



JUNE 2006

TFTM *news*

The Tucson Friends of Traditional Music

THOMSON'S TUNE OF THE MONTH

By Bruce Thomson
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A LITTLE THEORY

Most music from Europe and the Western Hemisphere (It's called "Western music" in the theory books even though Beethoven and his pals never wrote nothin' about horses) is based on the

12 tones of a piano that constitute an octave. A sequence of these notes ascending from one octave to the next forms scales where the nature of the scale depends on the intervals between notes. The ancient Greeks get the credit for most of the scales which are named after some of their tribes. Traditional old time American fiddle music usually uses four scales, two major scales and

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CD REVIEW: LASS OF ROCH ROYAL

by Jim McConnell

This instrumental CD contains a variety of traditional tunes from the British Isles. All the tunes are very well played and beautifully suited to the characteristics of the hammered dulcimer. The excellent accompaniment contributes a great deal to the tunes and doesn't ever become overbearing.

The music gently draws you in and pleasantly relaxes you. Listening to *Lass of Roch Royal* is a cool and perfect way to spend a hot, summer Sunday afternoon.

Technically, the CD is well produced and engineered by Tim Britton. It contains 16 songs: The

House Carpenter, Bonny Barbara Allan, Lass of Roch Royal, The Wife of Usher's Well, Riddle Song, The Death of Queen Jane, The Great Silkie of Sule Skerry, The False Knight Upon the Road, Proud Lady Margaret, Geordie, The Three Ravens, The Gypsy Laddie, The Elfin Knight, The Twa Sister, Lady Maisry and Gil Brenton. It runs about 40 minutes.

The CD features Cammi Vaughan on the hammered dulcimer and she is accompanied by Dave Carlisle-guitar and fiddle, Mark Hawkins-mandolin, Art Atkinson-recorder and accordion and finally Tim Britton-uilleann pipes, penny whistle, wooden flute and percussion.

You can order the CD or reach Cammi at 520-721-9894. You can hear excerpts at www.saradainc.com (go to Sarada Records).

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Tucson Friends of Traditional Music (TFTM) is dedicated to keeping the traditions of community music and dance alive and growing in Tucson. TFTM sponsors and promotes concerts, dances, workshops, and informal music sessions. Through these activities and a newsletter publication, TFTM builds awareness, educates, and fosters diversity in music and dance in the Tucson community.

Tucson Friends of Traditional Music is incorporated in the state of Arizona as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

For more info, visit www.tftm.org, or call us at 520-408-6181.



IN THE SPOTLIGHT: PHYLLIS DAVIES

When Phyllis Davies arrives at the TFTM dance, she lights up the room. Phyll, as her friends like to call her, is an active TFTM volunteer, an excellent dancer and a delightful person. She lives in the U of A area which is very convenient when it time to do some contra dancing. She has been a TFTM member off and on since the 1980s.

She started dancing in the Orwellian year, 1984. "My roommate and I both ended up moving to Tucson,

from Denver, and she was an avid folk dancer," Phyll explained. "She dragged me and my two left feet out to both contra and international folk dances in Tucson. It seems like the contra 'took,' but I still get all tangled up when I attempt folk dancing."

Phyll has a fascinating career. "At work, I am a draper for Arizona Theatre Company."

"What's a draper, you ask? Basically, I'm a patternmaker and soft-goods engineer. I take the designer's rendering and the actor's measurements and create a pattern specifically for that individual. Then, I make the pattern become a garment, with the aid of a first hand and maybe a stitcher(s), depending on the scale of the show.

"It's a fairly mobile profession, and I've managed to go all over the country, from coast to coast and border to border. Personally I like Tucson a whole lot more than Fargo.

"I don't actually do much stitching during this process as a draper I save that skill for personal projects and the summers, when I fill in during the ATC off-season, working at a company which makes clothes for horse show competitors (the riders, not the horses).

"I also occasionally work for the local stagehands union, as a 'dresser' for touring shows. (Yep, that's the person who makes sure the performers are wearing the correct things at the correct times. The job also involves assisting in the prep and costume changing of the performers, as



Continued on page 4



are wearing the correct things at the correct times. The job also involves assisting in the prep and costume changing of the performers, as necessary).

“And then, there’s the rare film or TV gig that requires doing something with the wardrobe department.”

When she’s not working or contra dancing, Phyll enjoys helping out a friend who is a large-animal veterinarian. “I’ve been learning a lot about animal care,” Phyll stated, “especially when the veterinarian gets called out to an emergency and I get to assist as a go-fer. I spend time critter-sitting for her whenever she has to leave town. My family thinks it’s highly amusing that I actually pet pot-belly pigs, a turkey, horses, dogs, cats and miscellaneous other creatures.

“The main thing that makes it difficult for me to get to or stay through an entire dance is hot air ballooning. That’s one of those activities that starts at dawn on the weekends. To get out to Avra Valley at least half an hour before dawn, it’s early when the alarm clock goes off. It’s lots of fun, though, and it gets the day off and running to an awe inspiring start. Of course, a nap is an excellent idea if it’s a dance night.

“When I sit still, I enjoy playing with my two kittygirls, making jewelry, reading and putting up my tired feet.”

Like many other dancers, Phyll loves the way the contra dance scene has such a positive sense of community,

both in Tucson and across the country.

“As I roamed the country for work,” Phyll said, “I discovered the joy of walking into a dance hall just about anywhere and feeling immediately at home and comfortable with kindred souls.”

“Of course, the opportunity to do a little (well...a lot) of harmless flirting isn’t to be ignored, either.”

What does Phyll like least in contra dancing? “Oooh,” she said, “that’s easy.” “I dislike the sticklers, who are so concerned about making a mistake that they make everyone miserable. Thankfully they are in the minority in the dance community. Hey, we all make mistakes.”

(Raises hand, sheepishly) “Some of us more often than others.”

“My other least-favorite thing is having to tear myself away before the dance is over, either because I’m too tired already or because I can hear the impending call of the pre-dawn alarm clock.”

Continued from page 1, *MUSIC THEORY*
two minor scales.

The major scales are the Ionian and the Mixolydian. The Ionian scale is made up of the white keys on a piano and has half steps between notes 3 and 4, and between 7 and 8. “Fisher’s Hornpipe” is an example of a tune that has runs up and down the Ionian scale. At the risk of oversimplifying, Ionian tunes are usually pleasant, bright, and cheerful. The Mixolydian scale is the

Continued from page 4, MUSIC THEORY

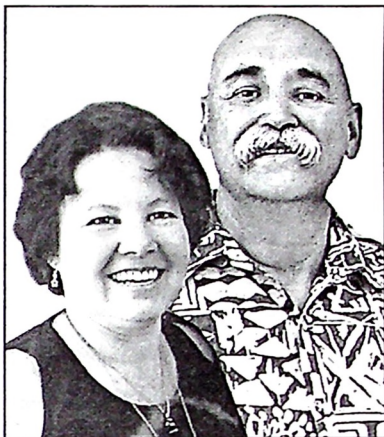
same as the Ionian scale but has a half step between notes 6 and 7 instead of between 7 and 8. Mixolydian tunes are thus a little darker and have a bit more tension. Backup instruments still use major chords and the banjoists don't use modal tunings. Last month's tune, the Puff Adder Step Dance is a classic Dmix tune. The key signature for Mixolydian tunes uses one less sharp or one more flat than its Ionian counterpart. Thus, Amix sheet music has only two sharps which normally signifies the key of D.

The first part of June Apple (see pages 6 and 7) is a classic Amix tune. I play the B part with a G# making it an A major scale, but played at dance tempo most folks won't notice the difference.

*Continued from page 9, VAUGHAN
DULCIMER*

second when a mandolin player or fiddler only has to move a finger to the next fret or the next string. Of course, the more I play a tune the easier it is to play at a serious speed.

Also, I've found the slower I practice a tune the faster I can play it later. And when I want a break from playing melody, the hammered dulcimer makes a good percussive back-up instrument."



MORE KNOT-TYING NEWS

In a move that surprised and delighted a whole dance camp, caller and former Tucsonan, Ken Cooper and Michele vonBoeck married during the break of the Socorro, New Mexico FOLKMADS Thrift Shop Ball on Sunday, May 28, 2006. Officiating over the impromptu nuptials was everyone's favorite, dancing judge, Merri Rudd.

Ken and Michele were married in a more official manner on Tuesday, May 30, in Rudd's office.

Ken commented that the dance camp wedding was a last-minute, spontaneous decision and that he was just as surprised as the rest of us were.

abc Notation

X:51

T:June Apple

M:C

L:1/8

N:Transcribed by Bruce Thomson

K:Amix

"Amix"xz6eg|:"A"ageg ageg|aged cdef|"G"gfef gfef|g3g g2eg|

"A"ageg ageg|aged cBA2|"G"GFGA

BAG2|[1"A"A3AA2eg:|[2"A"A3AA2ed||

|:"A"CA BV G A2AB|CBcd efec|"G"GFGA BABc|"D"d3ddd2ed|

"A"CA BV G A2AB|CBcd efec|"G"GFGA

BAG2|[1"A"A3AA2ed:|[2"A"A3AA4||

About the cover photo:

Becky Nankivell calls a dance in downtown Tucson during the Folk Festival. Doug Acuff and Susie Tomlinson dance down the line as Deborah and Jeff Thorn, Dale and Lorien Tersey, Bill Ganoe, Mike McGarry June Pitts and Paula Olch watch.



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**♪ Irish Jam Session
at O'Malley's:**
Traditional Irish jam
session on the second
and fourth Thursdays
at 7 pm at O'Malley's,
247 N. 4th Avenue.
Info: 520-623-8600.

**♪ Scottish Country
Dancing:** Thursdays,
7:30 pm, First United
Methodist Church, 915
E. 4th St.
Info: 520-299-5566.

**♪ Celtic & Old-
Time Jam:** Open Jam
session on the first and
third Tuesdays, 8-10
pm, Rincon Market,
6th St. at Tucson Blvd.
Set up in the Deli area.
Tunes from the TFTM
Tune Book and some
other sources.

**♪ Shape Note
Singing:** First and third
Saturdays, 3-5 pm,
Sonora Cohousing
Common Room, 501 E.
Roger Rd. Info: 682-
6201.

June Apple

The image shows a musical score for the song "June Apple". It consists of four staves of music written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written on the top line of each staff, and the lyrics are written below the notes. The lyrics are: "A mix of old time tunes, / A mix of old time tunes, / A mix of old time tunes, / A mix of old time tunes." The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. There are also some handwritten-style annotations above the staves, including "G", "A", "D", and "G".

CAMMIE VAUGHAN AND THE HAMMERED DULCIMER

Many of you know Cammie from the jams at Rincon Market. She plays her hammered dulcimer so beautifully and with such joy, that you have to wonder about the circumstances that led her to this point. Here's what she has to say:

"Traditional music has always been one of my greatest loves. In the folk era, I got a guitar and started singing. Then I heard Pete Seegar and couldn't resist buying a banjo that caught my eye at the local folk music shop. While other people were listening to Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix, I was listening to Wade Ward and Tommy Jarrell and trying to learn everything they played on the banjo.

"When a friend gave me a mountain dulcimer, I fell in love with it. I lived to get home from work to play it. I couldn't think or talk about anything else. Happily, my friends were tolerant of me during this phase. I was living in California at the time.

"A couple of years later I moved

back to my hometown of Nashville and met Robyn, also a mountain dulcimer enthusiast. We became music partners, named our duo *Tennessee Dulcimer Works* and played around Nashville with whatever guitarist or bass player we could find at the time—not difficult in Nashville. And, in 1984, we cut an album also named *Tennessee Dulcimer Works*. The good thing about this album is that there were some fabulous people on it. I practically give these albums away, since they are tapes—relics of an outdated technology.

"The first time I saw a hammered dulcimer, I was on a mountain near Chattanooga at a craft fair called *Plum Nelly* (plum out of Tennessee and nelly out of Georgia). I was fascinated by the magical sounds it created. I didn't buy one then because I was still trying to learn the banjo, but after a while my resolve to resist this amazing instrument gave way. I bought a hammered dulcimer, John McCutcheon's audio tapes on how to play it, and started on a new journey. This was Christmas of 1985.

"Six months later I moved to Iowa to take a job and where I met other musicians. We put together a band we



called *First of May* and played mostly old-timey music. As the years rolled by we included Irish tunes, with the help of Tim, our town's uilleann piper.

"One thing I especially love about traditional music is the connection it gives us to the past. Many of the tunes we play for dances now, were played for dancers centuries ago. I'm fascinated by the idea that so many great tunes were passed down to us by musicians where each generation taught the next. So much of this marvelous music has only been recently transcribed. I feel privileged to be a link in this enduring chain of traditional music."

"Another abiding interest I have, and one that I studied in graduate school, is the old Scottish and English ballad tradition. The words to the songs have been collected primarily by Francis Child, and tunes collected by Bertrand Bronson. The more I read these ballads and studied the tunes, the more I felt I had to free at least some of these exquisite melodies from their dark, dusty existence in out-of-print books.

"So, I started a project which resulted in a CD I called "Lass of Roch Royal" after one of the ballads.

On this album I wanted to at least touch on the way the melodies must have sounded when they were still alive in the performances of the singers. The songs varied with every rendering, although the story remained the same story and the tune remained

the same tune.

"My friend, Tim, the piper, produced the album, and we recorded it in his living room with as many of our musician friends as we could include. If a truck rumbled by in the middle of a take, we redid it. It was great fun and, surprisingly, we were happy with the results.

"My husband and I moved to Tucson four years ago to be near his parents, and I am so grateful to have found an active and enthusiastic traditional music community here. I love playing at the sessions and dances. In fact, I don't know what I would do without them.

"A few notes about the hammered dulcimer: My feeling is that the dulcimer is learner-friendly, especially if you've played another instrument—even in the distant past. The diatonic scale means there are less potential mistakes. Larger dulcimers will have the accidentals (potential mistakes) over on the left side where you really can't hit them by accident. However, as with every instrument, the dulcimer has its challenges.

"One big challenge with the dulcimer is to play reels at the required lightning speed—a difficulty mostly due to the sheer distance between the strings. Sometimes I have to move a hammer 6 or 8 inches in a fraction of a

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UPCOMING DANCES

Location	Date	Time	Band	Caller	Cost
First United Methodist Church 915 E 4th St	Sat. Jun 3	Annual Meeting Lesson 7:30 pm Dance 8-11pm	OPEN BAND	Don Copler	\$7 Public \$6 TFTM \$5 Student
YMCA Downtown 60 W Alameda	Sat. Jun 17	Lesson 7:30 pm Dance 8-11pm	PRIVY TIPPERS	Claire Zucker	\$7 Public \$6 TFTM \$5 Student
First United Methodist Church 915 E 4th St	Sat. Jun 24	Lesson 7:30 pm Dance 8-11pm	HANDS FOUR	Peg Hesley	\$7 Public \$6 TFTM \$5 Student
First United Methodist Church 915 E 4th St	Sat. July 1	Lesson 7:30 pm Dance 8-11pm	TBA	TBA	\$7 Public \$6 TFTM \$5 Student
First United Methodist Church 915 E 4th St	Sat. July 15	Lesson 7:30 pm Dance 8-11pm	TBA	TBA	\$7 Public \$6 TFTM \$5 Student

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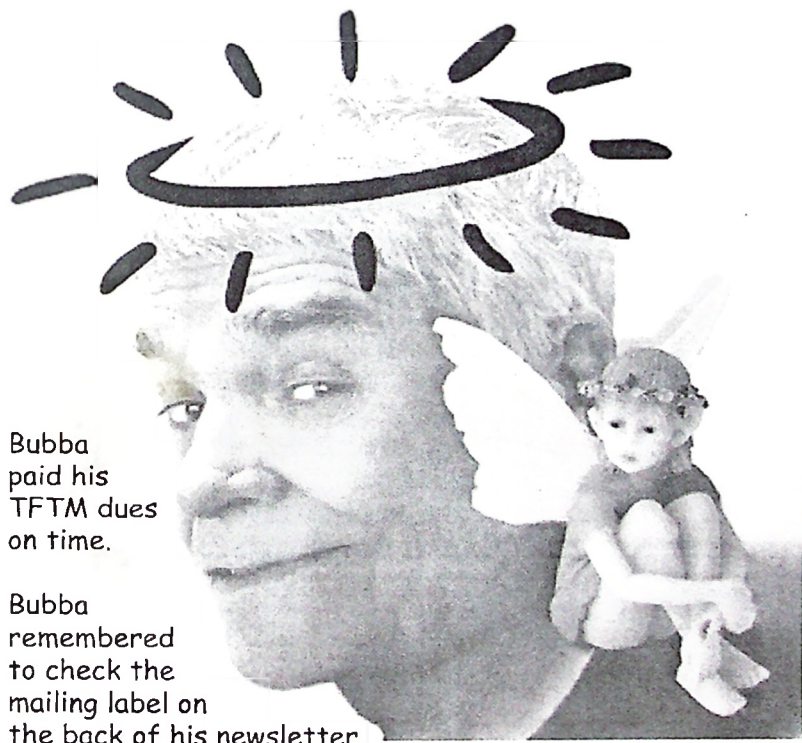
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