Although there had been a successful trial run the year before, August 2008 was the year of what has been officially named the First Princeton Traditional Music Festival. It took place over two days, August 16th and 17th, and there were two concurrently running stages, the Museum Stage and the Billiter Stage. This time the program was divided between individual performances and workshops. The workshops and other group sessions were titled:

- British Rumpty Tump Jam
- Celtic Jam
- French Songs and Music
- Mining Songs
- Logging Songs
- Political Songs
- Ranching & Cowboy Songs
- Sea Songs
- Traditional Ballads

The following performers who had participated the previous year returned in 2008:

- Eric & Betty Armstrong
- Jon Bartlett & Rika Ruebsaat
- Flip Breskin & Zeke Hoskin
- John D. Erskine
- Don Gilbert
- Judith Heather
- Jill King
- Mike Marker
- Rattlebone Band
- Brian Robertson
- Chris Roe
- Skweez (previously Squeeze)
- Ellen Van der Hoeven
- Lyn Van Lidth de Jeude

There were also many new faces:

- Across the Pond
- Alex Atamanenko
- Graham Baldwin
- Celtic Spirit
- Chris Corrigan
- The Cutters
- Bob Doucet
- Joseph Dubé
- Lorne Dufour
- Jim Edmondson
- Glen Esdale
- Fiddle Frazzle
- Fintan the Fish
- Grist to the Mill
- Larry Hanks
- John Henry
- J. D. Howell
- Irish Wakers
This was the schedule at the Museum Stage for the first day:

**Princeton Traditional Music Festival**  
16/17 August 2008

**Performance Schedule**  
Museum Stage, Saturday

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Performance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10:00</td>
<td>Celtic Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00</td>
<td>Alex Atamanenko</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00</td>
<td>Traditional Ballad Loreinne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00</td>
<td>Celtic Spirit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:00</td>
<td>Emily Van Lidth de Jeude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:00</td>
<td>French Songs &amp; Music Workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00</td>
<td>Across the Pond</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00</td>
<td>The Erin Galliers</td>
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In the following survey, the main focus will be on first-time performers at Princeton. First up on the Museum Stage were Celtic Spirit, followed by Princeton’s New Democrat Member of Parliament, Alex Atamanenko. Alex has been singing for many years both as a solo performer and with a group called the Balladeers. He performs regularly in seniors’ homes in the Castlegar area, often singing songs from the folk revival of the sixties, together with songs from B.C. and other parts of Canada. He also sings in Russian, a language he learned in the family home. He was joined in his performance by Lawrence Halisheff on banjo.

Victoria Morris team takes its name from a nearby regional park (formerly agricultural bottom land). They perform in the “border” style: dances originating from and in the style of English counties near the Welsh border. Their “kit” (costume) is top hat, tattered/ragged shirt, dark trousers and blackened faces (disguise, not minstrelsy).
The second workshop featured French, Acadian and Quebecois dance music and francophone songs, in the performance of which Joseph Dubé was joined by Lyn Pinkerton, Rika Ruebsaat, Chris Roe and Skweeze. Joseph Dubé lives in Princeton and sings in local coffee shops and church choirs. He was previously a member of the Movers and Shakers, a seniors' comedy choir, but he took up guitar two years ago to accompany himself singing francophone songs from his family heritage. The next performer, poet Lorne Dufour, is also a B.C. native, although he hails from the north Cariboo region rather than the west Okanagan. Lorne has been a horse logger for thirty-three years and lives at McLeese Lake, between Williams Lake and Quesnel. He has composed poetry for almost forty years, writing about the hardships and humour of life as a logger. His three books are titled *Spit on Wishes*, *Starting from Promise* and *Jacob’s Prayer*.

It was back to British traditional music with *Across the Pond*, and then it was time for the Political Song workshop, which gave the floor to several festival newcomers including Larry Hanks and John Henry as well as such pioneers as Flip & Zeke.

Saturday on this stage was wrapped up by the Irish Wakers, the house band of the Wolf and Hound pub in Vancouver. They play traditional Irish music with passion: instrumentals such as toe-tapping jigs, reels, hornpipes and waltzes as well as singing sea shanties and other traditional songs.

Meanwhile, on the Billiter Stage the Festival’s opening ceremony was followed by a rousing set from the Rattlebone band.

**Billiter Stage, Saturday**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>12:00</td>
<td><em>Spit on Wishes</em>, <em>Starting from Promise</em> and <em>Jacob’s Prayer</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>12:30</td>
<td>Mining Songs Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>13:00</td>
<td>Across the Pond, Across the Pond, Across the Pond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>The Irish Wakers, the house band of the Wolf and Hound pub in Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>14:00</td>
<td>The Bangers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>14:30</td>
<td>The Irish Wakers, the house band of the Wolf and Hound pub in Vancouver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>15:00</td>
<td>The Rattlebone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>15:30</td>
<td>The Rattlebone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Glen Esdale has been playing the bagpipes since the age of eight, and accompanying dancers since he was twelve. He has performed and competed both as a solo player and in bands for many years. In 1985 he traveled to Scotland for the World Grade 3 band championship. Now a resident of Princeton, he regularly plays for highland dances put on by the local Scottish community. Other highlights of his piping career have been playing at the Canadian Highland Dance Championships in 2002 and in the American National Championships in 2005.

Before the first workshop on this stage, which was devoted to Mining Songs interpreted by Jon and Rika, local singer John Henry, Larry Hanks and Jim Edmondson, there was a performance by the duo of Chris Corrigan and Brad Ovenell-Carter. Chris Cor-
Corrigan has been inspired by Jon and Rika to recover and expand B.C. folksong traditions; he creates songs about his home, Bowen Island, and his life there.

The next performers, Simon Trevelyan and Steve Quattrochi, are from Vancouver. With Steve providing accompaniment on banjo and mandolin and Simon on guitar and concertina, they perform what they call “back country” music—Appalachian songs from Anglo-Celtic and African-American traditions: songs of superstition, religion, elopement, feuding, and moonshine.

Bob Doucet, another newcomer to the festival, hails originally from Boston but now makes his home on Bowen Island, where he is a well known and active member of the local music community. A skilled multi-instrumentalist with a powerful voice, Bob has organized monthly “kitchen junkets” on the Island for several years. He is also the founder of Black Sheep Morris dance team.

After Sue Irwin’s concert came the local Okanagan group Fiddle Frazzle. They began playing together in Penticton in November of 2007. The group met one another through the Penticton Music Academy and Skaha Sound where they discovered their shared interest in Celtic music. They played traditional Irish, Scottish and New England dance music.

Fiddle Frazzle’s concert wound up Saturday’s proceedings on the Billiter Stage, but later that night the Morris dancers were back with a dance and light show in which they swapped their normal ‘swords’ (actually sticks) for light sabres modeled on those used by the Jedi in Star Wars. It was spectacular.
The Cutters kicked things off on the Museum Stage on Sunday morning, followed by a workshop in which Lorne Dufour presented more of his poetry and stories about life as a logger, and Brian Robertson, Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat sang songs about the history of the B.C. forestry industry, many of them taken from the Phil Thomas collection. The next workshop featured cowboy and ranching songs, also in part derived from Phil Thomas’ collecting in the B.C. interior, but before that there were performances by Mike Marker and Larry Hanks and by other veterans from the 2007 trial run: Ellen van der Hoeven and the duo Squeeze, now renamed Skweez.

Another of the American pioneers, Chris Roe, provided a solo concert, mixing *a cappella* songs with melodeon tunes and songs in which she accompanied herself on that instrument. The Celtic group Fintan the Fish, drawing on Irish musical traditions, was followed by the Vancouver duo of Lyn Pinkerton and Jim Edmondson. Jim, previously founder and lead singer of the group Three Strong Winds, has a special passion for creating and singing songs for causes he believes in. He teamed up with Lyn nearly a decade ago and their repertoire now includes traditional Appalachian, British and French songs. They also sing sea shanties and folk songs with what they call “nibbling social commentary”.

Tom Rawson involved his audience throughout his set with gospel, old-time and contemporary easy-to-sing-with songs. His day job is teaching grades 1 and 2 in Seattle. Besides teaching and singing, he loves railways, and has traveled thousands of miles by boxcar across North America. He is also a fisherman, which, he says, is how he became a storyteller. Tom cheerfully admits that he has modeled himself to some degree on his idol Pete Seeger. He travels throughout the northwest playing at festivals and coffeehouses, as well as leading community singing at conferences and retreats. He regularly puts on benefits in support of organizations working to reduce military spending and to channel resources to meet human needs. Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat closed the Museum Stage proceedings for the day.

Down the street on the Billiter Stage the first performance was by Grist to the Mill Ceilidh Band. As their name suggests, they play traditional dance tunes—jigs, reels, hornpipes—with energy and enthusiasm at cafés, festivals, farmer’s markets, ceilidh dances, and care facilities. They also sing the traditional folksongs of Ireland, Scotland and Celtic communities in North America.
After a set by J. D. Howell (about whom we unfortunately have no biographical information), it was time for two more workshops. First a session hosted by Simon Trevelyan and featuring sea songs (including a few shanties) sung by, among others, Jill King, Chris Roe, Brian Robertson, John Erskine and The Cutters. This was a vocal tour de force, in contrast to the subsequent Celtic Jam, in which instrumental virtuosity was at a premium. Both group sessions were received most enthusiastically by the audience, and they would become de rigueur at future festivals.

Three sets of folk festival pioneers from 2007 were back next. Don Gilbert was followed by Eric and Betty Armstrong, and they in turn by Brian Robertson. Eventually it was time for Princeton cowgirl poet Lyn Melnechenko. Lyn has been a horsewoman for fifty years, has worked with every aspect of horses and ranching and has many humorous stories to tell about it all. Many of her stories and poems have been printed in her regular column (“Ranching Ain’t Easy”) in the Similkameen News Leader and in such magazines as Reader’s Digest, Western Horseman and America’s Horse, and she has published two books of poetry and drawings called Cowgirls Cuss Too and Truth, Lies and a Whole Bunch of Bullshit. Lyn is a three-time winner at the Kamloops Cowboy Poetry Festival.

After this focus on the Princeton region and the spoken word it was back to rambunctious instrumental music and humorous folk lyrics with the final workshop, titled British Rumpty-Tump. The stage groaned under the weight of three groups (Across the Pond, Grist to the Mill and Rattlebone Band), as well as such lovers of the traditional music of the United Kingdom as Bob Doucet, Paul Lievesley, Chris Roe, and Eric and Betty Armstrong.

Finally it was left to Rika Ruebsaat to mastermind the closing ceremonies and songs, bringing to an end the first, and by all accounts highly successful, Princeton Traditional Music Festival.