

First Princeton Traditional Music Festival, August 2008



Quicksbottom Morris outside the Museum Stage

Although there had been a successful trial run the year before, August 2008 was the year of what has been officially named the First Princeton Traditional Music Festival. It took place over two days, August 16th and 17th, and there were two concurrently running stages, the Museum Stage and the Billiter Stage. This time the program was divided between individual performances and workshops. The workshops and other group sessions were titled:

- British Rumpty Tump Jam
- Celtic Jam
- French Songs and Music
- Mining Songs
- Logging Songs
- Political Songs
- Ranching & Cowboy Songs
- Sea Songs
- Traditional Ballads

The following performers who had participated the previous year returned in 2008:

- Eric & Betty Armstrong
- Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat
- Flip Breskin & Zeke Hoskin
- John D. Erskine
- Don Gilbert
- Judith Heather

- Jill King
- Mike Marker
- Rattlebone Band
- Brian Robertson
- Chris Roe
- Skweez (previously Squeeze)
- Ellen Van der Hoeven
- Lyn Van Lidth de Jeude

There were also many new faces:

- Across the Pond
- Alex Atamanenko
- Graham Baldwin
- Celtic Spirit
- Chris Corrigan
- The Cutters
- Bob Doucet
- Joseph Dubé
- Lorne Dufour
- Jim Edmondson
- Glen Esdale
- Fiddle Frazzle
- Fintan the Fish
- Grist to the Mill
- Larry Hanks
- John Henry
- J. D. Howell
- Irish Wakers

Sue Irwin
 Paul Lievesley
 Lyn Melnechenko
 Brad Ovenell-Carter
 Lyn Pinkerton
 Steven Quattrochi
 Quicksbottom Morris
 Rabbleberries
 Tom Rawson
 The Streels
 Simon Trevelyan
 Emily Van Lidth de Jeude

This was the schedule at the Museum Stage for the first day:

Princeton Traditional Music Festival
 16/17 August 2008
Performance Schedule
 Museum Stage, Saturday

DAY	TIME	PERFORMANCE	MC
Saturday	12:00	Celtic Spirit	Brian Robertson
Saturday	12:30	Alex Atamanenko	
Saturday	1:00	Traditional Ballads Workshop Host: Chris Roe, Judith Heasler, Simon Trevelyan, Ellen vander Hoeven, Don Gilbert, Lyn Pinkerton, Emily & Lyn Van Lidth de Jeude	
Saturday	2:00	Emily & Lyn Van Lidth de Jeude	Jill King
Saturday	2:30	Dance spot	
Saturday	3:00	French Songs & Music Workshop Host: Lyn Pinkerton, Skweez, Chris Roe, Joseph Dubé	
Saturday	3:30	Lorne DuFour	
Saturday	4:00	Across the Pond	Simon Trevelyan
Saturday	4:30	Political Songs Workshop Host: Filip Breskin, Jim Edmondson & Lyn Pinkerton, Zeke Hoskin, Mike Marker & Larry Hanks, John Henry, Rabbleberries	
Saturday	5:30	The Irish Wakers	

from the folk revival of the sixties, together with songs from B.C. and other parts of Canada. He also sings in Russian, a language he learned in the family home. He was joined in his performance by Lawrence Halisheff on banjo.



Lawrence Halisheff & Alex Atamanenko

The first workshop was devoted to an hour of traditional balladry, with Jon Bartlett and Brian Robertson joining the performers listed on the schedule. Lyn Van Lidth de Jeude was joined for a set by her daughter Emily, and then the Quicksbottom Morris Men were featured during a dance intermission. This



Celtic Spirit

In the following survey, the main focus will be on first-time performers at Princeton. First up on the Museum Stage were Celtic Spirit, followed by Princeton's New Democrat Member of Parliament, Alex Atamanenko. Alex has been singing for many years both as a solo performer and with a group called the Balladeers. He performs regularly in seniors' homes in the Castlegar area, often singing songs



A Quicksbottom Morris Man

Victoria Morris team takes its name from a nearby regional park (formerly agricultural bottom land). They perform in the "border" style: dances originating from and in the style of English counties near the Welsh border. Their "kit" (costume) is top hat, tattered/ragged shirt, dark trousers and blackened faces (disguise, not minstrelsy).



Quicksbottom Morris

The second workshop featured French, Acadian and Quebecois dance music and francophone songs, in the performance of which Joseph Dubé was joined by Lyn Pinkerton, Rika Ruebsaat, Chris Roe and Skweeze. Joseph Dubé lives in Princeton and sings in local coffee shops and church choirs. He was previously a member of the Movers and Shakers, a seniors' comedy choir, but he took up guitar two years ago to accompany himself singing francophone songs from his family heritage. The next performer, poet Lorne Dufour, is also a B.C. native, although he hails from the north Cariboo region rather than the west Okanagan. Lorne has been a horse logger for thirty-three years and lives at McLeese Lake, between Williams Lake and Quesnel. He has composed poetry for almost forty years, writing about the hardships and humour of life as a logger. His three books are titled *Spit on Wishes*, *Starting from Promise* and *Jacob's Prayer*.

It was back to British traditional music with *Across the Pond*, and then it was time for the Political Song workshop, which gave the floor to several festival newcomers including Larry Hanks and John Henry as well as such pioneers as Flip & Zeke.



Political Songs Workshop

Saturday on this stage was wrapped up by the Irish Wakers, the house band of the Wolf and Hound pub in Vancouver. They play traditional Irish music with passion: instrumentals such as toe-tapping jigs, reels, hornpipes and waltzes as well as singing sea shanties and other traditional songs.



The Irish Wakers

Meanwhile, on the Billiter Stage the Festival's opening ceremony was followed by a rousing set from the Rattlebone band.

Billiter Stage, Saturday

DAY	TIME	PERFORMANCE	MC
Saturday	11:30	OPENING CEREMONY Host: Rika Ruebsaat, ACing Mayor Maria Sadeguri; Alex Atamanenko, MP; Harry Lall, MLA; Gerri Logan, Area H	Rika Ruebsaat
Saturday	12:00	Rattlebone Band	Neil Gillon
Saturday	12:30	Glen Esdale	
Saturday	1:00	Chris Corrigan & Brad Ovenell-Carter	
Saturday	1:30	Mining Songs Workshop Host: Mike Marker, Larry Hanks, John Henry, Jim Edmondson, Jon Barelett & Rika Ruebsaat	
Saturday	2:30	Simon Trevelyan & Steven Quaerocchi	Philip Morgan
Saturday	3:00	The Streets	
Saturday	3:30	Flip Breskin & Zeke Hoskin	
Saturday	4:00	Rabbleberries	John Bosomworth
Saturday	4:30	Bob Doucet	
Saturday	5:00	Sue Irwin	
Saturday	5:30	Fiddle Frazzle	

Glen Esdale has been playing the bagpipes since the age of eight, and accompanying dancers since he was twelve. He has performed and competed both as a solo player and in bands for many years. In 1985 he traveled to Scotland for the World Grade 3 band championship. Now a resident of Princeton, he regularly plays for highland dances put on by the local Scottish community. Other highlights of his piping career have been playing at the Canadian Highland Dance Championships in 2002 and in the American National Championships in 2005.

Before the first workshop on this stage, which was devoted to Mining Songs interpreted by Jon and Rika, local singer John Henry, Larry Hanks and Jim Edmondson, there was a performance by the duo of Chris Corrigan and Brad Ovenell-Carter. Chris Cor-

rigan has been inspired by Jon and Rika to recover and expand B.C. folksong traditions; he creates songs about his home, Bowen Island, and his life there.



Chris Corrigan

The next performers, Simon Trevelyan and Steve Quattrocchi, are from Vancouver. With Steve providing accompaniment on banjo and mandolin and Simon on guitar and concertina, they perform what they call “back country” music—Appalachian songs from Anglo-Celtic and African-American traditions: songs of superstition, religion, elopement, feuding, and moonshine.



Steve Quattrocchi and Simon Trevelyan

Following the Streels and pioneers Flip & Zeke came the Rabbleberries. This group comprises Sharon Hazelwood, Karen Gillmore, Alan O’Dean and Ken Orchard and comes from Victoria. They first came together for the tall ships festival and now perform at demonstrations, rallies, political gatherings and folk clubs. They sing about work and play, about the planet, peace and justice, and about the wisdom, fol-

lies and struggles of people everywhere. They love songs that are about real people’s lives, music that helps us move to a better place, music that exposes and chides the powerful.



The Rabbleberries

Bob Doucet, another newcomer to the festival, hails originally from Boston but now makes his home on Bowen Island, where he is a well known and active member of the local music community. A skilled multi-instrumentalist with a powerful voice, Bob has organized monthly “kitchen junkets” on the Island for several years. He is also the founder of Black Sheep Morris dance team.



Bob Doucet

After Sue Irwin’s concert came the local Okanagan group Fiddle Frazzle. They began playing together in Penticton in November of 2007. The group met one another through the Penticton Music Academy and Skaha Sound where they discovered their shared interest in Celtic music. They played traditional Irish, Scottish and New England dance music.

Fiddle Frazzle’s concert wound up Saturday’s proceedings on the Billiter Stage, but later that night the Morris dancers were back with a dance and light show in which they swapped their normal ‘swords’ (actually sticks) for light sabres modeled on those used by the Jedi in Star Wars. It was spectacular.



Morris at Night

Museum Stage, Sunday

DAY	TIME	PERFORMANCE	MC
Sunday	12:00	The Cutters	Morgan Bartlett
Sunday	12:30	Logging Songs + Poetry Workshop Host: Jon Bartlett, Rika Ruebsaat, Brian Robertson, Lorne Dufour	
Sunday	1:00	Mike Marker + Larry Hanks	
Sunday	1:30	Ellen vander Hoeven	
Sunday	2:00	Skweez	Solana Allison
Sunday	2:30	Cowboy Songs + Poetry Workshop Host: Larry Hanks, Mike Marker, Lyn Meinechenko, J.D. Howell, Eric + Betty Armstrong	
Sunday	3:00	Chris Roe	
Sunday	3:30	Fintan the Fish	
Sunday	4:00	Lyn Pinkerton + Jim Edmondson	Eric + Betty
Sunday	4:30	Tom Rawson	Armstrong
Sunday	5:00	Jon Bartlett + Rika Ruebsaat	

The Cutters kicked things off on the Museum Stage on Sunday morning, followed by a workshop in which Lorne Dufour presented more of his poetry and stories about life as a logger, and Brian Robertson, Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat sang songs about the history of the B.C. forestry industry, many of them taken from the Phil Thomas collection. The next workshop featured cowboy and ranching songs, also in part derived from Phil Thomas' collecting in the B.C. interior, but before that there were performances by Mike Marker and Larry Hanks and by other veterans from the 2007 trial run: Ellen van der Hoeven and the duo Squeeze, now renamed Skweez.



The Logging Songs Workshop

Another of the American pioneers, Chris Roe, provided a solo concert, mixing a *cappella* songs with melodeon tunes and songs in which she accompanied

herself on that instrument. The Celtic group Fintan the Fish, drawing on Irish musical traditions, was followed by the Vancouver duo of Lyn Pinkerton and Jim Edmondson. Jim, previously founder and lead singer of the group Three Strong Winds, has a special passion for creating and singing songs for causes he believes in. He teamed up with Lyn nearly a decade ago and their repertoire now includes traditional Appalachian, British and French songs. They also sing sea shanties and folk songs with what they call “nibbling social commentary”.



Lyn Pinkerton

Tom Rawson involved his audience throughout his set with gospel, old-time and contemporary easy-to-sing-with songs. His day job is teaching grades 1 and 2 in Seattle. Besides teaching and singing, he loves railways, and has traveled thousands of miles by box-car across North America. He is also a fisherman, which, he says, is how he became a storyteller. Tom cheerfully admits that he has modeled himself to some degree on his idol Pete Seeger. He travels throughout the northwest playing at festivals and coffeehouses, as well as leading community singing at conferences and retreats. He regularly puts on benefits in support of organizations working to reduce military spending and to channel resources to meet human needs. Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat closed the Museum Stage proceedings for the day.

Down the street on the Billiter Stage the first performance was by Grist to the Mill Ceilidh Band. As their name suggests, they play traditional dance tunes—jigs, reels, hornpipes—with energy and enthusiasm at cafés, festivals, farmer's markets, ceilidh dances, and care facilities. They also sing the traditional folksongs of Ireland, Scotland and Celtic communities in North America.



Tom Rawson

Billiter Stage, Sunday

DAY	TIME	PERFORMANCE	MC
Sunday	12:00	Grist to the Mill	Lyn Melnechenko
Sunday	12:30	J.D. Howell	
Sunday	1:00	Sea Songs Workshop Host: Simon Trevelyan, Jill King, Brian Robertson, Chris Roe, Bob Doucet, J.D. Erskine, The Cutters	
Sunday	2:00	Celtic Jam Host: Chris Corrigan, Brad O'Connell-Carter, Celtic Spirit, The Streets, Finlan the Fish, The Irish Walkers, Fiddle Frazzle, Glen Esdale	Angelique Wood
Sunday	3:00	Don Gilbert	
Sunday	3:30	Eric & Betty Armstrong	
Sunday	4:00	Brian Robertson	J.D. Howell
Sunday	4:30	Lyn Melnechenko	
Sunday	5:00	British Rumpy Tump Jam Host: Graham Baldwin, The Rattlebones Band, Skweez, Across the Pond, Paul Lievesley, Chris Roe, Bob Doucet, Eric & Betty Armstrong, Grist to the Mill	
Sunday	6:00	Closing songs & goodbyes	Rjka Ruebsaat

After a set by J. D. Howell (about whom we unfortunately have no biographical information), it was time for two more workshops. First a session hosted by Simon Trevelyan and featuring sea songs (including a few shanties) sung by, among others, Jill King, Chris Roe, Brian Robertson, John Erskine and The Cutters. This was a vocal tour de force, in contrast to the subsequent Celtic Jam, in which instrumental virtuosity was at a premium. Both group sessions were received most enthusiastically by the audience, and they would become *de rigueur* at future festivals.



The Celtic Jam

Three sets of folk festival pioneers from 2007 were back next. Don Gilbert was followed by Eric and Betty Armstrong, and they in turn by Brian Robertson. Eventually it was time for Princeton cowgirl poet Lyn Melnechenko. Lyn has been a horsewoman for fifty years, has worked with every aspect of horses and ranching and has many humorous stories to tell about it all. Many of her stories and poems have been printed in her regular column (“Ranching Ain’t Easy”) in the *Similkameen News Leader* and in such magazines as *Reader’s Digest*, *Western Horseman* and *America’s Horse*, and she has published two books of poetry and drawings called *Cowgirls Cuss Too* and *Truth, Lies and a Whole Bunch of Bullshit*. Lyn is a three-time winner at the Kamloops Cowboy Poetry Festival.

After this focus on the Princeton region and the spoken word it was back to rambunctious instrumental music and humorous folk lyrics with the final workshop, titled British Rumpy-Tump. The stage groaned under the weight of three groups (Across the Pond, Grist to the Mill and Rattlebone Band), as well as such lovers of the traditional music of the United Kingdom as Bob Doucet, Paul Lievesley, Chris Roe, and Eric and Betty Armstrong.



Grist to the Mill and Friends

Finally it was left to Rika Ruebsaat to mastermind the closing ceremonies and songs, bringing to an end the first, and by all accounts highly successful, Princeton Traditional Music Festival.