information about the Musical Saw have made its beginnings very obscure. There are legends of its early appearance in Scandinavia, South America, Germany and even the Orient. But we like to believe it was native to North America where the lumberjacks played a part in carving the land out of the wilderness and, just maybe, were responsible for bringing the beautiful tones from a woodman's tool. There are three companies (Mussehl & Westphal, Valley Saw, Inc. with C. Blacklock Special, and Sandvik Stradivarius) that produce professional musical saws today but many run-of-the-mill hardware store saws will play some very beautiful music.

The Musical Saw has been used to play in many environments including vaudeville, symphonies, jazz, gospel, classical, semiclassical, Blue Grass and other folk types. It has been played for ethnic music in audio tapes received from Australia, Italy and Japan containing local music. We have had attendees at Musical Saw Festivals from England, Ireland, British Guyana as well as from Canada and the United States. The saw is generally played by drawing a rasped bow across the straight flat side of the saw opposite the teeth. In order to obtain sound, an "S" curve must be produced in bending the saw usually with the saw handle between the knees with the teeth towards the player. The bow must be placed near the handle with saw attitude nearly straight up for low notes and bent to a very acute angle with the bow near the top for the very high notes. All the rest of the notes fall somewhere in between. If you liken the saw to a harp you can visualize the long strings for low notes at the bottom and the short strings at the top for high notes. Then the strings are stroked with the bow to produce the notes unlike a violin on which the bow is usually drawn in the same place. Either a violin or cello bow can be used. Additionally, the saw can be played with a mallet usually felt tipped, or for larger saws a kettle mallet has been used.

In 1979 the Festival of the Saws was initiated in Santa Cruz, CA, by a man, Tom Scribner, who had been a lumberjack. There has been a statue erected in his honor in that city. This Festival continued through 1984 with winners of several categories and a Judge's Grand Prize Winner. The author was the winner of the Grand Prize in 1984. The Festival of the Saws was moved to Portland, Oregon for about three years when the desire to bring it back to California established a festival in conjunction with the Summer Solstice Folk Festival in California State University at Northridge. The Festival remained there for two years and was relocated at Disneyland in September 1989. The Festival of Saws will appear again at Disneyland in September 1991. In the meantime a small saw festival was born in Michigan with eight players at Bowens Mill, started by Gerald Jennings Cairns. It was held at the Ionia Faire Fair for about four years and I believe will be held at Michigan State University East Lansing, MI, August 16, 17, & 18, 1991, with the major events on Saturday. It is anticipated that this festival may be held at Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village in 1992. In 1988 Australia had its first saw festival with seven present, hosted by Ian Hill. We do what is called "jamming" here; they do what is called "busking" there.

Musical Sawdust has progressed to the extent that there are publications about it. Mussehl & Westphal issued a paper called Sawing News of the World, while another publication edited by Lillian Harris of San Diego, CA is called Musical Saw News. In January 1989 Jim Leonard and Janet Graeber published a book called Scratch My Back that reports much Musical Saw history, has technical information, and contains information from saw players around the world. There have been numerous "how to play" books in the past. The three most current are Larry Tyrrell's Saw Playing: Chris Michaels' How to Play the Musical Saw, with booklet and tape, using any saw; and the newest by David L. Youngs, the Sonorous Sawist, Saw Sounds will also be published with a tape.

As near as the Musical Saw came to extinction all the evidence is that it is thriving. Festivals are one means of communicating the beauty of the Musical Saw to a new generation and will encourage more young people to get a "handle" on Saw Playing. As we play in public, interested people ask where they can learn. Classes at Greenfield Village are offered to those desiring musical saw playing instruction, young and old.

Charles W. Hardy, Master Sawyer #7
The Mellifluous Musical Saw Player

We Give What We Have
by Cathy Winter

Far to the north where the January sun never brings the light of day,
Food is buried in the ice or bought at the store when there's money enough to pay.
It wasn't long ago the winter ran too long, the ice grew thick and the hunt fell low.
Everyone remembers the cry of hunger in the night.
When the evening news told of Africa's plight, her bones growing thin in the hot sunlight,
Everybody talked about what could be done.
They said, "When food is short we divide what we have, if it's meat or oil or ice.
If money will feed those people, then we can help pay the price."

"We give what we have, we have more than we know.
The earth, the heart, the hands create all."

The word went out through the land of ice and snow --
"Raise what you can from what you've got; to Africa the money will go.
When we were in need, people fed our towns. Now the helping hands circle 'round.
An auction, a bake sale, or door to door -- somehow the money will be found.
A penny will do, a quarter if you can, though a dollar will buy much more.
Give what you can when the little children come and knock on your door."

At the end of the week, an auction was held; and the whole town filled the hall.
Clothes from the Bay and hockey sticks signed by Guy LeFleur and more.
Things that came from far away, things made by the young and old.
Inuit and White bidding together for everything that was sold.
"Now what am I bid for this polar bear who stalks the seal alone?
You can feel the muscle under her fur, though she's carved out of green stone.
One hundred, now two, who will make it three? Four, four-fifty, five."
Old Henry's eyes fill up with tears for the people his bear keeps alive.

The dollars and coins kept adding up, though the towns are known as poor --
A half of twenty thousand dollars, Pengerton five thousand more.
How can it be that on this earth that grows so green on so much land.
Hunger can rule a country with an iron hand?
Where is the wheat from all the fields in the photos we memorize?
Where are the fruits from the southern lands that nourish the world wide?
Where is the money from all that trade? Do they just hang it up on a wall?
Or is it building a monument where, someday, it'll crumble and fall?
We hold the gift we all call life right in the palm of our hands;
You clutch it tight or open it wide, it's how you make your stand.

There are two slightly different melodies used for the verse -- choose or adapt whichever one feels best for each pair of lines.

This song is on Cathy Winter's 1988 recording "Travelling Home", on Flying Fish records. She writes, "I was performing in northern B.C. in 1984 on the Northern Music Circuits of coffee houses. On an off night, I caught Whi
Fraser's national CBC TV story on the North West Territories' efforts to send money to Ethiopia for famine relief. It really moved me. A year later, I was asked to perform at a Hunger Action benefit in Buxton and started trying to recreate the story in song. I couldn't remember enough about it to pull it off and I didn't want to make it up, since it was a real story. I dropped it until one of my guitar students whined about being left out. I almost gave up, but I just gave in to the temptation to look after the request and get the rest of the information. It took me just a few phone calls to track down Whit Fraser in Edmonton. I interviewed him over the phone for 45 minutes. He got a big kick out of it and it seems the song quite a bit. I had to scrap a lot of what I'd written because I hadn't remembered it accurately. The final version is completely consistent with Whit's information. As written, the song referred to Frobisher Bay, which was its name at the time the auction took place; Cathy now prefers to use its Inuit name, Igloolik. You can contact Cathy at P.O. Box 6482, Albany, N.Y., U.S.A. 12206.

**Ethnonsco Arts News...**

**Learning Through Drum and Dance**

"It is inside dancing and playing that laughter laughs"  
[Dagomba proverb]

Approximately forty students participated in the course, "Music and Dances of Ghana," a four week intensive study of the traditional drumming, dancing and singing originating in the West African nation of Ghana, which was held during summer (1990) at York University in Toronto. The instructors, Abraham Adzenyah and Helen Mensah, taught, respectively, drumming and dancing, and shared responsibilities for the teaching of traditional songs. Ghanaians by birth, both were, for several years, leading members of the internationally renowned Ghana Dance Ensemble before leaving it to pursue professional careers and to further their education in the United States.

Perhaps our biggest challenge, as participants in the course, was the task we were taught, wholeheartedly, through an oral tradition. Helen avoided giving verbal instructions, for example, as she preferred to demonstrate, physically, the dance movements, and have us repeat them over and over again until they were perfected. Only when flagrant coordination problems occurred did she stop to analyze movements verbally. Helen also preferred to show entire dances or large sections from the dances instead of analyzing their individual steps in sequence, as often occurs in Western dance instruction. Abraham also taught in a wholistic manner. He insisted, for example, that all of the drummers (which varied in numbers from 5-12 depending upon what piece was being played) continue playing while he taught individual parts. This technique seemed to lessen tension on the individual being taught and improve his/her capacity to learn complicated rhythm.

The instructors' heuristic methods seemed to emphasize the group more than the individual. For example, Abraham constantly reminded us that it was more important to coordinate one's playing with that of the group than it was to develop a virtuoso solo technique. In addition, individual parts were usually taught only once by Abraham, thus leaving it up to the students to teach themselves. The instructors also emphasized the fact that in Ghanaian society (and in most African societies) most dancers must learn how to drum, and most drummers learn how to dance. Indeed, both Helen and Abraham were exemplary of this tradition as each could easily identify and correct any missed dance steps or incorrect rhythms in the other's teaching. Eventually, most of our class developed at least some skill in both disciplines.

In addition to the actual drumming and dancing, we watched films depicting traditional Ghanaian culture and had many informal discussions with our instructors, thus enabling us a uniquely personal, humanistic insight into the customs and values of the various traditional and contemporary cultures which exist in Ghana.

Not surprisingly, both instructors included what I would call 'Western' methods in their teaching of the summer course. These methods were, however, treated less favourably by the instructors and seemed, in fact, to have been used partly in order to conform with the academic environment of York University. For example, the printed handouts we received (which included explanations of the origins of Ghanaian dance-forms, a discography/bibliography and an "Introduction to African Music") were seldom referred to by the instructors, and therefore seemed more supplementary than essential to their teaching. We were also permitted to take notes. It was clear to us that they preferred, however, if we felt we simply had to copy something down, it should be the words of the songs and not the melodies and rhythms of the music as copying the latter, they thought, would 'confuse us even further'. (They were right, of course.) Abraham, who, incidentally, never writes down the music he composes, often jokingly referred to written notations as 'chicken scratches.'