

Folk songs are not only part of our Canadian heritage and therefore belong to Canadian children, but because of their simple and beautiful melodies and exciting rhythms they are fun to sing and children of all ages enjoy them.

As there are so many Canadian folk songs available, it is sometimes difficult to know which are the best ones to use for which age group, and where to find these songs if one does not already possess them.

This is where we think the C.F.M.S. can help and if you would like to write us we can suggest both books and individual songs which may meet your need. Our present and past Directors have collected in every province, so we can also suggest someone in your own province whom you could contact if you wanted to plan a local folk song programme.

If you have used certain folk songs with great success or have a folk song programme going in your school, do let us know so that others can be encouraged to make more use of folk material.

In addition to books, songs and records we can also offer folk artists who (for a fee) will put on a concert or workshop of Canadian folk songs in your schools. Now, suppose we look at two folk songs and consider what you can do with them.

HO HO WATANAY

Iroquois Indian, collected by Alan Mills. Found in Edith Fowke's Canada's Story in Song.

This song can be used in Social Studies to discuss Canadian Indians (their music, their crafts, what they have to offer, etc.) The song can be used as a lullaby for young children. With drum accompaniment it can become a lesson in rhythm - (drum on each beat, drum on the first and fourth beat, drum on the closing words only). If it is sung in Iroquois, English and French it is good to help diction. It is pentatonic so it can be used for sightreading by those teachers using Kodaly's approach. It has four simple phrases and children can learn to listen to phrasing by doing something different to each phrase, (i.e. clap, drum, conduct, rock). It is useful for quiet relaxed singing and all children love it.

FLUNKY JIM

Saskatchewan, collected by Barbara Cass-Beggs. Found in Canadian Folk Songs for the Young.

This song tells you about Saskatchewan, gophers, and the Depression. It's a fun song to dramatise, to skip to, and to use for an example of six-eight time. It lends itself to the making up of a dance, and from

the singing point of view it needs good diction, and as it is sung fairly quickly, good breath control. As it has a verse and chorus a small group can be used for each verse with everyone coming in on the chorus. Again it is a song which children enjoy. Age group? Personally, I would say that these two songs can be used for almost any age group, although naturally your treatment of them would be different.

Of course, all these musical ideas can be used with any good piece of music, or any good song. Canadian folk songs add the dimension of being part of ourselves and therefore an excellent place to start.

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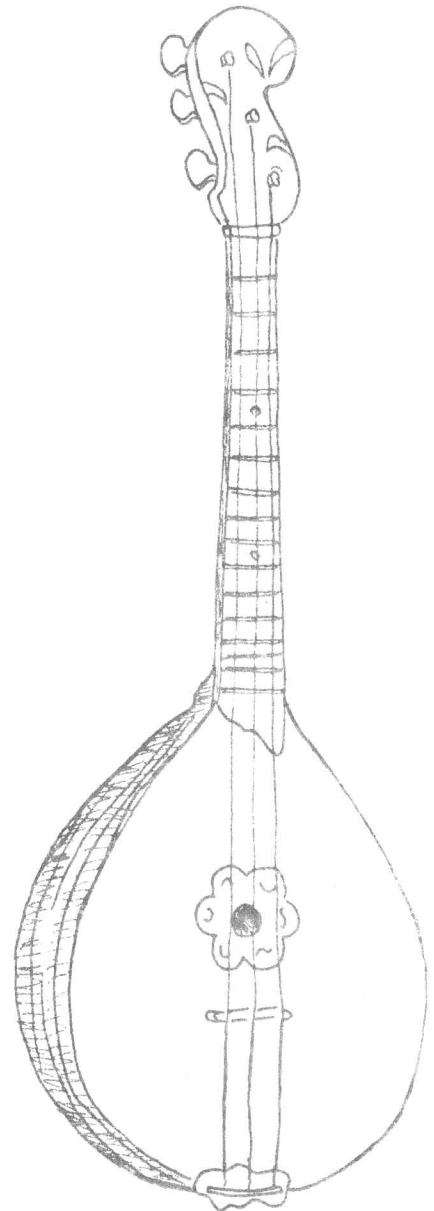
RUSSIAN FOLK ORCHESTRA

(Mr. Gerald Kirk, Music Consultant for the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board in Welland, Ontario, has kindly contributed the following article on a Russian Folk Orchestra. It describes a rather unique project in one of his schools.)

For the past seven years, Children's Folk Festivals have been produced annually by the Physical Education and Music Departments of the Welland County Roman Catholic Separate School Board (Ontario). Classes entered in the festivals were required to present both a song and a dance representing a particular nationality or ethnic group.

Consistently, Russian and Ukrainian themes were the best received - and the most fun to perform. The main drawback, however, has been our dependence on recorded for dance accompaniment.

In an effort to overcome this, a folk orchestra was launched in September 1978 at one of our schools. The domra, a 3-stringed Russian instrument of the lute family, was selected as the main instrument of the group. Four students set to learning the Prima domra, and three larger Secunda type. Since time was considered to be of the essence, only Grade 7 pupils having some previous experience with fretted instruments were accepted as members. Rehearsals are now being held twice weekly outside of school time.



the domra

Progress has been such as to permit the group to attempt arrangements for Prima and Secunda domra, chording guitar, Bass balalaika and percussion. Folk tunes of Russia and Ukraine are the foundation of the orchestra's repertoire, but plans call for experimentation with other folk music. All arrangements and instructional material is produced by the ensemble's leader, Music Consultant, Gerry Kirk.

While participation in the Folk Festivals is an important function of the orchestra, an even greater role involves performances in schools and in the community, bringing the joy of "live" folk music to the widest possible audience.



The new national
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**CANADA
FOLK
BULLETIN**

Subscriptions:
six issues/year: \$5

101-337 Carrall St.
Vancouver, B.C.
Canada V6B 2J4

Directors of the Canadian Folk Music Society featured so far in Canada Folk Bulletin have been John Murphy of Saint John, N.B. (Vol I, No. 2), Treasurer Tim Rogers of Calgary, Alta. (Vol I, No. 3), Editor of the CFMS Journal Edith Fowke of Toronto, Ont. (Vol I, No. 6), and Charlotte Cormier of Moncton, N.B. (Vol II, No. 1). Plans are being made to feature the work of Phil Thomas of Vancouver, B.C. in the near future.