

Editorial

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED to abstract (and translate, if desired) French articles into English and English articles into French. Our policy has been to include at least abstracts, and on occasion translations, for all main features. We are currently unable to maintain this policy due to lack of people able to carry out the task. If you are bilingual in English and French, please help!

Editorial blushes: a few issues back I wrote in *The Centrefold* of my delight at getting back in contact with Concertina and Squeezebox, discussed their subscription prices and so forth, but failed to give the publication's address. It is PO Box 6706, Ithaca, New York, USA 14851. Again, it's one of my favorite magazines.[GWL]

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Ten years ago, this issue, Anne Lederman guest edited a special number of the *Bulletin*, subtitled *Fiddling in Canada*, the first theme issue from this publication and one of the very first panoramic considerations of the subject anywhere. (Copies of this issue, 19.3, are still available at the cover price, \$3.00. A steal.) In his Preface, T.B. Rogers, *Bulletin* editor at the time, commented that the collection was "... best viewed as a preliminary review with the goal of stimulating further discussion and research." Ten years later, we can say happily that further discussion and research is ongoing. Interestingly enough, some of the most energetic work has begun to occur in western Canada, which was long considered a folkloristic—dare we say cultural?—wasteland. Indeed Rogers's own contribution to that issue was entitled "The Three Westernmost Provinces: A Call for Research." That call is being answered.

Lederman herself has primed the pump, of course, not only with *Fiddling in Canada*, but also with her exciting work among the Native and Métis fiddlers of the West. ("Old Indian and Métis Fiddling in Manitoba: Origins, Structure, and Question of Syncretism," *The Canadian Folk Music Journal* 19). Her two-album recording, *Old Native and Métis Fiddling in Manitoba*, is a model, not only of well-chosen musical experiences, but of presentation; her accompanying notes are thorough and extremely helpful to the newcomer to the genre.) This year, Jim Hiscott's CBC radio series on Canadian fiddling, *The View from the Bridge*, included a program on the Métis fiddler Mel Bedard, as well as programs featuring Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Cape Breton and Oliver Schroer, the one-man fiddle smörgåsbord from Ontario. Most of us can remember when a national radio documentary would have assumed that "Canadian folk music" meant "I's The B'y" and "Un Canadien Errant." Canadian fiddling, represented in those days by Don Messer, was generally an embarrassment to anyone who didn't wear a baseball cap.

Rod Olstad, whose first report on Freddy Lang is our featured article this issue, has just been awarded a significant grant from Alberta Historical Resources Foundation to record and study fiddlers of northern Alberta. Coincidentally, a

native of the Peace River country recently complained to me that in many versions of provincial culture and history "Alberta" really means "Edmonton and southward"; Olstad's work, then, is going to the margins of the margin! We call it his "first report" although earlier versions were read at the CSTM meeting in Calgary in 1994 and appeared as "The Freddy Lang Story" in the 6th issue of Alberta Society of Fiddlers' newsletter, *Fiddle News & Views*, because Olstad noted when he sent us the manuscript: "It has been difficult to feel that I have completed this article. Every time I re-read it, I seem to be reminded of some conversation that Fred and I had, and I feel that there is more information to be included." We hope that Olstad will have the opportunity to follow up these other reminders and to continue to develop his portrait of Lang.

Introducing *Fiddling in Canada*, Lederman challenged her readers: "In a country acknowledged the world over to have some of the most beautiful, intricate, virtuosic and rhythmically exciting fiddle styles, the state of our research into and understanding of these styles is truly pathetic." Harsh words, even a decade ago, but perhaps we should not let ourselves off their hooks too easily. Unfortunately a comment from a few paragraphs further on remains applicable in too many areas of the country: "... I perceive a continued lack of interest in our own traditions on the part of younger fiddlers, who often prefer to learn American, Irish or other regional styles from places they have never been." Olstad's work with Freddy Lang is a refreshing deviation from this pattern; in addition to his scholarly interest in preserving Lang's work and understanding his career, Olstad is motivated by a desire to *learn* Lang's music—and this side of his involvement with the older fiddler is resulting in a recording which should be available at about the time this issue goes to press. Jim Hiscott tells us that Calvin Vollrath and Patti Kusturok, though not Métis themselves, have learned much of the old-time Métis fiddling style, and though the venues where this aspect of their talents can be appreciated are relatively few, the fiddlers themselves prize this aspect of their national heritage. I only wish we could report as much for southern Alberta.