

The National Council for the Traditional Arts and California Presenters

PRESENT

DON'T FENCE ME IN



Featuring

WYLLIE & THE WILD WEST
COWBOY SONGS & YODELING

NORTH BEAR
NORTHERN PLAINS DRUM

THE QUEBE SISTERS BAND
WESTERN SWING & TEXAS FIDDLING

LOS TEXMANIACS
TEX-MEX CONJUNTO

PAUL ZARZYSKI
RODEO POET

*Songs, Music and Poetry
of the American West*



The West has always held a special place in the American imagination. It has also been romanticized and portrayed in hackneyed stereotypes of the “Old West,” reinforced by western movies and popular culture. People have been talking about the end of the “real” West, its indigenous cultures, and the “the cowboy,” since the late 1800s. The truth is that these people and cultures have evolved and changed, but they certainly haven’t disappeared. The West is still home to living cultures on the land. Native Americans across the West (and the rest of the nation) have proven far more resilient than those who wrote about the “passing of the Red Man” at the turn of the last century ever guessed. Not only has native culture survived but it continues to thrive and experience a renaissance that promises continuity and growth into the future. Similarly the cowboy didn’t disappear, as often predicted, after the trail drive days of the 1800s came to end. Neither did the vaquero culture of the Texas-Mexican border country. When the open range was fenced off they went to work on ranches and continue to work there to this day though they may spend time in a pick up or on a four-wheeler as well as on horseback. The old-time frontier fiddle traditions, filtered through the western swing music of Bob Wills and others, flourish now in the capable hands of younger artists.

The expressive arts of contemporary westerners have roots deep in the historical past and traditions passed down for generations, but the music and poetry being written and performed today also reflects the experience of living and working in today’s West. The excellent performers in this tour are not throwbacks to any earlier time, they are the premier representatives of their vital, living cultures.

*Charlie Seemann
Executive Director
Western Folklife Center*

DON'T FENCE ME IN

*A national tour
featuring songs, music and poetry
of the American West*

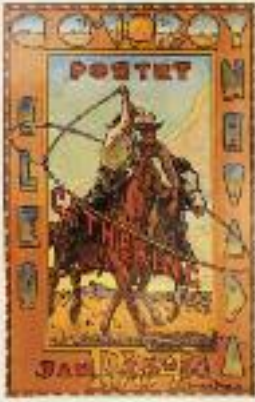
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10TH
COWBOY POETRY GATHERING

The first Gathering—fully reported by media types attracted by the apparent oxymoron of “cowboy poetry” and the opportunity for extensive punning (“git along little doggerels,” “rhyme on the range”)—was attended by a few hundred, mostly from local ranches—a far cry from the roughly 8,000 who attend the Gathering today. But in 1985, the experience for the poets, reciters, and musicians—many of whom had been reading, reciting, and composing poetry about ranch life for years—was electrifying.

10th anniversary poster (1995) for the Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Photo courtesy of the Western Folklife Center.





COWBOY POETRY: A TRADITION OF ARTFUL RECITATION

On a cold winter weekend in 1985, the Cowboy Poetry Gathering, a festival created by folklorists from around the West, debuted in the cattle town of Elko in northeastern Nevada. The event marked the beginning of a true renaissance of a folk art over a hundred years old, one that had previously escaped public notice in the overwhelming glare of publicity given to other media representations of the cowboy: Hollywood films, cowboy music and popular fiction and history.

Cowboy poetry got its start after the Civil War when great herds of cattle were driven north to Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming and Montana. Some eclectically minded cowpokes with a little extra time on their hands took the ballad tradition from the British Isles, mixed it in with the poetry and songs of soldiers and sailors and lumbermen, threw in a dash of Victorian poetry that they might have heard recited in school or in a front parlor, added a lot of their own true life experiences and a little bit of romanticized cowboy adventure from magazines and dime novels, stirred it all up and called it cowboy poetry.

What gave the poems their crackle and zing was the lingo, mostly borrowed from Spanish, a constant testimony to all that cowboys had learned from the *vaqueros* of Mexico and their ancestors, the horsemen of Spain and the Moors of North Africa and the riders of the Middle East. When you listen to cowboy conversation or when you read a cowboy poem, you realize that Spanish is the home ranch of cowboy talk: remuda and ramada, dally and lariat, chaps and taps, bosal and quirt.

A lot of the earliest poems and songs were undoubtedly in Spanish. Perhaps the oldest text—still sung and recited today—is “El Corrido de Kiansas” (or “Kansas”), a narrative of the adventures of a group of *vaqueros* who drove a herd of steers northward from Texas in the late 1860s. Even in the poems and songs of the nineteenth century, we can see that same die-hard, inventive love of words that cowboys have carried in their saddlebags since the first cowboy poems were published in western newspapers in the 1870s. An example is “The Cowboy’s Dance Song,” written about 1899 by James Barton Adams (1843-1918).

The Cowboy’s Dance Song

You can’t expect a cowboy to agitate his shanks
In etiquettish manner in aristocratic ranks
When he’s always been accustomed to shake the heel and toe
At the rattling rancher dances where much etiquet don’t go.

You can bet I set them laughing in quite an excited way,
A-giving of their squinters an astonished sort of play,
When I happened into Denver and was asked to take a prance
In the smooth and easy mazes of a high-toned dance.

But it’s not just a home-bred tradition. Cowboys, as Buck Ramsey liked to say, would argue over how to pronounce “oz.” on a can of tomatoes. Ranch cowboys were great readers when they had shelter, light and time, and all they needed were a line shack, a kerosene lamp and a long winter. Working cowboys would read Shakespeare and Homer, five-year-old maga-

Left: Cowboys gather at the XIT chuck wagon, in Utah or Colorado, ca 1902. Courtesy of the Library of Congress

zines and newspapers, detective novels, King Arthur stories, the Bible and, yes, popular cowboy stories—usually with a high degree of skepticism. A lot of this reading found echoes in their poetry. Other poets came to this tradition by other routes: some, such as Curley Fletcher (author of “The Strawberry Roan”), Glenn Ohrlin, and Paul Zarzyski, through competing in rodeos; others through journalism or popular poetry.

While a lot of cowboy poetry was influenced by music—gospel songs and hymns, old ballads, popular songs—cowboys were never isolated from other kinds of poetry. They absorbed the popular poetry of their times, the long narrative poems of Byron, Tennyson and Browning, then Longfellow’s “Paul Revere’s Ride,” “Hiawatha,” and “The Courtship of Miles Standish.” Some of the New England poets were probably read, too—William Cullen Bryant, John Greenleaf Whittier, Oliver Wendell Holmes—and Midwestern poets such as James Whitcomb Riley, Vachel Lindsay, Edgar Lee Masters and, later on, Carl Sandburg.

Did cowboy poets read Edgar Allan Poe? Sure. How about Walt Whitman? Some did. T. S. Eliot? Ezra Pound? Probably not—but they devoured (and assimilated) the poets who had powerful rhythms and exacting rhymes and who wrote about outdoor life, companionship and human bravery and endurance. Think of the British poet of the sea, John Masefield, or Alfred Noyes, who wrote “The Highwayman,” or Rudyard Kipling, whose poetry spoke of courage, mobility and exotic lands. And, most of all, Robert W. Service, with his poems of men battling the elements, hunting for gold and facing death—and usually finding it—in the Arctic. These tales of adventure and danger found cowboy equivalents.

The theme of the vanishing West and the vanishing cowboy has been a constant in cowboy poetry since the nineteenth century, and poets today continue that tradition. But they also remain in touch with modern popular and literary trends. They read and sometimes recite Stephen Vincent Benét, Robert Frost, and Beat poets like Allen Ginsberg and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. Even Bob Dylan’s lyrics are heard from time to time, along with environmental poets such as Gary Snyder and Wendell Berry. Like urban poets, cowboy poets are forced to confront the modern world.

Cowboy poetry, like all other kinds of traditional art, is just as dynamic and changeable as the ranching business. Ranching has seen technology arrive in the form of ATV’s, helicopters, computers and global positioning systems. Some ranchers are abandoning feedlots and going with leaner, range-fed beef. Some are raising bison, llamas or elk. And some are sitting down with environmentalists and officials from the government and talking hard and long about suburban sprawl, second home developments, ski resorts and golf courses, mining and logging and oil drilling operations, falling water supplies, vandalism and rustling.

The poetry reflects contemporary life. It’s been a long time since cowboy poets wrote about outlaws, gunplay or shooting up town on Saturday night, and nowadays you don’t hear many poems mocking environmentalists or vegetarians. Cowboy poetry has become a major medium for people in the livestock business, but also for westerners generally, people who care about the land and its beauty and the ways of life that go with it. And it’s not just in the content. The forms of the poetry are more varied, the rhythms are more skillful, the rhymes more exact and more inventive (no more rhyming “horse” with “of course” – what Paul Zarzyski calls the “Mister Ed Syndrome”).

Poets have given up a strict adherence to ballad form thanks to the models provided by Charles Badger Clark, Henry Herbert Knibbs and Bruce Kiskaddon, all of whom refused to stick to the same shape and rhyme scheme in every poem. When he wrote his contemporary classic, “Anthem,” Buck Ramsey (1939-1999) borrowed his stanza form from the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin.

And there have been other changes as well. At the first Gathering in Elko, to quote rancher-poet Wallace McRae, “a bunch of cowboys came together and found out that they’d all written the same poem about their favorite horse.” The horizons are wider now, the knowledge

deeper. Cowboy poets know a lot more about the Mexican and Spanish origins of the work and gear. And westerners are increasingly aware of the range poetry of other places and of interests they share with Native Americans from the U. S. and Canada, vaqueros and *charros* from Mexico, shepherds from the British Isles, drovers and bush poets from Australia, nomadic herders from Mongolia, Hawai'ian *paniolos*, Hungarian *chikósok*, *gauchos* from Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil, and *gardians* from the Camargue in southern France, land of black bulls and white horses. It's an amazing world, especially if you look at it from the back of a horse.

This fertilization goes in both directions. The popularity of cowboy poetry and other forms of recited poetry may be contributing to a renewed interest among mainstream poets in traditional forms, regular rhythms and rhyme. The enormous popularity of poetry slams and performance poetry—and storytelling festivals, for that matter—says something about a developing taste among the public for oral literature recited and performed for live audiences. The massive festival in New York City called the People's Poetry Gathering has brought together slam poets, performance poets, street poets, cowboy poets, logger poets, fisher poets and half a dozen other species.

There's another big change in cowboy poetry as well. Most of the poets who achieved a limited fame in the West before World War II were men, and in the early days, virtually every session at cowboy poetry gatherings highlighted male poets, although women such as Rhoda Sivell, Sharlot Hall, Georgie Sicking and Yula Sue Hunting had demonstrated that women could cowboy, and write about their experiences, too. Women writers have brought to cowboy poetry a deeper sense of the realities of western life—not just its beauty and its satisfactions, but also the hard realities of isolation, bankruptcy, loneliness, and even violence.

Cowboy poetry is not only a hybrid form but a dynamic one as well. Its changes in content, form, mood, and tone reflect the economic and political realities of the West, the ebb and flow of popular culture and the influence of other cowboy poets, past and present. It remains a major form of expression in a region of isolation, aridity and distance, a form that allows Westerners to express their deepest feelings about their lives, their families, their communities and their futures.



Courtesy of the Western Folklife Center

Some cowboy poets, particularly during the heyday of the Hollywood “oater,” reflected the influence of cinema in poems about range wars, stagecoach holdups, outlaws, Indian raids, and shoot-outs. Poems were also set to music and recorded by Hollywood actors, bluegrass and country musicians, classical composers, community choirs, and—occasionally—working cowboys.



William S. Hart, one of the first great stars of the motion picture western, recorded the famous poem “Lasca” about a Mexican girl and her cowboy sweetheart caught in a cattle stampede. First published in London in 1882, it was written by English playwright and poet, Frank Desprez.



Paul Zarzyski and Zeke.
Photo by Kenton Rowe



PAUL ZARZYSKI
RODEO POET

Recipient of 2005 Governor's Arts Award for Literature, **Paul Zarzyski**, has been "spurring the words wild across the open range of the page," as he puts it, for 37 years. When asked to describe himself, Paul Zarzyski (rhymes with "whiskey") says that he's a "rodeo poet, if any handle has to be hung on me at all." Paul is one of the best known, and best, of today's western poets. Though often referred to as "cowboy poetry," his artistry both expands and transcends the genre.

Zarzyski grew up in a small town in northern Wisconsin where his father mined iron ore, but has made Montana his home for nearly 40 years. At age 22, he moved to Montana to study under the esteemed American poet Richard Hugo in Missoula and within a year found himself pursuing his twin passions for poetry and a second "lucrative" career, bareback bronc riding. Paul spent more than a dozen years on the rodeo circuit, eight years as a member of the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, until a bad back ("the motor mounts rusted out") ended his bronc riding days. He now makes his living, he says, borrowing the title of a James Dickey essay, "Barnstorming For Poetry."

Unlike most cowboy poets, who use traditional rhymed verse forms, Zarzyski usually prefers free verse. In either form, he masterfully employs all of the classic effects - onomatopoeia, alliteration, cacophony - to drive home his riveting images. "In prose literature there are labels such a "Kafka-esque" and "Hemingway-esque." In cowboy poetry there is, or ought to be, "Zarzyski-esque." No other "esques" come close." (Jesse Mullins, *American Cowboy Magazine*)

Paul made his first appearance at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada in 1987, and has performed there every year since. Zarzyski has been featured on the *Tonight Show* and National Public Radio as well as the Library of Congress' National Book Festival. His ten books and chapbooks include *Wolf Tracks on the Welcome Mat*, winner of the Western Writers of America 2004 Spur Award for Poetry, *Blue-Collar Light*, and *All This Way for the Short Ride*, winner of the 1996 Wrangler Award from the National Cowboy Hall of Fame. His most recent is entitled *51: 30 POEMS, 20 SONGS & 1 SELF-INTERVIEW*. Paul also has recorded five spoken-word CDs, the latest of which are *Collisions of Reckless Love* and *Rock 'n' Rowel*.

His work is intensely lyrical, so it is no surprise that Paul has a number of admirers among musicians. He's co-written songs with Ian Tyson, Tom Russell, David Wilkie and, most recently, Wylie Gustafson. Paul and Wylie's song "Hang-n-Rattle," garnered the Western Writers of America's 2010 Spur Award for Best Western Song of the Year. Music writer Mark Bedor likened the team of Zarzyski and Gustafson to "Lennon and McCartney in cowboy hats." Paul also received a separate Spur Award for Best Western Poem (his second) for "Bob Dylan Bronc Song."

Paul spends the rest of his time holed up on his Montana ranch in the foothills of the Rockies, writing poems and defending his title as "the one and only Polish-hobo-rodeo poet of Flat Creek."

WESTERN MUSIC

With roots in the musical traditions of both Europe and Africa that had been cross-pollinating in the New World for several centuries, the term “western” music refers to the vernacular music created by, and about, those who settled and worked throughout the western U.S. and Canada.

Western music takes many forms: bouncy Tejano polkas played on accordion; breakdown fiddle tunes for dancing; a narrative ballad sung with understated guitar accompaniment; the lonesome yodel. It is all these things and much more – reflecting the traditions and experiences of people of different origins in different places, and flavored by regional style. Adding to this complexity is the fact that western music is continually subject to new influences that bring change over time.

Not all of western music is cowboy music, of course, but the music sung and created by those who worked on the range and ranch represents an important historical strand of the tradition. Newspaper and magazine accounts from the 19th century that describe cowboys mention music only infrequently. But there are a few good descriptions and one important scholar, John A. Lomax, who began collecting cowboy music before the turn of the 20th century. He was the first to proclaim that the arts of working Americans expressed a national purpose and he was the first to record those arts. His book *Cowboy Songs and Other Frontier Ballads* published in 1910 gained national attention for western music. A second collection, *Songs of the Cattle Trail and Cow Camp*, was published in 1919. From them we learn that much of this music has long been solo and that a passion for words has marked American cowboy music in the mainland West.

Early accounts mention the voice, harmonica and fiddle more often than other instruments. Not much is known about harmonica styles among cowboys, but fiddle styles are known. The most complex is the “long-bow” Texas style, the source of western “contest” fiddling. The guitar became common after 1900; two non-musicians, Mr. Sears and Mr. Roebuck, appear to be largely responsible for its availability. By 1920, it was clearly the instrument of choice among cowboys. Some probably received it from *vaqueros*, but documentation is scarce.

The favorite instrument of the *vaqueros* employed on the huge King Ranch in south Texas during the 1920s and 30s was the accordion, often accompanied by the *bajo sexto* guitar. The accordion came to their music in the latter 19th century, slowly pushing out the violin. Though *vaqueros* performed a variety of musics, the polka, waltz and *corrido* (narrative ballad) were especially popular.



*Sketch by cowboy poet and singer,
Glenn Orhlin*



Singing cowboy songs at entertainment at the Farm Security Administration mobile camp for migratory farm workers. Odell, Oregon, ca 1942. *Photo by Russell Lee. Courtesy of the Library of Congress*

In the 1920s, the growing recording industry and advent of commercial radio began to exploit the markets for rural, regional and ethnic music. This brought western music to the many westerners who preferred it, and to a new national audience. Otto Gray's Oklahoma Cowboys, assembled by William McGinty, an Oklahoma pioneer and former Rough Rider, was the first successful cowboy band, appearing on radio and touring on the vaudeville circuit from 1924 through 1936.

During the 1930s and 40s, Hollywood's romanticized depictions of cowboys and the West brought mainstream popularity to western music. Singing cowboys such as Gene Autry and Roy Rogers were the rage. Even Bing Crosby, one of the day's most famous pop singers, recorded cowboy and western songs. Popular recordings and radio shows frequently included western music.

By the 1960s, as rock and roll ascended, the commercial heyday of western music was fading. But while receding from popular culture consciousness, western music retained a following in the region from which it sprang.

In recent years, there has been a resurgence of interest in traditional western arts and music. The cowboy song genre is experiencing a renewed vitality. Across western North America, there is a continuous stream of new western music being written, recorded and performed.

Wylie Gustafson performing at
the 70th National Folk Festival,
Butte, Montana, 2008.

Photo by Michael G. Stewart.





WYLIE GUSTAFSON

COWBOY SONGS & YODELING

Five-thirty in the morning is not an hour generally claimed by musicians. While most singers and strummers are dozing on the bus or at the local Motel 6, there is one musician who is rising to face the day: world-class western yodeler, singer and Montana native **Wylie Gustafson**. Of course, there is a reason for his early waking: his horses aren't going to feed themselves.

Despite his successful career as one of America's most popular western entertainers, Wylie still gets up everyday to tend the livestock on his quarter horse ranch near Conrad, Montana. It is what grounds him and is the backbone of his art. For him, the ranch and the recording studio are inseparable. "The connection between ranching and my music is extremely close," he says. "Most of my songs are born out of the environment where I live. . . When I write an upbeat song, I make sure it's a song that a cowboy can dance to. When I write a more lyrical song, I make sure that a real cowboy will be able to relate to it somehow."

Wylie was born and raised in Conrad, where his father was a rural veterinarian and rancher. That shiny buckle he wears wasn't won on eBay. Wylie is an accomplished cutting horse enthusiast who, along with his talented Quarter Horse, Irish Whiskey Sugar, was the 2005 NCHA Western National Finals Champion.

Just as cowboy poetry had incorporated far-flung and varied influences, so has western music. While embracing traditional cowboy songs, western swing, and the Bakersfield sound of Buck Owens and Merle Haggard, Wylie's music is also imbued with a definite rock and roll sensibility. His dad taught him to sing and yodel, but Wylie was also listening to and absorbing the music of Chuck Berry, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and ZZ Top. "I really try to strike the balance between good old tradition and the West's innate trait of forging ahead into new territory. . . I want to take cowboy music into a new generation."

Wylie and his band The Wild West have traveled the world over, and appeared on the Grand Ole Opry over 50 times, performed at venues from Lincoln Center to the Houston Rodeo & Livestock Show, from the Kennedy Center to the Calgary Stampede. Wylie's was the original "Ya-hoo-ooo!" yodel of the Yahoo! advertising campaign, and he has an instructional book and CD entitled *How to Yodel: Lessons to Tickle Your Tonsils*.

Gustafson's recent musical collaborations with rodeo poet Paul Zarzyski are 21st century expressions of the historical kinship of the spoken and sung word in western culture. "Our audiences. . . care about the words. . . lyrics that evoke a feeling or resonate with the West, and not in an empty way. . . It's easy to talk about wagon wheels and coyotes howling at moons. . . The real West, you have to dig a little deeper, but it's everywhere. . . so colorful and vibrant. What makes it so enchanting to me is this hybrid existence that draws sustenance from so many streams."

Accompanying Wylie on the tour is guitarist **Mark Thornton**, a native of Indianola, Iowa. When Mark was 11, his older brother taught him to play Merle Travis' version of "The Nine Pound Hammer" on guitar. Soon after, he discovered Chet Atkins and was hooked; his life has revolved around music ever since. Thornton settled in Nashville in the early 1990s, where his musical activities have included a 12-year stint playing with the late Jerry Reed. He owns and operates Sidekicks Sound Studios, and has produced a number of the "Pickin' On" tribute records for CMH Records. Mark and Wylie have frequently worked together in the studio. The *Don't Fence Me In* tour is their first touring collaboration.



TEXAS FIDDLE

One of the most distinctive regional styles of traditional fiddling is that associated with Texas. Its popularity and influence have extended far beyond the state to become the dominant style at many fiddle contests in the central and western U.S.

The fiddle was new and exciting to middle-class folk when European emigrants, many from the British Isles, brought it to North America during the late 1600s and early 1700s. In the Old Country, the fiddle was replacing the hornpipe, tabor and harp at country dances and other rural gatherings. Part of the excitement resulted from improvements to the instrument and its availability. As early as 1736, Cremona violins were awarded as prizes at country fiddling contests in Virginia.

While the fiddle was a prominent instrument in many of the folk styles of Greater Mexico prior to the arrival of American settlers, the Texas fiddling style and repertoire are most strongly linked to the great wave of American immigration in the mid-19th century.

Unfortunately, there are no recordings of early Texas fiddling. But in 1922, it was Texas fiddler Alexander “Eck” Campbell Robertson (1887–1975) who made the first commercial recordings of traditional American fiddle music. Though these recordings did not bring Robertson’s fame, his accomplished playing had a lasting impact and set a standard of excellence for subsequent generations of Texas fiddlers; many of the best have acknowledged their debt to Eck Robertson.

However, the distinctive fiddle style referred to as Texas “long-bow” is a later 20th century development. It’s a smooth, syncopated, highly ornamental style that emerged at a time when interest in square dancing was declining, and fiddle music was increasingly fashioned for listening entertainment and fiddle competitions.

By the 1960s, the playing of fine Texas fiddlers such as Major Franklin, Orville Burns, and of course, the revered Benny Thomasson (1909–1984) attracted much attention to the Texas style. Influenced by older Texas fiddle masters including family friend Eck Robertson, and jazz fiddlers like Joe Venuti, Thomasson’s ability to improvise was legendary. As one of his contemporaries said of him, “Everybody wanted to play like ole Benny.” Thomasson inspired and mentored multi-genre fiddler Mark O’Connor and many Texas champions including Jim “Texas Shorty” Chancellor and Joey McKenzie, who is now passing his skills on to the Quebe sisters.



WESTERN SWING

Texas fiddling is inextricably connected to the development of a hybrid musical form called western swing, which emerged from Texas, Oklahoma, and the lower Great Plains in the late 1920s and 1930s as local bands searched for ways to keep house party and dance hall audiences on their feet all night. It was a unique amalgamation, primarily of the country string band music and the old-time fiddle traditions of Texas and the Southwest combined with the big-band jazz of the era. Musicians gave western swing an even stronger regional flavor by using accents from other local styles including cowboy tunes, German polka,



Alexander "Eck" Campbell Robertson *Photo: Courtesy of County Records*

African American blues, and music from the Mexican borderlands. Western swing featured "hot fiddling," a heavy, syncopated beat, and improvised solos to create an infectious dance music. Drums were incorporated into the basic rural string band format, augmented by piano, saxophone and especially, the steel guitar.

Western swing has been called the southwestern United States answer to bluegrass music, another string band hybrid that was developing at the same time in Kentucky and throughout the South. What they had in common was the fiddle. In bluegrass, the fiddle was secondary to the mandolin and banjo; in western swing, the fiddle was the lead instrument. Not only was it the lead, but it was paired with a second fiddle that played a note-for-note harmony line, and sometimes a third and even a fourth fiddle, to create an ensemble sound that has been a mainstay of Texas music and country music ever since.

Created by Bob Wills and Milton Brown in the early 1930s, the Light Crust Doughboys (named after their radio show sponsor) was the first professional western swing band. Western swing became wildly popular, both regionally and nationally, in the 1940s. Among the most prominent bands during its heyday were Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, Milton Brown and His Musical Brownies and Spade Cooley and His Orchestra.

The cultural richness and sheer danceability of western swing music have contributed to its enduring popularity, with the flame carried forward by contemporary groups such as Asleep at the Wheel, the Hot Club of Cowtown, and a new generation of younger musicians like the Quebe Sisters. As the late, great Waylon Jennings sang, "once you're down in Texas, Bob Wills is still the king."



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THE QUEBE SISTERS BAND

TEXAS FIDDLING AND WESTERN SWING

Three lovely and very talented fiddling sisters from Fort Worth, Texas are creating quite a stir. Playing western swing, jazz and swing standards, western and cowboy songs, vintage country, and traditional Texas fiddle tunes, **Hulda, Sophia and Grace Quebe** (pronounced KWAY-bee), ages 19, 22 and 24 respectively, bring a fresh, youthful energy to the rich musical traditions of the Lone Star State. They not only fiddle, but also sing, in three-part harmony, with an amazing vocal blend that it seems only siblings can achieve.

Before any of them had reached their teens, the Quebe sisters attended a fiddle contest in Denton, Texas, and fell in love with Texas fiddling. At ages 7, 10 and 12, they started taking lessons from Joey and Sherry McKenzie. From the start, all three sisters demonstrated talent, determination and a love for the music. Soon afterwards, the girls began competing in fiddle contests. All three of them have been Texas State Champion fiddlers, and won titles at the National Old-Time Fiddlers Contest in Weiser, Idaho. The Quebe sisters' long list of musical heroes reveals a deep knowledge and appreciation of Texas musical history and the influences that have shaped it.

Joey McKenzie provides masterful rhythm guitar accompaniment, and also creates the group's musical arrangements. Around the age of 12, he started fooling around with the instruments his father had around the house – a guitar, mandolin, tenor guitar, and a tenor banjo – and learned to play them all. He became interested in playing the fiddle at age 17 after becoming friends with Texas fiddle legend Benny Thomasson. “When I got the opportunity to back Benny up on guitar in a few contests and hear the way he played, all I could think about was trying to learn to play the fiddle!” Joey went on to win over 100 contests; he is a 3-time World Champion Fiddler, a World Series of Fiddling Champion, and is a 5-time Texas State Guitar Champion. Joey and his wife Sherry own and operate McKenzies' Music & Instructional Studio in Mansfield, Texas, where they teach traditional music on a variety of stringed instruments, specializing in fiddle instruction.

A native Texan, bassist **Drew Phelps** was initiated into the world of music at an early age. In junior high he played tuba with the school band (and still plays it once a year for the 4th of July parade in his home town). An accomplished, versatile musician, he's performed and recorded with the Duke Ellington Orchestra, the Dixie Chicks, Mary Wilson, Sarah Hickman, Bernadette Peters, Jack Ingram, James Earl Clay, and Bob Hope. Drew is also a music instructor, teaching upright bass and music theory. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his wife Esther and their two boys, who are also talented musicians.

The Quebe Sisters Band is the recipients of the Western Music Association's Crescendo Award, and the group's album *Timeless* was named 2008 Western Swing Album of the Year by the Academy of Western Artists. The group has performed with Ricky Skaggs, Merle Haggard, Alison Krauss, and been featured on the Marty Stuart Show, at the Grand Ole Opry, at the National Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Elko, Nevada and at a recent Berkshire-Hathaway Annual Shareholders Meeting, where even the “Oracle of Omaha” and ukulele player Warren Buffet couldn't resist joining in on “Red River Valley.”

Top photo: Left to right: Hulda, Grace and Sophia Quebe.

Bottom photo: The Quebe Sisters Band with Marty Stuart at the Grand Ole Opry in 2010.



THE TEXAS-MEXICAN CONJUNTO

Born in the valley of the Rio Grande along the Texas-Mexican border, *conjunto* (“group” in Spanish) is a lively dance music that had its beginnings in the late 19th century when the diatonic button accordion, recently introduced by German, Czech, and Polish immigrants, was incorporated into the music of Spanish-speaking working class communities in southern Texas. By the 1890s, the accordion was the most popular instrument at *Tejano* (Texas-Mexican) celebrations in “el Valle” or “the Valley,” performing a repertory of 19th century European dance music such as the polka, schottische, mazurka, redowa and waltz, along with the regional *huapango*. Through the early decades of the 20th century, the music evolved. By the 1930s, the foundation of the modern conjunto sound – a boisterous Tex-Mex fusion that revolves around snappy accordion melodies and the distinctive Mexican 12-stringed guitar, the *bajo sexto* – was laid.

While working class Tejanos of the Rio Grande Valley had played and danced to its rhythms for a half century, the *conjunto tejano* remained little known beyond its home region until the last quarter of the 20th century. The diversification of popular musical tastes beginning in the 1960s, chicano activism, outmigration of Tejanos to other parts of the country, and attention from recording companies, the Grammy awards, filmmakers, folk festivals, foundation and concert venues have taken conjunto far from South Texas. Today, there are hundreds, if not thousands, of conjuntos in many regions of the country. Its sounds are recognized as a major American vernacular tradition, and have become a symbol of Mexican-American identity.

CONJUNTO PIONEERS

A handful of musical pioneers are credited with shaping the style. Narciso Martínez of San Benito, known as “The Hurricane of the Valley” (El Huracán del Valle), wrote and recorded his own lively polkas in the 1930s and 1940s on a two-row button accordion, taking the music to Mexican American listeners beyond the Valley. At his side was the creative and nimble-fingered player of the *bajo sexto* guitar, Santiago Almeida. This duo cemented the core sound of the music and destined the *bajo sexto* to be the accordion’s constant companion in years to come.

The 12-stringed *bajo sexto*, whose precise historical path to the center of south Texas musical life has yet to be determined, is an extraordinary instrument. Its six double courses of steel strings span a wide, thick neck and a solidly crafted, full body shaped in the fashion of a six-stringed guitar, but bigger, and it’s tuned starting an octave lower. The *bajo sexto*, providing both bass and backbeat, liberated the accordionist to focus on the right-hand melody buttons and leave the left-hand bass buttons idle, an approach pioneered by Martínez.

Accordionist Santiago Jiménez, Sr., father of two famous sons, accordionists Leonardo “Flaco” and Santiago, Jr., was a contemporary of Martínez and an anchor of the music in its rising commercial capital, San Antonio. He and others such as Pedro Ayala of Donna, Texas (known as “El Monarca del Acordeón,” The Monarch of the Accordion), were friendly rivals and composed many of the enduring polkas, redovas, *chotises* (schottisches), mazurkas, and huapangos that graced the hardened-dirt outdoor dance events called *funciones* and dancehalls throughout the region.



Conjunto accordionist Narciso
Martinez (left) and bajo sexto player
Santiago Almeida, circa 1936.
*Photo courtesy of the Arhoolie
Foundation's Frontera Collection.*



Third from left: accordionist Leonardo “Flaco” Jiménez with Los Caminates in the 1950s. *Photo courtesy of the Arhoolie Foundation’s Frontera Collection.*

The latter part of the 20th century saw an explosion of innovation, as accordionist-bandleaders such as Valerio Longoria, Tony De la Rosa, Paulino Bernal, Leonardo “Flaco” Jiménez, and Esteban Jordan cultivated a distinctive regional style and technique, and incorporated new genres, such as the bolero and the *cumbia*, to be followed later by bilingual versions of country and western songs, blues, and jazz (the last of these by Jordan in particular).

As the music moved from the late 1940s into the 1950s, the string bass (*toloche*) was added, increasing the overall volume. As dance bands became electrified and dancehalls attracted larger audiences, the entire group was amplified, the electric bass edged out the acoustic string bass, and a drum set was added. Accordionist Tony de la Rosa of Sarita, Texas was emblematic of this sound, along with the increasingly staccato melodic style of Tejano accordion playing. Accordionists began to alter the metal “reeds” of their instruments to create a drier, edgier sound. Bandleader-accordionist-singer Valerio Longoria included the slow-paced romantic bolero song in his repertoire, catapulting singing to a place of prominence.

Polcas (polkas), popular for dancing for more than a century, are still popular today; many of the songs most requested by Tejanos have been written in, or adapted to, the polca beat. Since at least the 1950s, the Texas Mexican *polca* has developed its own sound. Accordion bandleader Tony de la Rosa is credited as the source of the music’s powerful, straightforward drumbeat, marking a laid-back dance tempo appropriate for the region’s gliding style of *polca* dancing known as *tacuachito* (little possum). Other dance musics that

took root in the region during the 19th century have receded to the margins of the repertoire, but as long as older generations continue to request them, they are likely to remain a part of musical life. Two newer rhythms—the slow, romance-themed Mexican bolero and the hip-shaking, up-tempo Colombian *cumbia*—entered the *conjunto* repertoire in the 1950s and 1960s.

Musical complexity continued to increase in the 1960s and 1970s, as bandleaders such as Paulino Bernal incorporated three-part harmonies in vocals and favored a larger accordion with more buttons that allowed more complex harmonies. Mingo Saldívar's singular style and stage dance movements added to the rising star power of the accordionist.

BEYOND THE VALLEY

In these same decades, the Chicano civil-rights movement imbued the button accordion-driven Tejano sound with a new social relevance, embracing it as a symbol of Mexican-American collective identity. In the '60s and '70s, it was part of the soundtrack to the struggle for farmworkers' rights, opposition to the Vietnam War, and protests of urban Brown Berets. California Chicano activist groups such as Los Lobos del Este de Los Ángeles (later known simply as Los Lobos) made the Texan music sound a core part of their repertoire.

Also during this time, Texas Mexican farmworkers migrated deep into American agricultural territory. Mainstream routes led through Arizona and California to the interior Northwest, directly northward from Texas to the heart of the Midwest, and eastward through the Deep South to Florida. Among the migrants, conjunto music was a centerpiece of social gatherings and an important force of social unity, and put down roots in these far-away places.

As the music evolved, socially, creatively, and geographically, it gained traction in the marketplace. Artists produced and sold their own recordings, the number of Texas Mexican record labels grew, and music of the region received greater attention in the music industry at large. In 1999, the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences established a Grammy category for Tejano music, which included conjunto. (In 2011, the category was merged with the Regional Mexican category as part of a general consolidation of Grammy categories.) Mexican Americans outside of Texas took up the music and competed successfully in the music marketplace. Although still identified with Texas, this regional roots music is now a favorite sound of Mexican Americans across the nation.



Mingo Saldívar performing in 1996 at American Roots 4th of July celebration, Washington Monument grounds, Washington, D.C. Photo by Michael G. Stewart



LOS TEXMANIACS

TEX-MEX CONJUNTO

The members of Los Texmaniacs came of age, musically speaking, at a time of *conjunto's* new social relevance, creative expansion, and diaspora far beyond the music's home territory in San Antonio and the Rio Grande Valley.

Texmaniacs leader and *bajo sexto* player **Max Baca** (b. 1967) is one of a number of musicians who are taking conjunto's musical excursions even further afield. Baca's creative *bajo sexto* playing is the foundation of the Texmaniac approach. As a disciple of master *bajo sexto* player Óscar Téllez and a longtime protégé of Flaco Jiménez, Max learned from the best the tradition had to offer. As a musical visionary, he has added to this learning. "He has taken the *bajo* to the next level that nobody has," says Texmaniac accordionist David Farías. "He does conjunto, he does rock and roll, he does blues, he does anything on that *bajo*. It's amazing what he does. . ."

Born and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Max's grandfather was an amateur accordion player, and his father, Max Baca, Sr., played accordion in his own band. "I was five years old, and I learned the polka 'Monterrey.' The second song I learned was 'In the Mood,'" Max recalls. This openness to incorporating the musical sounds around him into the music he inherited from his father portended the future direction of his musical career. By the age of eight, Max was playing electric bass in his father's conjunto. When he was twelve, Max and his brother Jimmy formed their own group, Los Hermanos Baca. One night, his idol, the dynamic conjunto accordionist Flaco Jiménez, invited them to come on stage with him and play. Flaco remembers the moment: "The people went crazy to see two young kids just tearing it up and doing it right. . ."

Twenty years later, Max' "ultimate dream" of playing with Flaco came true. Baca spent a decade in the 1990s with the Texas Tornados, the popular and innovative group which crossed Flaco Jiménez' conjunto accordion sound with Freddy Fender's bilingual country ballads and Doug Sahm and Auggie Meyer's (formerly of the Sir Douglas Quintet) rock and roll.

Doug Sahm's death in 1999 led the Texas Tornados to disband. Max continued to play with Flaco, but wanted to keep the creative flame of the Texas Tornados alive in his own work. In 1997, he created Los Texmaniacs. "I was growing up in high school listening to rock and roll, but yet I always had that traditional conjunto root from my father," he recalled. He explains his concept for the group: "Do hip music that people can relate to, that everyone in the world can relate, with the traditional conjunto elements, but not ever losing your *cultura*, where you come from. . ."

Baca calls accordionist **David Farías** (b. 1963) "the youngest of the old cats - very expressive. He puts a lot of feeling into his playing; he is not mechanical. I think that's the real deal right there." Farías was born and raised in San Antonio. He started playing music at age eight and by the time he was twelve, he was playing professionally with his father and brothers in their family group, Los Hermanos Farías, later re-coined Tropa F (after the television comedy *F Troop*). As La Tropa F's popularity skyrocketed, they played to major audiences of tens of thousands. While this schedule took a toll on his schooling, it was an intense musical apprenticeship that put him within earshot of the greatest conjunto players of the time. David's musical models are many, but Flaco Jiménez and Mingo Saldívar are at the top of his list. David parted ways with La Tropa F in 2006, the



Left to right: Óscar García, Lorenzo Martínez, David Fariás, Max Baca of Los Texmaniacs.
Photo by Dan Sheehy

precise moment at which Baca was looking for a new accordionist for Los Texmaniacs. As to David's philosophy of playing: "... you be yourself, be humble. You play from your heart, and music comes out beautiful."

Óscar García (b. 1971) brings more than thirty years of conjunto experience to the ensemble. He was born in Santa Cruz, California, and raised in nearby Hollister, where his Rio Grande Valley-born accordionist father Encarnación "Chon" García taught him all the instruments of the conjunto—accordion, drumset, bajo sexto, and electric bass. Along the way, he also learned to sing both *primera* (first) and *segunda* (second, harmonizing) vocal parts. His Tejano musical heritage was strong, thanks to his father; he describes his life as starting as a surfer and ending up an accomplished conjunto musician. Óscar moved with his family to San Antonio in 2002 and coincidentally settled a short distance from Max Baca's home. They became fast friends and frequent musical associates, and Óscar is now a long-time ingredient of the Texmaniacs mix. With Los Texmaniacs, he usually plays bass, but fills in on drums as needed.

Lorenzo Martínez (b. 1967) credits his grandmother for much of his early musical interest, as she often played Mexican music around the house. He grew up immersed in the eclectic musical environment of East Los Angeles, with its many styles of Mexican music, as well as popular non-Mexican music. Lorenzo learned drums, guitar, tenor sax, and later the Mexican *guitarrón* bass used in mariachi music. He played with the Chicano R&B group Los Cruisers. But the conjunto music his grandmother loved left a deep impression on him. "It's something about the conjunto music that you just feel; it brings you back home. There's a certain soul that it has." An innovator as well as a traditionalist, Martínez and his personal style of *guitarrón* playing have led to many creative moments in Texmaniac performances, as he delights audiences by switching from drums to *guitarrón*, giving a new shade of bass to the group's sound.



POWWOW

The contemporary intertribal powwow is a relatively new cultural phenomenon that has sprung to life during the past half-century from roots that run deep in the Native American experience, and has become popular across North America.

The powwow is an annual event that brings people together to socialize and celebrate community spirit, honor traditional values, engage in friendly competition for prizes and recognition, and share pride of culture and community with each other and with outsiders.

A BRIEF HISTORY

The word powwow is derived from the Algonquian word *pauwau* or *pauau*. It passed into use by English-speaking immigrants in the 1600s on the eastern coast of North America. This word was associated with holy men, shamans, priests – elders whose powerful dreams provided spiritual guidance, curative powers, and supernatural insights. Ceremonials, feast days and other gatherings were associated with these individuals. Eventually, the term came to describe almost any ceremony or gathering by Native Americans, and over time its meaning broadened to include any informal “get-together” such as a party, meeting, or group discussion.

Between 1880 and the mid-1930s, the ability of American Indian people to gather in public to celebrate traditional social or religious occasions was being curtailed. The “Civilization Regulations” and related federal policies prohibited Native American dancing, religious ceremonies, traditional gatherings, and other cultural practices on reservation lands and at far-off boarding schools where school-age children were being sent to learn “white man’s ways.”

At the same time, the American public was being entertained by “show Indians,” recruited and paid to perform at expositions, fairs, and tourist attractions. Tribes and individuals steadfastly continued to honor cultural and spiritual practices and beliefs, and to pass traditional knowledge on to the next generation, but these activities took place in private and under a cloak of secrecy to avoid the threat of punishment or imprisonment.

Historians cite the Ponca Powwow of 1879 in the newly-formed Indian Territory (now eastern Oklahoma) as the first public event to gather members of many different tribes – 67 tribes were resident in Indian Territory at the time – to participate in an exhibition of dancing, drumming and singing, in a circular arena, in the style of the modern day powwow.

By the turn of the 20th century, tribes in other states were using the word powwow to describe similar events that welcomed participation by other tribes and encouraged attendance by the general public. These events featured local dances and regalia mixed with more flamboyant and showy Northern Plains styles. At the same time, tribes continued to gather privately for social, religious, and ceremonial occasions.

Passage of the Indian Reorganization Act in 1934 marked the beginning of a new era. Tribes were once again free to organize ceremonies and gatherings openly. While they were adjusting to dramatic changes wrought by this “Indian New Deal,” another challenge materialized – one that would have far-reaching consequences in Indian Country. Nearly 45,000 Native Americans served in the United States Armed Forces during World War II. Another 40,000 men and women left their reservations and migrated to the cities to take

Shoshoni Days Powwow,
Ft. Washakie, WY, 2006.
Photo by Anne F. Hatch



jobs in defense-related industries. This was the first mass integration of Native Americans off the reservation into mainstream society in American history.

In 1952, the Bureau of Indian Affairs introduced the Urban Indian Relocation Program and began moving people off the reservation and into jobs in Chicago, Denver, Los Angeles, San Francisco, San Jose, St. Louis, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Dallas. Over the next 30 years an estimated 750,000 Native Americans migrated to the cities. According to census estimates, by the year 2000, 64 percent of American Indians were living off the reservation and in urban environments, compared to eight percent in 1940.

During this period in American history, a “pan Indian” sense of community developed between and among Native Americans from different tribes in similar circumstances. The intertribal powwow evolved as a place where people of all tribal affiliations could come together for fellowship, to honor ancestors and elders, and to share traditional values and pride of heritage with the younger generation.

Today, powwows are celebrated and recognized as powerful expressions of creativity, individuality, community and survival as tribes continue to counter the myth of the “Vanishing Indian” that guided 150 years of policy-making in the United States.

THE EXPERIENCE

Today’s intertribal powwow showcases the vitality of Native American arts and culture in the 21st Century. Drawing from traditional forms and inspired by traditional values, many who take pride in their Native American heritage contribute to these events. They create elaborate regalia, teach young people to perform and compete, learn songs that are appropriate to particular dances or occasions, take seats in the drum circle, and dance in the footsteps of their ancestors.

Handmade arts and crafts are often a featured attraction, and people stand in line at food booths where “Indian Fry Bread” or “Indian Tacos” are served. Individuals and families may “take to the powwow trail,” driving long distances to participate as visiting drum groups, enter dance competitions, or sell arts and crafts while visiting with family and friends from other counties or states.

The powwow schedule begins with the Grand Entry, led by an honor guard of armed forces veterans carrying the eagle staffs and flags, followed by honored guests such as tribal officials and princesses crowned at recent powwows. The Head Man and Head Woman lead the dancers into the arena. After a prayer and blessing, all are invited to participate in an intertribal “social” dance. Contest dances follow. If the powwow continues into the evening or lasts several days, additional Grand Entries are scheduled after the dinner break, or to open each subsequent day of the event.

Men’s competition categories include Fancy Dance, Traditional, and Grass Dance; women compete in Fancy Shawl, Traditional, and Jingle Dance categories. There are many other dances that may be featured, some of them competitive and others that are open to all. In the competitive dances, dancers compete by age group for cash prizes under the watchful eye of the Head Man and Head Woman who have been chosen by the powwow committee. Everyone attending the powwow is welcome to enter the arena and dance when the Master of Ceremonies announces an “intertribal” dance such as the Round Dance.

Most powwows feature a Powwow Princess competition. Competitors may be judged on regalia, dancing, ticket sales, and other criteria. The Princess receives a beaded crown and serves as an ambassador for her community or tribe at other powwows and events throughout the year.

“The drum” is a group of performers who gather around a large drum to play and sing. The Host Drum attends by invitation, and many powwows feature the different Northern and Southern styles of drumming by having a host drum from each. Drums that have not



Shoshoni Days Powwow, Ft. Washakie, WY, 2006. *Photo by Anne F. Hatch*

officially been invited are welcome to make a place for themselves around the circle. They play in rotation, or take turns under the direction of the Arena Director and Master of Ceremonies. Some drums have earned a following on the powwow circuit and offer CDs for sale. At some powwows, prize money is awarded for the best drum performances. Hand drum competitions may also be featured as part of the program.

Regalia are always unique to the individual dancer and constitute a personal expression of artistry, identity, and creativity. “Powwow” means different things to different people, even within families or tribes. The significance of the powwow to an individual may be influenced by tribal affiliations, family connections, spiritual beliefs, personal circumstances, and myriad other factors. Dancers dress in regalia appropriate to specific competitive or social dances, but personalized in ways that have special meaning to the wearers.

Dance regalia may be homemade or purchased, and may utilize traditional or contemporary materials. Patterns and colors are chosen for personal, family, or tribal significance. Some dancers wear heirloom pieces that have been passed down in their families. Many make regalia for themselves and family members. Some pieces are made for sale and purchased locally, at a powwow, or on the Internet. Powwow represents the blending and mixing of traditions from the many different tribes and cultures present in North America throughout its history. Powwow is an expression of contemporary living communities, not historical ones. As such, it reflects intricate and complex relationships between and among people who honor and celebrate their own tribal culture, heritage and identity. Many different traditions are represented and respected as part of “powwow tradition.”

Powwow is making its way onto the information superhighway as enthusiasts share photographs, videos, and experiences with a diverse audience. Websites like powwows.com provide forums where dancers, singers and artists exchange information and influences, and share their creative expressions and artistic visions with local, national, and international audiences and communities.



NORTH BEAR

NORTHERN PLAINS DRUM

In powwows around the country, the intense, repetitive heartbeat of the drum and soaring falsetto singing accompany agile dancers in competition and in ceremony. One of the newest and most powerful of the Northern Plains drum is North Bear.

North Bear's members represent tribes from across the Great Plains including the Northern Arapahoe, Oglala Lakota, Cheyenne River Lakota, Assiniboine (Hohe Nakota) and others. The group has gained recognition as a foremost exponent of the Northern Plains "straight" or "traditional" singing. This powerful style employs falsetto and non-word musical syllables called "vocables" that increase in volume and tempo as the song progresses. While firmly rooted in Plains tradition, North Bear's music also represents innovation within American Indian tradition.

The group is at the center of a resurgence of interest in the hand drum within the American Indian community. Hand drum competitions, in which the drums accompany love songs or topical songs, often humorous, with improvised lyrics akin to rap, are an increasingly popular, new feature of Plains powwows. North Bear composes and performs hand drum songs with a youthful energy and style influenced by modern R & B and hip-hop that makes for exciting live performances. Recognized as one of the top drums in the country, North Bear has traveled throughout the U.S., performing and competing in powwows across the West, taking numerous prizes.

With help from their father, **Jermaine Bell** and his younger brother **Aloysius Bell, Jr.** formed North Bear in 2003. Of Northern Arapahoe and Oglala Lakota descent, they grew up on the Wind River Indian Reservation, near Riverton, Wyoming. Already performing traditional powwow music, the brothers, 7th and 8th graders at the time, wanted to "do something different from what we heard on the powwow circuit," said Jermaine. "Times are changing, so the music changes. When the music changes, you have to change with it. Our style is real high and very up-tempo." Jermaine, who has now been singing for 18 years, noted that, post-boyhood, "you have to keep training your voice to get the high notes."

In 2010, after having lived in Montana for several years, the brothers returned home to Wind River. With the move back to Wyoming and subsequent changes in group membership, North Bear "was able to push our performances and push the styles," said Jermaine. Two of North Bear's newer members join Jermaine and Aloysius on this tour, **Lonnie Wise Spirit, Jr.** of the Cheyenne River Lakota and **TyRae Healy**, who is Assiniboine. Both have been singing since they were children. They and other new members have brought fresh ideas and influences, and an expansion of the group's repertoire. North Bear is now beginning to arrange traditional songs in three-part harmony, something new to powwow drum.



North Bear performing
at the 2009 Richmond
Folk Festival, Richmond,
Virginia. *Photos by Skip
Rowland*



ABOUT THE NCTA

The National Council for the Traditional Arts (NCTA) is a private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the presentation and documentation of folk and traditional arts in the United States. Founded in 1933, it is the oldest folk arts organization in the nation. Its programs celebrate and honor arts that are deeply rooted cultural expressions - music, crafts, stories and dance passed on through time by families, communities, tribal, regional ethnic and occupational groups. The NCTA stresses quality and authenticity in presenting traditional artists to the public in festivals, tours, concerts, radio/TV, recordings, exhibitions and other programs.

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California Presenters was founded in 1985 as a statewide coalition of organizations committed to advancing professional touring and presenting of the performing arts. As such, California Presenters nurtures organizational leadership, professional development, and knowledge exchange in the performing arts. Twenty-seven years later, California Presenters affirms this mission and promotes four core goals to support our field in a rapidly changing arts environment: annual presenter-to-presenter Artist Information Exchange; funding to support New Work artist tours to California Presenter members; advocacy at the regional, state and national level for the arts in California; and to support, nurture and develop leadership for new professionals in the presenting field.

SUPPORT THE NCTA

The National Council for the Traditional Arts relies on the generosity of our many friends. The NCTA is incorporated under IRS section 501 (c) (3), so contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. If you are interested in supporting the NCTA and our work to preserve and present the folk and traditional arts locally, regionally and nationally, please contact 301-565-0654 x 11. Contributions can be made directly on the NCTA website or mailed to the address below. Thank you!

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PROGRAM BOOK ESSAY CREDITS

“Cowboy Poetry: A Tradition of Artful Recitation,” by David Stanley, Professor Emeritus, Westminster College, Salt Lake City, Utah.

“The Texas Mexican Conjunto,” excerpted from essays by Daniel Sheehy, Director of the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and Director of Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

“Powwow,” excerpted from the gallery notes for “What Continues the Dream: Contemporary Arts and Crafts from the Powwow Tradition,” written and curated by Rebecca Snetselaar, Folklife Program Associate with the Nevada Arts Council. Used with the permission of the Nevada Arts Council, a division of the Department of Tourism and Cultural Affairs. For additional information, go to [http://nac.nevadaculture.org/dmdocuments/powwowtep_nti4_\(2\).pdf](http://nac.nevadaculture.org/dmdocuments/powwowtep_nti4_(2).pdf)

“Western Music” contains excerpts from an essay written by Joe Wilson for the NCTA tour from the 1980s, *The Cowboy Tour*.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE FOLLOWING INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS

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