

Treasures from Our Archives

Fifteen Years Ago

Bulletin 22.1 (September 1988). Yes, that date is correct! Issues sometimes were late in those days too! This issue included the new Constitution of the Society, totally rewritten at the 1987 AGM in Quebec City, which has survived with a few modifications until the present. Articles carried included Bill Sarjeant's call for regional reorganization of CFMS (which in fact inspired the new Constitution), David Watts's "Creativity and Mourning in the Work of Stan Rogers", and Gregg Brunskill's account of the newly-formed Winnipeg Folk Connection (as its name then was). There were no columns this time, but the issue included reviews of James Keelaghan's *Timelines*, Dick Howe's *A Scotsman in Canada*, Dave MacIsaac's *Celtic Guitar* and the Regina Folk Festival (with a photo montage by Bill Sarjeant). Several songs appeared: Kirk MacGeachy's "MacDonell of Barrisdale", Newfoundland traditional song "The McClure", and "Aux veilleuses du 28 février 1925", about an earthquake in Québec.

Ten Years Ago

Bulletin 27.1 (March 1993). An editorial announces that, after producing the magazine for the better part of a year, George Lyon and I have decided to carry on. (Hard to imagine that that was ten years ago...) The 'zine was still newsletter-style, but it was roughly back on schedule after the interregnum between Lynn Whidden's tenure and ours. The feature article was "Consumed by Consumerism" by Jon Bartlett, with full translation by André Gareau. The second "Ethnofolk Letters", "Over the Waves" and a still-unnamed magazine column were included. Songs and tunes were tied in with reviews this time: "I've Been a Gay Roving Young Fellow" and "Empty Nets" accompanied the review of Jim Payne's recording of the latter name; the tune "Flight Six-Seven-Six" went with *100 Toe-Tappin' Tunes for Fiddle* by George Carnahan and "Joey Beaton's Tune" with *Jerry Holland's Collection of Fiddle Tunes* (wish we could get that slick every time!); also reviewed was Roy Johnson's *Flying Tide*. As well, the first "Canada Camps" (later "Camps and Courses") made its appearance.

Five Years Ago

Bulletin 32.1 (March 1998). The centrepiece of this issue was "A Conceptual Canadian Blues Festival", a collection of ten blues songs with a Canadian flavour, written by Canadians. An interview with "Carlos del Junco, Blues Harp Virtuoso" by Peter Narváez carried on the theme. There was lots of housekeeping and ongoing material as well: the minutes of the 1997 AGM, plus an informal report on it; the 1996-97 Cumulative Table of Contents; the Canadian Folk Festival Directory; and "A Peak in Darien". Reviews included two books, *The Story of Ronnie Hawkins and the Hawks* and *The Seven-Headed Beast*, and seven recordings.

These issues (and all back issues, either in original form or as photocopies) are available from CSTM Back Issues, 224 20th Ave. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2M 1C2. See the Mail Order Service catalogue or the website (www.yorku.ca/cstm) and follow the links) for pricing. [JL]

Reviews/Comptes-rendus

Updates

Borealis Records have a new address: The Borealis Recording Co., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2. The address printed with the review of Matapat's CD *Petit fou* (36.3, p. 43) has thus been superseded. The mailing and email addresses given last issue for Sheela Na Gigh (review of *Live by the Aire*, 36.3, p. 38) also are no longer extant; the group can now be reached c/o Tami Cooper at 6532 112th St., Edmonton, AB. T6H 4R2, or by phoning (780) 430-9724. Thirdly, Canyon Records, several of whose CDs were reviewed in 36.3 (pp. 37, 41 and 42), have a new mailing address: 3131 W. Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA.

Books

Shelley Posen (compiler). *The Canadian Pub Caroler: A Collection of Old and Little-known Christmas Carols from Canada, England and the United States for Community Singing*. 2001. 62 pp. ISMM m-706023-00-7. OFC Publications, 1111 Bank St., Ottawa, Ont. K1S 3X4; <thefolks@ottawafolklore.com>; <www.ottawafolklore.com>.

In recent years there has been a surge of interest among folk musicians and fans alike in old, interesting or novel arrangements of carols. Lit perhaps by singers like Joan Baez and groups such as Steeleye Span, the fire has spread widely throughout the folk community. Performers such as John Roberts and Tony Barrand have released several albums dedicated to English carols. Groups like Finest Kind (Ann Downey, Ian Robb and Shelley Posen) have several unique carols in their repertoire. These songs are a refreshing change from the usual fare of commercialized Christmas pap. They are also fun to sing, but there is an unfortunate dearth of published arrangements for the older or more obscure carols.

The Canadian Pub Caroler is an eclectic collection of 27 Christmas carols from a variety of English and North American stylistic traditions. The bulk of the songs are derived from Yorkshire, where they have been sung for generations and for over 100 years as part of a village pub caroling tradition. These songs are augmented by Shape Note hymns from Canada and the United States, and by other English songs. But this is not some dry record of Christmas Traditions Past; it is a snapshot of a very vibrant tradition that has taken root in the Ottawa folk music community. The Canadian Pub Caroler is a compendium of songs used annually by a group that gathers under the auspices of OFC Music (Ottawa Folklore Centre) on the four Sundays preceding Christmas to sing carols in an Ottawa neighbourhood pub. Compiled by Shelley Posen, the songs are accompanied by extensive tips for aspiring organizers and carol leaders, an ample bibliography and discography, and -- a whimsical touch -- a recipe for a Christmas cake. Some songs are accompanied by commentary and performance notes.

While the book could be used by vocal quartets, it is clearly intended for use by larger groups. The tips and suggestions include advice on teaching and accompaniment to assist singers who might not be able to sight read "at first sight". The layout of the book, in a "landscape" style with suitably large print, makes this an ideal book for sharing among singers. OFC Publications offer multiple copies of the book at a discount to choirs. As in the Shape Note tradition, the music is split by part, and, as with Shape Note singing, there is the frustration of having the lyrics spread out among the various parts, with the words for verse 1 under the soprano line, verse 2 under the alto, etc. This split in the notation also makes it more difficult for an

accompanist to do more than just play the melody. But this is quibbling; the joy of the songs themselves makes up for the minor irritation of having to bounce around the page hunting for the words.

I did wonder, however, if having four different arrangements to "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks" was perhaps a bit of overkill. Thankfully, the "On Ilkley Moor Bar T'hat" version was not included, or we would have concluded that the estate of the lyricist Nahum Tate was funding the book. All four songs have interesting arrangements and are fun to sing, which leads me to assume that in the case of pub caroling the experience of the music is far more important than the choice of the lyrics. I suspect that Shelley may have chosen songs for this collection based upon their having a fun bass part -- which delights this particular bass -- but there is enough here to whet the appetite of all. Whether you make use of the book as a resource for a community or pick-up choir, quartet or octet, or as a means to enrich your family seasonal celebrations, this book is a delightful starting point for new and enlivened traditions.

Steven Méthot, Calgary, Alberta

Recordings

Duncan Cameron. *The Whistling Thief*. DRC 001. Duncan Cameron, 964A Bathurst St., Toronto, Ont. M5R 3G5; Shanahan AMP, 30 Miles Rd., Etobicoke, Ont. M8V 1V3; <shanahan@interlog.com>

Born into a musical family and nurtured in the Ontario folk scene, singer and multi-instrumentalist Duncan Cameron credits his family and musical community for making "music and storytelling as natural as breathing". In late 20th-century Canada, being raised surrounded by traditional music usually means receiving your music second hand through the interpretations of 1970s folk revival artists. Bands like Planxty and the Bothy Band first brought traditional Irish music to wider ears. This is the music that inspires Duncan Cameron and forms the bedrock on which he has created his self-produced CD. The 15 tracks are a balance of traditional and self-composed songs and tunes. There are some well-known session tunes like "The Lark in the Morning" and folk club songs like "The Bonnie Ship the Diamond", along with lesser-known material and original songs and tunes. A

couple of his tunes are very attractive and deserve to work their way into the wider session repertoire. To his great credit, Cameron acknowledges all his sources in detail -- sometimes even to the phrase. He doesn't just lift ideas from other people, but uses the work of his heroes to inspire his own interpretations. For example, in his song "The Actress", Cameron credits both Andy Irvine's songwriting style and Paul Brady's guitar accompaniment on his arrangement of "Arthur McBride".

Standing on the shoulders of such musical giants, does Duncan Cameron manage to reach higher? Well, no, he doesn't. But he doesn't fall too far short. Cameron has lots of talent and imagination. He is knowledgeable about the huge legacy of traditional Celtic music, and his enthusiasm shines through. He has a pleasant voice -- though please lose the fake Scottish accent on "The Diamond" -- and his band complement his ideas with some imaginative touches of their own.

There are times when Cameron overreaches himself. Does he really need to play 12 different instruments? He does a pretty good job on most of them (particularly the low whistles), but not all. The CD is over an hour long. A couple of tracks could have been shaved off (one or two of the more self-indulgent songs could go, in my opinion, but that's probably just a matter of taste). It feels as if he has thrown in everything in his bag of tricks. Sometimes his imagination seems to run riot. I heard "Dean Verger's Jig" as an attractive syncopated tune played on low whistle and bouzouki -- the imagery described in the sleeve notes of a shaman trying to bring a ghost on board a spaceship rather escaped me.

Duncan Cameron obviously has a passion for traditional Celtic music and treats it with respect without trying to preserve it in stone. The CD would have been stronger if he had brought in an outside producer to help curb some of that enthusiasm and overactive imagination.

Nan Colledge, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Keitha Clark. *dig your rootz*. KCCD-001. Keitha Clark, Box 1197, Shellbrook, Sask. S0J 2E0 <dreambig25@hotmail.com>

Keitha Clark offers 25 tunes and a total of fifty-three minutes of playing time on her first CD. It

includes four original tunes by Clark, and a wide range of genres and styles, from traditional jigs and reels, such as "To the Ladies" and "Devil's Dream", to more contemporary compositions by Calvin Vollrath ("Sheryl McLeod's"), Jerry Holland ("Buddy MacMaster's Fancy"), and Jay Ungar ("The Lover's Waltz"). Although at age 19 she has been playing the fiddle for only five years, Clark has a wealth of musical experiences to draw on, including participating in a Cajun band called Louisiana Jane and directing an all-girl fiddle band called Souls in Sound. She demonstrates her versatility by playing fiddle on most tracks, providing her own piano accompaniment on six tracks, adding some bodhran, and reciting original poetry over two tracks. Nine other Saskatchewan musician friends, aged 11 to 66, playing guitar, bass, banjo, mandolin, accordion, drums, spoons, viola, cello, harmony fiddle and vocals, join her on this recording.

The range and number of instruments predict some interesting accompaniments and arrangements of tunes. While not all the arrangements are equally effective, they do show evidence of careful thought and practice. Clark evidently likes playing with textures, changing often, sometimes perhaps too often, between unaccompanied melody, melody with harmony, melody with countermelody, melody doubled by other instruments, and melody with varying numbers of accompaniment instruments. Highlights for me include the entire arrangement of "Lament for the Death of the Late Reverend Archie Beaton", the bass line at the end of "Irish Washerwoman", the ending of "The Lover's Waltz", and the fiddle variations in "Angus Campbell" and "Cajun Fiddin' on the Bayou". The least effective are the ones that seem to me to be attempts at pop music arrangements of the tunes, particularly "The Tongadale Reel" and "Ellerback Outlaws".

Clark is an accomplished pianist, as demonstrated by both her interesting and tasteful piano accompaniments and the solo original piano piece, "Bread and Butter Rag". I particularly like her piano accompaniments on "Margaret's Waltz", "Rainy Day Waltz" and "Hearty Boys of Ballymote". The writing of the harmony fiddle parts is also consistently strong. Two interesting tracks are those on which Clark recites original poetry over the music. The first, "My Three Brothers", about Clark's three close friends, all fiddlers, won her a scholarship to the Journalism program at King's College, Halifax, N.S., and is

recited over an original waltz, "Forever in my Heart". The waltz is one of my favourites on the CD, but it is difficult to hear over the voice; I wish Clark had played through the waltz once either before or after the poem, so we could enjoy it for its own sake. The second poem, "To Be Young Again", is a companion piece to "My Three Brothers", and is recited over "Angus Campbell", played slowly as a hornpipe. The poems, and her liner notes, demonstrate Clark's considerable skill as a writer; however, to me their recitation seems a little flat, as though they are being superimposed onto the music rather than being part of the whole expressive package of each track.

Clark also includes excerpts from interviews she did with Natalie MacMaster and Donnell Leahy while hosting a weekly fiddle show on Saskatoon's Community Radio Station, which she did from age 15-18. Again these clips are played over the music: Natalie speaks of the significance of contextualization to understanding fiddle music during "Angus Campbell", and Donnell describes the importance of music in his life during a break in the song "The Violin". My favourite track on the CD is the last, called "The Jam". It is a medley of three reels, "Fisher's Hornpipe", "Big John McNeil" and "St. Anne's", played by four fiddlers, reflecting, as is evident from the title, the informal atmosphere of a jam. The fiddles are not playing specific arrangements, but each varies the tune according to her or his inspiration and ability. Played without accompaniment, and thus I thought lacking a solid grounding, this track demonstrates the sheer joy and energy that erupts when a group of fiddlers, and fiddling friends, plays together.

Unfortunately the fiddle playing itself on this recording is not consistently strong. Clark experiences some tuning and rhythm problems, and both bowing and fingering difficulties with some of the faster, more complex tunes, such as "Calgary Polka". Her jig playing is heavy and ponderous rather than crisp and light, lacking the necessary jig "lift". And, although the back-up musicians are obviously well-skilled, the ensemble playing is not always rhythmically tight. These difficulties, however, are all ones that can be solved with more time on the instrument and more experience playing in groups. Certainly for someone playing the fiddle for only five years, this CD is a huge accomplishment. Keitha is obviously an extremely talented young musician and writer.

Sherry Johnson, Toronto, Ontario

John Leeder: *Fresh Forest Breeze*. JL-001
John Leeder, 224 20th Avenue N.W., Calgary, Alta.
T2M 1C2; <john.leeder@nucleus.com>

Just before I sat down to listen to this CD I was looking through a book of Group of Seven paintings and remembering how my introduction to the Group's work coincided with my first experiences of Canada through the lakes and forests of Ontario. If you love nature, folk music and history (or any of these) John Leeder's first CD is for you. It comes over to me as just as Canadian as a Group of Seven painting – *Fresh Forest Breeze* even sounds like the title of a Group of Seven painting – even though not every track is inspired by Canada and the overall focus, unlike the Group of Seven, is on people rather than pure landscape. Nevertheless, of the 13 tracks, including three groups of instrumentals, five traditional songs, and four original compositions by John (some of the instrumental pieces are also composed by him), ten are wholly or partly on Canadian themes, three from Ontario. Out of five traditional songs, one – "The Jam on Jerry's Rock" – comes from the Ontario lumber camps, two are cautionary tales – "Will Ye Go to Flanders?" warning against becoming a soldier, and "Save Your Money While You're Young" (collected by Edith Fowke in Peterborough, Ontario), warning against squandering your money early in life. A fourth traditional song, "Marching Through Rochester" (English) deals with joining the army because you're poor and can't get employment, and the fifth, "The Cliffs of Doonee" (Irish) is in praise of the Irish landscape. "Where the Ghost River Flows" sets to music an anonymous Alberta poem extolling the cowboy's life and the beauty of the foothills country west of Calgary.

Of John's own compositions, two – "The Hudson Bay Line" and "Painting Over the N.A.R." – deal with Canadian railway history, and one – "The 'Segwun' is Steamin' Again" – with the reconstructed "Segwun" passenger steamboat (of which John's father was once first mate), which still sails the Ontario Muskoka Lakes, introducing the weary citizens of Toronto to the 'fresh forest breeze' which gives the CD its name. The title of John's fourth composition, "Likes Hockey Better than Me" speaks for itself, at least as far as 'Cancon' is concerned. Of the instrumentals only one, "The Tar Road to Sligo", is not North American in origin, and the inspiration for the others comes primarily from Canada.

It is clear that this first CD has grown out of years of music-making by a couple – John and Marge Leeder – whose love of folk music is palpable. And it's been done very well – interesting, varied material, and an excellent balance between instrumentals and vocals, both in terms of their sequence on the CD and within individual tracks. The whole CD is finely crafted, the instrumentals are clean, crisp and tight, and John's a cappella singing is solid, pleasing and restrained – apart from “Will Ye Go to Flanders?”, where he sounds a little uncertain, but this is a minor fault which does not recur anywhere else on the CD. The chorus singing is uniformly good, except in “Marching Through Rochester”, where it gets a little ragged.

All the instrumental playing is well done, but I specially liked the parlour pipes in “Will Ye Go to Flanders?”, the Northumbrian smallpipes in “The Cliffs of Dooneen” and Gan Ainm's 3-item instrumental interlude incorporating the flute-playing of Derek Lofthouse. The liner notes give just the right amount of background to enable the listener to understand the songs without getting buried in information.

Hard to pick favourites in such an all-round solid performance, but I was struck by the beautiful, haunting tune and bittersweet lyrics of “Will Ye Go to Flanders?” (a good, imaginative idea, too, to look at the song as speaking not to the woman who I suspect was the ‘bonny Mallie’ of the original, but rather to a man being wooed to join the army). “Painting Over the N.A.R.” – what a great subject for a song and what a pity the Folk Festival on Rails no longer exists for those like myself who live between Edmonton and Fort McMurray; “Where the Ghost River Flows”- an evocative song which resonates for anyone who's traveled that way, with solid a cappella singing from John and a finely performed fiddle interlude between verses; and “The ‘Segwun’ is Steamin’ Again”, another atmospheric piece, which like all John's compositions (with one exception) sounds ‘just like a folksong’ – what better tribute can one pay to a folk musician than to applaud the seamless transition between traditional and composed pieces? John's own songs don't stand out – which is exactly how it should be. The entire CD sounds like – and is – ‘folk music’. Except, perhaps, “Likes Hockey Better than Me”, which could have been dire, but, well, it's not, it's fun, and I credit this to John's dry, quiet humour and dead-pan delivery. Regardless of whether you're a hockey fan or (heaven forbid) bored stiff by the national game, or

(like me) somewhere in between – hey, this one should be a hit, eh?

To say a CD is ‘promising’ sounds as if you hope for something better next time. If John's second CD is as good as his first, it will be just fine. In the meantime, this one deserves plenty of exposure while we look forward with pleasurable anticipation to John's next production.

Rosaleen Gregory, Athabasca, Alberta

In February 1988, while visiting several other musicians in Calgary, I was most fortunate to learn of a local singers' circle which was to take place at the home of a local folkie and musician, who, as it turned out, was none other than John Leeder himself; attending this singing circle, I was introduced to John and his delightful family, and thus began a friendship that has lasted fifteen years. In these years I have come to appreciate Leeder's deep and abiding love of traditional music, especially that of his beloved Canada, and it is with great honor and glee that I am now holding in my hand the first copy of his brand new CD to be seen outside the boundaries of Canada itself.

Perhaps Leeder's credentials as part of the Canadian folk music scene, from running a Calgary folk club for over ten years to his editorship of the Canadian Folk Music Bulletin to his involvement on the board of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music, only help solidify the belief that when he picks out a song to sing, it is definitely worth the hearing, and not just once either. To put it simply, there are no boring or uninteresting songs or tunes on this recording, a statement I cannot make about a lot of recordings I have recently had a chance to hear.

As someone who loves a good Canadian song or tune I find this recording has a lot to offer, and indeed, Canada does come musically alive with songs that range the country from the lakes and lumber camps of Ontario to the frigid shores of Hudson Bay, and from the remote Manitoba muskeg to the sweeping prairies of Alberta. Featuring solo voice, five-string banjo and octave mandolin, along with a plethora of local musicians too numerous to mention, Leeder sings songs and plays tunes from Canada, the U.S., England, Scotland, and Ireland. Special mention, however, must go to the Singing Throng, a grand chorus aggregation that accompanies him on four fine

songs, as well as several other musical groups, including the Sunday Night Band and two Celtic groups, Gan Ainm and the Buccaneers.

Several traditional songs on this recording are noteworthy, including two lumbering songs, "The Jam on Gerry's Rock" and "Save Your Money While You're Young", as well as the poignant Scottish anti-war "Will Ye Go to Flanders?", a song whose powerful words and evocative imagery ring as true today as they might have done two centuries ago as they speak to the futility and uselessness of war. On the traditional Irish song "The Cliffs of Dooneen", Leeder's fine singing is further augmented by the haunting Northumbrian smallpipes played by local folkie Dick Lofthouse, and it's quite a stirring accompaniment at that.

If Leeder knows his way around a good traditional song, then it is equally valid to state that he certainly knows how to write intriguing original pieces, and on this recording there are four good ones of which to speak. Three ring of genuine nostalgia and a return to the good old days, while the fourth, "Likes Hockey Better than Me", is one of the funniest songs I have heard in many a moon; all I can say is, there are a lot of football widows down here in Yankeeland who can certainly identify with the frustrated heroine of this musical opus. As a self-proclaimed train lover I can empathize with Leeder in two of his other compositions: "The Hudson Bay Line" and "Painting Over the N.A.R.", and I only wish I could have traversed both those lines to see what it was all about. As for "The 'Segwun' is Steamin' Again", this song brings to the fore an aspect of Leeder's own family history, as both his father and uncle were personally involved with this Muskoka Lakes steamboat in its storied past. And last but not least, two instrumentals on this recording deserve special mention. The first is a medley including the French-Canadian tune "La Bastringue" and the American oldtimey tune "Ragtime Annie", briskly played in Leeder's own inimitable style à la five-string banjo. The second piece, fittingly ending this recording, is a Leeder-composed tune, "The Pine Grove Waltz", a tune musically remembering the annual camping site the CSTM has used each June since 1996 to gather in and make music and bring joy and merriment to those fortunate enough to make it out there, an event this writer has been lucky enough to have attended several times, notwithstanding the wide distance between Calgary and the Big Apple.

All in all, this is a recording that I'm quite pleased to give a big "thumbs up" to, and I am happy to include it in my Canadian music section as one example of the good acoustic music, both traditional and original, that is coming out of Canada today. It is nice to know that recordings like this exist to listen to after a hard day's work and all the effort it takes to get back home in order to have a chance to listen to it. Thanks to John Leeder, the Singing Throng, and all the other fine musicians who helped make this enjoyable recording possible. I am jubilantly able to highly recommend this recording – no brag, just fact. May the spirit of the 'Segwun' always live to ply the lakes of Muskoka, and may its fresh forest breeze always blow to bring music and its joys to all within its reach.

Robert Rodriquez, New York, New York.

VFSS Shanty Crew. *Blow the Man Down!: Tall Ships in the Fraser*. Vancouver Folk Song Society, c/o Simon Trevelyan, 2223 Graveley St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 3C1 (no address on packaging); <akikoh@telus.net>; <www.geocities.com/vfss.goe/>

Blow the Man Down!: Tall Ships in the Fraser is a collection of 27 shanties and forebitters, each passed down through human (not print) sources. The songs are presented in vocal arrangements, with a few adding guitar or accordion. The VFSS Shanty Crew consists of eight members of the Vancouver Folk Song Society (Granville Airton, Jon Bartlett, Judith Heather, Joe Jordan, Henk Piket, Rika Ruebsaat, Simon Trevelyan and Barry Truter) along with button accordionists Graham Baldwin and Rich Williams. The Crew has been singing together since the late 1970s, with individual members appearing on other projects and with other groups (for example, Piket and Truter are members of Fraser Union).

Even before listening to the music, I knew I was in for a treat. The liner notes included with this CD run 32 pages, and are worth the price of admission on their own. The bulk of the text, written by Jon Bartlett, consists of two essays, entitled "Sailing Ships in the Fraser River" and "Ships, Work and Shanties". The first of these is a detailed look at the history of sailing ships in the Vancouver area, while the second gives a description of both the anatomy of a sailing ship and the implications this had on songs. There is also a substantial "Guide to the

Sources of our Songs." Finally, the liner notes are enhanced with spectacular archival photos from 1860-1946, featuring tall ships in or near various Canadian northwest ports. Yet, curiously, only 11 of the 27 songs are mentioned, leaving no hint as to the stories behind the remaining 16. And while telephone and internet contacts are given, there is no postal address.

Fortunately, the pleasure of this CD doesn't end with the liner notes. The songs included on the disc are clean, simple performances of some fine pieces. Some of these were familiar to me, such as "John Kanaka" and "Hieland Laddie", while others I experienced for the first time, including "Willie Taylor" and the two French songs on the disc, "Ceux qui ont nommé les Bancs" and "Sur les bancs de Terre-Neuve". All of the songs are well sung, and all of the words are easy to understand, making this a great source for musicians seeking new, quality repertoire. The CD is thus a welcome addition to the folk music scene, and should serve to introduce landlubbers to the maritime singing traditions of Canada. Musicians already familiar with the music on this disc will find themselves joyously singing along: "Way, Hey, Blow the Man Down!".

Paul Guise, Topeka, Kansas

Harry Manx. *Wise and Otherwise*. NBM0008. Northern Blues Music, 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; <info@northernblues.com>; <www.northernblues.com>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

Ever since George Harrison fiddled with a sitar on the set of *Help!*, or perhaps before, Indian music and Western popular music have enjoyed a curious relationship, as more and more artists fused elements of Indian music with their own to add new and interesting sounds to their sonic palette. Harrison made interesting use of Indian instruments on songs such as "Love You Too" and "The Inner Light", and the Rolling Stones employed sitars to heighten the bleakness of the powerful anti-idyll "Paint It Black", but on the whole the impact of Indian music remained nominal and experimental. Harry Manx, the British-born Canadian-residing bluesman, may well represent the most successful combination along those lines to date. This album,

a follow-up to the acclaimed *Dog My Cat*, seems so relaxed that it feels like neither experimentation or any sort of stunt, nor a political statement (though undeniably there are politics behind Manx's approach), but rather an artist's natural and confident voice.

Wise and Otherwise offers 12 tracks, mixing traditional songs, popular covers and Manx's excellent originals. His gentle take on Van Morrison's "Crazy Love" is sincere and affecting, and shimmering versions of "Foxy Lady" by Jimi Hendrix (another artist quite interested in Indian music at the time of his death) and B.B. King's incomparable "The Thrill Is Gone" (in medley with an instrumental original called "The Gist of Madhuvanti") are glowing and highly distinctive reinterpretations of familiar standards. Manx manages the tricky task of offering radically different versions of familiar songs that nevertheless only enhance one's appreciation of the original.

Manx's original compositions sit nicely beside these covers. The touching "Don't Forget To Miss Me" is probably an updated version of Donne's "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning", positing the essential connectivity shared between husband and wife that overcomes geographical separation, and "Coat of Mail" is a sympathetic depiction of a desperate man searching for understanding. Both may well become standards in their own right. Also noteworthy is "Makes You Wanna Die Laughing", a sad lament/put-down reminiscent of Dylan's "It's All Right, Ma (I'm Only Bleeding)" (though the line "You went to the finest school" echoes "Like a Rolling Stone" instead).

The album on the whole feels smooth and elegant, with spare but polished production by Jordy Sharp. Manx plays a variety of instruments, including the veena, the 20-stringed slide guitar that is featured on almost half of the tracks -- a hand-made instrument of which the only two made for westerners went to Manx and George Harrison. *Wise and Otherwise* veers capably from gentle to forceful, as in "Foxy Lady", where Manx employs the veena for effects amazingly similar to Hendrix's wild guitar.

What impresses me most, however, is the comfort level in its fusion of Indian and Western traditions, which are matched so well that it's easy enough to ignore any political implications and just enjoy the music. Perhaps, at least in some small, musical

way, Kipling's twain have met at last in Harry Manx.

Murray Leeder, Calgary, Alberta

Medicine Dream. *Tomegan Gospem*. CR-7048. Canyon Records Productions, 3131 W. Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA (new address, change from packaging); <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

Medicine Dream recently released *Tomegan Gospem*, their second album with Canyon Records. Like their first album, *Mawio'Mi*, it combines traditional singing, drumming and instruments with pop and rock influences. The flute solos, especially the title track, show Paul Pike's mastery of the Native American flute and effective expression through carefully controlled vibrato.

In keeping with traditional powwow style, "Petals", written by Gilbert "Buz" Daney, opens with a soloist singing vocables, which are echoed by the group. The liner notes share the dream that Buz's son had which became the inspiration for this song. "The Ancestor Song" calls for an awakening: "Let all our spirits come alive." In the typical style of a rock ballad, the lyrics give way to an expressive electric guitar solo that defies comparison. A driving rock guitar features prominently in the chorus of "People of the Dawn". It is in this song that Pike's soulful voice is best showcased. Listeners will be impressed by the fusion of a round dance with a rock chorus similar to that heard on mainstream radio.

Continuing to educate listeners about the experiences of Native Peoples, this CD addresses the "Mercenary Myth" written in history books about the Mi'kmaq people. "Hurtful Stories" tells the story of how the Mi'kmaq people were said to have murdered the Beothuk people, yet in reality they lived peacefully together. Listen for the militaristic drums of colonization! "For the Love of Elders" honours Elders and thanks them for the positive influence that they have had on younger generations. It confirms the strength of Native People, who have survived challenges to their traditional life-ways: "You've endured the test of time. The residential schools discard you, but you never die." Such messages are skilfully set to popular music.

This recording, certainly worthy of mainstream airplay, presents positive, inspiring messages through Native music with a popular twist. Such diverse elements as mellow acoustic guitars, strong rhythms, driving electric guitars, soothing vocals, smooth harmonies and hauntingly beautiful flute melodies are readily found in *Tomegan Gospem*, providing an eclectic approach to Native popular music.

Janice Esther Tulk, Edmonton, Alberta

Various. *Enter>>Tribal*. CR-7043. Canyon Records Productions (see above for address)

Enter>>Tribal features R. Carlos Nakai, Cliff Sarde, Robert Tree Cody, Primeaux and Mike, Delphine Tsinajinnie, Jay Begaye, William Horncloud and the Blackstone Singers. Vocals, Native American flute, eagle bone whistles and drumming are combined with keyboards, mellotron flute, synth flute and various electronica. The result is a cool, new age sound that is sure to intrigue many listeners.

R. Carlos Nakai's impressive flute playing features prominently in this recording. "Winter Camp" shows his incredible pitch-bending control. Availing of a variety of vibratos and articulations, his playing is expressive and evocative. The funky groove of "Retire the Colors" is entirely unexpected if one reads the liner notes before listening to it. This version of a flag song is unlike any heard before. The layering of the emcee's voice, the high-pitched singing of the Blackstone Singers with members of the Black Lodge Singers, and the electronica create a unique sonic experience.

"Lakota Love Song" is performed by William Horncloud, Frank Afraid of Horses, Ben Sitting Up and Cliff Sarde, and features a mellow flute solo that floats over the bass, followed by the voice. The final track on *Enter>>Tribal* is the "Tree Cody Mix" of the same song, which adds the flute stylings and spoken word of Robert Tree Cody. Both are equally enjoyable as they test the boundaries of sound and music. The title track of *Enter>>Tribal* is perhaps the most successful of all the pieces on this album. In particular, Nakai's flute and vocalizations accentuate the melodies heard in the accompaniments. The listener can't help but groove to the hypnotic underlying rhythm.

Janice Esther Tulk, Edmonton, Alberta

Liz Doherty. *Last Orders*. CDFSR1702. Tartan Tapes, 17 Redford Dr., Edinburgh EH13 0BL, Scotland; <footstompin@tartantapes.com>; <www.tartantapes.com>; Portland America Distributing, 496 Congress St., Portland, ME 04101-797-3868, U.S.A.

The latest release from County Donegal's Liz Doherty is a superb mix of tunes, musicians and arrangements. Doherty's lyrical playing is captured very well on this recording; she brings her own style to tunes from Cape Breton, Ireland and Scotland.

The tone of the fiddle is warm yet crisp, blending nicely with the timbre and volume of the other instruments. Doherty keeps instrumentation to a minimum, featuring intricate and intimate duos for most of her sets. Guitarist Ian Carr's playing forms a tight, responsive partnership with Doherty's fiddling. Carr is very in tune to the direction and dynamics of Doherty's playing, resulting in a meaningful and rewarding musical experience for the listener. His chord choice for the strathspey "Lime Hill" is edgy and humorous, spicing up a rather worn-out tune. However, I did find his rhythm in "Jimmy Lyons" monotonous -- twice is nice, but three times through the tune on the same pattern is too repetitious. Ryan McNeil does an excellent job on piano; his Cape Breton style complements Doherty's playing without overwhelming or competing with it. His arrangement of "Mitton's Breakdown" is especially creative and in sync with Doherty's playing.

The tunes are well selected and ordered, capturing the listener's attention and admiration from the vivacious first cut to the fresh and innovative duo with Scottish fiddler Clare McLaughlin in the final set. *Last Orders* is an excellent album by a fantastic fiddler.

Keitha Clark, Shellbrook, Saskatchewan

Troy MacGillivray. *Musical Ties*. Troy MacGillivray, RR 4, Lanark Antigonish, N.S. B2G 2L2; <tmacgillivray@ns.sympatico.ns.ca>

Piano player Troy MacGillivray's debut album of traditional Cape Breton fiddle tunes does not lose sight of its "Musical Ties". MacGillivray, at the age of 21, has produced a mature recording that respects and represents the tradition of the music.

Top-notch musicians such as Dave MacIsaac, Mac Morin and Matt Foulds provide solid, straight-forward backup for MacGillivray's lively piano playing. The focus on quality, not quantity, of accompaniment gives the music room to breathe and allows MacGillivray's talent to shine.

There are numerous excellent original compositions on the album. "The Grand Piano" kicks off a great set of reels (with a funky intro provided by Gordie Sampson and a nice bass line by Jamie Ghatti). The medley of "Musical Ties" and "Cool Cuts" features MacGillivray's sister Sabria step-dancing. The feet and tunes are great, but the programming in the intro distracts from the dancing and seems too mechanical for an otherwise heartfelt set. A couple of tunes, such as "The Oriental", seem rushed and a bit unsteady, but for the most part the sets are clean and well phrased. The final number is especially musical. Troy teams up with another excellent pianist, Tracy Dares, and the medley flows well and has lots of heart.

MacGillivray's playing is fast, well defined and absolutely toe-tapping, showing off his natural ability and passion for the music. Three years of music at St. F.X. University have not been wasted on MacGillivray; his use of jazz lines and chords gives the traditional tunes a face-lift, adding nice texture to the overall sound. The two slow airs are especially well arranged; MacGillivray's expressive phrasing, subtle timing and rich chords evoke the full emotional capacity of the pieces. Overall, *Musical Ties* is well done and an enjoyable listen, a strong start for a promising pianist.

Keitha Clark, Shellbrook, Saskatchewan

Kat Danser. *Ascension*. KDA042002. Kat Danser, Box 306, 6003 - 48 B Ave., Camrose, Alta. T4V 3B8 (no address on packaging); <katd@telusplanet.net>; <www.KatDanser.com>

This debut CD from Alberta singer-songwriter Kat Danser has lots to recommend it: strong guitar work, varied and creative songwriting, arrangements that support the songs rather than overtake them and a singer who clearly sings from the heart. There are a few rough spots, however, mostly having to do with inconsistency in the singing, but overall this recording is mellow and bluesy and makes for easy listening. All the songs were written by Danser, and that itself is quite a feat. They range from sentimental anthems ("Light

a Candle"), to self-deprecating humour ("Big Beauty") to heartfelt blues. Some are more successful than others: the opening track, "Time Machine", captures beautifully the struggle of dealing with life's sudden changes, but "The Moon, Mother Teresa & Me" seems forced in its message to "do my part". The blues numbers are the best, with some fun lyrics and funky guitar playing. The backup musicians are consistently subtle, leaving the singer and the songs front and centre.

Danser doesn't have a big voice, but she does know how to deliver a song, and that's a gift. No matter what the mood or message, she is able to sound a little bit different on each song, keeping the listener tuned in. Her humour especially shines through. There are some places where she struggles ever so slightly with tone and intonation, especially in the highest and lowest parts. When she sticks to the middle ground, she's solid and confident.

Judging from the sound of this recording, I have a feeling that Kat Danser puts on a great live show where occasional slips in vocal technique don't matter so much. *Ascension* will appeal to fans of acoustic roots music who enjoy a touch of blues, folk and beyond.

Jean Mills, Guelph, Ontario

Mose Scarlett, Jackie Washington, Ken Whiteley. *We'll Meet Again*. BCD120. Borealis Recording Co., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; <info@borealisrecords.com>; <www.borealisrecords.com>

The album is a live recording taken from four Ontario-based concerts in the fall of 1998. The recording admirably retains the live feeling but is devoid of the background noise you might normally expect. The production is excellent. The atmosphere took me back to my formative days in the "Pack Horse" pub in Leeds, England, and the Sunday night acoustic blues club I used to frequent. The trio's repertoire encompasses a mix of styles: rag-time, old blues, Vaudevillian comedic tunes and ballads. The arrangements are in general well done; I particularly liked the opening cut, "Honeysuckle Rose". However, I'm afraid that the rendition of "Goin' to German(y)", with Ken Whiteley on mandolin, doesn't do justice to the original Cannon Jug Stompers' version.

The three participants are all competent, and work very well together, but it is Mose Scarlett who is the indisputable linchpin of the trio. With his deep, dark, dulcet vocals and his equally smooth handling of the guitar, he's a joy to listen to; witness "Diddy Wah Diddy" and "I Got Mine". In contrast, I found Jackie Washington's vocals almost irritating. He has certainly picked songs to which his voice is suited ("Nobody", "If I Had a Girl Like You/Your Feet Too Big", "I Cried For You"), but I would have been happier with less evidence of his vocals on the CD. What I miss, on the other hand, is a swing'em out, string dazzler, guitar instrumental in the vein of Lonnie Johnson and Eddie Lang. The trio's guitar picking abilities would seem ripe for this. It is also a little odd, since Lonnie gets a couple of mentions in the liner notes, and we are informed that Mose knew Lonnie in his latter years, when he lived in Toronto. Perhaps it's just me, back at the Pack Horse pub again, but I fondly remember Steve Philips and Brendan Croker (later of Notting Hillbillies fame, with Mark Knopfler) rattling off some superb finger-picking duets, and they were always a highlight. To close out the CD we have Ken Whiteley's own composition "Golden", an exquisitely atmospheric ballad, and then finally the title track, "We'll Meet Again" (of World War II fame), being tastefully delivered.

Peter Johnson, Calgary, Alberta

Chris Whiteley. *Blues Party*. BCD118. Borealis Recording Co. (see above for address)

Continuing the Whiteley family theme (Ken Whiteley featuring on *We'll Meet Again*), here is an offering from Chris Whiteley (trumpet, electric guitar, harmonica, vocals), who, with the aid of a sizeable cast of other musicians, has produced a self-indulgent delivery of original "big band" jump blues. Although not completely to my liking, it does have some appeal.

As a whole the album tended to drag for me, and no track more so than the rendition of "Glory of Love". On the other hand, it is noteworthy that 10 of the 12 tracks are original compositions. The album gets off to a good start with Chris's "Nobody Home" in true Jump Blues style, and there's a nice brassy instrumental entitled "Blues on a Swing", but whilst the constituents of the arrangements are essentially the same, the album seems to have problems with its identity. Though it strives (I think) to be a blues album, there are a couple of pieces included which

might sit better on a Harry Connick Jr. album, namely, "Hope You Miss Me Too" and "Life is Magic". Like them or not, however, there is some very nice trumpet and piano work on them. In fact, Chris's trumpet playing is a highlight throughout the album, whilst his guitar playing is certainly not stellar. The two are evidenced on "Too Many Cooks", a track which shows more than a nodding acquaintance with John Brim's "Be Careful". Meanwhile, the identity crisis continues with "They Said it Wouldn't Last", which made me reminisce about Mungo Jerry, for some reason!

In my opinion, Chris's vocal style isn't enough to sustain a whole album. His vocals on "Blues Party" are unconvincing, and the whole track feels contrived. It has nothing like the party feel of, say, "Down Home Blues" as rendered by harmonica players Cotton/Wells/Branch/Bell on their infamous *Harp Attack* album. While on the subject, Chris's own harmonica solos can't be called outstanding, but where featured, are proficiently sufficient for their economic space.

The band has been recorded live off the floor, with no over-dubs, etc., which shows them to be quite together. However, the drums sound like they were recorded in the men's urinals with a microphone hanging from the one solitary light bulb. Chris has certainly put together a competent assemblage of musicians to back him up. Chris's own strength is his trumpet playing, but special mention should be made of his associate piano players and trombonist. The gathering stolidly work their way through all the pieces, but there's no real spark. It's an outfit not dissimilar to Colin James's "Little Big Band", but the energy level is diabetic in comparison. Brother Ken's album achieves a lot more with a lot less. The man has talent, but this album is a situation where the whole equals less than the sum of the parts.

Peter Johnson, Calgary, Alberta

Margaret Bennett. *In the Sunny Long Ago... Footstompin' CDFSR1708*. Tartan Tapes. (see above for address)

This CD is a mixture of Scottish, Irish and Newfoundland songs performed by Margaret Bennett. She is occasionally joined by other performers. It is pleasant background music, with the tempo, pacing and mood remaining constant throughout the entire disc. The biggest asset of the CD is the very clear enunciation of the lyrics on all

of the songs, making them easy to follow and learn. The recording balance between the voices, principally Margaret's, and the instrumentation can be somewhat uneven. This is particularly noticeable in "Sweet Forget-me-nots", where the instruments overbalance Ms. Bennett's voice.

There is little information in the liner notes. These are focussed on the artist's emotional connections with the songs, rather than (or as well as) the provenance of the pieces, never mind who is singing and/or playing on each individual number. In the days of the much-touted information highway and e-mail, there is really no excuse for this omission. All in all, it is a decent CD. We would not pay full price for it, but would pick it up on sale. Three out of five.

Carolyn and Alastair Preston, Calgary, Alberta

A Peak in Darien

In this section we list recent releases that so far we have not had time (or perhaps space) to review. We also list releases which were sent to us but do not fall within our purview to review. Look in future issues for reviews of some of these materials.

Books

Georges Arsenault (translated by Sally Ross). *Acadian Legends, Folktales, and Songs from Prince Edward Island*. The Acorn Press, P.O. Box 22024, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1A 9J2; <www.acornpresscanada.com>

Ronald D. Cohen. *Rainbow Quest: The Folk Music Revival & American Society, 1940-1970*. University of Massachusetts Press, Amhurst, Mass, USA, 01004; <www.umass.edu/umpress>

Recordings

Atlantic Union. 02-50873. Atlantic Union, Box 50030, SS #3, St. John's, Nfld. A1B 4M2; <mail@atlanticunion.net>

Barachois. *Naturel*. HPP 5. House Party Productions Ltd., RR#1, Box 24, Wellington, P.E.I. C0B 2E0; <grady@barachois.com>; <www.barachois.com>

Myllie Barron. *Fiddler on the Loose*. VRCD 331. Voyager Recordings & Publications, 424 35th Ave., Seattle, WA 98122, USA; <info@voyagerrecords.com>; <www.voyagerrecords.com>

Rik Barron. *Right to the Bone*. ODD SOCK PRO 104. Rik Barron, 3 Forest Rd., St. John's, Nfld. A1C 2B8 (new address)

Blackstone. *Pictures of You: Round Dance Songs*. CR-6353. Canyon Records Productions, 3131 W. Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

Rodney Brown. *Into the Woods*. SSDK005. Starsilk Records, 347 Pearl St., Thunder Bay, Ont. P7B 1E9; <brown@norlink.net>; <www.rodneymbrown.ca>

Enterloupe. *Les choux pis des melons*. MIN-ENT112000. Vizou, 400 rang St-Joseph, Ste-Béatrix (Québec) J0K 1Y0; <vizou@vizou.com>; <www.enterloupe.vizou.com>

Aengus Finnan. *North Wind*. BCD148. Borealis Recording Co., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; <info@borealisrecords.com>; <www.borealisrecords.com>

Kyp Harness. *The Floating World*. PBR002KH. PorterBeach Records, 218 Carleton St., Toronto, Ont. M5A 2L1; <www.kypharness.com>

High Noon. *Songs for Our People: Original Style Pow-Wow Songs*. CR-6355. Canyon Records Productions (address above)

Julie Kerr. *Mornings Like These*. SR20402. <juliekerr@hotmail.com>; <www.juliekerr.com> (no postal address on packaging)

Craig Korth. *Bankview*. SR10402. <ckorth@shaw.ca>; <www.juliekerr.com> (no postal address on packaging)

Anne Lederman. *Fiddlesong*. FP005. Anne Lederman, 153 Glendale Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6R 2T4; <aleder@interlog.com>; <www.annelederman.com>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

Cara Luft. *Tempting the Storm*. BCT002. Cara Luft, c/o Blue Case Tunes, P.O. Box 68045, RPO Osborne Village, Winnipeg, Man. R3L 2V9; <caraluft@hotmail.com>; <www.caraluft.com>

Allison Lupton. *My True Love*. Learig Music, P.O. Box 23015, Cambridge, Ont. N1S 4Z6; <info@allisonlupton.com>; <www.allisonlupton.com>

Heather McLeod. *Bones*. BMP-24004. Vizou (address above); <www.heather.vizou.com>

R. Carlos Nakai. *Fourth World*. CR-7046. Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

Norouet. *Spirale*. MIN-NOR042001. Vizou (address above); <www.norouet.vizou.com>

Northern Cree and Friends. *Round Dance Songs Recorded "Live"*. CR-6350. Canyon Records Productions (address above)

Mose Scarlett. *Precious Seconds*. BCD146. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Bob Snider. *Stealin' Home*. BCD149. Borealis Recording Co., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; <info@borealisrecords.com>; <www.borealisrecords.com>

Michael "Earnie" Taylor. *Folk 'n' Western*. CD 1002 2. Laughing Cactus Music, 31 Douglas St., Stratford, Ont. N5A 5P3; <taylor-dans@sympatico.ca>

Michael "Earnie" Taylor. *Me & My Uncle*. Laughing Cactus Music (address above)

Various. *41 musiciens folk du Québec*. FOLQ2-2001. Vizou (address above); <www.folquebec.com>

Various. *FOLQ1*. Vizou (address above)

Velvet Breeze. *Late Summer Thunder*. VB 1-02. Jan en Fien Bos, Broerstraat 9, 9001 EK Appingedam, Netherlands; <wkbos@bierum.myweb.nl>; <www.bardance.acroots.com>

Bobby Watt. *Watt Next?*. MIN-WATT0302. Bobby Watt, 15 Parc la Peche, Masham, QC J0X 2W0; <bobby@rjwstonemasons.com>

The Wailin' Jennies. WJ001. <info@cameltrainproductions.ca>; <www.thewailinjennies.com>

Norman Walker. *"T" Time -- Time Tested Tales, Tall and True*. PPM01. Norm Walker, 2235 Robinson St., Regina, Sask. S4T 2R1; <normwalker@accesscomm.ca>; <www.normwalker.com>

Nancy White. *Stickers on Fruit*. BCD147. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Young Bird. *Only the Strong Survive: Pow-Wow Songs Recorded Live at the University of Iowa*. CR-6354. Canyon Records Productions (address above)