A Peak in Darien

If you read last issue's introduction you might understand the title—but we still need a catchy name for this feature. Any suggestions? (And, I guess we don’t all use the term "product," even though it’s spreading—the insidious mindfog is creeping over more of us as time goes by...)

Recordings

Alter Ego. Mémoires d'outremer. XENOF 4035. Xenophile Records, 43 Beaver Brook Rd., Danbury, CT 06810, USA

Rick Beckner. Trouble With the Moon. Harby Der Music, Box 224, Whelighton, B.C. V0P 1A1

Bill Bourne and Shannon Johnson. Victory Train. Free Radio CD 001. Free Radio Records, 6814 -110 St., Edmonton, Alta. T6H 3E7; Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver B.C. V5L 2X7

Rick Fielding. LifeLine. CD-123. Folk-Legacy Records, P.O. Box 1148, 85 Sharon Mountain Rd., Sharon, CT 06069, USA

Alasdair Fraser, Buddy McMaster, Natalie McMaster, Jerry Holland and Aly Bain (with the Boston Scottish Fiddle Club). Scottish Fiddle Rally Concert Highlights 1985-1995: Masters of Scottish and Cape Breton Fiddling. PAD 1050. Boston Scottish Fiddle Club, P.O. Box 823, North Cambridge, MA 02140, USA

Kindred Spirits. Canadian Harmony. Kindred Spirits, P.O. Box 5834, Victoria, B.C. V8R 6S8

Penny Lang. Carry On Children. SWPL-9601-2. Festival Distribution, 1351 Grant St., Vancouver B.C. V5L 2X7


Stewart McLain. In a Groove in a Groove. WCD51218. Southwood Productions, RR#1, Gravenhurst, Ont. PIP 1R1

Orentis. Night Visions. GLCD 1152. Green Linnet Records, 43 Beaver Brook Rd., Danbury, CT 06810, USA


Three Strong Winds. We Are Here. Amabilis AM 451. Jim Edomondon, 1023 E. 21st Ave., Vancouver, B.C. V5V 1S6

Keith Walter. Give Me Your Hand. (no address on packaging)


Comptes-rendus/Reviews

Books


What the...! Why the Folk?

The title on the cover of Northern Journey: A Guide to Canadian Folk Music differs from the catalogue listing (from which I purchased the book), which appears on the title page, in that it adds the words on CD. Perhaps this was intended as a cautionary note, for the cover does suggest a little of what is to be found in Gene Wilburn's 1995 buyer's reference. Half the front cover is a delightful smiling photo of a young fiddler, Cyrena Eddy of St. John's, Newfoundland. There is an irony here, for the name of Ms. Eddy does not appear among the over 1300 names in the 14 page Artist Index. Who then does appear? First, performers who have been on CDs released in the past decade. The recorded performances are thus predominantly recent, but there is a representation of CD-reissued material from earlier vinyl and/or cassette tape productions. Of all those artists, only some 325 have an entry in the guide. With even that many, one wonders what criteria Wilburn uses to call all their performances "Canadian Folk Music."

Gene Wilburn is aware that the title needs explanation. He enlisted Gary Cristall (for 15 years Artistic Director of the Vancouver Folk Music Festival, now the Jazz, Folk and World Music Officer at the Touring Office of the Canada Council, and currently listed on the Board of Directors of The Sing Out Corporation) to write a three page Foreword. Cristall tells us at the start that the book "is going to change your life. It is also, if you have any imagination at all, going to cost you a lot of money." He suggests that if you are not going to use it as a buyer's catalogue you don't buy it. I reply that the book does act as a quite full overview of what is happening throughout Canada in that commercial category labelled "folk music."

Access is through the Artist Index (where the page references for the main entries are in bold type), the 84 page Song Index, and, in the book's main body, the alphabetical listing of the highlighted artists or groups. As they appear, under each name is from one to three descriptive tags in which Wilburn places the performer(s)/performance(s), followed by an introduction to the artist(s), a little background with pointers to the CD, and then a listing of the cd(s) by title, record label, and contents. Wilburn gives each disc a rating on a four-star scale plus a check for those specially recommended.

In giving tags or labels to the performers, Wilburn and his helpers (he lists several) provide a view of what they mean by "folk."

In his Introduction, Wilburn writes:

To the probable distress of musicologists and folklorists, I've used the term folk to include the spectrum