The past year has shown a great deal of performance activity across the province with the emergence of some new clubs and three major folk festivals. In addition, some new research and media activity have emerged and there are some encouraging signs of children's and educational folk music activities unfolding.

Festivals: under the auspices of the Alberta 75th Anniversary Fund the Travelling Folk Festival and Good Time Medicine Show toured the entire province this summer. Organized by Mitch Podolak, this tour consisted of some of Canada's finest commercial folk music performers: Sylvia Tyson, Stringband, John Allan Cameron, Paul Hann, Connie Kaldor, Joa MacIsaac, the Duck Donald Band and Stan Rogers with his band. In at least three locations (Edmonton, Lethbridge and Calgary), the tour's visit was integrated with local efforts and other performers to produce three brand new folk festivals. All three of these were successful and indications are that they will become annual affairs. The overall experiment with the tour and combined local efforts deserves applause as an effort to stimulate local folk music communities to become involved in festivals.

In addition to the three new festivals, new energy and directions were added to the Red Deer International Folk Festival to make it a combined ethnic and folk song performance show, thus creating another festival of interest to the large Alberta folk music public. When combined with the already extant Canmore Folk Festival and the (soggy) Blackfaulds Festival, Alberta now shows a significant festival calendar, offering both visitors and local people opportunities to see the finest in contemporary folk music performance from across Canada and abroad.

This year also saw the first festival organized by Dave Watts and the "Colonist Car Society". A group of folk enthusiasts took a train and rode in a colonist car up to Fort McMurray, giving workshops and singing and playing the whole way. The Society intends to organize future festivals of this type.

Clubs: four folk clubs in Calgary (The Calgary Folk Club, the Rocky Mountain Folk Club, The Saturday Night Special and the Nickleodeon Music Club), plus the Southside Folk Club in Edmonton and clubs in Canmore, Medicine Hat, Red Deer and Lethbridge ensure that there is continuous performance activity throughout the fall, winter and spring. A fifth club (St. Pius Few) is shortly to begin regular activity in Calgary, and numerous coffeehouses across the province are emerging and doing well. These clubs and coffeehouses feature various combinations of local and imported performers in a situation oriented toward participation and sharing folk songs that make the Alberta scene very unique indeed.

Concerts: numerous individuals and groups continue to import out-of-town, internationally known performers to play for Alberta audiences, making for a full plate of available resources in the larger centres. Recent visits of Burl Ives, Tannahill Weavers, Stan Rogers and many others stand out in this regard. Regular series (e.g., Music at Glenbow) and periodical concerts (e.g., Buck-Dancer's Choice and Friends, Calgary Folk Festival, Celtic Productions) are all a part of this.

Media: several TV shows featuring aspects of the Alberta folk scene were aired this year, and several others are "in the works". The University of Calgary Reaction series is noteworthy here with its feature on Bev Bandur, a local cowboy singer, and its projected program on Doug Goldsmith, a cowboy singer and musician active in the 40's. Several major folk music radio documentaries have been produced by CKUA (Access) Radio out of Edmonton, including a one-hour program on Alberta folk songs and another on American folk music. A series of programs featuring various ethnic communities was initiated by the CBC, but budget problems prevented its realization. Dave Wilkie of Calgary radio station CPAC is producing a marvellous show on older cowboy songs which is very listenable, and which certainly speaks to aspects of the Albertan musical heritage.
The Edmonton and Calgary CBC both initiated dialogue sessions with their local communities. Various ethnic groups and the English language folk music communities were represented. The CBC indicated a desire to provide resources for the various communities needing it, but indicated (rather clearly) that there wasn't very much money around to do this. Whether this dialogue will result in some responsive programming for the Alberta folk music community remains to be seen, but at least the CBC has made some initial overtures.

Workshops: after a successful start featuring the Friends of Fiddlers' Green from Toronto, there has been movement towards provision of more workshops in all aspects of folk music performance in the Calgary area. Instrumental and vocal, songs and tunes are all featured in sessions sponsored by the Calgary Board of Education, local clubs and stores. When combined with the highly successful Continuing Education classes in things like folk instrumentation and songs, the adult educational needs are being well-serviced in Calgary. Of note is the CFMS workshop November 15 and a Board of Education workshop on Alberta folk songs November 22.

Research: Leonora Pauls, a graduate student in music at the University of Calgary, has begun a mammoth collection project as part of her thesis. She'll be looking for older songs sung in Alberta with an eye to organizing these into a Kodaly program for teaching music to children. Tim Rogers is continuing his oral history work with cowboy singers, and things are beginning to shape up for an introductory folklore course at the U. of Calgary for 1982. Oral history work in Lethbridge, Calgary and Edmonton is turning up occasional songs and interesting materials — but the need for integrated and constant collection of songs and lore remains as urgent in the province.

Kids: Judy Woodgate in Calgary and the Spaldings in Edmonton have begun important activities for children in the province. Concert series and tours are the major current activity here, but indications are that we will soon see emphasis on educational programs for children from pre-school through to high school. This entire area emerges as the next potential major development area over the next while in Alberta.

I have just completed a first draft of a list of folk performance outlets in western Canada. I hope eventually to make this a comprehsive list — please forward any information. Anyone wishing to obtain this list, please contact the CFMS at 1314 Shelbourne St S.W., Calgary, Alta. T3C 2K8.

I guess by now it's pretty clear that Alberta has a healthy and vibrant folk music community. To whomever I've missed in this brief summary — I'm sorry, please let me know and to whomever wishes further details, please contact me.

- Tim Rogers

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