Only during the twenty years in Senneterre did I stop playing. I was too busy and couldn’t seem to make time available; I have since regretted this, as I lost much of my dexterity and most of my memorized music, so now I have to really work at it. I strongly advise anyone to keep in practice because it is very hard to "come back" in old age!

I typed this, as my handwriting is hard to read—my fingers do not want to do what I want them to do! It’s the same with music; if I’m tired, I hit wrong notes—nearly drives me up the wall! But I’m happy doing it, music was always my relaxation, it was what I did if I was upset about something, and always fun; that is why I enjoy playing with the Enjoyment Band here. They are not critical of the wrong note we all hit from time to time, and we have the satisfaction of bringing pleasure to those for whom we play; no money in the world could equal that!

Georgina Lapointe
Powell River, BC

[We met Lapointe in Martin Rossander’s account of the Enjoyment Band in the Bulletin 29.2.1]

The recent meeting of the Canadian Society for Traditional Music was, for me, a weekend well worth the travel to get there. To meet the likes of Edith Fowke and Phil Thomas made the weekend worth it, but the very fact that there was such a diverse representation of Canada’s various folk and ethnic communities showed just how important the role of traditional music and culture is and points out the important, vital role such a group as the CSTM plays in the last years of the 20th Century and the beginning of the 21st.

Three papers that were presented deserve special mention: Edith Fowke’s on traditional folk music in literature, Peter Narvaez’s on songs created from the plight of Newfoundland fishermen, and Jacquelin Lavalle’s on the role of music in Ojibwa society and her use of such songs in teaching.

I was unable to attend the Sunday night Flying Cloud concert of Society members, but if reports I have are accurate, it went well and was enthusiastically received by those in attendance. Thanks to Judith Cohen, David Warren, and all those who truly made the 1995 meeting a success and a fine weekend: a friendly atmosphere, excellent papers.

Robert Rodriguez
New York City

How Come We All Hate the Word "Product" But We All Use It?

The following books and recordings have crossed our collective desk in the last few months; watch for reviews of some of them in upcoming issues.

Books


Recordings
Alpha Yaya Diallo. Nbnè. SA93279. Box 170, 2496 E. Hastings, Vancouver, British Columbia V5K 1Z.


Bird Sisters. She & She & She. BS003. Outside Music, 25 Defries Street, Toronto, Ontario M5A 3R4.

Black Cabbage. A Recording by Black Cabbage. DROG 009. DROG, PO 24062 Bullfrog, Guelph, Ontario N1E 6V9.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (Calgary Branch). The Mountain Road. 115 Lakemead Drive SE, Calgary, Alberta T2J 4B2.

Dent-de-Lion. Les Beaux Yeux Bleus. MIN-795. PO Box 719, Moretown, Vermont 05660, USA.


Jeter Le Pont. L’Escapade. MIN-594. PO Box 719, Moretown, Vermont 05660, USA.

Killiecrankie. The Haggis Egg. CD464693. Killiecrankie, PO Box 27016, Cambridge, Ontario N1R 8H1.


Tom Lewis (with Friends of Fiddler’s Green). Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Singer. Self-Propelled Music, Box 1095, Salmo, British Columbia V0G 1Z0.

Natalie MacMaster. Fit as a Fiddle. CBC Maritimes NMAS 1972. Natalie MacMaster, RR#1, Port Hastings, Nova Scotia B0E 2T0.


Will Millar. The Lark in the Clear Air. Chacra CHACD 042. Chacra Alternative Music Inc., 3155 Halpern, St-Laurent, Québec H4S 1P5.


Christina Smith. Fiddle Me This. SS-9411. Singsong, PO Box 6371, Station C, St. John's, Newfoundland A1C 6J9.

Laura Smith. b'tween the earth and my soul. OZ 50235, Cornermusic Recordings, Box 34105, Scotia Scotia PO, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 1N0.

David Wilkie (featuring The McDades). Cowboy Celtic. CFA 006 Centerfire Music, Box 868, Turner Valley, Alberta T0L 2A0.


Zvonimio Croatian Choir. Pjevaj Mi, Pjevaj (Sing To Me). Zvon 9501CD Society of Friends of Matica Hrvatska, c/o Josko Caleta, 420 Byng Street Coquitlam, British Columbia V3K 5N5.

Comptes rendus/Reviews

Paul Haslem. Step Out of Time. Dulcimer Traditions. Paul Haslem, PO Box 26, Fordwich, Ontario N0G 1V0.

Step Out of Time is a collection of traditional melodies and Paul Haslem’s original tunes played on hammered dulcimer, backed up by guitar, cello, and various other instruments. The traditional tunes, which include quite a few by O’Carolan (on only one of which the Irish master is given proper credit), will offer few surprises. For those of us who love this repertoire, that is just fine. The original tunes, all written by Paul Haslem, add spice and relief from familiarity to the selection.

The one surprise in the repertoire, on an otherwise totally instrumental disc, is "Blind Mary," which has been given love song lyrics; I have to admit that I would have preferred that it had been left as an instrumental. The sugary-sweet lyrics are out of character with the simple elegance of the rest of the album, and the vocal rendering by Terri Burns is unremarkable.

Paul Haslem’s dulcimer style is straightforward, with ornamentation used in moderation. Much of the colour is provided by the harmonies of the backup instruments. The guitar does upstage the dulcimer melody in a few places, but for the most part, the arrangements are tasteful.

Dulcimer Traditions continues in much the same vein. A reprise of "Blind Mary" restores it to its rightful instrumental character, and Turlough O’Carolan receives proper credit for his work. The dulcimer stands out more as a solo instrument on this recording, and Haslem demonstrates the percussive character of the dulcimer with more noticeable ornamentation. The arrangements are better balanced, with some very nice accompaniment on flute and harp. Some tunes are played solo, and the accompaniment is more restrained on the others.

The selection of music on this disc is again a mix of traditional works and original compositions, with the addition of two classical pieces, Bach’s "Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring" and Gounod’s "Ave Maria." I was disappointed with "Jesu"; this is, unfortunately, a stripped-down excerpt only. True, the full work is a challenge to play on the dulcimer (trust me!), but it is a shame to abbreviate such a well-known piece. On the other hand, "Greensleeves," a delightful duet of dulcimer and harp, is a treat to listen to.

These discs are very listenable: the listener will find a variety of both familiar and unfamiliar tunes. Their strength is in the tasteful arrangements (particularly on Dulcimer Traditions), which bring out the individual character of each melody. They will be a pleasant addition to any collection, especially to anyone who is not familiar with the hammered dulcimer and its repertoire.

—Keith Walker
Calgary, Alberta