

Second Princeton Traditional Music Festival, 2009



Brian Robertson leads a workshop

For the second year of the Festival the lineup included many returning artists who had been in Princeton in either 2007 or 2008 or both years. These pioneers included:

Eric & Betty Armstrong
Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat
Flip Breskin & Zeke Hoskin
Chris Corrigan
Bob Doucet
Joseph Dubé
Lorne Dufour
Jim Edmondson
John D. Erskine
Glen Esdale
Fiddle Frazzle
Don Gilbert
The Irish Wakers
Mike Marker
Lyn Melnechenko

Steve Quattrocchi & Simon Trevelyan
Quicksbottom Morris
Rabbleberries
Rattlebone Band
Tom Rawson
Brian Robertson
Chris Roe
Ellen Van der Hoeven

However, the list of new performers was even longer:

Annie & Margaret
Mike Ballantyne
Banquo Folk Ensemble
Marion Barschel
Billy Gals (Jill King & Pam Jeffreys)
Black Sheep Morris
Bob Bossin
Gary Cohen
John Gothard

Rosaleen Gregory
 King's Shilling (Simon Trevelyan & Mary Armitage)
 Kouskous
 Peter Kratoska
 Little Mountain Step and Clog
 Graham Metcalfe
 Bob Morgan & Lynn Graves
 Philip Morgan
 North by West
 Psycho Acoustics Ceili Band (with caller Kari-Ann Thor)
 Doug Reid
 Sassenach Rebellion (Laurie & Nell Postans)
 Jeff Scouten & Friends
 Soft Focus (Marian Buechert & Steve Britten)
 Solidarity Notes Labour Choir
 Vancouver Morris Men
 The Wanderers (Call Allen & Bill Murlin)
 Lorne Warr
 The Westside Ramblers
 Angelique Wood

Songs of B.C.: Logging, Mining, Fishing, Goldrush
 Songs of Canada
 Songs of the British Isles
 Songs of the Sea: Fishing, Sealing, Whaling, Tugboats and Off-Watch
 Songs of the US: Appalachian Ballads to Blues
 Traditional Ballads: Ancient Songs of Love and Murder

As in the previous year, the Festival ran for two days in August (Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd) and there were two stages at which performances ran concurrently. This brief survey of the 2009 line-up will concentrate on new performers about whom we have some biographical information (unfortunately not the case with everybody). Here is Saturday's schedule for the Museum Stage:



Princeton Traditional Music Festival

MUSEUM STAGE
 SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2009
arrivals in CAPITALS are possible with 4-16 participants

10 am **Bob Doucet**
songs from the last that time forgot

10.30 am **Morgan & Graves**
old & new songs with fiddle and guitar

11 am **SONGS OF CANADA**
songs from across the country

Noon **Jeff Scouten & Friends**
personal favourites with a family twist

12.30 pm **Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat**
songs of Princeton and BC

1 pm **Lyn Melnechenko**
Princeton's concept poet

1.30 pm **The Vancouver Morris Men**
traditional English village dances

2 pm **THE TRADITIONAL BALLADS**
ancient songs of love and murder

3 pm **Lorne Warr**
songs with an oral and literary flavour

3.30 pm **Peter Kratoska**
French-Canadian fiddle tunes

4 pm **John Gotthard**
traditional songs from the British Isles

4.30 pm **Annie & Margaret**
Canadian Celtic fiddle/guitar duo

5 pm **SONGS OF BC**
logging, mining, fishing, goldrush songs

Bob Doucet, a welcome returnee from 2008, opened the proceedings. Then came a new duo, Bob Morgan and Lynn Graves from Seattle, who play and sing a mix of acoustic roots music. Their repertoire included old and new folk songs, original songs and tunes on fiddle and guitar. Most interesting from a historical point of view were the fiddle tunes played on the Oregon Trail, based on research by folklorists and musicians Phil and Vivian Williams. Bob, incidentally, is a keen photographer, and many of the photographs in this issue of artists performing at the Festival were taken by him.

There were more workshops too, on the following subjects:

Blues
 Celtic Jam
 Shanties
 Songs and Tunes from La Francophonie



Bob Morgan



Part of the Songs of Canada Workshop

The “Songs of Canada” workshop was followed by a set from Jeff Scouten and Friends. The “friends” included daughters Sarah and Anna. Jeff describes himself as a “kitchen musician”. He has been active in the music scene on Bowen Island for many years, where he plays banjo with The Lawn Dogs, a local bluegrass band.

Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat performed B.C. songs from the Phil Thomas collection and local material that they had gathered in Princeton since coming to live in the town. Princeton cowgirl poet Lyn Melnechenko provided more poems and tales about ranching in the Okanagan. Then came a demonstra-

tion of Morris dancing by the Vancouver Morris Men, who have been performing together for thirty years. Go to any street festival in the Lower Mainland and you’ll probably see them with bells ringing and handkerchieves waving. They have also been known to dance on dark, rainy parking lots on Guy Fawkes Night. Apart from this inclusion in the formal program, the group frequently performed spontaneously in the streets of Princeton throughout the weekend, whenever they decided that a little “guerilla dancing” (as they called it) was required to liven the proceedings.



Morris Dancing in the Street

The second workshop was devoted to traditional balladry. Participants included Jon and Rika, Chris Roe, Simon Trevelyan, Ellen Van der Hoeven and several newcomers to the Festival: Rosaleen Gregory, Gary Cohen and Amber Woods. The next solo artist was Lorne Warr, originally from Newfoundland but now living on Bowen Island. An active member of the Celtic music scene on the coast, Lorne mainly sang songs inspired by the tunes and stories he heard growing up on “the Rock”. Then came Vancouver fiddler Peter Kratoska who began his musical career playing for Scottish country dances and Irish ceillidhs. More recently he has also been playing French Canadian fiddle tunes, a tradition strongly influenced by both the Irish and Scottish music.

John Gothard was born in Liverpool, plays English concertina, and sings what he calls his “own brand” of traditional music, a mix of sea songs, traditional ballads, and songs of Irish immigration to

North America. He lives in Brackendale, where he organizes Irish country dances. Besides performing, John was in charge of the Friday evening Irish ceilidh dance that commenced this year's Festival.



Peter Kratoska



John Gothard

The last concert was given by Annie and Margaret. They met in Vancouver a decade ago and have been participating in Celtic music sessions together ever since. Annie, who loves Celtic dance music, began teaching fiddle after an accident-prone science career. Margaret was raised in a musical family in Ireland but it wasn't until her move to Sweden that she returned to the Irish folk tradition. Her repertoire includes odes to home and country, love songs, and foot-stomping sing-alongs.

The afternoon's music concluded with a workshop on the songs of British Columbia, which mixed songs collected from oral tradition by Phil Thomas and others with more recent compositions by the participants, including Brian Robertson. Festival organizers Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat played a prominent role in this session.

Princeton Traditional Music Festival

VERMILION SQUARE STAGE

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 2009

starting at 10:00 am

10 am Rattlebone Band
village dance band music

10:30 am Glen Esdale
traces on the great Highland pipes

11 am Little Mountain Step & Clog
traditional English clog dancing

11:30 am THE BLUES
uniquely North American

Noon Billy Gals
a capella 2-part harmony

12:30 pm POLITICAL SONGS WORKSHOP
songs of social struggle

1:30 pm Banque Folk Ensemble
ancient songs & traditional tunes

2 pm Mike Ballanlyne
traces from the 1820's & 1830's

2:30 pm The Irish Walkers
step, reel, songs and dances

3 pm Philip Moynan
sea songs and more

3:30 pm Chris Row
ballads, songs and new music

4 pm North by West
songs of the sea with lively choruses

4:30 pm SONGS OF THE US
Appalachian ballads to blues

5:30 pm Fiddle Fuzzie
folk, rock, bluegrass & more

Meanwhile, on the rechristened Vermilion Stage, the morning's music had been kicked off by the Rattlebone Band, followed by a set by local piper Glen Esdale, one of the participants in the previous year's festival. Next came a dance demonstration by Little Mountain Step and Clog. This group was formed thirteen years ago and is one of only five English clog-dancing groups in North America. Clogs with wooden soles and leather uppers were once the industrial footwear worn in the mills of Lancashire. Workers noticed that the shoes made a lot of noise and some developed dances to take advantage of this fact. English clog dancing is one of the sources of tap-

dancing in North America. Little Mountain's dances come from England, the Isle of Man, Connecticut and Canada.



Blues Workshop with Mike Ballantyne and Mike Marker

The Blues Workshop was followed by a concert by Billy Gals, a Vancouver duo comprising Jill King, a veteran from 2007, and newcomer Pam Jeffreys, now also a member of the Irish Wakers. Jill and Pam had only been playing and singing together for four months but it was their love of harmony singing that brought them together, and this was a feature of their performance on this occasion.

After the Political Songs Workshop a trio of musicians from Mayne Island took the stage. Calling themselves the Banquo Folk Ensemble, they play dulcimer, bagpipes, recorder, hurdy-gurdy, cittern and percussion. They also sing. The Ensemble was formed in 1998 and has survived through many changes of personnel throughout the last decade. Its members are dedicated to the enjoyment and celebration of early music and traditional folk music, but they emphasize that they are not purists and view folk music as a living tradition which is constantly adapting and changing.

One of the participants in the Blues Workshop, Mike Ballantyne, also had his own concert, devoted to good-time hokum blues, ragtime, and jugband songs of the 1920s and 1930s. Mike now lives in Central Saanich on Vancouver Island but first picked up the guitar in England in 1963. He came to Canada ten years later and played British folk music in lounges and bars throughout western Canada. He retired from this kind of performing in 1989, but last year took up the guitar again and now plays the music of such greats as Georgia Tom Dorsey, Tampa Red, The Mississippi Sheiks and the Dallas String Band.

The audience enjoyed more Celtic music from the Irish Wakers before Philip Morgan's first solo performance at the Princeton festival. Philip hails

from Seattle where he has been making music for many years, both as a shanty singer and as a member of a band he founded, the Cutters. His specialty is songs of the sea. He has been a mainstay of Seattle's nautical music scene and has for many years organized the songs of the sea extravaganza at Seattle's Folklife Festival. He also puts on concerts at the same city's Maritime Centre.



Mike Ballantyne

Chris Roe is no stranger to Princeton, having participated in both the 2007 trial run and the 2008 festival. Her concert this year was followed by North by West, four singers who, like Philip Morgan, specialize in songs of the sea – shanties, or worksongs, and forebitters, or off-watch songs. They met in the Vancouver Folk Song Society and have been singing together for twenty years, on board ships, at festivals and shanty gatherings and at parties. The last workshop on this stage, an exploration of “Songs of the U.S.A.”, was followed by the last act of the afternoon, the Celtic music group Fiddle Frazzle.

There were—and are—no evening concerts at the Princeton Festival, but instead a time for musicians to party and jam together in the yard of Jon and Rika's house. A late night of beer and music meant that not everyone was up and running at 10am on Sunday morning, but the Museum Stage was func-

tioning approximately on time.

Princeton Traditional Music Festival

MUSEUM STAGE
SUNDAY 23 AUGUST 2009
SEVEN:00 to EIGHT:00 am panels with 7-10 participants

- 10 am The Westside Ramblers
traditional Canadian folk songs
- 10:30 am SONGS & TUNES FROM LA FRANCOPHONIE
from France, Acadie, Québec, and Louisiana
- 11 am Mike & Nakos Marker
old-timey songs with banjo, dobro & guitar
- 11:30 am Quicksbottom Morris
border-style Morris dance
- Noon SONGS OF THE SEA
songs of fishing, sailing, whaling, rigboats and off-walsh songs
- 1 pm Rosaleen Gregory
traditional English song
- 1:30 pm Lorne Dufour
logger poet from Miramichi Lake
- 2 pm Graham Metcalfe
unaccompanied traditional English song
- 2:30 pm Ellen Vander Hoeven
traditional folk song, cover a capella
- 3 pm Sassenach Rebellion
Celtic and Canadian songs for all to join in
- 3:30 pm Koussoums
World folk music with Mediterranean flavour
- 4 pm Doug Reid
mostly American UK songs
- 4:30 pm Flip Breskin & Zeke Huskin
Irish folk songs & dance
- 5 pm Brian Robertson
life and times on the road coast
- 5:30 pm Don Gilbert
traditional North American songs

First to appear were the Westside Ramblers, a.k.a. Joe and Rosie Lobb from West Kelowna. They have been performing together for about ten years, including concerts for the Kelowna Heritage Society, the Kelowna Museum and the Friends of Fintry. During that time they have built up an extensive repertoire of Canadian folk songs, some of which have rarely been heard.



Mike and Nakos Marker

After the Francophonie workshop Mike and Nakos Marker sang country blues, jazz from the 1930s and southern Appalachian music played on banjo, dobro and guitar. A vigorous and colourful exhibition of

Morris dancing by Quicksbottom Morris preceded the “Songs of the Sea” Workshop.

Then it was the turn of traditional ballad singer Rosaleen Gregory. Rosaleen was born in England with Irish, Welsh and Scottish ancestry. She first discovered traditional ballads as literature and later realized that they had tunes. She has been singing traditional songs and ballads for over fifty years and now has a repertoire of over three hundred songs. Rosaleen has participated in many ballad workshops in Britain and Canada and is a regular contributor to *Canadian Folk Music*, the magazine of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music. Her love of ballads comes out of her desire to tell stories and convey moods through song.



Rosaleen Gregory

Lorne Dufour again brought his characteristic brand of verses and tales of the life of a logger in the B.C. forests. Then Graham Metcalfe from Victoria presented a set of folk lyrics and chorus songs from the English tradition, songs that he has been singing for the past forty-five years. Graham’s concert was followed by one by Ellen Van der Hoeven, one of the pioneers from 2007 who also performed in the first ‘official’ festival in 2008.

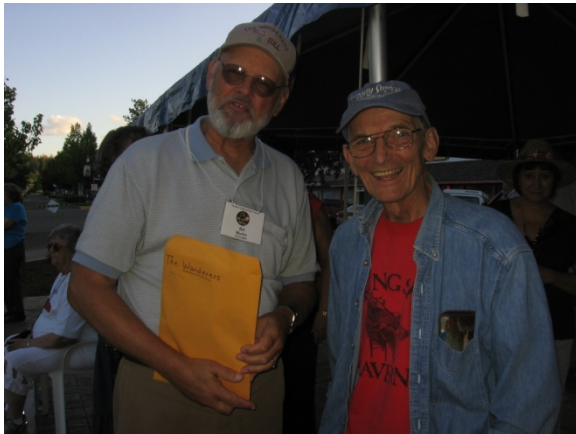
Sassenach Rebellion, also from Victoria, comprised the duo of Laurie and Nell Postans. They began singing together in 1997 but both had been performing since the early 1960s. Laurie’s early influences included the Kingston Trio, Gordon Lightfoot and Pete Seeger. Over the years he performed in countless folk clubs, festivals in Canada, the U.S., Britain and New Zealand, playing guitar, banjo, concertina and octave mandolin. Nell’s music was influenced by the British folk revival and her Welsh mother. Since moving to Victoria in 1986 she has

have been singing together ever since. They take their material from the dark chapters of human history, believing that adversity has given birth to some of the finest songs in the Anglo-American tradition, especially those inspired by press gangs, conscription, slavery and the convict transports to Australia.



King's Shilling

After the Celtic Jam came a performance by Festival pioneers Eric and Betty Armstrong, followed by a debut concert by The Wanderers, the duo of Carl Allen and Bill Murlin from Beaverton, Oregon. They perform folk songs from the 1960s to the present but their special passion is Woody Guthrie, whose Columbia River songs they have collected, published and performed. The year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of when they began playing and singing together.



The Wanderers

Chris Corrigan, a familiar face from the previous year, combined his talents with those of fellow Vancouver session musician Colin McLean, an active participant in the Irish music scene in the city. Bob Bossin from Gabriola Island is an accomplished songwriter and was perhaps the most famous performer at the 2009 festival. Peter Gzowski once remarked that Bob has created “wonderful songs that

linger in a lot of people's memories”. He was the founder of the group Stringband back in the “folk boom” of the early 1970s. Since then he has produced numerous LPs and CDs. He is also the author of award-winning plays and essays that have been published nationally. Bob has performed all over the world and his songs have been sung by such well-known musicians as Valdy, Ian Tyson and Pete Seeger.



Bob Bossin

Bob's set was followed by a performance by Soft Focus, a duo from the Lower Mainland, consisting of Marian Buechert and Steve Britten. Marian has been singing traditional songs for almost 30 years, and she teamed up with Steve about nine years ago. Together they perform a variety of traditional songs, some Canadian, others from Britain and the U.S.A. They have performed at the Northwest Folklife Festival and the B.C. Renaissance Festival, and are regulars at the Vancouver Folk Song Society, the Steveston Folk Guild, Fort Langley, and on CJSF Radio. On this occasion they played and sang an eclectic mix of material, demonstrating considerable virtuosity in switching from style to style as appropriate for the different songs.



Soft Focus

voice, along with Rich Williams, Simon Trevelyan, Brian Robertson and others.



Steve Quattrocchi



Singing Shanties: North by West

Before the final workshop the audience at the Vermilion Stage were treated to return performances by Tim Rawson and the duo of Simon Trevelyan and Steve Quattrocchi. Then came a song-swapping session with the rather loosely-followed title of “Songs of the British Isles”, to which Rosaleen Gregory, Zeke Hoskin and Sassenach Rebellion contributed, among others. The Festival then wrapped up with more shanty-singing under the gazebo. This was becoming a tradition that would be followed enthusiastically at all subsequent Princeton Festivals.

After a welcome return by the Rabbleberries came the “Sea Shanties” workshop. This found festival organizers Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat in fine

The Songs of the British Isles Workshop

