

News, Views, & Stuff

Word comes from Lorne Brown of the *The Ballad Project* in Toronto that singer Ed McCurdy is in poor health in Halifax. McCurdy is probably best known (and will probably be remembered) as the composer of the moving anti-war song, "Last Night I Had the Strangest Dream." But he probably made his largest bank deposits from a series of records on the Elektra label in the early sixties, beginning with *When Dalliance Was In Flower*, erotic (usually humorous) songs from the Renaissance (though most of us really couldn't distinguish between Medieval and Renaissance culture at that time and likely thought we were hearing stuff that was *real old!*), the pseudo-Renaissance, and just plain anything with any sort of pretence to being *Olde Englishe*. The covers featured men in fake beards and young women in quite real *décolletage* (I remember them well). I sold the one or two copies I had a long time ago—in a fit of sophistication, I suppose, although I suspect that the musical value was a bit more than I credited them with. I wouldn't mind having one again.

I never sold my Riverside McCurdy lp, *The Ballad Record*. It was the first grownup record I ever bought, and I'm pleased to realize that I never thought I'd outgrown it. If I've learned anything about singing in my life, it began with that record. I still sing several of the songs I learned from it, and I still leave the *lawd, lawd* crap from "John Henry," something I didn't know you could do before I heard McCurdy. Given the predilection of so many singers to baroque decoration these days, I think more of us ought to spend more time listening to bonny tunes sung straight. [GWL]

Lorne Brown is collecting well wishes via email and will convey these to McCurdy as he recuperates from some serious surgery. I'm going to send mine, and you can send yours, to <lorbro@HOME.COM>.



From the Credit-Where-Credit-Is-Due Department: It hit me this summer that during the last, oh, four years, I've had some instrument repair/setup work done by the same number of craftspeople in Calgary, something I'd shied away from for many years, probably out of fears that it'd cost my shirt. In fact, each time the price has been quite reasonable and the work done very carefully. Only one person made me sit through some pretty corny yucks because I don't keep my instruments manicured the way that my neighbor keeps his lawn. I don't know what the repair scene is outside of Calgary—and I suspect that even here there are some butchers—but I suspect that with a little caution in your choice of shop, you can have experiences as happy as mine. [GWL]



First Call for Papers
Annual Meeting of the British Forum for Ethnomusicology

14-16 April 2000, Sheffield, United Kingdom

Fieldwork, Ethnography, Representation

Fieldwork is a central, some would claim defining, characteristic of ethnomusicology, and is one of the ethnomusicologist's major claims to representational authority. Yet the idea of the field as a distinct location has been quietly challenged for some considerable time by ethnomusicologists engaged in historical research, by indigenous scholars carrying out research "at home" as it were, and, more recently, by writers who have pointed to the construction of "the field" in the mind, notes, performances and published writings of the ethnomusicologist.

Abstracts of up to 300 words on the broad topic of fieldwork and its outcomes should be submitted to Jonathan Stock by 1 November 1999 at the address below. Abstracts will be evaluated anonymously by a small panel; in the case of postal submissions, two copies should be sent, one without the author's name or institutional affiliation. Those offering papers will be advised of their acceptance or otherwise on or around 7 December 1999. As usual, student submissions are very welcome, and a number of BFE student bursaries will be available to students who attending the conference to give a paper. Students applying for these should enclose with their abstract a covering letter detailing anticipated travelling costs and a signed letter of support from their supervisor. Film shows and performances may also be proposed, as may be preformed panels or workshop sessions (to fit 1 hour and 30 minutes), for which a longer abstract with named speakers (up to 750 words) may be provided.

For further details, see:

<<http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/I-M/mus/staff/js/BFEConf.html>>

or contact (after 17 September 1999):

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Visit the British Forum for Ethnomusicology site at:

<<http://www.shef.ac.uk/uni/academic/I-M/mus/staff/js/BFE.html>>



Call for papers for the Annual Conference of the International Society for Luso-Hispanic Humour Studies, September 28 to 30, 2000, co-sponsored by the Department of Hispanic Studies, McGill University, Montreal.

Deadline: March 1, 2000.

The International Society for Luso-Hispanic Humor Studies solicits proposals for papers, panels and sessions on any aspect of Hispanic humor. Papers on theoretical, social, cultural, literary, artistic and political issues are welcome. Preference will be given to papers with a minimum of jargon and in language accessible to the non-specialist.

Presentations may be in either English or Spanish. Reading

time will be limited to 20 minutes. A selected proceedings will be published from papers given at the conference. Conference participants must be members of the International Society for Luso-Hispanic Humor Studies.

Place: Delta Hotel, Montreal; Room rate: \$140 CDN. All inquiries and reservations should be made directly through the hotel, at 1-877-286-1986. Hotel guests may stay additional nights before or after the conference at the conference rate, pending availability.

Cost: Pre-conference registration fee: \$85 US (members of ISL-HHS); (prior to August 1, 2000); On-site and non-members fee: \$120 US (after August 1, 2000); Student fee: \$40 US (with proper ID).

Three copies of abstracts, not to exceed 400 words, should be sent, postmarked by March 1, 2000, to: Dr. K. M. Sibbald, Department of Hispanic Studies, McGill University, 680 Sher-

brooke Street West, Room 385, Montreal, Québec, Canada H3A 2M7; phone: (514) 398-6683; fax: (514) 398-3406; E-mail: <ksibbald@leacock.lan.mcgill.ca>.



You might just make this one if you hurry! The Third Annual Rhythm Bones Festival takes place September 25, 1999, in Brightwood, Virginia (35 miles north of Charlottesville, 60 miles south of Washington, D.C.). Directions, lodging, programs, &c., can be found on the Rhythm Bones Central web page: <<http://mcowett.home.mindspring.com/>>. Or contact Russ Meyers at (540) 543-2368; fax 543-2339; or Martha Cowett, (336) 294-5332; <mcowett@mindspring.com>. If you can't get there this year, make plans for next.