



## A Peak in Darlen

*John Leeder, Review Editor*

*Please send your reviews, or items to be reviewed, to  
John Leeder,  
224 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Calgary AB,  
Canada, T2M 1C2.*

*All the items listed below have come to us since the last  
issue. Some will be reviewed in upcoming issues; others  
are there so you'll know them.*

### **Books**

Clary Croft. Helen Creighton, Canada's First Lady of Folklore. Nimbus Publishing Ltd., 3731 Mackintosh St., P.O. Box 9301, Sta. A, Halifax, N.S. B3K 5N5; <mail@nimbus.ns.ca>; <www.nimbus.ns.ca>

Richard Thomas Wright & Cathryn Weller. Castles in the Air: Music & Stories of British Columbia's 1860s Gold Rush. Winter Quarters Press, Box 15 Miocene, Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 2P3; <cwellner@grassrootsgroup.com>; <http://grassrootsgroup.com>

### **Recordings**

Black Lodge. It's Been a Long Time Comin': Round Dance Songs. CR-6338. Canyon Records, 3131 West Clarendon Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85017, USA; <canyon@canyonrecords.com>; <www.canyonrecords.com>

Clary Croft. Still the Song Lives On: Traditional and Contemporary Songs from Maritime Canada. CCROFT 01. Clary Croft, 5959 Spring Garden Rd., Suite 1008, Halifax, N.S. B3H 1Y5; <www3.ns.sympatico.ca/cs.croft>

David Francey. Far End of Summer. LKR 1002. David Francey, P.O. Box 539, Ayres Cliff, P.Q. J0B 1C0; <www.davidfrancey.com>

R. Carlos Nakai & AmoChip Dabney. Edge of the Century. CR-7054. Canyon Records (address above)

Wyckham Porteous. Sexanddrinking. CBR-0242. Cordova Bay Entertainment Group Inc., 5159 Beckton Rd., Victoria, B.C. V8Y 2C2; <info@cordovabay.com>; <www.cordovabay.com>; PHD Canada Distributing Ltd., 1330 Main St., North Vancouver, B.C. V7J 1G4; <phdenq@phdcanada.com>

Tha Tribe. 'N Action! Pow-Wow Songs Recorded Live in San Carlos. CR-6340. Canyon Records (address above)

Richard Thomas Wright & Cathryn Weller, with Ken Hamm & The Wake Up Jacob Band. Rough But Honest Miner. Winter Quarters Press,

Box 15 Miocene, Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 2P3;  
 <cwellner@grassrootsgroup.com>;  
 <http://grassrootsgroup.com>  
 Young Bird. Change of Life. CR-6341.  
 Canyon Records (address above)

*Heather Sparling*

**Bag o' Cats: Out of the Bag.** Greentrax Recordings: CDTRAX193. Cockenzie Business Centre, Edinburgh Road, Cockenzie, East Lothian, EH32 0XL.

**W**hat does the name "Bag o' Cats" suggest about the music they play? "Bag" suggests a collection while "cats" calls to mind jazz. Depending on your musical tastes, it might also call to mind the skirl of the bagpipes! Such is the eclectic nature of the music found on Out of the Bag.

I'm a little confused about how to classify this CD. It is certainly not straight, traditional Scottish music, although the label, Greentrax, is known for their Celtic releases. Certainly, there are a number of instruments commonly associated with Celtic music to be heard, such as a variety of bagpipes and whistles, but there are even more non-Celtic instruments, including bass clarinet, saxophones, cittern, and djembe, to name a few. I wouldn't consider it World Beat because it's not so much pop or rock as some sort of jazz-classical-traditional music fusion. Listening to this CD is something like having a taste of various cultures at Toronto's Caravan, all blended into a single album.

Most disappointing about this CD, for me, was the accompanying information. The liner notes are minimal, limited to naming the tunes and the instruments played on each track. The CD itself is somewhat more helpful, since it also functions as a CD-Rom, providing background information about the musicians. Although it was interesting to read of the various training and experiences of the band members, I was more interested in how the music itself developed, since it is such an eclectic mix of instruments and musical styles. Unfortunately, very little is said about each piece. The technical aspect of the CD-Rom didn't meet its potential, being quite basic. Moreover, it was not well conceived for various monitor sizes – I guess I'm one of the few people remaining on the planet who still uses a 14" monitor. It's too bad, really, since the multimedia capabilities of the CD-Rom medium might have conveyed an energy all on their own.

To my ears, Scottish elements are predominant on most tracks, with a healthy dose of jazz melodic contours and syncopations. Some tracks feature different cultural sounds, such as

"Basant Muchari," which features the manditar, an instrument created by band member, Nigel Richard, combining the mandola and sitar. It has, not surprisingly, a distinctly Indian flavour. On "Raven," soprano saxes, whistle, bass clarinet, cittern, percussion, and bass perform Balkan rhythms. Each track constitutes a highly polished arrangement hung on a traditional hanger but with lots of improvisation to dress it up.

This is a CD for the musically adventuresome. It will not likely appeal to traditionalists, nor is it likely to make it big on the Billboard World Music chart. However, it is an intriguing, sophisticated and unexpected mélange of world musics and instrumental timbres. It might be the very thing for those searching for something palatable and yet different.

Craig Morrison & The Momentz. **Rocket Radio.** 7NMC-04. 7 Nights Music Communications, 183 Querbes Avenue, Outremont, Quebec, H2V 3V8;  
 <music7n@total.net>; <www.craigmorrison.com>

**I**n the 1950s and 60s, the transistor radio did a lot to bring rhythm 'n blues into the lives of young people throughout North America. Craig Morrison remembers how a little red "Rocket Radio" brought him the sounds of blues and rock as a teenager, which led him to his career as a musician, teacher and writer with a keen interest in the roots of rock. This album is, in part, a tribute to Morrison's musical heroes who sang through that Rocket radio, containing 18 songs, half of them originals, the other half cover versions of r 'n b hits and folk tunes.

The cover songs, including the Doc Pomus/Reginald Ashley hit "Boogie Woogie Country Girl," Jackie Lee Cochran's "Mama Don't You Think I Know" and the Strawberry Alarm Clock's "Incense and Peppermints," all work well. Morrison and his band create a very highly spirited and authentic-sounding rockabilly groove on "Mama Don't You Think I Know," featuring a fabulous walking bass line. John McDiarmid plays some ferocious blues piano work during "On the Road Again," which Morrison learned from a Memphis Jug Band recording. To my taste, Morrison's originals are arranged a bit thinly, and seemed to need more textural "space." However, the opening instrumental, "Rocket Radio," grooves quite well, and "Song for New Year's Day" contains some very attractive chord changes.

Morrison's guitar sings expressively throughout the album. He broaches a number of styles, from Chuck Berry-like double stop solos, chorded solos in a rockabilly style and jazzy single-note lead lines. His lead and rhythm playing is