One refreshing product of the International Year of the Child has been the great improvement in the quality of music for children. The days of patronizing, kiddy-poo songs may not be over, but they are certainly numbered, when faced with competition from the likes of Sharon, Lois and Bram, and the ever-popular Raffi. Their records, One Elephant, Deux Eléphants, and Singable Songs for the Very Young, respectively have had enormous success, and have put them among Canada’s best selling artists.

What is not generally known, however, is that all these performers got started in the field of juvenile entertainment through a little-known offshoot of Toronto’s Mariposa Folk Foundation, called Mariposa in the Schools (MITS). Now in its tenth year, the MITS program continues to bring together folk musicians, dancers and story-tellers with students from nursery to high school age for the purpose of sharing the rich variety of folk traditions. In the past year, MITS organized over six hundred workshops and concerts in schools in every Toronto borough, in nearby counties, and in schools, libraries and community colleges beyond their local boundaries. In their very comprehensive catalogue, they list twenty-two performers, and among them they offer workshops covering a wide spectrum of folk topics.

MITS provides folk performers who offer workshops on a variety of folk-related topics geared to nursery, elementary, junior and senior high school students and teachers, as well as to local communities. Their aims are clearly defined:

1. To provide an informative and enjoyable musical experience.
2. To impart an awareness and appreciation of
folk traditions in their many forms.

3. To enable students to interact in person with performers on an informal basis.

4. To encourage students not only to listen but to participate.

5. To make students more aware and appreciative of their heritage and of cultures around them.

6. To make students aware of the possibilities for musical expression outside those offered by the mass media.

7. To provide examples illustrating the common roots of the many forms of folk traditions.

8. To impart to students, through knowledge of traditional music, the tools to listen critically and perceptively to traditionally based contemporary music.

9. To use folk traditions to supplement and extend the regular school curriculum, not only in music, but in other subjects as well.

Would-be clients (or imitators) can get MITS’s useful and detailed catalogue by writing to the Mariposa Folk Foundation, 525 Adelaide St., Toronto, Ont. M5A 3W4.

After a period of inactivity due to a disagreement with their previous landlords, Windsor’s Club Sandwich is again in operation. They are now open every Friday at the University of Windsor’s Vanier Hall. The club had been very successful during its short stay at the Windsor Press Club, and because of their policy of booking a wide variety of folk acts, have helped considerably to establish a southern Ontario circuit for performers touring this area. Welcome back to a valued addition to the folk scene!

Lastly, a personal plea. Aren’t any record manufacturers interested in making sampler albums any more? When I was first getting interested in folk music, but didn’t know much about the performers, I found these records, which featured a number of performers from the catalogue, very useful. Sometimes the records were arranged thematically, such as Topie’s Sea Songs & Shanties, or Scots Songs & Music albums, but mainly folk music was the common thread. I know that many people have come to our club and become interested in folk music generally, but when they went to the record store and were faced with a variety of records, became afraid to part with $8-$10 for an unknown quantity (or quality). Record companies featuring folk music, which does not generally receive much coverage on the radio, would surely benefit from providing some sample of the music they were featuring—it has worked in the past, why not now?

Alistair Brown