The Centrefold

I recently got back in touch with one of my favorite publications, Concertina & Squeezebox: The International Magazine for Free Reed Musicians. Founded by John Townley deep in the 80s, Concertina & Squeezebox is currently edited by Joel Cowan, who has survived moves, fires, and various other unnatural disasters to bring the magazine into its 31st issue, fatter and fuller than ever. Full of neat stuff, like the cover interview with Lou Killen, a reprint of an interview with the late Scan Tester of Sussex (conducted by Rod and Danny Stradling), a continuing series on maintenance and repair, as well as reviews, market place, and some absolutely wonderful photos. They’ve been gathering and issuing cassettes made from home recordings by readers of the magazine for several years; these cassettes, Original Readers’ Tape, Son of Readers’ Tape, Bride of Readers’ Tape and Revenge of Readers’ Tape, are offered at $12.00 ($14.00 airmail, both prices U.S.; Canadian readers can get all four for $40.00 U.S. postpaid). Considering that their readers include such folks and Killen, not to mention Townley and Cowan themselves, Hamish Bayne, and others less known (but often very good and surprisingly original), these cassettes are well worth owning.

My only current beef with Concertina & Squeezebox is that I’ve got to find some way to put together $50.00 to buy the back issues I’ve missed during the last couple of years. [GWL]

A little known group that might be of interest to Society members is the American Banjo Fraternity. Despite the inclusive sound of their moniker, the group is quite specialized: their turf is the nylon or gut strung, finger picked (but not à la Scruggs, and without picks, for sure!) in the so-called “classical” mode. Of late, they’ve branched out a bit, showing some interest in the popular styles of playing that preceded the Golden Era of classical banjo (the late 1800s, though I gather you can still study the instrument in conservatories in England): recent articles and reprints have looked at the minstrel banjo technique, which was the prototypical “frailing” or “clawhammer” style.

I first became aware of the group during the 60s: they were not new when Pete Seeger cited them in his banjo instruction book. A friend of mine wrote a letter to the address Seeger gave, citing his source, and received a blistering response, denigrating Seeger as a Communist, blah blah blah. Not exactly the sort of thing to make a fellow much interested in joining. The current group is much friendlier. I think that’s one reason why I keep my membership up; it’s fun to receive the quarterly 5 Stringer, their publication, even
though I've never gotten around to learning to read music well enough to play any of the music they print (though every now and then I have a moment to sit and noodle with a little of it), and though I know I'll never make it to Pennsylvania for one of their Fall or Spring Rallies. Lord knows, even as a listener, it must be a great deal of fun!

Dues for the Fraternity are $10.00 annually. Write to the Treasurer, Joann Azinger, 271 McKinley Street, Braddock Hills, Pennsylvania, USA 15221. The 5 Stringer is edited by Elias and Madeleine Kaufman, 202 Capen Boulevard, Amherst, New York, USA 14226.[GWL]

News, Views, & Stuff

The International Institute for Traditional Music (IITM) in Berlin is in danger of being permanently closed, along with its publications World of Music and Intercultural Music Studies. Losing this Institute would be a tremendous loss. To protest, write the Mayor of Berlin and send your letter care of the IITM:

Write
Hon. Eberhard Dieggen
Berliner Rathaus
D10173 Berlin, Germany

Send your letter to
The International Institute for Traditional Music
Winklerstr 20
D14193 Berlin, Germany
Fax: 00-49-30-825-9991
Tel.: 0049-30-826-2853
email (but fax or snailmail preferred):
iitm@netmbx.netmbx

The School of Music at the Memorial University of Newfoundland has announced a vacancy to be filled in the field of Ethnomusicology. This will be a full-time, tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor, subject to budgetary approval, with a possible cross-appointment to the Department of Folklore. This is both a research and a teaching position, with duties at the undergraduate level in ethnomusicology as well as in music history and literature; there may be teaching and supervision of graduate students in Folklore. Preference will be given to candidates undertaking research in the music of Atlantic Canada. Qualifications include a doctorate in ethnomusicology with a background in North American traditional and/or native musics. University teaching experience will be an asset. Secondary expertise in popular music of the twentieth century, such as jazz or rock and roll, would also be advantageous. The deadline for applications is January 15, 1995. A letter of application, CV (with evidence of teaching effectiveness, if available), and three letters of reference should be sent to
Search Committee
%Dr. Maureen Volk, Director
School of Music
Memorial University of Newfoundland

According to the Preliminary Program of the 33rd World Conference of the International Council for Traditional Music, published in the Council’s October Bulletin, there will not be much of a Canadian presence at the January event in Canberra. Pity. Still, Beverley Diamond will be reading a paper, "Contemporary Aboriginal Music in Canada: negotiating the politics of marginalization," and there are many fascinating titles on the menu. Wish I could go. [GWL]

From the Bureau of Semiotic Confusion, Wild West Department: While many Calgary institutions tart themselves up for Stampede in various peculiar ways, usually using the castoffs of a not-so-10°C-dllumberyard, hay bales from nearby, and lots of brown paper and magic markers, few are as bizarre as banks. When I went to deposit a small amount during the yearly affliction this July, I was amazed to notice that my teller's nickname for the week was Cajun Kuljit. Oh, Kana Das. [GWL]

The Andean Society Pusi Suyo and fifteen indigenous communities of Santiago, located in the north of Potosí, Bolivia, have been working together since 1990. This unique partnership in agro-ecology and cultural development encourages a vision of native people's self-sufficiency through micro-projects which integrate environmental protection and natural resource management with the promotion of ancestral social and cultural values. The community development work of Pusi Suyo and the Quechua-speaking ayllus (clans) of Northern Potosí is generously supported by funding from Save the Children—Canada.

A cassette recording is available from the Society, the result of a collaborative effort between ethnic communities and Bolivian agro-ecologists and anthropologists. It features the participation of traditional musicians and dancers from the north of Potosí who express a reverence for the Pacha Mama.