

Ten Years Ago

Bulletin 32.3 (September 1998). This issue had a radio focus; it included David Gregory's memoir about the CKUA radio series *Ragtime to Rolling Stones*, and a triple-headed editorial on the CBC's attitude to folk music, with George Linsey, David Spalding and George Lyon expressing views.

In non-radio-related matters, two reminiscences about the late Joe Adams were accompanied by his song (with Rona Altrows) "The Last of the Wild Ones"; three blues songs by Canadian women, "Women's Liberation Blues" (Vera Johnson), "November Blues" (Penny Lang) and "Two and Twenty Blues" (Linda Morrison), followed up the Canadian blues theme of two issues earlier. An EthnoFolk Letters column, and lots of news, reviews, letters and regular compilations, rounded things off.

Five Years Ago

Bulletin 37.3 (Fall 2003). Two major articles led off this issue: a reassessment of Edith Fowke by Pauline Greenhill, entitled "Radical? Feminist? Nationalist? The Canadian Paradox of Edith Fowke"; and David

Gregory's "The Elisabeth Greenleaf Collection at MUNFLA: An Overview." David also contributed a review essay of two books, *The English Traditional Ballad* by David Atkinson, and *Rainbow Quest* by Ronald D. Cohen.

Rosaleen Gregory's Singer's Workshop column featured the song "Lovers' Farewell," and there were also reviews of two folk festivals, Calgary and Canmore (the latter including an interview with Martyn Joseph by James Prescott), as well as several CDs and a storytelling book. Abstracts of papers from the 2003 Annual General Meeting in Athabasca, Alberta, and the usual columns were included.

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Reviews

Events

Calgary Folk Music Festival, 2008. Folk Festival Society of Calgary, P.O. Box 2897, Sta. M, Calgary, Alta. T2P 3C3 (no unsolicited artist materials to this address); info@calgaryfolkfest.com; www.calgaryfolkfest.com

Samuel Johnson said that when two English people meet, their first talk is of the weather. Now, imagine they were both at a folk festival . . . Actually, something very similar can be said of folk festival patrons, and reviewers. At the 2008 Calgary Folk Festival, the weather actually held fairly well, but it was the bursts of bad weather which were most memorable. I sheltered from one hailstorm under a tarp, and Ani Di-Franco, the festival's closer, remarked that the weather was better than the last time she played, though she had probably reversed that assessment by the end of her set.

One of the changes that I noticed since my previous visit to the festival was that workshops have officially been renamed "sessions." This is likely to accommodate more solo concerts throughout the day, by acts large enough to attract solo attention but not big enough to get mainstage time. I myself am more

prone to attending workshops in hopes of seeing a range of people at once, and perhaps a level of experimentation that goes beyond an exchange of solo performances. It should be said, however, that a lot of acts who appear in these sessions are better than the headliners who get mainstage time.

That being said, I was not especially disappointed by most of the mainstage acts at this festival, with the glaring exception of Conor Oberst and the Mystic Valley Band. I was only faintly acquainted with Oberst's work in Bright Eyes, but enough to expect sweet-voiced simplicity. But if Oberst is often compared to a young Bob Dylan, this act was more like Dylan going electric prematurely, with Oberst singing in an unnaturally dark tenor and strumming an acoustic guitar in the middle of a band with five other electric instruments, three of them guitars! It seemed like a big mess to me.

The Carolina Chocolate Drops got a lot of attention (and appearances on the cover of several local periodicals), and deservedly so. I particularly admired their ability to deliver information to audiences about how they're recovering the black roots of bluegrass and old-timey music, without ever seeming like they're lecturing. I like their aesthetic as well; having

two members dressed in self-consciously old-fashioned clothes, while the third wears T-shirts and has an Afro, conveys a lot about how they position themselves in the past and the present. They get their points off with a lot of style and grace, and reviving the neglected Piedmont blues style is a great contribution to North American music in general.

High marks too for Abigail Washburn and the Sparrow Quartet Featuring Bela Fleck (unwieldy name aside—doesn't phrasing it that way lead one to expect five musicians, not four?). Transcendently tight and skilful, I thought their music (with vocals in both English and Chinese) was sublime, but I actually wonder if they might be better served by a recital hall than a folk festival. Aimee Mann, the Weakerthans, Blue Rodeo and Ani DiFranco all provided dependable mainstage sets, proving exactly why they belonged up there, as did the Men They Couldn't Hang, bizarrely doing only one Canadian tour date. And my happiest discovery was Andrew Bird, whose absolutely surreal style (whistling, glockenspiels, vibraphones, synthesizers, electric violin, and spinning custom amps that look like gramophones) conceals a rich and coherent sound.

Bird is an artist who escapes easy classification, and consequently the only place you would stumble upon him is a folk festival that embraces plurality, albeit reducing the label "folk" to a bland catchall in the process. As Sam Roberts said during his mainstage act, "Any song that comes from the heart is a folk song." Really? Then it's a wide enough label to include practically anything, and consequently be meaningless. This folk festival even included what amounted to a hip-hop workshop, featuring No Luck Club and the Klezmer-rap fusion group SoCalled. The Calgary Folk Festival is very good at trying to embrace the controversial and the new while avoiding transient novelty (contrast Canadian Idol winner Kalan Porter's appearance at the Ottawa Folk Fest in 2005). Whether this is a move in the right direction is for the individual to decide, though. The festival's size allows it to try to cater to all tastes at once. World acts from Morocco to Venezuela, Hungary to Trinidad, are represented well, and in truth, there is no shortage of more traditional folk acts, like John Wort Hannam or Jesse Winchester or Greg MacPherson, though that end of things is increasingly marginal.

As usual I am impressed by the depth and breadth of the festival program, though I'm disappointed to find that the "Folk Acrostic" is reused part-and-parcel from the year before. Further, it seems like the people who write the artist summaries are in a contest to produce spiky, obtuse, meaningless prose. Take Ani DiFranco's entry: "Somewhere between a rose-coloured happy ending and an anguished

so infinite it's anybody's guess, is a place where DiFranco sings her 'happy song.'" Okay . . . And then, "She's a cowgirl, alter-ego, a lecherous old lady wanna-be, a folk hero; she is a poster girl with no poster; she is thirty-two flavors [*sic*] and then some." I picture an editor scratching away at her head over this and still letting it by.

Murray Leeder, Ottawa, Ontario

[I guess I'm allowed to disagree with my son in public; I wouldn't count John Wort Hannam, Jesse Winchester and Greg MacPherson as "traditional" folk musicians, skilled conventional "folk" performers, i.e., singer-songwriters, as they may be. In fact, my general complaint against most large folk festivals, including Calgary, is the almost complete absence of "traditional" English-language Canadian folk music performers from the program. (I know, I might be seen as having an axe to grind, being a sometime performer in that field myself. But there are many excellent performers available who are overlooked, and a potential audience that folk festival artistic directors seem to be reluctant to try to reach. If I'm at risk of reopening the debate as to the meaning of "traditional," so be it.) – JL]

Books

Roxanne Young. *String City, vol. 1: 16 Original Bluegrass & Irish Fiddle Tunes for Intermediate to Advanced Players*. Calgary Contemporary School of Music, P.O. Box 32012, 2619 14th St. SW, Calgary, Alta. T2T 5X6; info@ccsmusic.com; www.ccsmusic.com

String City is a collection of 16 original fiddle tunes (nine reels, five jigs and two airs). Although composer and fiddler Roxanne Young is not well known as a solo artist, she is not new to the (popular) fiddle scene. The introduction to the collection indicates that she can be heard on numerous recordings (although it is not clear where these recordings can be found) and has worked with a number of popular groups and artists (such as Cirque du Soleil, Barrage, Alanis Morissette and Steve Tyler). Young toured for 14 years, then returned to her home town, Calgary, Alberta, where she founded the Calgary Contemporary School of Music.

When I first saw this collection, I was struck by its urban appearance. The title, of course, suggests an urban orientation. Also, urban aspects are found throughout the collection. The cover art, for example, depicts Young in modern dress with a city as a backdrop. Furthermore, the tunes have names that are often self-consciously "hip" or humorous (examples include "Booze Brain" and "Spandex Knee Socks"). There are in fact no elements to this collection that suggest a traditional or rural orientation. This is indicative of the target audience: fiddlers interested in

fiddle music that has a modern sound (i.e., more pop than traditional).

String City is a self-published collection. This is perhaps the reason for the numerous format inconsistencies. In particular, Young does not include the same information for each tune: one has the form indicated (i.e., AABBA); one has sections indicated with letters (i.e., ABCD); two tunes are described by type (i.e., air, reel, etc.); and one tune has an indication of where the performer should end. Furthermore, the harmony parts are sometimes called “harmony” and sometimes “V2,” and one tune has a “D.S. al Coda” but no coda. Young also does not match the time signature and notation: although the simple duple tunes (i.e., 2/2 or 4/4) are all notated in cut time, the time signatures are common time. This results in confusion regarding the intended time feel (i.e., it is not clear which beats should be accented). These are not, of course, substantial issues; they do not (for the most part) deter from the actual content of the collection. However, these inconsistencies lend an unprofessional look to the book and suggest that the author did not consider what information would be most useful to fiddlers.

This collection also raises questions related to the inclusion of ornaments, bowings and tempos in notated fiddle music. Young believes that ornaments are a personal choice, and has therefore decided not to include ornamentation. While I appreciate the reason for this exclusion, I would have liked to know how she would ornament the tunes (especially since they are original tunes). I feel that she could have at least included examples of how she might ornament a tune in the introduction. Young also does not include tempo indications (perhaps for the same reasons that she does not include ornamentation). Again, some indication of how fast she might play a tune would have been an excellent guide. Young does, however, include bowings, because – as she notes – people often ask her about bow technique. This addition of slurs seems inconsistent with her decision to exclude tempo indications and ornaments: bow patterns are just as much a personal choice as ornamentation or tempo. I feel that this collection would have been improved if – like the slurs – ornaments and tempos were included as guides while recognizing that they are suggestions and not requirements. Another approach could have been to include recorded examples of each tune (since recordings of these tunes are not yet available), thus providing an aural guide to ornamentation and tempo.

The issues outlined above lead to a question regarding the title of her book: What makes these tunes bluegrass or Irish? Ornaments, bowings and tempos are all important factors in the creation of a sound that fits into these genres. This title would thus dis-

appoint fiddlers who purchase this collection with a desire to learn how to perform bluegrass or Irish tunes.

Despite these criticisms, the tunes included in this collection are interesting and unique. The use of hemiolas in the jigs is especially notable (three of the five jigs in this collection have hemiolas). Hemiolas are created through harmonic and melodic accents and through a tied third and fourth beat (so that the tune switches between a 6/8 and 3/4 feel). Young also often uses syncopated rhythms (seven of her nine reels feature some syncopation). The tune “Booze Brain” is the most interesting example: some measures have accents on the first eighth note, the fourth eighth note, and the seventh eighth note (so that the eighth notes are grouped three, three, two). These are just some examples of the numerous rhythmic figures found in this collection that catch the ear and create interest.

This book is not suited to fiddlers who want to learn about bluegrass or Irish fiddle techniques. It is also not intended to be used as a method book, since it does not contain pedagogical material (i.e., hints or suggestions related to execution or approaches to performance). Furthermore, the choice to omit ornaments and tempo indications (and recorded examples, for that matter) suggests that this collection is not geared to a broad range of fiddlers. However, intermediate or advanced fiddlers who are able to take notated music and turn it into a fiddle tune would find this collection valuable as a source of new repertoire.

Monique C. Giroux, Toronto, Ontario

Recordings

Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat. *Now It's Called Princeton: Songs and Poems From B.C.'s Upper Similkameen*. Princeton Traditional Music Society, c/o Box 2451, Princeton, B.C., V0X 1W0; jon_bartlett@telus.net; www3.telus.net/jonbartlett-rikaruebsaat/ptms

It would be nearly impossible to have any serious or meaningful discussion of the current folk music scene in Canada, and in particular British Columbia, without a prominent mention of Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, who have been an integral and active part of this music scene for nearly four decades. Or, to put it another way, part or all of eight American administrations have come and gone while they have been stamping their own imprint and special brand of traditional music the length and breadth of Canada, whether this be the somber and poignant ballads from French-Canadian tradition, Child ballads from both

sides of the big pond, or songs from the rich and colorful history of their British Columbia home, centered around the town of Princeton in southern B.C.

And thus we come to the heart of the matter, their latest recording, centring in on the songs and poems which have been found as a result of their ongoing research in the Upper Similkameen River valley, reflecting the history, traditions and culture of the people who have settled this area of B.C. since the second half of the nineteenth century. If one word can be used to describe the attitude of these two truly excellent performers, it is "passion," whether this passion is for the songs themselves or for the larger social and economic context in which they have occurred in the history of B.C., even into the first years of the twenty-first century.

The songs and poems on this recording come from three distinct sources: first, songs collected by the legendary B.C. maven Phil Thomas in several collecting jaunts through the province in the 1960s; second, poems and verses published in the *Similkameen Star* from 1900 to 1931; and third, recent musical contributions penned by local residents. Here are songs that have reflected, and still reflect, the lives of the folks who not only sing them but hear them as well. These are songs shared by a community, in which the difference between performer and listener would be difficult to find, to say the least. And as to the songs and poems themselves, they deal with a myriad of subjects familiar to local residents since pioneers first began to settle this part of B.C., subjects including pioneering and settlement, prohibition, mining, prospecting, lumbering and logging, and railroading. One only has to hear how Bartlett and Ruebsaat approach these pieces to know the deep and abiding love they have for the traditions that are as rich as the soil of B.C. itself.

The title track, "Now It's Called Princeton," deserves special mention. In a manner of speaking, it is a microcosm of the entire recording. It was composed in the summer of 2007 by Bellingham, Washington's, own songster-composer Zeek Hoskin, and is a musical history of the town of Princeton from its earliest days, when it was known as Vermillion Forks. As a recovering academic, I have found it also to be a dream come true. History through music and song surely beats conventional textbooks any old day of the week. As to the general tenor of the recording, the modes and sentiments vary widely, from comedic playful and rambunctious to feelings of daily drudgery, isolation and despondency. This is especially true of those involved in the field of mining. This is evidenced in such songs as "The Hard Rock Miner," "I'm Only A Broken Down Mucker" and "The Hang-Up Stick," among others. Some personal favorite cuts include the somewhat nostalgic "Kettle Valley Line,"

Ruebsaat's powerful a cappella rendering of the tragic tale of the 1965 Hope Slide, an original piece composed by Paddy Graber, and "The Banks Of The Similkameen," a B.C. variant of the American song known as "The Lakes of Pontchartrain."

Even though the tenor of this recording is definitely B.C. in locale, content and character, tune buffs will recognize a variety of melodies employed to present these musical pieces. They include such familiar tunes as "Tramps and Hawkers," "Wait 'Til the Sun Shines, Nelly," "Springtime In The Rockies," "Wabash Cannonball," "Old Oaken Bucket" and "Mountains Of Mourne," among others. Susan Stewart does some excellent piano accompaniment on such pieces as "The Hang-Up Stick" and "Haywire Outfit," while other back-up musicians doing fine work include Bob Webb, Cameron Stewart and Jim Edmondson, on a variety of instruments, including bass, banjo, and guitar.

One special aspect of this recording is a set of spoken-word recitations, numbering eight, done by both Bartlett and Ruebsaat, showing their talents as more than closet storytellers. Several powerful examples are Ruebsaat's "A Miner's Candlestick" and Bartlett's "Wanted: A Railroad," with its powerful message, just as potent today as it was over a hundred years ago, denouncing corporate greed for its suborning of public officials and pointing out how the common folk are often shafted and left out in the cold to suffer the consequences.

Two final points should be made. The booklet accompanying the CD is worth the price of the recording alone, containing as it does notes on the songs and poems, text sources and valuable information on both Phil Thomas and the Princeton Traditional Music Society. Last but not least, all moneys raised from this recording go to support the local free folk music festival each year. Perhaps the best way to sum up what this recording is all about is from one of the songs itself, the title piece, in which it is said, and quite proudly, that "Princeton is a town that is one in a billion." What more is there to say, except that this recording comes very highly recommended?

Robert Rodriguez, New York, New York

Blackfoot Confederacy. *Hear the Beat: Pow Wow Songs Recorded Live at Ft. McDowell.* CR-6428.

Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; canyon@canyonrecords.com; www.canyonrecords.com

This is the third recording of The Blackfoot Confederacy, which gathers singers from the Kainai (Blood), Siksika (Blackfoot), Piikani (Peigan) and U.S. Blackfoot tribes. The group is dedicated to maintaining traditional Blackfoot singing style, and the ample

insert provides a record of their efforts to continue the old songs through recordings and participation in powwows.

The album has an interesting variety of contributors. While some of the songs were created by Jay Dusty Bull, there are many other contributors. It is nice to hear the slower, more definite tempi of the Old Agency Singers from the 1950s and the Badlands Singers of the 1970s. Even a member of the well-known Blackfoot A-1 Club, George Good Eagle, was influential in guiding some of the young singers on this recording.

The newer songs feature a higher-pitched drum, strong warble in the voices, and exciting calls, accelerandi, and dynamic contrasts. The notes tell us that three of the 15 songs were made for individuals who contributed to their people and who have now passed on. The final song, "Made for the Occasion," is in honour of the reigning Native American Indian Days Tiny Tots Princess!

Lynn Whidden, Brandon, Manitoba

Daniel Gervais. *Endless Possibilities*. DGCD-05. 11528 – 44A Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6J 1A3; danielg.gervais@excite.com (addresses different from packaging)

On Saturday afternoon of the 2007 CSTM meeting in Edmonton, Alberta, we were treated to a reception and open house by FolkwaysAlive. As I was enjoying the fine food and drink and examining the colourful Folkways album covers decorating the walls, the sound of a fiddle and accordion caught my ear. I wandered over to watch and listen more closely to the two young musicians. They were in the middle of a set of traditional reels: "St. Anne's Reel," "Big John McNeil," "Angus Campbell." The energy was infectious. Soon my toe was tapping and, before I knew it, I had passed my wine glass to the person next to me and had started to step dance. I danced on and on and on. I wasn't thinking about being tired, or the small group that had gathered around to watch us. I was focused only on the drive and power communicated by these two young musicians. That was my introduction to the fiddle playing of Daniel Gervais. When I was asked to review his second album, *Endless Possibilities*, later that evening, I couldn't get my hands on it fast enough. It has been a favourite of mine ever since.

Endless Possibilities includes a nice variety of familiar tunes, from "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "Five Foot Two" to "Tennessee Waltz" and "Redwing," interspersed with a number of Daniel's original compositions. For the most part, his original tunes have interesting, singable melodies and set a distinctive and appropriate mood, whether it be a dreamy

wash of sound in "Mémère and Pèpère's Anniversary Waltz" or the driving rhythms of "BluegrassE (*sic*)."

As well, Daniel develops some interesting variations on melodies that really serve to make the tunes his own; this is particularly impressive on those very familiar tunes that we've heard so many times, like "Five Foot Two." I find the arrangements of the tunes, however, to be somewhat hit-and-miss. While I like the variety of textures, including doubling of the fiddle with mandolin and/or guitar, sometimes in a different octave, and two- and three-part harmonies, I find some of the intros and endings to be too calculated, and the tight arrangements to take away from the "give 'er your all" energy I experienced in his live playing. That lift and energy can be found, however, even in a recording studio, on the tracks of, for example, "Redwing," "Don Messer Medley" and the middle portions of "Pointe au Pic."

Finally, there is no doubt that the musicianship on this CD is first-rate, evident, not least, in the impressive improvised solos on fiddle, mandolin and guitar in a number of tunes. I expect Daniel Gervais' *Endless Possibilities* will be enjoyed by many Canadian old-time fiddle fans, and I am looking forward to his future recording projects.

Sherry Johnson, Toronto, Ontario

Alexis MacIsaac. *Inspired*. 6223 Abbot St. W, Stittsville, Ont. K2S 1A9; alexis@alexismacisaac.com; www.alexismacisaac.com

Inspired is Ottawa fiddler Alexis MacIsaac's debut album. Recorded at the age of 16 (circa 2003), this album showcases MacIsaac's mature sound and advanced technical abilities. MacIsaac has – since releasing this album – built a solid career as a fiddler: she often performs at solo concerts, festivals and ceilidhs throughout North America, and she was a featured fiddler for *Riverdance* (which enabled her to tour the United States and Ireland).

This album has a traditional Celtic sound. The 44 reels, jigs, strathspeys and slow airs included are from Cape Breton, Ireland and Scotland, and are performed with a traditional Cape Breton feel and traditional ornamentation. Although most tracks on this album feature violin with piano accompaniment (provided by Ottawa fiddler and pianist Denis Lanctôt), MacIsaac also sings a traditional Irish song and step-dances (on one track). Further Celtic flavor is achieved through the occasional addition of Highland pipe, Irish flute and whistle.

A couple of minor criticisms arise upon a careful review of this album, which, on the whole, is put together with care. The tracks are mislabeled: tracks 1 and 2 are listed as a single track in the liner notes and on the back cover of the album; all the tracks that

follow are thus incorrectly numbered. Also, the inclusion of the song and dance numbers, as well as the tunes with pipe, flute and whistle, detract slightly from the album's otherwise professional quality. MacIsaac's voice (albeit pleasant) sounds underdeveloped and often uncontrolled; the solo dance section lacks the energy evident in the rest of the album; and intonation and other unison performance inconsistencies are evident in the tunes with pipe, flute and whistle.

These issues, however, do not significantly detract from the quality of the album. In fact, *Inspired* has numerous positive elements. First, the violin tone is fabulous. The violin was recorded and mixed in a manner that retained the acoustic sound: bow sounds (some "grit") remain audible, capturing the character of the instrument and avoiding the processed (i.e., vacant, distant) sound evident in some recordings. Second, MacIsaac changes her sound for different tunes: it is full and warm in the faster tunes, and vulnerable and rather nasal in the slow tunes. Third, she uses varied, well-executed articulation, moving from legato, detached, and spiccato articulations in different contexts. This creates interest and demonstrates her technical abilities.

This album is well-crafted, and, although self-produced, has (for the most part) a professional appearance and sound. It would appeal most to listeners who appreciate traditional Celtic fiddle tunes and acoustic violin music. Even though she was a young fiddler when this album was recorded, MacIsaac has superb technical abilities and a mature sound that exudes character. This album is well worth a listen.

Monique C. Giroux, Toronto, Ontario

Pete Seeger. At 89. Appleseed Recordings, P.O. Box 2593, West Chester, PA 19380, USA; info@appleseedmusic.com; www.appleseedmusic.com

Here is a disc that contains no traditional music (well, one track is an instrumental version of "The Water Is Wide") and no Canadian content. Yet I feel it justly deserves a review in *Canadian Folk Music*. The reason, of course, is Pete himself. At age 89 he is still going strong, still writing new songs, still giving concerts, and still inspiring untold numbers of people. This will very likely be his last recording. His first recordings were made in 1941 with the Almanac Singers, so if my math is right, his is a remarkable 67-year recording career. There cannot be many artists of whatever stripe who can make that boast. Not that Seeger will ever boast about it; in fact, "boast" and "Seeger" are two words rarely found in the same sentence.

The album consists of 32 tracks, some very short, such as spoken introductions to songs, or short

banjo riffs. Some are Pete all by himself, some are sung by others, with Pete providing the accompaniment. It is an uneven disc, since a variety of recording equipment was used, including recordings in the Seeger home. All the recordings were made in the Hudson Valley which Pete loves so well. The singing is also a mixed bag; included are groups such as the Walkabout Clearwater Chorus. The total effect, however, is just like a Seeger concert, with everyone singing lustily along no matter what their ability is.

Seeger's voice, in his words, is shot. It definitely has deepened with age, and the range is no longer there. But it's still musical and it's still Pete, and for that we can all be grateful.

One of the problems with Seeger records is the duplication of many of his favourite songs on different discs. This recording avoids that pitfall – only a new recording of "Waist Deep in the Big Muddy" appears, unfortunately as pertinent today as when it was originally written in the 1960s.

Everyone will have different favourite tracks as they listen to this CD. I was fascinated with a new version of "Tzena, Tzena, Tzena" that combines new Arabic words to go with the original Hebrew words. "If It Can't Be Reduced" is based upon the wording of a zero-waste resolution passed by the city council of Berkeley, California, in 2007. No one else could get away with a chorus that says, "Hooray for the city of Berkeley and its zero-waste commission!" For many, the favourite might well be Noriko Ibaragi's 1959 poem "When I Was Most Beautiful," sung beautifully by Seeger's niece Sonya Cohen. But for me, maybe because I'm a grandpa, the most moving track is "Little Fat Baby," with verses sung by Pete, James Durst, David Bernz, and Martha Sandefer:

Some day you'll be able to walk,
Some day you'll be able to talk;
No more diapers, you will wear pants;
You'll be able to sing and to dance,
And then, oh then, oh then, oh then,
I'll wish I had that little fat baby,
In my arms again.

The 89-year old Seeger sings the last verse:

Some day we'll be saying, "So long,"
Some day it will be time for me to move on;
No more discussions over a glass of beer,
No more generation gaps appear,
And then, oh then, oh then, oh then,
You'll wish you had your dear sweet poppa,
In your arms again.

The man is about to begin his tenth decade on Planet Earth. We are grateful we had him in our arms for so long.

Lorne Brown, North York, Ontario

Darcy Stamp. Darcy Stamp Music, 139 Strathridge Close SW, Calgary, Alta. T3H 4J3; info@darcystamp.com; www.darcystamp.com

Violinist Darcy Stamp's self-titled debut album is a diverse collection of tunes that draw inspiration from a number of genres; this is perhaps a reflection of Stamp's varied musical background. Stamp studied classical violin with Joan Barrett and Nick Pulos at the Mount Royal College Academy in Calgary, and with David Zager at the University of Toronto. He also has a background in fiddle music: he was a long-time member of the Calgary Fiddlers and an original member of Fiddlers GF (now known as Barrage). Stamp has since performed in theatre productions, as well as with a number of popular musicians such as Jully Black, Josh Groban and John Wort Hannam.

The most striking aspect of this album is the variation between tracks. "Miss Rowan Davies" (Phil Cunningham) is a simple air accompanied by a second fiddle line, understated drum and acoustic guitar. "Infantryman" (John Wort Hannam) has a similar "folk" sound, but features singer John Wort Hannam, with Stamp adding an introduction, interludes and a coda on his fiddle. These two selections create an unusual contrast with the pop/rock sound of "Full Circle" and funk/disco-inspired "Midnight Drive" (both Warren Tse). Stamp also includes a medley that is reminiscent of the band Leahy, a nuevo tango tune and a bluegrass tune. The album concludes with the original arrangement of two movements from "Sonata in G Minor" (Johann Sebastian Bach) for unaccompanied violin.

Stamp has an even, clear sound, and plays with accurate intonation (with a few exceptions). He also performs with smooth lines and few accents. This approach is most successful in the tunes "Miss Rowan Davies" and "Infantryman" (the folk-oriented tunes). The former has beautiful phrasing and harmony, and the violin line in the latter never overwhelms the vocal line. Unfortunately, Stamp does not alter his sound from tune to tune, even though the differences between tunes necessitate distinct timbres and unique accentuation. Stamp thus does not seem to be fully engaged in the genres from which he is drawing inspiration.

If Stamp intended to use this album to display his wide range of interests, then he was successful. Due to the varied repertoire, this album would be of greatest appeal to someone interested in listening to a sample of genres that include violin (such as violin students interested in some of the possibilities available to them as violinists). However, Stamp seems to depend on his varied selection of tunes to create interest; his playing often sounds uninspired, and does not stand out as especially interesting or creative.

Listeners may therefore find – due to the lack of cohesion between tracks – that few tracks appeal to their own particular preferences.

Monique C. Giroux, Toronto, Ontario

A Peak in Darien

Some of these will be reviewed in upcoming issues; some are outside our purview, but are included as a courtesy to the people who sent them to us, and to inform our readers.

Recordings

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Blackstone. *Bring Your Feathers In!: Pow-Wow Songs Recorded Live at Shiprock Fair.* CR-6404. Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; canyon@canyonrecords.com; www.canyonrecords.com

Rodney Brown. *North Country.* SSDK007. Starsilk Records, 347 Pearl St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 1E9; rodney@rodneybrown.ca; www.rodneybrown.ca

Michael Jerome Browne. *This Beautiful Mess.* BCD192. Borealis Records, 290 Shuter St., Toronto, Ont. M5A 1W7 (new address, different from packaging); www.borealisrecords.com; info@borealisrecords.com

Celtara. *Until the Morning Light.* celtara@telus.net; www.celtara.ca

Les Charbonniers de l'Enfer. *À la grace de Dieu.* TRICD-7267. La Tribu, 100 Sherbrooke Est, bur. 3400, Montréal (Québec) H2X 1C3; info@latribu.ca; www.latribu.ca; Productions Serge Paré (addresses above)

Annabelle Chvostek. *Resilience.* BCD193. Borealis Records (address above)

Kat Danser. *Somethin' Familiar.* KB 0713. MGAM Inc., 1153 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ont. M6J 1J1; Kat Danser Music, 9412 67th Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6E 0N7; katdanser@shaw.ca; KatDanser.com

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