

# Reviews

## Book

**Rev. Franceene Watson. *Andy De Jarlis: Master of Métis Melodies*.** Métis Community Services, P.O. Box 8660, Victoria, B.C. V8W 3S2; mail@metis.ca; www.métis.ca; Rev. Franceene Watson, 3945 Lexington Ave., Victoria, B.C. V8N 5C1; fkmwx@telus.net

Kudos to Ms. Watson for taking on a task that is long overdue – a biography of one of our most influential musicians, traditional fiddler Andy de Jarlis. It begs the question, of course, why biographies of Canadian musicians are so scarce. To my knowledge, this is only the second of a fiddler, the first being a tribute to one of our first media superstars, Don Messer, written in 1969. But while the east had Don, the west had Andy, easily Don's counterpart, with somewhere in the neighbourhood of 33 albums to his credit, and at least half a dozen full tribute albums exclusively of his material, one by Messer himself. Since he didn't have access to the national airwaves like Messer, he is not as well known in the country as a whole, but his position as a Canadian icon is secure in the hearts and minds of westerners and fiddlers. [In fact, he deserves a large measure of the credit for what is now called the "Red River" style.](#) He is the link between the older fur trade traditions and their somewhat spiffier public face, having polished and smoothed much of the older, First Nations-influenced unpredictable phrasing into a form and a sound that could find a larger commercial audience. In many ways, he was the ultimate poster boy for the Métis Nation.

This is a slim volume, 69 pages, full of photos and reminiscences, awards and tributes. It has many things going for it. Ms. Watson is obviously a fan and a trusted family friend. This gave her not only access to memorabilia in the family's possession but a willing informant in Andy's older sister, Dolly, his first accompanist and, to some extent, manager of the young man who found himself in public demand before he was old enough to vote. Dolly apparently kept a diary of Andy's life, and without it, this would no doubt have been an almost impossible book to write. Through her eyes we learn that he was generous to a fault (doing benefits for many people, donating to worthy causes, allowing those who couldn't afford it to come to his shows for free), proud of his Métis heritage, patriotic, and in ill health most of his life (probably TB, compounded by leukemia at his death). Dolly also provides personal background on the titles of many of his tunes, an important contribution to musical scholarship. An

added bonus is the detailed (24-page!) genealogy of the de Jarlis family, provided by Stanley Hulme and Gail Morin, in which we learn, if I have figured it out correctly (some sort of legend or explanation would have been helpful here), that not only was he related to another famous Métis musician, Pierre Falcon (often called "The Bard of the Métis"), but also he had connections to historical leader Cuthbert Grant.

Unfortunately, the book's strengths are also its weaknesses, and it suffers from a number of basic journalistic shortcomings. Most of the information comes from only one informant, the aforementioned sister, with a few quotes from other friends and admirers, notably fellow fiddler Victor Pasowisty. It is pretty much devoid of any attempt at objectivity and, while loosely chronological, jumps around enough to be quite confusing at times. There are factual contradictions left with no clarification (such as Andy saying he started playing at 16, others at 15, two different time frames in different chapters for the anglicization of his name, etc.). The narrative flow is frequently interrupted with repetitive asides praising one aspect or another of de Jarlis' character, while anything with possible negative implications is quickly glossed over (two marriages apparently broke up very quickly, leaving a son to be cared for by others, for example). It seems that no detail regarding dates and events is too insignificant to be included, but there is very little flesh on many of these bones. Certain important aspects of his career are overlooked, such as a discography, and any musical insight into his work. Hardest to forgive is a chapter's worth of romantic musings on the origin of the "Red River Jig" (improvised on the banks of the Red River, while listening to bagpipes) with no references to easily available scholarly work on the subject which would have laid such fictions to rest. One hopes that before a second edition is printed Ms. Watson will collaborate with both a good music researcher and an editor.

Meanwhile, we have a fanzine, a hagiography, a eulogy to a fallen hero. For all the awkward writing and insufficient research, Ms. Watson has succeeded in giving us a picture of the man and what he meant to people in a way that a more experienced journalist might not. Fans will enjoy the loving detail, the devotion and the personal tributes, the photos and artwork, and probably not worry much about the rest.

*Anne Lederman, Toronto, Ontario*

## Recordings

### **Chor Leoni Men's Choir. *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup>.**

CRR0401. Cypress Choral Recordings, 7061 Cypress St., Vancouver, B.C. V6P 5M2; [chorleoni@telus.net](mailto:chorleoni@telus.net); [dloomer@telus.net](mailto:dloomer@telus.net); [brucecat@shaw.ca](mailto:brucecat@shaw.ca); [www.chorleoni.org/recordings/safari2.html](http://www.chorleoni.org/recordings/safari2.html)

Based in Vancouver, Chor Leoni is a highly-acclaimed 53-voice male choir, conducted by Diane Loomer. *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup> is the choir's 8th album, and was recorded in 2004 at Ryerson United Church in Vancouver. In addition to a team of seven accompanists, the disc features several accompaniments by the folk group Mad Pudding (including two instrumentals from the group's 1995 album, *Dirt & Stone*) and several solos by baritone Steve Maddock. As suggested by the title, this two-disc set follows up on Chor Leoni's 1998 release of the original *Canadian Safari*. For years, while traveling to other countries, I have brought *Canadian Safari* along to use as a musical representation of Canada, so I was anxious to see how "part two" compared.

At its most basic, *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup> is very much like the original, featuring a wide variety of folk songs from across the country, along with three songs from beyond Canadian borders. As is the nature of such projects, certain parts of Canada are bound to be under-represented, but in this case there are songs from Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Québec, Ontario, Alberta, and B.C. Two other songs are generously ascribed to Manitoba and Yukon (through changing "Fairbanks" to "Whitehorse"), respectively, while five others are more pan-Canadian. The choral arrangements come from a number of people, with the majority by Larry Nickel and Ron Smail. These are performed beautifully by Chor Leoni, who show a rare ability to transform themselves musically from a "classical" choir to "bushwhackers and privateers", each with artistic merit and equal success. The musicality of the choir is matched by the excellent accompanists, and the instrumentals "Indian Reels" and "Heather Bonn/Island Ferry", recorded in 1995 as a separate project, are particularly well integrated into the disc.

Despite the above words of praise, *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup> is not without its quirks. The inclusion of "Dondaine la ridaine", which was also released on the original *Canadian Safari*, is hard to justify for the listener, although it may have been deemed necessary by the choir (it is a blast to sing). More problematic are the arrangements: despite the use of ten different arrangers, the songs lack sufficient variety for a two-disc, 95-minute package. Further, the acoustics of the recording (both the room and the recording

techniques used) don't provide enough detail to keep the listener's attention throughout. These are all issues related to the overall size of the package: it's doubtful that any of this would have been noteworthy had *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup> been a single disc. To mitigate these issues, simply spread your enjoyment of *Canadian Safari*<sup>2</sup> over a few evenings.

The programme notes included with the disc hint at the possibility of a *Canadian Safari III* in the future. I look forward to the continuation of the series (hopefully, well beyond *Safari III*), but offer one unsolicited suggestion. One disc at a time, please.

*Paul Guise, St. John's, Newfoundland*

### **Freshwater Trade. *Well-Remembered Shore*.**

[revken@pipcom.com](mailto:revken@pipcom.com); [www.freshwatertrade.com](http://www.freshwatertrade.com)

Freshwater Trade is made up of Glen Caradus, Michael Ketemer and Ken Ramsden; together they sing and play tin whistles, guitars, bodhrans, fiddles, and even a thumb piano. The group has been together since 1995, playing such venues as Logging Days at Temagami, Upper Canada Village, Black Creek Village and countless Ontario parks. Their music reflects the forests and waterways of Ontario.

*Well-Remembered Shore* includes some traditional songs and some composed songs, some vocal numbers and some instrumentals, 15 tracks in all. The group has an honest, rough sound, and obviously enjoys what it is doing. I'm pleased that the album contains some traditional material, a trend that happily seems to be developing. I wish the accompanying notes gave more information about the traditional material—in most cases, the word "traditional" is all we get. Two tracks particularly struck my fancy: "The Humours of Whiskey" and "Strike the Bell". Their version of the traditional "Leave Her Johnny" (on the album it appears as "Leave Her Laddies") contains words unfamiliar to me, and I wish there were more in the way of explanation.

It is encouraging to know that there are groups like Freshwater Trade, combining traditional and original material from their local roots.

*Lorne Brown, North York, Ontario*

### **Great Big Sea. *The Hard and the Easy*. B25646**

26026. Warner Music Canada, 3381 Steeles Ave. E, Main floor, Suite 100, Toronto, Ont. M2H 3S7; [info@warnermusic.ca](mailto:info@warnermusic.ca); [www.warnermusic.ca](http://www.warnermusic.ca)

Sarah Moore calls it the "traditional mentality" in her analysis of why the popular Newfoundland band Great Big Sea "reclaimed Newfoundland culture and heritage, and placed it in the mainstream of the Canadian music industry" (Moore, 2005, p. 12). She was referring to how the band had been able to

maintain its local identity in the face of increasing national and international exposure. Sarah suggested this “traditional mentality” is reflected in Great Big Sea’s:

- Use of local place names and phrases in both their music and the surrounding texts;
- Use of the bodhran with no drum kit;
- Emphasis on folk/oral tradition, including “by ear” learning;
- Use of songs familiar to their local audience;
- Consistent detail and fidelity in crediting sources;
- Making the song more important than the singer.

Their latest album, *The Hard and the Easy*, elaborates this “traditional mentality”, serving as an interesting addendum to Moore’s paper.

The CD is another fine collection drawn from Newfoundland tradition. It includes three songs that can be found in the Gerald S. Doyle songbooks, three listed in Peacock’s collection, two popular written songs from the recent past (Omar Blondahl, Lem Snow), two older “anons”, a relative newcomer (“The Mermaid” by Phil Hillier), and an instrumental medley based on tunes from Rufus Guinchard, Baxter Wareham and Charlie Lloyd. All are well performed and interpreted — a worthwhile addition to anyone’s collection.

For me, though, the most interesting aspect of this recording, and the one that extends Sarah Moore’s analysis, is the “bonus” DVD that comes with it. This is a casual get-together of the three primary members of Great Big Sea plus some friends. Beginning outside on the patio, and eventually gravitating into the living room, we see casual performances of many of the songs on the CD (as well as a “bonus” song, “Picking Berries at Old Aunt Mary’s”). These relaxed and “at home” performances bring the “traditional mentality” to life in all its glee and glory.

Each song is preceded by a short introduction and comment from a band member (e.g., re “Come and I Will Sing You”: “You might not remember the words of the song, but everyone remembers that you sang it.”). Then we’re treated to an informal performance of the song, not the version on the CD, but the kind we’d expect to hear in a kitchen. I loved the way Great Big Sea launched into the songs, showing by example many of the performance attributes I associate with traditional performance (and many of those banished by the recording studio in the interests of “good” performance). In watching this DVD we see a concrete manifestation of Moore’s “traditional mentality.” These include:

- Considerable laughter and lots of smiles (throughout the entire DVD);
- Experimentation, which sometimes leads to mistakes and restarting, with no thought of apologizing or eliminating them (e.g., “Tickle Cove Pond”, and on

the *a cappella* “River Driver” there is a mid-song stop to re-establish the key). This also includes tolerance of occasional out-of-tune moments, as well as an interruption by a cell phone;

- Casual sitting, in more-or-less a circle (throughout);
- Spontaneity, especially noticeable at the endings of songs (e.g., the “drop-in-the-bread-box-you crumb” conclusion to “The Old *Polina*”);
- An exited buzz of post-song chatter which includes comment on the performance and/or discussion of aspects of lyrics (e.g., “River Driver”, “Charlie Horse”);
- An implicit understanding of instrumental volumes, which leads to modulation in the interests of hearing the words (throughout);
- Quips, comments and hand signals mid-song, some jocular, some containing instructions regarding upcoming breaks and harmonies (e.g., “Harbour LeCou”);
- Stopping mid-song to negotiate/clarify chords (e.g., “Charlie Horse”) and harmonies (e.g., “River Driver”);
- Presence of libations (later in the session).

While not a complete catalogue of the attributes that make up the “traditional mentality”, these certainly illustrate a situation in which the songs become more important than the singers — where musicians submerge themselves in their songs and craft and thrive within the framework of their tradition. And what a treat to see this so well demonstrated!

Sure, critics will hear mistakes, off-pitch notes, and any number of other “no-nos”, but they can listen to the pristine CD if that’s what they want. I suppose the difference between the CD, with its tight arrangements, and the more casual DVD is akin to the difference between organized, uniformed hockey, like most kids play today, and shinny. The unorganized, spontaneous version is when the fun happens, where we find the wellspring of passion for music (and hockey). We lose sight of this at our peril. Watching the DVD that comes with *The Hard and the Easy* is one way to keep us anchored in our efforts to promote musical tradition, be it in a classroom, in a kitchen, at our desks, or on stage. Great Big Sea has rendered visible the invisible community that is so much a part of any recording. Have a look—you’ll end up smiling.

Doyle, G. S. (1927, 1940, 1955, 1966, 1978). *Old-time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland*. St. John’s, NL: Gerald S. Doyle Ltd.

Moore, S. J. (2005). “Fostering Local Identity: Great Big Sea, Trad-Pop and Folksong”, *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne*, 39:1, 6-13.

Peacock, K. (1965). *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*, Volumes 1-3. Ottawa ON: National Museum of Canada.

*Tim Rogers, Calgary, Alberta*

**Ed McCurdy. *A Ballad Singer's Choice: The Tradition Years*.** Empire Musicwerks; [info@empiremusicwerks.com](mailto:info@empiremusicwerks.com); [www.empiremusicwerks.com](http://www.empiremusicwerks.com)

Canadian (albeit U.S.-born) folksinger Ed McCurdy was one of the biggest names in the folk music era of the 50s and 60s. He made many recordings, and appeared on the CBC in radio and television. (See my tribute to Ed in the March-June 2000 edition of this magazine, 34.1-2, p. 32.)

This is a CD reissue of his July 1956 album on Tradition (TLP 1003), edited by Ken Goldstein and Pat Clancy. Erik Darling, of The Tarriers and The Weavers, provides simple but effective banjo accompaniment. As an extra bonus, Ed's original liner notes are printed in full.

There are 19 tracks of this fine singer with the powerful baritone voice (a frustrated opera singer, he once informed me). All tunes are traditional; four are Canadian: "Back Bay Hill", "A Great Big Sea Hove in Long Beach", "Lukey's Boat" and "Star of Logy Bay". It is a treat and a privilege to be able to listen again and marvel at Ed's way with a folksong. One of the best, as Pete Seeger said.

Ed McCurdy fans should rejoice that this release means there are now three McCurdy CDs available: an album of children's songs, an album of cowboy songs, and now *A Ballad Singer's Choice*. Roger Kash, the project co-ordinator for Tradition Years, hopes this release will spark a renewed interest in Ed's works. So, fervently, do I.

*Lorne Brown, North York, Ontario*

**Ian Robb. *Jiig*.** FAM 006. Fallen Angle Music, 285 Spencer St., Ottawa, Ont. K1Y 2R1; [ian@ianrobb.com](mailto:ian@ianrobb.com); [www.Jiig.ca](http://www.Jiig.ca)

The latest collaboration by Ian Robb, one of Canada's foremost folk singers. Ten great songs, three well picked and impeccably played sets of tunes, good friends and great musicians playing great music together.

When this CD literally fell into my lap at a music gathering this spring, I was naturally interested in finding out what new pursuit Ian was up to. When I looked closer and saw who/what Jiig is, I got excited and had a hard time staying to the end of the party. I wanted to get this in my player and hear it. Over the last month it has been in that player quite a bit. It is indeed a pleasure to listen to.

Robb needs no introduction to lovers of traditional folk music. It's hard to keep track of his many musical adventures over the last three decades or so (I think it was '75 when I first heard him sing at Fiddler's Green Coffee House). He's recorded solo, in duos (with Margaret Christl, among others), in a

trio (Finest Kind) and in many larger configurations (Friends of Fiddlers Green, Hang the Piper, Old Sod Band). In this configuration he teams up with a great Ottawa-based band, Jiig, comprised of three inspiring players: James Stephens (fiddle, mandolin, tenor guitar, bass, percussion, and vocals), Ian Clark (guitar) and Greg T. Brown (fiddle, mandolin, button accordion, vocals and feet).

The 13 cuts that Jiig has chosen for this debut recording are a wonderful variety of songs and tunes, ranging from lively to poignant. The CD has a very traditional sound to it, though many of the pieces have been written in my lifetime. It includes two great Cyril Tawney songs and a wonderful rendition of Ewan MacColl's "Sweet Thames Flow Softly". The tune sets are well put together, with tunes pulled both from the traditional realm and from the pens of James Stephens and Greg T. Brown, Brian Pickell and Rayna Gellert.

The CD includes impressive liner notes written by Ian, with a nice little introduction for each song and set of tunes. I truly hope that this is the first of many CDs to come from Ian Robb and Jiig.

*Blaine Hrabi, Calgary, Alberta*

**George Smith. *From School Yard to Folk Club: Songs and Rhymes Mostly from the North of England*.** 34 Woodfield Cres. SW, Calgary, Alta. T2W 3W4; [bnsmith@3web.net](mailto:bnsmith@3web.net) (no addresses on packaging)

I found this to be a somewhat disappointing and uninspiring recording. There is a strong flavour of Lancashire dialect throughout, and some familiarity with this dialect (which I lack) would make for easier appreciation of some of the phrasing. The sleeve notes do contain a brief glossary, and also the song lyrics are printed out, which is definitely helpful.

Short tracks of children's rhymes are interspersed throughout the CD. Examples of this type of rhyme or song have been presented on other recordings in the past, but I find that when they are recited by an adult voice they lose much of their childish charm. Many of the other songs are rather sombre in mood, and occasionally seem to be pitched at the extreme lower end of the singer's range, with resulting loss of clarity. Those tracks supported by a multi-voice chorus are definitely more effective and enjoyable, and have a much brighter sound.

Traditional songs have become so because they are complete, and rarely require additional lyrics for their enhancement. Such additions are more likely to detract from the song, as does the added final verse to "Three Drunken Maidens", which is simply anticlimactic after the brazen admission, in other versions, of the preceding line of the song. The song



having the greatest impact for me is “The Coal and Albert Berry”, which admirably describes some of the inevitable dangers which occur in deep shaft mining.

*Alan Wilson, North Saanich, British Columbia*

[I’m not about to second-guess the reviewer’s opinion of the content of this CD. However, to my mind this is the kind of recording that should be encouraged in Canada: a recording of folk material which will not be familiar to most Canadian listeners, especially those who don’t have roots in the singer’s homeland. The studio in which the recording was made is a professional-quality facility, in fact an award-winning one, so recording quality is not an issue. The fact that the performer is not a professional singer, but one who presents the material out of love and a desire to share the music and knowledge with others, should be a positive rather than a negative in our field—see Tim Rogers’ review of *The Hard and the Easy* elsewhere in this issue for ruminations on the traditional performing esthetic as contrasted with the music industry’s attitude. – JL]

**Christina Smith & Jean Hewson. *August Gale*.** BCD170. Borealis Records, 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; [www.borealisrecords.com](http://www.borealisrecords.com); [info@borealisrecords.com](mailto:info@borealisrecords.com)

Christina Smith and Jean Hewson, both as a duo and as part of Maher’s Bahers (see the review of *Maherulous!*, 39.3, p. 33), are one of the groups currently carrying Newfoundland’s traditional music throughout North America. Their approach is different from that of Great Big Sea, whose new recording *The Hard and the Easy* is reviewed above; while GBS are hauling their fish-guts-kickin’ pub band sensibility into the realm of purer traditional music, Smith & Hewson as a duo started from the traditional end of the spectrum, although with this CD they show signs of inching towards the mainstream. Only inching, though, which is surprising enough, given that both of them started out in musical fields other than the Newfoundland tradition (Smith was a classical cellist, Hewson sang lead in a pub band) and embraced the tradition as revivalists.

One of the unfortunate trends today is that regional fiddle music is being overwhelmed by more mainstream styles. Christina Smith is one of those who has taken a hand in keeping this from happening to Newfoundland fiddle music. The CD unsurprisingly includes medleys from both of the masters, Emile Benoit and Rufus Guinhard, but there’s also a grouping of four tunes from other fiddlers in diverse areas of the Island. Also, two accordion tunes from Frank Maher’s repertoire are translated to the fiddle, and Frank joins the duo for this track. Still in the instrumental area, Christina

plays her own humorous tune “The Snow Shoveller’s Waltz” (whose rhythm is suited more to shovelling than to waltzing!), while Jean includes a trio of guitar compositions titled on medical themes (I’ll let the liner notes explain).

On the vocal side, most of Jean’s song choices come from the traditional repertoire. “The August Gale” tells the story of a 1927 storm which killed 40 fishermen. “Butter and Cheese” is a comic song about a courting mishap. “The Privateer” is a duet between a departing sailor and his girl, with Derek West singing the male part. On “The Green Shores of Fogo” I in fact slightly prefer Jean’s vocals to the breathier version of Pamela Morgan, who sings the same song (in a slightly different version) on her recent CD *Ancestral Songs*. For all the vocals, Hewson has internalized the traditional feel, and projects it nicely in her singing. I’m also impressed by her guitar accompaniment – a textbook example of how to support songs which originally would have been delivered *a cappella*, without overwhelming them or changing their character. The same can be said for Christina’s fiddle playing as accompaniment.

I could quibble with a couple of the other song choices, though. I dearly love “The Curragh of Kildare”, and Jean sings it beautifully, but it seems at odds with the rest of the album. Why is it there? Even more so Ron Hynes’ song “Atlantic Blue”. Sure, Hynes is one of the world’s fine songwriters, and a Newfoundlander to boot, and the song tells of a Newfoundland event, and thus it isn’t inappropriate to include it, but none of this overcomes the singer/songwriter esthetic, which is totally at odds with the rest of the program. Perhaps the song might have been better placed in the middle, as a change of pace, but positioned near the end, it seems to have been tacked on as an afterthought. The robust French song “Le Bon Vin” doesn’t really regain the atmosphere, leaving the last few tracks isolated from the rest of the album, sort of like a live set which takes an abrupt tack near the end. (Or is my attitude toward programming obsolete in these days of shuffle modes?)

That said, this is a satisfying album. It brings traditional music into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century without doing violence to it in the process. We need more of that.

*John Leeder, Calgary, Alberta*

**Various. *Classic Canadian Songs from Smithsonian Folkways*.** SFW CD 40539. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 750 9th Street NW, Suite 4100, Washington, DC 20560-0953, USA; 1-888-FOLKWAYS; [mailorder@si.edu](mailto:mailorder@si.edu); [www.folkways.si.edu](http://www.folkways.si.edu)

This compilation disc is one of the SFW “Classic” series, and is drawn from the 140 or so Canadian

albums originally recorded on Folkways Records. It is a joint project between the University of Alberta and SFW – Moe Asch liked the university and visited it often, since his son Michael was teaching there. Brenda Dalen, of the Faculty of Music in the University of Alberta, an expert in music of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was responsible for the compilation and the very informative notes accompanying the CD. I have to say right out that this is an album anyone with the slightest interest in Canadian traditional music should have. The treasure trove that is Folkways has been combed over, and the results are on this disc: performers such as Jean Carignan, Wade Hemsworth, Alan Mills, Stanley Triggs, Tom Kines and Karen James are featured, along with field recordings including O.J. Abbott. The CD ends with Sandy Stoddard performing some bear and moose calls for Helen Creighton.

The only thing anyone can quibble with is, of course, the selection. Everyone listening to this CD will no doubt say, “How come such-and-such wasn’t included?” No doubt Brenda Dalen and her committee asked the same thing. But there is a good representation of the various areas of Canada, no mean thing to accomplish given the preponderance of recorded material from the Maritimes. English and French (and Gaelic, African, Jewish, etc.) traditions are well balanced, and there are traditional songs and composed songs as well, also representative songs from our First Nations people. So to please everyone, this would have had to be a multi-CD album, although even then there would still be some plaintive voice asking, “Why no --- (fill in the blank)?”

I personally think there is a good cross-section of Canadian folk music represented, with a nice balance between studio recordings and field recordings. But if I may add my plaintive voice, I would ask why Hélène Baillargeon was not on this album. And I wish Ken Peacock had been included, as well as a recording of Phil Thomas that I know is in the SFW archives. But that’s mere quibbling, and the more I think about it, the more I think that the discussions from everyone listening to this CD will be part of its value.

I’m very grateful to Moses Asch and Sam Gesser for recording this material in the first place, and for Asch’s vision to keep all his records in print. And of course I’m grateful to the Smithsonian Folkways folk for co-producing this album. But I can’t help thinking about the fact that it is Americans who did so much to preserve our recorded Canadian folk music, and it is Americans who are reissuing it now. (See Ed McCurdy’s new/old album, reviewed above.) What’s wrong with Canada? Can’t we do that, too? Why isn’t someone re-releasing all those early Canadian

folk music records on various other labels? Why has the RCA 9-disc Centennial collection of folk songs been left to languish out-of-print, for example? Only in Canada, you say?

*Lorne Brown, North York, Ontario*

**Randy Wood. *There Are No Goodbyes*. CR-6375.** Canyon Records Productions, 3131 West Clarendon Avenue, Phoenix AZ 85017, USA; canyon@canyonrecords.com; www.canyonrecords.com

This is Randy Wood’s third album with Canyon Records, following his two prior successful recordings, titled *Round Dance Blues* (CR-6363) and *Round Dance the Night Away* (CR-6344). As the brief liner notes identify, Randy Wood is cultivating a new style of First Nations music. His contemporary style, which blends blues and Plains round dance styles, will likely have broad appeal for Native and non-Native audiences alike.

The fast beat in “Shilkeem” immediately reminded me of techno dance music. Indeed, Wood’s blues-influenced First Nations music may lend itself well to other popular styles, perhaps remixed as popular dance music. The recording already makes use of mediation and manipulation of the voice, which may indicate a willingness to pursue the further manipulations. Wood could easily transition into the realm of worldbeat with his heartfelt and sometimes humorous music.

Curiously, in the first track, titled “Listen To My Drum”, the drum is mixed so low in the recording that you can barely hear it in the background. Indeed, it sounds more like a distant tapping or click-track than anything else. This, in fact, is a feature of the entire recording, which seems to be primarily focused on the voice of Randy Wood, and does not maintain the expected balance between voice and drum. This focus on the voice makes for a very intimate recording, and emphasizes the vibrato and vocal pulsations employed by Wood in his creation of expressive, sentimental songs (such as “Handyman”). The tessitura of songs on *There Are No Goodbyes* sits relatively low in comparison to much Northern music; however, this lower range accentuates the unique timbre of Wood’s voice.

Once again, Wood has come out with a unique recording that is worth a listen.

*Janice Esther Tulk, St. John’s, Newfoundland*



## 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.

### Books

Kelly Russell (ed.). *Kelly Russell's Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Vol. 1 – Rufus Guinchar & Emile Benoit*. Pigeon Inlet Productions, P.O. Box 47, Trinity, T.B., NL A0C 2S0; [kellyrussell@nf.sympatico.ca](mailto:kellyrussell@nf.sympatico.ca)

Kelly Russell (ed.). *Kelly Russell's Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Vol. 2 – All the Rest*. Pigeon Inlet Productions (address above)

### Recordings

Jay Begaye. *The Colorful World: Songs from the Diné Heartland*. CR-6403. Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; [canyon@canyonrecords.com](mailto:canyon@canyonrecords.com); [www.canyonrecords.com](http://www.canyonrecords.com)

Blackfoot Confederacy. *Confederacy Style: Pow-Wow Songs Recorded Live at Poor Falls*. CR-6405. Canyon Records (address above)

The Cottars. *Forerunner*. Rounder Records Group Canada, 2450 Victoria Park Ave., Suite 1, Toronto, Ont. M2J 5H3; [info@rounder.com](mailto:info@rounder.com); [www.rounder.com](http://www.rounder.com)

Dust Poets. *Lovesick Town*. DMS9628. [info@dustpoets.com](mailto:info@dustpoets.com); [www.dustpoets.com](http://www.dustpoets.com) (no addresses on packaging); Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; [fdi@festival.bc.ca](mailto:fdi@festival.bc.ca); [www.festival.bc.ca](http://www.festival.bc.ca)

Joel Fafard. *...and another thing...* JFI-2. P.O. Box 1003, Lumsden, Sask. S0G 3C0; [mail@joelfafard.com](mailto:mail@joelfafard.com); [www.joelfafard.com](http://www.joelfafard.com) (no addresses on packaging); Festival Distribution (address above)

Joel Fafard. *Rocking Horse*. JFI-1. (addresses above).

James Hill. *A Flying Leap*. BCD174. Borealis Records, 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; [www.borealisrecords.com](http://www.borealisrecords.com); [info@borealisrecords.com](mailto:info@borealisrecords.com)

Ron Hynes. BCD175. Borealis Records (address above)

James Keelaghan. *A Few Simple Verses*. JMB 0604. Jericho Beach Music, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; [www.jerichobeach.com](http://www.jerichobeach.com); [www.keelaghan.com](http://www.keelaghan.com)

Keri Lynn. *The Devil's Mill*. JZCD199611. Keri Lynn Zwicker, 10931 122<sup>nd</sup> St., Edmonton, Alta. T5M 0A7; [harpchickcanada.com](http://harpchickcanada.com); [harpchick@hotmail.com](mailto:harpchick@hotmail.com)

Colleen Power. *Face and Eyes*. 0261082. Baygirl Music, P.O. Box 5332, Sta. C, St. John's, Nfld. A1C 5W2; [baygirlmusic@yahoo.ca](mailto:baygirlmusic@yahoo.ca); [www.colleenpower.com](http://www.colleenpower.com)

Ted Russell. *Tales from Pigeon Inlet: Original Recordings by Ted Russell as Uncle Mose*. PIP-7336. Pigeon Inlet Productions (address above)

Tom Russell. *Love & Fear*. HCD8190. Festival Distribution (address above); [www.tomrussell.com](http://www.tomrussell.com)

Phil Thomas and Friends. *Live at Folklife Expo 86*. [mildredbaines@telus.net](mailto:mildredbaines@telus.net); [www.rainshadowgallery.com](http://www.rainshadowgallery.com)

Various. *All the Best Folk Music of St. John's, Newfoundland*. PIPCD-7322. Pigeon Inlet Productions (address above)

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Phyllis Wheaton. *The First Song*. [phylliswheaton@hotmail.com](mailto:phylliswheaton@hotmail.com); [www.calgarysongwriter.com](http://www.calgarysongwriter.com)

Ken Whiteley. *Join the Band*. M06KW. Merriweather Records Ltd., 109 Crawford Rose dr., Aurora, Ont. L4G 4S1; [order@merriweather.ca](mailto:order@merriweather.ca); [www.merriweather.ca](http://www.merriweather.ca); [www.firetheimagination.ca](http://www.firetheimagination.ca); [www.kenwhiteley.com](http://www.kenwhiteley.com)

Keri Lynn Zwicker. *Rich & Rare*. HH-02. (address above)

### Lost Soul

The member listed below has moved without sending us a new address. If you know of her new whereabouts, please inform us at [prescotj@telusplanet.net](mailto:prescotj@telusplanet.net) and/or [leeders@nucleus.com](mailto:leeders@nucleus.com).

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**Publication of *Canadian Folk Music/Musique folklorique canadienne* is assisted by a grant from the SOCAN FOUNDATION.**

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