

A Peak in Darien

Books

Anne Sawcett. *Whistling Banjo*man George Hector. Otnabeg Editions, 2-20 Front St., Gagetown, N.B. E5M 1A1; <asawcett@nbnet.nb.ca>; <www.otnabeg.com>

Rod Ostad (notator & editor). *Freddy Lang's New Time Fiddle Tunes*. Fiddler's Dream Music, c/o Rod Ostad, 9812 - 93rd Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T6E 2W1; or c/o Freddy Lang, Box 1912, Merritt, B.C. V1K 1B8

Recordings

John Clarke. *Miles on my Heart*. BYK12. (no address on packaging)

James Keelaghan. *Road*. JBM 9901. Jericho Beach Music/Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fbi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

Kathy Kidd & Kongo Mambo. *Hajji*. LOW-0045. Lowrider Records, 318-36 East 14th Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5T 4C9; <lowrider@in2net.com>; <www.lowrider.bc.ca>

Penny Lang. *Some Body Else*. SWPL 9901-02. She-Wolf Records, 4102 St-Urbain, Montreal, QC H2W 1V3; <coma@cpreal.com>; <www.cpreal.com/penny_lang>; Festival Distribution (as above)

Medicine Dream. *Mawio'mai*. CR-7039. Canyon Records Productions, 4143 North 16th St., Suite 6, Phoenix, AZ 85016, USA; <canyon@canyourecords.com>; <www.canyourecords.com>

Dorman Ralph. SS 9908-04. Singong Inc., P.O. Box 6371, St. John's, Nfld. A1C 6J9; <singong@nfld.com>; <www.singong.nfld.com>

Liz Rigney. *Chameleon*. 02 50826. Lizard Productions, Suite 73, 3045 Robie St., Halifax, N.S. B3K 4P6; <lrigney@ctv.ca>

Sara & Kamila. *Sara & Kamila*, P.O. Box 599, Wolfville, N.S. B0P 1X0; <www.sarakamila.com>

The Serpas Brothers. Guillermo & Roberto Serpas, #202, 1333 17th Ave. NW, Calgary, Alta. T2M 0R2

Sticks & Stones. *Tuning In*. W20233. Sticks & Stones, 6819 119th Ave., Edmonton, Alta. T5B 4L9; <sticks_stones@yahoo.com>

Vakdy & Gary Fjellgaard. *Contenders*. SPCD1262. Stony Plain Recording Co., P.O. Box 861, Edmonton, Alta. T5J 2L8; <spcord@telusplanet.net>; <www.stonyplainrecords.com>

Snoozy Waters Sings Hank Williams. BCD122. Borealis Recording Co., 67 Mowat Ave., Suite 233, Toronto, Ont. M6K 3E3; <brc@interlog.com>; <www.interlog.com/~brc>

Comptes rendus / Reviews

[A full file of reviews vanished into cyberspace somewhere between my address and George's last November, with the result that a number of reviews intended for the December issue didn't make it into print, and that means you get a larger whack of reviews than usual this time, even for a double issue. Sorry about all of you who were breathlessly awaiting these reviews.—JL]

Books

Kay Stone. *Burning Brightly: New Light on Old Tales Told Today*. Peterborough: Broadview Press, 1998. 286pp.

Once upon a time, a very curious thing happened. A folklorist-turned-storyteller, like so many folktale heroines before her, walked off into the woods in order to discover why, even in today's hectic world of technological and other marvels, the type of folk narrative known as the "wonder tale" still has great appeal for both professional storytellers and the audiences who hear their stories. The result of this intriguing investigation is *Burning Brightly*, a book which not only is a grand read, but reaches out to touch us all where it truly counts: the heart, the soul and the very core of the human condition—for, as long as human beings have come together, they have regaled one another with stories, including during the last quarter-century, with the renaissance of storytelling all across North America. And so enters Winnipeg folklorist, storyteller, academic, and one-third of the performing storytelling trio known as Earth Kind, Kay Stone, who has given the storytelling community a joyous gift with the publication of her new book, which touches on not only the storytelling revival in general, but a group of selected storytellers whose development and social identification bring an even more dynamic approach to the book's success, including a group of selected story texts which Stone has included to further enhance the reader's enjoyment of the volume.

Stone divides her study into two general sections. In the first, she looks at the overall impact of the storytelling revival which has swept across North America since the early 1970s,

considering especially why storytellers still find the telling of wonder tales, also known as "magical tales" or "fairy tales," so appealing and an integral part of their repertoires, and why these stories also appeal to the audiences who hear them told on festival stages, at story swaps held by local and regional guilds, and at other locales where organized storytelling events take place. She likens the modern revival to a great river, with four separate streams flowing into it, the four areas from which the modern revival has drawn its plethora of modern professional tellers: the oral tradition, school and library settings, the theatrical realm, and the arena of therapeutic and spiritual activity. Through hundreds of interviews, questionnaires and letters, solicited and otherwise, Stone details a fascinating breakdown of where professional tellers got their start, and how this has been reflected in the establishment of storytelling communities across North America, especially in Canada, and the storytelling organizations and festivals that have burgeoned immensely since the late 1970s. Stone has travelled extensively, from the Yukon to Florida, from New Brunswick to California, talking to and interviewing scores of tellers to make this book possible.

Because Stone is most familiar with the current storytelling revival in Toronto, she chose this urban centre for an in-depth study of how the revival began there 20 years ago, with such events as the establishment of the Storytellers' School of Toronto, the beginnings of the annual storytelling festival in 1979, and

the weekly get-togethers of storytellers and their listeners at various locales throughout the city since that year, which has become known as "The Thousand and One Friday Nights of Storytelling." (Though the locales have changed from time to time, there has never been an interruption in these Friday night story gatherings, regardless of weather, holidays or other extraneous causes.) In many cases, this Toronto story community has been the basis for other smaller communities to model their efforts upon, not only throughout Ontario but also across Canada, as far west as Vancouver, Victoria and Calgary, and as far east as Ottawa, Montreal and Fredricton. Stone herself, as an active teller, was instrumental in the organization of the Winnipeg guild, Stone Soup, and founded, along with sister tellers Mary Louise Chown and Jane Cahill, the performing trio Earth Kind, whose own excellent recording of traditional tales and myths will be reviewed at a future date.

In the second section of the book, Stone looks at eight very special tellers, whose backgrounds are as diverse as the stories they have told, and carefully examines their development as tellers, what influences were important to their repertoire development, and why the stories they chose for this volume were important to them, both as tellers and in their own lives. With one exception, Susan Gordon from Maryland, all of them are Canadian: the late Joe Neil MacNeil from Cape Breton, the late Stuart Cameron from Sudbury, four Toronto tellers, Bob Barton, Marilyn Peringer, Carol McGirr and Marvyne Jenoff, and Kay Stone herself. Each teller speaks in his or her own words, giving a personal insight as to why he or she chose the tale to be retold and why each tale was more than just a set performance piece in his or her repertoire. Of the eight tales chosen, only one, Jenoff's modernized "Snow White: A Reflection," is not a traditional text, while Stone's "Curious Girl" is a reworked version of a very short Brothers Grimm story which she has always found strangely delightful but which she felt needed to be developed to give more personal meaning to the female protagonist. The other six are traditional: two are Celtic, "The King of Egypt's Daughter" and the story of "Jack and the Three Feathers"; "The Honest Penny" is Norwegian; "The Horoscope" is French; "The Rosy

Apple and the Golden Bowl" is Russian; and "The Juniper Tree" is taken from The Brothers Grimm.

Even with master tellers, it is often difficult to capture the scope and vibrancy of a tale on a printed page, but Stone has more than ably caught the essence of each tale, as well as the manner of its telling. This especially comes across in the contribution of Joe Neil MacNeil, "The King of Egypt's Daughter" and that of Stuart Cameron, taped in live performance at the 1988 Toronto Storytelling Festival, complete with interruptions when folks entered the room where Cameron was telling the tale, and he masterfully reacted to each interruption, which made his tale all the more enjoyable. Another personal favourite is Marilyn Peringer's story "The Horoscope," a tale from Quebec, told with simplicity, yet with a poetic beauty and charm that amplifies the story of a young man who must avoid dying on his wedding day. Still another favourite is Carol McGirr's rendering of the Russian story "The Rosy Apple and the Golden Bowl," a Slavic counterpart of the well-known British and North American ballad "The Two Sisters," but in this case, with a much happier ending than that which the ballad gives.

Kay Stone has given the storytelling community, in Canada and elsewhere, a book that is much more than just a book; it is a montage of poetry, words spoken to the heart, and wondrous images to behold. Stone has managed to walk into the woods and bring back the water from the well at the world's end; she has entered the depths of the forest and successfully returned with fresh strawberries even though it is in the dead of winter; she has penetrated the realm of darkness and returned with the golden bird of truth, whose song is a restorative to old age, infirmity and a dying spirit; she has brought back the golden apples of youth. Kay Stone has taken us on a magical journey into the heart of a revival of a glorious art form which has been with us for thousands of years; the light of each teller and his or her tale is indeed burning brightly—may that light never fade from the heart and soul of each of us, now and always.

—Robert Rodriguez
NYC

Dr. Skye Morrison and Bill Russell (eds.). *Alex Mulligan's Collection of Square Dance Calls*. Toronto: 1992. 80p. Bill Russell, 63 Havelock Street, Toronto, Ontario M6H 3B3

This is a collection of calls used by Alex Mulligan, who not only called dances himself but tutored other callers as well. Mulligan prepared the material that was the basis for the book for his students, but Morrison and Russell have here reprinted it with some editorial additions. The very fact that original copies of this book had fallen apart through long use speaks to the value of this book to square dance callers.

It should be pointed out that the book was revived and edited for the Canadian Olde Tyme Square Dance Callers Association. (I am immediately on guard when I see "olde tyme" for "old time" on material that clearly postdates these spellings.) Callers inexperienced in this tradition will not find immediately helpful material here, although the book would certainly help such callers to branch out and add some variety to their reper-

toire. A relatively inexperienced caller would also be able to use the book to improve his or her skills. I have some doubts, however, as to whether a caller inexperienced in this square dance tradition would be able to reconstruct the dances from the calls here. I certainly could not. It might be argued that one needs to dance within a tradition before attempting to call, and so the characteristic patterns and calls would be more transparent to these individuals, and I think this is a fair argument. Certainly those familiar with this tradition will get much more from the book than those on the outside.

Morrison and Russell have added two indexes: one alphabetical by title and one organized by type of dance. Beyond these aids to the reader, Mulligan's original arrangement of the material has been maintained. This ordering is so idiosyncratic

as to be somewhat confusing; I can't imagine what the book would have been like before the addition of the indexes.

It's not clear to me why Mulligan's original ordering has been maintained in spite of its inconsistencies. For example, calls are printed on pp. 10 and 11B, with "Square Dance Intros or Openers and Endings or Closers" (p. 11A) interposed. Although the non-square dances (couple, circle and line dances) are separated from the squares, the dances are not arranged by type within this section. The indexes help to make sense of the book, but it's not clear to me what it is about Mulligan's ordering that

makes it worth maintaining rather than simply alphabetizing the dances by form and title.

Material in tribute to Mulligan, photographs and information about his "stubble-jumpers" will be of more interest to friends and students of Mulligan and to folklorists than to those looking simply for a collection of calls and useful information about calling. To those within the old time dance tradition, for whom this book was clearly intended, it will be a wealth of information.

—Michael Pollock
Calgary, Alberta

Edward D. Ives. *Drive Dull Care Away: Folksongs from Prince Edward Island*. Charlottetown: Institute of Island Studies, 1999. ISBN 0-919013-34-1

Here is the kind of book I wish Edith Fowke had written. Rather than being merely a scholarly compilation of folksongs collected by Sandy Ives in Prince Edward Island starting in the late 1950s, this book is a story in itself. Based on his field notes and his wonderful memory, Ives has recreated for us his experiences in collecting these folksongs. There is thus a real narrative flow to the book, making it an easy and enjoyable read.

Even more important, however, is the fact that he sets the songs in their context. We come to know as he did the sources of the songs, and we feel a real connection with the people and the culture. I suspect that this is the first time this type of book has been published, and I hope that it will not be the last.

Reading John Jacob Niles's *Ballad Book* gives me somewhat the same flavour of the background of the sources, but Niles is so well known for having falsified and added to and changed his material that one never knows whether to trust his account or not. And it is not written in a chronological way.

Ives gives you no such difficulties. Here is a great collector, "the dean of Maritime Canadian and Northeastern United States folklore," as Clary Croft puts it, whose academic standards are unquestionable. We get to follow him on his journeys, meet his informants, share his wonderful moments and his failures. It is almost as if we were tagging along beside him, so real is his writing. I would put this book into the rare pantheon of Jean Ritchie's autobiographical *Singing Family of the Cumberlandds*, and Canada's own Alice Kane's memoirs *Songs and Sayings of an Ulster Childhood*.

Included are 62 folk songs, complete with music and lyrics. 14 of these are included on an accompanying CD, so we get to

hear the actual singer and the song, thus giving us subtleties of style that not even Ives's writing can fully describe.

Ives spent only a limited time in the Island, usually a week or so at a time during his holidays, and, as he admits, he was unable to get many Child ballads (which I deeply regret) or any bawdy or obscene material. The other thing I notice to my regret are the many opportunities he had for collecting stories. But stories weren't songs, and he avoided them, and a great treasure chest has now been lost as a result. But a great treasure chest has been found, too, and we are grateful to him. People like Mary Cousins and Charles Gorman come alive. Gems of songs like *The O'Halloran Road* and the *Uncle Dan Song* are now justly preserved.

The book has been edited by Edward MacDonald and the wonderful Laurie Brinklow, and deserves a place on the bookshelf of anyone interested in traditional music. or come to think of it, anyone interested in Canada.

Away, away, away, away -
We will drive dull care away!
And while we're here
with our friends so dear
We'll drive dull care away!
- Charlie Gorman.

Amen.

—Lorne Brown
Toronto

Gale de Vos and Anna Altman. *New Tales for Old: Folktales as Literary Fictions for Young Adults*. Engelwood, Colorado: Teacher Ideas Press, 1999. ISBN 1-56308-447-3. 408pp.

What happens when two extremely talented folks, who just happen to come from Edmonton, with skills in folklore, storytelling, library science, children's literature, and education, get together? Gale de Vos has been a consummate storyteller and educator for many years, with several previous books to her credit, including one dealing with urban legends as told by teenagers, which has been acclaimed by both folklorists and storytellers on both sides of the border. Anna Altman grew up listening to the stories of the Brothers Grimm and is a specialist in both German folk literature and library science. Originally designed as an

article on the reworking of traditional folktales through various aspects of popular modern culture, both de Vos and Altman furthered their researches into the continued endurance of folktales.

The first observation to be made about this book is its sheer size and scope. Following a general first chapter looking at the continuing popularity of traditional tales, through modern reworkings both in print and through cinematic retellings, eight specific and individual tales are looked at in depth: *Cinderella*, *The Frog King*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Rapunzel*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White*. It

was decided to limit the book to tales of European origin, since this is the area of the authors' expertise. To delve into other global traditions would have made the book unmanageable.

In each chapter, de Vos and Altman briefly survey the provenance of each tale, following this with an in-depth look at the printed history of the story. The reader will frequently encounter such major collectors and writers as Italy's Giambattista Basile, France's Charles Perrault, and Germany's Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. De Vos and Altman then analyze various critical interpretations of each tale from various points of view, psychological, anthropological, literary, and folkloristic. Of the eight tales studied, several, including *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Snow White*, have become such classics of literature that entire

volumes have been written on them. As a clever storyteller once put it, "A lot of folks owe their degrees and subsequent careers to the likes of certain fairytale characters who never existed."

De Vos and Altman next turn to the appearance of each story in a myriad of forms: novels, short stories, films, opera, ballet, poetry, and picture books designed for younger readers. The book also features a section on internet resources. In the section entitled "Classroom Extensions," they share ideas and suggestions as to how these tales might be integrated into classroom discussions in courses from social studies to literature. There then follows an extensive bibliography.

—Robert Rodriguez
NYC

Recordings

More New Releases from French Canada

[The French version of these reviews appeared in 33.2, p.34; various vicissitudes prevented the English version from appearing until this issue.]

The year 1998 was an extraordinarily productive one for traditional music, and this was true up to the end of the year, with the release, just before the holidays, of La Bottine Souriante's tenth album. As a whole, this production goes in all directions, from purists to folkies young and old, from traditionalists to the avant-garde. Here are some good examples that I received in the last few months.

Bourque, Bernard and Lepage. *Matapat: Musique traditionnelle du Québec*. BCD 110. Borealis Recording Co., 67 Mowat Avenue, Suite 233, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3E3; <brc@interlog.com>; <www.interlog.com/~brc>; artists' website: <www.microtec.net/~bbltrio>

This disk reunites Benoît Bourque, formerly of the group Éritage, a jigger, singer and accordionist; Gaston Bernard on violin, mandolin and bouzouki as well as on vocals; and Simon Lepage on vocals and bass. The disk presents a very beautiful repertoire of instrumental pieces and songs, beginning with testimony from violinist Pitou Boudreault, and containing songs collected by Marius Barbeau or interpreted by Allan Mills. The arrangements of songs for these three voices touch the heart directly, as does the "Valse Matique," a composition of Benoît Bourque, a glimpse of Cameroon folk in "Matapat," and an un-

forgettable version of "Le chanson des rubans." There is also something original: a setting of the lament "Le Damné," taken from Phillip Aubert de Gaspé's novel *Les Anciens Canadiens*. If the traditional instruments, violin and accordion, have a well-defined personality, here the electric bass tailors for itself a very original place in the crew. This is a disk simply made, with heart, sincerity and generosity. It's an easy listening disk, to enjoy on a rainy day, to draw encouragement from when life presses down too hard, or looking at the sunrise on a beautiful winter morning.

Daniel Roy. *Au tour du flageolet: Musique traditionnelle québécoise/Traditional Music of Quebec*. Mille-Pattes/Musicor MPCD 4440. Les Productions Mille-Pattes, 503, rue Archambault, Joliette, Québec J6E 2W6; <www.millepattes.com>

Well-known traditional pieces on an instrument that is less well known to us, the flageolet, a small instrument that we identify more easily with the tradition of Ireland, fatherland of the tin whistle. The presence of this instrument in Quebec is documented in the 18th and 19th centuries. Traditional pieces by the best Québécois traditional musicians, like Philippe Bruneau and Marcel Messervier, quote from these compositions. The traditional melodies interpreted on this instrument take on a very different colour and texture. One senses that Daniel Roy took

pleasure in gathering around him such excellent musicians as Réjean Archambault, Michel Bordeleau, Michel Faubert, Éric Favreau, André Marchand and Paul Marchand. To create various musical climates, he has brought together traditional musicians with different approaches, like pianists Denis Fréchette of La Bottine Souriante, with his jazzy style, and Danielle Martineau, who sticks to a more sober accompaniment. Roy even treats us to the use of a cello to bring out all the lyricism of one of his own compositions, "Coq du pêcheur."



On songwriting: "It seems like if you don't do the darn song all at once, you lose something.... You don't get the same images; the mood changes."
Joe Adams, Calgary, May 2, 1996

Entourloupe. *La St-Berdondaine: Musique traditionnelle du Québec—Traditional Music of Quebec*. Mille-Pattes/Musicor MPCD-4441. Les Productions Mille-Pattes (see above)

The disk *Au tour du flageolet* revealed Daniel Roy to be an excellent musician. Here we discover that he is also a passionate one. He gathers some of the best musicians of the younger generation: Eric Favreau on violin and piano, Paul Marchand on guitar and feet, and Stéphane Landry on the diatonic accordion. Daniel plays the flageolet, mouth music and percussion. One senses in these four characters a beautiful complicity, a length of experience and a certain eclecticism. The songs, like the instrumental pieces, have been chosen with particular care, as much for their harmonic and melodic richness as for their emotional content: superb melodies and particularly rich texts. With *Enter-*

loupe, a response song is not an invitation to party, but a chance to take the time to savour a rich and beautiful language, a moving story, a teaching. With *Entourloupe*, a reel doesn't trouble itself with being squarely in 8 time; on a whim, it becomes more complex, to show the unbelievable richness of this music at the junction of French, Irish and Scottish traditions. *Entourloupe* interprets this music with the profound simplicity that belongs to great works of art. It is no cliché to say that the music penetrates to the very heart of the Québécois musical tradition. This disk is an absolute "must hear."

La Bottine Souriante. Xième. Mille-Pattes/Musicor MPCD 2040. Les Productions Mille-Pattes (see above)

Eh! Yes, *La Bottine Souriante* have arrived at their tenth disk after a career of more than 20 years and disks that have brought success and prizes one after the other. Their first secret is a powerful energy that has never let up; their second secret is a new sound and unexplored territory. On this tenth disk we find 13 songs and instrumental pieces, with new contributions including pieces from overseas by the Basque accordionist Kepa Junkera and the Finnish violinist Arto Järvelä. The brass section is present as always, imparting to the music an urban neon dynamism. The arrangements are increasingly daring (for example "Un air si doux"), finely finished, flirting cheerfully with jazz

and Dixieland (for example "Margot Fringue"). After so many disks, one could think that they would become repetitious. Hardly: they maintain just enough continuity that the listeners can find themselves. At times they overflow with a hilarious cheerfulness, at others they let themselves go to a soft euphoria, but melancholy? Never heard of it! This disk could be reproached for a lack of unity and simplicity. It takes the listener in a dizzying array of directions. The arrangements are sometimes too heavy, so complicated that essence is lost. For fans, it is the disk that can't be passed up; for those who do not know *La Bottine*, let yourself be surprised.

Ce qu'ils m'ont chanté. Collection Germain Lemieux, s.j. Documents originaux de terrain, 1948-1958. CFOF-1. Centre franco-ontarien de folklore, 38, rue Xavier, Sudbury, Ontario P3C 2B9

September 12, 1998, the Centre franco-ontarien de folklore celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of the first folksong collection in the mid-North of Ontario of the Jesuit father Germain Lemieux. To mark this event, they have, among other things, produced a cassette of 21 songs collected by father Lemieux between 1948 and 1958, from source singers ranging in age from 19 to 82 years. This cassette was also a way of paying a particular homage to the singers who entrusted their songs to the tape recorder of the Jesuit folklorist. The cassette contains an extremely varied repertory, from laments to response songs, with satirical songs, songs of drunkards and drinking, enumerative

songs and several beautiful versions of "Petit Mari." The original recordings having been cleaned electronically, and this documentary investigation is pleasant, even captivating, listening. However, the booklet should have contained a short word of explanation and the text of the songs, even if those are already published in other collections.

—Donald Deschênes
Beauport, Québec
translator: Steven Méthot
Calgary, Alberta

Hart-Rouge. *Beaupré's Home*. H13-0297. Folle Avoine Productions, Highway 13 Musique, 5156 Fabre, Montréal, Québec H2J 3W5; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant Street, Vancouver British Columbia V5L 2X7

When a musical performer or group transcends one musical style to appeal to a different audience, say from country to pop, they are known as a "cross-over" act. However, it's a sad fact of life that very few artists can bridge the gap between our two linguistic solitudes. In its long career, Hart-Rouge have attempted to appeal to folk and pop listeners, to English and French audiences, and they've had some moderate success doing so.

I vividly recall the first time I had the opportunity to hear Hart-Rouge and see them perform, in Montréal at a Canada Day

celebration. To tell the truth, the acts appearing with them were all considered by the "in crowd" as has-beens, never-had-beens, or people too unknown to have warranted an invitation to the much larger Fête Nationale bash the week before. People attended the concert to while the time away before watching the fireworks. That night they were in for a pleasant surprise; the fireworks started on stage, with Hart-Rouge's electrifying performance. While Hart-Rouge have had some success in the francophone world, winning a SOCAN award in 1991 for their second album, *Inconditionnel*, they have yet to achieve the same level

of recognition in English Canada, and that's a pity.

Well into their second decade together, Hart Rouge continue the juggling or balancing act between styles and cultures with their seventh album, *Beaupré's Home*. As they have abandoned their western home for Montréal, one might expect a more urban or jazzy feel to their album; however, while there is a certain sophistication to the production and the instrumentation, there is still enough here to attract an audience interested in folk and roots music. The album is billed as a "road album about trying to find your way home," and is dedicated to Édouard Beaupré, the "Willow Bunch Giant," who died on the road with the circus in the 19th Century and was buried in his home town (and that of Hart-Rouge) nearly a century later. A haunting, homeless feel does pervade the album, a thread running through original compositions, songs by Zachary Richard, Lenny Gallant, Nanci Griffith, Connie Kaldor and Roy Forbes, as well as several traditional pieces.

Instrumentation is sparse and mostly acoustic, highlighting the tight vocals and the beauty of the lyrics. This is most highly pronounced on the more contemporary pieces, but seems to falter a bit on the traditional ones. Suzanne Campagne's voice is beautiful, but seems more suited to the adult contemporary world

and, dare I say it, pop. Suzanne really shines on songs like Connie Kaldor's "I Go Out Walking." There is a wonderful rendition of Lenny Gallant's "Destination" and, for those who don't realize that Cajun can be more than just "Eh toi!" in-your-face party music, a soulful rendition of Zachary Richard's "Sunset on Louisianne." The original compositions are the jewel of this CD, however, saving it from being just another easy-listening contemporary folk album. Michelle Campagne's "Peine" and Suzanne Campagne's "On the Edge" are true works of the poetic art, and Michelle's "Ramona" reveals the heart of a storyteller.

Concept albums don't always work; either they are too clever, and soon date themselves, or they are too abstract to hold a common theme together. I wasn't sure what the point of this album was, apart from the dedication to Édouard Beaupré's long road trip, until the last chord of the last piece, "À la Claire Fontaine." Most listeners will recognize this beautiful traditional piece and, without spoiling the surprise, it doesn't go on or end where you would suppose it should. Neither does life, love, the pursuit of happiness or the career of this unique Canadian group. You're never sure where they're going next.

—Steven Méthot

Chris Rawlings. *Rocks and Water*. CF04-2. Cooking Fat Music, c/o Chris Rawlings, 67 Wrenson Road, Toronto, Ontario M4L 2G5; <wrenfolk@interlog.com>; <www.interlog.com/~wrenfolk>; Edviro Enterprises Inc., c/o Peter Russell, 402-4 Willow Street, Waterloo, Ontario N2J 4S2

"Rocks and Water" is an area that Chris Rawlings must have exclusively to himself. The 13 songs on this recording describe the geological processes: the rock cycle; the saturated zone; living on a layercake; mountains; groundwater; wetland wonderland; and sweet and sour rain. The vocabulary of the songs indicates that a fair bit of research has gone into them, and that the topics discussed are scientifically correct.

As my interest in rocks was a collection of anything fancy in my younger days, and my interest in water was for swimming and surf life-saving, I can't profess to getting wrapped up in these songs now, so they must be for the younger set, specifically, older elementary school children who are being introduced to these concepts in their science classes.

A live presentation of the material would allow for discussion and specific introductions to the topics; the CD would

be great for revision. I haven't seen the teacher's manual, but it would need to be used by someone with a good imagination and interest in the subject. One of the songs mentions the below-ground features of Ontario, but then there are references to acid rain, the mountains and the sea—topics that would fit various areas Canada, rather than just one.

The songs are presented in a medium-to-slow tempo, with a bass and electric guitar featured, and on occasion a children's chorus or a little trumpet and sax appear. Three of the songs are in French, which suggests bilingual science classes. Because of the nature of the vocabulary (and not having the words), it was difficult to sing along with the songs, and I believe it would be difficult to keep them memorized for any length of time.

—Dave Foster
Calgary, Alberta

Various. *The Bridges of Cape Breton County(s)*. CECD 002. Celestial Entertainment, 393 Newlands Avenue, Sydney, Nova Scotia B1S 1Z5; <bvmckinnon@ns.sympatico.ca>

"Bridges come in many different shapes and locations. Some cross rivers and streams. Other bridges support four strings on a fiddle. These are the bridges of our hearts... reaching out across time to bring centuries of music and tradition together."

So say the liner notes from one of the latest compilation albums to come from Cape Breton, *The Bridges of Cape Breton County(s)*. While the quote says little about the actual artists that appear on the album, it does say a lot for the passion that these Capers grew up with and retain for their music. I say "their" music, for it is unique to that small patch of land on Canada's east coast; nowhere else in the world does the music

ring quite as pure and as proudly as in Cape Breton. That the Bretoners realize this and celebrate it has kept the music alive and vibrant for hundreds of years. It has also resulted in many compilation albums lately; true to Cape Breton form, the album focuses on the strength of the music itself and its ability to transform and flourish in the hands of many, instead of praising the abilities of only one or two artists.

Like a kitchen party sent from heaven, *The Bridges of Cape Breton County(s)* brings together some of the Island's finest to get your toes tapping and heart smiling for many hours. This is one ceilidh that never ends (unless of course your Disc-

man runs out of batteries!). The spirit of the music is alive and kicking in every cut, from a traditional dance set by legends such as Buddy MacMaster and Carl MacKenzie, to medleys from today's masters Jerry Holland and J.-P. Cormier, to haunting airs from the debut album of Jennifer Roland. 16 artists, 16 fabulous cuts.

The setting and accompaniment are for the most part traditional, the songs are common tunes you would find in the repertoires of most Cape Breton fiddlers, and the musicians are

Finest Kind. Heart's Delight. FAM 03CD. Fallen Angle Music, 285 Spencer Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1Y 2R1;
<ianrobb@magi.com>; <www.magi.com/~ianrobb/>

Ottawa's Finest Kind consists of three people with different musical passions and backgrounds and quite different ways of singing. As a result, their collaborations involve a refreshing mix of music and some items that show some rather startling influence on one another. Shelley Posen, who generally sings bass, is a folklorist who delights in Irish music, particularly in its Ottawa Valley incarnation. On this CD, this style takes on a strong whiff of fish, with the inclusion of some Newfoundland ballads. Thought you'd heard the last of "The Squid Jiggin' Ground"? Try this arrangement on for size! And Posen's new "No More Fish, No Fishermen" brings this strain up to date.

But wait... Ian Robb has a voice and a sensibility straight out of the British pub. Don't get me wrong, I'm not accusing him of too much tipping. Robb's voice was built for tenor, but can also extend into a rich baritone range when harmonies suggest it: so can Posen's bass. But this grassroots tradition of musical content and, especially, singing and harmonizing style finds its way into many of the group's non-pub songs. In fact, it shows up in "No More Fish," which is set to the old carol "See Amid the Winter's Snow." Robb's "Homeless Wassail" continues the Christmas theme, with modern hard times lyrics drawn from the cold streets of Toronto. Even closer to both sides of the pub tradition is a setting of Robert Service's "In Praise of Alcohol" not original to Finest Kind, but right down their alley.

Several of the other pieces on this CD come from the British repertoire, including traditional pieces such as "April Morning" and "The Mermaid," which will probably be familiar to most people. Familiarity breeds a very strong desire to sing along, and then you can have fun picking out which harmony you prefer, or mixing and matching, or adding an additional line of your own. Close three-part harmony is what this group does best and what brings me out to collect each of their CDs.

Finest Kind's third (at least in this listing) member is Ann Downey. Quite unlike "the female vocal" part, her voice is a

masters of the Gaelic sound. In almost all cuts, the tapping of feet can be heard in the music, keeping time to the heartbeat of Cape Breton Island. This is an album that is celebrating tradition, not breaking it.

This is a great album, a compilation appetizer that will introduce you to, and tickle your taste buds for, the music of Cape Breton.

—Keitha Clark

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

rich alto. This allows vocal lines and harmonies that cross over with the men's, with very rewarding results. As the liner notes for "Jordan" say, when three people try to sing a four-part song, she ends up creating an intriguing hybrid of original alto and treble parts, and, I'd be willing to bet, some of the tenor is there too. Downey also contributes a background in and love of southern US music, traditional country and 20th-Century blues tradition. Her pieces include bluegrass-derived "Down at the End of Memory's Lane" and a fine arrangement of the Hank Williams recording "Someday You'll Call My Name"—with shades of "Danny Boy," resident in the original, brought to the fore.

While British ballads and Canadian Irish ballads may seem to have a natural kinship, Downey's tastes might seem a bit out in left field. However, listening to Finest Kind's arrangements, one begins to see the connections. But they are apparently not alone in bringing together the two. The group enjoys singing traditional shape note music—albeit with a missing part—and this heritage is also beginning to find enthusiastic adherents in Britain. The transfusion is two-way. There is increasing enthusiasm on this side of the pond for West Gallery music, which descended from the same 18th-Century roots. I expect to see Finest Kind put out something in the future from this tradition too, all the better that West Gallery uses instruments besides the voice. The fiddle and concertina parts Finest Kind incorporates so well (with a little help from some friends) will fit right in.

The CD's introduction of the group says they "like to startle," and they share an affection for old songs and new songs that sound old, and get a kick out of tight harmony. I share those passions, and I find that Finest Kind not only like those things but do them superbly well. Heart's Delight is the group's second CD, and I like it just as much as I liked the first (Lost in a Song). I hope they keep going in the same style for a good long time and become somewhat of their own tradition.

—Mryka Hall-Beyer
Calgary, Alberta

Tamarack. 13. FE1433D. Trend Records, 47 Racine Road #6, Toronto, Ontario M9W 6B2; Folk Era Records, 705 S. Washington Street, Napierville, Illinois 60540-6654, USA; <folkera@loopback.com>, <www.FolkEra.com>

Tamarack is a long-established Canadian folk group: the CD title states this simply. It's their thirteenth, and in a fit of whimsy they have made sure it includes 13 tracks. They have gained a reputation for creating new songs about old folk themes, and their concerns range over the whole of the North American con-

continent. Most are Canadian, but they have a following in the US as well, and occasionally manage to accommodate that geography (Thirteen gets only as far as South Dakota, but some songs have no specific setting).

Tamarack is a fairly large vocal group and adds extensive

instrumental backup and solos. This makes for interesting listening, but personally I prefer groups with few enough lines that I can pick out the harmonies and hope to imitate them with only a couple of friends or a lot of fingers on the keyboard. That is personal preference; readers who like big groups will probably be pleased by Tamarack.

The subject matter may be from the last century in a few cases, but the songs are new. Even when the content is new, they offer traditional themes: hard times, road trips, family, bad guys and the good old days. Oh, yes, and of course a love song. There is a pleasing variety of styles, showcasing different group members. Some are ballads, some blues, even some Motown in

"Mills of Massachusetts." It is perhaps a CD that listeners will skip around in to find their favourite styles, rather than listening to it from start to finish.

Tamarack has a firmly established place in modern Canadian folk style, creating new songs with interesting melodies and harmonic textures without straying so far that it ceases to be folk. Certainly it is not within the thread of traditional music, except in its subject matter. Thirteen does not contain music that "sounds old."

—Mryka Hall-Beyer
Calgary, Alberta

Tamarack. *Muskoka's Calling*. SGB29. SGB Productions, Box 714, Guelph, Ontario N1H 6L3; <gormorse@sentex.net>

The first review I wrote for the Bulletin, back in 1982, was of an LP by a trio, Randy Sutherland, James Gordon and Jeff Beck, who called their recording, and later their band, *Tamarack*. Although I liked many things about the LP, I criticized it on several counts. One was execution—the group's vocals could have used more work before they were satisfied with what ended up on the record (a common failing of people doing their first recording). Another was representation: although the disc was subtitled "Music of Canada," much of the music was not in fact Canadian, and the Canadian music was so eclectically arranged that its Canadianness was swamped by other influences. (Nothing wrong with that, unless you're holding yourself out as a standard-bearer of tradition—but that's what they were doing.) Thirdly, while the group were masters of many instruments and many instrumental styles, they seemed to be trying to hit us with every arrow in their quiver, without regard as to whether it suited the material—and often it didn't.

Tamarack survived my negative words and almost 20 years later are a fixture on the Canadian folk scene (although the last founding member has left the group since *Muskoka's Calling* was recorded). Nowadays they're thoroughly professional—their recordings are impeccably played and sung, and their arrangements and production are tasteful (or are we so used to Canadianness being swamped by other influences that we just don't notice any more?).

As to my other complaint, the group get around being non-traditional by no longer representing themselves as practitioners of Canadian traditional music—indeed, some onstage comments by a member once gave me the impression that he doesn't much like Canadian traditional music. Nevertheless, a case can be made for them as representatives of a new tradition, which they had a big part in developing—that of the Canadian "historical songwriter" (as Paddy Tutty phrased it in her Bulletin interview, 33.2, p.14). Tamarack certainly didn't invent this genre; numerous people before them wrote songs based on episodes from Canadian history, and around the time that Tamarack were developing their style, a certain Stan Rogers was actively writing in the same vein. Nowadays, groups such as Tanglefoot might be said to be descendants of the Tamarack/Rogers genesis. Nevertheless, Tamarack stand out in their writing as being able to personalize history: rather than recounting events as an impartial

narrator, they put themselves inside the head of an imagined participant in the events. Tamarack make us feel that we know that person, and through him or her, we know what it was like to have lived in those times—a talent shared in miniature with the best historical novelists. Again, Stan Rogers was a master of this technique—I wonder who learned what from whom....

So what brings me to write about another Tamarack recording after all this time? Ontario's cottage country has always been a big part of my life, even though I now live 2000 miles from it. Some of my own songwriting springs from that part of the country (e.g., "The 'Segwun' is Steamin' Again," 18.4, p.11). I was curious as to whether Tamarack's vision of Muskoka is far from my own experience. All the songs on *Muskoka's Calling* are about the district and its history and economics (which in Muskoka's case are one and the same; this is not a region noted for great military or political events; the lives of its people and the work they did are what's been most important in its past). The only possible exception is the evocative title song, but Muskoka's special ambiance is a major factor in what is now its most important industry, tourism. "Muskoka's Calling" is sung by Molly Kurvink, who takes the lead on the other "atmosphere" songs, "Maynard's Big Front Porch" and "Up on the Verandah" (the other two songs which deal with tourism, from the points of view of modern summer cottagers and of guests at the old-fashioned grand hotels) and "Three Mile Lake" (the hardships of homesteading in Muskoka, a doomed enterprise at best, but with the compensations of being able to live in a gorgeously scenic area). "Muskoka Road" echoes that theme, with a more rough-and-ready humorous approach. Other songs come from the forest industries ("Tugboat Days," "Booms Out on the Lake," "Maple Syrup") and historic events and situations ("Huntsville Fire," "The Anglo-Canadian Leather Company Band"). "Pride of Muskoka" is the only other "minor inland waters" steamboat song I know of, other than "The S.S. Minto" from BC.

So-called "concept albums" nowadays tend to deal rather loosely with their subject matter, and few stick to their theme as closely as this album. Either the members of Tamarack all have close connections to Muskoka, or they've done their research well. Maybe both. (The CD bears a Muskoka Tourism imprint, but it's unclear whether it was commissioned as a theme album,

or whether the group came up with the concept themselves and sold the District on it. If the former, the album's evocation of the Muskoka flavour is even more impressive.) The singing is uniformly clear and mostly free of mannerisms (although Alex Sinclair's tendency to drop his voice at the end of phrases is a tad distracting on "Maple Syrup"). The lyrics are the important thing on these songs, and the vocal styles don't get in the way. The instruments support the singers seamlessly. And I particularly like the *a capella* "big chorus" singing on "Pride of Muskoka," but that's just me.

I can pick a few nits (not that I could ever resist...), in no particular order. Whatever the maps say, the river through Huntsville was never called the "Muskoka" by Huntsvillians (maybe things have changed since I lived there, but it wasn't so in the days when the Huntsville Fire took place). The group pronounce the name of the "R.M.S. Segwun" as "seg-wun," rather

than "see-gwun," the proper pronunciation from the days when my father and my uncle worked on her—but I'm afraid this error is almost universal nowadays. I have to point out that "fiery inferno" in "The Huntsville Fire" is repetitious redundancy. Lastly, clever but borderline rhymes (e.g., "clear it/spirit," "awoke her/Muskoka," "favourites/prayed for it/savour it," all in "Muskoka Road"; "call it/wallet," "mountain/accountant," in "Three Mile Lake") work well in humorous songs, but I find them distracting in songs that are supposed to be serious. The face of the songwriter is too visible. But maybe Tamarack have a secret smile on their faces.

To sum up, Tamarack's Muskoka isn't always the same as my Muskoka, but it's usually close—and all of it sure feels like *somebody's* Muskoka.

—JL

Tom Lewis. Mixed Cargo. BCD116. Self Propelled Music, PO Box 1095, Salmo, BC V0G 1Z0; 1-800-SEA-DOG1; <seadog@netidea.com>; <www.folk.emich.edu/~tomlewis>; Borealis Recording Co., 67 Mowat Avenue, Suite 233, Toronto, Ontario M6K 3E3; <brc@interlog.com>; <www.interlog.com/~brc>

The latest recording from Tom Lewis is pleasant listening and reveals Tom's voice to good advantage. Tom spent 24 years in the Royal Navy before washing ashore in British Columbia and taking up a career in folk music.

This CD has 21 songs, all of which are vocals. Two-thirds of the songs are *a cappella*, and the remainder are sparingly accompanied by concertina, banjo or guitar. Most of the songs are from studio sessions, with a few from live performances. Tom's voice seems to acquire additional spirit in the presence of an audience. Tom is joined on half of the songs by some of his mates, all male voices. Tom and friends enunciate clearly throughout, and produce some nice harmonies. Four of the songs are traditional, and five were written by Tom himself.

It is noteworthy that the more powerful songs on this album are in fact Tom's own songs. Perhaps the most heartfelt is "Some Mother's Son," about one of the horrors during the late troubles in Northern Ireland. It's the kind of song that will stab deep into the heart of many listeners.

Only a few songs on this CD captured my imagination. Tom's own "Peking," about one of the last and largest of sailing ships, a four-masted steel barque built in 1911, does have a particular fascination. That may be in part due to the enigmatic and haunting line "Peking was the name still made sailors' blood freeze." The liner notes don't explain why Tom would have written a warmly nostalgic song about a ship and in the same song imply such horrors associated with her that the mere name could freeze the blood of sailors some 60 years after her retirement. I've been unable to find any indication that *Peking* was in any way a particularly unlucky or unpleasant or dangerous ship, other than that her dozen or so major voyages were from Europe to the west coast of South America and back via stormy Cape Horn. This is a route for which she was specifically designed and built.

The song was inspired by a film, *Peking Battles the Horn* (also called *Peking at Sea*), with reportedly hair-raising footage taken during a sail-training voyage around Cape Horn in 1929-30. The footage was taken by Captain Irving Johnson, who also wrote a book entitled *Peking Battles the Horn*. The ship, the film, and the book are all at the South Street Seaport Museum in New York.

The song "Peking" exemplifies both the nautical and the nostalgic themes of this CD. Half of the songs have the nautical connection, such as Tom's "An Ex-Sailor's Life." Half of the songs are farewells or songs of nostalgia. Many of the latter, such as Bill Caddick's "The Writing of 'Tipperary'" are from or about the two World Wars.

Also worthy of mention is Tom's song "Showers," about how just one shower is not nearly enough to cleanse the stench of diesel oil and ingrained body odour that a sailor acquires during an extended cruise on a diesel submarine. The song is not a great song, but the immediacy of the words and presentation give us a strong sense that it could have been sung to the wry and appreciative applause of those very submariners. As there is no date of composition given, we can't be sure.

There are a few Canadian connections, in Larry Kaplan's "Wreck of the Bayrupert," Tom's own "HMCS Sackville" and "Rolling Home (to Nova Scotia)," with words by Charles McKay. Otherwise, the album has very much a British focus.

The engineering on this recording is clear but uninspired. There is an obvious adjustment of the stereo mix early in the first track and another glitch on track 9. The spoken phrase at the end of track 13 is indecipherable at a normal listening level. The CD booklet includes the words for the songs, an excellent touch that I always appreciate.

—James Prescott
Calgary, Alberta

Half the Sky. Lou Keresztes, 940 Lake Twintree Crescent SE, Calgary, Alberta T2J 2W3; <lgkeresz@halfthesky.com>; <www.halfthesky.com>
Half the Sky. Naked as Moonlight. DTE 1002. (as above)

I once went through the agonizing, frustrating, exhilarating experience of making an independent recording with a Celtic band I was part of. We released our cassette and waited for the reviews. The most puzzling one was the person who raved about how much she loved it, how terrific it was, how *mellow* we were. Mellow. Mellow was not the sound we were going for, ever. Even after I listened to the tape carefully a few hundred times, "mellow" was not what I heard. But she heard, and loved, our "mellow" sound.

I recount this experience as a warning to all musicians, reviewers and readers of reviews. What we hear, and how we respond to it, is so subjective that I fear what I am about to say may cause you to turn the page, or may bring the members of Half The Sky to their feet in indignation (or worse). I enjoyed these two recordings—enjoyed their interesting arrangements, smooth vocals, tight harmonies, excellent instrumental playing and creative songwriting. This band is very easy to listen to.

And that's what I'm worried about—easy-listening folk? Half of you are already turning the page. Isn't "easy-listening" a pop term, and a damning one at that? Perhaps. But I really liked these two easy-listening recordings by Calgary band Half The Sky. There is nothing traditional about the songs, unless you include the fiddle, mandolin and whistle licks. They vary from contemporary folk ballads to jazzy instrumentals to the occasional pop-sounding anthem. Listen to "While I Make Love With You." It's not what you might expect from a song with that title. It's all executed with taste, polish and apparent ease.

Most of the songs on these two recordings are creations of

vocalist, guitarist and fiddler Shaun Coburn, and while they're not all great, there are some very memorable moments, including "Katie," the portrait of a woman remembering her men lost to the sea, the bluesy "Sometimes It's Good To Cry," and a little love song called "Through The Night." Some of the other band members contribute songs as well. Singer Gail Korchinski's "My Irene" wraps a new melody and storyline around the familiar "Goodnight Irene." Guitarist Mark Vangool rocks on a guitar instrumental called "Mr. Memory," and there are ballads by bassist Lou Keresztes and pianist Graham Neumann.

Instrumentally, the band is tight—also well recorded and mixed. The guitars, bass and additional colour from violin, mandolin, flute and whistles provide a solid instrumental base for the featured vocals, which are consistently strong. I especially like the work of pianist Graham Neumann throughout, a subtle keyboard voice that occasionally rises to the surface. The vocals, especially the seamless harmonies of the female voices (Kim Thiessen and Wendy Schellenberg on the first album, Thiessen and Gail Korchinski on the second), give Half The Sky its unique, easy-to-listen-to sound. While the personnel changed slightly from the first recording to the second, the band managed to maintain its characteristic warm vocal personality.

Sometimes pop-sounding, sometimes smooth and warm—hey, even mellow: I enjoyed both these recordings by Half The Sky.

—Jean Mills
Guelph, Ontario

Diego Marulanda and Pacande. Por el Sol. PACA002. Diego Marulanda, PO Box 364, Station P, 704 Spadina Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2S9; <pacande@globalserve.com>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant Street, Vancouver, British Columbia V5L 2X7; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

The Toronto-based Latin band Pacande, formed in 1994, released its first CD in 1996, featuring music and lyrics by band leader Diego Marulanda. Por El Sol, the band's second CD, was nominated for a Juno Award in the Best Global Album category. Again, all music and lyrics are by Diego Marulanda. Funding for Por El Sol was provided by the Canadian Heritage Department and the Toronto Arts Council.

Diego Marulanda was born in Colombia, and came to Toronto in 1985. A self-taught musician, he played in folk bands in Bogotá, mainly on panpipes, and wrote his first piece at the age of eight. Before founding Pacande, he played in several Toronto groups, including the folk ensemble Nazka. Pacande also includes Richard Morales (bass and percussion) and Wilson Acevedo (percussion), both originally from Colombia; Alex Godinez (percussion), Toronto-born of Latin American heritage; Lisa Lindo, a classically-trained vocalist, originally from Jamaica; Luis Orbegoso (percussion), from Peru; and Alex Russel, a classically trained flautist. All of Pacande's members perform in other ensembles—for example, Wilson Acevedo is the leader of the wonderful salsa band Grupo Moro (unfortunately, no CD

yet)—and all of the band members support themselves financially with other jobs. It is a credit to Diego Marulanda that he has put out two CDs of his own music and poetry while working full time at an unrelated job.

His compositions mix African, Latin and jazz elements, and feature rhythms from the Atlantic coast of Colombia, which are listed for each piece on the back of the CD, a very useful feature. Rhythms include *cumbia*, *son*, *chande*, *palenquero* and *porro*. Jazz influences are noticeable in some pieces, including the solo flute featured on the first number, "Por el Sol," and the long instrumental close at the end of track 5, "Amarillo." Overall, the arrangements are a fine blend of traditional and modern elements. Complete Spanish texts and partial English and French translations are given for each song. Some of the poetry is very lyrical; for example:

Senores llevo el amarillo....—"Yellow-colour of joy, flavours of orange and melon/slices of hope/giving colour to my guiro and life to my bongo/the rumba begins."

Que aquí entre mi guitarra duerme la luna—"Inside my

guitar sleeps the moon."

Una mariposa alegre se levanta ana juaquina....—"A flurry of autumn leaves and a lone butterfly/carry a thousand reminders of my people and/a promise made to share the songs of my land."

The print and design of the jacket make reading the text and translations a little difficult. Since the words are so beautifully crafted, I would love to see them more clearly.

The band does not use synth, and may feature traditional Latin American instruments. However, it does use electric bass, a problem I have with many contemporary Latin bands, in that the sound seems to me to be too detached from the acoustic instruments and too prominent in the overall texture. I prefer an

all-acoustic sound; however, I'm sure most young audiences don't have this problem.

In the summer of 1999 the band performed at the PanAm Games in Winnipeg and at folk festivals in Dawson City and Whitehorse. They also toured Western Canada in 1998, performing in Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver; in 1997 they performed at the Montreal Jazz Festival. For Diego Marulanda, it is important that everyone in the audience feel the infectious nature of the rhythms, whether they know the Latin steps or not. Por el Sol is a vibrant addition to the Canadian Latin music scene.

—Leslie Hall
Toronto, Ontario

Dave Gogo. Bare Bones. Ragged Pup Records, 3717 Harriet Road, Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 3T3; <www.raggedpup.com>

If the thought of one more guitar-thrashing rocker unplugging to (a) make a pale stab at being Bob Dylan or (b) show you that his roots are in "da Blooze" makes you want to run screaming from your CD player, don't be too quick to judge Nanaimo's Dave Gogo on his acoustic blues debut. An electric guitarist of international reputation in the Stevie Ray Vaughn mold, Gogo here shows consistent genius as an acoustic guitarist, playing convincing Delta blues with a flat-pick on Bukka White's "Aberdeen Mississippi Blues" and the traditional "In My

Time Of Dying," plus a boundary-stretching set list ranging from his own "Halfway To Memphis" to Tom Waits's "San Diego Serenade," with a stop at Captain Beefheart's "Crazy Little Thing" (properly credited to the good Captain's real name, Don Van Vliet). Backed by acoustic bass and harmonica, playing National steel, acoustic and fuzz-bass guitars, Gogo delivers a challenging and satisfying disc.

—Tim Williams
Calgary, Alberta

Francine McLure. Climène. Karo Productions. Distribution Plages Ltée, C.P. 5621, Caraquet N.-B. E1W 1B7; <plages@nbnet.nb.ca>; <www.plages.net>

Francine McLure chante depuis plus d'une trentaine d'années et a fait partie de plusieurs groupes musicaux. Elle est ce qu'on pourrait appeler une chanteuse de rue. Au centre-ville de Moncton, beau temps, mauvais temps, elle chante sur le trottoir de la rue Main et, le samedi matin, au marché des fermiers. Avec sa bonne connaissance du répertoire traditionnel acadien, elle propose sur son disque des pièces moins connues, d'une rare beauté, ayant comme thèmes l'amour, la guerre et l'exil, comme

Climène, Le Départ pour les Îles, Là-haut sur ces montagnes. Elle a ajouté à cet éventail trois compositions originales. Les arrangements sont faits avec des instruments acoustiques, principalement guitare et mandoline. Malgré quelques réserves quant à la réalisation, c'est un disque qui s'écoute bien, qui présente un répertoire d'une grande originalité, et fait par une chanteuse généreuse.

—Donald Deschênes

Festival Mémoire et racines, Collection Souvenir Volume 2. Extraits des éditions 1997 et 1998. Lanaudière : Mémoire et Racines, C.P. 4, Joliette, Qc J6E 3Z3; <festival@memoireracines.qc.ca>; <www.memoireracines.qc.ca>

Le Festival Lanaudière : Mémoire et racines est le seul festival de musique folk au Québec. Il se tient tous les ans durant la dernière fin de semaine complète du mois de juillet, dans la région de Joliette, à une centaine de kilomètres de Montréal. Collection Souvenir Volume 2 nous propose les meilleurs moments de la grande scène des éditions 1997 et 1998 du festival. On y trouve une variété de pièces à saveur folk qui va du reel au gospel en passant par le bluegrass et la musique cajun, avec des

artistes de grande qualité du Québec, des autres provinces du Canada, de la Nouvelle-Angleterre et de France.

Conjuguant spontanéité et sens artistique, et à partir des meilleurs enregistrements, on a fait un montage serré de façon à retrouver à l'écoute l'atmosphère si particulier de la grande scène du festival et de ses moments les plus forts. Un festin de musique varié et riche qui nous entraîne vers de belles découvertes.

—Donald Deschênes

Mademoiselle, Voulez-Vous Danser? Franco-American Music from the New England Borderlands. SFW CD 40116. Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, Centre for Folklife Programs and Cultural Studies, 955, L'Enfant Plaza, SW, Suite 7300, MRC 953, Washington, DC 20560; <folkways@aol.com>; <www.si.edu/folkways>

En 1999, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings a produit un CD avec les représentants les plus significatifs de la musique traditionnelle franco-américaine en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Il est dédié

à Martha Pellerin, musicienne et chanteuse active dans son milieu et décédée depuis. Sont rassemblés sur ce disque les groupes Chanterelle, Dent-de-Lion, les Franco-Américains,

Nightingale, Marcel Robidas and the Maple Sugar Band, de même que les frères et fils Bernard, Normand, Marc et Michael Ouimet ; des chanteurs et chanteuses comme Martha Pellerin et Lucie Therrien ; des musiciens comme Rodney Miller, Dudley et Jacqueline Laufman, de même que Laurier et Henry Riendeau. Le disque présente un mélange équilibré de musiciens et chanteurs traditionnels et professionnels, avec des extraits de disques et des extraits de la captation d'une veillée traditionnelle. En plus de pièces et de chansons traditionnelles bien connues du répertoire canadien-français, tels La Bastringue, La Guignolée, Le Grain de mil, Le reel de Sainte-Anne, La Grondeuse, on y retrouve quelques compositions traitant de ce patrimoine, des liens toujours étroits avec les cousins canadiens, par exemple.

Le disque est accompagné d'un livret très bien documenté

qui débute avec une présentation de la tradition française en Nouvelle-Angleterre, de la force de cette tradition musicale et de ses principaux acteurs. Celle-ci est suivie d'une présentation étoffée de chacune des pièces et des interprètes, avec photos. Le feuillet contient également de brèves bibliographie et discographie, de même que les coordonnées des groupes, chanteurs et musiciens participants. À défaut d'inclure au livret les paroles des chansons, on a eu la bonne idée de renvoyer l'auditeur à la page web sur le site de Folkways contenant les textes des chansons en français et en anglais.

En conclusion, il s'agit d'une anthologie utile qui présente un portrait de la tradition musicale franco-américaine actuelle.

—Donald Deschênes

Kendra MacGillivray. *Clear the Track*. Kendra MacGillivray, RR#4, Lanark, Antigonish, Nova Scotia B2G 2L2; <kendra@grassroots.ns.ca>; www.grassroots.ns.ca/~kendra/

There are many ways to get warm on a cold winter's day. Nothing is quite as effective (or fun) as putting on a good CD of fiddle tunes and letting your feet be guided by the infectious rhythm. May I suggest the latest album from fine Cape Breton fiddler Kendra MacGillivray? *Clear the Track* will have you clearing up the mid-winter blues in no time, in fact I recommend clearing up the carpet as well and having yourself a little ceilidh.

On this energetic, entertaining and highly enjoyable album, Kendra pays tribute to her grandfather, Hugh A. MacDonald, a pioneer in recording Scottish fiddle music in the 1930s. All tracks consist of tunes played or made popular by Hughie or composed by himself or one of his descendants. Although the tunes are for the most part fairly old (Hughie wrote "The Crooked Stovepipe," a staple of every fiddler's diet for many years), in the hands of MacGillivray they are made young again. MacGillivray makes every note dance like it was just composed yesterday. Each tune comes alive with the tradition of MacGillivray's roots and her refreshing contemporary sound. The old

gave life to the new, and the new brought the old back to life.

Kendra is accompanied on this album by her younger brother, Troy, who does an excellent job on piano. His nimble fingers do justice to a tasty solo on the opening cut, and he creates a beautiful atmosphere for "The Starlight Waltz." Also appearing on the recording is Dave MacIsaac, undoubtedly the finest guitar player in the genre (and triple ECMA Award winner). Both Dave and Troy contribute much to the great feel of this album.

Kendra has done extensive touring around the world, performing, teaching and inspiring many along the way. It is easy to see why she is in demand, just by listening to *Clear the Track*. MacGillivray possesses clear tone, strong rhythm, individual style and all the talent of her grandfather. In Cape Breton they don't say "You're talented"—instead, they say "The music is in you," and that is certainly the case for Kendra MacGillivray.

—Keitha Clark

Penny Lang. *Live at the Yellow Door*. SWPL-9702-2. Fleming Artists Management, 5975 ave du Parc, Montréal, Québec H2V 4H4; <http://www.interlog.com/~cpreal/penny_lang/pl_recordings.html>

Well, here's a pleasure for us all: another CD from Penny Lang. First off, you should know that I have never much cared for live recordings. Invariably they detract from my pleasure in listening to the uncluttered songs or music of an artist or band. Yet, as much as I enjoyed a previous CD of Penny's, *Ain't Life Sweet* (Bulletin 29.1, p.48), and I enjoyed it a lot, I enjoyed this one even more! It really *rocks*—even the slow numbers! Clearly the audience and the musicians are in complete accord; and there is joy and life in the recording. Both feed Penny their energy, and in consequence Penny's renowned vocal ability and musicianship are displayed to full effect, just as they are at festival venues.

In one form or another, with one or two exceptions, the blues idiom is maintained throughout the CD, even with the country songs, "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes" and Eddy Arnold's 1948 hit "Bouquet of Roses." As all performers know, the distribution of tempos during a performance is crit-

ical. The programme here begins with Brownie McGhee's driving, straight-ahead blues, "I've Been Living With the Blues," and appears to slow down with the opening stanzas of the second number, the traditional "Twelve Gates to the City." This is just an illusion. The song takes off when the rest of the musicians join in after a couple of verses. The third number, the lilting "I'm Thinking Tonight of My Blue Eyes," continues the smooth flow that typifies the CD's content. Penny lets her hair down with "Frankie and Johnny," which she considers to be one of the best songs for the display of her voice. "Bouquet of Roses" follows, with "Jailer Bring Me Water" coming afterwards.

The recording is full of traditional and semi-traditional songs and, from a singer's point of view, is a good source for the less accessible words of songs we sort-of know. Even though the words are not included in the liner notes, Penny's diction is clear, and they are easily transcribed. There are definitely a couple of numbers I will be adding to my repertoire for singing

at Labour Day Picnics and similar events.

Among all these good time songs is Penny's own "Song for Bridget's Film," which gives one breathing space and room for thought. Written for and based on the content of a documentary, it tells some heart-wrenching hard truths from the lives of four women. "Bye Bye Blues" is track 8, with "We Shall Not be Moved" sung as the concert's closing number. The ad lib encore "Penny's Blues" winds up an all too short-seeming CD (actually about 51 minutes), with the musicians as well as the audience plainly having a ball. The 13 musicians and back-up vocalists on the two sessions (tracks 5 and 6 were recorded a year earlier

than the rest) include the Whiteley brothers on tracks 5 and 6, Martin Boodman on harmonica, Penny's son Jason on guitar and Judy Golick on sax. My apologies to all the rest for not making a string of names.

For my money, Penny surely should be dubbed Canada's "First Lady of Folk Blues." The quickest way to get this recording and earlier ones is through Penny's home page on the Internet (see above). If you have any trouble finding her on the Internet, simply use a search engine and type in "Penny Lang."

—Mike Ballantyne
Cobble Hill, British Columbia

Crooked Stovepipe. Pickin' On the Rock. TWPCD104. Third Wave Productions, Box 563, Gander, Newfoundland A1V 2E1.

Southern bluegrass differs from northern bluegrass, and Canadian bluegrass, perhaps being farther away from the source, is akin to the northern style. When you hear "I'se the b'y" in a song, and the information, "We'll fish off Cape St. Mary's," complete with a folksy accordion, you probably need only one guess as to the source.

Pickin' On the Rock from Newfoundland contains some bluegrass along with country sounds, old time, and what might be called "folk" if one is brave enough to hang that label on it. You'll find no earth-shaking Tony Rice or Sam Bush licks here. There are a few instrumentals on the recording, but the instruments seem to act more as support for the vocals than usual. Neil Rosenberg plays banjo throughout and lead guitar on two pieces. If you want to know anything at all about the origin and history of bluegrass, Dr Rosenberg is the man to call. Ted Rowe plays rhythm guitar and handles most of the lead vocals; Don Randell is the fiddle man; Scott Swinden plays mandolin and has flexible tonsils to enable him to handle tenor, lead and baritone vocals; Jim Rillie handles the acoustic bass duties. A guest on the recording is Baxter Wareham, who brought his accordion to the session.

Some of the pieces are old-timers, such as "Dark Hollow," "Sweet Sunny South" and "I'll Sail My Ship Alone." The Mercery Brothers supplied "Uncle Tom," which **Crooked Stovepipe**

recorded as a country-grass piece; "Farewell Cindy" is an instrumental, with some lead phrases slightly reminiscent of "Rye Whiskey, Rye Whiskey." "The Prison Dance" is sung in deadly earnest fashion, but contains the repeated phrase "I can't take her to the dance 'cause they're hangin' me tonight." I wonder if the Austin Lounge Lizards know about this song?

Songs from the home front include "Star of Logy Bay," a sad ballad which is one of Newfoundland's best-known folk songs; "Crooked Stovepipe," the old-time fiddle piece; and "Tiny Red Light," another folksong from **The Rock** which brings back the accordion and the plea to put a light in the window.

"**Pickin' On the Rock**" is not a slick production done by guys who spent 20 hours a day practising hot licks so they could run into a recording studio and record them. It is an album of music of varying styles done by a group of singer/musicians who sound like they're having a good time doing what they want to do. This group has been together and playing their mixture of bluegrass, country and folk since the early 70s. I'd love to hear them in concert some time, somewhere. They sound like they're having a good time, and the audience would as well.

—Laurie Mills
Calgary, Alberta

Chris Norman. The Beauty of the North. DOR-90190. Dorian Recordings, 8 Brunswick Road, Troy, New York 12180-3995, USA; 1-800-DORIAN-6; <info@dorian.com>; <www.dorian.com/>; Allegro Corp., 14134 NE Airport Way, Portland, Oregon 97230-3443, USA; 1-800-288-2007; <www.allegro-music.com>

The Beauty of the North is an album of "traditional favorites from Quebec and Maritime Canada" rendered on the keyed wooden flute. Norman has a strong reputation as a virtuoso on this instrument, and this recording can only add to that renown. Norman is joined by some strong players: Alasdair Fraser (fiddle), Billy McComisky (button accordion), Robin Bullock (guitar) and Paul Wheaton (bass).

Norman is a native of Halifax currently working in the United States. He is without doubt an astonishing virtuoso of the wooden flute. The combination of the characteristic warm tone of the wooden flute with digital gymnastics usually reserved for fully-keyed metal flutes creates a unique and pleasant sound.

A comment first on the overall sound of the recording. The recording level seems to be low relative to most other

recordings; you'll have to crank up the stereo to achieve a comfortable volume. Even with the volume adjusted, the music lacks the presence usually associated with CDs. Balance is, of course, largely a matter of personal taste, but it seems to me that in general the treble is overemphasized on the guitar, and the bass is often a bit heavy. It's true that Norman's flute is intended to be front and center, but other instruments are frequently mixed down so much that a casual listener might well miss some of the nice things he is doing.

The 28 listed tunes are divided into five sets and a single tune. Through the wonders of CD technology, the tunes can be accessed separately by their track numbers, and this would be very useful to anyone trying to learn tunes from the album. The sets range in size from seven to three tunes. Some of the sets

hang together well, but in some cases the tunes are so similar one to another that they are hard to distinguish, and one set ("Beauty of the North Set") is really too long, at seven tunes played three times each. In a medley, three times is a lot to play any one tune, and I found myself expecting a tune change (and not getting it) by the second repeat. The album itself seems a little long, given the similarity of many of the tunes. Even with the inclusion of a few waltzes, this is more flute-playing-jigs-and-reels than I want to listen to at a sitting. It would be a good choice as background music at a gathering of friends, but that is surely not what Norman intended. Norman's technique is impeccable, and he generally plays the tunes in a lively fashion, but there is an element missing in his rendering of much of the material here. Fundamentally the music he has chosen is dance music, but with a few tantalizing exceptions the dance is not in the

music. These exceptions—the "Highland Set," "Banks of Newfoundland/Gigue du Joliette," and particularly the "Chicoutimi Set"—are the tunes that make the listener want to move, and surely that is the measure of performance where dance music is concerned. It is on these tracks that the recording comes to life, and they serve to emphasize the somewhat lacklustre feel of some of the other material.

In sum, then: a pleasant album, but not an outstanding one. I'm a sucker for the characteristic pretty sound of a flute, so it's easy for me to enjoy this as background music, but I find that my mind wanders every time I listen to this album. Flute players will, I think, be sufficiently impressed with Norman's obvious talents to overlook the deficiencies of the recording; others may be less forgiving.

—Michael Pollock
Calgary, Alberta

John Reischman. *Up In the Woods*. Corvus CR006. Corvus Records, PO Box 19655, Centre Point Postal Outlet, Vancouver, British Columbia V5T 4E7; <shadow9@direct.ca>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>

People who think they don't like bluegrass songs might do well to try an instrumental album such as this one. Superb musicians are superb musicians, and the type of musical field isn't really all that important. John's first mandolin recording under his own name was done in 1993. It was all-instrumental, with three or four bluegrass cuts and the rest Latin-influenced, plus a visit to Cole Porter. This current album is exclusively bluegrass, perhaps because most of his fans are accustomed to hearing that style from him. That is not a totally fair judgment of him, however, for in the late 70s and early 80s he was a mainstay with the Tony Rice Unit, which was much closer to jazz than bluegrass. Then he spent many years with the Good Ol' Persons, also out of California. This was an eclectic band, but you could always expect to hear class bluegrass from them.

Many of the players are friends from California. Todd Phillips provides the acoustic (of course!!) bass; Gabe Witcher, fiddle; Dennis Caplinger, banjo and fiddle; Jim Nunally, Miller, Scott Nygaard and Kathy Kallick, guitar; Nick Hornbuckle, banjo; and Rob Ickes, dobro.

So now John has done the landed immigrant thing and has settled in Vancouver. The area has provided inspiration for such

pieces as "Nootka Blues" and "The North Shore." All twelve cuts on *Up In the Woods* come from John, but they are certainly varied in tone, tempo and mood. None of the pieces sound like copies of Bill Monroe compositions, which we might expect from a lesser mandolin player, though several sound as traditional as can be. At the top of that list is the title cut, "Up In the Woods," and "Bluegrass Signal," along with "Low Gap." There's a mellow waltz, "The North Shore," and the minor key of "Nesser" brings back some of the mournful sound bluegrass can provide so well. Contemporary compositions include "Indiana Firefly," "Ponies In the Forest," with guitarist John Miller, the slow "Alexandra Waltz," with Kathy Kallick on guitar, and two cuts I kept returning to. One is "Nootka Blues," which is especially noticeable for the addition of Dennis Caplinger on banjo. If bluegrassers had garden parties, "Greenwood," the regal-sounding selection which wraps up the recording, should be played at each one!

Banjo king Tony Trischka has called *Up In the Woods* "one beauty of an album." I can't think of any higher recommendation.

—Laurie Mills

Robyn Jesson. *Bluegrass and Beyond*. Jim Jesson, 3279 Shearwater Drive, Nanaimo, British Columbia V9T 6A1; <jesson@nisa.net>

There is a down-home, uncomplicated feel to this release from 11-year-old BC fiddler Robyn Jesson and a curiosity that peeks out from each tune, hinting at the many great notes yet to come from this young musician.

Each track is clearly and tastefully done, allowing Robyn's natural talent to shine through without being overpowered by the backup or effects. As Robyn's personal style is just beginning to form, it would have been very easy for her to lose her feel for the music if the backup musicians had not been so discreet and respectful of her promising sound. While the accomplished accompanists use their own style, experience and wisdom to enhance Robyn's playing, they at no time try to dress up her per-

formance and make her into something she is not. The result is a refreshing, pure sound of very good quality.

There is a very easy-going feel to the album. The tempo for most of the songs brings out the character of the tune and those who play it. It has a very natural appeal, as comfortable as your favourite old t-shirt. *Bluegrass and Beyond* does not break tradition; instead, it thrives on it.

The selection is standard but well-chosen. Time-tested tunes like "Tennessee Waltz," "Devil's Dream" and "Bile 'em Cabbage" are in abundance. Newer tunes by some of today's finest Canadian fiddlers and composers also make an appearance, however. Robyn's version of Saskatchewan Métis fiddler John Ar-

cand's tune "Big Bear" is done especially well. The cover and the thank-yous on the insert are also great, and give us a little sample of Robyn's personality.

If you want to support a very talented young artist, buy this

album. You won't regret it. At the very least, put aside a few bucks so that you can purchase one of Robyn's future albums (of which I'm sure there will be many), because you are not going to want to miss hearing this girl.
—Keitha Clark

The Plankerdown Band. *The Jig is Up*. PIPCD-7331. Pigeon Inlet Productions, PO Box 1202, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 5M9; <krussell@pigeoninlet.nfnet.com>; <www.pigeoninlet.nfnet.com>

An eclectic mix of music from Newfoundland, Sweden, Brittany and Venezuela, with other influences as well, has the potential to be an ill-defined hodge-podge of material with no continuity. However, The Plankerdown Band has managed to create an album that makes the combination of these diverse elements seem entirely natural, and integrates them seamlessly into a sound that is uniquely their own.

Of the band's five members, four have passed through the ranks of Figgy Duff at some point; this should give readers an idea of what to expect, but this is not a clone of that band by any means. The hard-driving Figgy Duff sound on jigs and reels is apparent here, as is the use of a drum kit in the rhythm section. The band's members are all solid players. Kelly Russell, giving his usual stalwart performance on a variety of instruments, and Frank Maher on button box are particularly worthy of praise. Although some tasteful percussion (notably on the bodhran) is evident on some tracks, the drum kit is generally gratuitous, mainly emphasizing the strong offbeats already provided by the guitar. The drums and pop/rock style bass give the more up-tempo cuts a fun, bar-band feel that quickly wears thin

on a recording, however appealing it may be in a performance situation.

The Celtic-flavoured Maritime tunes are interspersed with tunes from the other folk traditions mentioned above. This beat trend is to be applauded, for these are easily the standout tunes on the recording. These pieces require the band to step outside the jigs-and-reels format, and this results in innovative and exciting arrangements that fully display their talents. Kelly Russell's considerable abilities as a multi-instrumentalist enhance the variety of the pieces. Russell has an unerring sense for the right sound in the right place. Would you expect to hear the *gu cheng* (a Chinese zither) on O'Carolan's "Bridget Cruise"? Russell makes this seem entirely appropriate and proper.

The energy in this recording is very high and the sound quality and production reach or exceed the high standards we have come to expect from Pigeon Inlet releases. The good-time sound should appeal to a broad range of listeners; with luck, this band will attract a following that will allow them to explore the more varied material of which we get such a delightful taste on *The Jig is Up*.
—Michael Pollock

Jerusalem Ridge. *Beyond the Ridge*. JR050299. PandaBird Agency, 1207 37th Street, Edmonton, Alberta T6L 2M8; <pandab@telusplanet.net>; <www.telusplanet.net/public/pandab/music.html>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant Street, Vancouver, BC V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

This quartet from Edmonton is regarded by many entertainment writers and broadcasters as the best bluegrass band in the country. A few years ago the word went around that Jerusalem Ridge had come apart and quit playing. It would be more truthful to say that the band took a year off to regroup and recharge batteries. The band which re-emerged was as good as the first with a slightly different thrust.... There was now a full-time fiddler. Keith Burgess was still the acoustic bass man with vocals; Craig Korth plays banjo, guitar, and sings harmony; Bill Lopushinsky is the mandolin and vocal man, and also plays guitar. The fiddler is Byron Myhre, who also sings and plays guitar.

"Jerusalem Ridge" is the name of a well-known fiddle piece recorded several times by Bluegrass Boy Kenny Baker. It's also the name of a ridge of land near the Bill Monroe homeplace, close to Rosine, Kentucky. The original foursome took the name out of respect for the man who blended several styles of music into the music which was to become known as "blue grass." (The original label was two words, which evolved into the single word, "bluegrass.")

This is the third CD to be released by the band; *Beyond the Ridge* proves that the band members have had their music writing pens out, and have attended a lot of rehearsals. There are no musical missteps on any of the 15 cuts, which is of course the way it should be, but it doesn't always happen that way with

every band. The blend of musical styles on the recording indicates a familiarity with several branches of bluegrass, but also peeks into older country songs. Hank Williams would undoubtedly approve of the smooth bluegrass version of "House of Gold," with some impressive choir-like harmony vocal work. Traditional music includes "Lonesome Hobo," a very fast instrumental version of "John Henry," and the old gospel song "Standing In the Need of Prayer." Recognition is given to some of the artists who helped develop the music: Lester Flatt's "Why Don't You Tell Me So," Jim and Jesse McReynolds' "I'll Love Nobody But You," and "Long Gone," from banjo player Don Reno. If you've ever wondered what "cross-picking" on the mandolin, a technique developed by Jesse McReynolds, sounds like, check out the intro to "Dream Of Me."

Some of the highlights, to my ears, include several instrumentals supplied by band members. The album title tune, "Beyond the Ridge," was written by banjo man Craig Korth and fiddler Byron Myhre, although he plays guitar on this cut. It's melodic as can be, and showcases some really tasty bits of banjo/guitar unison playing which are both impressive and effective. Craig supplied the old-timey-sounding instrumental "My Friend Jim," and Bill Lopushinsky created "Sidewinder" in a mode closer to traditional bluegrass. One of the songs, from Ruby Rakes, entitled "More To Be Pitied," is a wonderful illus-

tration of "just came down from the mountain to record this and now I'm goin' back." It's in 3/4 time, which is a bit unusual on its own, and features wonderfully tight vocal harmony.

Beyond the Ridge by Jerusalem Ridge is a solid album of bluegrass music to be proud of for the band members and to en-

Jerusalem Ridge. Looking Back. JR-030-493.

— Make A Joyful Noise. JR040494.

— Beyond the Ridge. JR050299. The PandaBird Agency, 1207 37 Street, Edmonton, Alberta. T6L 2M8; <pandab@telusplanet.net>; <www.telusplanet.net/public/pandab/music.html>; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver, B.C. V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

It was perhaps fitting that my first encounter with Canadian bluegrass was Jerusalem Ridge's version of "Early Morning Rain," the opening track on their first CD release, *Looking Back*. I was familiar with Gordon Lightfoot's original, and I was certainly familiar with bluegrass music, but the combination of the two was not something that had ever crossed my mind. What was in store for me? It still had that bluegrass feel, in fact the mandolin and banjo solos were surprisingly good. I had slight reservations, though. To me, a bluegrass tune is a bluegrass tune, not some popular song (although a good one at that) refabricated into a bluegrass wannabe. I couldn't help thinking about Flatt and Scruggs' renditions of Dylan numbers, something that, in my mind, should never have happened! Perhaps this was a political statement by the band—"Yes, we're playing bluegrass, but we haven't forgotten we are Canadians." It just seemed a shame that they didn't have a traditional Canadian bluegrass repertoire to draw from—well, not yet, anyway!

Having said all that, this is a good album and I enjoyed listening to it. The band's impressive command of their instruments certainly stands out on instrumental numbers such as Bela Fleck's "White Water" and the band's only original, "Spring Flowers." This latter number is a fiddle tune with a melody that suggests a traditional Scottish influence, and is clearly a piece you could dance the back-step to if so inclined. The traditional bluegrass romantic sentimentalism appears in "32 Acres," a medium-paced jewel of the idealized life amongst nature destroyed by the capitalist forces of modernity—just great stuff!

This album (like many other bluegrass albums) contains a clear nod of respect to the masters: the Stanley Brothers, Flatt and Scruggs, and the man himself, Bill Monroe. The harmony singing of Jerusalem Ridge obviously lags behind the Stanleys, but it is in that vein and deserves praise for following in their footsteps. I feel, though, that the vocals are just slightly too polished, and lack that rawness which raises bluegrass singing to that level of awe found so often on Stanley recordings. "Roving Gambler," a traditional number associated with the Stanley Brothers, also appears here, and stays pretty true to their version; not forgetting the album's closing track, "Little Maggie," a long-time favorite of Ralph Stanley.

The standout track of the CD, though, has to be the Bill Monroe tune "Can't You Hear Me Calling?". This is still the bluegrass tune that Monroe intended it to be, but with some rock 'n' roll thrown in for good measure. What can I say? This number rocks. The banjo playing is excellent throughout, with the inclusion of the "Wipe Out" theme in the last solo being a nice

joy for the listener. Keep in mind that the music is not played by four band members from Kentucky, Virginia or North Carolina.... They're from the non-bluegrass area known as Alberta, and the music still sounds just like it should!! —Laurie Mills

touch. I must admit, though, that hearing these good old Canadian boys sing the Lester Flatt tune "Little Girl of Mine in Tennessee" is just too ironic—even for an Englishman!

Hot on the heels of *Looking Back*, Jerusalem Ridge released their second CD, *Make A Joyful Noise*, in 1994. It seems to be the done thing in bluegrass to release at least one gospel album during your career, and this CD is Jerusalem Ridge's take on this tradition. Once again this is a good CD, and, as the title suggests, it is a joy to listen to, although on my first few listens of this CD, again I found myself questioning the opening track, "Climbin' Up The Mountain." Performed *a cappella*, to me, this sounds more "barber shop quartet" than bluegrass gospel. The problem, I think, is that Jerusalem Ridge do not possess the variations in vocal range so distinct in the best bluegrass gospel singing. Not to say that this is bad singing—far from it—but it just doesn't send that chill down the spine like some. I must say, though, that this opening track grew on me each time I heard it, and I found myself thinking it must be pretty cool to see the boys perform this live.

If I had any doubts about the opening track, these were soon forgotten by the second, "Hallelujah, I'm Ready To Go." This is one of my favorite gospel numbers performed by the Stanley Brothers, and just lately there has been no escape from this song. Ricky Skaggs recorded it for his own recent bluegrass gospel album *Soldier of the Cross*, and it has even surfaced as the opening song at some recent Bob Dylan shows. Jerusalem Ridge certainly do the song justice, and once again they seem to be influenced by the Stanleys' recording of this gem. This truly is "a joyful noise."

"The Stanley Brothers again!" I hear you cry; well, perhaps this is where the arguments start. I may have seemed slightly negative in my comments on the opening song, but everything else on this CD is just great. The problem is that because many of these tracks are bluegrass standards, we just cannot ignore their association with the Stanleys, Monroe, and the other greats of bluegrass. Of the twelve tracks on this CD, I know of at least six that were in the Stanley Brothers' repertoire, "Rank Strangers" being the most well known. There are also two tracks, "Cryin' Holy" and "A Beautiful Life," which were in Bill Monroe's repertoire. I do not doubt that any serious bluegrass musician has a good sample of the Stanleys and Monroe in their CD collection. If they were going to record these songs, it would just be nice if they acknowledged their sources. The CD booklet does not provide any details on the songs—not even a mention that they are traditional.

Again coming back to Ricky Skaggs, his three recent bluegrass releases contain many songs performed by the Stanley Brothers *et al.*, and the liner notes nicely acknowledge this influence. In no way does this suggest that *Make A Joyful Noise* is a poor CD—far from it—but it would be nice if they thought about providing some details on their songs in the future. Their other two CDs do at least give composer credits, but I wondered to myself whether that is only because they contain original songs as well. Hopefully somebody out there will be able to set me straight on this issue! Criticisms aside, this CD is worth checking out, and it certainly places Jerusalem Ridge as a bluegrass band who know their gospel.

In 1999, ten years after these Edmonton boys first got together to make music, Jerusalem Ridge released their third CD, *Beyond The Ridge*. 1999 was an excellent year for bluegrass in the United States, with outstanding releases by Ralph Stanley and Jim Lauderdale, *I Feel Like Singing Today* (Rebel); Steve Earle and the Del McCoury Band, *The Mountain* (Grapevine); and Ricky Skaggs, *Ancient Tones and Soldier Of The Cross* (Skaggs Family). *Beyond The Ridge* shows that Canada has something to offer the bluegrass world too. This is the best release yet by Jerusalem Ridge, and if this is anything to go by, the future for bluegrass in Canada looks bright.

The first thing I noticed when listening to this CD was the subtle but remarkable difference in sound compared with their two earlier releases. The previous CDs had a noticeable digitized feel to the recordings, resulting in an overtly manufactured (what I call "plastic") music. The sound on *Beyond The Ridge* is warm and natural and clearly captures the pure acoustic tonality of the instruments. Perhaps the change in producer helped, and

it sounds to me that analog recording was used in place of digital technology; whatever the reason, the change is a welcome one. The opening track is perhaps the weakest on the album, but this is hardly worth a mention. The 19 songs found on this CD are a nice variety of traditional, covers and three originals. The banjo-driven instrumental version of "John Henry" is just what bluegrass should be—fast and fun! Bill Lopushinsky's mandolin also stands out on this track, and at times clearly reminds me of Bill Monroe's playing. The gospel standard "Standing in the Need of Prayer" captures the rawness found in the best bluegrass performances, something which the first two CDs lacked; I'm glad the band has finally found it here.

I don't think there is a "best track" on this CD. The title number, "Beyond The Ridge," an original instrumental, is worth a mention, though. Basically a duet between banjo and guitar in a similar style to some of the recordings Bela Fleck has made, this is not your traditional bluegrass tune. The jazz influence is clear, but there is still that hint of folk tradition present in the melody, so as not to stray too far away from the path. This piece of music was a pleasure to hear, so much so that I found myself just sitting back and relaxing, for a moment forgetting that I'm supposed to be reviewing the CD. Hank Williams's "House of Gold" is also a nice inclusion. Apart from being a great song, this performance is just right. The instrumentation is simple and effective, not adding any unnecessary showmanship. The vocals also focus on the minimal, merely revolving around a basic harmony on the chorus. This track is a prime example of how sometimes the least can be the most effective.

—Justin Partyka

St. John's, Newfoundland

[We don't shy from presenting two perspectives on the same recording—one came unsolicited, but that's fine. —JL]

Nathan Tinkham. *The Loom*. Rhythm Range Music, Box 75, Gabriola Island, British Columbia V0R 1X0; <nathan@island.net>; <www.island.net/~nathan>

The country music of Alberta (and, to a lesser degree, the British Columbia interior) has always stood apart from Vancouver and Southern Ontario's Nashville-driven sounds. Traditional cowboy and western styles have remained more popular, as has western swing (albeit often with fewer blue notes than the south-western US style favors and with a faint but discernible Eastern European influence). Witness the popularity of Wilf Carter, Ian Tyson and The Great Western Orchestra, particularly in southern Alberta. Nathan Tinkham, formerly of Tyson's and Cindy Church's bands and a former member of The Great Western Or-

chestra, as well as guitarist for Quartette and Diamond Joe White, ties together many elements of what make Alberta's music scene unique. Drawing on elements of traditional country, gospel, honky-tonk, folk and more, he delivers a 14-song CD packed with interesting songwriting, superb support from some of the prairies' finest (including fiddler Myron Szott and steel guitarist Jeff Bradshaw), and what amounts to a doctoral thesis in guitar styles. Stand-out tracks include the title cut and "Alison Lives By The Big Ben."

—Tim Williams

Mark Despault. *Natural Revelation*. MUGG3-001. Applefield Arts Canada, c/o Box 2349, Picton, Ontario K0K 2T0; 1-800-278-0600; <info@applefieldarts.com>

This disc by Wakami Wailers member Mark Despault is a great example of the contemporary folk music of Southern Ontario. Ringing acoustic guitars, shimmering piano, tasteful electric bass underpinning, accordion and string tracks all support Mark's heartfelt vocals (and some nicely-arranged

back up vocals—actually, all the arrangements are top-notch). Showing strong influences from a pair of Canadian music giants from Southern Ontario, Gordon Lightfoot and Stan Rogers, this is a very good disc of songwriter-driven contemporary folk.

—Tim Williams

Doug Cox. *Life Is So Peculiar*. Ragged Pup Records, 3717 Harriet Road, Victoria, British Columbia V8Z 3T3; <www.raggedpup.com>

Canada's premier dobro player steps out on this solo disc with a quirky, fun collection of 12 tunes, recorded in Edmonton with a backing band of prairie stalwarts, including Amos Garrett on guitar, Mike Lent on bass, Ron Casat on keyboards and accordion and Ontario's Rick Fines on guitars. The set list romps through instrumental medleys of "Johnny Too Bad/Blackberry Blossom" and "Further Along/The Water Is Wide," blues from Memphis Slim and Blind Blake, pop tunes like Mel Tormé and

Robert Wells's "Born To Be Blue," and spoken word performances ("The Blues Came To Canada"). The music is impeccably played and beautifully recorded (Rick Fenton produced), and the title track (a duet with Garrett) is lovely. This is an eclectic, wide-ranging recording. Not for the musically hide-bound, but rewarding for those folk music fans with broad tastes.

—Tim Williams

Tim Williams. *Indigo Incidents*. Cayuse TW 002. Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant Street, Vancouver, British Columbia V5L 2X7; 1-800-633-8282; <fdi@festival.bc.ca>; <www.festival.bc.ca>

This CD, recorded in Calgary in 1997, presents a nice range of blues, tastefully sung, and accompanied by a bunch of talented musicians. At 36 minutes, it's a bit short—not just a question of value for money, but because more blues by this singer would be very welcome. But that's the only serious complaint.

A reasonably comprehensive blurb includes all the song words, credits the studio, and gives sources for the songs and even the guitars used. But it has almost nothing about Tim Williams. It's a pity, because he's obviously worth talking about. The only clue comes in a throwaway remark that he began performing in California coffee houses in the mid-60s, and has been playing for some 30 years. That would explain the confidence with which he tackles material from a wide range of sources, from black primitive street singer Blind Willie Johnson via jug bands to hillbilly-tinged white singer Jimmie Rodgers.

Almost half the pieces are by the singer himself, presenting a nice variety of inspiration—did I hear Brownie McGhee's

ghost on "The Fool"? Most are serious, but "Everything for Christmas" has a nice line in wry humour, as the singer explains that he is as "hung up as a stocking" and promises "I'm gonna deck the next mother tries to deck my halls." Another piece is by Steve Pineo, who plays and sings on a couple of other tracks.

Williams plays one instrumental ("Buckdancer's Choice," the tune which provided the name for the store that once provided a hangout for Calgary folkies). He is the sole accompanist on another five tracks, usually on slide guitar, but he also breaks out a 6-string banjo, a mandolin and spoons (not all at once...). His expressive and athletic voice provides clear articulation of the words without sacrificing the bluesy sound. A talented bunch of sidepersons on the other tracks include harpist Rich Pollack, and one track with Tanya Kalmanovitch's bluesy viola (a rare treat).

There isn't a dud track in the 14 presented here, and I'd like to hear more.

—David Spalding

Pender Island, British Columbia

Jenny Lester. *Friends Like You*. THM CD-20210. Triple Header Music, PO Box 109002, 4th Avenue Postal Outlet, Vancouver, British Columbia V6K 4R8; <tripleheader@hotmail.com>; <www.jennylester.com>; Festival Distribution (see above)

Jenny Lester is not one of the biggest names in Canadian bluegrass, but that could change with more exposure. Raised in Smithers, in BC's Bulkley Valley, she was assigned by her father to play fiddle at the age of 9. The Lester clan had a band called the Driftwood Canyon Family Band, which toured many small locations in BC for five years in the mid-1980s. When that ceased, Jenny joined a neighbour's family group, the Just For Fun Band. At the age of 17 Jenny won a scholarship to a music college in Levelland, Texas, and was on her way to becoming a serious pro musician. After several years at school, she spent four years, both with and without the group Dark Horse, travelling to play in Korea, Guam, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan. Returning to BC in 1997, she met master mandolinist John Reischman, and they started getting thoughts together to make this recording.

For a young lady who's known first as a fiddler, then a guitarist, Jenny is also a good singer. She has supplied four of the songs on this 11-cut recording, and none of her originals sound like first-time efforts. Several of her songs feature the harmony vocals of Koralee Tonack, and those songs are out-

standing in the vocal department. These would include "Friends Like You," "Send Down An Angel" and Paul Kennerly's "First In Line." Because of Jenny's reputation as a fiddler, I was surprised to find not a single instrumental piece on the CD. Homage to those who helped start the music comes from Lester Flatt, "I'm Waitin' To Hear You Call Me Darlin'," and the "Virginia Waltz," from the brothers McReynolds. This piece features western swing-sounding fiddles on a slow-tempo song, and the arrangement is very effective. A great song about the wonders of nature, as indicated by the title, is Jenny's composition "The River, Mother Nature, and Me."

Maestro Reischman was the producer of the project, played mandolin throughout, and a great old-time-sounding guitar in addition to mandolin on "Don't Neglect the Rose." Chris Stevens of the BC group Tumbleweed supplied some of the harmony vocals, along with band members Nick Hornbuckle, banjo; Paul Bergman, bass; and Byron Myhre of Alberta's Jerusalem Ridge playing fiddle.

This recording has a different sound than those of most of the women in bluegrass who are singing lead vocals. Jenny's

voice is quite mellow and non-nasal, and that modifies the music. The instrumentation sounds like the straight-ahead bluegrass you might expect, but the voice is more country-sounding than many, and that's meant to be a positive remark

(no, there's no "twang"). If you feel your bluegrass music collection contains only "solid" recordings, *Friends Like You* has a place in that collection.
—Laurie Mills

Young Grey Horse. It's Just A Tribe Thang. CR-6297. Canyon Records Productions, 4143 North 16 Street, Suite 6, Phoenix, Arizona 85016, USA; 1-800268-1141; <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

This group of Cree, Assiniboine, Blackfoot, Blood, even Plateau ancestry are musical innovators. As the jacket says, they are "inheritors of a strong singing tradition..." and indeed they have successfully built upon the old songs (for example, the basic powwow rhythm never flags) to create exciting new sounds.

The song titles leave us in no doubt that this is a fresh approach. "Pure Playaz" features strong unison singing with lots of dips and curves in the melody. The next song "Luneez" has so many extra calls, some flute-like, that it becomes another line of music or level of sound. "Unpredictable" is aptly named for it has an unusually smooth melodic curve, much different from

powwow tunes, which are often diagrammed in angular, descend-ing steps. The excitement and intensity of "Da Next Level" makes it Indian "soul" music. And in songs such as "The Straight Edge," Young Grey Horse show that they can play it straight too.

This was recorded live at Pincher Creek, Alberta, and the lead singers need to be better amplified—there is too much disparity in sound levels for comfortable listening. But overall, this recording is highly recommended and the cover art, "Four Dogs and a Crow," by Jim Nelson, is worth seeing. —Lynn Whidden
Brandon, Manitoba

Southern Cree. Keepin' It Real. CR-6298(Volume 3), Canyon Records Productions, as above

This large group of 15 (only 12 on the recording) is quite traditional in its music form and style. They can rely on their powerful drumming to maintain listener involvement, moving with ease from a fast song such as "Legend" to the slow stately beat of "The Dance." And the lead singers have some long interesting lines, "The Ratt" song, for example.

Keepin' It Real was recorded digitally, which provides listeners with a very clean sound; the final "Eric's Last Song," recorded live at Duffield Alberta, provides a nice contrast with the usual ambient powwow sound. Of interest is the fact that "Eric's Song" is sung by the late Eric Ridley, to whom the recording is dedicated.
—Lynn Whidden

Fiona Coll, et al. Two Left Feet: Music for Irish Dancing. Volume 1: Solos. TLF001. Two Left Feet Productions, 1525 27th Ave. SW, Calgary, Alta. T2T 1G5; <www.therockies.com/blakey.cd>

With the success of "Riverdance," Irish dancing and Irish instrumental music have enjoyed a surge in popularity, reaching new audiences and gaining appeal worldwide. With more and more children and adults enrolling in Irish dancing classes, the demand for new and innovative recordings of this music has grown. The recent Calgary release *Two Left Feet* is a welcome addition to the collection of recordings of traditional Irish dance tunes. It is a success for its listening enjoyment as well as for its instructional purposes.

The recording features several talented musicians who not only perform the repertoire well, but perform it well for dancers. The rhythmic precision, phrasing and overall musicality make the music easy to dance to, and as a result, meet the needs of dancers from beginners to champions.

The selection of tunes used in the recording is well done. There is a good balance of tunes in major and minor keys, and several less common dance tunes are included. Track 7, "Single Jigs", includes the melody of "Pop Goes the Weasel," a song that is often used to teach beginner dancers about the rhythm of the single jig.

The majority of tracks feature the fiddle as the primary melodic instrument. Fiddler Fiona Coll's easy and delicate style is complimented by the strong rhythm of Russell Broom on guitar and Willy Joosen on piano. John Hyde on bass and Tanya

ble. The bodhran, played by Nathan McCavana, adds a rhythmic element to the music, although the distinctive sound of the drum is often lost in the overall musical texture. Tracks 4 and 5, "Treble Jigs" and "Hornpipes" respectively, feature Merv Bell on accordion, whose style combines melodic sensitivity with a confident steady beat.

The percussive duet that introduces the first track, "Reels à go-go", features Nathan McCavana and hard shoe dancing by Barbara Blakey. Beginning the piece by showcasing the rhythmic talents of the duo results in an interesting and pleasing effect for the casual listener. It does not however, receive the same acclaim from dancers and dance instructors who use the recording for practice or classroom purposes. Because the actual music does not begin until almost 20 seconds into the track, the dancer is left waiting and the class is momentarily halted. This introduction also makes this piece an unlikely choice for performance music, because the sounds of the dancing shoes, which are part of the appeal of live Irish dance performances, are already present on the recording. This is unfortunate, as the combination of tunes, including two non-traditional ones (fiddler Fiona Coll's "The Stone Reel" and Amy Cann's "Catharsis"), the transitions between the different tunes and the emotive fiddling and rhythmic accompaniment make the track an otherwise excellent possi-

bility for performance.

Two Left Feet presents a variety of reels, jigs and hornpipes, and includes four traditional set dances ("St. Patrick's Day", "The Blackbird", "Garden of Daisies" and "Job of Journeywork"). Both as a tool for practice and for listening pleasure,

Rik Barron. *A Sock Full of Holes*. Re-Bop 105. Re-Bop Records, Box 985, Marshfield, VT 05658, USA; Rik Barron, St. Catherine's Road, RR#3, Bonshaw, PEI C0A 1C0; <rbarron@isn.net>

— *Heel to the Toe*. ODD SOCK KIDS 102. Rik Barron (as above)

Rik has an easy-listening voice, and gives an easy-going presentation on *A Sock Full of Holes*, a cassette of songs for children, some familiar and some not. A note on the information card reads, "favorite folksongs from Newfoundland's Odd Sock Kids' Show." Thus "Squid Jiggin' Ground" and "Lukey's Boat" might be expected, but it's also nice to be able to listen to "Jig-along Home" and "Bring Me A Little Water Sylvie"—a couple of songs not often heard. There's also "Little White Duck," "Down By the Bay" and "Moringtown Ride," which might be more familiar to junior listeners.

I don't know if the Odd Sock Kid's Show was on radio or television, but much of the appeal of a children's singer is the memory of a live performance and/or the interaction (of children) with the singer. As Rik is the only one doing vocals (along with a good mix of instruments, including washboard and spoons), this presentation is more of a mini-concert for its audience, rather than a good old join-in-sing-a-long.

There's a bouncy selection of songs on *Heel to the Toe*, but I found myself listening to them as ones I enjoy now, rather than any I heard as a child. "The Preacher and the Bear," "When the Red, Red, Robin Comes Bob, Bob Bobbin' Along," "Apple

this recording is a worthwhile addition to the CD collections of both dancers and fans of traditional Irish instrumental music.

—Danica Clark
Edmonton, Alberta

Picker's Reel" and "Reel of the Flickering Light" are titles that come to mind when I'm looking for something to sing at a Singers' Circle. But these are still good songs to present to children, and that's the key: a good song is a good song, no matter for whom it's presented. The rhythms and the imagery of the songs on this cassette should appeal to older elementary school children. Rik's voice is strong, the words are clear, and he has help with a few background vocals. The nervousness of the character in "I Want To Be a Cowboy" or the silly vegetables in "Barnyard Dance" (this would be a good one for play-acting) are the kind of nonsense songs that kids enjoy.

There's also some familiar selections from tradition—"The Old Polina," "Buffalo Gals" and "This Little Light Light Of Mine"—to round out the presentation.

I think that *Heel to the Toe* refers more to the feel of this collection than to any song title, and it shouldn't be very far into the playing of the tape before feet of any age are tapping away.

—Dave Foster
Calgary, Alberta

David Grabias. *Ashikar, Those Who Are In Love*. Golden Horn GHP 010-2. Golden Horn Records, PO Box 5776, Walnut Creek, California, USA 94596.

Charlotte Peters Rock. *Flying Free*. Manatee Press MTEPCD 002. Manatee Press, Holly House, Middlewich Road, Allstock, Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 9XJ

Deutsches Volksliedarchiv. 1848: "...weil jetzt die Freiheit blüht". Südwest Records SWR 104-98 CD. Südwest Records, Schwarzwaldstraße 11, 79189 Bad Krozingen, Germany; Deutsches Volksliedarchiv, Silberbachstraße 13, D-79100 Freiburg, Germany.

Deutsches Volksliedarchiv Freiburg/Staatliche Hochschule für Musik Freiburg. *Röslein auf der Heiden*—Goethe und das Volkslied. address as above.

I am gathering here several CDs that have come across our desk which really aren't in the Bulletin's sphere of concern, but which I feel ought to be noted, either because I simply want to keep the discs (true in all cases, anyway!) or because I'm somewhat embarrassed that the discs were sent to us. I definitely do not want to open floodgates into our review column, the parameters of which strike me as already being as inclusive as they can reasonably be. If nothing else, a small publication that tries to do too much risks being nothing to nobody rather than all things to all people. Besides, I think the old time music of Canada (that boring stuff that Edith Fowke, Helen Creighton, and Marius Barbeau were so interested in) deserves its own magazine and if this ain't it, what is?

Since I will not be continuing on the board of the publication, I'm aware that others may wish to open it further, but

I do not think that the Society ought to be responsible for all of the interests of members, even of prominent members. *Memo to future editors*: if the Bulletin's review policy is ever wide open, I'd like to have dibs on review copies of reissues of Sonny Rollins's *Way Out West*, the Dizzy Gillespie Cubop sessions with Chano Pozo, or Madonna's *Sex*.

The first item here, from Charlotte Peters Rock of Cheshire, almost has a claim to our attention, given the presence of an item called "Innuitt [*sic*] Call Song." Rock's publicity material (all nicely homegrown in appearance) suggests that she should be termed a "performance artist," but unless her activities go wildly beyond the repertoire represented on this recording, such a grandiose term isn't really necessary. She sings *a cappella* and recites some nice poems, influenced throughout, as she notes, by

a variety of traditions, from rural Britain to the Berlin music hall. She favors a sentimental naturalism ("I wear clogs when I wear shoes at all....") and a variety of atmospherics, including some Celtic twilight stuff (the poem "Lugh")—which, like certain varieties of sexist jokes, I worry about even as I enjoy them. (Do Irish people worry about this sort of imitation/appropriation? Perhaps not much, now that they're in the money. Still....)

Having picked those nits, I should quickly note that her account of British domination of Northern Ireland (in the appropriately punned "Our Bloody Language") is hardhitting and to the point: "We English had an empire, it's just Ulster now that's left, and the city's Londonderry in our language." A very fine song, this one.

Rock is a rough and pleasant singer, and she's able to handle the several accents she puts on. I don't much like her occasional use of reverb, including as it's used in "Inuit Call Song," a performance I find acceptable otherwise, though it's one of those more sentimental items here. And I suspect that it has more to do with how she feels *about* the Inuit than with anything the Inuit might say about themselves. Society members who were concerned that the Inuit drummer be removed from our logos will dislike this song—those who liked to have the figure may like it a great deal. Others, like myself, will be of two minds. It fits very tidily into a tradition of romanticism about First Nations people, a tradition deservedly attacked, but not without its uses. (See my introductory essay to our blues issue: 31.2 (1997), "A Conceptual Blues Festival.")

I hope I'm not sounding too snarky. This disc came over the transom, and we had no responsibility to cover it, but I think that readers who like unaccompanied ballad singing and story-telling would find it appealing. I wouldn't be surprised to find myself singing some of these songs sooner or later.... "I built a castle in the air and watched it fade away...."

Golden Horn records sent me a copy of Ashiklar, as a reward, apparently, for my positive review of *Balkan Journeys Close to Home*, their anthology of Torontian Balkan-style performers in 33.3. This offering is from the soundtrack of a film about Turkish music by David Grabias, which features the *ashik* minstrels of the Alevi religious tradition.

These minstrels play the *saz* (and *baglama*, a smaller version of the same instrument), which is more familiar to western ears in its Greek incarnation: *bouzouki*. The *saz* is somewhat buzzier than the *bouzouki* generally is, and players (who at least on this sample play either solo or paired with another of the same instrument) tend to favor drones more than most *bouzouki* players I've heard. (Of course, on this continent, one is more likely to hear the more sanitized varieties of anything.) Given that the *saz*/*baglama* generally only has three courses, chords are not likely to get very complicated, but most commercial *bouzouki* players (who nowadays are amplified and play in ensembles) tend to favor pretty stinging single-string leads; these players allow their melodies to rest in the rhythmic support of frequently struck drones.

This is a dark, moody music. Think of it as a soundtrack to the Song of Solomon: "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved

had withdrawn himself and was gone ... I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." Comparison with certain blues singers—Robert Pete Williams, Skip James, some of John Lee Hooker—would not be inappropriate.

Because Ashlikar is a soundtrack, it may be thought of as a field recording, and on a few cuts, the rest of the world (particularly wind and storm) make themselves felt. In some ways, given the density of the music and personality, this is quite appropriate, though some listeners might find it troublesome. (I just hope I get to see the movie some day!)

Golden Horn Recordings (the name comes from a drop of the Bosphorus into Istanbul) has a fascinating catalog of jazz and Asian musics. Look it up on <www.goldenhorn.com>.

The last two items on the list arrived in response to a citation I tossed into an earlier News column; I think it came to me from the ballad listserve. My German vocabulary is so small that I'm not sure I've got the correct designation for whoever is responsible for these discs—all the written material is in German. Whether that means they won't try to make them available on this side of the ocean is anybody's guess. It'd be too bad if they don't, though, for these are nice records.

1848 is an anthology of songs from that powerful year a century and a half ago when (as in 1968), the good guys almost won. Yep, good old revolutionary songs, protest songs, as we called 'em for a while in the 60s. Some of them, such as "Die Giedanken sind frei," are classics; many I never heard of, and some of these are likely to have been throwaways created for a specific purpose, like the songs of our own Raging Grannies.

Like the Grannies, these songwriters happily plundered tunes from near and far. (These were the days of the *Internationale*, remember, not *globalization*!) They also sent their melodies off to the rest of the world. The tune we know as "Maryland, My Maryland" (or "Organize," if you've ever sung at a May Day rally) came to the English-speaking world from central Europe; Scotland sent "A Man's A Man For A' That" to Germany. And I'd dearly love to know what they're singing to "God Save the King"! No, the devil can't have all the good tunes!

The songs are presented here in a variety of formats, only occasionally attempting to recreate the performance milieu of their own time. The only artist known to me is Wolf Bierman, himself an iconoclastic songwriter from what used to be East Germany. All of the performances are lively and delightful. Just the thing to cheer me up as Alberta prepares to trash medicare.

Röslein auf der Heiden celebrates Goethe's involvement in folk song, which I take it must have paralleled that of Burns in Scotland. (Again, I can't read the notes.) As happened with Burns's songs and poems, these were arranged by many composers of the penultimate century. (Too bad I can't simply say the "last century" any more!) This collection features some 17 different composers, sung (usually solo) by three different sopranos, an alto, tenor, and bass, with piano accompaniment. Only a few of the composers—Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven—are household names, but all are pleasant.

Some months back, when the British/American duo, John

Roberts and Tony Barrand, issued a recording of songs from Percy Grainger's collection, I got the impression that some reviewers felt that these folkie arrangements were somehow more appropriate than Grainger's settings. I'm sure they were very nice, but some of Grainger's work is stunning. If it doesn't automatically improve folk songs to set them "classically," neither does it automatically improve them to give them coffee-house accompaniment.*

*Shelagh Rogers—of all people—played a perfectly dreadful version of Wade Hemsworth's "Log Driver's Waltz" recently. I think I'd rather listen to Sebastian Cabot reading "Hey, Mr. Tambourine Man."

Arnie Naiman & Chris Coole. 5 Strings Attached with No Backing. M01CA. Merriweather Records, 109 Crawford Rose Dr., Aurora, Ont. L4G 4S1; <ragged@interlog.com>

It's a bit of a surprise to find a CD of five-string banjo tunes, mostly played clawhammer style, coming out of Toronto (a city not renowned as a hotbed of Appalachian music). And it's a pretty decent CD, too, taken on its own terms. Arnie Naiman and Chris Coole intersperse their own compositions with traditional numbers, and pieces they've learned from other pickers; some tracks are instrumental, some are songs. It's a spare album—some tracks are solo, some have guitar backing, and a few feature dual banjos played in contrasting styles (finger-picking and clawhammer). The tunes and songs are up-front; there's no attempt to surround them (or overshadow them) with complex accompaniment. Arnie and Chris trust the material to stand up for itself, and as far as I'm concerned, their trust is not misplaced.

Nevertheless, it's hard to produce a varied program under these circumstances, and someone whose ear isn't attuned to the subtleties of clawhammer-style banjo (yes, they exist—hold the banjo jokes!) may find a certain sameness to the CD. Arnie and Chris have similar-sounding instruments and use them throughout, except for a nylon-stringed fretless banjo on one track. They don't have the advantage of, say, Mike Seeger on his CD *Southern Banjo Sounds*, of using a different banjo, and a different playing style, on every cut. Arnie and Chris work for variety by mixing-and-matching the various tunings they use, the

None of these versions appeal to me as much as Grainger's work, to be honest, but perhaps if I knew the words, the arrangements would demonstrate a logic or subtlety that I don't perceive now. Given Goethe's importance in the history of literature, I'm sure that these have been translated (whether well or recently is another matter!), and when I have time, I'll track them down and spend a couple of hours focussed upon the disc.
—GWL

solo vs. accompanied tracks, the songs vs. tunes, and so on. Within these limits, they manage to steer clear of sameness to a good extent.

Both Arnie and Chris have white-bread Southern Ontario voices, and would never be mistaken for rough-and-ready Southern Mountain singers. In particular, nobody does Dock Boggs like Dock Boggs, and Chris's valiant attempt on "Country Blues" may prompt people to seek out the original version, but won't start any cults on its own. However, they choose interesting songs, and interesting *versions* of songs. In particular, an unusually wistful "John Hardy" almost makes a sympathetic figure of the murderer, while an incongruously jovial "John Henry" turns the death of the folk hero into good-time music. (Kathie Naiman contributes harmony vocals on the chorus, as well as guitar backup on this track and others.) Some of these songs have already found their way into my own repertoire. And Arnie's and Chris's original compositions hold their own with the rest of the material—without the sleeve notes, I might not have known which was which. I especially liked Arnie's tune "Trip to Restoule" and Chris's "Winfield's Fancy."

The notes are sparse, but document the sources of the material, the banjo tunings and styles used, and the performers on each cut—what more can we ask? Within its limited objectives, this is a very successful and entertaining CD.
—JL

Some Cape Breton fiddlers have raised the point ... that the loss of Gaelic [language] will have its effect on the fiddle style, and the real bias or taste of Gaelic music will be lost.... The goal, I think, for those interested in the continuity of Scottish culture here is to try to maintain the entire culture all the way from long folk tales through fiddle music to step dancing, and to show that this is just as relevant in its twentieth century context here as it has always been to Scottish communities everywhere.

John Shaw CFBulletin 3.3 (May-June 1980)

*The watchful harpers touched the sweetest strings
Their tall harps owned; such soothing, dream-like notes
As murmur in the cups of deep, dusk springs
In dreamy woods. The strain seductive floats
In trancing sounds, which, as they melting die
In ear and soul, breathe softly, "Prophecy!"*

Isabella Valancy Crawford, from "The King's Garments"