very conscious of this personal lack in his experience and repertoire. Towards the end of his life he spoke of learning French so that he could address French Canada himself.

15 Three of Rogers’ contemporaries who have followed this pathway to some extent are Connie Kaldor, Richard White and Vera Johnson. All three are based in the West, but have a view that transcends their region. Kaldor’s “Maria’s Place/Batoche” (about Gabriel Dumont, Louis Riel’s lieutenant) was on the American charts in 1985; her “Au Revoir, Bye, Bye” has become a classic description of English-French relations in Canada on the level of a personal romance. London-born Vera Johnson, who has also written a couple of bilingual songs, has been in eclipse since the early ’80s. Her career in Canada parallels that of Malvina Reynolds in the U.S. in a number of respects.

16 Will Millar, leader of Canada’s best-known international group, “The Irish Rovers”, made his TV debut with a Saturday morning kids’ show in Calgary in the early 1960s. But, although the Rovers have always been considered “family entertainment” — with such hits as “The Unicorn”, “The Biplane”, “Evermore” and “Whiskey on a Sunday” (“The Puppet Song”) — they are an exception. Singer Anne Murray has recorded one children’s album (not her own material): “There’s a Hippo in my Bathtub”. Gordon Lightfoot and Joni Mitchell, Canada’s reigning international stars, have each written just one children’s song of note: Lightfoot’s “The Pony Man”, and Mitchell’s “Circle Game”, a song of adult reflection on childhood.

17 Folk festivals, both large and small, have become Canadian cultural carriers, both for the regions and groups sponsoring them, and nationally, as artists move from one festival to another. In the 1987 Canadian Folk Festival Directory there were 288 events listed across the country.


19 E.g., Raffi’s “All I Really Need...”, David Spaulding (“Brandywine”)’s musical setting of “The Gingerbread Man”. Also Ann Mortifee (not a children’s performer, and hardly even a “folkie” any more) has written a child-adult musical, “Reflections on Crooked Walking” (Jabula Records), which in my view, will stand alongside Peter Pan, Wind in the Willows, Winnie-the-Pooh, and other English-language classics. Mortifee is from Vancouver.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I was pleased to see reviews of the 19th and 20th Annual Regina Folk Festivals. My thanks to Bill Sarjeant and the BULLETIN. It is hard enough to get coverage in our local paper and so it is gratifying to see it reported in our national BULLETIN.

Of possible interest to Bulletin readers is the trials and tribulations of folk festival organizing. The Regina Folk Festival has recently held a series of meetings to talk about our purpose, policies and a five-year plan.

The impetus for these meetings was a controversy over “The Honorarium Gap” and “The Star Syndrome”. The Mariposa Folk Festival was cited by many as the wrong way to go. Policies that emerged included keeping the Honorarium Gap to a minimum, treating all performers as fairly and equally as possible, raising our “base-rate” for performers as quickly as we can and not hiring “Parachuters” who cannot or will not do workshops.

Another great topic for discussion was the nature of “Workshops”. At many festivals, the “Workshops” at Regina have become little more than mini-concerts, with many of the more “commercial” musicians playing the same “hits” they will perform later on the main stage, often with complete disregard to the workshop theme. We identified “interaction” as the most important aspect missing at present, with “educational value” close behind. By interaction we mean performers “jamming” on stage, interacting with each other, or interacting with the audience, through either answering questions or directly demonstrating aspects of their music.

Our solution, I believe, will be to divide the different stages, or times, into “Concerts”, “Jam Sessions” and “Instructional Workshops”, perhaps with sign-up sheets for the instructional workshops.

Gordon Fisch

[Perhaps other festival organizers would care to comment on this topic or other vicissitudes of running folk festivals. – Ed.]
I've read with interest your articles on the accordion in Canada [21:3, p. 4; 21:4, p. 7]. A much-needed piece of work — thanks for undertaking it.

In this letter I will just touch on a couple of points that came to me in reading pp. 10-11 of 21:4.

First — Delmer Dorey is not a Newfoundlander; I'm almost certain that he's a Nova Scotian.

Wilf Doyle was the first Newfoundland accordion player to record, and has been extremely influential in the province. I did a video show on him in 1980 which was broadcast here on the local cable station over Memorial University's station, and it contains an interview that sketches his career. He recorded, in the '50s, for Rodeo/Banff, and his first albums included complete dance sets for the Lancers and other local traditional dances, in the proper sequence and rhythm. He toured the province widely in the '50s and '60s but consistently refused offers to appear on the mainland and on such shows as Don Messer's Jubilee. He still performs around his home in Conception Harbour, C.B. Taft's Discography lists his recordings up to 1972; he has done a number of others since then. Wilf played accordion on Dick Nolan's hit recording "Aunt Martha's Sheep". He plays both button and piano accordion, as well as keyboards.

Ray Johnson, currently a member of the group "Buddy, Whas'is'name, and the Other Fella", made albums for AuDat (listed in Taft) and Pigeon Inlet, and is generally considered one of the best.

The other accordion player with Figgy Duff in the past was Art Stoyles, who is very highly regarded in St. John's, particularly because of his mastery of the Portuguese repertoire and style.

The most popular group in the accordion-based Newfoundland-country mode (which Hibbs popularized but which was first heard on record in recordings by Doyle and Omar Blondahl) is Simani ("Sim an' I"), a duo consisting of accordionist Sim Savory and guitarist Bud Davidge of English Harbour West, on the South Coast. Through they have never played off the island, or even in St. John's, they have sold hundreds of thousands of records and cassettes over the last five years. Davidge is a fine songwriter, and his compositions "Saltwater Cowboys" and "The Mummer's Song" are extremely popular local hits. They regularly include accordion instrumentals on their albums. They have a recording studio and have inspired a considerable number of similar groups, most of whom have recorded cassettes for their label. There is a lot of newly-recorded accordion music available today in Newfoundland.

Taft's Discography lists other Nfld. accordionists.

Finally, a lot of accordion fans here are enthusiastic followers of the Norwegian-Canadian accordionist Olaf Sveen, who did albums for Rodeo/Banff in the '60s.

Neil V. Rosenberg

... the Wilf Carter interview [BULLETIN, vol. 21, no. 2 (June 1987), p. 5] was first quality. The writer made the right move by not trying to correct the grammar and syntax. I felt like I was listening to the man, and not just reading about him.

Cal White

Been reading with interest your discussion on what's folk music. I have different definitions for different occasions. My second most favorite has nothing to do with style or groups and everything to do with the oral process — to me it's the cumulative change (for better or worse) on a song that makes it folk. My most favorite definition, though, is "kitchen music" — whatever we're singing at home. This definition works only at home, though, like the plaque one sees on some pleasure boats: "Marriages performed by the Captain of this ship are for the duration of the voyage only."

Keep up the good work, and I hope you work it out. I fear you have an almost unsolvable problem — trying to reconcile the needs of the academic writers about and the let's-have-a-good-time players of folk music (sometimes — as in the case of, say, Tim Rogers — in the same person). As I said, good luck, and don't let it keep you up nights, unless there's a bottle of screech on the table.

The folk festival business is sure booming — I'm now doing booking and scheduling for a folk festival to be held June 9-11 in an indoor-outdoor performing arts center (like Ontario Place — holds 15,000) near Boston. I think these guys think folk music is "coming back". In doing research, I have talked to a few people in "the industry" — one said: "Folk is no longer a dirty word." Another: "Lyrics are in."

Michael Cooney