

UK £3.25 • EUROPE €5 • USA \$7 • CANADA \$7

THE LIVING TRADITION

-ISSUE 87-

RACHEL DAVIS

Cape Breton Fiddle

Siobhan Miller • Ric Sanders • The McCalmans
Lincolnshire Folk Song Competition • Celtic Nyckelharpa
Celtic Colours Festival • Stovies and Salsa



9 771351 410022

01

Issue 87 • January/February 2011

In this issue

Editorial	4	
News	5	
Siobhan Miller	12	<p>Joe Holmes - 12</p>
Ric Sanders	16	
Lincolnshire Folk Song Competition	20	<p>Ric Sanders - 16</p>
The McCalmans	24	
Celtic Nickelharpa	30	<p>The McCalmans - 24</p>
Celtic Colours International Festival	34	
Rachel Davis	38	<p>Celtic Nyckelharpa - 30</p>
CD Reviews	40	
Live Reviews	55	<p>CD reviews - 26</p>
Stovies and Salsa	60	
The Pipeline	66	

The small print...

Accuracy

Whilst we take all reasonable care to ensure that our advertisements are honest and truthful, we cannot be held liable if you find otherwise. Information is believed to be correct at the time of going to press, no liability can be accepted for errors or omissions. It is advisable to check dates and concert details in local advertising or at the venue.

See website www.livingtradition.co.uk for advert and editorial deadlines for the next issue.

The Living Tradition welcomes contributions of news, features and photographs but cannot accept responsibility for unsolicited material. The views expressed in "The Living Tradition" are solely those of the author and do not necessarily bear any relationship to other members of editorial staff. We welcome items for review. Send all items for review to the editor for distribution to the review panel.

the otherwise superb packaging is let down by multiple typing errors (for example the Raffeiri of *Raffeiri Is Back* has three different spellings). I know, only minor points. Content is King and there's 11 cracking songs to get yer teeth into. Nuff said.

Grem Devlin

BOOKS

EWAN MCVICAR

Lang Legged Beasties

Gallus Publishing

ISBN 9780956599001

Well known as a Scottish songwriter and storyteller, particularly for children, Ewan McVicar has written or co-written several previous collections of songs. This book is specifically designed for children, pre-teens mainly, who like a good story or a silly song. *Lang Legged Beasties* is a mix of traditional and new material, with rather less than half the items here written by Mr McVicar. I say items, because there's a broad range from playground rhymes to fairy stories, old riddles to funny verse. Nothing is taken too seriously, and although this book is beautifully printed and bound there's a homespun feel to the layout and illustrations, almost as if someone had pinned the oral tradition to the page. I quite like the seemingly haphazard use of fonts, the overlapping of text and images, and it's certainly a change from the too-glossy production of many kids' books and magazines.

There's a fair amount of Scots vocabulary in both the old and new works here, and even a Gaelic word or two, so the glossary at the back will be essential for most children, but my Anglicised brood had no problems using it. With plenty of attractive drawings and lots of humour, *Lang Legged Beasties* should appeal to a wide range of young readers. It's also good for reading aloud, or singing along to - the sounds and repetitions are an important part of the fun. The title promises monsters and creepy crawlies, but there are as many

tales of woodland and farmyard animals, and some stories where the animals only have a minor part to play: versions of *The Gingerbread Boy*, *The Dancing Princesses*, *The Selkie*, and *The Tinder Box* for instance. It's not all sweet little bunnies and happy endings, mind: this is traditional fare, with death and misfortune a normal part of life. Nothing new for the video-game generation, of course. Google it, or email ewan.mcvicar.gallus@tesco.net for more information.

Alex Monaghan

CHRIS GOERTZEN

Southern Fiddlers And Fiddle Contests

University Press Of Mississippi

ISBN: 978-1-60473-122-4

IAN RUSSELL & ANNA

KEARNEY GUIGNÉ (EDS.)

Crossing Over: Fiddle And Dance Studies From Around The North Atlantic 3

The Elphinstone Institute, University Of Aberdeen, With The Department Of Folklore, MMaP And The School Of Music, Memorial University, Newfoundland.
ISBN 0-9545682-6-5

Fiddling in the US has seen the seemingly unstoppable growth of the "Texas competition style", which have the structure to allow them to be used as a springboard for variations - mostly melodic, but with some rhythmic, which can point up aspects of the original tune whilst allowing for multiple interpretations and the exhibition of the performer's improvisational and technical ability. This has led to the contest holding "protected" contests, where specific regional styles other than the "Texas" are specified. This puts me in mind of the situation in Ireland where the seemingly overwhelming impact of the "session style" - an ironing out of regional styles allowing more group playing whichever your regional style

might have been - led to organisations such as Cairdeas na bhFidiléri successfully championing a greater appreciation of regional culture.

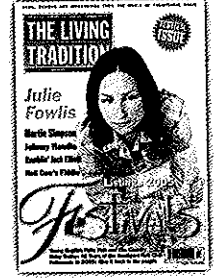
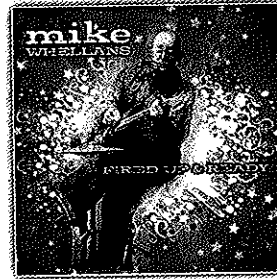
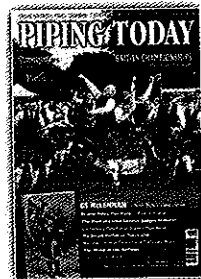
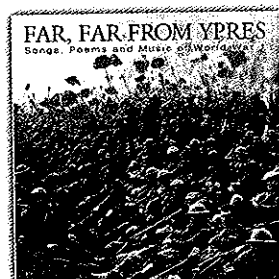
Goertzen's fascinating book looks at the phenomenon of the fiddle contest: the overall event, the contest itself, the fringe events, the fiddlers and, of course, the music they play. There are several transcribed interviews with musicians and a detailed look (with impressive musical transcriptions) at some of the tunes. So, we trace how Neil Gow's *Lord Macdonald's Reel* mutated into *Leather Britches* and how this may be approached by a fine Texas-style performance; the other tunes in this section are *Mississippi Sawyer* and *Dusty Miller*. It is interesting to see how, in a country like England, which has no such contests, the Folk Festival has developed into a similar counterpart as regards the people who go, what they do when they're there and how they approach both the music and the traditions which surround it. He writes: "...I am an academic with a primary audience of other academics", but his breezy style and rigorous research make this a volume to be appreciated by a much wider audience, especially anyone interested in the development of traditional fiddle music.

Goertzen reprises part of his research in the excellent new collection of essays from the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (NAFCo) held at St John's University, Newfoundland in 2008. The third such collection, once again under the inspired stewardship of Ian Russell with Anna Kearney Guigné, this collection ranges far and wide. Unsurprising, the bulk of the essays deal with fiddle traditions in the Americas, but there is something here for everyone, not just from different traditions, but for those who wish to consider the position and motive of revivals, how local and national traditions are shaped and, indeed the role of the fiddle in the twenty-first century. It is hard to do justice in a short review to the breadth, vitality and interest of this collection. Superb!

Paul Burgess

These and more reviews are available to read online at www.livingtradition.co.uk

designfolk^{td}



CONTACT JOHN SLAVIN

DesignFolk Ltd, 27 Portland Road
Kilmarnock, Ayrshire, KA1 2BT

m. 0781 513 1116
e. john@designfolk.com

www.designfolk.com

Graphic design solutions for print

With 10 years experience working with all types of client in the traditional music scene, DesignFolk has the good taste to create the good looks your music deserves.

Magazines • CD / DVD Packaging • Brochures • Logos • Song Books • Posters • Flyers
Leaflets • Banners • Programmes • Advertising • Display Graphics • Postcards
Folders • Stickers / Labels • Vehicle Livery • Product Packaging • Concert Photography