

# Workshops at the Princeton Festivals

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There are different aspects to a Folk Festival. The succession of concerts by individual artists and groups gives them an opportunity to express their musical and lyrical ideas and to connect with their audiences. The workshops allow those same musicians to get together and swap songs and instrumental licks with fellow performers whose music is similar to their own in some important respect, whether that be instrumental style or type of song. They also allow for the exploration of themes, musical and non-musical. Non-musical themes are the subject matters of songs that say something, that deliver a message, personal, political, or both.

The Princeton Festival has over the five years of its official existence offered a wide variety of workshops. They have been at the heart of the Festival, its core *raison d'être*.

This is an alphabetical list of all the workshops (sometimes the titles of what have been essentially the same workshops have varied a bit, so these are their generic titles, not necessarily their exact titles in any given year):

- Banjoes
- B.C. Songs: Logging, Mining, Fishing & Gold Rush
- Blues
- British Isles: Traditional Music & Song
- Celtic Jam
- Eastern Europe
- Francophone Music & Song
- Free Reeds
- Gospel
- Harps
- Homegrown Traditions
- Irish Jam
- Political & Protest Songs/The 99%
- Princeton
- Railway Songs
- Ranching & Cowboy Songs
- Sea Songs: Fishing, Sealing, Whaling, Tugboats and Off-Watch
- Shanties
- Songs of Canada
- Songs of Social Significance & Struggle/The 99%
- Songs of Working Lives
- Spoken Word: Poetry & Stories
- Traditional Ballads
- U.S. Songs

Listed chronologically (year by year), these have been the titles of the actual workshops, in the order they have appeared in the Festival programs:

## 2007

No workshops, but individual performers themes include “Songs of B.C. Miners and Loggers”, “Sea Songs”, “Songs of Working Lives”, “Songs of Social History” and “Songs of Social Significance”.

## 2008

“Traditional Ballads”, “French Songs and Music”, “Political Songs”, “Mining Songs”, “Logging Songs”, “Ranching & Cowboy Songs”, “Sea Songs”, “Celtic Jam” & “British Rumpy Tump Jam”.

## 2009

“Songs of Canada”, “The Traditional Ballads: Ancient Songs of Love and Murder”, “Songs of B.C.: Logging, Mining, Fishing, Goldrush”, “The Blues”, “Songs of the US: Appalachian Ballads to Blues”, “Songs and Tunes from La Francophonie”, “Songs of the Sea: Fishing, Sealing, Whaling, Tugboats and Off-Watch”, “The Celtic Jam”, “Shanties” & “Songs of the British Isles”.

## 2010

“The Traditional Ballads”, “Songs and Tunes of La Francophonie”, “Four Harps”, “Celtic Jam”, “Protest Songs of the ‘60s”, “Spoken Word”, “The Blues”, “Railway Songs”, “Songs from the Mines”, “Shanty Session” & “Free Reeds”.

## 2011

“Irish Jam”, “MacPrinceton: Scottish Songs and Tunes to Honour Princeton’s Scottish Founders”, “The Blues”, “Gospel”, “Shanty Session”, “Five Banjos”, “The Traditional Ballads”, “Homegrown Traditions”, “Songs and Tunes of La Francophonie”.

## 2012

“Traditional Ballads from the Child Collection”, “Homegrown Traditions”, “The 99 Per Cent: Songs of Social Struggle”, “Songs and Tunes of La Francophonie”, “The Blues”, “The Irish Jam”, “Five Banjos”, “Free Reeds”, “Traditional Music of Eastern Europe”.

When we look more closely at the subjects and types of workshops, they divide into six categories:

1. Workshops designed primarily to let musical birds of a feather get together and do their particular thing, whether their instruments are fiddles, banjos, guitars, accordions or harps: Banjos, Harps, & Free Reeds.
2. Workshops restricted to a broad type of music: Blues, Gospel, Irish, Celtic, Franco-phonie or Eastern Europe.
3. Workshops focused on a broad category of song: Traditional Ballads, Songs of Canada, US Songs, Songs of the British Isles.
4. Workshops on narrower, more specific types of song: Shanties, Sea Songs, Mining Songs, Logging Songs, Ranching and Cowboy Songs, Railroad Songs & Songs of B.C.
5. Workshops on Princeton-related subjects or themes: Princeton Songs, Homegrown Traditions & MacPrinceton.
6. Workshops on songs with a message of some kind: Political & Protest Songs, the 99%, Songs of Social Significance and Struggle, & Songs of Working Lives.

The following provides more detail about some of the recurrent workshops, based on the information given in the programs for Festivals Nos. 3, 4 & 5 (2010-12). They are listed alphabetically:

### **Banjos**

There are many jokes about banjos, but when played well they are a joy to the ear. This session features banjo virtuosos who aim to delight audiences with their frailing and finger-picking.

Participants in 2011: Bob Webb (host), Stuart James, Mike Marker, Felix Possak & Bryn Wilkin.

Participants in 2012: Stuart James, David Lowther, Dave Marshall, Cameron Stewart & Bryn Wilkin.

### **Blues**

Emerging from the field calls and chants of slavery days, the Blues became a popular commercial music among blacks in the 1920s and 30s. Blues styles evolved with the widespread use of electric guitars after World War II, and Chicago-style electric blues were imitated successfully by white performers from the 1960s onwards. The older, acoustic, folk-blues styles, however, also found continuing favour with both white and black exponents of the genre. This

traditional blues style is that mainly favoured by blues players at the Princeton Festival.

Participants in 2010: Mike Ballantyne (host), Bob Doucet, Mike Marker, Henk Piket & Barry Truter.

Participants in 2011: Mike Ballantyne, Mike Marker, Henk Piket, Barry Truter & Bob Webb.

Participants in 2012: Mike Ballantyne & Rick Van Krugel, Mike & Nakos Marker, Henk Piket & Barry Truter .

### **Celtic Jam/Irish Jam**

Put a bunch of passionate Celtic fiddlers, guitar players, flautists, pipers, etc. on stage together and see what happens.

Participants in 2010: Brian Robertson (host), Irish Wakers, Blackthorn, Fiddle Frazzle, Stu Hendrikson, Malarkeys, Ed Peekeekoot, Psycho Acoustic Ceili Band, Ex Pirata International, Grist To The Mill.

Participants in 2011:

Chris Corrigan, Irish Wakers, Nathan Hayward, Randy Vic, Becky Deryckx & Psycho Acoustic Ceili Band.

Participants in 2012: Claddach, er-Ratica, Stewart Hendrickson, Lynn Graves, Bryn Wilkin, Nathan Hayward, Randy Vic, Becky Deryckx & Psycho Acoustic Ceili Band.

### **Francophonie:**

France is the motherland of “La Francophophonie” while Quebec, Acadia, Louisiana, and many other places are her children. Each year the workshop features a mix of French-language songs from France, Quebec, Acadie and elsewhere, as well as energetic instrumental performances, usually featuring fiddles and accordions.

Participants in 2010: Danielle Arcand (host), Maggie Desbiens, Lyn Pinkerton, Chris Roe, Skweez & Lucas Thebault.

Participants in 2011: Maggie Desbiens, Suzanne Leclerc, Lyn Pinkerton, Chris Roe & Rika Ruebsaat.

Participants in 2012: Suzanne Leclerc, Lyn Pinkerton, Chris Roe, Judith Heather & Rich Williams, & Rika Ruebsaat.

### **Free Reeds**

Harmonicas, accordions and concertinas function in the same fundamental way: air travelling over thin pieces of metal called reeds makes musical sounds.

Participants in 2010: Judith Heather (host), Skweez, John Gothard, Oliver Schneider, Rod Miller (from Malarkeys), Alyssa Semczyszyn (from Orkestar Slivovica), Jill King & Lucas Thebault.

Participants in 2012: Chris Roe, Orkestar Slivovica, Something About Reptiles, Alison Humphries, Ben Meti, John Gothard, Phillip Tidd, & Rich Williams.

## Harps

Most people associate harps with angels. The harp is in fact the oldest known stringed instrument. The word 'harp' derives from Anglo-Saxon, Old German and Old Norse words meaning "to pluck".

Participants in 2010: Debi Johnson from Fiddle Frazzle (host), Zeke Hoskin, Kate Gibson Oswald & Chris Roe.



*Zeke Hoskin at the Four Harps Workshop in 2010*

## Gospel Music

Music of Christian praise and worship that comes out of black American congregations. There are songs of that sort in this session but there are also songs from other traditions of praise and worship, some Christian and some not.

Participants in 2011: Flip Breskin, Jim Edmondson, Mike Marker, Lyn Pinkerton, Larry Saidman & Ellen Vander Hoeven.

## MacPrinceton

The Scots founders of Canada included such explorers as Alexander Mackenzie and Simon Fraser, and early prominent B.C.ers included B.C.'s first governor Sir James Douglas. Famous (or infamous) was B.C.'s first industrialist and robber baron, Robert Dunsmuir. Susan Allison, the first settler in the Similkameen, registered her (and her children's) religion as 'Church of Scotland'. The June 1901 census for Princeton reveals that of the 316 inhabitants, 61 claimed Scottish as their racial origin, with 15 of them actually born in Scotland. Scottish culture in early Princeton was reflected in the tradition of celebrating St. Andrew's Day (November 30<sup>th</sup>) and of hosting 'Burns Suppers'. These public events brought Scotland's literary and musical heroes to the fore, and the meal, with its toasts interspersed with songs, was merely the beginning of a night of dance, recitation, and more songs.

The MacPrinceton workshop was a continuation of this tradition. Hosted by physician Doug Reid, who was a regular singer and host of the annual fund-

raising Doctor's Show for much of the 25 years he served as a family doctor in the community, the concert presented a cross-section of Scottish musical culture from the traditional ballads so favoured in Aberdeenshire, Gaelic song from the Highlands, industrial and political song from red Clydeside, and the tradition of humorous songs from Harry Lauder to Matt McGinn and Hamish Imlach.



*The MacPrinceton Workshop in 2011*

## Mining

Princeton started off as a ranching community 150 years ago but it was the discovery of coal, copper, gold and platinum that made it mushroom into a town. Gold was discovered at Granite Creek north-west of Princeton in 1885. The upper Similkameen valley was also found to hold rich stores of platinum, copper and coal. However, the area's isolation prevented the effective exploitation of these resources, since without a railroad there was no practical access to markets. The workshop honoured this history, with Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat presenting songs from Princeton and other parts of B.C., Judith Heather bringing songs about mining from a woman's perspective, and Charlie Baum and Lisa Null taking us to the mines of Appalachia.

Participants in 2010: Bartlett/Ruebsaat (host), Charlie Baum, Judith Heather & Lisa Null.

## Protest Songs/Political Songs/The 99%

Remember "Blowin' in the Wind" and "If I Had a Hammer"? The 1960s were a time of social and political upheaval and at the same time the occasion for a revival of interest in folksong. The times also spawned a large number of very creative 'protest songs'. More recently with the Arab Spring, the student struggle in Quebec, and Princeton's own campaign for quality health care in mind, the songs of the ninety-nine per cent have never been more relevant.

Participants in 2010: Rabbleberries (host), Flip Breskin, Tom Hawken, Mike Marker, Larry Saidman & Elaine Rutherford.

Participants in 2012: The Diggers, Mike Marker, Lemon Gin and members of the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir.

## Railways

Wanted – A Railroad

The glinting waters flow between  
High mountains, where Old Nature stored  
In aeons past a precious hoard  
Beside the winding Similkameen.

Bold seekers after treasure came  
With daring hearts and ready hands  
(Obedient unto Hope's commands)  
A share of Nature's wealth to claim.

By force they pierce the aged hills  
And show their hidden riches forth –  
While from the East, and West, and North,  
The new-born land of promise fills.

"A road! A road!", the people cry,  
"To make our country rich and great!"  
"I fear you'll simply have to WAIT."  
The Dunsmuir dummy-heads reply.

"The CPR is not prepared  
To build the road at once, you see,  
And WE don't like the VVE  
For reasons we have NOT disclosed."

Similkameen! Your crying need  
Occasions but a passing thought:  
"How easily public men are bought  
As tools for corporation greed."

*Similkameen Star*, 26<sup>th</sup> January 1901

The first railway builder to perceive the commercial potential of serving the resource-rich Similkameen valley was Jim J. Hall of the Great Northern Railway (GN) in the northern USA. He began construction of the Vancouver, Victoria and Eastern Railway (VV&E) north to Oroville and thence across the border to the rich mining areas of the upper Similkameen. This challenge to the hegemony of the Canadian Pacific Railway caused it to respond with its own border-hugging subsidiary, the Kettle Valley Railway (KVR), to keep the Americans out of Canada. By 1900 the CPR had built a line east as far as Midway but financial roadblocks stalled further construction. Eventually the KVR made it to Princeton by a roundabout route via Kelowna and Penticton, and, even later, a difficult and expensive link was constructed across the Coquihalla to the CPR mainline along the Fraser valley. But the latter section was often closed by winter storms and was soon abandoned. The dream of a permanent railway route over

the low Crow's Nest Pass through the Rockies and all the way across the southern border territory of B.C. to the coast was only a fleeting reality. The lie of the land, with its series of north-south valleys and mountain ranges, made a direct route difficult and expensive, and even the winding roadway that was eventually built proved equally difficult and expensive to maintain in good working order.

Participants in 2010: Barry Luft (Host), Jon Bartlett, Rika Ruebsaat & Ed Peekeekoot

## Shanties

In the days of the tall ships sailors used to sing songs called 'shanties' while they worked. Shanties provided the rhythm that went with a particular job as well as giving sailors extra energy to raise a sail or haul up the anchor.

Participants in 2010: Simon Trevelyan (host), Bartlett/Ruebsaat, John Gothard, Great Big Sing! & Chris Roe.

Participants in 2011: Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, John Gothard, Philip Morgan, Chris Roe, Simon Trevelyan & Bob Webb.

Participants in 2012: Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat, John Gothard, Dick & Carol Holdstock, Henk Piket, Chris Roe, Phillip Tidd, Simon Trevelyan & Barry Truter.

## Spoken Word

For several years running Lyn Melnechenko regaled audiences with her cowgirl poetry, while David Parkin shared stories from his multi-faceted and fascinating life.

Participants in 2010: Lyn Melnechenko & David Parkin.

## Traditional Ballads

Ballads are songs that tell stories. Traditional ballads are ones that have been passed down over hundreds of years, telling stories of love, murder and passion. The basic repertoire consists of the 305 ballads compiled by Francis Child in the five volumes of *The English and Scottish Traditional Ballads*, but that extensive core of material is often supplemented with broadside, literary and contemporary versions of the narrative genre.

Participants in 2010: Lisa Null (host), Charlie Baum, Rosaleen Gregory, Lyn Pinkerton, Paddy Tutty & Lyn Van Lidth De Jeude.

Participants in 2011: Jon Bartlett, Rosaleen Gregory, Jasmine Fiona, Janet Michael, Lyn Pinkerton & Chris Roe.

Participants in 2012: Rosaleen Gregory, Sarah Scouten, Penny Sidor, Phillip Tidd & Lyn and Emily Van Lidth De Jeude.