Transfusion Medicine Reviews 6.4 (October 1992): 280-83, by Barry M. Isaac. Isaac is using the cd revolution to make a point about a difficulty which affect hemophiliacs, but it seems to me that the same point applies to the recording industry itself. Were cds really necessary? I have not been able to make myself purchase one yet, despite (or perhaps because of) pressure from a greedy industry. Obviously the battle for vinyl has been lost, and it would cause as much dislocation and waste to go back to lps as the first change caused. One hopes, perhaps in vain, that when the industry decides to obsolete CDs, record buyers will cry Enough!

"The economies of production and world needs will virtually ensure that as recombinant factor VIII inexorably makes inroads into hemophilia care in developed countries, plasma-derived products will become increasingly scarce. This can be illustrated with an analogy: some 8 to 10 years ago, audiophiles made do with a perfectly good system of sound reproduction: vinyl recordings. Then Phillips Electronics invented and developed compact disk technology, using lasers to reproduce music in a seemingly miraculous and bright fashion from a tiny plastic disk reputed to be indestructible. Although there is much said to the contrary, let there be no doubt that vinyl records could and do deliver sound every bit as good as compact disks, but consumers no longer have a say about the format in which they want their sound delivered. Vinyl recordings are nearly obsolete. (When was the last time the reader attempted to purchase a classical recording on vinyl? Most record companies no longer press them.) This is not to say that one technology is necessarily better than the other. This is simply to say that choice has been eliminated by marketing and technology."

Performers, club folks, &c., who think they might do some work in (or gather performers from) New England might want to check out the Folk Arts Network, an organization headed by Stephen H. Baird, who created a buskers' newsletter many long years ago, out of which both this Network and a Street Artists' Guild. The Network publishes an annual Directory as well as the New England Folk Almanac, which comes out six times a year. The tenth edition of the Directory will be published in February 1996, at $15.00; inquire to the Folk Arts Network, PO Box 380867, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 02238-0867 for it. For the Almanac, subscriptions are $15.00 per year; write New England Folk Almanac, PO Box 336, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, 02141.

Letters

I recently picked up an lp at the Goodwill, but the record inside the cover was, sadly, not the right one. It was especially unfortunate because the recording, put out for the BC Centennial (1966), was by Evan Kemp and The Trail Riders, and, although they are unknown to me personally, it included such forgotten potential gems as "Bella Coola Baby," "Ogopogo Polka," the "Quadra Island Breakdown," and the "North Thompson Reel."

An earlier recording, advertised on the back cover of the sleeve, mentions another song that looks interesting: "Dawson Creek Dolly."

The British Columbia Folklore Society is especially interested in tracking down the songs for its library and also in contacting Evan Kemp and any of the Trail Riders, if it’s at all possible. If anyone has any information about the musicians or the songs would they please contact us at

The British Columbia Folklore Society
PO Box 312
Cobble Hill, BC
V0R 1L0

Mike Ballantyne
Cobble Hill, BC


Le premier paragraphe du texte auquel nous référons reproduit un fragment de l’adresse d’un juge à un grand jury au sujet des banjoistes. Des plus intéressants, cet extrait de l’ouvrage de Art Rosenbaum nous permet d’apprécier une fraction des préjugés que certaines personnalités influentes pouvaient entretenir et, de toute évidence, émettre publiquement au sujet de ces musiciens.

Nous avons toutefois été consternés par la suite du texte qui, nous semble-t-il, n’est pas extraite du texte de Monsieur Rosenbaum mais provient bien de la plume d’un membre de la rédaction de votre bulletin. Le commentaire qui y est émis, en continuité avec la citation qui le précède, et la spéculation qui entoure la réussite social des deux personnes qui apparaissent sur la photographie nous semblent quelque peu déplacés. Comme si cela n’était pas assez, la phrase qui termine le texte, à savoir si nous serions confiants de savoir notre fille en compagnie d’un de ces jeunes hommes [traduction libre], nous apparaît comme une confirmation de l’opinion émise par le juge et ne fait qu’alourdir le préjudice causé.

Notre accabllement provient du fait qu’un tel commentaire, probablement émis à la blague et sans aucune méchanceté apparente, soit publié dans le bulletin de la Société canadienne pour les traditions musicales, organisme fondé en 1957 et voué à l’étude et l’avancement des traditions musicales de
toutes les cultures et communautés, sous tous leurs aspects».

Ne croyez-vous pas que la publication d’un tel commentaire puisse déroger à l’éthique et au professionnalisme de vos membres? Croyez-vous que les personnes qui font don de documents photographiques à des organismes tels que la British Columbia Folklore Society s’attendent à voir un jour des commentaires semblables accompagner leurs photographies? Et croyez-vous que la publication d’un tel genre d’humour, à notre humble avis inconvenant à l’intérieur d’une publication telle que la vôtre, puisse venir en aide aux chercheurs [qu’ils soient ethnomusicologues, ethnologues ou autres] qui travaillent en étroite collaboration avec des informateurs, si ceux-ci ont eu connaissance du traitement que vous fai tes de l’information?

Nous ne pouvons que déplorer la publication d’un tel commentaire et espérer vivement que ce genre d’écrits ne se retrouve plus dans votre publication.

Nous vous prions de recevoir, Monsieur Lyon, l’expression de nos sentiments les meilleurs.

Mario Boucher
Directeur général
Fédération des sociétés d’histoire du Québec
Montréal

First of all, I take the full responsibility for the caption, and if it or anything in any issue of the Bulletin offends anyone, I truly apologize, for I have not meant to do so.

There may be misunderstanding as well as disagreement at work here. When he introduced the original quote in his instruction book, Rosenbaum wrote, “Writing in his doctoral dissertation, Folk-songs du Midi des Etats-Unis, at the Sorbonne in the nineteen twenties, [Josiah Combs] gave [a description of a mountain banjo player] in the form of this admittedly comic and slanted speech of a Highland judge to the grand jury…” As I understand this passage (and I have not had the opportunity to read Combs’s original), the event was likely a fiction (thus my caption read that the judge reputedly gave the address quoted) and was intended humorously (i.e., «à la blague et sans aucune méchanceté apparente»), if not in Combs’s original text, certainly in Rosenbaum’s. In other words, this passage is not a sociological document from which we can glean much information: «une fraction des préjugés que certaines personnalités influentes pouvaient entretenir…».

In fact, Rosenbaum himself gives the quote, not as a specimen of prejudice against banjo players, but as support for an affective response to old-time banjo playing, which he wishes to promote, not as “something pretty quaint and old-fashioned,” but as something which has been “comparatively recently… the most far out music in Appalachia.” (In case anyone’s forgotten, the vernacular term “far out” had distinctly hippiedippie connotations in 1968, when Rosenbaum published his work, and his choice of term was probably deliberately evocative to and of the youth of that era.)

I’ve gone into detail about this because I believe that humor is a way of enterine certain texts. In this case a photograph, of making those texts come alive in a way that other methods (including analysis) cannot do. My rhetorical question was not intended as a slur upon the nameless subjects of the photo, whose morals I cannot speak to, but it was intended to suggest that we read the photo as some viewers contemporary to it might well have done and that we might usefully do that with our tongues in our cheeks. We might, for example, see in these two young men the sort of adolescent coquettish which Shakespeare gaffed through Cleopatra’s memory of “My salad days, / When I was green in judgment, cold in blood…” (Antony and Cleopatra 1:5).

Again, no offense was intended, and I am truly sorry that it was felt. If anyone has found that this item or any other in the Bulletin has had a detrimental effect upon their field work, please let us know. (It is perhaps significant in this connection that this particular issue seems to have been very popular in at least one BC community; see the letter from Martin Rossander which follows.)

Readers who would like to consult Rosenbaum’s original use of the Combs quote to compare my use of it should look for Old-Time Mountain Banjo, Oak Publications, New York.

Incidentally, I am myself a banjoist, and I promise all and sundry that you may trust me with your daughters, wives, girlfriends, &c. But don’t leave a chocolate cake unattended in my presence. —GWL

Tuesday at the open air market I was delivering a copy of the June ’95 Bulletin to one of our players, and I chose to show it to a few people on the way, like “Here is a story about little old Powell River” (“Powell River BC: The Enjoyment Band Plays On”, 29:2, p. 20]. Well, somehow it caught on, and it seems that the ten copies you sent me won’t meet this sudden burst of interest. Usually I can’t succeed at promotion if I try too hard! So I enclose another cheque, and you can send me more June issues.

Martin Rossander
Powell River, BC

Readers will recall Martin Rossander’s article on the Enjoyment Band of Powell River, BC, in the last issue. At a recent business meeting of the Band, it was noted that the organization had a bank balance of $500.00, thanks to “earlier efforts of the Band,” as Martin put it. It was decided that all but $25.00 of these funds be assigned to benefit of shut-ins at the extended care unit of the hospital.—GWL

At least one of Martin’s distributed copies has gained us a new member. If all our readers were able to do the same thing, our future stability would be assured.—JL

I was especially pleased with Michael Ballantyne’s great piece on ritual folksong in England [“English Ritual Songs: A Participatory Workshop” 28.3, p.5]; Ballantyne is not only an excellent singer of traditional songs with a fine repertoire, as evidenced by his cassette, Pint Pot and Plough, but his knowledge of the lore and traditions surrounding these songs is also quite ample.
Here are several further sources in the area of rituals, celebratory occasions, and custom folks may wish to investigate. William Anderson, *The Green Man* (San Francisco: Harper-Collins, 1990), an intriguing look at the figure of the Green Man from antiquity to the present, as well as the prevalence of the Green Man in art, literature, its role in both pre-Christian as well as Christian religious practices. Also, many of the volumes in the *Folklore in English Counties* series, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul in London, contain various chapters on local customs, rituals, and festivals from Cornwall to the Shetlands following the calendrical cycle. Even though the original publisher is no longer in existence, many of these volumes, though very hard to locate, can be found and are well worth hunting for.

Many excellent songs dealing with rituals, customs, and ceremonies and celebrations have been recorded by many of the best folk performers, especially in Britain, and although many of them are either out of print or almost impossible to locate, the following, while not a definitive list, nonetheless are some of the best around and some of yours truly’s personal favorites and again are well worth searching out.

The Watersons’ *Frost and Fire* issued in Britain on Topic and in the US on Elektra, one of the classic folk albums of the revival, featuring one of Britain’s premier a cappella singing groups, doing songs of the calendar year, including "Darby Ram," "Jolly Old Hawk," "Earlston Sword-Dance," "SoulCake," and "Gower Wassail." Leader-Trailer offered a similar set, *Maypoles to Mistletoe*, featuring Jeff and Penny Harris, Martyn Windham-Read, and Arky’s Toast in a group of unusual songs of ritual and ceremony, including "Jack in the Green," “Waites New Year’s Carol,” “Witson Dance,” “Moon to the Sun,” “Forty Days Carol,” and many more. The folklore of Britain, series, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul in London, was a massive anthology of field recordings made by Peter Kennedy in the 1950s. Volume Nine, Songs of Ceremonies, features songs from the Yuletide season, including unusual versions of "Twelve Days of Christmas," by the Copper Family and wren-hunting pieces from Ireland, but also including several songs of spring and May celebrations such as "Padstow May Song," as well as the "Hal-An-Tow" procession from Cornwall.

The Copper Family of Sussex have sung as part of their repertoire many songs of seasonal and ritual significance, and many have been recorded, including songs of winter, spring, May Day, and the harvest. The most comprehensive recording to date is *A Song for Every Season*, a magnificent four-record set, issued in Britain Leader-Trailer, featuring forty-five songs and an accompanying booklet. Other Copper Family recordings have been issued by Folk Legacy in the US and by the English Folk Dance and Song Society in Britain. (The *Copper Family* is not to be confused with the *Kipper Family*, whose zany, off-the-wall collection of parodies of traditional songs of Christmas, * Arrest these Merry Gentlemen*, was issued on Britain on the Dambuster label.)

Transatlantic revivalists John Roberts and Tony Barrand have recorded four volumes of songs of the winter solstice, both religious and secular, issued on the Andy’s Front Hall label from Voorheesville, New York. Also issued on this label was their excellent album, *Welcome to the Spring*, a collection of hymns, songs, and tunes reflecting traditions of Easter, Maytime, and spring in general. From Christmas Revels Inc. in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has come a series of fine recordings of music and songs of the winter solstice and Yuletide, four in number, from America as well as Britain and other European sources. One recording includes a full-length presentation of a traditional mummer’s play. Revels has also issued *Wild Mountain Thyme*, songs of celebration of spring, May Day, and harvest festivals and customs, including luscious versions of "John Barleycorn," "Padstow May Song," and "Pace-Egging Song," among many other musical treats.

Carols for all Seasons (Tradition) featured traditional Kentucky singer Jean Ritchie, one of the America’s best, in a collection of songs of the Yuletide season as well as May Day songs, including several songs from her own rich family heritage. The Valley Folk’s *Bells of Paradise* (Topic), is a collection of traditional songs reflecting various elements of the Christmas season as performed a cappella by an English folk group—nice harmonies and good musical arrangements.

A final word: many folk performers—including Louis Killen, Martin Carthy, Anne Briggs, Mick Ryan, Shirley Collins, Ashley Hutchings and his various incarnations of the Albion Band—have recorded songs involving rituals, customs, and ceremony. Good hunting!

Robert Rodriguez
New York City, USA

A few days before the winter holidays, I attended a benefit concert for the Vancouver Food Bank at the Vogue Theatre, an evening which featured seven local musical acts and a few celebrities from the CBC. This form of variety show had been in used in three other western Canadian cities, and the Vancouver concert enjoyed a healthy turnout for what proved to be a very fine three and a half hours of music, which ranged from Celtic and bluegrass through blues and rock. Among our indigenous performers were several who are well known internationally.

Although I have no qualms about the laudable quality of the music, there was an aspect to the evening’s fare which bothered me, however, as I found myself projecting questions concerning the Canadian cultural landscape. A sense of national identity seemed to be missing. For example, it seemed slightly amusing to me that a concert promoted by the CBC, Air Canada, the Vancouver Sun and Industry Canada, would be precede by forty minutes of the Eagles’ Hotel California album being piped through the hall’s PA system. Had that air time been promoting the many fine tunes by our own music industry and artistry, might not our bread line be just a tad shorter?

My most striking perception of the evening centred around the French and Québécois flavor of our land. A few days before, the Parti of separation had released their strategy leading up to the promised referendum, while I found myself absorbed in Hugh MacLennan’s novel of Canada’s linguistic
duality, Two Solitudes. These two provided the catalyst for me to open a "third ear" which, as the entire evening's concert proved, might as well have been deaf. During the whole show, not one word of the other official language of our nation was spoken or sung by any of the participants.

Now it might be argued that this was a concert by English Canadian performers in Vancouver, so there was no French audience to entertain. But how true is that? I would imagine that in an audience of over eight hundred people there were at least a good handful of men and women fluent en français. Further, it doesn't seem unreasonable that perhaps more than two-thirds of the audience had at some time in their lives been educated in French, regardless of how successful that education was. So often do I hear local musical groups introduce songs from the British Isles, and so rarely do I come upon a song of Québec, in French. Do English artists fail to recognize the heritage of La belle province as their own? Do they forsake the opportunity to stimulate national unity through "continuing education"?

There is certainly no lack of material to draw on. Marius Barbeau claimed to have discovered 160 versions of "A La Claire Fontaine" alone. Folkways Records (founded by Moses Asch, operated now by the Smithsonian Institution) includes, among many Québécois titles, a series of tapes by Hélène Bailleul and Alan Mills, Chantons en Français: Songs for Learning French. Music collections by Edith Fowke and others are full of songs passed down through the generations in aural traditions, both French and English.

It is difficult to learn a song in an unfamiliar language, to pronounce it correctly and to understand the emotions of the story. How much easier to follow the dictates of Los Angeles and London and let the big names lull us to sleep. I wonder, though, how our national divisions might be affected if the same spirit which informed the Canadian content regulations were applied to the two official languages. Should not one-third of Canadian content be sung in French? Is that an offer-