

## Letters/Lettres

I recently sent for and received (thank you very much) your **Bulletin** for June 1997.... I am an old time fiddle music fan from, originally, Matlock, Manitoba, 40 miles north of Winnipeg. I was raised on Andy Dejarlis fiddle tunes and have always considered Andy the finest composer and player of Canadian fiddle tunes in our Canadian history.

It is too bad the CBC could not bring themselves to do a program of Andy's music, ever, but they did some excellent programming on Don Messer, I'll admit. But it seems that the

fiddle music of the West stayed out west. When I heard Don Messer, I used to think that he was the only notable fiddler in Canada. How sad, and how wrong I was! I knew Andy as just a regular Manitoba fiddler, but Don Messer got the publicity needed to make Canadians really aware of his fiddle music.

Anyway, thank God that Franceene Watson is doing such a great thing in promoting the fine Western fiddling as done by Andy Dejarlis. I have just donated 16 of Andy's 33 1/3 RPM long-playing records to her Andy Dejarlis Archives in Victoria,

BC. I am so pleased to be a part of preserving our very rich and much-neglected (for some time) Canadian old time fiddle music.... I am a senior, 71 years young, Regimental #H27921 of the Winnipeg Rifles....

I am a champion of the Red River Jig, and lament that it is not done much any more, as it has such a number of fine changes to the jig step. All we get out here, from Kenora to Pembroke, Ontario, is step dancing, at the many fiddle contests that take place in Ontario. Is the Red River Jig alive and well, and practised out West more, I hope? Let's promote it! I sure do, out this way, especially at the Pembroke Old Time Fiddle Contest, held in Pembroke, on Labour Day weekend.

Finally, after asking their MC, Art Jamieson, many times to show folks there a bit of the Red River Jig, in the September 1997 contest, Marc Bru [?] of Saskatchewan, accompanied by April Verck on fiddle, did a few minutes of the Red River Jig. April didn't tune her G string to the A for this version.

I sure would like to come by info re: Mary Mindess, "Spring, Bagpipe Music, A Fiddler, and the Red River Jig was Born: The Story of a Historic Manitoba Melody", Winnipeg Free Press, Saturday, June 25, 1966....

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*[Can any of our Winnipeg readers help George out concerning the Winnipeg Free Press article?]*

It's kind of neat that the *Bulletin* can cater to the less formal types and styles of happenings in music; is there anyone so bereft of rhythm and tune as to not have tried to hum or whistle at some time in their life, when they believed themselves to be alone? Well, anyway, I got my old hobby-horse plug into the article about music being one of the arts, an important one, useful for bridging the gap, the widening gap, between the dwindling workplace and the evolving era of creative leisure. It is the latter where most people will find themselves. I hope not in the military legions for maintaining law and order 'mongst the have-nots, but even soldiers march to music, and smell the roses—but the poppies?

Martin Rossander  
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