

Leon Bibb in his very poignant retelling "Dancy and the Talking Drum", taking a typical Anansi tale from Africa and resetting it into the American South during the Civil War, turning its tricksterish aspect into a tale of love, hope and eventual freedom from bondage for two escaped slaves. Such is also the case for Nan Gregory's beautiful retelling of "The Clay Flute", taking a Swedish literary piece and placing it in a Persian setting. Such is the talent of these Vancouver tellers that Yukiko Tosa can take the very fabric of history and weave it into a memorable Japanese legend, "The Drums of Noto Hanto", complete with various drum accompaniments, to tell a stirring tale of how a small village, through musical trickery, saved itself from takeover by an enemy warlord in 1576, and how this event is remembered and celebrated annually in a time-honoured local festival.

To be sure, not every tale is filled with tragedy or sadness, and two particular stories come to mind: a tale from Viet Nam in which an aspiring musician learns that outward reactions to his music may not be what he hopes; and a story from India in which three musical instruments help reveal a king's secret, i.e., that he has incredibly large ears. One tale of the dozen shows what music can do when it has a mind to accomplish needed results: the Chinese story "Pipa Ji", or "The Lute-Player's Story", stunningly retold by Melanie Ray with pipa accompaniment by Qui Xia He, a tale in which a humble peasant woman, through musicianship, shakes up the political establishment, helping to punish a prince for his mistreatment of her and her family and teaching a judge the true meaning of justice and fair play.

This recording succeeds on several very important levels. It brings together some of the best storytellers and musicians in and around Vancouver, to show what can happen when excellent storytelling is magically interwoven with great musical accompaniment. To the Vancouver Society of Storytelling go many cheers for proving that, where good storytelling and music are concerned, "all the world's a stage". From beginning to end, this recording sings, in every sense of the word, of the time-honoured magic which both of these venerable art forms can achieve when placed into skilful artistic hands. In years to come, I believe this recording will become a classic in its own right. May its music and stories always remain embedded in hearts and minds here, there and everywhere. Musically and story-wise, this is as good as it gets: no brag, just fact.

*Robert Rodriguez, New York, New York*

## A Peak in Darien

*Recordings received but not yet reviewed.*

Bill Hilly Band. **All Day Every Day**. BCD145. Borealis Recording Co., 225 Sterling Rd., Unit 19, Toronto, Ont. M6R 2B2; <info@borealisrecords.com>; <www.borealisrecords.com>

Blackstone. **Around the Horn**. CR-6352. Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

Michael Jerome Brown. **Drive On**. BCD138. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Radmilla Cody. **Seed of Life: Traditional Songs of the Navajo**. CR-6345. Canyon Records (address above)

Danú. **All Things Considered**. Shanachie 78049. Dialogue Communications, 345 Delaware Ave., Toronto, Ont. M6H 2T7; <tom@dialoguecommunications.ca>; Shanachie Entertainment Corp. <www.shanachie.com>

Thomas Duran, Jr. **Peyote Songs of the Blue Sky People**. CR-6343. Canyon Records (address above)

David Gogo. **Skeleton Key**. Cordova Bay Entertainment Group, Inc., 5159 Beckton Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8Y 2C2; <info@cordovabay.com>; <www.cordovabay.com>; PHD Canada Distributing Ltd., 1330 Main St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 1G4; <phdenq@phdcanada.com>; <www.phdcanada.com>

James Gordon with Sandy Horne. **One Timeless Moment**. BCD141. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Donna Konsorodo. **Skylines**. VR0201. Bobbie Blue, #321, 215 Oswego St., Victoria, B.C. V8V 2B5; <bblue@islandnet.com>; <www.donnakonsorodo.com>

Penny Lang. **Gather Honey**. BCD137. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Heather McLeod. **Bones**. BMP-2-4004. Vizou, c/o Dana Whittle, 400, rang St-Joseph, St-Béatrix, P.Q. J0K 1Y0; <dana@vizou.com>; <www.heather.vizou.com>

Mr. Mole. **From the Outside**. 623667-204217. The Moles, #101, 4500 39th St. NW, Calgary, Alta. T3A 0M5; <mary@mr-mole.com>; <www.mr-mole.com>

Peter Narváez. **Some Good Blues**. 7502041412. Everett/Narváez, 82 Circular Rd., St. John's, Nfld. A1C 2Z5; <badaxe@nf.sympatico.ca>; <ww3.nf.sympatico.ca/badaxe>; <www.ambermusic.ca>

Verdell Primeaux & Johnny Mike. **Hours Before Dawn**. CR-6342. Canyon Records (address above)

Xavier Quijas-Yxayotl. **Singing Earth: Clay Flutes & Ancestral Drums of Meso-America**. CR-7044. Canyon Records (address above)

Eli Secody. **The Following Generation**. CR-6348. Canyon Records (address above)

Southern Cree. **Drum for Life**. CR-6349. Canyon Records (address above)

Tanglefoot. **Agnes on the Cowcatcher**. BCD143. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Terry Tufts. **Two Nights Solo**. BCD144. Borealis Recording Co. (address above)

Tha Tribe. **Winterstorm**. CR-6351. Canyon Records (address above)

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

Zubout & Dawson. **Tractor Parts: Further Adventures in Strang**. BHCD-0003. Black Hen Music, P.O. Box 74661, Kitsilano, Vancouver, B.C. V6K 4P4; Maximum Management, Suite 420, 319 W. Pender St., Vancouver, B.C. V6B 1T4; <info@maximummanagement

## A Personal Farewell

The big man with the little songbook – this is an image that will always stay with me from the twenty-five years that I knew Bill Sarjeant. Although his world was a much wider one, encompassing the academic field of geology, writing fantasy novels, and preserving Saskatoon's architectural heritage, my experience with Bill's world was primarily at song circles and storytelling sessions. Bill was always there with his tiny handwritten book of folk songs and ballads, along with a row of harmonicas sitting neatly beside him. He sang with gusto, gentleness and commitment. His repertoire encompassed big ballads, comic songs, ancient dirges and songs by the northern English songwriter Jez Lowe. At Saskatoon Storyteller's Guild events, Bill usually sang traditional ballads, but more recently offered personal reminiscences from his childhood days in England during the war.

I met Bill in the late 1970s, a few years after I became deeply immersed in the folk music of the British Isles. He was very generous in sharing his extensive library of recordings and books, and I spent many evenings at Bill's listening to records and discovering new songs and ballads that would have been otherwise unavailable to me. Bill was always very supportive of my singing, and included a program of my music on his extensive series "The Folk Singers" which he produced and hosted for CJUS-FM, the University of Saskatchewan's radio station.

Over the years I have seen Bill and Peggy's three daughters Nicola, Rachel and Juliet grow up. They were often present at musical events, occasionally contributing a song or two, as can be expected from young children. Many years later, at a song circle at the Sarjeants a few years ago, I witnessed Rachel with her young son Tristan in tow, joining in the circle and singing. I felt quite delighted knowing somehow that the tradition was being passed along. Peggy confirmed this a few weeks ago following Bill's funeral, saying that Bill's little songbook was to be given to Rachel.

*Paddy Tutty*