

roots musicians in general.

Rosenberg has taught for years at the British Columbia Bluegrass Workshop in Sorrento, and even served as director for a couple of years. That's where he first met Chris Coole, who plays banjo and guitar. They traded CDs but neither listened to the other's for almost a year, and they both reached the opinion that, "Hey, this is pretty good."

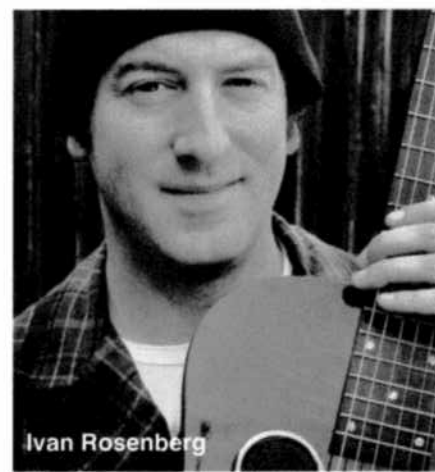
The following summer the rest of the Boys came to Sorrento and they became jamming buddies. In the interim, the association resulted in an old-time duet album by Coole and Rosenberg.

When Rosenberg got the idea for this project, he knew he wanted the Boys in on it because he hadn't heard anybody who came closer to the sound he wanted. After he was introduced to Busby's song, *Lost*, he knew that bass player Max Heineman had the perfect voice for it. The project grew from there, and Rosenberg travelled to Toronto to record with them at the home of mandolinist Andrew Collins's parents in Parry Sound, ON.

Rosenberg has adapted his resophonic playing to the style of that era. This was before Jerry Douglas and Rob Ickes, when Josh Graves, Mike Auldridge and Gene Wooten were on the cutting edge of Dobro. The playing is less busy, with fewer notes but more big slides.

"A lot of things that might sound simple are really hard to do ... and stay in tune," which is the biggest challenge for resophonic players.

Some of the Boys have also adapted their playing. Collins and fiddler John Showman also play with the Creaking Tree Quartet,



Ivan Rosenberg

which is much closer to jazz than bluegrass.

But Collins says all of the Boys have matured with the band over the past decade, and can apply enough restraint to play in the older style, which had its own quirks. "We all feel the album came off having that quirkiness but with all the drive of bluegrass music."

With five albums under their belt, the Boys "...know how to interact with each other, so it was cool to have Ivan in the mix."

When he's not with his foggy friends, Rosenberg is one busy man. Currently he has a studio in Portland, and he has produced four solo albums as well as collaborations with Jason and Pharis Romero, The Breakmen, the wonderful Washington State songwriter Kevin Brown, Chris Stuart and Backcountry and Mighty Squirrel.

Rosenberg has also received kudos for songwriting and his instrumental compositions. Rosenberg and Chris Stuart were awarded the 2009 IBMA Song of the Year for co-writing *Don't Throw Mama's Flowers Away*, which was performed by Dan Paisley and the Southern Grass.

And although it hasn't made him rich, Rosenberg's music has been used in 150 TV and film scores, including some high profile shows like Oprah Winfrey's and *The Daily Show* with political satirist Jon Stewart. You never know how your music will be used. Oprah used Rosenberg's resophonic to accompany a spot about her favourite sandwich in America, and "the Kirstie Alley bikini reveal." The mind boggles. Rosenberg never saw the shows, but heard about them afterwards.

Right now he's having a hard time containing his excitement about an entry in a contest for the theme song to William Shatner's forthcoming animated series, *The Zenoids*, that he has co-written with fellow Pacific Northwest musicians Dave Keenan and Nova Devonie.

He's also working on a solo album, has plans to tour with Chris Coole in the new year, has teaching gigs lined up at a number of music camps, as well as some dates on the West Coast with the Boys.

"A six-person band is not economically viable, but neither is any bluegrass band," Rosenberg says. That hasn't changed since the golden era of bluegrass, and is unlikely to change in the next 40 years, even for those with fake country music accents.



Dr. Beverley Diamond

## Treasured Tracks

**Rare historical field recordings of Newfoundland's rich musical heritage are now available on CDs thanks to Dr. Beverley Diamond. Jean Hewson makes an appointment with the good doctor.**

Within the last century, much work has been undertaken by academic institutions to document and preserve the traditional music of Newfoundland and Labrador. In the 1920s, song collectors Elisabeth Greenleaf and Grace Yarrow Mansfield of Vassar College visited the island, as did Cecil Sharpe's collaborator, Maude Karpeles. From the 1950s to present day, academics such as ethnomusicologist Kenneth Peacock, folklorist Ken Goldstein, and the professors and students at Memorial University's Department of Folklore have continued to conserve and study the province's oral heritage.

Vast numbers of songs, stories and dances have been amassed. While some of these pieces have been recirculated back into the community through publications and musical anthologies, much of Newfoundland and Labrador's oral heritage languishes in archives.

Enter the Research Centre for Music, Media and Place (MMA). Founded at Memorial University in 2003 under the direction of Dr. Beverley Diamond, MMA has been instrumental in creating links between the work of academics and the musical community. One of Diamond's first moves was to establish a community advisory group whose function was to open up the lines of communication between local musicians and the university.

"When I first came here, the thing that I heard most often from musicians was that the university had all this material given to them by the people of Newfoundland but that there wasn't very much coming back," says Diamond. "The community advisory group came up with ways that people could come forward with ideas for projects, and often they were CD projects."

In 2005, the Back On Track Archival CD series was launched with a view to making rare and currently inaccessible Newfoundland recordings available to the public. The first CD was called *It's Time for Another One*. This disc features a collection of field recordings made by folklore student Jesse Fudge in 1968 of singers from the South Coast communities of Ramea and Grole.

"The idea for this CD came from Anita Best," states Diamond. "I said to the committee, 'OK, if we're going to do a CD series, are there any important collections in the archives that you think the public would like to have out there?' Anita said she thought the Jesse Fudge collection was one that had some wonderful songs and was relatively well recorded."

The following year, MMA released the second CD in the series entitled

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

The project had started a number of years earlier as a collaboration between folklore professor Dr. Peter Narvaez and two

graduate students. While the repertoire on the first CD represents the traditional music of a specific region, the selection on the second disc includes music and stories from all over the province that had been deposited in the university's folklore and language archives.

"Peter hadn't had the time or funding to finish it, so I suggested we take it on. He and his students had already made all the selections, and we did the transcriptions. Some of the dialects were interesting," laughs Diamond.

There are truly some gems on this CD, including contributions from well-known traditional musicians Rufus Guinchard, Emile Benoit, Bernard Felix, and Minnie White, as well as many engaging tracks from lesser-known artists. It is MMA's best-seller to date.

There are three other CDs in the Back on Track series: *Saturday Nite Jamboree* chronicles the weekly radio show of the same name that was carried on the Newfoundland Regional Network of the CBC from 1958-1969. Hailed as the radio version of a Newfoundland kitchen party, it featured local country, folk and traditional entertainers. From *The Big Land: Music from Makkovik featuring Gerald Mitchell* showcases the music of influential Labrador songwriter Gerald Mitchell, and combines tracks from albums released in the 1970s as well as more recent recordings.

*Welta'q: Historic Recordings of the Mi'kmaq* was the first CD in the series to utilize archival material from outside Newfoundland. It draws from collections at the Canadian Museum of

Civilization, the University of Moncton and Cape Breton University, as well as those of Memorial.

All the CDs come with brilliant booklets, ranging in length from 20 to 60 pages, which include the background history of the project, photos, and notes on the songs and the singers.

MMA has a number of upcoming recordings in the works. Sherry Johnson, a fiddler, dancer and ethnomusicologist at York University, is spearheading *Bellows and Bows*; a Canada-wide survey of lesser-known, non-commercial fiddle and accordion music. It is a huge endeavor, involving a two-CD set and a 150-page booklet. Tom Gordon, recently retired from his position as head of the School of Music at Memorial, is working on a CD focusing on the Moravian missions in Labrador.

The research centre is also considering branching out into video. "This year myself and Kati Szego (the current director of MMA) had the time to audit a video documentary course. We toyed with the idea of doing a series on Newfoundland accordion, and we've already started doing some experimental filming with Stan Pickett. We did a pretty nice recording at the local session at the Rocket lunchroom where we got footage of Stan and Frank Maher as well," says Diamond. The concept is still in the preliminary stages and it will be a while before there is an actual product available.

Thanks to the initiatives of MMA, Newfoundlanders and Labradorians can continue to enjoy the songs and stories of their ancestors, recorded in the settings of everyday life; and the entire world can share the depth of history, beauty, and

authenticity of one of North America's most unique oral traditions.

The Back On Track series is available through MMA's website [www.mun.ca/mmap](http://www.mun.ca/mmap).

