Our Back Pages

Fifteen Years Ago

Bulletin 17.1 (January 1983). In those days, the Bulletin carried the minutes of the AGM (a noble tradition which we’re reviving this time), and the bulk of this issue consists of those minutes plus “State of the Art,” reports from the regions across Canada—a great overview of what was happening in folk music in this country in those bygone days. Other content included articles on songs: "Dans le temps du sucre" by Donald Deschênes and "Three Sailors Went to Yellowknife" from Jurgen Ilaender. A third song was Ian Robb’s "The Iron Lady." Columns from Alister Brown and David Spalding made an appearance, as well as reviews of Michael Cooney’s Pure Unsweetened and books Je danse mon enfance (France Bourque-Moreau) and Stan Rogers: Songs from Fogarty’s Cove and Coast to Coast Fever (Arthur MacGregor, ed.).

Ten Years Ago

Bulletin 22.1 (September 1988). Yes, that date is correct! Issues sometimes were late in those days, too! This issue included the new Constitution of the Society, totally rewritten at the 1987 AGM in Quebec City, which has survived with a few modifications until the present. Articles carried included Bill Sarjeant’s call for regional reorganization of CFMS (which had in fact inspired the new Constitution), David Watts’s "Creativity and Mourning in the Work of Stan Rogers," and Gregg Brunskill’s account of the newly-formed Winnipeg Folk Connection (as its name then was). There were no columns this time, but the issue included reviews of James Keelaghan’s Timelines, Dick Howe’s A Scotsman in Canada, Dave MacIsaac’s Celtic Guitar and the Regina Folk Festival (with a photo montage by Bill Sarjeant). Several songs appeared: Kirk MacGeachy’s “MacDonell of Barrisdale,” Newfoundland traditional song “The McClure,” and "Aux veillouses du 28 février 1925," about an earthquake in Québec.

Five Years Ago

Bulletin 27.1 (March 1993). An editorial announces that, after producing the magazine for the better part of a year, George and I have decided to carry on. (Hard to imagine that that was five years ago…..) The ‘zine was still newsletter-style, but it was roughly back on schedule after the interregnum between Lynn Whidden’s tenure and ours. The feature article was "Consumed by Consumerism" by Jon Bartlett, with full translation by Andre Gareau. The second "Ethnofolk Letters," "Over the Waves" and a still-unnamed magazine column were included. Songs and tunes were tied in with reviews this time: "I’ve Been a Gay Roving Young Fellow" and "Empty Nets" accompanied the review of Jim Payne’s recording of the latter name; tune "Flight Six-Seven-Six" went with 100 Toe-Tappin’ Tunes for Fiddle by Gordie Carnahan and "Joey Beaton’s Reel" with Jerry Holand’s Collection of Fiddle Tunes (wish we could get that slick version). As well, the first "Canada Camps" (now "Camps and Courses") made its appearance. [JL]

News, Views, & Stuff

Visit the Great North Wind Web Site

The GNW web site contains vast quantities of information including homepages for The Blackflies, Glen Reid, Rick Fielding, and The Grievous Angels, as well as articles on Mac Beattie and The Ottawa Valley Melodiers, The Music of Northern Ontario (did I say vast?), The Porcupine Awards (complete accounts) and playlists from the Great North Wind Radio Program. And then there’s the Great Canadian Fiddle Liner Notes, which contains all the liner notes from over 250 Canadian fiddle albums (and the list is growing). Naturally there’s great links and hijinx. Lastly, the Great North News has updates on future GNW programs, interesting obituaries and books and mags. That’s a sorta thing. Use it and abuse. [Steve Fruitman]

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We don’t usually cover events south of the border, but this suits our blues theme for the month, and, besides, it’s just too delicious not to mention. The Erie Art Museum, 411 State Street, Erie, Pennsylvania 16501, is offering an exhibit of Dobros, Nationals, and related instruments. It’s entitled Loud and Clear: Resonator Guitars & the Dopyera Brothers’ Legacy To American Music and lasts until April 15, 1998. (It’s available to travel thereafter, so you might think about bugging your local institution.) If there’s anyone left who doesn’t know what a resonator guitar is (hard to imagine since, as Bob Brozman put it, rock stars have taken to them as fashion accessories), they’re the instruments that look like they have pie plates screwed on the front. Some gyppo firms actually did in fact put out cheap plywood guitars with the equivalent of pie plates screwed on, but on genuine examples, the decorative cover protects a metal resonating cone, not unlike the cone in your stereo speakers. (A friend of mine once had an off brand in which the resonator was made of fibre, precisely like a speaker.) Some resonator guitars have metal bodies, some have wood—obviously the latter produce a more mellow tone than the former.