



## A Mari Usque ...

## Traditional Music across Canada from Sea to Sea

### From Ontario:

#### Folk Music in the Sudbury Region

*Dianne Cameron*

In addition to the Northern Lights Festival Boreal (coming up July 6-8), Festival Boreal also runs some folk events throughout the year which range in flavour from traditional to blues to contemporary to ...? More or less a sampling of what one might see at the festival any year. These may take the form of house concerts, folk club events, or special mini-festivals, such as the Spring Meltdown in March featuring a wide variety of artists performing at several venues around town (including our own favourite, Duncan Cameron!). There are also a few local restaurants, bars, coffee houses and other venues who feature folk musicians from time to time. The Elm Tree is a fairly recent new venue which features a folk music concert series.

There are several very active traditional folk associations in the area, including a Comhaltas branch which sponsors a spring Celtic Fair, Irish Gaelic lessons, dance, whistle and choir groups and other activities. A Scottish country dance group gets together weekly throughout the fall and winter. The local Cape Breton Club has been holding a spring Cape Breton lobster festival every June for many years. This year it was held June 16, and featured an array of traditional Gaelic and English singers, musicians and dancers in continuous performances from 1 p.m. until 9 p.m. Many of these performers were local, and the talent was outstanding. It was one of the best traditional music events I have ever seen in Sudbury, and the number of exceptional young fiddlers playing was wonderful to see.

Laurentian University has been home to a long-standing Department of Folklore which has been instrumental in the collection and preservation of the traditional music and storytelling of the large francophone population of Northern Ontario.

House ceilidhs have been running now for over fifteen years, more or less monthly, in various hosting houses around the region as far away as Espanola and Onaping Falls. There is always a mix of familiar and new faces at these events, with ages from infancy to 96 (so far). Though there is a core group of musicians who come fairly regularly, we have surprises from time to time as well. At one ceilidh, someone brought some visitors from

Korea, who spoke no English, but quickly realised what was going on and delighted us all with traditional Korean folk songs!

There are also several local traditional music bands, including the Friends of Erin and Paddy's Patriots who do mostly Irish music, but I'm not up to date on all of these, having been away for the last five plus years.

Cheers!

*Dr. Dianne Cameron lives (again) in Sudbury, ON, where she sings and plays her various instruments, hosts ceilidhs and house concerts, and from which she roams to perform at various festivals.*

### The Ultimate Song Circle

Merrick Jarrett

It is 7 a.m. Sunday morning, April 27th. I am driving along looking for a place where I can buy milk at this hour, since we have visitors with children at the breakfast table, and we have run out of milk.

It being so quiet at this hour as I drive along, I start thinking about the evening before, when, and not for the first time, I reflect on the Old Chestnuts Song Circle in Kitchener, Ontario, and what it has meant to so many of us, what an inspiration it has been over the past years; how much fun and joy we have had, and the friends we have made.

And last night's session in particular, which I have called "The Ultimate Song Circle", for reasons that follow.

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to sit in on Jack Cole's "Circle" that he started some six years ago, know that Jack runs a tight ship. He doesn't let singers or musicians break off into little groups to do their own thing, as I have seen in other song circles, resulting in what sometimes approaches chaos; he likes to have us supply lyrics if possible, so we can sing along with the singers and enjoy the choruses, and generally feel a part of the songs, resulting in an evening of great participation and enjoyment by all.

And as he goes around the circle, everybody involved either has a song, or 'passes' to the next singer. We all know that when thirty-odd people are involved, it is not likely that any one of us will get to sing more than a couple of songs before the break, but nobody is disappointed, or gets their nose out of joint.

And as I moseyed along, still looking for a variety store that was open, I started thinking of some of the singers, musicians, and volunteers who help Jack and Lori set up for these occasions and for house concerts, all of whom joined together to make last evening one to remember, and a fitting close to the season.

How could a song circle go wrong, with singers and musicians like Charlotte Bernstine singing a Yiddish version of that lovely line from Psalms 121, "I will lift mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help", that she learned from a rabbi, then following this with a funny parody on "This Land is Your Land", only about how Israel is surrounded by Arab lands ... Louise Carroll, with her young Sofie sitting on her lap, leading us in that beautiful old Pentecostal gospel song, "Farther Along" ... Wayne Cheater, fine songwriter and guitarist ... and what would a song circle be without cheerful Debbie Smith picking out great songs from *Rise Up Singing*, *Sing Out!*'s great songbook of lyrics, both traditional and contemporary folk, a book that every singer should have.

And Jean Mills, great dulcimer player, the female member of Jack's "GreenWood" trio, organizer of the Dulcimer Club in Guelph, who, although she was not feeling well, dragged herself out from Guelph to the Circle, because she didn't want to miss any of what turned out to be a magical evening (That's dedication, eh?) ... Jakkie Ridley, her strong lovely voice and fine guitar picking always a welcome addition to any song circle, and passing it along to daughter Ariel ... Monique Hobbs ... what a lovely voice and selection of songs ... and our resident A-1 five-string banjo player, Margaret Jackson, who I doubt has ever missed a Song Circle.

And no Song Circle would be complete without Mr. Old Chestnuts Song Circle himself, Jack Cole, singing the two songs that everybody asks for, "The Canadian Tire Song", and, as a fitting end to the evening, "The Potter's Song", to rousing cheers and claps, whistles, yips and hurrahs and other enthusiastic noises, along with full-throated choruses.

Now, here I must admit that I am somewhat biased on how the evening went, because my wife, Mary, and I were fortunate enough to have our daughter Kate Jarrett, her husband, John Hart, and their three children, Terry, Martha and Rachel, come from Peterborough; our son, Stephen, from London; our oldest granddaughter, Lindsay, a budding penny whistle player and possible fiddler, this summer working as an interpreter at Doon Pioneer Village (she has gone real "folkie" and has done some excellent essay work on Canadian traditional folk music for her course work at Queen's U in Kingston); our oldest daughter, Linda, would be with us as well, but she had to be in Ottawa.

Many years ago, before they all got busy with careers, raising families, etc., we used to do concerts as "The Jarrett Family". Kate, John and I also formed the children's trio, "Young at Heart",

and Stephen was a member of the trio, "Lord Gord and the Benchwarmers", doing wonderful parodies poking fun at the legal profession (since all three of them are lawyers!).

We thought the Song Circle was a good place to have a musical family re-union.

It brought tears to Mary's eyes as she saw 8-year old Rachel get up and sing with Kate, and 10-year old Martha, who had worked out some lovely harmonies, also with Kate; and Lindsay was thrilled with the wonderful rousing verse-and-chorus treatment we gave of Stan Rogers' "Northwest Passage", since one of her essays was on him ... and "Hang on the Bell, Nellie!" is one of Stephen's favorites. It sure gave Mary and me a great feeling to see the songs handed down for who knows how many generations to come? Guess we all have planted some great musical genes!

Another event that turned the evening into a magical one for me was to see six children of varying ages all sitting in their own "song circle" on the floor, but still being a part of the larger group, since Jack made sure that the children all had input as he went around the circle. Jakkie's daughter; Ariel, Louise's daughter, Sofie, Cathy and Dave's daughter, Amanda, and her brother, James, for whom I promised a Zulu war chant next Circle, and John and Kate's Terry, Martha and Rachel.

Especially Amanda Bryberg, whom I have seen grow from a wide-eyed little "folkie" to a poised, pretty, competent young lady, contributing her talents as a flautist.

As Sally Rogers sang in her great song, we "pass it on".

So all in all, it was an evening to remember. I know there have been great evenings before - in six years of Song Circles, there had to be - but I doubt if there has been one to top this one. A fitting end to the season, and I'll stick to calling it "The Ultimate Song Circle"; and I only wish we had recorded it for posterity.

We all owe a great debt of gratitude to Jack Cole, who has masterminded the whole concept of the Old Chestnuts Song Circle from its inception. He has encouraged so many performers and singers to take part and "rise up singing"; the resulting song circle evenings have attracted many friends, not only from the Kitchener/Waterloo and Guelph area, but from out-of-town points. His monthly informational bulletins are a delight to read, and keep all of us, including retirees like myself, in touch with what is going on in the folk world. . . Jack, if there was an "Emmy" for top host, or an "Oscar" for outstanding performances in our folk music world., we would definitely cast our votes for you!

I am sure I echo the feelings of everybody who took part last night, and who have been part of previous Song Circles, who love you, respect you, and stand in awe of how, in your busy professional life, you manage to put it all together; and at the same time, organize house concerts, write songs, absorb even more material at "The Woods" and Celtic programs, and become an increasingly proficient instrumentalist. Take a bow.

*Merrick Jarrett is a veteran folksinger who lives in Waterloo, ON. He may squirm in embarrassment, but the term 'folk legend' might rightly apply here.*

*News from Judith Cohen:*

**H**i everyone! These few lines are in response to our new editor's call for any news, any communication (always a good idea!), even short. Also a good idea: how many times have I put things off because there's no time for them to be longer?

In a few days (late June), I leave (again) for Spain: my daughter and I are doing several concerts, including one for a conference in a mediaeval town in Aragon where not long ago a collection of medieval Hebrew manuscripts were found being used as bindings for Cathedral liturgical manuscripts, probably since the Expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. With co-operation from all concerned, the manuscripts are being restored, and this is the second conference which has grown out of the discovery. In fact, the Cathedral itself is on the list of sponsors! As a Sudanese Moslem friend of ours is joining us for the concert on oud and other instruments, the event recalls the coexistence of the three cultures of medieval Iberia before the Expulsion, and the co-operation is encouraging, to say the least.

We'll also be playing in Palma de Mallorca, and here a Bulgarian Rom friend I met when he was playing accordeon in the main square of Madrid a year ago this week will join us for a couple of songs; he and his wife moved to Mallorca, and I was able to introduce them to some musician friends there, and also to a Gypsy musician friend in Extremadura province. (In Spain and Portugal, none of my Gypsy friends and acquaintances choose to use the term "Rom"; they stay with "Gitano" [Spain] and "Cigano" [Portugal].)

Now that my beloved three-year SSHRC research grant is just about over, my trips in Spain are taking on another aspect, besides the ongoing work with Sephardic and Crypto-Jewish ("Marrano") traditions and also regional village traditions. (Thanks SSHRC! and before that, thanks, York University Office of Research Administration, and thanks, Canada Council; the

grant helped me immeasurably.) I've promised Lorne that I'll write about this in more detail in a future issue: it's the Alan Lomax recordings project.

Quickly, because I really do have very little time, many of you know that Rounder Records is issuing a huge series - at least a hundred CD's from the Alan Lomax Collection. Many have already been released, each with a generous booklet full of song transcriptions (words only), full translations where required; background commentary and so on. The director of the Alan Lomax Archive and of the project is Anna Chairetakis Lomax, Alan Lomax's daughter - a knowledgeable, helpful, generous person it is a delight to work with. My role here is General Editor of the Spanish Series, which will come to up to 15 CD's from various regions of Spain. Once I'm in Spain anyway, for research and concerts, I'll continue to do what I started in April during a different trip: return to villages Lomax recorded in, and at times even interview some of those who sang for him almost fifty years ago. It's a very exciting project, and Lomax's own field notes are an inspiring combination of detailed observation and a truly caring attitude toward other people - as well as some delightfully barbed comments about those at certain levels of politics at the time - 1952.

But, as promised, more on that later.

*Dr. Judith Cohen is that rare combination of scholar and performer, an ethno-musicologist who has been collecting material in Spain and Portugal for several years.*

## From Alberta:

Congratulations to the Bulletin's music editor Maureen Chafe on the birth April 23 of her third daughter Isobel. Maureen is now on leave from Mount Royal College.

## From Newfoundland:

*Bridget Noonan*

The Folklore Department at Memorial is set to re-publish Ballads and Sea Songs of Newfoundland (Elizabeth Bristol Greenleaf and Grace Yarrow Mansfield). The book has some new editorial content, but for the most part it's exactly as originally published. It will contain blurbs from some SJFAC members and friends. The cover is being designed by Helen Houston, who works in Linda Russell's office at MUN.

The Folklore Department is also publishing a book of selected essays by Dr. Herbert Halpert,

who is largely credited with helping establish the Folklore Department.

Dr. Halpert died on December 29th, 2000. He began teaching folklore courses in MUN's English Department in 1962. After the Folklore Department was established, he taught there until the late 1970s. He continued at the university as professor emeritus and guest lecturer, and continued writing until 1992.

*This notice was extracted from The Broadside, the newsletter of the St. John's Folk Arts Council.*

## From Prince Edward Island:

*News from Georges Arsenault*

I have a CD of Acadian folktales from PEI coming out in a few months. It is made up of field recordings I made in the 1970 with traditional story tellers. It is part of a collection which was launched by the Centre d'études acadiennes of Université de Moncton. The folklorist there, Ronald Labelle, whom you might know, is in charge of the collection and is much interested in folk tales. He wants to work on an exhibit on folk tales with Moncton's Musée acadien.

*Georges Arsenault is a folklorist living in Prince Edward island. He has recently published a book of folktales and songs in French called Contes, Legendes et Chansons de l'Île du Prince-Édouard.*

The end of July featured, once again, the "Larry Gorman Folk Festival". Larry Gorman, born in 1846, was one of PEI's most famous (and infamous) songwriters. Some of his songs are still sung today. A highlight of the event is the Gorman Bus Tour, led by the inimitable John Cousins, historian, folklorist and musician, and which features stories and songs of the lumbering, fishing and farming traditions of West Prince, along with lunch in a lighthouse!

Sandy Ives, from Maine, who earned a PEI Museum and Heritage Foundation Award of Honour, is taking part in the festival. He's the author of "Larry Gorman, the Man Who Made the Songs". Participants also include a great mix of new and established Island musicians, including Lennie Gallant. "The Bulletin" applauds the concept of this festival, honouring one of Canada's traditional songwriters in a way that encourages the tradition to continue."

## From the Northwest Territories

*Moira Cameron*

Summer in Canada's Northwest Territories is typically a season of music festivals and celebrations. However, in very few of these northern festivals can there be found a truly satisfying dose of traditional music. Fiddling is, perhaps, the only consistent exception. The north is home to several notable First Nation's fiddle players.

This summer, fiddling is the focus of the entertainment portion of the Great Northern Music and Arts Festival in Inuvik. This festival, known throughout the world primarily for its celebration of our region's famous carvers, painters and artisans, provides an idyllic setting for music and storytelling.

There is always a music and dance celebration to be found in each community across the north. Some, like the Inuvik festival, become well known to non-residents. Yellowknife, the territory's capital, is another such community. Once known as a folk festival, 'Folk on the Rocks' has recently changed its focus and has established itself as simply a music festival. Big name Celtic rock groups are favoured by festival organizers, as well as blues, jazz and country musicians. Located on the picturesque shores of one of Yellowknife's many nearby lakes, Folk on the Rocks is still a fun festival to attend, but if you are looking for traditional music, you may find yourself a little disappointed.

However, traditional songs and music are regularly played in Yellowknife at a few different locations. There are 'House Ceilidhs' or song circles hosted in people's homes each month (call 867/873-6580 or 867/920-2464 for more info); coffee house performances at Mary and Friends Tea House; and, providing they can secure funding, folk music performed at the Festival of the Midnight Sun the week prior to Folk on the Rocks.

Later in the summer, to round off the season's musical events, there is the intensely popular Friendship Festival in Fort Smith, south of Yellowknife. This festival, which is more like a giant jam session than an organized festival, is a favourite among musicians. Unlike the more formal Folk on the Rocks, musicians have the opportunity to share music amongst each other as well as the audience.

Our summers may be short, but we northerners are committed to making the most of them. Happy summer everyone!

*Moira Cameron is a ballad singer who lives in Yellowknife, NT, and performs with Ceildh Friends. With several CDs to her credit, she will be giving a ballad workshop this summer at the Storytellers of Canada/Conteurs du Canada conference in Lennoxville, Quebec.*

## From Saskatchewan

*Paddy Tutty*

I find it heartening that there will be a lot of traditional music from many parts of the world, as well as a number of songwriters who are heavily influenced in their folk traditions in Saskatchewan this summer!

Regina Folk Festival Coming to Victoria Park on August 17, 18 & 19

Performers (in alphabetical order):

\* The Be Good Tanyas (BC) Gospel, old-time jazz, blues, folk, country trio of females with the sweetest voices you ever did hear - slow, hypnotic and oh-so beautiful!

\* Bonnie Logan (SK) Children's storyteller and musical entertainer with banjo in tow.

\* Celso Machado (BC) Brazilian guitarist, percussionist and multi-instrumentalist this virtuoso one-man band uses guitar, voice and even his own body to captivate audiences in his mesmerizing performances. Listen to Jongo Lê from the CD of the same name.

\* The Madrigals (MB) Six women a capella singers who do songs in at least 5 different languages, including French - their harmonies are to die for!

\* Mama Lljajta (SK) A mixture of Central and South American melodies and rhythms give this Chilean/Canadian group their infectious sound

\* Nikamok Means 'sing' in Cree and consists of Joseph Naytowhow (Cree) & Cheryl L'Hirondelle Waynohtêw (Métis). Both currently reside in Saskatchewan. Their sound is derived from powwow, round dance and other Aboriginal social and ceremonial settings mixed together with the contemporary sound of harmonies and English lyrics.

\* Puentes Brothers (BC via Cuba) These guys were nominated for a Juno for their Cuban rhythms and their deadly voices. Their father is joining them on tour from Cuba and is one of the best-known guitarists in Cuba right now. Oye Rumberito from their Morumba Cubana recording.

\* La Raquette a Claquettes (SK) Hometown boys whose mixture of French Canadian Trad and classic Beatles is a delight! Their live show is so much fun!

\* The Real Ones (BC via Norway) Celtic folk from Norway? These guys are full of energy and have the sweetest harmonies.

\* Keith Secola and his Band of Wild Indians (US) Alter-Native music with a progressive edge, utilizing traditional Native percussions, world beat and tribal dance in his energetic live shows.

Ness Creek Music Festival Big River, Saskatchewan, July 20 - 22:

\* The Lighthouse Penguins They are a five piece Celtic group from Saskatoon featuring Skye Lennox on fiddle, Margaret Leighton on bodhran and accordion, Ryan Spracklin on fiddle, Patrick Leighton on flute, mandolin and bouzouki, Michael Hughes with guitar, bouzouki and vocals. The Lighthouse Penguins deliver a turbocharged mix of infectious reels, jigs and songs while staying true to the spirit of the Celtic tradition. Kicking up their heels with the band will be The Bantry Lassies featuring the fine footwork of Irish dancers Laurie Johnston and Ashley Boese.

\*Old Style Millikin Jack Millikin and his family came to Canada from Scotland to join his older brother Andrew who was homesteading in Saskatchewan. He began his musical career at age seven by singing and playing the mouth organ in downtown Saskatoon. A few years later his family moved to Big River Country to homestead near the Ness Creek Festival site. When he was a teen, his mother bought him a second-hand fiddle and he and his two brothers played local dances for \$2 a night. The isolation and harsh living conditions in rural northern Saskatchewan strengthened the need for people to get together: "... all the homesteaders liked parties; any time somebody built a house that was a good excuse for a party ..." Over the years Jack taught himself to play the banjo, saxophone, saw, bottles and more - anything that could make a sound - he would play it! During the war Jack and Andrew built a hall on their homestead where they held benefit dances for the war effort. The Millikin homestead became known as the social centre of the community. And it is in the spirit of Jack Millikin and others like him that the Ness Creek Music Festival was born. Jack is a few years shy of 80 year of age and he is still going strong - The Grandfather of Ness Creek. Don't miss the Old Style Millikin performance when Jack is joined by his son Don of Crooked Creek fame on Friday evening at this year's Festival!

\* Njacko Backo is one of the rare professional Kalimba (thumb piano) players in the western world. After studying under his village elders for many years, Njacko moved from Africa to Amsterdam where he recorded and performed, shortly thereafter moving to Montreal and now to Toronto. Poet, writer, composer, performer and accomplished choreographer Njacko Backo makes his own instruments, including the Kalimba, the Zaa Koua (African harp) as well as a wide variety

of drums and small percussion instruments. Njacko's music will heat up even the chilliest New Year's Eve.

\* Upstream The woodlands of Park Valley, Saskatchewan, two hours north of Saskatoon on the edge of the Prince Albert National Park, are home to scenic farms, lakes, rivers and diverse recreational areas. They are also home to Saskatchewan's acoustic roots trio Upstream. The group consists of Gord Vaadeland on vocals, bass and guitar, Sheila Vaadeland on vocals, guitar and percussion and Darryl Amundson (1997 SCMA specialty instrumentalist of the year) on vocals, mandolin, guitar and dobro. Although the group is new, the members are experienced. They have 40 years of combined musical journeys and have recorded eleven albums between them. Their rich harmonies and instrumental skills provide a framework for their real life images and themes portrayed in their lyrics. Upstream's first release, Vintage Vintage, combines the folksy, rural tradition of Park Valley with a new millennium mixture of acoustic folk, gospel and bluegrass to create rich musical textures which sound both old and new at the same time. Co-produced by Don Schmid, of the Northern Pikes, at his Fresh Vibe North Studio at Morin Lake, SK, the CD brings a freshness and down home feel that is both easy to listen to and reflective of the isolated setting in which it was recorded and the modern circumstances portrayed in its lyrics. "We set about to create an honest sound, traditional in its structure, yet unique in rhythm and feel."

Also featured in Ness Creek's line-up are: Not a Love Song (eclectic folk, blues, traditional, original) Los Canasteros Ben Schenstead (classical guitar) The Corn Sisters El Grupo Moncada Jerusalem Ridge (bluegrass, straight up) Crooked Creek Bocephus King (I've not mentioned all the music at the festival - there's everything from country and rock to children's, world, and a sharing circle of intimate workshops).

I, myself, am off to my favourite traditional music heavens: Fiddle Tunes workshop at Port Townsend, Washington, and, later this summer, to the Noel Hill Irish Concertina School in Newberg, Oregon. These are both intensive environments for learning traditional music. These "immersion pools" are *the* best way to experience music - to listen to the masters and learn to play the music!

Cheers!

*Paddy Tutty is a singer and multi-instrumentalist who lives in Saskatoon, SK. She has recorded many CDs on her Prairie Druid label.*

## From British Columbia:

Ballad report for May, 2001

Jon Bartlett

Our most recent Ballad Night featured Malcolm Page, who led us as promised through the history of the "broadside" ballad. He has very kindly prepared the notes below:

Malcolm Page said that his starting point for his thinking was noticing the number of words which preceded 'ballad' in commentaries. These words include: folk, traditional, minstrel, stall, street, broadside, bothy, literary and modern.

He had focussed especially on the broadside ballad, usually one ballad text on one big sheet of paper, with a woodcut illustration and the name of a tune. Broadside flourished from the early 1500s to the late 1800s, so overlapped considerably with the heyday of the Child ballad. They existed in many thousands: the biggest collection is of 17,500, and Pepys collected 1,671, and many must be lost. Broadside were sung by a balladsinger at fairs and markets, with the text sold for a penny: the performer was also the advertisement. Shakespeare portrays a wandering ballad singer in *A Winter's Tale*. Broadside faded away with near-universal literacy, and mass circulation newspapers, in the late 19th century.

Broadside were of two main types: human romantic tales (many of which would usually be categorized as folk songs) and news, either National Enquirer-type sensations and fantasies, or actual news (Roy Palmer's book, *The Ballad in History*, reprints many of this kind, on the Spanish Armada, the Great Fire of London, and so on).

Broadside are most often viewed as inferior to Child ballads, Child himself describing them as "thoroughly despicable and worthless." Gordon Gerould in *The Ballad of Tradition* admires them for what they reveal of ordinary people, everyday life, and their attitudes and interests. John Holloway, however, finds in them "vivid tale-telling, drama, quick psychological insight, racy first-handedness, openness to life, crisp humour." Alan Bold in *The Ballad* sees broadside as urban, not rural; topical, not timeless; and the work of hacks for money.

Jon Bartlett sang "The Bold Northwestman" based on a conflict between First Nations and sailors in the Queen Charlottes in 1791, found in broadside printed in Boston in the 1830s.

Malcolm asked whether broadside should be seen as a continuation of the Child ballad in the age of print, or whether they gradually displaced Child ballads? He then spoke briefly on bothy

ballads - a bothy is a barn or dormitory where Scottish farmworkers slept in the 19th century. Many bothy ballads come from the Aberdeen area and were composed in the middle of the 19th century - associated with men coming together, as loggers' songs are. They are usually more personal, realistic and down-to-earth than earlier ballads, and sometimes - as in the well-known 'Drumdelgie' - about a particular farm. However, Bob Munro, in one of the few studies, asserts that "bothy ballads are obviously based to some extent on a previous ballad culture deeply rooted in the peasantry."

Finally, Malcolm commented briefly on the literary ballad, narratives using ballad stanzas for narratives, written by poets - and so unconnected to both song and the oral tradition. The three best-known are probably William Cowper's 'John Gilpin,' S T Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner* and John Keats' 'La Belle Dame sans Merci.' But many other poets had been attracted to the form, such as Oscar Wilde, A E Housman, Rudyard Kipling, W B Yeats and W H Auden. The definitive study was *The British Literary Ballad*, by G Malcolm Laws.

Malcolm Page

Thanks, Malcolm! the evening was a real winner, and there was much discussion. Our next meeting is the last of this season: we'll be starting again in September. The next meet will consist we hope almost entirely of singing and eating - a poitluck at about 6 pm followed by as many ballads as we can cram in on top of a full stomach! That will be Monday 4 June: feel free to bring interested friends, as always.

The presentation Rika and I gave at the Scottish Day of Culture here in Vancouver last month went over, we thought, pretty well. It might be something we do a lot more of, particularly since our attention (Rika's attention, that is) was directed to the question of what was so good about Aberdeen for ballads? We might well tap into some local knowledge here.

*Jon Bartlett is a ballad singer and enthusiast who lives in Vancouver, BC, and is a former editor of The Canadian Folk Music Bulletin. Is it a coincidence that editors like ballads?*

Norman Stanfield

I would like to tell your readers about an exciting new development for me, and from me.

I'm offering a 3rd year course this Fall at the University of British Columbia School of Music called "Music of British Columbia". Its my intention to do a survey of the Folk and First Nations music found throughout the province. I'm doing this with the able assistance of Professor

Thrasher, but I intend to seek out suggestions from Phil Thomas and other doyens of the provincial folk music scene to make it as complete as possible.

I am especially interested in this project because the UBC School of Music has naturally concentrated on the music of the Pacific Rim, so this is somewhat of a departure, or perhaps a much needed extension, of their mandate. My own research interests began with Japan, then folded into Early Music and since 1986, morris dance! I could easily lead you astray with discussions about the absence of dance (i.e., ethnochoreology) from most, or is it all, Canadian campuses, but I'll spare you that harangue for now.

The course will survey the provincial fiddle community and its relation to the national scene, the remnants of ballad singing (as per Phil Thomas) and any other "fires in the kitchens" some of which will be ultimately related to "ol' timey" music. Square dancing, Western swing, and other similar movements (pardon the pun) will be investigated. We'll have a look at brass bands in mining towns such as Trail and the First Nations reserves (which could be a surprise to some, but clearly documented in many sources). The Doukhobor choirs will certainly get our attention, and perhaps other provincial expressions of far-flung music communities such as the local Chinese music scene.

One area that will be highlighted will be First Nations music from all three major subdivisions in our province - Coast, Plateau, and Sub-Arctic. I have quite a bit of experience in the music of the Kwakwaka-wakw (Kwakiutl) including the language which I'm currently struggling through, and I'm only too well aware that the other two groups are very under-represented. Of course, we must also have a look at the common ground to so many of the members of these communities, the Powwow trail, and the common ground of natives and non-natives alike - Country and Western.

Even though this program of study has only been recently announced, I've already had active expressions of interest, some from the most surprising quarters. For example, two university student "violinists" have come up to me and confessed their roots in "fiddle" orchestras in Prince George and the Central Fraser Valley, and how much they'd like to have another, closer look at the substance of their formative years playing the music of the grandparents.

This course falls on the heels of the latest volume of the Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, entitled "The United States and Canada". I wrote the article for British Columbia, severely cut

down from my original text of 5000 words(!) and a great picture of Phil Thomas, all of which was pared and cut for final production. Even then, the book weighs in at several pounds.

The timing of the course will also naturally fall on the occasion of the October conference of the CSTM (Canadian Society for Traditional Music) in Vancouver, so there should be a major contingent of university students with fiddles and voices at the ready, or at the very least, keen ears to absorb and discover.

I admit to being new to this area, and I'm sure that there are many people who could overwhelm me with the minutiae of their knowledge of BC music, but rather than be daunted, I want to pull all of them together under the roof of the School of Music, and provide them with the scholarship and revelation offered by ethnomusicology, my specialty. If the sun shines right, the course will run regularly, giving all of us "folkies" and academics a fertile ground to plant our ideas and see our provincial and Canadian identity grow and prosper.

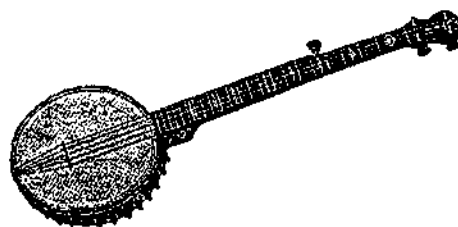
*Norman Stanfield teaches in the School of Music (www.music.ubc.ca) in the University of British Columbia.*

Thanks!

I hope all our readers find this column as interesting as I do, and sincere thanks to the contributors. You will note, though, that several provinces are missing. My hope is that this column will contain interesting and important news about traditional music from every region of Canada. If you would like to contribute, send your material to me. If you know someone who would be a contributor, contact them, and also send their names to me.

This column depends on your input!  
Thanks again, Lorne Brown Editor

Is it difficult to learn to play the banjo?



No, it's as easy as  
3.1415926535897932384626433832795...