News, Views, & Stuff

Gord Fisch sends the following from Regina:

The Saskatchewan Cultural Exchange Society is a provincial cultural organization which facilitates cultural exchange and communication by providing a base for sharing cultural experiences. The SCES runs several programs around the province and supports other organizations working closely with grass roots arts and cultural expressions. These include the following:

Exchange Magazine—An arts and culture magazine published quarterly by the SCES. Features include interviews with Saskatchewan artists, arts in the country, stories on cultural/arts issues and updates on the programs and committees of the SCES. Submissions are welcome, but no writers fees can be paid at this time. For advertising rates contact the SCES.

School Workshop Tours—The SCES delivers a tour to schools across Saskatchewan each fall, taking five artists to conduct workshops in the areas of visual arts, music, dance and drama. If you are interested in working on a tour, or would like more information, contact Margaret Fry, Executive Director SCES at (306) 569-8966.

This Side/The Other Side—This Club is a members' lounge with a hassle-free atmosphere, special events and gallery space. Each month features a new local artist or artists. Drinks are cheap, and the pool is hot. A great place for a meeting, or after meeting drinks. The Other Side is our big old concert hall, with room for 175 people and very reasonable rates. It features a great wooden dance floor, big stage, in-house Martin PA system (technician available for hire) and basic stage lighting. Bar and banquet facilities are primitive but improving. Both are located at 2431 8th Avenue in Regina, officially called The SCES Complex, (but we know it’s really This Side/The Other Side). The hall may be booked through the SCES office: (306) 569-8980. The SCES Fiddle Committee supports the development of Old Time Fiddling in Saskatchewan. Our objectives are: to promote a positive awareness of old time fiddling, to act as liaisons between contest organizers, fiddle clubs, jamborees, fiddlers and the SCES, to assist in the development and directions of SCES fiddle programming, and, to encourage and assist in the development of fiddle talent.

Our major programs include the annual Emma Lake Fiddle Camp and provincial championships. We support the fiddle community by maintaining a database of fiddlers, accompanists, clubs and contests (over 5,000 listings!), hosting workshops on contest judging and providing manuals on how to organize a contest or fiddle event.

We also sell sheet music by Calvin Vollrath, John Arcand, Dean Bernier and Gordon Radu. SPECIAL! Free sheet music to the Emma Lake Polka is available!

For more information, suggestions or comments, contact: Saskatchewan Cultural Exchange Society
2431 -8th Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada, S4R 5J7.

Phone (306) 569-8980 Fax (306) 757-4422
email: gfisch@ucn.com

Also from Gord:
Greetings fiddlers and fans - Just a short announcement:
"Virtual Fiddle Camp" is now open!
http://www.gpfn.sk.ca/arts/fiddle/index.html
For those of you who can’t make it to the Emma Lake Fiddle Camp in Saskatchewan (or even if you can) look over the materials at virtual camp. Included are several text files on basics, instrument care, composing tips and so on and everything you need to learn the "Emma Lake Polka"—sheet music, midi and aiff files.

We are just in a testing phase right now and hope to add more material soon. Let me know what you think.

We’ve gotten another opinion on the identity of one of the guitarists whose picture-cards GWL found in an Edmonton flea market some months back, which we published in 29.1 (back inside cover). In 29.4, we speculated that the skinny fellow might have been a young Bev Bandur, but Calgary guitarist Jim Dauncey thought that the guitar in the photo looked like his father’s old guitar, so he took the issue home and asked had he ever loaned his guitar. Jim Dauncey, père—who played fiddle and guitar at dances in the Tisdale, Saskatchewan area, northeast of Saskatoon—had no memory of doing that, but he did recognize the studio (Thames Studio) as one in Saskatoon, and felt that the player resembled Alberta Slim, who was active in the 30s and 40s. The quest continues....
lization’s Exhibition *Opus: The Making of Musical Instruments in Canada.* The work of over 60 instrument builders was featured in the exhibition, which ran from 1992 to 1995, including such various axes as baroque trumpets, renaissance lutes, steel-string guitars à la Maccaferri, harpsichords, diatonic accordion, and bows for various members of the violin and related families. The Second Wind will allow over 30 of these instruments to be loaned out for periods ranging from three months to three years. Eligible candidates may be either established professional musicians or talented young musicians on the threshold of an international career. Applicants must be Canadian citizens or permanent residents, and they must officially reside in Canada during the loan period.

My only beef is that I sense here an apparent lack of respect for ordinary musicians. We can’t all be Shauna Rolston, can we? I’m very glad that such “established professionals” and “talented young musicians on the threshold of international careers” are around—they make my life happier. But so do a large number of rather less glamorous performers; that description sounds as though it might eliminate such folks as Stan Triggs or Minnie White from the running. Either of them might have a lot of fun with three years’ worth of Clément Breton’s diatonic accordion (I know I would!), and they might also offer a lot of fun to their friends and neighbors. Ah, the repression of the yuppie *excellence* mentality!

For more information, write the Museum: 100 Laurier Street, PO Box 3100, Station B, Hull, Québec, J8X 4H2.

The Vancouver Folk Song Society’s *Second Wednesday* series offers an intriguing opportunity for aficionados in the area to deepen their understanding and interest. On the second Wednesday of the month, members meet to consider various themes. Some of these (such as "Native Indian Songs" hosted by David Querido) sound as though there may be some lecture involved, but others ("A Singaround on the Theme of Food" hosted by Brian Robertson and perhaps "Songs for Political Gatherings" hosted by Maura Volante) appear to be very participatory. Both formats are probably very useful. Other themes include "Love and Friendship," "Traditional and Contemporary Jewish Songs," and children’s, cowboy and sailor songs. Great idea! For more information about these evenings, phone Jon Bartlett at 526-2804.

Pete Heywood, the editor of the Scottish folk music magazine, Living Tradition, asked us to alert our readers that he and others are involved in putting on several events related to the Bicentenary of Robert Burns, "...coming from a trad music angle rather than a Burns angle." If you’re going to be in Britain this summer, you would be well-advised to find out what’s going on the other side of Hadrian’s Wall.

**Letters/Lettres**

Sheila and I listened to one workshop run by Dave de Hugard at the 1994 Maleny Folk Festival north of Brisbane. Good man, straight goods, common people music. We have a tape of his, *Magpie Morning* (Sandstock Music, PO Box 557, Charlestown, New South Wales, 2290). His workshops appeared to be a gathering of his friends from across this large country, and I suspect they also work the National Folk Festival in Canberra, which is supposed to be for the true oldtime traditional-only kind of music. His workshop featured some fiddle/accordion/concertina/harmonica tunes from German, Gypsy, Irish, Scots, and American sources, all of them warped by Australian residency. We met another concertina maniac named Chris Sullivan who also lives in the Nambour area. You would also like the bush dance band Wongawilli (After the Tradition PO Box 17, Albion Park, NSW 2527). They look and act like a 1930s small town Alberta/Saskatchewan square dance band, except they talk funny. Naaahhh, I didn’t say that, did I?

Surely I’ve told you about the Australian folkie societies? We are members of the Queensland Folk Federation (9 City View Terrace, PO Box 840, Nambour, Queensland 4560), which publishes a magazine (Folklines, editors Roy Harbour and Steve Cook, Fax 07 485 2069, same address in Nambour). It serves the same function as the Bulletin, but not the CSTM Journal function. I’ll bet there is at least one academic folkie journal down here, but I haven’t run into it yet. The QFF runs at least two large festivals that we know about, both of them in southern Queensland where most of the population lives. As a result of this, much of their money and effort goes into the festival: the build up, the event, and then the post-festival analysis. They are currently in the agony of being too successful with their festival, having purchased a big dairy farm pasture as a festival site, and having to form a corporation to manage and finance it. This whole sequence of events is painfully familiar to our involvement with the Winnipeg Folk Festival 1974-1991. There are apparently real folk clubs near and in the big cities down south, with regular performances of local and overseas bands. We are 2000 km away from all this action. Our own local folk festivals are very small, very loose; some would say "feral."

Based on reading Folklines, and attending a few festivals, there appears to be the same tragic split between the flashy commercial bands who make money (and are very good musicians), and the raggy traditional folkies who play for travel money and bush dances and heritage days in small towns. A further subdivision that is worse is that bluegrass and country like ballad singers are definitely not considered folk music down here, and don’t appear at the folk festivals.... And as in Canada, a lot of the big festivals have international acts from all over the world, close to the "World Music" tag, with lots of fusions and