

## Program Notes

The CROSSCURRENTS concert series celebrates a sense of place in music, storytelling, and oral history. First developed in Newfoundland in 1986, the series juxtaposes insiders' and outsiders' images of landscape in an exploration of the human/environment relationship. The songs and stories collected in tonight's program are distillations of firsthand experience of life in the North, following the IAS logo around its circle.

The Atlantic fishery is one of the most prolific sources of folklore for cultural survival. Songs in "**Empty Nets**" are drawn from my research collection of over 200 songs of the inshore fishery since 1975. Two pairs contrast resource users' and animal-centred perceptions of whales ("Greenland Whale Fishery" and "Last Leviathan") and cod and salmon (Empty Nets" and "Song of the Sockeye"), while "Woman of the Sea Man," written about the post-Confederation resettlement in the 1950s, has new poignancy today.

Wilderness is one of the most controversial concepts in the North today. "**Call of the Wild**" contrasts the essential human desires for solitude and for connection in both white and native perspectives ("Call of the Wild/Klondike" and "Raven Steals the Sun"), and illustrates the sometimes rueful consequences of those desires in "The Ballad of Hard-Luck Henry."

"**Topophilia**" is a word coined by geographer Yi-Fu Tuan to describe the love of place that defines cultural nations. This set blends traditional Russian, Finnish and Swedish folksongs with a humorous recitation that captures the Scandinavian-American experience in northern Minnesota. "Suomi laulu" (Song of Finland) was composed by the author of the Finnish national anthem, while the traditional "Läksin minä kesäyönä" was sung by the legendary African-American contralto Marian Anderson. Thanks to the Heiskinens for source material and to Monica Tennberg for language coaching.

"**Wanderers Home**" illustrates the power of oral history for a long view of human activity in the Arctic, and the magic of the imagination to leap great distances. "The Kayaker Who Flew" combines a traditional Inuit tale with a hunting song taught to me by a friend from Rankin Inlet in an Irish bar in Milwaukee (during a travel trade show). "Gudrid the Wanderer" was developed from the Vinland Sagas and Norwegian gammaldans tunes for a presentation on L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland, on a cruise ship in 1991. During the research for VOYAGES, my book on Canada's Heritage Rivers, I experienced every stanza of Stan Rogers' famous "Northwest Passage." In honor of the women as well as men who have sought out True North in their lives and hearts, it is here combined with Lady Franklin's Lament on her husband's ill-fated expedition.

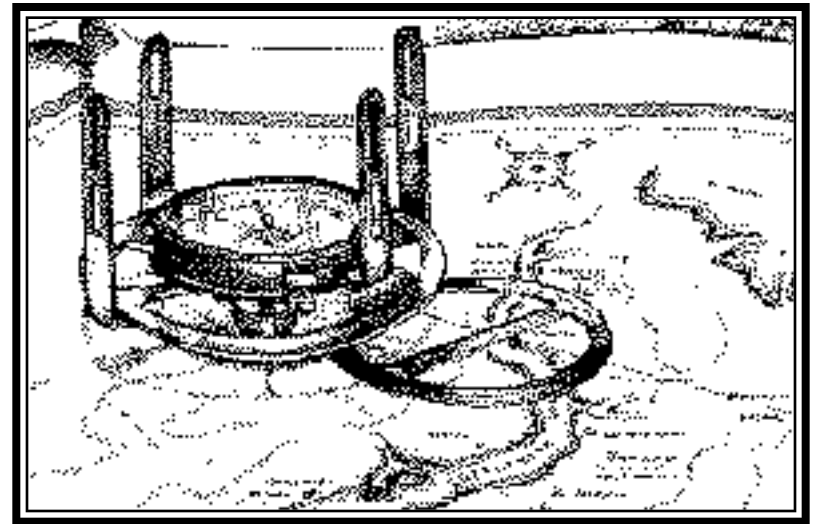
Thanks to all my colleagues at the Institute for Arctic Studies, and at the ICARP conference, for the opportunity to undertake this cultural exploration of the North.

Lynn Noel

# True North

## Sense of Place in Arctic Music and Folklore

by Lynn Noel



VOYAGES artwork by Hap Wilson

### Banquet Program

International Conference on Arctic Research Planning  
Hanover, New Hampshire  
December 9, 1995

# True North

Where is true North? Sight along your home line of longitude: what you see depends on where you stand. The ICARP conference is about discovering common truths, and about appreciating different perspectives, on the Arctic. If “the definition of genius is to hold two conflicting truths in the mind at once,” then the Arctic has a great deal to teach us about the genius of place, toward a deeper understanding of the place where all the lines of sight converge. There, in the mind’s eye, is true North.

Arctic Dreams (Barry Lopez) . . . . . U.S.A.

Songs Are Thoughts (Orpingalik). . . . . Greenland

Science is a human pursuit compounded of inquiry, observation, and imagination. So is art.

## Empty Nets

Greenland Whale Fisheries (trad.) . . . . . England

The Last Leviathan (Andy Barnes) . . . . . New England

Woman of the Sea Man (Pat Byrne) . . . . . Newfoundland

Empty Nets (Jim Payne) . . . . . Newfoundland

Song of the Sockeye (Dean Stephens) . . . . . Oregon(U.S.)

When any resource collapses, communities must face change head on. When culture is founded on unsustainable use of nature, what is to be preserved and who will decide? Traditional and current songs of the fishery are the hauling lines between past and future, hope and despair, individual needs and the community of all life. They teach of coming to terms with change, and that in the end, all the fish swim in the same sea.

## Call of the Wild

Call of the Wild (Robert Service) . . . . . Yukon

Raven Steals the Sun (trad. Haida) . . . . . British Columbia

Klondike/North to Alaska (anon.) . . . . . Yukon/Alaska

The Ballad of Hard-Luck Henry (Robert Service) by David Parry . Yukon

Desire drives explorers to the Arctic. Desire for gold, from oil and gas to the golden ball of the sun, for adventure and personal discovery, and for love, even from the Klondike to Wisconsin, reach toward the Pole in the poetry of longing.

David Parry, from the Canadian Museum of Civilization, had been invited to perform from his extensive repertoire of Robert Service in this concert tonight. Sadly, he died suddenly last June 13 at the age of 53. In his memory, we will hear a recorded recitation from 1993.

## Topophilia

Russian songs TBA by special guest Vera Melenina . . . . . Russia

accompanied by Patricia Wetherall, piano

Suomen laulu (F. Pacius) . . . . . Finland

Läksin minä kesäyönä (trad.) . . . . . Finland

Finn Who Wouldn't Take a Sauna (Margaret Haskins Ourbeson) . . . Minnesota

Vem kan segle (trad.) . . . . . Sweden

Love of place holds northern communities to their land like mussels on a rock. In this harsh land of stark contrast, it is a necessary bond. The mournful “Vem kan segle” is respectfully dedicated to Sasha Pika, Richard Condon, Steve McNabb, Bill Richards, and their Yup'ik colleagues. “Who can sail without the wind? Who can row without oars? Who can part from loving friends without shedding tears?”

## Wanderers Home

The Kayaker Who Flew (trad. Inuit) . . . . . Baffin Island

Gudrid the Wanderer (trad. adap. Lynn Noel) . . . . . Vinland

Lady Franklin's Lament (trad.) . . . . . England

Northwest Passage (trad./Stan Rogers) . . . . . Canada

“The goal of every journey,” says T.S. Eliot, “is to return to the place from which we started, and to know that place for the first time.” A thousand years of journeys, from umiaks of elders to Viking ships to the Franklin Expedition, remind us how to be at home in the Arctic, to come to terms with the land “as if it were another sort of civilization we had to reach agreement with.”