We started singing it in 1955. Believe it or not, the song had not been copyright until 1658. In '58 Pete came to us and said they've set up the Woody Guthrie Foundation, would we mind if we signed over all the rights to the Foundation to help raise Arlo? So we signed an official agreement handing it over to the Guthrie Foundation. I think it now goes to the Huntington Foundation. There's one proviso: wherever it's used in Canada it has to say, "Canadian words by the Travellers." Probably the most stirring event was in 1970 with the Toronto teachers in Maple Leaf Gardens. The Travellers sang "Solidarity." It was the most stirring event in all the years we've been through. 18,000 teachers sitting there, 3,000 teachers in the lobby -- the first time the teachers association because the teachers' union -- and they're on their feet. I've never seen a more militant group, and after that they marched out of there and marched to Queen's Park, singing. And I said, "The power of music!"

We were interrupted by the phone ringing, and then spent the rest of our time together pouring over old newspaper clippings and song sheets from the forties. But the phrase "The power of music" kept ringing in my ears.

The Travellers have been singing together for fifty years, a remarkable achievement by any standard. They're sung in all ten provinces and in ten countries. They've sung on picket lines, ice hockey rinks, and in front of 250,000 people on the lawn of the Peace Tower.

Elsewhere in the Bulletin I have mentioned Kathy's earlier CD: Say Hello to the Morning, which I consider among the very best children's CDs I have ever heard. Now for the amazing part. The Ontario Government's Early Years Plan came up with the idea of sending A Smooth Road to London Town home with every newborn baby for the next two years. They also wanted it in French, so Kathy and I worked on that, went back to the studio, reversed roles of lead and backup singers, and happily obliged. The French CD is called "Savez-vous planter des choux?"

From March 31, 2002 on, every newborn baby in Ontario will be sent home with the appropriate CD, English or French, and assorted other goodies. The power of music, indeed.

Exciting News!

Lorne Brown

It is not often that I've been able to give my Ontario Government much credit. But it is here where I may. Some of us may know of The Parent-Child Mother Goose Program, a valuable programme. It teaches parents with infants all sorts of rhymes, tickles, songs, and stories they can use with their children to develop a love for language and music. Traditional Ontario singer Kathy Reid-Nilsson, who does extensive work with young children, was asked by Glenne Janzen of the P-CMG to make a CD of the favourite songs selected by programme leaders across Ontario. They came up with twenty-seven dandies, and Kathy, with the help of her daughter Hannah and the indescribable Ken Whitley, made a treasure of a CD called A Smooth Road to London Town.

Canadian Folk Music Bulletin
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The March, 2001 issue of Chatelaine contains an article on house concerts, featuring Perri and singer Katherine Wheatley giving a house concert in Calgary, Alberta. Jack Cole, proprietor of the Old Chestnuts Song Circle in Kitchener, Ontario, is also quoted.

House concerts are a wonderful way to bring performer and listener together, and it's good to see them receive publicity in a national magazine.
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