

Summary

by
Tim Rogers

The articles in this feature represent a diverse number of perspectives and a considerable amount of information. Because of this it is difficult to develop any kind of summary or integrative statement. However, the content of the articles does suggest several generalizations worth mentioning. It should be underscored, though, that these are just that - generalizations and there will be some selectivity and bias in formulating them.

It is interesting to note how the various festivals presented in Sandi Hackler's survey define themselves (see the row labelled "Artistic"). Winnipeg, Vancouver, Home County, Edmonton and Swift Current see themselves as international, while the remainder indicate a degree of regional or local programming. Mariposa is hard to categorize here, so hasn't been included in the following calculations. In general terms, the international festivals are also large, showing an average attendance of 18,400 in 1982. A mean of 3,771 people attended regional festivals (excluding the Festival of Friends whose attendance estimate was not based on an actual "head count"). The international-regional size difference is also reflected in total budget figures, with the regional showing an average of \$39,000 compared to \$204,000 for international fes-

tivals. (A total budget for Edmonton of \$200,000 was used here as this figure was reported in the Alberta Report, August 16, 1982, p.25). These data clearly support the observation that the internationally-oriented festivals are qualitatively different from the regional ones - not only in terms of their artistic policies, but also in terms of their size.

Another quasi-statistical figure of interest in the Hackler data is the cost per attendee. Dividing the total budget for 1982 by the number of people attending the event provides a figure that summarizes the overall festival. This figure reflects a number of non-controllable factors (such as weather reducing attendance, thereby inflating the cost per attendee) and should be interpreted with a degree of caution. Adding the Calgary data presented in Annie Davies article (and again omitting Mariposa as it is unclear whether their total budget figures are for the entire foundation or just the festival), reveals an incredible range in cost per attendee. The average figure was \$12.63 (again the Festival of Friends was not included). London's Home County showed a remarkably low \$1.75, but this must be tempered by the realization that it is a "free" festival (no gate fee) and held near the downtown. This means that - compared to a non-free festival - attendance will be high, and cost per attendee low. Even so, Home County shows a surprisingly low figure. Vancouver shows the highest value (\$24.54) while Swift Current, Clarendon and Calgary all were less than \$10.00 (\$2.33, \$6.86 and \$9.57 respectively). The remainder of the festivals are huddled fairly close to the average cost per attendee.

One point that can be assessed from the Hackler data is the extent of city contributions to various festivals. It should be made clear that oftentimes municipal donations are "in kind" (e.g. rental free use of the festival site). However, most of the festivals listed do receive additional support from their municipal governments in the form of grants. An interesting comparative figure is to calculate the percentage of the total budget that comes from such sources. This percentage varies from 0 (Manitoulin, Swift Current and Canmore) to a whopping 47% for the Festival of Friends. The average is 9.7 percent. Perhaps the availability of this "national average" can be cited in grant proposals for those festivals that fall below the figure. Those above the average should thank their lucky stars that they have a sympathetic community.

The foregoing discussion of finances and attendance provides some interesting insight into how the various festivals compare with each other. The analyses have not been presented in an effort to pick the "best" festival or any such thing. Rather the attempt is to develop a viable comparative base, so readers can assess the relative position of their favourite festivals. Knowing how other festivals are doing is oftentimes very difficult to discover, and these data give a starting point. This section also underscores the need for more contact between festivals.

In the articles in this feature several people have indicated the need for a meeting of festival organizers that would allow for the exchange of information - including indepth analyses of the kinds

of data discussed in this article. In addition, issues of coordinating among the festivals (e.g. there is an unfortunate overlap of Owen Sound and Calgary this year) and sharing information about strategies, workshops, overall policies and performers could be discussed. It is our understanding that the Mariposa Folk Foundation is interested in hosting such a meeting. The Society definitely supports this and is willing to lobby for its occurrence - but with one important caveat. Specifically, the meeting should not encourage any homogenization of festivals. It is exceedingly important that

events, and it has been difficult to find relevant information. This suggests the need for a national listing of festivals. When *Touch the Earth* was being aired, Bruce Steele coordinated the publication of such a listing, and the CBC helped in its publication. Since then, the information problem has re-emerged. Through the cooperation of Sandi Hackler of the Solstice Festival, the Canadian Folk Music Society intends to pursue the preparation of a listing that will be circulated as soon as possible. Any input into this project would be most welcomed.

the article dealing with that festival.

The Summer Solstice Festival will take place June 18 and 19 in Current River Park, Thunder Bay, Ontario. General information can be obtained by writing PO Box 2984, Thunder Bay or phoning (807) 345-7482. It is a free festival and will have childrens' programming and crafts. Motels and camping are available within three miles of the site.

Spring Song is a one day festival sponsored by the Calgary Board of Education (Continuing Education). It will occur on April 16 and consist of a day of workshops and an evening concert and dance. All local performers. For information call: (403) 283-9397.

In Conclusion. The generalizations presented above are exactly that - generalizations. There are clearly many more ways to cut the cake, and many more points that need to be made. Also, a number of festivals have been left out. For this we apologize and invite you to write and let us know. To be sure, the positions outlined above have their blindspots. We invite your input. Of particular note here is the bias toward current revival festivals - in contrast to festivals of traditional artgiven by community tradition bearers. So too do the present articles offer a bias toward anglo music forms. Hopefully future features in this annual festivals issue will begin to address some of these points. For now, this feature represents some useful and interesting information and comments on the current festival context. We can only hope that by reading it you have become more aware of the complexity and importance of the folk festival in the Canadian context.

Any efforts at having festivals adopt a common format or model would be a mistake

each festival retain its own distinctive flavour - particularly its regional emphasis if appropriate - and any efforts at having festivals adopt a common format or model would be a great mistake. For example, efforts at developing a touring retinue of performers that would "hit" each festival together should be resisted, as this would begin to restrict the individuality of each regional event. But the exchange of information on the "how to's" of organizing, fundraising, running and evaluating festivals is a very important step in the development of the folk festival in Canada.

Another aspect of festivals is the difficulty of would-be festival goers encounter when trying to find out about the events in their area - and across the country. Lots of would-be festival goers plan their summer vacations around various



Some Early Festivals

No doubt the compilation of this listing will take time, and we won't be able to publish it until some of the earlier festivals have already passed. We were not able to obtain information about *Folk On the Rocks* and *Mariposa*, and there is extensive information about *Regina* in