

# 1998 Annual General Meeting Canadian Society for Traditional Music November 1, 1998, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Man

## Introduction

Thanks to the energy of Pauline Greenhill, her students, Richard Burleson, and the rest of their committee, our 1998 AGM/Conference in Winnipeg was one of the most intellectually stimulating in recent years. We are enclosing as many abstracts from the paper sessions as we were able to gather; these ought to give readers an idea of the variety and intensity of the discussions. We hope to be able to get complete texts of at least some presentations for future use in the Bulletin; readers would particularly enjoy, we think, Dr. Burleson's discussion of the complexities of integrating Native and academic wisdoms into undergraduate music education and Jim Hiscott's adventures of discovery among the Métis and Inuit traditions. (At least some of the fruits of Hiscott's work have appeared on CBC, and we anxiously look forward to more of the same!)

Dr. Burleson was responsible for bringing Walter Bonaise to the meeting. Walter's intelligence and humor were extremely moving, and his interaction with the European Canadian students from the course he teaches with Burleson was a delight to watch. He is first of all, as Dr. Burleson pointed out, a wonderful singer. The cover photo was taken during a break in the proceedings, and as I listened to him sing for his own pleasure, it struck me that, while it may be easy to understand that this musical style is "natural" and "appropriate" in the woods or on the plains, we need also to hear it as natural and appropriate to the cinder block walls and sheet metal furniture of

our cities—Walter and his music are part of our world, and the sooner (and more fully) we understand that, the better.

Walter knows it. I was struck, Friday evening, by the attention he paid to the sitarist at A Taste of India, where we all feasted. Though both the Cree and the Hindustani peoples are called "Indian," their worlds are half a globe apart—but Walter was very attentive to this music, which he noted (correctly) has healing qualities. After all, it is part of his world.

Saturday evening gave many delegates the opportunity to jam with some of the very fine Irish musicians of Winnipeg, who session at the Irish Club (on Erin Street, appropriately). The evening became particularly memorable to my co-editor when his son Rodger brought his dynamic young group The Buccaneers to join the music.

Pauline Greenhill and Diane Tye convened the cerebral aspect of the convention Sunday morning for a round table on the future of Folklore Studies in Canada, some of the difficulties of which were apparent from the variety of points of view around that table. For one thing, very few of us do more than teach the odd folklore or folklore-related course—some of us were not even teachers or, in the strict sense of the term, researchers. And yet, all have a stake in the field. The minutes of this discussion will appear soon on the Society's web page. I highly recommend that everyone read them and consider the issues raised.

This Annual General Meeting was one of our less contentious ones. Perhaps the Cree drum songs and Hindustani ragas did a number on us? Or perhaps there just weren't any troublesome issues. However that may be, it struck me afterwards that I don't fear contention in the Society, as I've come to do in other areas of my life. Indeed, one aspect of the Society that I prize most is that we can knock 'em down 'n' drag 'em out as fiercely as need be, but in the end, we do respect each other. I wish I could say as much for some other institutions I've been involved in.

Perhaps the most important item on the agenda, at least in the long run, was the final acquisition from the Edith Fowke estate, about which Phil Thomas and Leslie Hall have prepared a report in the following pages.

Finally, I cannot let the moment pass without a public vote of thanks to LaVern Wentz, who as treasurer has done more than should have been expected. How much he has done is really only known to those on the board and those of us in Calgary who have worked with him, but take my word that it is considerable. He would be willing to pass the torch on to other hands, by the way, so if anyone is qualified—and I *do* mean qualified—and willing to take the chore on, please pass along the word before the next AGM.

Once again, the 1998 meeting was a great success. As I've done several times already, Thanks to Pauline Greenhill and her merry crew.... [GWL]



*And each one bore a lyre, and some that caught  
The Queen's fair flower placed it on the breast;  
Then warbling strains breathed from the lyre and sang  
Of Love, of sweet-eyed Love, fair Joy and Rest.  
And some there were that twined the flower amid  
Cold gems that twinkled on the high, pale brow;  
Then burst the lyre to trumpet tones and sang  
Of power, high deeds, and Fame's eternal glow.*

*And some there were that crushed the flower between  
Gross palms that burned and sapped its charmed life,  
Then fire-eyed Madness struck the clanging strings,  
Charmed Vice to fairer form, more vivid life.  
And rife the world became with demons masked  
In seraph brightness; and so toward the fanes  
That held thrones the pilgrims, singing, passed  
Across the mighty glories of the plains.*