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Atlantic Voices: The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa



Winter Concert

Maritime Memories: Songs and Stories from the Helen Creighton Collection

Scott Richardson, Director Theresa Cillis-O'Meara, Accompanist

> With Special Guests: Clary Croft Fumblin' Fingers Band

Master of Ceremonies: Brien Marshall

Sunday, January 24, 2010 at 3 p.m. Centretown United Church 507 Bank Street Ottawa, Ontario

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Atlantic Voices: The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa

Atlantic Voices: The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa was founded in the spring of 2002. Atlantic Voices is an amateur choir in its eighth season with a repertoire consisting mainly of Newfoundland, Maritime, and Celtic songs and music. Its members are primarily made up of expatriate Newfoundlanders and Maritimers, but singers and musicians from any background are more than welcome to join.

Rehearsals are held on Tuesday evenings at Pleasant Park Baptist Church from 7-9:30 p.m. If you would like to join the choir, please contact Catherine Semple at president@atlanticvoices.ca. Visit our website at www.atlanticvoices.ca for more information about the choir.

Scott Richardson, Musical Director

Scott Richardson is active as a freelance accompanist and choir director in the Ottawa area. He is the pianist for the Ottawa Choral Society, and has also accompanied the Canadian Centennial Choir and the Ottawa Children's Choir. Scott maintains a busy schedule of private teaching. As an organist and choir director, he has held various positions in the Atlantic Provinces and in Ottawa, and is currently Music Director at Orleans United Church.

Scott was born in New Brunswick and raised in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia. He studied piano at Mount Allison University with Janet Hammock and Edmund Dawe. At Mount A, he met his future wife Kelly, a flautist from Gander, Newfoundland. While at university, Scott worked as an actor and musician in all three Maritime Provinces. His graduate studies took him in a different direction, and he later completed a Ph.D. in English literature at the University of Ottawa.

With roots in southern New Brunswick, Cape Breton, and Pictou County, Nova Scotia, Scott feels a deep attachment to the East Coast. For many years, he was active on the Ottawa pub scene performing East Coast music in various groups, and he is glad to be once more presenting the music of the region to Ottawa audiences.

Theresa Cillis-O'Meara, Accompanist

Theresa Cillis-O'Meara holds Bachelor of Music and Education degrees from the University of Ottawa. She has enjoyed the past twenty-eight years serving Ottawa's musical community as a Musical Director, Pianist, Organist, and Piano Accompanist. Theresa presently teaches Music at Sacred Heart Catholic High School. Selected credits include serving as the Musical Director for GOYA Theatre Productions (Vaudeville, Menopositive, War Brides, Dads in Bondage, Anne and Gilbert, Gabriel), Act Out Theatre (Cabaret), and The Ottawa School of Speech and Drama (Oliver!, West Side Story, Guys and Dolls, Pajama Game, Hello Dolly, and Seussical the Musical). Theresa is currently the Piano Accompanist for the Ottawa Bach Choir and Atlantic Voices Choir, the Organist at Emmanuel United Church, and the Musical Director for the OSSD Spring 2010 productions of My Fair Lady and Pirates of Penzance.

Special Guests

Clary Croft

Clary Croft is a Halifax-based folklore researcher, author and recording artist. He is best known for his continuing work with the collection of his mentor, the internationally renowned folklorist, Dr. Helen Creighton. He has written five books including *Celebrate! The History and Folklore of Holidays in Nova Scotia* which is now part of the Nova Scotia school curriculum and *Helen Creighton:* Canada's First Lady of Folklore, a work that has been called "an important book which should sit on ... everyone's shelf who is interested in Canada." [Appleseed Quarterly] In addition to his work in the traditional music of the Maritimes, Clary is a successful songwriter and several of his songs have been arranged and performed for choirs across Canada. His recordings and concert appearances, which feature original compositions and traditional music from the Creighton Collection, has caused Clary to be called, "the acknowledged master of one of the richest repertoires in Canada." [Halifax Mail Star]

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The Fumblin' Fingers

The Fumblin' Fingers Band has given over 50 public performances since it was formed in 2005, at seniors residences, lobster suppers, birthdays and various fundraisers. Their first CD is available for purchase downstairs in the Hall. To contact them, check their website at www.fumblinfingers.ca

Members are Celeste Bradbury-Marshall (MC, singer, ugly stick, guitar), Hannie Fitzgerald (leader, accordion), Dave Huddlestone (guitar, spoons), Sue McCarthy (bass), Wayne Mercer (guitar, mandolin), Tom Murray (fiddle), Lynn Petros (fiddle), Marcia Phillips (recorders, flute, tin whistle, bodhran)

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Want to hear more? Atlantic Voices: The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa has recorded several CDs that include repertoire from previous concerts. CDs may be purchased in the Downstairs Hall during the intermission and at the reception following the concert.

Website

Please visit our website regularly for the latest information about Atlantic Voices performances:

www.atlanticvoices.ca

Music Programme

Pre-Show Entertainment provided by The Fumblin' Fingers

Part I

•	The Ode to Newfoundland	Sir Cavendish Boyle Hannie Fitzgerald and Norman E. Brown, Arr.
•	False Knight Upon the Road	Traditional Eunice A Sircom, Arr
•	I'll Give My Love an Apple	Traditional Eunice A Sircom, Arr
•	The Pirate's Serenade	Traditional Jean Coulthard, Arr
•	Acadian Lullaby	Traditional Eunice A Sircom, Arr

Special Guests: Clary Croft Pat Dornan

♦ When I was in My Prime Soloists Phyllis Knox and Michelle Green

♦ In Canso Strait

Sing-a-Long: Sauerkraut Song

♦ Grandma's Advice

Traditional Ruth Watson Henderson, Arr

Traditional Keith Bissell, Arr

Traditional

Traditional Robert Flemming, Arr

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Part II

♦ Citadel Hill Traditional Eunice A Sircom, Arr

→ Johnny's Gone A-Sailing
Traditional Dave Eagles, Arr

♦ The Swan

Traditional
Dave Eagles, Arr

♦ The Mermaid Traditional
Dave Eagles, Arr

Special Guest: Clary Croft

Farly, Early in the Spring

Traditional
Eunice A Sircom, Arr

♦ The Hills and Glens

Traditional
Pierre Perron, Arr

♦ Sing-a-Long: Farewell to Nova Scotia Traditional

♦ Still the Song Lives On Words and Music by Clary Croft
Gary Ewer, Arr

Please Join Us in the Downstairs Hall after the Concert for the Reception & Conclusion of the Silent Auction

Atlantic Voices: The Newfoundland and Labrador Choir of Ottawa

Sopranos	Altos	Tenors
Bonnetta Allen	Marg Allison	John Cunningham
Cynthia Barnes	Denise Arsenault	Gayle Dumsday
Marian Barton	Ilona Bain	Dave Huddlestone
Janice Brown	Mary Barker	Dan King
Jennifer Cunningham	Peggy Berkowitz	Michael Nugent
Melody Dallaire	Jane Bothwell	Lucas Stephenson
Heather Dyke	Celeste Bradbury-Marshall	
Ann Erdman	Susan Conrad	
Joan Fisher	Hannie Fitzgerald	Basses
Sarah Gauld	Betty Ann German	
Sandra Gould	Krista Grant	Winston Babin
Michelle Green	Alison Harding-Hlady	David Barnes
Phyllis Knox	Grace Helle	Mike Bleakney
Nicole Lefebvre	Jackie Hirvonen	Bruce Burgess
Cecelia Lounder	Sue Huddlestone	Gord Hippern
Nancy MacDonald	Nancy-Louise Hustins	Don MacDonald
Bridget McNeill	Tracy Leblanc	Brien Marshall
Elaine Moores	Helen Lücker	George Marson
Margaret-Anne Park	Kyla Maddox	Wayne Mercer
Lynn Petros	Judith Madill	Doug Sinclair
Joy Phillips-Johansen	Dana Merrigan	
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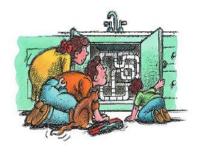
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The Ode to Newfoundland

When sun-rays crown thy pine-clad hills, And summer spreads her hand, When silvern voices tune thy rills, We love thee, smiling land. We love thee, we love thee, We love thee, smiling land.

When spreads thy cloak of shimm'ring white, At Winter's stern command, Thro' shortened day and starlit night, We love thee, frozen land, We love thee, we love thee, We love thee, frozen land,

When blinding storm gusts fret thy shore, And wild waves lash thy strand, Thro' sprindrift swirl and tempest roar, We love thee, wind-swept land, We love thee, we love thee, We love thee, wind-swept land.

As loved our fathers, so we love Where once they stood we stand; Their prayer we raise to Heaven above, God guard thee, Newfoundland. God guard thee, God guard thee God guard thee Newfoundland.

Sauerkraut Song

Now if you'll only listen to what ye spake about, I'm going for to tell ye how to make the sauerkraut, The kraut's not made of leather as eff'rey one supposes, But of that little plant what they call the cabbage roses.

Chorus

Sauerkraut is bully, I told you it is fine, Me thinks me ought to know 'em for me eats 'em all the time.

The cabbages are growing so nice as it could be, We take 'em and we cut 'em up the bigger as a pea, Me put 'em in a barrel and me stamp 'em with me feet, We stamp and we stamp for to make 'em nice and sweet.

Chorus

Me put in plenty of salt so nice, don't put in no snuff, (sniff, sniff) Nor any cayenne pepper nor any of that stuff, Me put 'em in the cellar 'til it begins to smell, So help me twice me thinks it's nice, The Dutchmen like it well.

Chorus

When the sauerkraut begins to smell and it can smell no smeller, PEEEE-YOOO!!!!!!

We take it from the barrel that's way down in the cellar, We put him in the kettle and it begins to boil, So help me we can smell her round for fifty thousand miles.

Chorus









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The Nova Scotia Song (Farewell to Nova Scotia)

The sun was setting in the west, The birds were singing on ev'ry tree. All nature seemed inclined for rest But still there was no rest for me.

Chorus

Farewell to Nova Scotia, the sea-bound coast, Let your mountains dark and dreary be. For when I am far away on the briny ocean tossed, Will you ever heave a sigh or a wish for me?

I grieve to leave my native land, I grieve to leave my comrades all, And my parents whom I held so dear, And the bonnie, bonnie lass that I do adore.

Chorus

The drums they do beat and the wars do alarm, The captain calls, we must obey. So farewell, farewell to Nova Scotia's charms, For it's early in the morning I am far, far away.

Chorus

I have three brothers and they are at rest, Their arms are folded on their breast. But a poor simple sailor just like me, Must be tossed and driven on the dark blue sea.

Director's Note

It has been surprising for me while putting together this programme to discover how many Canadians, and even Maritimers, are unaware of Dr. Helen Creighton's contribution to Canadian culture. It has been odd to have to explain repeatedly who she was, since for myself, I don't recall a time when I wasn't aware of her presence. As a young person interested in folk music and living in her hometown of Dartmouth, I just took Helen Creighton to be part of the musical landscape, central and inevitable. I likely met her in 1979 when Nova Scotia hosted the International Gathering of the Clans: my grandfather was one of the organizers, and as one of the province's cultural treasures, she was an honoured quest at several events. Being nine, however, the memory is fuzzy. I do remember as a teenager repeatedly listening to the album False Knight on the Road, by our guest artist, Clary Croft, and first falling in love with these gems of songs that she had collected from traditional Maritime singers (yes, I had already developed some rather odd musical tastes for a 1980s teenager). In 1991, just two years after her death, I entered a contest to produce an arrangement of a suite of folk songs from her collection. The winning arrangement was premiered at the second Helen Creighton Folklore Festival. I missed the premiere because I was busy backpacking around Europe and finding myself desperately homesick for the Maritimes for the very first time in my life. Through the 1990s. I used to introduce songs from her collection into my shows at Ottawa pubs full of Maritimers, and could never understand why people didn't recognize these "standards" from their own region (Farewell to Nova Scotia, excepted, of course).

For me, Helen Creighton never needed an introduction. But I am getting better at boiling down her life story to a few lines. A life spent collecting and preserving some of the precious and fleeting treasures of Maritime folk culture, beginning with her first forays into the fishing communities near Halifax in the late 1920s, and lasting right up until 1989, the year of her death, when she published one last collection, her volume of Acadian folksongs. Numerous important folk song and folk culture collections, preserving the music of the Maritimes' various cultures, the Gaelic songs of Cape Breton, and the folkways of the region. Six honorary degrees and an Order of Canada. Her contribution to the study of folklore is invaluable, and she is an important international figure in that discipline. But as Easterners, we all owe her a debt for preserving so much of Maritime tradition through the change and turmoil of the 20th Century, saving for future generations an incredible wealth of stories and song.

Scott Richardson

Program Notes

False Knight Upon the Road

Helen Creighton began her collecting career in search of Nova Scotian variants of the ancient ballads catalogued by British scholar Francis Child. This song is a version of Child ballad #3, in which a child outwits the devil (the "false knight") in a riddle competition. Dr. Creighton writes about this ballad:

"Riddles go back to very early times when a suitor may have won his lady's hand by answering all her questions, or a lass may have won a crown by solving difficult riddles for her king. Here a child's life is in danger and he has to think quickly. Could we have met the challenge as well as he did? We'd have to be pretty smart.

If you have a chance to hear my record, "Folk Music From Nova Scotia" published by Folkways you can hear this sung by a fisherman, Edmund Henneberry of Devil's Island with a fiddle accompaniment by the lightkeeper, Kenneth Faulkner. They said that when the chorus was played the singer would dance to the music."



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A lovely picture of Cheryl Mousseau and her Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retriever, Sasha Bea!



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I'll Give My Love an Apple

Another ancient riddle ballad. This and several other pieces on our programme were arranged for chorus by Eunice Sircom, a protégé of Helen Creighton. Dr. Creighton describes the circumstances of the ballad's collection:

"Dennis Smith lived at Chezzetcook, Nova Scotia, and when I was collecting folk songs in his area I nearly missed him because he was over ninety and I thought he would be too old to sing. Not a bit of it. He knew many songs of excellent quality. The only difficulty was that if he sang more than two or three at a time he tended to confuse his tunes. He lived about thirty miles down the shore from my home so in order to get thirty songs, you can imagine how many trips that took. But each trip was a delight and he was true to his word when he said, "Whenever you come I'll have a song for you." He and his friend Tom Young from Petpeswick used to sing to one another and only at Christmas they sang together, sitting beside a table and holding a handkerchief between them. "

"He had been singing for some weeks when in place of a long narrative song he produces a riddle ballad. He was surprised at my enthusiasm and said, "It's only a little one about as long as my thumb". It has been described as one of the most idyllic in the English language."

The Pirate's Serenade

This ballad began life as a poem by Scottish author William Kennedy published in 1827. The song was changed, and one might say improved in many details, through oral transmission, but it also lost much of its coherence. Helen Creighton's informant, William Gilkie, remembered much of the song, and those fragments can be found in her book *Maritime Folk Songs*.

The Canadian composer Jean Coulthard arranged this ballad in 1979 as number two of *Three Ballades From the Maritimes, c*hoosing to set only the most complete and lyrical fragments. Unfortunately, they don't give us much of the narrative, in which the pirate tries to seduce his love to escape to sea with him by scaling a rope from her window. In some instances, the original words have been changed entirely beyond recognition. To take just one example, Kennedy's poem says at one point: "Now fast to the lattice these silken ropes twine", or in other words, "tie on these ropes and shimmy down, darling. I've brought silk ropes so they won't cut your hands." A sensitive pirate! The Nova Scotian variant transforms this to the enigmatic but beautiful "And when we're under court letters, court silk, and court wine."

The song originally began:
"My boat's by the tower, my barque's in the bay
And both must be gone near the dawning of day."

Acadian Lullaby

This beautiful lullaby, which appears to be unique to Acadia, was collected by Helen Creighton in 1955 from Laura McNeil of West Pubnico on Nova Scotia's south-western shore. We present it in a choral version by Eunice Sircom, who transcribed most of the music in the volume *La Fleur du Rosier: Acadian Folksongs*, and who was described by Dr. Creighton as her "mainstay and support" as she put together that important collection.

Sleep, sleep, little baby, This is mother's beautiful baby, Sleep, sleep, sleep, Sleep, sleep, mother's baby.

Tomorrow, if it is fine, we will go to grandfather's, Sleep, sleep, little baby, Sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, sleep, Sleep, mother's beautiful baby.

"Lullabies are sung by people of all ages from tiny tots to old men in their eighties but they were hard to find in English in Nova Scotia because it was usually the father who sang for his children when the day's work was done and he sang long songs that told stories. Little children don't pay attention to the words but the older ones must have found some of them strong stuff to go to sleep on. One such line that I heard children sing as they had learned it from their father went like this: "He took her by the yellow locks and drug her o'er the ground." They evidently hadn't thought about the words because they sang most cheerfully. This makes us doubly grateful to the Acadians for their comforting lullaby. The singer's voice softens almost to a whisper as sleep comes to the child."

When I was in My Prime

This song of love's regret is known in other versions as The Sprig of Thyme or The Seeds of Love. Dr. Creighton collected this variant from Enos Hartland of South-East Passage. The Canadian composer Ruth Watson Henderson arranged this tune as one of a trio of Maritime folksong settings.

In Canso Strait

In the beginning, Helen Creighton went looking particularly for variants of the ancient British ballads. To her great credit, however, she usually opted to preserve any and all traditional material that she found, rather than to select out what the academic world of the time considered the best specimens of folksong. As a result, she recorded a great number of locally-composed songs, such as this one, sung to her by Otis Hubley of Seabright, N.S. in 1951. Keith Bissell's choral setting starts with the three low voices crooning "Homeward bound" in a very sentimental style, but the upper voice immediately cuts in, shattering the mood with a tale of a drunken sea captain and his crew. Bissell leaves out several verses that tell of a violent stand-off between the captain and his men and the mutiny on board that ultimately saves their lives.



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Helen Creighton learned this song from Japeth Dauphinee of Nova Scotia's south shore. It describes the making of the famous Tancook Island sauerkraut according to the "Dutch" recipe (those "Dutch" were actually the descendants of German settlers). The process involved stomping the cabbage roses with their feet.

Grandma's Advice

Grandma doesn't even follow her own advice in matters of the heart. The maiden telling the story recognizes this, and the young prove to have more sense than the old. Dr. Creighton collected this English song from Miss A.S.M. Ward of Wolfville N.S. in 1953. The arrangement is by the eminent Canadian musician Robert Fleming, who worked as a church musician in both Ottawa and Montreal and composed for the NFB.

Citadel Hill

"When I first took this song down it was called Back Bay Hill. It was said to have been made up by a man who lived at Prospect down the coast from Halifax; Back Bay was a nearby Hill. But singers often change place names so I've also aid it as Little Moose Hill, Garrison Hill and McInnes's Hill. When Dr. Marius Barbeau of the National Museum in Ottawa was compiling a song book for men in the Services in the Second World War he changed it to Citadel Hill. Men who had served in Halifax would know that name well and therefore would find it much more fun to sing."

Quote from Helen Creighton

Johnny's Gone A-Sailing

Helen Creighton collected multiple versions of this song (also called Jack Munro), in which a woman disguises herself as a sailor to follow her love to sea. Her father tries to separate the lovers, but he is no match for a daughter able to outwit an entire shipload of men. The lovers get married in the end, though our version finishes with the daughter confronting the father on her return from sea. The arranger of this and the following two songs, Dave Eagles, is an Ottawa composer. This is the premiere of his three arrangements.

The Swan

A traveller encounters a woman grieving; he tries to comfort her and win her love, but she is already promised to another, Young Reilly, whom she fears is gone for ever. The melody is clearly related to the Gaelic air Bunessan, which has become well-known as Morning Has Broken.

The Mermaid

This ancient British ballad (Child #289) has taken on an American setting in a variant collected from Allen Teal of Bridgewater, N.S. Originally, the ship in the ballad founders because the captain spies a mermaid, which was said to bring misfortune. In this version, the mermaid of the title has disappeared entirely, and the focus is on the ill-fated crew members.

Early Early in the Spring

A song of miscommunication and near-disaster in love, but the story has a happy ending after all. Dr. Creighton writes the following of the circumstances of its collection:

"Most of the old-time folk singers learned their songs by hearing them sung, rather than from books. Usually they would sing them to a stranger willingly but occasionally they had to be coaxed. I had given up trying to get a song from Mr. Dave Hartlan of Eastern Passage although I had many from his brothers, but one day we met in his hayfield and he suddenly burst into song. What a scramble to get both words and music on paper in case one singing was his total effort and he would refuse to repeat, but once his shyness was overcome he was most obliging. His verses were a bit uneven, so Mrs. Sircom has taken Mr. Hartlan's words and combined tem with those of Mr. Ralph Huskins of Cape Sable Island. The melody is Mr. Hartlan's."

The Hills and Glens

Helen Creighton collected this song from Malcolm Angus MacLeod and D.B. MacLeod of Cape Breton. The beautiful tune was composed by "The Bard of Margaree", poet and composer Malcolm Gillis. Dr. Creighton felt that the words had changed so much over time that the version that she collected did "not make too much sense", but allowed that "the main theme is never in question, love of their own countryside." When she was asked for "a folk song suitable to be sung to Hon. Robert Stanfield when he was leaving Halifax to make his home in Ottawa as leader of the Progressive Conservative Party", she recalled the tune and sentiment of The Hills and Glens, and composed her own lyrics for the air, describing her own deep love for the province of Nova Scotia, lyrics that she thought would also "express Mr. Stanfield's feelings towards the province he was leaving. It is the way most of us feel who live here."

The Nova Scotia Song (Farewell to Nova Scotia)

Helen Creighton compiled this song from the versions given to her by multiple traditional singers. She writes that the song was "particularly well known in the Petpeswick and Chezzetcook districts, where they tell me it used to be sung in the schools. The effect of the sea upon the lives of people in remote fishing villages can be deeply felt." Her version has gone on to become a Nova Scotian anthem. In 1808 a Glasgow newspaper printed "The Soldier's Adieu", attributed to Robert Tannahill. It has several lines and phrases in it that suggest it was a source of inspiration for the song.

Still the Song Lives On

This song was composed by our special guest, Clary Croft, as a tribute to the memory of his friend and mentor, Helen Creighton. Her spirit lives on in his life and work. We hope that you too will catch some of that spirit through our songs and stories this afternoon.

For further information on any of these selections, or to request references for any of the quotations from Helen Creighton, please contact director@atlanticvoices.ca

Atlantic Voices: Our Mascot



Photo by Joan Fisher

The Atlantic Voices Mascot is a Newfoundland Dog named 'SS Maritime Atlantiika', a.k.a. "Tiika". Tiika was born July 18th, 2007. As is common of her breed, Tiika loves people, especially children, and is very gentle. Like many of the Atlantic Voices choir members, Tiika's genes go back to the island of Newfoundland. Her ancestors loved the sea and the people of the island. These strong waterdogs were loyal and loving companions who worked very hard on shore and at sea. They pulled in fishing nets, delivered mail, and hauled logs from the forests. They often served as 'living lifelines', rescuing people from the sea. Tiika is proud to be the Mascot of Atlantic Voices and hopes that you will love the songs of the sea as much she does!

Please be sure to greet Tiika, and her owner/handler John Fisher as you enter or leave the concert!