The British Columbia Folklore Society has chosen the Distaff and Spindle as a symbol to represent the many ethnic groups coming to together to make up the society of peoples of the province.

It also represents the multiplicity of traditions within our society that form a single thread we can all recognize and be proud of.

**Folklore, what is it?**

The name "Folklore" was first coined by W.J. Thoms in August 1846 to describe a study of antiquities, an offshoot of anthropology. The remnants of some of the early studies in folklore still exist and commonly tend to manifest themselves as a vague, lingering belief that folklore is either a subject for scholars or has something to do with ancient Greek myths and legends. Others might associate folklore with folksongs, with Native Indian tales.

Folklore is all of these things, but it is much, much more and a great deal of it relates to our daily life. It is Granny’s memories and what was passed on to her from her mother, Aunt Mary’s quilt and rug patterns, Uncle Albert’s fresh-water well and why he doesn’t line it with cedar, and mother’s family recipes. It is song parodies, riddles, jokes and shaggy-dog stories, and what landmarks coastal fishers recognize, and what they call them and why. It is the stories of loggers and miners and their work-a-day language, the fiddle tunes of British Columbia, the planting seasons in the Peace District and the Chilkat blankets of the North West. It is the tales of hardship and humour of British Columbia’s lesser known communities such as the Hawaiians and the Finns, who came here in the 19th century and brought with them the folk tales and traditions of their countries of origin. Also it is cowboy poetry, wooden toy logging trucks, and the Morris Dances of British immigrants. True folk art still exists and evolves, and is still being newly created. Examples of folk art can be seen if one is aware of the parameters within which folk art exists and, occasionally, pieces can be found hidden amongst craft works in galleries and local craft stores. And yet all these things only scratch the surface of folklore and folklife.

Folklore is a living thing that affects us all. It is something that we can all be proud of, and it needs to be both documented and preserved as an important part of our heritage.

*For more information please write:*

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Cobble Hill, BC
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The response to the call for papers for the International Ballad Conference 1996, which we listed in the previous Bulletin, has been overwhelming. A selection procedure will be necessary. The deadline for offers of papers and preliminary registration has therefore been brought forward to July 1, 1995. If you wish to give a paper or plan to attend without giving a paper, please contact Tom Cheesman, SEL (German), U. Wales Swansea, Swansea SA2 8PP, GB (Fax: 01792-295710; email: t.cheesman@swansea.ac.uk) as soon as possible. There is a form to be submitted, available from Cheesman. An abstract of up to 250 words should accompany offers of papers. Speakers will have about 25 minutes. New offers of papers are still very welcome.

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Prior to their concert in Calgary, Jorge Coulon of the Chilean group *Inti Illimani* made some interesting comments to a reporter for the *Herald*. A sampling of his thoughts:

"People like Peter Gabriel or Paul Simon are maybe a little bit tired with the classic rock and they went to learn something about other cultures. But the problem for us is that we cannot wait to be discovered by some rock star in England or America. When people living in North America or Europe want to look for some culture, some music, outside of their own, then we exist. When they are tired of us, we do not exist."

"Look at what happened to Brazilian music. Many Brazilian musicians, fantastic musicians, went to Europe or the United States to work because their music was suddenly popular. But after that, it was dark."

"It is no longer in fashion and nobody now knows what happens in Brazil...."

"For us it is important to say to the people, look, we are only one group. It is an enormous continent with an enormous range of music and talent. We are only one group in this ocean...."

"We know absolutely everything about North America or Europe but in Europe or North America the people know very, very little about South America or Africa or Asia. And that is a problem more for you than for us."

"Marginal cultures are important in music, in philosophy, about the earth, about relationships."

"We are a little bit prisoners of a western conception of life and I think, I feel, the results are not the best." (Calgary Herald November 22, 1994)