

The Beginnings of the Children's (Folk) Music Industry in Canada: An Overview*

I. SHELDON POSEN

Since the mid-1970s, Canadian performers such as Raffi, Fred Penner, Eric Nagler, and Sharon, Lois and Bram, have made careers singing folksongs (more or less) to the children of the “folkies” who listened to more grown-up fare at folk festivals and concerts a decade before. In doing so, they have husbanded a performing industry that has not been duplicated to nearly the same extent in the United States—that is, in fact, being exported to the States on a grand scale and emulated in many American localities.

In 1987, the *Wall Street Journal* profiled Raffi in a frontpage article and gushed that his record company was expecting “to sell over a million records and tapes in the U.S.” The same year, Mariposa in the Schools (MITS), a Toronto organization that specializes in providing folksingers to perform in schools, boasted a twentyfold increase in performances since their inception over fifteen years earlier. In 1989, Sharon, Lois and Bram’s “Elephant Show” signed with the Nickelodeon television network in the U.S. and now reaches 40 million American homes. Their concerts across North America are sold out within hours, often before tickets go on sale. Canadian expertise in children’s performance is not only acknowledged across the border but also paid for by rival U.S. performers. Tom Paxton, for instance, hired away one of Sharon, Lois, and Bram’s Toronto staff to manage his own new children’s record label.

All this suggests certain questions. First, why Canada? The United States has taken the lead in most other entertainment industries: why is Canada in the vanguard of children’s folk music? Second, why children’s folk music? The designation “children’s folk music” is relatively new: how did it develop? Why did it develop here? Is there any connection between what the industry is and where it is enjoying its greatest success? Third, why now? Revival folksingers and folksongs for children have been on the North American scene for at least forty years: what were the conditions that favoured the development of a children’s music industry in the 1980s?

Background

From at least as early as the 17th century, children have constituted a market for specialized artistic goods and services in the western world. Producers

of cultural products, especially books, have long exploited the commercial possibilities of selling to families with money to spend on entertaining their children. From the 1660s to 1690s, for instance, one Nathaniel Crouch made a fortune publishing such shilling books as *Young Man's Calling*, *Apprentice's Companion*, and *Delightful Fables*. By the turn of the 20th century, the children's literary market was flourishing, producing commercially successful collections of children's poetry (e.g., Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verses*) and narrative (e.g., A.A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* and the Beatrix Potter books).

The Children's Record Industry

At the end of the 19th century, the market for children's literature was mirrored almost exactly by developments in two new media: the recorded cylinder and the recorded disc. Children as a class, and nursery rhymes as a genre, persistently appear in accounts of the early years of the recording industry. The first words ever recorded (in 1877 by Thomas Edison) consisted of the first verse of "Mary Had a Little Lamb," presumably the first thing to pop into the inventor's head. In 1888, the first recorded discs offered for sale (they were called "plates") included Mother Goose rhymes. In the decade and a half before they hit their commercial stride, recorded discs were regarded as children's toys. Emile Berliner, the inventor of the gramophone, got his start in Europe supplying recorded discs for insertion into toy dolls.

The earliest record catalogues—of Edison (1898), Berliner (1899), and Victor (1900)—all contained separate children's sections. Nursery rhymes were the most frequent offerings, along with barnyard sounds and child-oriented skits. For the next forty years, the music listed in the children's sections of such catalogues mostly consisted of specially composed songs: "Three Little Owls and the Naughty Little Mice," "Little Orphant Annie," "Why Don't They Play With Me?" "The Teddy Bear's Lullaby," "Land of Nod," "Little Shoemaker," and "Bow-wow-wow." In the 1930s, Walt Disney published "Silly Symphony" and "Mickey the Mouse Songs," based on his cartoons. In the 1940s, Columbia offered stories-with-music, including adaptations of traditional nursery fare (e.g., "Little Red Riding Hood,") and new constructions (e.g., "Herman, the Littlest Locomotive").

The odd traditional folksong had appeared in record catalogues from their earliest days. For example, "The Wedding of the Frog and Mouse" and "Villikins and his Dinah" are listed in Victor's 1901 offerings in 1901. Folksongs and children did not begin to be identified together until after WWII, and even then, only on minor labels. The introduction to a 1948 international guide to children's records stated:

... there is available a magnificent choice of folk music from all over the world, some of it in the catalogs of our major disc manufacturer, but the best of it on independent labels like Asch-Stinson, Disc, Musicraft, Keynote, and Gen-

eral... We might add that folksong is sure-fire children's material, especially when sung by such artists as Burl Ives or Woody Guthrie.

These recordings demonstrate the linking of the children's record industry with the North American folksong revival. The felicity of this marriage might have been read in the Burl Ives 1953 hit "I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly," a children's song created by Canadian Alan Mills on the basis of a poem credited to an Englishwoman named Rose Bonne—Edith Fowke had brought the song to Ives' attention while he was on tour in Canada the year before.

Traditions of Adults Singing for Children

The postwar appearance of records by adults performing folksongs for children was, of course, a mirror of adults singing for, and with, children in the real world. It began long before the Second, or even the First, World War. Several singing traditions flow like currents through the river that became the children's folk music industry. The currents flow with different relative intensities over the years, merging and diverging at various points along the way. What they have in common is the social structure of their dynamics: a group, either of adults or of children, empowers a leader to tell it when, how, and what to sing. The relevant group singing traditions include: (1) the Protestant tradition of religious singing by choirs, congregations, and informal worshippers; (2) the North American recreation movement, comprising the national playground movement, the 'Y', the boy scout and girl guide movements, as well as the children's summer camp movement; (3) the union movement which has drawn melodies, words, and inspiration from the Protestant singing traditions, developing its own extensive repertoire.

Aspects of all of these group-singing traditions: church, recreational, and labour, were introduced into, and flourished at, that unique North American institution adopted by all three movements: the children's summer camp. By the late 1950s, there existed a kind of universal children's summer camp repertoire and a tradition of adults leading children in song, based on techniques and material drawn from all three movements. In the next decade, two sociopolitical movements in the United States were fuelled by, and in turn enriched, the summer-camp singing-tradition: the Civil Rights movement, an important component of which was the black gospel song tradition, and the anti-nuclear and Viet Nam War protest movements, whose spirit and techniques were inspired by labour struggles of decades before, and whose songs were fed by the pop music industry.

I should add a fourth movement to the three I've mentioned: music education, the formal teaching of music in schools and libraries and I would bundle these with music therapy. Music educators were particularly committed to the use of folksongs, for reasons which turn up in the arguments of other musical movements championing folksongs for children. One

argument has its roots in 19th-century romantic nationalism and involves the perception of folksong as the “idiom of the people” and of the role of a country’s schools in promoting national spirit and a sense of true national music in its pupils. (These ideals provided, for instance, the motivation for Cecil Sharp’s fights with English boards of education in the first decade of this century to include authentic traditional songs in the music curricula of English schools.)

A second argument endorsing the connection between children and folk music has to do with general perceptions of children’s psychology and of the technical nature of folksongs. The Hungarian composer, folksong collector, and music educator Zoltán Kodály, linked the notions of simplicity and folksong in his 1943 *School Collection of Songs* (cf. Choksy 1974, 9): “How often one can hear small children struggling with melodies of too big a range, too difficult intervals and rhythm. And as a result, the beauty of the song is lost, and only the memory of confusion and feeling of strain remains with the children. Most songs in this collection are simple enough in every way for small children.”

Barbara Cass-Beggs, went further in her 1974 *To Listen, To Like, To Learn*: “Folk songs, which represent the childhood of music, have simple and beautiful melodies, usually well within the range of a young child’s voice.” These points are augmented in what is perhaps the most extensive and best reasoned argument for folksong as ideal children’s music: Ruth Crawford Seeger’s influential 1948 collection, *American Folksongs for Children*. Her main points are: (1) folksongs have much to teach children lexically and psychologically; being an integral part of cultural heritage and a bearer of a country’s history and custom, folksong can give children a glimpse of ways of life and thought different from their own; (2) musically, folksong is valuable because it invites improvisation and creativity; it has rhythmic vitality; it is a music of motion; (3) folksong functions at an important social level; being a kind of music which everyone can help make, it invites participation; (4) folksong, as opposed to other forms of music aimed at children, is rich at so many levels that children will not have to outgrow it. More than forty years later, these arguments in various forms are still to be found in album notes, performer interviews, and journalistic treatments that explicate and rationalize the children’s folksong industry.

The Children’s Recording Industry Meets the Folksong Revival

Later regarded as the founders of the North American folksong revival, artists on the New York City scene during the late 1940s and the 1950s sang not only for adults but also for children. Pete Seeger and other members of the Almanac Singers performed at socialist workers’ summer camps; Woody Guthrie wrote children’s songs (“Going for a Ride in the Car Car,” “I Woke Up in a Dry Bed,” “Howdja Do”) that he presumably performed

himself in concert (his wife Marjory organized children's hootenannies in New York City). It was largely a matter of economics. Says Pete Seeger:

Leadbelly, like me, found that he could pick up a few dollars singing in private schools in New York City, for the liberal and left-wing teachers... Leadbelly sang about Frankie and Johnny, and all the exciting life of the country; he got the kids joining in. So, I'm learning from Leadbelly too, and during the early 1950s, when the Weavers were blacklisted, I went back to teaching... I was able to stay alive economically by going from camp to camp and school to school and college to college.

According to Guy Carawan, Bess Hawes taught folksongs to teachers in Los Angeles while she was living there during the mid 50s. She played them field recordings, presumably from the Library of Congress. Pete Seeger gives Folkways owner Moe Asch much of the credit for the presence of folksongs in American schools:

Moe Asch, I think, was the big pioneer. Far more than me, or my father [musicologist Charles Seeger], or Alan [Lomax] he was the important link in the chain. He went around and plugged folk music to all the conventions, not only music educators' conventions, National Conference, but the Modern Library Association, the Modern Language Association, the English teachers, the history teachers.

According to Pete Seeger, Asch was sensitive to any market niche he could fill with Folkways records, no matter how small, and children provided one such niche. In fact, Asch tailored the product according to the feedback he got from his customers. Seeger relates how, for his "more successful children's records," Asch chose the songs and instructed him to play at a tempo that seemed painfully slow, explaining: "Well, for a little three-year-old, it's much better at slow speed. A number of kindergarten teachers have told me, 'Please ask Pete if he can't slow down some.' So let's put out a whole record just with songs for three-year-olds, very little kids."

Guthrie and Seeger, along with such other artists as Ella Jenkins and Canadian singers Alan Mills and Ed McCurdy, recorded children's albums, notably on the Folkways label. (Ed McCurdy also had a children's show on CBC television during the 1950s, another early sign, perhaps, of future Canadian directions.) But folksongs comprised a tiny record market in the United States at the time, and folksongs recorded strictly for children were an infinitesimal part of that. Ironically, this may be one of the reasons these songs have formed such an important canon for today's performers: yes, they are of high quality, but they are also all there was.

The relative dearth of folksong recordings for children seems to have continued over the next thirty years, whether the popularity of folksong itself waxed or waned. Even during the folksong revival's commercial boom in the 1960s and early 70s, children's recordings and concerts were a sideline, a by-product, of the main action. Major revival performers such

as Pete Seeger, The Limelites, The Weavers (as "The Babysitters"), Peter, Paul, and Mary (as "Peter, Paul, and Mommy"), and in Canada, The Travellers, recorded the odd disk aimed at children, using the repertoire that had become standard during the 1940s and 50s, augmented by newly written songs like Tom Paxton's "Going to the Zoo" and Shel Silverstein's "I'm Being Swallowed by a Boa Constrictor." But no one at this level was making a specialty, let alone a living, singing folksongs for children.

On the other hand, the invocation of the child-in-the-adult was increasing. "Hello Mudda, Hello Fadda," a song satirizing children's summer camps, was on the charts. Such groups as the Chad Mitchell Trio featured songs by the likes of Paxton and Silverstein at adult concerts as novelty or change-of-pace pieces. There was also an increased use of children's voices in the popular music marketplace. Using children's voices, Mitch Miller recorded folksongs such as "On Top of Spaghetti," a parody of "On Top of Old Smokey," featuring children's voices. The very structure of summer-camp singing: adult leader, children's chorus, became institutionalized on pop records. I do not think it is a coincidence that the theme song of Canada's Centennial and Expo 67, Bobby Gimby's "CA-NA-DA," was sung by a children's chorus. Nonetheless, the world needed to change somewhat before singing for children could develop from being a source of extra income for folksingers to becoming a self-sustaining industry.

Looking back now, it would seem that the children's folksong revival required certain special conditions: a time of general prosperity and free-flowing funds, both private and public; adults' willingness to apply those financial resources to culture for children, based on the perception that nothing was too good or too expensive for one's children (because children were, after all, an extension of one's self and culture) was one more weapon in the developmental arsenal that would ensure one's children's success later on; a belief that folksong was important enough to spend that kind of money on, so that children could experience it. In other words, an adult generation had to arise that had itself come to value folk music highly and had learned to spend money on acquiring and experiencing it. What was required, then, were the conditions that prevailed from the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s.

The Canadian Children's Folksong Revival

In the mid-1970s, Canada's folksong revival was still rolling along. CBC Radio featured folk-music programs both nationally and locally. Although coffeehouses were not as plentiful as ten years earlier, folk-music clubs were much in evidence. Stan Rogers brought new energy to the singer-songwriter folk scene. Former folksingers like Murray McLaughlin and Bruce Cockburn were beginning to "cross over" to other kinds of music and media, taking their so-called "folk-flavoured" styles with them. There were healthy folk festivals in major and minor centres across the country:

Toronto, Owen Sound, Winnipeg, and Vancouver. The children's folksong recording industry was, in a sense, an industry waiting to happen—in Canada.

Momentum was strongest in Toronto. Organizers of Toronto's Mariposa Folk Festival, the oldest and most prestigious event of its kind in the country, instituted two programs centred on children. In 1976, Mariposa created a separate children's area as one of its annual offerings. Previously the odd children's concert had been squeezed in among other Festival events, but never a separate area and stage for ongoing children's programming. Because of Mariposa's influence, suddenly it became virtually mandatory for any folk festival to highlight performances especially for children.

In 1969, Mariposa's Artistic Director, Estelle Klein, in collaboration with folksingers Chick Roberts and Klaus van Graaft (the latter a representative of the local Musicians' Union), organized Mariposa in the Schools (MITS). MITS' role was to book local folk performers into elementary and high schools for folksong workshops and concerts. The Musicians' Union offered a two-for-one subsidy: when a school bought one workshop, the union paid for another. It was an inspired plan that benefitted everyone involved: it gave students an alternative to the music they were exposed to in the mass media; for the Mariposa Folk Festival, it provided publicity and groomed a continuing audience; and it provided work, and in some cases, a virtual living, for unionized Toronto-area folk musicians.

The success of the program was made possible by the sophistication and prosperity of both Toronto and the province of Ontario at the time. A positive climate existed for arts of virtually any stripe, and there was money to support them. Several organizations were sending classical music performers around to schools and libraries throughout Ontario; some of these organizations (Prologue to the Performing Arts and Inner City Angels, both of which were heavily funded by the Ontario Arts Council) also sent folk musicians.

MITS' growth in this period was astonishing. The 20 or so artists on the MITS roster during those years included most of the leading lights that would shine in the Canadian children's folk-music industry ten years later: Sharon Hampson, Lois Lilienstein (Lois had been the main energy behind the Children's Area at the festival, and both she and Sharon coordinated it for several years), Bram Morrison, Eric Nagler, Raffi, Ken Whiteley, Chris Whiteley, Bill Usher. As these performers played a role in the success of MITS, so MITS acted either as a training ground or launching pad for their careers in the children's folk-music industry.

Raffi, and Sharon, Lois and Bram

If one event can be said to have triggered the children's folksong boom, it occurred in 1977 when not only Raffi but also Sharon, Lois, and Bram quite separately decided to make records of music they were performing for

children's audiences in schools and libraries, and at the Mariposa Folk Festival. Whatever the other factors in their astonishing success (timing, location, talent, energy), one of the most crucial was the uniqueness of their products. Their records were different from any children's folksong record that had been issued before. The differences had to do with the style—or rather, styles—of the songs' presentation. These not only were informed by the tastes and abilities of the performers, but also were shaped in important ways by the producers of the respective albums: Ken Whiteley for Raffi, Bill Usher for Sharon, Lois, and Bram. Both Whiteley and Usher had extremely eclectic musical tastes and backgrounds and saw no reason to limit their productions to the relatively barebones arrangements of previous children's folksong recordings.

In these novel recordings, songs were no longer filtered through the personalities and trademark sounds of the performers, as had been true of recordings by such singers as Pete Seeger, Alan Mills, and Burl Ives. Rather, studio musicians were brought in and each song was given a "treatment" according to its stylistic possibilities. The resulting records were stylistic collages that invoked all manner of musical traditions and sources: reggae, country, calypso, Broadway musical. They sounded avant-garde for folk records when they came out in 1977, and pointed to what was to come in the "postmodern" 1980s world of folk-music recording. Their novelty was backed by solid musicianship and production. They were perceived as completely new. The press was enchanted and a year's constant touring and marketing by Raffi, and Sharon, Lois and Bram established the field, and these performers as leaders within it.

Questions

Why were these performers successful? Not as particular performers, but as singers of folksongs for children? And why did they achieve that success in Canada and at that particular time?

I think it was children's *folk* music because of who was listening to general folk music during the boom in the 1960s and early 70s, and who those people became during the mid-1970s: how they led their lives, what they demanded for themselves, and what they tried to give their children. In the late 70s, these parents were middle-aged, yuppie, middle-class—with young children. They were still strong on causes, heavy on nostalgia, and were looking for experiences for themselves and their families that in some way seemed genuine, authentic, direct, ethical, socially positive. Any commodity, including children's music, that met those criteria was attractive. By the end of the 1980s, those criteria were summed up in a single buzzword, "quality." According to Fred Penner:

We're all concerned, or I hope that the parents are concerned, about what the kids are consuming on all levels. We're talking about the amount of sugar in

cereals. And now with the whole cholesterol trip, everybody is watching what they're consuming on all sides. And on television and on records, you want to consume quality.

For the folkies of the 1950s and 60s, folk music had always offered "quality," and in the 1970s, they sought it out for their children. Not incidentally, they were doing well financially and had long ago learned that folk music was something you spent money on. The result was that Sharon, Lois, and Bram were able to pay off the twenty investors in their first album, within six months of beginning to sell it.

This is not to say that it was only in the area of music and song that the children's market was taking off. The fortunes of the children's book industry pretty much mirrored those of children's folk music, and children's authors' careers, particularly that of Canadian Robert Munsch, soared. All of these, in turn, were part of the increasing fragmentation, specialization, and verticalization of North American consumer markets. Children and adults were split off from each other and subdivided by marketers targeting ever narrower segments of the population on the basis of sophisticated demographic statistics. Folksongs and books were being pitched to children in the same way as kitchenware and clothing were being sold.

Why did the children's folk-music boom originate in Canada and not the United States? Largely because of the structure of the country and its cultural matrices. A musical phenomenon can have a much greater impact in Canada because of the relatively low volume and density of popular, media-based culture. With fewer voices clamouring for attention in Canada, and clamouring more quietly, each has a better chance of being heard than a counterpart in the United States.

If one of those voices is folk music, it is more likely to succeed in Canada. The impact of folk music, especially as experienced at festivals, has been stronger here, and longer lasting, than in the United States—less diluted, perhaps, by other realities. Canadians generally discard media trends or personalities less readily than Americans. More importantly, the folk-music revival in the U.S. was largely a political movement about struggle, bosses and labour, blacks and whites, war and peace, and was accompanied by, and resulted, in political ferment. In Canada, English Canada at any rate, the folk music revival was about society, togetherness in diversity, mosaic, nature, and so on, and it was accompanied by, and resulted in, sociocultural legislation and changes in consciousness: the Bi-and-Bi Commission, multiculturalism, back-to-the-land communities. The children's music industry was made possible in Canada by an adult population in Canada that cherished a warm, fuzzy, folk-festival worldview from the mid-1970s well into mid-1980s. The U.S., meanwhile, had gone on to other issues, and other kinds of music. (So, of course, has Canada, now.)

I think it may also be said that Canada, that perennial Olympic silver medal winner and UN peacekeeper supreme, excels at what the United States doesn't care about, or regards as second-rate. (Australia has a parallel national inferiority complex, referred to there as a "cultural cringe.") Children's music is widely accounted, both inside and outside the industry, as inferior, second-class music, with practitioners to match. It is a cruel and lamentable general assumption that performers who are not successful with adults can still be good enough to entertain children. The converse common wisdom is also held, that those who entertain children are not as good as those who perform for adults and that they would prefer to work with adults if only they could. Children's music, then, folk or otherwise, simply wasn't important enough, literally big enough, for the U.S. to recognize initially. The American entertainment industry, even Disney, had other musical fish to fry. Canada found the niche and filled it.

While Mariposa provided the seeds of the children's folk-music audience, and MITS its performers, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation provided the means of disseminating this music right across the country. The CBC is a very special body. Though centred in Toronto, it is accessible, in ways that no commercial American network is, to certain kinds of local talent and music scenes. In contrast to American Public Broadcasting, the CBC has not just the obligation but also the power, as a federally funded national broadcaster, to bring regional cultural products to the rest of the country. Because its radio network is commercial-free, the CBC can take chances with programming that otherwise might not win advertisers' support or approval. As well, it can set standards of pacing and moral vision that fit its idea of what Canadians want in their media. It is highly doubtful that the fledgling "Elephant Show," relatively quiet, relatively slow, would have been attractive to a U.S. network.

Another important factor in establishing the children's folksong industry in Canada was Hy and Judy Sarick's Children's Bookstore in Toronto. Like Moe Asch in New York, the Saricks were devotees of folk music, recognized the viability of children's folk music as a marketable product, and were excellent judges of performers. Hy and Judy made it commercially possible, and thereupon profitable, for those performers to sell their records to the Canadian mainstream. As the principal retail source of children's recordings in Toronto and acting as consultants to that city's influential educators, the Saricks helped create a solid children's folk-music market in schools and libraries across Canada. Also, they gave up-scale Toronto parents a place to bring their children to meet the entertainers and buy the product.

The Children's Music Industry Today

Although children's folk music may have started out as yuppie and middle class fare, the picture now, some fifteen years after it began, is quite a bit more diverse. Children's folk music is part of a general "kiddie culture"

boom that began around the same time. The fortunes of children's publishing in Canada mirror those of the children's folk-music industry. Kiddie culture has attracted a relatively mixed and very large clientele to specialized children's bookstores, boutiques, and arts festivals that did not exist fifteen years ago.

The parental component of children's folk music is now better identified by its age, i.e., as post-baby-boomers, rather than by its history, i.e. as former folk-boomers. Preliminary results of a survey I conducted of families on the Sharon, Lois, and Bram mailing list indicate that the group's audience covers the gamut from professional to blue collar, from big city to far-flung settlement. Sharon, Lois, and Bram, Raffi, and Fred Penner are media institutions now, seen by millions on television and available on record not only in The Children's Bookstore in Toronto, but also at Woolco and K-Mart. Market forces, distribution, media exposure, ever tighter and better-serviced marketing niches have taken over from their audience's personal history as the source of ongoing success. In a sense, that these musicians are folk performers (if, indeed, they are, and that is another matter) is now beside the point: they are media stars. The irony is that what they once offered as an alternative to the music in the popular media is now virtually a pop form in itself.

This "media-fication" of the children's folk music industry is transforming it. The audience is getting ever younger, especially when it turns up for concerts. The parents, who are now a generation past that of the former folkies, are not aware that their offspring have to be a certain age to participate in this musical experience; they see the concert as a chance to expose their very young children to a live performance by the stars they watch on television. While this trend towards younger audiences has enhanced box office, it has resulted, for all the artists, in program-long mayhem in the concert hall.

Media success has also had its effects on the performers. In 1990, Raffi's record sales were providing him with a sufficiently high and steady income that, after a year's soul-searching, he decided to terminate his children's career as such. He could no longer, he said, endure the irony of singing to children about Baby Beluga when the corpses of beluga whales were washing ashore in the St. Lawrence River, bloated with toxic waste. Since then, he has concentrated on writing and performing songs about the state of the world environment. Originally, his intended audience consisted of teenagers and young adults, members of the generation that had grown up with his music, who knew and trusted his voice, and who were idealistic enough to share his goals and vision. Raffi performed recently in Ottawa. The date was billed as a Family Concert. His program included some of the old repertoire as well as some of the new, and the new was distinctly geared to his ever-young audience.

The recent boom in children's music is far from being merely a North American phenomenon. Almost four years ago, Henri Dès, a Swiss children's performer, sold out the Olympia de Paris ten days running for a combined audience of 20,000. M. Dès has had a school named after him in France. I do not know what aspects of the European children's music scene allow it to support such a superstar or how they would accord with what I have described for North America. Certainly, the British children's folk music scene offers some contrasts to the one on this side of the Atlantic. I doubt one would ever hear a North American children's record featuring such a song as the first cut on Cilla Fisher and Artie Tresize's kids' album, namely, "Ye Cannae Shove Your Granny Off a Bus."

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Sommaire: *I. Sheldon Posen passe en revue l'histoire de la musique anglophone enfantine à caractère commercial, au Canada. L'auteur esquisse ici une histoire du secteur "chansons enfantines" dans l'industrie du livre et du disque, depuis le milieu du XVIIe siècle, tout comme celle du "chant de groupe" (par exemple, les camps d'été), et aborde aussi la recrudescence de la musique folklorique après la Guerre. Le grand succès commercial qu'ont connu les interprètes de ce type de musique, depuis les années 70 à nos jours, est présenté brièvement et des explications de ce phénomène sont mises de l'avant.*