

The New Westminster AGM and Conference, November 2005

Jon Bartlett, New Westminster

The Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music was held the weekend of November 4-6 at Douglas College in New Westminster, BC. The Conference and AGM were sponsored jointly by the Douglas College Community Music School and the Vancouver Folk Song Society. The Vancouver Folk Song Society has long been an institutional member of the CSTM and is the oldest such organization in the country, having been founded in July 1959.

The weekend opened on the Friday with a concert titled "The World Turned Upside Down". The title derives from the English Civil War, following the overthrow of the monarchy and the questions arising therefrom as to who should rule and on what basis. The conference was formally opened by the local MLA and the Acting Mayor of New Westminster, and event organizers Rika Ruebsaat and Jon Bartlett opened the show. A very responsive audience heard performances from Jim Edmondson, who sang among other songs a very moving one of his own making, concerning the occupation of Iraq and titled "The Light Blue Door"; from the Vancouver Morris Men, who performed a Mumming Play; from The Solidarity Notes Labour Choir; and from Fraser Union. The large audience enthusiastically received every group, and the evening closed with a very warm, song-filled reception for delegates and performers.

Saturday saw a full schedule of presentations of papers and workshops, as follows:

Papers

Sandria Bouliane, "La musique populaire du Québec au-delà de la politique : un passé historique engagé dans l'avenir"

Judith Cohen, "Music in the Construction of a Medieval Identity for Sephardic and Muslim 'Others'

in Spain and Portugal"

David Gregory, "William E. Axon and Working Class Song in Victorian Lancashire"

Kim Kobayashi, "Asian Women Kick Ass Through Japanese Taiko"

Norman Stanfield, "May Day in Deepest, Darkest New Westminster, British Columbia"

Louise Wrazen, "Bringing the Polish Tatrás to Canada: Privileging Narratives"

Workshops

"Magic and the Supernatural in Traditional Balladry": Rosaleen Gregory, Rika Ruebsaat, and Paddy Tutty (Chaired by David Gregory)

"Before and After Joe Hill: Labour Song in British Columbia": Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat

Panel

"Teaching Folk Songs in Canada": Maureen Chafe, Rika Ruebsaat, Norman Stanfield (Chaired by David Gregory).

A most enjoyable party at Jon and Rika's house followed a banquet for delegates and presenters. Many singers and musicians from across the country as well as from the Lower Mainland shared music until the wee hours.

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held Sunday morning at the College. Reports were presented from the President, the Treasurer, the Membership Secretary and the Archivist, from the editors of the *Bulletin* and the *Journal* and concerning the Mail Order Service and the website. There was, as always, too little time to discuss all the subjects that members wanted to bring up, and the Board will address this before the next AGM, which is proposed for Ottawa.