MUSICAL NOTES

This is a new addition to the Bulletin. Living folk music today depends on live performance, and we would like to hear about your group, or about groups or musicians who have performed in your area. We would be particularly interested in hearing about musicians who are singing traditional songs, or playing traditional instruments, but all submissions are welcome. We also want to hear about festivals and new record releases. Send the information to me care of the Bulletin. Until I receive your letters, it’ll seem like Brandon, Manitoba is the centre of the folk universe, since that is where I live, so let’s hear about traditional music in your area!

I was watching ‘Sounds Unlimited’, a Saskatchewan television show about music and musicians, and who should I see but some friends of mine -- Paddy Totty, a female vocalist from Saskatoon, and the Pockets, also from the City of Bridges. The Pockets are a trio who sing mostly a cappella, led by Susan Bond, and they sing a mixture of their own material, and other upbeat music. Their harmonies are superb. They mostly perform locally, so if you are in Saskatoon or at the Regina folk festival, you may catch them. Paddy Totty has a unique vocal style, which seems to me to be influenced by Old English music, and she likes to sing songs from various sources about the land, and its relationship to people. She also plays guitar, dulcimer and fiddle, and has played many venues, including the Winnipeg Folk Festival.

As interesting band passed through Brandon recently, and also played at Winnipeg and Regina on their way across Canada. Their name is Nyetz, and they are based in Vancouver. There are four musicians, led by Nova Devonie on vocals and piano accordion, and Zubin Gillespie on vocals and guitar. They play an eclectic variety of original music, and in between the songs their most bizarre sense of humour is evident. About eighty people showed up to their concert in Brandon, but I gather their Regina and Winnipeg performances were poorly attended. Their concert was well worth the admission fee, so come on all you listeners to music - live music is best! Catch Nyetz next time around.

The long awaited third album by the Newfoundland group Figgy Duff has finally been released. It is available on the major label A&M and has been receiving a lot of hype on the music video channel Much Music. Who would have thought you’d see jigs and reels on Much Music? Traditional music is everywhere. The cast list on this album reads like a who’s who of Newfoundland Music - Noel Dinn, Pamela Morgan, Kelly Russell, Jamie Snider (also of Toronto’s Tip Splinter), Geoff Butler, Frank Mahler, Bruce Crummmel, etc. Newfoundland fiddler Emile Benoit is prominent in the video ‘Weather out the Storm’. The album is also called ‘Weather out the Storm’ and contains more original material than the previous two LP’s by the band. It is available on compact disc. Record stores in Brandon are requiring Figgy Duff fans to put in a special order, so if you can’t find the cassette or CD in your local record store - ask. It’s on a major label and should be easy to order. Tours to promote the album have not been finalised, but watch for Figgy Duff in your area.

Louise Quinn