influence again), and there is a good assortment of "singalong" songs on this disc. In spite of all these instruments, the recording is not over-produced; it is an accessible and unimposing collection.

The notes accompanying the recording include interesting information about each song and how Luft came to learn it. He is generous in

acknowledging his sources. He also gives banjo tunings, for which banjo players are very grateful but for which others may be left scratching their heads trying to figure out what on earth gCGCD means.

It was when I was trying to decide if I had a special favourite that I could talk about that I realized what a joy the complete album is. But I do have to mention Korby Lenker's "Old Shenandora", and the traditional "Worried Blues". When this old blues started, I was startled, thinking that Michael Cooney had somehow found his way onto this record! The notes give Cooney's Folk-Legacy recording as Barry's source; listening to Luft's arrangement with his gourd banjo made me take my own banjo down from the wall and play the song. So there you have it: a recording that is both a pleasure to listen to and a great source for new (old) material. What more can you ask for?

*Lorne Brown, North York, Ontario*

**Mary Story. *From the Heart*. MSCD 001.**  
Mary Story, Box 681, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, B2H 5E7;  
<marybstory@yahoo.ca>



This is a first CD by this Nova Scotian traditional singer (originally from England, I think), who sings all the vocals, four *a cappella* and the remaining eight tracks tastefully supported by musicians on guitar, mandocello, mandolin, fiddle, viola, bowed psaltery, flute, whistle, didgeridoo (yes, even this is tasteful!), bodhran and cello. Mary Story has made an interesting choice of material: one song, "The Fisherman's Wife", by Ewan MacColl and one,

"The Ones that Got Away", an amusing account of childhood sweethearts by Mary's friend Joy Ashworth which Mary sings with a clear tone and nice deadpan delivery, and all the others traditional songs and ballads from the British Isles and Ireland – "Oh are you sleepin' Maggie?", "The Lightbob's Fancy", "My Bonny Lighthorseman", "The Bonny Labouring Boy", "The Irish Girl", "The Ploughman Laddies", "The Fair Flower of Northumberland", "The Shearing's Not for You", "Clerk Saunders", and "Lowlands Away". Some of these I knew already, but others not, and it's always nice to see lesser known material getting an airing.

I liked the first quotation from Mary on the liner notes (which, incidentally, are short but informative, while the words of the songs are included, always a plus) where she says: "I close my eyes when I sing these songs, the better to reach deep inside and live the words. Whether in the sixteenth century or the twenty-first, the glory and the despair of loving haven't changed". There is no doubt in my mind that these performances really are 'from the heart', and there are tracks on which it shows, such as "The Bonny Labouring Boy" (although I don't think the bodhran works so well on this track), "The Irish Girl", "Clerk Saunders" and "Lowlands Away". "The Irish Girl", in particular, is beautifully sung and clearly one of Mary's favourites. However, I found the harmonies on "Lowlands Away" pleasant but a bit contrived, and in both long ballads ("The Fair Flower of Northumberland" and "Clerk Saunders") there needed to be more dynamics – in fact, more emotion. The same goes for "The Lightbob's Fancy", which is an English song about a young woman whose soldier lover is in prison and who has to turn to prostitution to survive. Given the situation and the powerful language of some of the verses – ("When first I came to town I had no smock to wear-O/Now I've nine or ten, for the fancy lads to tear-O", and "Once I had a bed, but now I'm forced to plank it/Hang and take the jade who stole my bed and blanket") Mary's delivery seems to me too level; as a matter of fact, I think it possible that the young woman is actually quite proud of her ability to cope and make money pending her lover's release, but, either way, one would expect more emotion than comes through in Mary's singing. And this is my chief criticism of this CD. Mary's voice has a nice tone, sometimes a little thin, but clear and true, and she has chosen some songs with lovely melodies,

but in general her delivery seems too careful and unemotional.

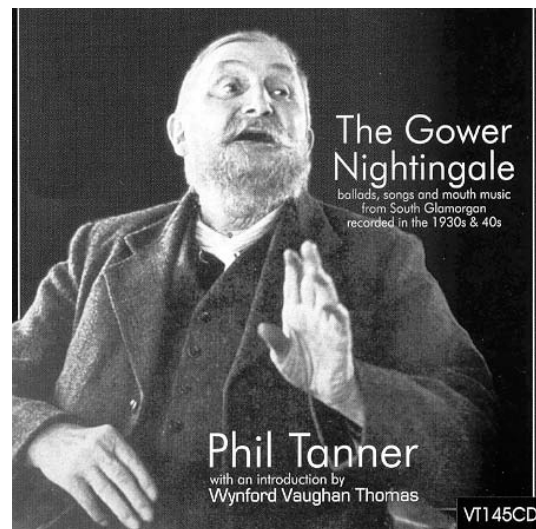
This raises the always thorny issue of how much emotion to put in traditional singing. The answer is “not too much, not too little”, which is not actually as unhelpful as it sounds. I’m aware that I speak out of one side of my mouth over this issue and sing out of the other, because in theory I lean towards the ‘less is more’ school, favouring restraint over its opposite, but when I am singing I do find myself expressing emotion. Listening to other singers’ performances, I guess I find an excess of restraint less jarring than an excess of drama – if excess there must be. Too much restraint can result in a pleasant sound which fails to grip the heart: too little restraint leads to theatricality instead of drama, where the song gets lost because all we can focus on is the singer. The truth is there is a golden mean, but it varies not only from song to song but also from singer to singer, because of many factors, including the varying timbres of different voices, the emotional affinity that the singer develops with particular songs, the way the shape of the melody affects performance, to name only a few. My chief criticism of Mary Story’s first CD is that her delivery errs too far on the side of restraint. Of the five songs I found the best I think it is no accident that three – “The Irish Girl”, “The Ones that Got Away” and “Lowlands Away” – were sung *a cappella*, because it was in these five songs (the other two are “The Bonny Labouring Boy” and “Clerk Saunders”) that Mary seemed most ready to let herself go, give herself up to the rhythm and melody of the tune and the meaning of the words, thereby bringing in more expression, feeling and dynamics. Nonetheless, the CD is well worth buying and I hope the next will have more of the intriguing material Mary has treated us to here.

*Rosaleen Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Phil Tanner. *The Gower Nightingale*.** Veteran VT145CD; Veteran Mail Order, 44 Old St., Haughley, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 3NX, England, UK. <[www.veteran.co.uk](http://www.veteran.co.uk)>

Phil Tanner was undoubtedly one of the finest Welsh traditional singers ever to be recorded. An English-language singer, who lived in the Gower region of South Wales, he was first recorded in November 1936 at the age of 74, when Maud Karpeles arranged for him to travel to London to make two 78rpm discs for Columbia. Those recordings (“Young Henry Martin”, “The Sweet

Primroses”, “The Gower Wassail Song” and “The Gower Reel”) are included on this CD, as are two performances recorded in Llangennith by the BBC, about a year later (“The Oyster Girl” and “The Gower Reel”). The other songs and mouth music by Tanner on this CD date are BBC Welsh Region recordings dating from 1949. They include, among others, Phil’s versions of “Barbara Allen”, “The Bonny Bunch of Roses”, “The Parson and the Clerk”, “Young Roger Esquire”, “Swansea Barracks” and “Fair Phoebe and the Dark Eyed Sailor”. These are classic performances, previously unavailable, which makes this a reissue to treasure. It is filled out with a BBC radio talk about Tanner by Welsh author Wynford Vaughan Thomas, originally broadcast in 1976, which paints an evocative picture of Phil and the village in which he lived.



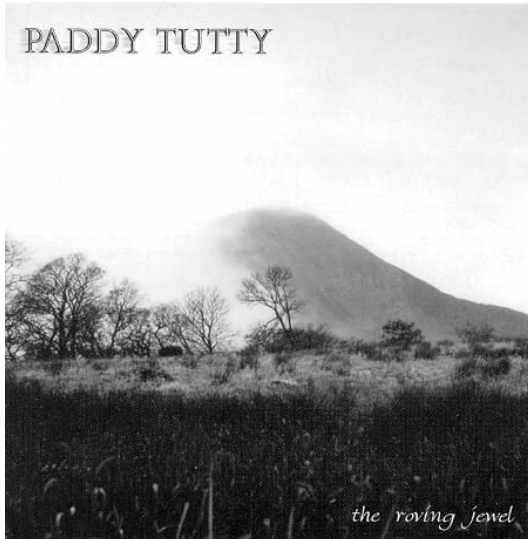
No lover of English traditional song will want to be without this CD. Since very few good quality field-recordings were made of British source singers before Peter Kennedy pioneered collecting with a tape recorder at the beginning of the 1950s, these Columbia and BBC disc recordings are to be treasured. Their quality is remarkably good, and the regret is that only a dozen items from Tanner’s large repertoire were caught for posterity. Would there were more!

*Dave Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Paddy Tutty. *The Roving Jewel*.** Prairie Druid PA05. Prairie Druid Music, 219 11<sup>th</sup> St.E., Saskatoon, SK, S7N 0E5; <[www3.sk.sympatico.ca/wuidland/](http://www3.sk.sympatico.ca/wuidland/)>

This is a selection from Paddy’s first two recordings: *Paddy Tutty* (a cassette from 1983)

and *Who Liveth so Merry* (an LP from 1986) featuring vocals, fretted dulcimer and guitar. There are also tracks featuring fiddle, whistle, and David Essig on DX-7 synthesiser and bass. Readers should note that there is also an extra fiddle track after the 14 tracks noted on the liner notes – if you wait patiently for about 8 seconds after the last song (“The Dancers of Stanton Drew”) you will be rewarded with the Québécois fiddle tunes “La Case” and “Turlute à Antonio”, originally recorded on the 1983 cassette.

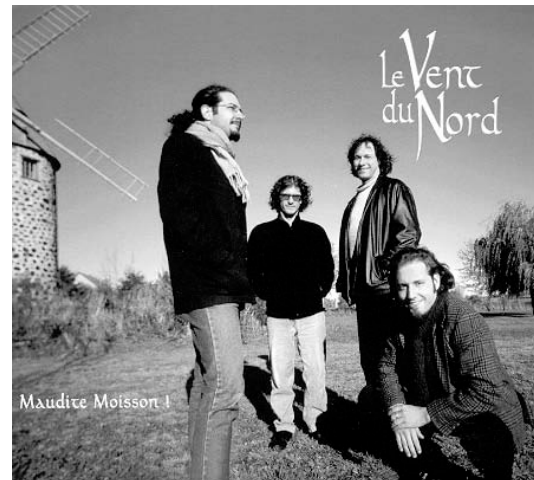


This new selection covers almost all that was on the original recordings with the exception of the instrumentals “Lull me beyond thee” and “The Exile’s Jig” and the songs “I Have Wandered in Exile” and “Rattle on the Stovepipe” from the cassette and “The Land Knows You’re There” from the LP. So we still have four traditional ballads – “The Blind Harper”, “Annachie Gordon”, “Bonny Lass of Anglesey” and “The Lass of Loch Royal” – together with such well-loved songs from Paddy as “Katy Cruel” (the ‘roving jewel’ of the CD title), “Southwind”, “Black Sarah” (a prayer to the patron saint of European gypsies), “Who Liveth so Merry”, “Rolling Home Drunk” (the powerful and pathetic indictment of domestic violence sung by a battered woman), Leon Rosselson’s “The World Turned Upside Down”, “Bonny Portmore”, “The Hare’s Lament”, “Low Down in the Broom” and “The Dancers of Stanton Drew” – a varied selection of traditional and modern songs rounded out with four instrumentals (“Polka Piquée”, “The Black Nag”, “Sally in the Garden” and “La Case/Turlute à Antonio”).

I’ve always enjoyed Paddy’s voice. She has a distinctive timbre, passion which never gets out of control, masterful pacing in the ballads where her voice alternately soars like a lark in the sky and gently folds around phrases like a leaf round a bud. Totally devoid of ego and all the more effective because of it. So it is a pleasure to listen to these songs again and to recognize old favourites, my personal ones being “Annachie Gordon”, “Bonny Portmore”, “Bonny Lass of Anglesey” and “The Dancers of Stanton Drew”. I liked the Peggy Seeger version of “The Lass of Loch Royal” (from North Carolina), although I think it is the one track on which Paddy’s voice is pitched a little lower than comfortable, and I also liked, but had forgotten, Frankie Armstrong’s version of a little-known English love song, “Low Down in the Broom” and “The Hare’s Lament”, a thoughtful account of hunting from the hare’s point of view. Small wonder that I think of nature metaphors in connection with Paddy; her own choices of song frequently reveal her love of the earth and of nature. Highly recommended for all lovers of traditional music performed by one of its best Canadian exponents.

*Rosaleen Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

**Le Vent du Nord. Maudite Moisson!** Borealis Records BCD 151. The Borealis Recording Company Ltd., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, ON M6R 2B2; Tel 1-877-530-4288; <[www.leventdunord.com](http://www.leventdunord.com)>



The four Québécois musicians who make up Le Vent du Nord are Nicolas Boulerice (hurdy gurdy), Benoit Bourque (accordion & mandolin), Olivier Demers (fiddle), and Bernard Simard (guitar & vocals). I first came across them this

summer at the Calgary Folk Festival and followed them from workshop to workshop, intrigued by the plaintive melodies of songs that I couldn't translate and the distinctive sound of Nicolas' *vielle à roue*. And now I'm very glad to find this fine CD of (mainly) traditional music from Québec.

There is the usual quota of instrumental reels, expertly played but lacking the characteristic local flavour one might have expected. But it is the songs that most appeal to me. My favourite is "C'est dans Paris", a piece of oral folklore collected by Nicolas from his grandmother Alice Boulerice, which reflects the prejudice that once existed against serving maids wearing make-up: it has a beautiful melody that seems quite at odds with the rather pedestrian humour of the words. Alice also sang "Le moine complaisant", the tale of a monk who liked to drink and flirt with young women. Another simple song with a pretty tune is "Vive l'amour" (on the age-old theme of courting too slow), one of several collected by Bernard in Sainte-Béatrix, in the Lanaudière region of Québec. "Le gros Richard" is a song noted in 1916 and published by Marius Barbeau in *En roulant ma boule*. And "Au bord de la fontaine" is a relative of the more famous "A la claire fontaine", related in words that is, for the melody is different and the song is performed at a much faster tempo. I could go on, but I have said enough to indicate that Le Vent du Nord makes enchanting music that is solidly rooted in the traditional culture of New France. The items on this CD are authentic and well-performed, examples of a flourishing oral tradition that we in English Canada all too rarely have the opportunity to see and hear.

*Dave Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta*

## A Peak in Darien

*Here are listed various recordings that we are in the process of reviewing, or, occasionally, items that we have received but do not intend to review because they are musically too far removed from our traditional beat.*

Rik Barron. *The Quiet Faith of Man*. Odd Sock Pro 105. Rik Barron, 5 Forest Rd., St. John's, Nfld. A1C 2B8; <www.rikbarron.com>

Dave Clarke. *Guitar Songs*. CD 1003. <www.daveclarke.ca> (no postal address on packaging)

Wendell Ferguson. *Happy Songs Sell Records, Sad Songs Sell Beer*. WHF 0203. Wendell Ferguson, Apt. 208, 31 Rockcliffe Blvd., Toronto, Ont. M6N 4R1; <wendellferguson@wendellferguson.com>; <www.wendellferguson.com> (new addresses, different from packaging)

Wendell Ferguson. *I Pick, Therefore I Jam*. WHFCD002. (address above)

Lennie Gallant. *Le vent bohème*. TOCD4525. Lennie Gallant, Hunter River RR#3, Rustico, I.-P.-E. C1A 1N0; <lennie@lenniegallant.com>; <www.lenniegallant.com>; TOCCQ Musique/Le groupe OKO, 1445, Lombert Closse, Suite 300, Montréal (Québec) H3H 1Z5; <info@dkd.com>

John Wort Hannam and the Sound Merchants. *Pocket Full of Holes*. Box 1904, Fort Macleod, Alta. T0L 0Z0 (no postal address on packaging); <worthannam@hotmail.com>; <www.johnworthannam.com>

Richard Harrow. *Best Before / Meilleur Avant*. 1716 66th Ave. SE, Calgary, Alta. T2C 1T3; <rharrow@audiomastering.com>; <www.richardharrow.com>

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