

Fourth Princeton Traditional Music Festival, 2011



Occupying Vermilion Avenue: The Vancouver Morris Men

The fourth Princeton Traditional Music Festival, held on August 19th-21st, 2011, retained the format that had proved successful for the three previous years. There was a Friday evening street dance to kick things off, an informal jam/party on Saturday night, and music on two covered stages from 10am to 5.30pm on Saturday and Sunday. The lineup was again a mix of stalwarts from earlier years and a contingent of new faces. The list of returning performers was growing each year, a tribute to the hold the festival had on the hearts of these artists. These were the returnees:

Eric & Betty Armstrong
Alex Atamanenko & Lawrence Halisheff
Sue Averill
Mike Ballantyne
Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat
Marian Buechert
Claddach
Chris Corrigan
Maggie Desbiens
Flip & Zeke

Fraser Union
John Gothard
Rosaleen Gregory
Stewart Hendrickson
The Irish Wakers
Jim Edmondson & Lyn Pinkerton
Jill King
Mike & Nakos Marker
Lyn Melnechenko
Morgan & Graves
Philip Morgan
Psycho Acoustic Ceili Band
Rabbleberries
Rattlebone Band
Tom Rawson
Brian Robertson
Chris Roe
Larry Saidman & Robin Cottle
Solidarity Notes Labour Choir
Vancouver Morris Men
Without A Net

And these were the new acts, although they sometimes included some familiar faces:

Dark Willow (Ellen Van der Hoeven & David Donaldson)
Jasmine Fiona
Loose Change
Janet Michael
Pasties 'n' Porridge (Doug Reid and Yvonne Harper)
Felix Possak
Karen Smart & Chris Bishopp
Songtree
Stab the Cat
Vazzy
Randy Vic & Becky Deryckx
Bob Webb

The workshops scheduled for this year were:

Blues
Five Banjos
Gospel
Homegrown Traditions
Irish Jam
MacPrinceton: Scottish Songs and Tunes to Honour Princeton's Scottish Founders
Shanty Session
Songs and Tunes of La Francophonie
Traditional Ballads



Music on Saturday morning on the Museum Stage began with Princeton's singing Member of Parliament Alex Atamanenko, joined on this occasion by sidekick Lawrence Halisheff. As usual he sang a mix of Russian songs from his family heritage and English-language traditional material, mainly Canadian in origin. Brian Robertson followed with a concert comprising mainly his own compositions, not only the celebrated "When the Tide is Out" but some more recent songs about Vancouver's history.

MUSEUM STAGE, SATURDAY 20 AUGUST 2011

sessions in CAPITALS are panels with 4-7 participants

10 am Alex Atamanenko

Canadian & Russian songs from our own MP

10.30 am Brian Robertson

Life and times on the west coast

11 am Claddach

Traditional songs & tunes from Canada & the British Isles

11.30 am Homegrown Traditions

A potpourri of Princeton performers

12.30 pm Marian Buechert

Damsels in Disguise

1 pm Loose Change

English traditional to Appalachian

1.30 pm Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat

Songs of Princeton, B.C. and Canada

2 pm Jill King Sings!

Come sing with Jill King

2.30 pm John Gothard

Traditional songs from the British Isles

3 pm Jasmine Fiona

Traditional ballads and more

3.30 pm Mike Ballantyne

Blues from the 20's and 30's

4 pm Chris Corrigan

Irish tunes

4.30 pm Fraser Union

Songs that tell stories

5 pm THE BLUES

Songs, guitar riffs and wailing dobro to make you cry

Claddach, a Kelowna-based Canadian/Celtic folk trio, were not new to Princeton, since they had been part of the 2007 trial run. But this was their first time at the "official" Festival. The members of the group

are Rob Corbett, Lorraine Helgerson, and Ross McRae. Over the past fifteen years they have built up an eclectic repertoire of acoustic music. Songs vary from historical B.C. ballads to contemporary topical songs. Interspersed are traditional fiddle tunes ranging from Scottish strathspeys to Breton waltzes.

Then it was time to focus on Princeton, with a workshop featuring a variety of local musicians. Although the session was titled “Homegrown Traditions”, the songs performed were not in the main of regional origin but rather a potpourri of non-traditional items ranging in style from country to blues.

Marian Buechert had performed at the Festival in 2009 and 2010 as part of the duo Soft Focus but on this occasion she went solo. A veteran of thirty years as a singer of traditional music, Marian is particularly fond of songs about women who use disguise to go where they were not allowed to go and do what they were not supposed to do. That was the theme of her concert about “Damsels in Disguise,” with songs ranging from the humorous to the tragic.

It was Loose Change’s first performance as a group at the Festival but its three members were all familiar to Princeton audiences: Simon Trevelyan, Mary Armitage and Steve Quatrocchi. Simon & Steve first appeared together at the inaugural 2008 Festival, while Simon and Mary (as King’s Shilling) were first seen in 2009. As a trio they perform everything from English traditional songs to Appalachian ballads. Some songs are *a cappella*, but most are accompanied on guitar, banjo or concertina.

The next three concerts were all by artists who count as Princeton regulars. Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat reported in poetry and song on their discoveries of interesting examples of local musical and literary culture in old newspapers published (usually only briefly) in the Okanagan, Cariboo and Kootenays during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Jill King, a veteran from 2007 and every festival thereafter, sang sea shanties and other chorus songs designed to maximize audience participation. John Gothard sang traditional English ballads and lyrics, interspersed with instrumentals on guitar or concertina.

Then it was time for a new face, that of Jasmine Fiona, a young elementary school teacher who believes that traditional (as opposed to commercial) music is a most valuable tool for enhancing children’s (and adults’) development as human beings. One of Jasmine’s goals as an educator is to continue to collect and share music that is meaningful to children beyond mere entertainment. She characterizes herself as “haunted by the melodies of many traditions and enchanted by the Roma”, but on this occasion she focused on Irish, Scottish, English and Appalachian ballads, laments and lullabies.



Jasmine Fiona

After Jasmine’s Princeton debut, the remaining performers on this stage were all familiar to audience members who had attended previous festivals. Mike Ballantyne performed an amusing and entertaining selection of party blues, hokum, and old jug-band tunes from the twenties and thirties. Chris Corrigan, on this occasion without his sometime partner Colin McLean, focused more on the Irish component of his repertoire, although he did not entirely neglect songs about the B.C. coast and its inhabitants.

Fraser Union, now a trio, sang a mix of songs about B.C., union songs, and other songs about social issues.



Fraser Union

The final session on Saturday was devoted to the Blues Workshop, which saw Mike Ballantyne joined by a number of other artists including Mike Marker, Bob Webb and Henk Picket of Fraser Union.



Blues Workshop: Mike Ballantyne, Bob Webb and Mike Marker



Henk Piket of Fraser Union plays slide guitar

**VERMILION STAGE, SATURDAY
20 AUGUST 2011**

sessions in CAPITALS are panels with 4-7 participants

10 am The Rattlebone Band
Village dance band music

10.45 am Bob Webb
Songs from sea and land

11.15 am Solidarity Notes Labour Choir
Songs of social justice

12 noon Tom Rawson
Songs and stories a la Pete Seeger

12.30 pm THE IRISH JAM
Fiddles, flutes, bouzoukis, whistles, bodhrans

1.30 pm Chris Roe
Ballads, airs and box tunes

2 pm Jim & Lyn
Traditional songs from Britain and Appalachia

2.30 pm MacPrinceton!
Scottish songs and tunes to honour
Princeton's Scottish founders:
*Traditional ballads, songs from Robbie Burns, and much
more from many of our performers*
Hosted by Dr. Doug Reid

4.30 pm Vazzy
French Canadian songs and dance tunes

5 pm Randy Vic & Becky Deryckx
Classic flute & fiddle combo from Galway & Clare

5.30 pm Stab the Cat
Piping, drumming, sawing & singing



Rattlebone Band

Saturday morning proceedings on the Vermilion Stage started with a rousing performance by one of the Festival's regulars, the Rattlebone Band, retaining the same unique line-up with tub-bass and/or tuba supplementing the more common guitars, fiddles and accordions.

Second up was newcomer Bob Webb. Bob presented a variety of Appalachian banjo tunes and ballads, songs of the Pacific Northwest, and music of nineteenth-century sailors. During forty years of performance Bob has shared the stage with Doc Watson, Elizabeth Cotton, Mike Seeger, Gordon Bok, Sonny



Bob Webb

Terry and Brownie McGhee and Mamadou Diabaté. Bob learned some of his guitar technique from, and occasionally accompanied, the legendary Mississippi bluesman Sam Chatmon (1897-1983). Much of his maritime artistry came directly from the “last shantyman”, Stan Hugill (1906-92). On this occasion Bob’s music ranged from mountain banjo breakdowns to unaccompanied ballads and country blues, and from finger-style guitar instrumentals to sea songs with big choruses.

The impressive Solidarity Notes Labour Choir were return visitors to the Princeton Festival, as was banjoist Tom Rawson. After the Irish Jam came the return of veteran Princeton performer Chris Roe from Seattle and then the duo of Jim Edmondson and Lyn

Pinkerton with their traditional songs from Britain and the Appalachian mountains.

Next there was a two-hour extravaganza on a special theme: “MacPrinceton! Scottish songs and tunes to honour Princeton’s Scottish founders”. This substantial workshop, hosted by retired local doctor Doug Reid, included some traditional ballads, songs by Robbie Burns, other Scottish songs, and a body of Princeton-related material, much of it discovered in the local archives by Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat. Doug Reid ran the workshop and contributed several items from his rich repertoire of songs from his native Scotland and others that he had learned when part of the British folk revival of the 1960s.



The MacPrinceton Workshop, with Stuart James, Rika Ruebsaat, Doug Reid and Jon Bartlett

After focusing on Scotland and Princeton in this special workshop it was time to move eastwards to Quebec for a concert of French-Canadian songs and music, peppered with dance tunes from the Métis and Canadian repertoires. The lively instrumental music and francophone song came courtesy of Vazzy, the duo of Suzanne Leclerc and Bryn Wilkin, who have toured the length and breadth of Canada from Vancouver Island to Newfoundland. They combined fiddle, foot percussion, banjo, spoons, mandolin, bodh-

ran, harmonica, jaw harp and vocals to take us on a cultural voyage to Acadia and Quebec.

From Quebec we journeyed musically to Ireland, at the hands of Randy Vic and Becky Deryckx, like Vazzy newcomers to the Princeton Festival. Randy Vic is a fiddler and multi-instrumentalist who has been active in the West Coast Irish music scene for many years. He has played for dances, given concerts, taught music and hosted jam sessions. Becky Deryckx, who plays whistle and flute, is a more recent arrival on the Vancouver music scene. She plays

primarily at traditional pub sessions. She also makes regular trips to the east coast and to Ireland to learn more about the music she loves and the culture from which it comes. Randy and Becky have known each other for several years but have only recently performed as a duo.

For Saturday's last act on the Vermilion Stage the ubiquitous Simon Trevelyan appeared again, this time as part of a new group named Stab the Cat. This trio of cat-lovers—the 'stabbing' refers to injections given to a much loved but diabetic cat—features Nathan Hayward on bagpipes, Scottish smallpipes and whistle, while Veronica Maynard plays musical saw, bodhran and spoons, and Simon guitar, concertina and banjo. They performed pipe tunes, shanties, ballads and love songs, all selected from the traditional music of England, Scotland and Ireland, with the occasional North American item thrown in as well.



Stab the Cat

Sunday morning on the Museum Stage began with a concert by ballad-singer Rosaleen Gregory that mixed traditional Child ballads with English folk lyrics but also included a contemporary environmental song by her partner Dave. Rosaleen was followed by Songtree, the duo of Barbara Jackson and Earle Peach, both members of the Solidarity Notes Labour Choir (Earle is the conductor). They have been singing together for over twenty years in coffeehouses and at house concerts, community festivals and fund-

raisers. On this occasion they performed an eclectic collection of song-stories from the fourteenth century onwards, taken from many countries' folk traditions.

After Songtree Stewart Hendrickson returned to play and sing selections from his repertoire of Irish slow airs, fiddle tunes and traditional songs.



Stewart Hendrickson

MUSEUM STAGE, SUNDAY 21 AUGUST 2011

sessions in CAPITALS are panels with 4-7 participants

10 am Rosaleen Gregory
Traditional English song

10.30 am Songtree
Sweet harmonies from then & now

11 am Stewart Hendrickson
Songs & fiddle tunes from Britain

**11.30 am SONGS & TUNES OF
LA FRANCOPHONIE**
From France, Quebec & Acadia

12.30 pm Lyn Melnechenko
cowgirl yarns and poems

1 pm Larry Saidman & Robin Cottle
Old-timey with guitar, banjo & mandolin

1.30 pm Irish Cream
Jigs, reels, songs & shanties

2 pm THE TRADITIONAL BALLADS
Ancient songs of love, marriage & murder

3 pm Bridgetown Morrismen
Pub songs with choruses

3.30 pm Eric & Betty Armstrong
Old-time country duets

4 pm FIVE BANJOS
Is this legal?

5 pm Karen Smart & Christopher Bishopp
Traditional Celtic music

5.30 pm Without a Net
Klezmer music & more

Next came a Princeton Festival tradition, the “Songs and Tunes of the Francophonie” Workshop, followed by a return appearance by cowgirl poet Lyn Melnechenko with her verses and stories about life on the ranch. Larry Saidman & Robin Cottle were also repeat performers, again providing a selection of old-timey banjo tunes and songs from the Appalachian mountains.



Irish Cream

Irish Cream proved to be a reincarnation, with slightly modified personnel, of the Irish Wakers, a Vancouver band that plays mainly Celtic music and is well-known to Princeton audiences.

The Traditional Ballad workshop, although missing such formidable ballad singers as Paddy Tutty and Lisa Null (both of whom had participated the previous year), nonetheless provided Rosaleen Gregory, Lyn Pinkerton, Chris Roe, Jon Bartlett, Rika Ruebsaat and others a good opportunity to swap British and North American versions of Child ballads and broadsides. Then the Bridgetown Morris Men were brought in off the street for a lively concert of British traditional dance music, songs of ceremony, and humorous ditties heard in pubs.

Eric and Betty Armstrong, pioneers from the 2007 trial run and the first official festival in 2008, again provided an enjoyable selection from their large repertoire of British and North American traditional song and instrumental music. A banjo workshop, with five different performers trading licks, provided great entertainment for those audience members who love the instrument and an opportunity to catch the Rattlebone Band’s set on the Vermilion Stage for those who found it all a bit too much.

It was back to Princeton music after the banjos. Karen Smart is a long-time Princeton resident who

performed with her group, Celtic Spirit, at the first Festival in 2008. She and Chris Bishopp played traditional Celtic music featuring fiddle accompanied by keyboard. This stage’s Sunday festivities were brought to a close with a taste of klezmer music (traditional dance music from eastern European Jewish communities) from Without a Net, the duo of David Lowther and his partner Mary. They performed a mixture of traditional klezmer instrumentals and original songs with a political edge.

Meanwhile, on the Vermilion Stage Sunday had started with a gospel music workshop, which included some fine renditions of spirituals in which the audience participated with enthusiasm. The second set was a concert by Felix Possak, a newcomer to the Festival. A multi-instrumentalist who plays banjo, guitar and autoharp, Felix studied piano and classical guitar in his youth and has been performing all his life. He is currently the resident entertainer on the Kettle Valley Railway in Summerland, B.C. His music is from all corners of the earth and ranges from folk songs and ballads to blues and ragtime.



Felix Possak

Felix’s set was followed by a performance by a group who have become one of the Princeton Festival regulars, the Rabbleberries from Victoria. They have returned each August since the first (official) festival in 2008. With their myriad instruments—autoharp, flute, banjo, mandola, thumb piano, harmonica, percussion and washtub bass—and traditional and contemporary songs about the environment, peace and justice, they surely symbolize and encapsulate what the Festival is all about.

Next up was another newcomer to the Festival, Newfoundlander Janet Michael. Janet traces her family back to the English West Country in the eighteenth century. During the traditional music renaissance of the 1970s she was enthralled with such groups as Planxty and Steeleye Span and became a

founding member of both the Celtic duo Gaelin' and the Celtic band Paddy Wick. For thirty years she has earned a living as an actress on stage and in film but recently has seen music resume the central place in her life.



Janet Michael

After Janet's concert the Vermilion Stage was temporarily deserted for a session of shanty singing in the Gazebo, led by Jon Bartlett, Bob Webb and Simon Trevelyan, among others.



Shanty Singing under the Gazebo

Then it was the turn of Pasties 'n' Porridge. Sometimes a duo, sometimes a trio, and occasionally a quartet, the group's core are Doug Reid—well known to Princeton residents as a doctor and to Princeton audiences as a singer-guitarist specializing in Scottish material—and Yvonne Harper. Yvonne, who now lives in Poulsbo, Washington, is a retired high school teacher. In her student days she sang in the pubs and clubs of her native Cornwall, hence the "Pasties" part of the group's name. Doug Reid moved to Canada from the UK in 1983 and was a family doctor in Princeton for 25 years but now works in West Kelowna. His brother David and Ken Freshwater (also

physicians) make up the larger version of the group. They have performed at hospital Christmas shows, charity concerts and Burns Nights in Princeton and the Okanagan. Their repertoire is a mix of Scottish and English West Country traditional song.

The next artists on the Vermilion Stage were also familiar to Princeton audiences. Bob Webb, although a newcomer to Princeton, had already given a concert the previous day, while Morgan and Graves were regular visitors since the second Festival in 2009.

VERMILION STAGE, SUNDAY 21 AUGUST 2011

sessions in CAPITALS are panels with 4-7 participants

10 am GOSPEL WORKSHOP

Songs of praise from many traditions

11 am Felix Possak

Multi-instrumentalist extraordinaire

11.30 am RabbleBerries

Free-run organic people's music

12 noon Janet Michael

Songs & ballads

12.30 pm SHANTY SESSION IN GAZEBO

The work songs of the sea sung by a shantymen and you, the crew

1.15 pm Pasties 'n' Porridge

Traditional songs from Scotland and England's west country

2 pm Bob Webb

Songs from sea and land

2.30 pm Morgan & Graves

Songs & tunes of the Oregon Trail

3 pm Dark Willow

Traditional songs & tunes from Britain & Canada

3.30 pm Stuart James & Margaret Rush

A conversation in song

4 pm The Rattlebone Band

English jigs & reels, lively songs

4.45 pm Sue Averill

Songs from her home with lots of choruses

5.15 pm Mike & Nakos Marker

Folk & country blues with banjo, guitar & dobro

Dark Willow, on the other hand, was performing at Princeton for the first time, although half of this duo—Ellen Van der Hoeven—was one of the Festival pioneers, having participated almost every

year since the 2007 trial run. She provided the vocals, accompanied by either guitar or mandolin. The other



Dark Willow

half of the duo, David Donaldson, contributed backing and instrumental breaks on pennywhistle, melodica, recorder and krummhorn. Together David and Ellen played Scottish, Irish and English songs and tunes as well as some of David's original compositions. The sound of the Irish whistle, alternatively lively and cheerful or sweet and haunting, blended with and enhanced a variety of traditional and contemporary songs.



Stuart James

Dark Willow were followed by another duo, again new to Princeton as a group, although half of the

group was familiar to Princeton residents and audiences. Stuart James is a local banjo player, one of the participants in the "Five Banjos" workshop. He could also be seen dressed in white, bells jingling and hankies waving, dancing with the Vancouver Morris Men. Stuart provided the accompaniments, his musical partner Margaret Rush provided the vocals, and their performance mixed traditional and contemporary folksongs from Europe and North America.



Margaret Rush

The next two concerts were also the work of returning performers. The Rattlebone Band was by now a regular and familiar visitor to Princeton, having participated in the 2007 trial run and attended almost every Festival since. They provided a lively set of jigs and reels interspersed with traditional songs from the British Isles. Sue Averill had made her Princeton debut more recently, in 2010, and gave an energetic reprise of that memorable performance.



Mike and Nakos Marker

That left only one more concert: by Mike and Nakos Marker. Mike is a veteran of many a Princeton festival but on this occasion he had brought along his son Nakos, who proved to be a virtuoso instrumentalist on slide guitar. After their set the 2011 Festival wound up with the traditional shanty singing in the Gazebo.