

## NEW PROJECT COORDINATOR



*Photo by Chris Hammond.*

Kristin Harris Walsh became the new Project Coordinator at MMAP in September 2008. Kristin is a PhD candidate in Folklore at MUN and recently finished a four-year teaching contract in Folklore and Social/Cultural Studies at Sir Wilfred Grenfell College in Corner Brook. Prior to her arrival in St.

John's in 1997, she completed an M.A. in Dance Ethnography (1997) and a B. A. (Hons) in Fine Arts Studies (1995), both from York University in Toronto. Kristin's dissertation research focuses on Irishness and vernacular dance in Newfoundland. Through her case studies of set and step dance, Kristin is investigating how dance can be the embodied representation of the collective identity of a culture. After defending her dissertation, Kristin plans to continue research on culture and identity through Irish and Newfoundland step dancing. A balletomane since childhood, Kristin has trained, taught and performed as a step dancer since 2000. In 2009 she'll begin MMAP projects on Newfoundland dance and children's folk song.

## MUN BRASS ENSEMBLE TOURS MORAVIAN LABRADOR

By Tom Gordon



*First-year trombone major Steven Ivany gives a trombone lesson to children in Makkovik. Photo by Tom Gordon.*

The bill of lading for the first Moravian missionary ship to the Labrador coast in 1771 listed everything the missionaries needed to establish a permanent settlement on Labrador's forbidding North coast: materials to build a communal

house, three years of provisions and two French horns. Life's essentials itemized: food, shelter and the beginnings of a brass band. In the ensuing decades the community of Christian faith which sought to establish itself among the indigenous people of the North Labrador coast would bring many changes to a centuries-old way of life among the nomadic sub-arctic Inuit of Labrador. But none was so welcomed, nor would become so culturally transformative, as music.

The richness of this heritage is little known in the rest of Canada and is under threat of slipping from memory in the Labrador Inuit communities themselves. With the intention of capturing that resonance before it fades forever and in the hope of sensitizing a young generation of professional musicians from Newfoundland and Labrador to the wealth of the Moravian Inuit tradition, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Brass Ensemble undertook a tour of Nunatsiavut in September 2008. *Continued on page two...*

### IN THIS ISSUE

CSTM News .....	2
Ethno Newbies .....	3
Picking in the Field .....	5
Lecture Series .....	6
Summer at the Met .....	7
Fiddling Around .....	8

Travelling by air and boat, the ensemble visited Happy Valley/Goose Bay, Northwest River, Nain, Hopedale and Makkovik and presented educational concerts and workshops to every single school-aged child in the Inuit communities. As well as performing a wide range of repertoire, the workshops offered a lively introduction to how brass instruments work (with the unlikely aid of garden hoses, kitchen funnels and . . . spit!). The exchange with the students was very much a two-way street. In Makkovik, for example, the brass ensemble was treated to a demonstration of throat singing by young musicians from J. C. Erhardt Memorial School.

School by day and concert by night. The ensemble offered full concerts in the Moravian churches in each community. These concerts featured selections drawn from the Moravian repertoire in arrangements written especially for this tour. A highlight of each church concert was a congregational hymn sing in which the band accompanied the members of the audience in singing traditional Moravian hymns in Inuktitut and English. Elders from each community had been invited to select the hymns that they felt would be most meaningful. The response was overwhelming. The churches were full and the hymn singing was both powerful and moving. After each concert, community members spoke with deep emotion about their experiences with this ancient music, so ingrained in the spiritual life of Labrador.

The trip was much more than a series of workshops and concerts. Every experience lived added to the group's understanding of the rich culture which they were encountering. In Makkovik and Hopedale, museum tours amplified the remarkable details of the history of the region and the cultures which met and transformed one another. An afternoon visit with Makkovik's Uncle Jim Andersen, an incomparable storyteller, was crowned by bringing out the original set of brass instruments that had once belonged to the congregation in Okak which ensemble members had the opportunity to play. But as richly as these artifacts told the story, the lessons were most profoundly learned from the land and especially

from the people who inhabit it. The astounding "big landedness" of Labrador was confirmed by several hours on twin otter planes and an overnight voyage on the Northern Ranger. The vastness of the land was only exceeded by the warmth of its people. The group members were welcomed into their communities and into their homes. School kids became our inseparable companions and we feasted at the generous tables of hosts who provided us much more than a room for the night. Not surprisingly, we learned some of the most important lessons about the big land and its big hearted people right at the kitchen table.



CSTM HAS A NEW LOOK!



Canadian Society  
for Traditional Music

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Société canadienne pour  
les traditions musicales

The fall 2008 CSTM conference saw the implementation of certain changes to the Society's image, including the approval of a new logo designed by MUN PhD candidate Graham Blair. There is also a new website design ([www.yorku.ca/cstm](http://www.yorku.ca/cstm)), a new recruitment flyer, and the reconceptualization of the CSTM's academic journal, which has been redesigned and renamed MUSICULTURES to emphasize its broad ethnomusicological and folkloric mandate.

**MMA P'S "BACK ON TRACK"  
CD SERIES**

*It's Time for Another One: Folk  
Songs from the South Coast of  
Newfoundland—  
Ramea and Grole*

*Folklore: A Newfoundland  
Sampler of Songs,  
Narrations and Tunes*

*Saturday Nite Jamboree on  
CBC Newfoundland*

Available at Fred's, O'Brien's,  
Downhome, MUN Bookstore,  
Heritage Shops, The Rooms, and  
through our website:  
[www.mun.ca/mmap](http://www.mun.ca/mmap)

**BREAKING THE ICE: SOME IMPRESSIONS  
OF THE NEW ETHNOMUSICOLOGY FLOCK**

**By Pat "Everything I Know About  
Interviewing I Learned In This  
Department" Brennan**

By the time this newsletter comes out, the new Ethnomusicology graduate students will have been here for a whopping four months. If you haven't got to know them yet, I have taken it upon myself to uncover some tasty tidbits about these strangers in order to ease your social anxieties and facilitate conversation for the next time you encounter them at the MMA P water-cooler. [The editor has added major research interests of each student.]

**PhD Candidates**

**Tom Artiss; contemporary Inuit media.** *You sometimes come to MMA P, but your visits are usually brief and infrequent. Where do you spend all your time?* I go for long walks on the beach at sunset with my Irish Setter, meditate into the wee hours in my cave on the Southside

Hills, cook elaborate seven-course meals for local artistes and visiting intellectuals, write very long manuscripts which I refuse to allow to be published until after I die, study other solar systems through a mega telescope I made myself, play speed chess with grand masters on line, and, in my spare time, do a little school work in order to satisfy the administrative sorts at the local intellectual trades institution (MUN)..... oh wait, that's not me....seems I pulled up the wrong file.

**Ian Hayes; Cape Breton music tourism.** *I've heard that you play every instrument known to man. This seems like an overstatement, but I'm willing to believe it. What is the strangest instrument you play, how and why did you learn to play it, and don't you think it's better to stick to things that people are familiar with, like guitar and piano?* I'm not sure if I play any instruments that are that strange or unusual, but if I had to pick one that is less common than others, I suppose it would be the Irish tenor banjo. I've had one for years and never played it much, but over the summer a friend of mine wanted me to play it on a recording of his. After a lot of woodshedding, it's become one of my favourite instruments.

**Marion MacLeod; music, alcohol and "rebel culture."** *It is my understanding that your father is famous. It was my hope that I could keep this a secret, but now that things are out there I am kind of relieved that I won't have to continue my "slumming it in grad school" charade. Finally, I can take my Lamborghini to all the elbow-rubbing functions again. But, really, we people with famous parents are really all the same: we're way better than you guys. Just think of me as a blend of Nicole Ritchie and, maybe, Scrappy Doo. Just don't factor in Ben Mulroney.*

**Leila Qashu; Arsi Oromo women's music and dance.** *I've heard a lot of viola jokes, none of them very flattering. As a viola player, what do you have to say to defend your instrument?* It is very unfortunate there are so many bad viola jokes out there because in defense, I can say that violists tend to have very strong musicianship because: *Continued on page four...*

They must play through the ranges of tenor, alto and treble clefs (when violinists only play in the last one); they must master an instrument that is physically difficult and awkward because of its size and response; they are often the core of the harmony (the third or middle part of a chord) so music would be lost without them and their acute ears; and they are among the nicest, most down-to-earth members of the orchestra. I think those viola jokes just show how jealous the rest of the world is.

### MA Candidates

**Marc Finch; Bluegrass “authenticities.”** *Your record collection has an impressive breadth and depth. What are the three records that say the most about you, and what can we learn from listening to them?* This is pretty tough you realize, but here's a shot: (1) *Huey Lewis and the News*–“Fore”: As a kid, I was saturated with the hits from this record via the VOCM airwaves, and that likely has a lot to do with my love of popular music. It's also taught me to appreciate my past musical tastes, no matter how cringe-inducing. (2) *Pavement*–“Wowie Zowie”: This record has some of the most ridiculous lyrics I've ever heard and can probably account for my awkward sense of humour. It has taught me that there is often profundity in the ridiculous. I think Milan Kundera said something along those lines as well, so it has to be profound. (3) *Belle and Sebastian*–“If You're Feeling Sinister”: Perhaps, my favourite quality in music is an autumnal feel. And when I think autumn music, I think of this record. Also, Belle and Sebastian have taught me not to be embarrassed to dance like a fool.

**Amanda Ironside; aspects of popular music as tradition.** *My only knowledge of synchronized swimming comes from the opening to Austin Powers: The Spy That Shagged Me. I can't understand how people hold their breath for so long. Can you explain this phenomenon?* It took years of rigorous training wherein my coach held me underwater until I turned blue. The trick is not to pass out, although I am sure that I killed a few brain cells over the ten years of competitive smiling, while dizzy, from lack of oxygen.

**Rachel Landy; music and health education.** *Members of the St. John's reggae phenomenon the Idlers purportedly live in the same house as you. How do you justify your rock star lifestyle when everyone else is at home studying?* If you are fishing for an invitation Pat, you can come over any time you'd like. I could maybe even arrange for you to meet a rock star [Author's note: *Awesome!*].

**Tiffany Pollock; music as community building in “new immigrant” gatherings.** *You've finally finished your performance degree and can officially call yourself a budding ethnomusicologist. How do you feel?* Finishing my music degree is a great relief as I felt as if I were negotiating between two very different worlds. I am excited to be able to fully concentrate on one discipline, although all my hard work on cello seems to be going down the drain. I really need to find a way to incorporate my instrument into my study or just try to make it to some MMaP jam sessions! Anyone interested in making some music?



### RECENT MUSIC PUBLICATIONS BY MUN AUTHORS

Beverley Diamond. 2008. *Native American Music in Eastern North America. Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture.* New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Gerald S. Doyle with a new introduction by Anna Kearney Guigné. 2008. *Old Time Songs and Poetry of Newfoundland.* (1940) St. John's: MUNFLA.

Anna Kearney Guigné. 2008. *Folksongs and Folk Revival: The Cultural Politics of Kenneth Peacock's “Songs of the Newfoundland Outports”.* St. John's: ISER.

Kristin Harris Walsh, Sherry Johnson and Marcia Ostashevski, eds. 2008. *Dance in Canada / Danse au Canada* (Special topics issue of *Ethnologies* 30/1).

## TWO WEEKS IN “THE FIELD” AT A BLUEGRASS AND OLDTIME MUSIC CAMP

By Graham A. Blair

As an anthropology graduate student in the late 1990s I remember dissecting the metaphor of “the field,” particularly how it was borrowed from the natural sciences and was entangled with the language of “discovery” used to justify colonialist expansion and exploitation. I have never been one for conventional fieldwork, but this summer I found myself quite literally in *a field* while in “the field” surrounded by bluegrass and oldtime musicians who had come to Sorrento, BC, for the 19<sup>th</sup> annual British Columbia



*Photo by Graham Blair.*

Bluegrass Workshops, held on the grounds of an Anglican camp in this very small town on the shores of Shuswap Lake. Founded by Jay Buckwold, the Sorrento workshops bring together a range of musicians, from professionals to rank beginners, for a period of intense music-making, sometimes onstage, but for the most part around campfires and picnic tables. Those who regularly attend the workshops are mostly from Western Canada and neighbouring states, and stay for both week-long sessions.

I was camped just beyond one of the fields in a series of campsites known as “Tent Town,” which in the first week had an unofficial mayor and a town square, consisting of an artfully mounted oversize tarp, a couple of picnic tables, and a scattering of chairs arranged around a propane tank with a lamp extending out of it. It rained heavily that first week, and as a result I spent more than forty hours participating in informal picking sessions under the tarp in Tent Town; one jam that I recorded lasted over seven continuous hours. During the evenings there were various events scheduled, but the focus for the people camped in my vicinity was on picking, and picking all night long.

From a fieldwork perspective, this first week was challenging. Diving headfirst into participatory fieldwork, I spent every moment I could playing music and recording what was going on around me. This meant staying up until four or five every morning, then getting up in time for breakfast and the first classes of the day. Part of the morning ritual that developed at camp involved passing around a bottle of whiskey, and pouring it into our coffee. After a few days of this routine, I was feeling pretty haggard. I looked so bad, in fact, that at one point a fellow picker turned to me, laughed, and said, “You’re like the Hunter S. Thompson of ethnomusicology.” I know she wasn’t talking about my writing.

The second week brought a welcome change. After the one-day bluegrass festival that marks the end of the first week and the beginning of the second, a new crop of people moved into the campsites around me, and there wasn’t the focussed energy of Tent Town anymore. I took this as an opportunity to walk around and observe a wider variety of jams, and to document in detail some of the “official” evening activities happening on the outdoor stage. I was also able to write more extensive field notes which, during the first week, I had to do verbally into my Edirol recorder in the darkness of my tent in the wee hours before daybreak.

There were certain limitations to what I could accomplish in that context. Because everyone was there to play music, I focussed on observing and participating rather than conducting interviews. Drawing upon the contacts I made during this period, however, I was able to spend the fall semester conducting in-depth interviews with two dozen of the workshop participants to augment my work with Vancouver’s Pacific Bluegrass and Heritage Society. With all of this material accumulated and the lengthy process of transcription, analysis, and writing looming, I often find myself wishing I could return to “the field.”

## “GENDER SURPRISE!”: AN EVENING WITH CAROL BABIRACKI

By Pat Brennan



Chatting with Carol Babiracki (right).  
Photo by Kristin Harris Walsh.

Last year, Bev Diamond offered the Ethnomusicology students the chance to submit the name of the scholar whom they would most like to invite to MMAP as a guest lecturer this fall. Now I was pretty quick off the draw, but apparently Paul Simon is not considered a “scholar” (I beg to differ). In any case, word on the street has it that Ainslie Durnin won the big prize, and her vote for Carol Babiracki resulted in said academic superstar’s visit this past October.

Dr. Babiracki’s arrival was met with much genuine excitement and interest. She delivered several classroom lectures over the course of her week-long stay, including an interactive bamboo flute and traditional Indian dance demonstration for one lucky Folklore class. The focal point of the week, however, was her public talk in the MMAP Gallery, entitled “Transnational Tribals and the Transformation of Local Music in India.” Babiracki recounted fieldwork experiences from her time in India (in the 1980s and the 1990s), comparing and contrasting the work of two Jharkhand musicians, Dr. Ram Dayal Mundu and Nandu Nayak. She argued that these musicians took ostensibly opposing stances on the issue of tradition in their musical practices, with the former aiming to preserve the dances traditionally performed in Indigenous

(“tribal”) contexts, and the latter seeking to create a space in which tradition can co-mingle with other sounds, styles and contexts, to ensure that “culture is not for museums.”

But while she held our interest with this debate about the nature of tradition, Babiracki was subtly exposing the inherent gender inequality in the projects of both men. Indeed, in a surprise twist ending (à la M. Night Shyamalan), she revealed that women were being denied agency (agency that was integral to the tradition in the original social context of the Indigenous dances) in both the programmed culture of Dr. Mundu’s revivalist strategies, as well as the male-centric global pop performances of young Nayak. (Come to think of it, we shouldn’t have been all that surprised – Dr. Babiracki is, after all, one of Ethnomusicology’s “foremost gender studies scholars” according to our own Bev Diamond). In highlighting the importance of the *social* over the strictly *musical*, Babiracki gave us ethnomusicology students some significant food for thought. Not even the pizza party we had the next day at MMAP satisfied our appetites quite so thoroughly.

### UPCOMING LECTURES

Tuesday, January 20 @ 7:30  
MMaP Gallery

Graham Blair, Carol Diamond,  
Andrea Kitta and Contessa Small  
Panel: Fieldwork Ethics in  
Folklore and Ethnomusicology

Thursday, March 12 @ 7:30  
MMaP Gallery

Dr. Martin Lovelace  
“The Ballad and the Folktale:  
The Reality of Fantasy.”

## THURSDAY NIGHT FEVER: AN EVENING WITH WILL STRAW

By Tiffany Pollock



*Students have lunch with Will Straw the day after his lecture. Photo by Tiffany Pollock.*

On November 20, 2008, Dr. Will Straw gave a compelling lecture as part of the Music, Media, and Culture Lecture Series. A professor in the Department of Art History and Communications at McGill University, and current Director of the research hub Media @ McGill, Dr. Straw has done extensive research in various areas including music consumption, dance, and the theorizing of cultural “scenes;” as Bev Diamond noted, he is one of the most internationally renowned scholars in popular music. His diverse work was reflected in the audience present that evening, which included people from varied disciplines and interest areas.

His lecture exposed Montreal as a major centre for disco music production with ties to centres in Europe. The final part of this lecture followed the musical career and many personas of Pierre Perpal, the self-proclaimed first Afro-Quebec music star, as he negotiated different scenes, searching for a musical form that would let him break out in Quebec and beyond. Disco proved to be this form, as evidenced from the inclusion of Perpal's work on *Unclassics*, a compilation album of European disco.

## SUMMER IN THE CITY

By Ainslie Durnin



*Balloon dog: Overlooking Central Park, the Jeff Koons exhibition on the roof of The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Photo by Ainslie Durnin.*

This past summer, I took a stroll around an ancient Egyptian temple, had a rendez-vous with Sargent's *Madame X*, and played

with a giant balloon dog on a roof overlooking Central Park and the New York City skyline. Every day was full of possibility and wonder as one of the forty-two college and graduate interns at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Over the summer I was tasked with several major projects. I transcribed an extensive collection of correspondence owned by Mrs. Crosby Brown who was the founder of the Met's musical instrument collection in 1889. The letters date from as early as 1884 and came from all over the world detailing the acquisitions of many of the instruments in the museum's collection. I found myself swept up in the letters of a missionary working in Burma, a man in Japan who described the popular music and instruments of the time, and a woman in Spain whose psaltery had been lost in transit.

The highlight, however, was visiting the storage room where about four thousand of the collection's five thousand instruments are housed. I could wander through the rows of shelves filled with instruments accompanied by the musical instrument technician, Joe Peknik, who had stories to tell about many of the instruments and how they came to be in the collection. The best part about these visits was that Joe would allow me to play some of the instruments, including a xylophone made out of rock. (I later found the concert announcement from 1894 which called it a “Rock Concert”). I also played *Continued on page eight...*

a welcome horn from the island of Marquis, and a hunting horn inside the body of a violin!

The most rewarding and inspiring aspect of the experience was the expertise shared, and the relationships formed among the fellow interns. I feel privileged to have shared a summer with such exceptional people in one of the world's finest museums.



## NORTH ATLANTIC FIDDLE CONVENTION

By Evelyn Osborne



*Fiddler Christina Smith.  
Photo by Duncan DeJoung.*

Atlantic and beyond converged on the city for the fourth North Atlantic Fiddle Convention (NAFCo). NAFCo was originally hosted by the University of Aberdeen's Elphinstone Institute in 2001, 2004 and again in 2006. At the 2006 conference I had visions of NAFCo coming to St. John's someday. It took a hardworking and inspired Anna Kearney Guigné to pull it off in style and put Newfoundland and Labrador on the world fiddling map.

NAFCo is quickly becoming a well known event in fiddle circles and Newfoundland hosted over 3,000 concert goers, performers and scholars. Participants hailed from all over Newfoundland and Labrador, other parts of Canada and the world. Perhaps the furthest flung visitor was from Tasmania. There was a full academic conference and workshop schedule each day while the evenings saw world class concerts featuring top performers, late night dances and downtown sessions until dawn. There was fiddling almost 24 hours a day!

It was all about "fiddling around" this past August (3-8) in St. John's as violinists from around the North

The conference also reached out to young fiddlers who came together to share their music with each other and learn from their elders as well as perform alongside professional players. There were also Random Acts of Violins, a concept developed by the late Oliver Schroer, and performers from NAFCo played at random locations throughout the city in his honour. NAFCo will continue to be felt in the province through the newly formed Newfoundland and Labrador Fiddlers Association. The final concert, Lasting Legacy, on Friday afternoon featured local fiddlers including myself, the Lear family, Karen Iny, Gerry Strong and Rendell Mercer. It raised seed money for the association which will be working to continue to bring together local fiddlers across our province in the years to come.

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