News, Views, & Stuff

Of course, the big news item for the Society is that at the Annual General Meeting, held in Calgary this past June, the membership voted to alter the name slightly, from the Canadian Society for Musical Traditions to the Canadian Society for Traditional Music. The change will not be official until it has been registered. Further information and discussion will be presented in these pages as it arises.

At the AGM, Philip J. Thomas was made an Honorary Life Member and Edith Fowke the Honorary President of the Society, honors well earned and probably overdue for these hardworking members.

The Meeting coincided (in some degree by design!) with the release by the University of Calgary Press of Ms. Fowke's most recent book, which she wrote with Society Director Jay Rahn (with whom she co-edits the Society Journal), entitled A Family Heritage: The Story and Songs of LaRena Clark. The book includes fascinating articles by Fowke, Rahn, and Clark herself, as well as a major portion of Clark's outstanding repertoire of ballads and other songs.

A Family Heritage is Ms. Fowke's 23rd book. Upon the release of her 22nd book, Legends Told in Canada (Royal Ontario Museum), which was published only a month earlier, Fowke was given a warm and lively feature in The Globe and Mail ("Explorer of a beckoning realm," Thursday May 5, 1994, C1). In it, she gave reporter Val Ross as fine a credo as anyone could need: "I'm an ordinary person and what ordinary people do is important." Still, the article recognizes her, along with Marius Barbeau and Helen Creighton, as one of the "three pioneers of folklore studies in Canada." Scuttlebut at the nearly coincidental meetings of the CSMT and the Folklore Studies Association of Canada indicates to this observer that Fowke's stock is high, not only with the popular media, but among many younger folklorists.

The Sonneck Society for American Music will hold its twenty-first National Conference in Madison, Wisconsin, on April 6-9, 1995, hosted by the University of Wisconsin. Proposals for papers and performances involving all aspects of music in America (defined as Canada, the USA, and Mexico) are welcome. While a broad range of topics and approaches are desired by the Program Committee, the University of Wisconsin's reputation as a center for challenging critical and interdisciplinary thought makes topics in this vein particularly appropriate. Proposals addressing questions of interdisciplinary methodology, critical studies, and perspectives on the 20th century are encouraged. In addition, since 1995 marks the centennial of William Grant Still's birth, the Program Committee also seeks to encourage submissions devoted to an examination of Still as well as to African-American vernacular, popular, and art music subject. Regardless of topic, a clear thesis and convincing methodology will highly recommend a presentation to the Program Committee.

All materials must be received on or before October 1, 1994, by Program Chair Ron Pen, 7601 Grimes Mill Road, Lexington, Kentucky, USA 40515.

The Sonneck Society’s 1994 awards included, for the Irving Lowens Awards for the best book on an American music topic, Stuart Feder’s Charles Ives: "My Father’s Song" (Yale UP, 1992) and for the best article Robert Walser’s "Eruptions: Heavy Metal Appropriations of Classical Virtuosity" (Popular Music 11.3). Percussionist Max Roach was named the Society’s Honorary Member for 1994.

The Helen Creighton Foundation (11—5254 Green Street, Halifax, Nova Scotia, B3H 1N7) offers two Grants-in-Aid programs, one entitled Folklore Performance and Exhibition, the other Folklore Research, Collection and Publication. These grants are usually for $250.00 and are meant to be encouragement rather than to fund completely any project. Most of the awards are made in the Spring, and the deadline for application is May 15; a few grants are also made in the Fall, the deadline for which is September.

This is late, but then we usually get the news late. Still, if you’re going to be in California on Sunday October 9, you might want to attend the Northern California Association of Luthiers Second Annual Exhibition of Handmade Musical Instruments at the Veteran’s Memorial Hall, 6401 Stockton Avenue, El Cerrito. For a small admission fee, you can see the work of more than two dozen makers of instruments: all types of guitars, mandolins, electric violins and basses, cuatros, harps, and unusual musical instruments.

(OK, be honest. How many of you out there are old enough to remember just how weird it was when Bob Dylan sang of Einstein—"disguised as Robin Hood"—who was "famous long ago for playing electric violin on Desolation Row")

The City of Aberdeen (with the help of Wallace Music)
has recently published a complete edition of James Scott Skinner’s autobiography *My Life and Adventures*. Until it gets a Canadian distributor, you’ll apparently have to order it from Aberdeen Central Library, Rosemount Viaduct, Aberdeen AB9 1GU. That’s Scotland, of course.

Again, this came too late for an earlier deadline, but the Edmonton Folk Song Circle is sponsoring their First Annual Weekend Guitar Workshop at Camp B’nai B’rith, Pine Lake, Alberta, on the weekend of September 16-18. Prices run from $250.00 to $275.00, for which you get two nights’ accommodation, two days of meals, and twelve hours of music instruction in such areas as Vocal Harmony, Basic Blues and Improvisation, Open Tuning, Songwriting, Bodhran Construction and Basic Drum Beats, Basic Guitar, and Dobro.

The Circle also meets the first Thursday of each month from 8-11 PM at Avonmore Hall, 7902-73rd Avenue.

The Great Canadian Song-Along 1995: Wanna play?

After two highly successful Song-Alongs in Toronto plus a spin-off event in Ottawa, organizer Karen Leslie Hall is coordinating a Canada-wide Song-Along to take place during March of 1995.

The Song-Along is a unique event celebrating the love of songwriting. It’s a simple concept: choose a few themes, invite songwriters to write songs inspired by these themes, then have them gather to perform their new songs for each other and the public. The result is a magical musical event that inspires creativity and camaraderie in the songwriting community, as well as a whole slew of new songs!

The idea of the Great Canadian Song-Along is to have it happen simultaneously in communities across Canada, with songwriters from coast to coast writing around the same three or four themes.

If you would like to participate as a songwriter, coordinator, volunteer, or audience member, please call Karen today at (416) 690-3504.

And spread the word!

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Times were hard those years. Sometimes I didn’t have twenty-five cents to go to a dance. Reins and Art Mitarbodi, who had an orchestra at that time, told me to go along as one of the players. I couldn’t even play a note, but I got in free.

*Ontario Ranchman. Each Step Left Its Mark (Hoe Lakes, Alberta)*

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We’ve missed it for 1994, but you might like to know that the 10th Anniversary North American Northumbrian Pipers’ Convention (held in conjunction with the North American Association of Lowland and Border Pipers and the Scottish Traditional Music Trust) was held at the North Hero Village Hall, North Hero, The Lake Champlain Islands, Vermont, USA, August 27, 28, and 29. Advertised as attending were Chris Ormston, Gordon Mooney, Paddy Keenan, Brian MacCandless, Alain Leroux, and on and on and on. Traditions invoked on the weekend included those of Québec, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, and Cape Breton, as well as Northumberland itself. Events included a mini-concert/folk dance, grand piping concert, lectures, workshops, and surprise guests. Sigh!

For next year’s Convention, write Alan Jones, P.O. Box 130, Rouses Point, New York, USA, 12979.
countries of Europe, America, Asia, and Africa.

We would like to invite the representatives of your organization to take part in the symposium. We will be glad to host in Moscow the leaders and leading specialists of music academies and conservatories, music departments of universities, higher schools of musical education and other organizations that may be interested in discussing the pressing issues of musical education.

**Goals:** The symposium will discuss the experience in goals and prospects for musical education as well as the expansion of creative ties between the different schools of music worldwide. Proposed topics include:

- Development Trends in Musical Education Systems in the Context of World Culture
- The Inter-Influence of Different Pedagogical Schools, Prospects for the Consolidation of Theoreticians and Practicing Teachers
- The National, Historical and Cultural Specialties in the Systems of Musical Pedagogies
- The Forecast Systemic Models of Training Musicians of the Musical Upbringing of Children.

For more information, write:

Gnessin’s Russian Academy of Music
30/36, Vorovskogo str. (Povarskaya)
121069, Moscow
RUSSIA.

An interesting titbit from Neil Rosenberg. It seems that his fine *Bluegrass: A History* (U Illinois P) has come to serve double duty as an autograph album for bluegrass fans, who carry copies to festivals for the purpose of having their heroes sign their pictures. A number of people have had their guitars and banjos autographed by idols and chums (sometimes in rather attractive patterns); it’s pleasing to see a book treated with such loving attention(8,11),(993,989). I’ve heard of folkloristic works that influenced tradition—not so many become tradition!