By Peter Parrish

Cajun/Zydeco music and dance from the prairies and bayous of Southwest Louisiana and East Texas is one of the most exciting and enduring folk/roots dance scenes in California. Largely supported by expatriates from the Southwest Louisiana and East Texas regions, this music and dance can be found at regular monthly dances, "church dances", and clubs like the House of Blues.

The Cajun/Zydeco scene in California owes its roots to a considerable number of Louisiana and East Texas natives that immigrated to California during and after WW II. Today the Bay Area, the Sacramento/San Joaquin Valley and Southern California are home to large numbers of these Louisiana expatriates now into their third generation. For this reason, Cajun/Zydeco is strongly linked to Southwest Louisiana and their cultural identity includes the French language, the Catholic church, and a world famous cuisine as well as the music and dancing.

For over 150 years—up until the late 1920s and early 1930s—this music was able to thrive in relative isolation in Southwest Louisiana because, in part, of its unique geographic location. The Atchafalaya River/Swamp to the East, the Sabine River to the West and Gulf of Mexico to the South formed natural barriers to the forces of homogenization. Today French can be heard on local radio and TV, in supermarkets, barber shops, and of course the dance halls. For some of the older generations, French is their language of choice.

In Southern California, regular dances are held in South Pasadena and Gardena and these are augmented by "church dances" and other special events when out-of-town bands make an appearance. Los Angeles is fortunate to have a number of local bands as well as a steady stream of excellent bands from Southwest Louisiana and East Texas. These touring bands come to California for 2 or 3 weeks at a time, playing for dances from San Diego to Sacramento, and Oregon and Washington.

In addition to these regular and church dances, California hosts several annual Cajun/Zydeco summer festivals. Good examples of these festivals are those held in Long Beach, San Diego, Reno and the Sacramento area.

Some of the better local bands include the California Cajun Orchestra and André Thierry (Bay Area), Lisa Haley and the Zydecats (Los Angeles), Cajun John and the San Diego Playboys, and Acadiana (Santa Barbara). Some of the better touring bands from Louisiana and East Texas include Gazo Delafosse and French Rockin' Boogie, Willis Prodhomme and the Zydeco Express, Thomas "Big Hat" Fields and his Foot Stomping Zydeco Band, Leroy Thomas and the Zydeco Road Runners, the Creole Zydeco Farmers, Steve Riley and the Mamou Playboys, and BeauSoleil.

It is difficult to compartmentalize Cajun and Zydeco music and dance styles: they really form a continuum. At one end of the spectrum is classic Cajun music—played with acoustic instruments such as the diatonic, single-row button accordion, fiddle, guitar, bass, triangle (“tit fer”) and drums—featuring one-steps, two-steps and waltzes. At the other end is Zydeco—played with the chromatic piano accordion, electric guitars, rubberboard (“frottoir”) and occasional saxophone—featuring rhythmically more complex tunes with R&B and Caribbean influences. Not only is there no neat dividing line, but both of these musical idioms have at times overlapping styles. Thus, Louisiana music is best described as "Cajun/Zydeco".

The Cajun/Zydeco scene in California owes its roots to a considerable number of Louisiana and East Texas natives...
Y ou are in a dance hall. There is a band playing upbeat, catchy tune. You can’t help but move your feet. Music is the force, but dance is the action. Folk dance is a community activity that goes back generations. It is deep rooted. Dance ethnomusicology spends their life learning about this culture. For the rest of us, dance is just something we do. The folk dance scene in L.A. is happening. It has been happening for many years. Square dancing was big in L.A. in the 1950s. Reading back in the history books, there is reference to Wiltshire Blvd being closed off for a Square Dance event. And there have been international dance venues such as The Intersection and Cafe Danza, as well as others. Irish, English country and contra dancing in L.A. go back to the early 1970s. And, of course, there is ethnic dancing as part of the local culture: Armenian, Greek, Israeli, and many others.

Folk dancing encompasses various degrees of difficulty. Some forms are easy to learn. You can walk onto a dance floor and, with little or no instruction, dance the night away; others require years of study. Some forms are individual efforts like Irish step dancing. Other forms are couple-centered like Cajun, Norwegian, and Scandinavian dance. Others like contra and English country dancing are couple dancing with groups of other couples. Finally, there are group dances like Irish, Greek, Soutear, andalach, and others. Perhaps such categorizations are overly simplistic, for as soon as you note the generalizations, exceptions come to mind. With the advent of vinyl recordings in the 1950s, the trend in many folk dance groups was to abandon live music and recordings. While this made it easier for dance organizers and dancers to have the music available to them, it had a downside. Missing was the interaction between live musicians and dancers. Without music could the music be geared to the skill level of the dancers. No longer could the musicians observe and react to the feeling on the dance floor. This trend has reversed direction in the last quarter of the 20th century and dancers can, once again, dance to live music. While this is not always the case, we believe, given the choice, that dancers would always choose to dance to live music. It is precisely this “magic” interaction that often creates what is referred to as the dance “high.”

Many of the boomer generation were introduced to folk dance in summer camps and to square dancing in elementary schools. These childhood experiences seem not as prevalent in today’s high tech world. Children are generally not exposed to folk dancing unless it is part of their culture or they have been included in family folk dances. As a result, most young people go through life with minimal or no exposure to folk dancing. One highly visible exception to this unfortunate trend is the popular production, Riverdance. As a result of this extravaganzas of Irish music and dance, there has been a significant increase in attendance at Irish dance classes. It is also encouraging that some teachers include folk dancing in the school curriculum. In fact, if you have current experience doing this or suggestions of ways to make this happen, let us hear from you. We believe it is important to keep folk dancing alive for the next generation.

As we embark on the next millennium, we note that many people are returning to the arts. Look around you. Look at the vinyls in our cars and air-conditioned homes and offices, are looking for ways to interact with other people. Folk dance provides an alternative to our frenetic life. It is happening in L.A. All you have to do is find it. Like other folk activities, it is hidden from the mainstream of public life. It is because of this that we have focused this issue of FolkWorks on folk dance. Participants involved in various dance forms have written about their experiences. Perhaps reading their stories will inspire you. We hope it will encourage you to come out and try it for yourself.

you for making it possible! Thank you for making it possible!

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Gerry Milnes is an accomplished musician, author, dancer, storyteller, musicologist, film producer and an advocate for traditional culture. He's on staff of the renowned Augusta Heritage Center in West Virginia, which brings traditional music, crafts, dancing and folklore alive for residents and visitors. He has recently written a book called Play of a Fiddle, an old-fashioned work of folklore, filled with anecdotal and local histories of music, dancing and singing (available through the University Press of Kentucky and online at Borders.com or many other .com booksellers.)

This is part 1 of a II-part interview.

Gaili: Gerry, when did you first hear old-time music?

Gerry: Well I sort-of grew up in a music-playing family in Pennsylvania. My older brother was a fiddle player, and when I was in high school I was playing bluegrass.

Gaili: On what instrument?

Gerry: On banjo. I'd started playing guitar when I was about nine. I think it was a bluegrass festival up in Maryland that I went to and there was an old guy in the parking lot with a fiddle and I went over to see what he was doing. It was the first really strong impression of old-time fiddle music that I had, and I spent the rest of the bluegrass festival in the parking lot with the old guy with the fiddle. His name was Red Hirtett. I haven't heard about him for a long time, and I suppose he's moved on by now. So when I was probably still a teenager, I sort-of 'found' old-time music. Of course I was aware of people like "The New Lost City Ramblers," people like that. But there was something about meeting this old fiddle player that got me thinking in a whole new direction, musically.

Gaili: So at that time you were playing banjo and guitar. And eventually you picked up fiddle as well.

Gerry: Yeah. I think it was when I was about 20 I decided to take the plunge and do a full-time job as a fiddle player. It's a demanding job but it's the way I still look at it! You never get as good as you want to be. But I got turned on to fiddle music and started going to festivals, mostly down in West Virginia. And I met loads of really good traditional musicians at those events. So then I started coming out and visiting people, rather than going to festivals. And then in 1975 I moved down to a town called Huttonsville in Randolph County in West Virginia. And it wasn't very long before I started meeting all these old banjo players around Huttonsville. There were about 5 or 6 pretty decent clawhammer banjo players, all people who were able to say in their late '70s and through their 80s; people who weren't to be around for much longer. So I did a lot of field recording of those folks. And in fact later on I ended up making an anthology of old-time banjo music from there.

Gaili: Is that available to us now?

Gerry: Yes. It's called The Old-time Banjo Anthology and that was on the Marmac label in the Augusta Heritage Series, and it's in 2 volumes.

Gaili: People can order that from the Augusta Store online?

Gerry: Yes. The online address is www.augustaheritage.com.

Gaili: OK. great. You know there's been a lot of excitement about the film Songcatcher, which is about a musicologist who collects old-time tunes from Appalachian people. But of course you are the real thing! So I was wondering how did you go about it, actually making these field recordings. The musicologist in the film lugs a gramophone up the mountain. What kind of equipment did you have to bring?

Gerry: The most important piece of equipment was my fiddle. 'Cause the fiddle would open doors. Especially here in West Virginia, among older people, if you knock on their door with a fiddle in your hands, you're "in like flint" wherever that expression comes from. And I was recording fiddle players too, and ballad singers on a professional Sony cassette tape recorder.

Gaili: This was in the mid-'70s?

Gerry: Yes, I moved to West Virginia in '75 and in '77 I moved to a pretty remote farm further down in the country in Webster County. We found this incredible piece of land and built a house there. And not knowing anything about the musicians in that area -- it was about 75 miles from where we'd previously lived -- immediately started meeting great musicians in that area including people like Ernie Carpenter who was a fine old-time fiddle player, from Sarah Singleton who was a dance fiddle player. There was a really lovely dance scene around there and I would go and play with them and dance, and it was quite an interesting community of dancers, musicians and callers who got together every weekend. They were really good dances where we'd get people like Wilson Douglas and Ernie and Sarah and probably a few other people that I can't think of right now. So it was like a mini folk festival every Friday night with all these great old-time musicians around.

Gaili: When you were playing with these guys, were you playing banjo?

Gerry: Banjo, fiddle, and guitar. And we were playing music for dancing. There's certainly a new and revived dance movement throughout the country now; but it's quite a bit different from the older dances I had discovered there.

Gaili: Really? So not like the contradancing we're doing now?

Gerry: There was no contradancing at all. It was all circle dancing and square dancing. No teaching, that was unheard of. If a new dancer showed up, he or she was taken under wing and lead through the dance, and in time, they're dancing. That's one thing within the current dance movement; it's always a kind of workshop setting where they stop and walk through a dance. And to me, it takes so much away from the dance that it's not a social thing anymore, but a learning session or something. But anyway, I'm glad there's a revival in traditional dance, of course. There is a big controversy in the South. Some callers will refuse to call contradances. And some places you go where there's only contradances.

Gaili: Why would they be refusing to call contradances?

Gerry: Because the South had such a strong tradition in square and large circle dancing. Where did contras come from?

Gerry: Contras came from New England.

Gaili: Oh, I see. Another Yankee invasion!

Gerry: Yeah, they were the traditional dance there, but they've swept the country now.

Gaili: Yes, here in Los Angeles our dances are primarily contras.

Gerry: Yeah, and a lot of callers feel like that's too bad. Even the younger callers think, well why? Why are we dropping this really strong tradition to go to this new regional tradition that's not part of who we are? But there are certainly lots of people doing it in the South, as well as in other parts of the country.

Gaili: Wow, that's so interesting. I haven't seen many circle dances, except an occasional mixer. Is it basically like a square?

Gerry: Yeah, people couple up and get 4 to a small circle and do a figure and then move on. It's almost like a square dance, enlarged.

Gaili: Yes, I just remembered that we had a caller from North Carolina named Fred Park at our Summer Solstice Festival who called a circle dance like that. You could see that the die-hard contradancers were challenged by that dance?

Gerry: Yes, there's a lot of resistance to it.

Gaili: Gerry, let's talk about the work you've been doing since you've become involved in old-time music. You've written and recorded a book and cassette for children which we're going to talk more about in our next interview. But you've also recorded a lot of music yourself as well as with your band Gandydancer (available through Gerry at gcm@augustaheritage.com). You've recently written a very highly acclaimed book for adults, and you've also made a documentary, isn't that right?

Gerry: Well, I've made several video documentaries (www.augustaheritage.com). That's sort-of another avenue for me to present folk traditions. In Fiddle Stakes and Dog Days, one of the things I try to do through film is show people that old-time music here in West Virginia has a context. Unfortunately, a lot of people hear old-time music played on a stage, which is way out of context. And what I tried to do throughout the film was tie the music itself to the people, and to the rest of their lives, so it was all filmed in people's homes. Besides a lot of really good musicians that are in that film, a few of which have even died here recently, I think it shows this connection to something other than just people's musical lives.

Gaili: That sounds incredible. I can't wait to see it. Now tell us a little about your book, Play of a Fiddle.

Gerry: Well, there was an old man I heard about in the area in where I was doing my research, and he made the statement that if a man couldn't dance of a jig, shoot of a gun, or play of a fiddle he wasn't worth a damn. So that's where the title comes from.

Gaili: That's great. The book is sort of a culmination of all the research you've been doing since you moved to West Virginia?

Gerry: Yes, I try to talk about old-time music in...
NEVENKA, a Los Angeles-based women’s folk chorus, performs songs of Eastern Europe. Formed in 1976 by women who shared a common interest in the complex harmonies, compelling rhythms and rich instrumental styles typical of Balkan music and dance, Nevenka’s repertoire includes songs from Bulgaria, Yugloslavia, Greece, Turkey and Russia that vary in style from traditional village melodies to arranged chordal pieces.

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512 advance (members $10)
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The Circle of Fifths

Previously on the musical highway we produced all of the major scales in the sharp (#) keys and, in the last installment, we finished up all of the flat (b) keys. So, here is the complete set of major scales in all the keys:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
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<tr>
<td>Key (b)</td>
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<td>A</td>
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<td>Cb</td>
<td>Db</td>
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In the last issue, we learned a logical way to get from one scale to the next in a specific order. Move a fifth up to get to the next sharp key, a fifth down to get to the next flat key. Beginning with the key of C (no sharps, no flats) and, starting with the note C as “1”, we counted up to 5 to arrive at the next key, G, the key of 1 sharp. From the G major scale we counted G as 1 and went up 5 to D, the key of 2 sharps and so on up to the key of C#, the key of 7 sharps. For flat keys, we counted 5 in the opposite direction to get to the next one and continued to Cb with 7 flats. This progression of keys by fifths is a difficult concept for some people to visualize, but it is so important, it has been encapsulated into a construct known as the Circle of Fifths. It is typically pictured as a circle with the sharp and flat progressions written in opposite directions around the circle as shown. Notice that moving clockwise from the top takes you through the sharp keys and moving counter-clockwise takes you through the flat keys. As mentioned last time, a “fifth down” lands you on the same letter name as a “fourth up.” So the Circle of Fifths is even more interesting and useful than it appears. As we progress farther along the musical highway we will keep revisiting the Circle of Fifths and show how to use it in many different musical applications.

Here’s a little extra information: I found a host of interesting things while researching the Circle of Fifths on the web. Here are the three most unusual I encountered:

- Circle of Fifths Watch (I bought one and love it)
- The Harp Circle Of Fifths (Play on any key on any harmonica…like I’m sure.)
- The Unit Circle of Fifths (Why?)
  http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~gavenoni/fifths.html

When I first discovered the Circle of Fifths I was immediately struck by its beauty and simplicity. It was one of those great moments when I felt like I had stumbled on a universal secret. So keep looking for musical truths and be sure to stay tuned…

The Circle of Fifths

By ROGER GOODMAN

The Circle of Fifths

Previously on the musical highway we produced all of the major scales in the sharp (♯) keys and, in the last installment, we finished up all of the flat (♭) keys. So, here is the complete set of major scales in all the keys:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key</th>
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By using a circle instead of a line to visualize the progression of fifths it is obvious that the Circle of Fifths overlaps itself. The three overlapping keys at the bottom of the circle are known as enharmonic keys (sounds the same, but has a different name). C♯ and Db, for example, are named and notated differently but sound exactly the same.

If you’ve spent time around any serious musicians you’ve probably heard of the Circle of Fifths and wondered what it was. Just as other fields of study have tools to help you remember pertinent details and visualize complex concepts, the Circle of Fifths is basicallly a tool that synthesizes lots of information in a concise, visual way. Actually, it turns out that the Circle of Fifths is even more interesting and useful than it appears. As we progress farther along the musical highway we will keep revisiting the Circle of Fifths and show how to use it in many different musical applications.

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The Yoruba, an ancient spiritual tribe that migrated from Nigeria from Egypt in roughly 746 BC, revered dance as an integral part of life. As in most African cultures, dance in the Yoruba tradition serves various functions. There is ritual dance, a sacred form of worship; ceremonial dance, an important part of community celebration; and dance as a form of entertainment and self-healing.

The ritual dance entails years of devotion, initiation rites, ceremonies and costumes, plus the correct paraphernalia and sacred ingredients to make the outcome of the experience beneficial. The ritual comes from Ifa, a Yoruba metaphysical practice and mythological understanding of Creation that believes in different forces and spirits of nature known as Orisas, very much like the Gods of the Greek and Roman civilizations. As a form of prayer or sacrifice, a ritual dance is performed at shrines such as Yoruba Oluku to invoke the spirit of the Orisa, each Orisa e.g., God or Goddess of Fire, Wind, Ocean, River, Metal, Peace, etc. - is identified by a series of corresponding movements and storytelling pantomime that relate to his or her virtues, failiures or supernatural powers. Certain colors, symbols, instruments and props further enhance the power of the dance. For example, Yemoja, Mother of the Fish, dressed in a wide circular skirt of blue and white, emulates the motions of ocean waves. Ogun, the God of Daribility and Iron, dances with machete in hand, cutting his way through the forest with strong and deliberate warrior-like movements. Oshun, Goddess of the River, dances to the rhythm of cool water moving slowly and sensuously with mirror in hand as if she is moving in honey. Shango, the God of Fire and Manifestation, dances like fire - fast and furious, moving every which way. In general the movement of the male deities is more exaggerated and almost acrobatic, while the female movements are usually more internal, simulating the discipline of cool character, sensuality and inner beauty.

At religious gatherings known as bembes, dancers who have been initiated into the religion can call down the spirit of their own guiding Orisa. If the Orisa descends upon them, they become elevated to another awareness where they sometimes receive messages or healing qualities beneficial to themselves and everything around them.

Traditionally, ceremonial dance has been used to mark time and bring the community together. There are dances for welcoming the Elders, the birth of a child, naming a child, entering adulthood, getting married, the cycles of the moon, the change of seasons, or just on waking up and/or ending a day. Since the beginning of time, we have all been drummers and dancers; so everyone in the community learned these dances no matter what shape or size, age or gender. The role of the drummer cannot be underestimated. He is the master of the rhythm, keeper of the tempo and invoker of the spirit. He communicates the message in Yoruba, the tonal language of the drum. Once the rhythm is established the corresponding dance is expected to follow. The dancer is cued to start or stop or change the step by the musical break.

Although most of the steps require uniformity in movement there is plenty of room for individual expression. After extensive practice and embodiment of a rhythm, the dancer and drummer become unified. Exactly as the tempo of the drum is accelerated so is the movement. It looks as if each note propels a twist of the body, a step, then a jump. In that state the dancer feels as if he is moving without effort by the power of the drum or dancing on top of the rhythm.

Yoruba social dance was and may still be the most common form of entertainment. As rhythm is a way of life, dance is natural to most people. If in fact our first drum is our heartbeat, then everything we do or say or even think has a rhythm and a dance. So in a sense, we are dancing to our own beat. That is both the similarity and the difference in African dance: we are dancing to traditional rhythms that have been passed down from generation to generation for hundreds of years. These rhythms have power, purpose and a significant effect upon the human psyche. Most popular Yoruba music utilizes these rhythms and combines them with electric instruments to make Highlife music.

At Yoruba House in West Los Angeles everyone is welcome to experience all these kinds of dance in an authentic and respectful way. With Baba Ayo Adeyemi, native Nigerian Ifa Priest and master Yoruba drummer and dancer, there are workshops, classes, parties, rituals, drum circles and other events open to the public. Yoruba House Ensemble, a traditional drum and dance group, is available for all kinds of performances, as is the YH Highlifers, a dance band that will make any party rock. For more information please call 310-838-4843 or email yoruba1@mindspring.com. http://yoruba1.home.mindspring.com
Ancient Chord Music
CD and Concert Reviews by Dennis R. Stone

Review written for this column feature CD and occasional concert reviews mainly in the realm of Celtic folk music; but we will venture to the close neighborhood in Scandinavia and Eastern Europe.
The purpose in writing these reviews is not only to spread the word about new CD releases and up-and-coming artists, it is also to journey into recording the past, especially those that are not often heard or listened to a second time around. In this way, many of these "Treasures of the Past" can be discovered by new ears or rediscovered by those who either passed them by on the first listen.

Another area of interest is the more obscure and hard-to-find releases. Many of these artists are on small regional labels, or are independently produced and are worth taking note of. Last issue, an article on FolkWorks was a regional publication, an effort will be made to review artists in that format in the future California area.

Correspondence and/or feedback is welcome by email at: DunedinChord@hotmail.com

FolkWorks • P.O. Box 55051 • Sherman Oaks, CA 91413.

Title: BEST OF...15th ANNIVERSARY

Title: LUAR NA LUBRE

Artist: LUAR NA LUBRE

Rating: ★★★★★

By Dennis Stone

In the year 1986, a group of young musicians from the Galician coastal city of A Coruña in Spain came together to form what is today one of Galicia’s most important Celtic folk bands. Standing beside its better known Spanish Celtic group Milladoiro, is Luar na Lubre. In the Galician language, Lubre refers to the sacred forest groves where ancient Celts held their religious rituals. The group primarily draws from their Galician culture and music but they also incorporate music from their Celtic cousins in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Brittany. The group is as comfortable in presenting Irish jigs and reels, as it is with modern versions of old Galician ‘cancioneros’ or songbooks. They also present diverse versions of Galician dance tunes.

Their first recording, ‘O Son Do Ar’ was released in 1988. It was followed in success by ‘Beira Atlantica’ (1990); ‘Ara Solis’ (1993); ‘Plenilunio’ or ‘Full Moon’ (1997); ‘Cabo do Mundo’ (1999) and the current collection. Piper and original member Bieto Romero leads the band. Over the years there have been many personnel changes. The band currently consists of: Rosa Cedrón, cello & vocals; Bieto Romero, bagpipes, accordion & hurdy gurdy; Xaio Varela, bouzouki, vocals & percussion; Eduardo Coma, fiddle; Patsí Bermúdez, bodhrán, tabor & djembe; Pedro Valero-guitar; Xavier Ferreiro-Latin & African percussion & effects and Xan Cunqueiro-flutes.

All the vocals and most of their CD liner notes are in Gallego, the Galician language.

A high point for Luar na Lubre came in 1992, when the band performed for English musician Mike Oldfield. They have since become good friends. In 1996 Mr. Oldfield recorded a version of Bieto Romero’s ‘O Son Do Ar’ (The Song of the Sun) on his Celtic flavored CD ‘Voyager’. Mr. Oldfield also has had the band’s vocalist, Rosa Cedrón, sing on his latest CD ‘Tubular Bells III’. Another high point was in 1997 when the band signed a contract with Spain’s Warner Music. Since then, the group has enjoyed a steady rise in popularity not only within Spain, but also throughout Europe.

The band has also received many music awards including a Spanish Gold Record, which is rare for a Galician group.

The new CD, ‘lo mejor de Luar na Lubre – XV aniversario’ (The Best of Luar na Lubre - 15th Anniversary), is a great introduction to this band. Unlike most ‘best of’ packages which just re-hash the old cuts, this new compilation includes three new recordings, live recording, rare tracks and plus some of the best tracks from past albums. Most of the studio material comes from their last two Warner CD’s ‘Plenilunio’ and ‘Cabo do Mundo’, which are by far the groups most popular work. However, the three new studio track are breathtaking, and demonstrates this band’s ability to continue to grow, becoming one of the top groups in their field.

Luar na Lubre’s sound is a bit difficult to describe. It can be very ancient and traditional. It also can be very contemporary, with modern arrangements. I don’t usually like to make comparisons, but making an exception here, I would have to say that they sound like a Galician version of Capercaille, although not as electrified. Most instruments are acoustic, though they do incorporate occasional electric guitars, bass and keyboards. The lush and beautiful vocals by Rosa Cedrón make those tracks a plus, balancing the soaring instrumental dance tunes and spellbinding airs. Several of the vocal tracks have been remixed and now include famous Spanish male vocalists performing duets with Ms. Cedrón. Asturian piper Jose Angel Hevia also makes a guest appearance on the track, ‘Grial’. Other highlights include the outstanding ‘O Son Do Ar’, which originally debuted on their first album, but, in 1997, was re-recorded and arranged after the aforementioned Mike Oldfield’s version was released. ‘a frol d’augou’ was also originally recorded on the first album, but a fantastic new and much improved arrangement is included here. The CD’s final two tracks are live, recorded at the Rosalía de Castro Theatre in A Coruña in 2000. These are exciting versions of dance tunes also originally released on earlier albums, and provide insight to how the band sounds in concert.

If you aren’t familiar with the original lyrics, don’t worry, only the chorus survives: "Honesty’s all out of fashion/These are the rigs of the time." In Maddy’s version, the rigs of the time takes a poke at transnational companies, private utilities, huge corporate stores, logo-based clothing and the media. This becomes a timely and wondrous reworking of this classic song.

The two song cycles are very odd (in an interesting way), very distinctive and well worth the listening time. The first is called “With Napoleon in Russia,” and starts with a bit of a traditional piece (“Honey”) commonly sung by sailors. It goes on to “Scorched Earth,” and finishes with a song called “Loo.” In all three, the music is based on traditional tunes but with new lyrics by Maddy Prior. The cycle is excellent, but, in a way, too brief. I guess she thought people wouldn’t sit still for an album-length saga about the destruction of an army and an empire.

The other song cycle, “In the Company of Ravens,” is about Ravens, both real and mythical; their life cycles and songs of the Morrigan (Celtic war goddess), whose symbol they were. The songs in this cycle are entirely Maddy Prior creations. One of the most musically attractive of these pieces is based on a study of Ravens by a noted ornithologist, who pointed out the fact that Ravens form the bird equivalent to teenage gangs. (They leave the nest at a typical age for birds, but do not mate and form pairs until they are four or five. In those intervening years, they form wandering mobs that intimidate other birds to get to their chosen food.) The song, “Young Bloods”, is that combination of grimm and bouncy which works so well for Maddy’s voice. The others in the cycle are good as well, but that’s my favorite of the bunch.

The album was produced by Troy Donockley and Nick Holland, who play most of the instruments on it as well. Using the traditional tunes to cleanse the palate before, between and after the song cycles worked very well. Maddy’s distinctive voice was showcased well, and the results were in most cases excellent. If you enjoy up-tempo British Isles music, you will enjoy this one.

MUSIC RATINGS GUIDE

★ POOR Uninspired stuff. A waste of your time.
★★ FAIR One or two tracks acceptable, the rest garbage.
★★★ GOOD Same as Fair, with more favorable tracks, but still uneven.
★★★★ EXCELLENT Overall a well produced and balanced effort.
★★★★★ BINGO The Gods watched over this creation. Basically a flawless joy from beginning to end, with an apparent effort to make it that way. A work of art that will last a lifetime. Highly recommended.

GRAPHIC & WEB DESIGN

ART DIRECTION

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alan@stonecreatives.com
www.stonecreatives.com

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O N G O I N G  M U S I C  H A P P E N I N G S
M U S I C,  M U S I C  A N D  M O R E  M U S I C

S A T U R D A Y
6:00-8:00pm - Wilkinson House - Bon Elnder (mostly Bluegrass)
KFJK (90.7FM)
www.kfjk.org
8:30-10:00pm - Bluegrass Express
Marvin O'Dell (Bluegrass)
www.kfjk.org
KPFK
9:00-11:00pm - One Heartlight - Morning Program
Ben Elder (mostly Bluegrass)
www.kpcc.org
KPFK
7:00-10:00pm - Bluegrass Express
Marvin O'Dell (Bluegrass)
www.kfjk.org
KPFK
8:30-11:00pm - Irish Session
www.kpcc.org
KPFK
10:00-11:00pm - Mugava Acoustic Ensemble
www.kpcc.org
KPFK
11:00-1:00am - Irish Session
www.kpcc.org
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F U N D R I S K I N G

FolkWorks attempts to provide current and accurate information on all events but this is not always possible. Please send corrections to ongoing@FolkWorks.org or (818) 785-3839.
OGM: On-going Music-page 7 • OGD: On-going Dance-page 10 • SE: Special Events-page 16

PICKS OF THE MONTH

SOLAS “...a five-member Irish-American band of startling instrumental and vocal firepower.” — Los Angeles Times

APRIL VERCH “23 year-old April Verch’s CD, Veracredo is a puppy, lively and, above all, happy musing of fiddle tunes played with exceptional grace and skill.” — Tom Knapp, Rambles, A Cultural Arts Magazine

CHERTY, WHEELER “…the rare artist that combines strong poetry, specificity of images, occasionally complex yet memorable melodies, and clever…” — Sing Out! Magazine

GREY LARSEN & PADDY LEAGUE “Their playing is both authentic and beautiful, the product of artistic humility and insight. Grey and Paddy have found the perfect balance between maintaining tradition and finding their own unique voice.” — Martin Hayes

OGM: On-going Music-page 7 • OGD: On-going Dance-page 10 • SE: Special Events-page 16

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### Folk Happenings at a Glance. Check out details by following the page references.

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### PICKS OF THE MONTH

**VÅSEN** — "deeply rooted in the forests and rich earth of the Swedish countryside, in the centuries-old tradition of the folk music of Uppland. There is more than just folk sounds. There’s a playfulness to their music, joie de vivre and a delight in clothing new ideas in a wonderfully original musical garb."

**NEVONKA** — "haunting voices, exquisite harmonies and lilting melodies that intoxicate."

**ODETA** — "few...pass that free understanding of a song’s meaning which transforms it from a melody into a dramatic experience. Odetta, who has influenced me greatly in this area of dramatic interpretation, is just such an artist. The sensitivity and belief which she brings to her performances surpass even her vocal gifts, which are in fact of the highest quality."

---

**DOUGIE MACLEAN** — "The feelings and imagery found in Dougie’s music is unparalleled, and to the listener, a live concert is Dougie at his very best. Dougie MacLean sings songs that lodge in your brain cells and vibrate at your heart."

---

**Folk Works**

September - October 2001
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ON-GOING DANCE HAPPENINGS
DANCING, DANCING AND MORE DANCING

AFRICAN DANCING
Thursdays, 6:00-8:00pm
Yoruba House 3264 Motor Ave West L.A.
(310) 391-4500 - totem@irishdance.com
www.irishdance.com/yoruba.html

ARMENIAN DANCE
ORANGE COUNTY DANCE CLASS
Tuesdays 7:45-10:00pm
1721 N. Orange Circle, Santa Ana
Susan Ounjian (818) 843-7555

BALKAN DANCE CO-OP
1515 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles
Wednesday 7:30-10:30pm
Sharon Czeck, Coordinator: www.pinchstep.com
(626) 292-8852
sharon@pinchstep.com
www.knowdondance.com/CafinalDanceHome.htm

KAY'S WEST BALKAN DANCERS
Mondays 7-9:30pm
VFW Club 6011 West St. San Pedro
Ziga Gregis (310) 832-4517

CAJUN DANCING
2nd Fridays - Lesson 7:00 Dance 8:00-11:00pm
South Pasadena War Memorial Hall
415 E. Fair Ave., South Pasadena
LALANE (562) 441-5733
For additional Cajun/Zydeco dancing:
2nd Fridays
Mondays 7:30-9:30pm
The Bamboo Mouse Long Beach
190 W. Barbork Blvd., Barbork
Thursdays 7:00-9:00pm
The Glendale Mosaic Lodge
107 Aver St., Arcadia
Michael Patrick Brown (818) 842-4881
www.irishdance.com/glendalemologic.htm
MARTIN MORRISSEY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE
(914) 340-1151

WEST COAST COOP
7:30-10:45pm $5
Emerson Junior High
1690 Selby, Los Angeles
Thursdays (310) 391-4500
WEST VALLEY FORK DANCERS
Mondays 10:30-11:30am
Canyon View Park
720 Judson Ave., Canoga Park
Jay McMahan (310) 386-7357 • jsf3@aol.com

ITALIAN DANCE
CLEARY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE
6:00-10:00pm (not a dance)
www.irishdance.net • (503) 540-4377

LADIES DANCE
OF CULVER CITY
Mondays 7:30-9:30pm
Roberta Heath 724-0573
www.calstatela.edu

LATINO DANCE
SYDNEY'S DANCE STUDIO
7:30-10:00pm
202 N Broadway, Santa Ana
(818) 349-0677

LACROSSE DANCE COMPANY
Thursdays 7:30-10:30pm $3.00
Calver West Park • 4612 Wude St., Culver City

INTERNATIONAL DANCE CLUB
AT UCLA
Mondays 6:00-1:00pm - Free
UCLA Ackerman Student Union Building
Rooms 244 & 246
Los Angeles 90095-1536 (805) 274-1365
www.ucla.edu/unesco/unesco.html

MOUNTAIN DANCERS
ONCOTAYA CONFLICTIONAL CHURCH
13505 Apple Valley Rd., Apple Valley
Richard Dance (760) 794-5840
dance@calstatela.edu

WESTERN WORLD DANCE CLUB
HOLLYWOOD WESTERN DANCE CLUB
7:30-9:30 pm
Club House 1, Leisure World, Laguna Hills
Flair's Cafe, Laguna Beach 714-365-4361

MORRIS DANCERS
LOS ANGELES MORRIS DANCE CLUB
7:00-10:30pm $3
4540 Deux Dr. La Canada
La La Moe (818) 792-0304

PALM DESERT DANCERS
TEAK/TRANSLATION DANCE
Mondays 7:00-11:00pm
IXC. of Orange County • 250 Baker St. Costa Mesa
Yom Yom (714) 753-5752
IJSBA/ITAL. DANCE CLUB
7:30-10:30 pm
IXC. 300 S. Will St. Long Beach
Robert Edery (909) 519-1888

IJSBA DANCE CLUBS
IXC. of Orange County • 250 Baker St. Costa Mesa
Yom Yom (714) 753-5752

JAZZ DANCE
BEVERLY HILLS DANCE STUDIO
Beginner - 7:00 - 8:30pm
Tuesdays - 7:30 - 9:30pm - $5.00

POLISH DANCE
THEE DANCE STUDIO, VALLEY COLLEGE
Mondays 7:00-10:30pm
9370 Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley
Don Karwelis (714) 730-8124

THEE DANCE STUDIO, VALLEY COLLEGE
Mondays 7:00-9:00pm
9370 Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley

THEE DANCE STUDIO, VALLEY COLLEGE
Mondays 7:00-10:30pm
9370 Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley

CENTRAL CARIBBEAN DANCE FESTIVAL
AFRICAN DANCING
Mondays, Thursdays, Thursdays
PIZZA NOVA (323) 725-2171

PORTUGUESE DANCE
Mondays 7:00-10:30pm
6504 San Pedro Ave., North Hollywood
Rancho Santa Susana Community Center
13164 Burbank Blvd., Van Nuys
David Ederly (909) 591-1688
www.irishdance.com/rsscc.htm

ROYAL SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING
KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL
4344 Warner Ave., Long Beach
(562) 430-0661

SCOTTISH DANCE
Mondays 7:30-9:30 • 511 S. Harbor, Anaheim
(818) 343-1151
1st Saturdays
CALIFORNIA DANCE CO-OP
 Chuck Galt (562) 427-2176 cgalt@gte.net
Throop Memorial Church
Kathy Qualey (818) 989-1356 bj371@lafn.org
Steve Lewis (661) 255-2149

SOUTH PASADENA WAR MEMORIAL HALL
3rd Fridays
Helen Winton (562) 430-0666
dgsa@pacbell.net

ST. PAULS EPISCOPAL CHURCH
Tuesdays
412 South Camino Real, Redondo Beach
Narale Brown (310) 843-8009

THERMOS DANCE CLUB
Mondays 7:00-10:00pm
White Horse Pub, Arcadia
Israel Yakovlev (818) 886-5004

THERMAL DANCE CLUB
Mondays 7:00-10:00pm
White Horse Pub, Arcadia
Israel Yakovlev (818) 886-5004

WAVES OF SCOTTISH DANCE
Mondays 6:30-9:30pm
St. Pauls School, Canoga Park
Lynn Babich (818) 301-6596

WESTWOOD ISRAELI DANCERS
Tuesdays
560 Madison Drive, West Hollywood

WESTWOOD ISRAELI DANCERS
Tuesdays
560 Madison Drive, West Hollywood

WHISTLER DANCE STUDIO
Mondays, Thursdays
3750 Orange Ave., Long Beach
Deanna St. Amand (818) 761-4750

WICKED ROYAL IRISH DANCE
Mondays 9:00-10:00pm - $5.00
Pope John Paul Polish Center
3990 Br Dr., Yorba Linda
Rich Kotlow (714) 776-3657 • richk60@hotmail.com

WYOMING DANCERS
Mon-Thurs
Emerson Junior High
1690 Selby, Los Angeles

ZAMBIAN DANCE FESTIVAL
SOUTH PASADENA WARM WAR MEMORIAL HALL
535 Fair Ave., South Pasadena
David Ederly (909) 591-1688

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535 Fair Ave., South Pasadena
David Ederly (909) 591-1688
WHAT DO I MEAN BY STORYTELLING?

by Harlynne Geisler

S

torytelling is a word used to mean many things—writing a novel, filmmak-
ing, oral history, etc. For the purposes of this column I will be focusing on

telling folktales orally to a live audience of one or more people (although I do

plan to discuss collecting family stories in future columns).

Folktales as an art form started in preliteracy society as people passed on a story

by word of mouth from person to person until the author, the creator of the story,

was forgotten. Yes, someone had to be the first person to tell Cinderella or a Jack

tale. But as the story traveled on from generation to generation and from country to
country, the “folk” claimed it. “Folk” is just a fancy way of saying people like us.

It is a fallacy to believe that all storytellers in the past (and in the present!) freely

passed their stories on to anyone who wished to tell them. I read of one Irish teller

who hid in the attic to hear a tale another teller had kept from him. He then leaped
down into triumph to crow, “Now I’ve got your story!” and ran out the door.

There were rules about folktales in some cultures, such as which gender could tell which

stories and at what time of day or season. Stories were passed on by professional

entertainers who were paid, sometimes by passing the hat before they’d tell the

exciting part of the tale. Stories were passed on by beggars and handicapped people

who earned a meal or a night’s lodging in exchange. Stories were passed on by vil-

lage boys conscripted into the army where they heard tales from other villagers

and brought them home.

As books became more readily available and as folklorists wrote tales down, sto-
tories passed from print to mouth back to print, blurring the lines between a literary

and a folk tale.

Most storytellers today learn their folktales from researching printed sources

rather than living within a culture and gathering tales from oral sources.

To learn more about the history of storytelling worldwide read The World of


ON-GOING STORYTELLING EVENTS

GREATER LOS ANGELES

LOS ANGELES COMMUNITY STORYTELLERS
2nd Thursdays • 7:30 pm
Tomasi (Booth Tone) • 1327 Venice Blvd
Audrey Kopp • (310) 823 7482
akepp@aol.com

SUNDAYS ARE FOR STORIES
2nd Sundays • 3:00 pm
Free
Jen’s Community Centers
Los Angeles Civic Wide.
(323) 36-6444 INFO@CLLA.ORG.

FAMILY STORYTELLING
Saturday/Sunday • 11:00 am, noon, 1:00 pm
Free
Storytelling in Spanish on alternating Saturdays.
Casa del Rey Center Family Room
1200 Getty Center Drive • Los Angeles
(310) 480-7100

WHITTIER ADULT STORYTELLING GROUP
Tuesdays • 5:00 - 6:00 pm
Los Nietos Community Center,
11340 E. Shamoon Ave., L.A.
(323) 548-9898

ELMIERT PARK GROTH WORKSHOP
3rd Wednesdays • 7:00 pm
Ja-Phi’s Plaza, 4146 Degnan Bl
(310) 874-8989

SAN GABRIEL VALLEY STORYTELLERS
3rd Tuesdays Pasadena • 7:30 pm
Armeniac Library, 1130 S. Mountain Ave.
(626)792-8512

LONG BEACH STORYTELLERS
1st Wednesdays • 7:30 pm
El Dorado Library, 2900 Snubcker Road
(562) 634-5780

ORANGE COUNTY

COSTA MESA SOUTH COAST STORYTELLERS GUILD
3rd Thursdays • 7:00 pm
1521 Baker St. • (714) 496-1960

SOUTH COAST STORYTELLERS
Saturdays & Sundays Santa Ana • 2:00-3:00 pm
Bowers Museum, 2802 North Main Street
(714) 440-1520 •
http://www.bowers.org/link/1.htm

ORANGE COUNTY

COSTA MESA STORYTELLING
Wednesdays • 7:00 to 8:00 pm
Borders at the Block, City Drive
(949) 496-1960

MISSION VIEJO STORYTELLING
Wednesdays • 7:00 to 8:00 pm
Borders, 2522 El Paseo • (949) 496-1960

COSTA MESA STORYTELLING
BY LAURA BRAMEY
Wednesday • 10:00 pm
South Coast Plaza • (949) 496-1960

COSTA MESA STORYTELLING
BY LAUREN ANDREWS
Fridays • 10:00 pm
South Coast Plaza • (949) 496-1960

CALIFORNIA DANCE CO-OPERATIVE PRESENTS

CONTRADANCE PERFORMANCE

Workshop / Contradance with live Celtic and Appalachian music

OPEN HOUSE

FREE ADMISSION

OCTOBER 6, 2001 • 2:00PM - 5:00PM

The South Pasadena Woman’s Club, 1424 South Fremont
As part of the 2001 Los Angeles Arts Open House,
California Dance Co-operative is presenting a special
Contradance performance and workshop.
This event is one of over 150 Los Angeles Open House Activities
Taking place in 34 communities in the greater Los Angeles area.
October 6th. Complete schedules are available in public
Libraries throughout Los Angeles, on the Arts Commission
WWW.LACOUNTYARTS.ORG

Arts Open House hotline 213-972-3099
For more info call: 818-785-3839 • Email: ledas@pacbell.net

PHOTO BY JUDY NAHMAN-STOUFFER

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WHERE TO START

LA DANCERIE

627-2950

Monday and Friday

Live music and dancing at 8:30 pm

The San Diego Cajun/Zydeco Festival

October 19th, 20th, 21st 2001

Bayside Marina Park in Chula Vista, California

More Information on Regularly Scheduled Dances

For more information on the Garand dances call Murphy at (310) 688-7355 or Connie at (562) 427-8384. The VFW Hall number is (310) 324-6161.

The BTSC hotline is (858) 486-6655

The best on-line source of information on the Cajun and Zydeco dance scene is Zydeco Brad's website: http://members.aol.com/zydecobrad/zydeco.html.

Peter Parish was first hit by the folk dance bug while teaching at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Contradancing and clogging consumed most of his interest until he discovered Cajun and Zydeco music at the August Heritage Arts Festival in Elkins, West Virginia in the late seventies. He and his wife Priscilla go to the local dances and also visit Louisiana and East Texas a couple of times a year to sample the "real thing."
FEATuRED ORGANIZATION: LOS ANGELES DREAMSHAPEs BREATING TALES TO THE SOUTHLAND

BY BILL HOWARD

Badger, who has been described as a living, breathing Japanese animation character, and who is one of L.A.’s most formidable chefs, faces the audience. And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon’s that is dreaming as he tells his variation of Andersen’s “The Steadfast Tin Soldier” – only Badger’s version takes place in a modern-day insane asylum. To the right of the performance area sits per- cussionist Chuck Ross, who, with a surreal array of instruments and an unequally pre-

science, plays off Badger’s verbal riffs. Finished with his tale, Badger relinquishes the audience, still shaken with delighted horror, to Mariluna Martin. Clothed in dazz-

ling purple robes and looking like Sheherazade, she shakes us even further with a tale of rape and murder from the Book of Judges and with a terrifying tale of drag-

on slaying, which we realize only at the end is her retelling of “Jabberwocky”. And Chazz plays off every nuance. This is not your kindergarten teacher’s storytelling, but the Los Angeles DreamShapers. In any given month DreamShapers offers Angelinos from one to four opportunities to experience this most ancient form of performance art. Tonight we are at the California Traditional Music Society (CTMS) Folk Music Center in Encino Park. In a week or so we might listen to Leslie Perry tell “Wiley and the Hairy Man” in Pasadena or we might hear stories and music from the Claremont Forum. (Except for the story swaps at Tujunga, a ten-dollar admission price is charged at the door.)

In addition to coordinating venues, DreamShapers, which recently achieved its official nonprofit status, has hosted the 2001 Southern California Story Swapping Festival and will be the parent organization for the Los Angeles World Storytelling Festival, which is slated for November of 2002. Plans are also in the works for edu-

cational and senior outreach and multicultural, hospice and at-risk programs. And though DreamShapers has a small, dedicated board, like most non-profits, it could certainly use more hands.

Says Seutter: “I hadn’t realized how hard it was going to be and how few people have the time in their lives for something as essential to the human condition. [But] never underestimate the power of passion…of believing in something.”

One major setback for the organization was the loss in May of 2000 of Lora Katheryne Jacobs when she was hit and killed by a drunk driver. Lora Katheryne had been an indefatigable worker whose love of the storytelling art and whose belief in DreamShapers’ purpose made her indispensable. After a year DreamShapers is still reeling from her tragic, and premature death. DreamShapers has become a family and with that metamorphosis comes the joys and griefs that are the core of any good story.

Has DreamShapers made a difference? Has it helped to defray the damage done to oral tradition by the overwhelming influence of popular culture? Seutter is quiet for a moment. “It’s subtle. We’ve gotten stories out to thousands of people, and though you can’t put a stamp on people’s foreheads, you know they’ve been touched… People get to breathe in a little imagination and wisdom and breathe out a little of ‘this is us, here and now.’”

The ancients saw the storyteller as a weaver of magic, and as something indispensable to human existence. It is DreamShapers’ mission to keep that magic alive and to make it available to as many people as possible. For a storyteller, says Seutter, the magic is “being in the moment with the audience. As you walk away, you realize the connectivity, over thousands of years, between then and now.”

For information regarding DreamShapers performances, call (626) 286-0690 or email billhoward@earthlink.net

Bill Howard is a storyteller, singer, writer, artist and teacher. He lives in San Gabriel.

ENGLISH COUNTRY DANCING

BY LINDA REPASKY

This article was first modified by Alan Winston, and then by FolkWorks to fit the Los Angeles community. Taken from text by Linda Repasky, who dances in Amherst, Massachusetts

You say you’ve never heard of English country dancing? You’re in good company, since many people are unfamiliar with it. But if you’ve watched Pride and Prejudice on TV or seen Sense and Sensibility or Emma at the movies, you have indeed seen it. But fear not – English country dancing is not the obscure relic you might think it to be! This traditional form of dance has been around for several hundred years, and it’s still thriving today. There are dances all over the United States.

People love English country dancing for a variety of reasons. For many, it’s the music – hauntingly beautiful tunes that make the heart swell. Some dance tunes are taken from old ballads and political satire; others come from classical music and opera. This gives the music a very diverse sound: sometimes sweet and melodic, sometimes melancholy, and sometimes absolutely driven with a pulsating beat. Others love it for the grace and elegance with which you glide as you dance. At times, you simply get swept away as you become one with the music. Many people love the beautiful patterns that you create as you dance and weave. Through it all, there’s an indefinable quality to English country dance that makes it energizing, mesmerizing, and just plain fun.

English country dancing is not hard to learn. If you can walk and know the dif-

ference between left and right, you already have much of the basic knowledge you’ll need. As we do it in the United States, most of the movements are based simply on a walking or skipping step. Dancers move in a number of specific figures, some-

times holding hands, sometimes by themselves. Each dance is prompted by a caller, so that each figure and movement is called in time to the music; you don’t need to rely on your memory alone to know what to do.

Beginners are welcome and encouraged at all the regular local dances. Partners are not necessary; you can come by yourself and be assured of dancing throughout the evening, since our tradition is to change partners for each dance. Local dances are social and friendly, and the atmosphere is informal. No special clothing is need-

ed, other than clean, soft-soled shoes or sneakers. Interested in coming to try a bit of dancing, or simply to watch before you take the plunge?

The South Bay English Country Dance, an affiliate of the California Dance Cooperative, organizes twice-a-month events in Torrance (see the Ongoing Dance listings for details).

The first Los Angeles Playford Ball is scheduled for September 29, 2001. For informa-

tion, contact James Houston (310) 474-8105.

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VALLEY GIRL HOOKED ON IRISH MUSIC & DANCE

By Judith Messinger

It didn’t occur to Kira to take up the fiddle until October 1999 about the time she decided to attend the Frankie Kennedy Winter Music School in Donegal. Howard Chu lent her a fiddle and took her on as a student. Similar to CTMS Summer Solstice Festival, but on a much smaller scale, the Kennedy School takes place between Christmas and New Year’s each year. It’s sponsored by Altan, the hottest band out of Ireland, and is a family run operation honoring the renowned fiddler for whom the school is named.

At the Kennedy School beginning, intermediate and advanced classes are taught by famous musicians and it’s eat, drink and sleep music. There are classes in the morning, concerts in the afternoon and evening and then seisiuns at various pubs until the wee hours of the morning. Kira pointed out people are so welcoming “it’s almost unnerving.” Musicians will query newcomers, “What instrument do you play, invite you to sit down and join in,” frequently asking, “Do you have a tune for us?” Still others hear a song is to ask the name of a tune at a jam session, go home and download it off the Internet. Still others hear a tune and it sticks in their head.

Kira indicated she combines learning styles. “A friend often breaks down the music playing a section at a time. Then I play it back.” She notices fingering and has a relative pitch so she can hear the intervals. Kira adds, “If you can sing it you can play it back.”

Currently Kira is in Highland Sun, a band that plays various gigs: weddings, parties, restaurants and cafes. She admires Tommy Peoples who she considers “the ultimate Donegal fiddler,” the Chieftains, and locally loves the way Melanie Nollie plays. Kira’s advice to people who want to learn Celtic music is, “If you play an instrument, go to sessions and really open your ears. Get to know people who are there and talk to them.”

One can see that Kira, who has always been interested in Irish dance and music, has found her calling in the fiddle. With her combination of talent and passion she, and the other young musicians and dancers, will carry the tradition into the future.

Judith Messinger is a psychotherapist in West L.A. who considers a day lost is one in which she hasn’t danced.

MARTIN MORRISEY

Martin Morrisey is the director of the Los Angeles-based Morrisey School of Irish Dance. Martin competed successfully in both stepdancing and Scottish Highland dance, becoming Western U.S. Men’s Irish Dance Champion three years running. He has performed at various venues around the country and shared the stage with The Chieftains during their tour 2000. Martin teaches regularly at traditional music and dance festivals around the country, and is a sought-after accompanist (accordion & piano) for stepdance feisanna (championships). Martin is a founding member of the Celtic alternative group, Green Man, who are currently preparing release of a second CD, following their successful 1998 self-titled debut.
FOLK DANCING: A PLEASURE & A TREASURE

BY BEVERLY BARR

Folk dances are ethnic dances from countries around the world, and they are danced in many different venues with different emphasis. There are recreational groups, performing groups, and ethnic groups that dance their own country’s dances. Dances are from Israel, Scandinavia, Armenia, Greece, Turkey, the Balkans, the Mideast, South America, the South Pacific, Africa, Scotland, England, the U.S.A. and many more. Some dances are ancient, even from countries that no longer exist, and some are more recent creations. Some dance groups also include a few contradances and line dances in their international folk dance repertoire.

Folk dancing is primarily fun, but it is also a beautiful learning experience. Through folk dance, we learn about the different cultures of the world and hear the wonderful and exciting music of different countries. If you sit out during a dance, you still enjoy the music that surrounds you.

Recreational international folk dancing is what I am most involved in and we do dances from all countries. Folk dancing is a hobby that many people of all ages enjoy. Recreational groups can be found all over the world. There are many very large Folk Dance Festivals and weekend and full week folk dance Retreats that are available for all to attend and enjoy.

CONTRA continued from page 1

Let’s take a look at the three essential ingredients.

The caller is the glue that holds the three elements together. As the one who prompts the dance, the caller is the most visible person in the hall. He (or she) is also the person with the most balls in the air. For most callers, the job of preparing for a contradance starts hours, if not days, in advance. Dances must be chosen and programmed into an order that takes into account a beginner’s learning curve and at the same time is rewarding for the experienced dancer. Once at the dance hall, the caller must properly instruct each piece of choreography and work with the musicians to select music that is appropriate for each individual dance. But above all, by providing a fun attitude, the caller initiates the character of the dance and sets the tone for both the dancers and the musicians.

From there, the musicians take over. Bands either rehearse in advance or are certain that most members have a similar repertoire of tunes. Once the dance begins, the musicians communicate with the caller to determine what tunes they will play. These tunes are not just accompaniment for the dancers’ feet, but serve as a guide to how the entire body moves. Tunes may evoke incredible bursts of enthusiasm. The tempo may vary from dance to dance, and the musicians will often shape the rise and fall of energy throughout an evening. Whether it’s a smooth, flowing melody with an arpeggiated back-up, a feverish lead with a salsa beat, or anything in between, the music sends signals to the dancers to alter their movements into gliding, walking or even strutting.

And by their movements (along with enthusiastic whoops and hollers!), the dancers give immediate feedback, which serves to energize both the caller and the musicians. Specific movements may turn from smooth to bouncy depending on the dancers’ interpretations of the music. Dancers also interact with the musicians in how they fill up musical phrases with an extra turn or a glance at their partner. Some interactions with the caller are obvious—the caller teaches and the dancers respond. But the dancers also communicate with the caller in their attentiveness and excitement with each dance.

There are many volunteers who contribute to the overall effect of a magical evening: the people who produce the event, those who cook, bake, or shop for the refreshments, and those who choose to volunteer to collect admission at the door, among others. These contributions help shape a dance community and should not be overlooked. But once on the dance floor, the rest of the world seems to fall away, leaving the caller, the musicians and the dancers. The synergy between these three elements and the excitement that it builds creates the magic that dancers have enjoyed for many generations.

Jeffrey Spero is a contradance caller, musician and dancer. He co-edited “(southern) California Twirls”, a book of contradances and community histories of Southern California, and is currently working on a second book of contradances composed throughout the state.

Folk dancing is a wonderful, non-threatening environment in which to meet people. No partners are needed and singles and couples all mingle together. Life-long friendships are often made, and a common bond is formed between people that you would otherwise probably never get to know or befriend. Folk dancers make up an extended family.

Regardless of your skill level, you are equally accepted by the group. Most folk dance groups are warm, friendly, and helpful to those learning the dances.

There are wonderful side benefits of folk dancing. It is good, vigorous exercise that is easy to do several times a week. While folk dancing, you free yourself of the stresses and problems in your life. Your mind is clear and open to the wonderful music and to learning new dances.

There are many places to folk dance throughout Southern California, and there is a choice every night of the week (see ongoing dance listings). Many of the dance groups belong to the Folk Dance Federation of California South. For information you may call the Folk Dance Federation at (310) 478-6600.

Beverly Barr is an active folk dance teacher and leader of several groups. To reach her call (310) 202-6166.
S P E C I A L  E V E N T S

FRI AUG 30 – MON SEPT
Northern Pacific Music Week:
www.npmusicweek.com
(310) 398-2583 • GMANPROD@aol.com
8:00pm  Lisa Haley & the Zydekats
7711 Followill Blvd, Van Nuys (213) 281-3690
9:00pm  The Waifs
5510 Cahuenga Blvd., North Hollywood • (818) 985-5916
SAT AUG 31
8:00pm  Lisa Haley & the Zydekats
$32
9:00pm  Dave Edmunds & 16
10:00pm  John & Jill</p>