



# THE BARN DANCE OPERA JOURNAL

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A Not For Profit Organization

Barn Dance Website: [www.thebardance.ca](http://www.thebardance.ca)



*Sue, Stacey & Crystal leading the cast in the finale,  
I Saw The Light*



*October 2007 Barn Dance Show at the Heritage  
Theatre, Wingham*

## MUSIC'S GREAT REAWAKENING

by Grant Heywood

All of us have just come through one of the most stressful, if not, emotionally traumatic periods in our lifetime. The COVID 19 Pandemic was real, and will likely be with us for some time to come. It has affected the worldwide population on a major scale, with a considerable loss of life, and burden on our institutions and daily lives.

Musicians, and those affiliated with the arts in general, have taken a massive hit in their occupations and careers, never seen before in our lifetime. And yet it is books, theatre, movies, and

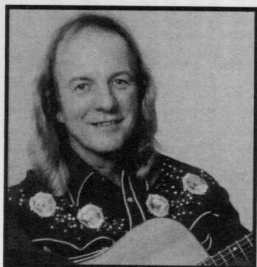
music that we rely on to get us through an extended crisis. These artists have families to support and have had their careers suppressed with barely any other source of income. Some have even given up on ever being able to recover from over two years of silence in the arts.

But somehow, hope has redeemed those who have persevered and emerged with their artistic skills still intact. Big name artists have also suffered through the pandemic, with loss of income from tours that literally vanished, and cd/merchandise sales that literally flatlined.

But those who have taken the worst brunt of it all are the fringe artists, up and comers, and lesser known musicians/artists. Several new and younger singer/songwriters and bands have had their dreams put on hold. I watch kijiji and marketplace religiously, and have seen a huge listing of musical and studio equipment for sale. Some are trying to sell off items for cash to keep afloat, while others are exiting the music business entirely. Music stores too, have felt the pinch.

There will no doubt be a lot of new music to hear, as

*Continued on Page 3*



## The Editor Speaks

by Grant Heywood

After two years in hibernation with the ever changing pandemic, it's always refreshing to welcome warmer Spring weather... when it finally arrives. Personally, I've never been much of a winter person, other than enjoying hockey. As a musician, I rarely perform at gigs in the winter anymore, as the weather can be way too risky.

Currently, I am playing in about four separate bands. The Barn Dance Band, the LTZ rockin' blues band, the Stevie T. blues/rock band, Crackerjack Palace classic rock band, and various part time fill in gigs with duos, trios, etc. My retirement has almost morphed into a full time music career. This year's calendar is filling up quickly for me with many outdoor/indoor concerts, festivals, special events, and private concerts. I am very fortunate to have so many live gigs this coming season, and I certainly don't take it for granted after an extremely long dry spell of not performing.

But music didn't take a backseat for me while waiting out the Covid pandemic. I spent many hours improving my song-writing skills and wrote several new songs as well. When it was okay to gather, I put in many hours laying down tracks and ideas in the recording studio. I worked on many of my own songs as well as arranging, playing, and producing songs for close friends. The studio world is a creative place to be when you have song ideas and time to work on them. I'm quite flush in that department.

Over two years of the Covid-19 Pandemic has taught me a lot though. I have seen people at their best and worst. On one hand, there were those who became divided or wouldn't listen, because of politics or questionable sources of information. Others took the opportunity to help those in need, volunteer when possible, and follow the rules and guidelines in the hope of ending this quickly. If people read more about history, they might be better informed about pandemic situations.

Covid-19 has most certainly taken its toll for caregivers and those on the front-line. Some have died in the line of duty as have many friends and relatives. I personally went through 6 months of losing close family relatives and very dear longtime friends at the rate of one every two weeks. Some were older, but many were much younger. Most were not Covid related deaths, but it was heartbreaking not being able to say a proper goodbye, and it left me devastated. I hope I never have to go through a time like that again.

One of the best ways I have found, to cope through uncertain times, is to create, perform, or listen to music. In today's world, much of the current trend of music tends to be assembly line soundalike radio songs. I'm not saying all of today's music is like this as there is a lot of good music as well. It's just that much of it seems so corporate, and auto generated soulless fluff.

The best way to cure the 'lockdown Covid-19' blues is to finally get out and treat yourself to some real honest music, performed by musicians who will be as excited to perform, as you will be listening and appreciating it. Get out to hear a live band, duo, or single artist whenever you can. There are some Barn Dance shows you should attend, listed on the schedule below. We've been cooped up long enough. Time to enjoy music we love with

friends again. Hope to see you at the next Barn Dance.

Comments? Please contact:

Grant Heywood

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or send a message on facebook.

**WITH REGRET,  
THE 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL BLYTH  
BARN DANCE CAMPOUT  
JAMBOREE FOR 2022,  
WILL NOT TAKE PLACE.  
THE 2023 JAMBOREE,  
ALSO REMAINS  
UNCERTAIN**

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(or leave a message)

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**www.thebardance.ca**

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## 2022 COMING EVENTS

Date	Event Name	Place
Sun., May 1, 2022	Barn Dance Show - 2:00 p.m.	Purple Hill Country Hall, Thorndale, ON
Sat., Sept. 17, 2022	Barn Dance Show	Elma-Logan Arena, Monkton, ON
NO DATE	23rd Campout Jamboree	Blyth Arena and Campgrounds, Blyth, ON
Sun., Dec. 11, 2022	Barn Dance Dinner & Show	Wingham Knights of Columbus, Wingham, ON



*Continued on Page 1*

many musicians have had an extended period of time to rehearse new material or even record some new music. Being a musician is not an easy life, but it is satisfying when there is an audience that appreciates good music. The ties that bond a musician to the listener is a connective friendship of respect for both. One without the other is like bacon without eggs or hugs without kisses. It's just not the same.

The continuation of the pandemic has surprisingly coaxed some music lovers to investigate new musical styles and genres' they might never have discovered. I made it a point to seek out new music by new artists during my time off. It's gratifying and refreshing sometimes to hear something completely new and original or even listen to a different take on an old song. John Lennon of the Beatles once said, 'Give peace a chance.' I say, 'Give music a chance.' It's always exciting to discover something new and different when it's unexpected.

Besides the Barn Dance shows that are scheduled this year, I implore those who have been cautiously waiting, to come out and enjoy live music once again. As Joni Mitchell said in a song,

'You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone.' It's been a very long intermission. The musicians who perform the music are just as anxious as you are. Let's get the music started.

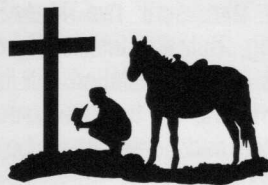
**Why does Pepsi never promote country music?  
Because it's not Pop!**



*At a convention in Las Vegas, Grant Heywood, and Ron Coulthard, drive to a honky tonk in Death Valley to catch singer Bobby Kingston, and his band. Bobby is the son of singer/recording artist, and early CKNX Barn Dance performer, Jack Kingston.*

## IN MEMORIAM

Mary Elizabeth 'Beth' Elder, wife of Barn Dance pioneer, guitarist/singer, Hugh Elder. Passed away at Louise Marshall Hospital, Mt. Forest, Jan. 29, 2022, age 91. A lover of farming & country music, Beth is survived by sons, Richard & Raymond Elder, daughter, Karen Elder & partner Liz Lapsley, daughter, Susan Widmeyer and husband Al, and daughter, Linda Elder. Grandmother of Shania and Ryan. Predeceased by her son Robert. She will be greatly missed by family and friends.



## 2022 CMA ONTARIO AWARDS

Congratulations to CCMA Hall of Honour Award winners, singer, Carrol Baker, and Country Music News Editor, Larry Delaney, on their upcoming win of the CMA ONTARIO Impact Award, for their many contributions to country music in Canada over the years. So well deserved.

The CMA Ontario Awards show will be hosted by Jason McCoy and Robyn Ottolini. The awards show will be held at Centennial Hall, London, Ontario, June 2-5, 2022. Winners will be announced that weekend.

# WHO REMEMBERS THIS?

by Grant Heywood

I know I've likely covered this subject a few times, but it is interesting when you look at it from a broader perspective. I'm talking about how we listen to music, and mainly the radio and its history. Here's a quick re-visit.

An Italian man, Marconi, invented the first radio in the 1890's even though Nikola Tesla was working on a wireless radio transmission at the same time. The first radio station was KDKA, out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in 1920. There were 5 radio stations in the U.S. in 1921, which grew to 556 by 1923. The economy was doing well in the 1920's. Income increased and people had more leisure time to listen to the radio. With the depression in the 30's, followed by World War 2, radio became the fabric of life. This was the Golden Age of radio when radio became a news service, source of entertainment and advertising tool. And wireless radio became a tool for the military that replaced Morse code.

The cost of a radio in the 1920's was \$200, and by the end of the 1920's it dropped to \$35. A decent radio in the 1960's was around \$70. Some of the first shows on radio in the 20's and 30's you could tune into, were Will Rogers, Amos 'n Andy, Jack Benny, Porgy and Bess, plus soap operas and variety shows, all performed live on radio. When music flooded the airwaves, it eventually spawned a multi faceted, multi million dollar industry.

In the 1920's, jazz music was popular, and then later it was blues music. The start of the depression in the 1930's saw hillbilly music surge. This would later be known as country music. Then big band music through the Second World War, became trendy, followed by country and western, Western swing, and cowboy music. This eventually led to the popularity of early rock & roll. It was the end of the war when soldiers came home to get married, make a

home, and buy things, that radio music took off, along with record sales.

Radio became a part of families, like the Waltons, gathered around the old antique radio in the parlour, for entertainment and news. Table top radios became popular in the 1940's & 50's, but with the advent of stereophonic sound, big cabinet stereos were the new kid on the block. Companies like Electrohome, sold many of these 'furniture like' all in one, stereo radio/phonograph player entertainment centre's. Then component stereo systems became the industry standard. Companies like Pioneer and Kenwood led the way in supplying high wattage FM receivers coupled with big speakers, turntable, equalizer, cassette player, and then CD player. And who can remember the big, portable, (oxymoron) boombox era of the 80's.

I kind of liked the period of the 60's when you could buy a small rocket like, plastic crystal radio that had a clip on wire and an earplug. Or even the little handheld transistor radio that came in different colours from Canadian Tire. I personally listened to our old cabinet style radio/phonograph at home. At night I'd be working away on building plastic model cars while listening to my Sony transistor radio tuned into CKLW in Windsor or even Wheeling West Virginia or maybe even Wlofman Jack out of Boston.

Times have certainly changed though. It seems like it was only yesterday that cd's replaced vinyl records. Now it's reversed. Sirius satellite radio via subscription at home and in your car, and streaming on internet radio, or satellite radio from your TV, are today's sources of radio. I'm sure I've likely missed something, but it's interesting to note that 92% of the population still listens to radio. It is the # 1 trusted source for information and continues to be a catalyst for most recording musicians in get-

ting airplay. I used to love dialing across the radio frequencies trying to find music I liked, only to have it fade in and out with static, especially when many stations would 'power down' their signal at night.

Everyone thought that radio would eventually become a dinosaur with the advent of television, computers, cell-phones, and iPads. But radio survived and morphed with the times. I salute the many radio personalities who continue to serve our area with information, humour, advertising, interviews, news, and music. People like Jim Swan, Dan Bieman, Randy Owen, John Marshall, Bryce Butcher, and many others, who have become a part of our lives through radio. CKNX 920 radio has been a hub for western Ontario and spawned many early live broadcasts including the Heywood Family. Live CKNX Barn Dance shows aired over the radio, gave rise to celebrities and a local musical bonanza of talent. It is because of this, that we treasure those nostalgic memories every time we attend or participate in a Barn Dance show today, with radio personality, Jim Swan, as your host.



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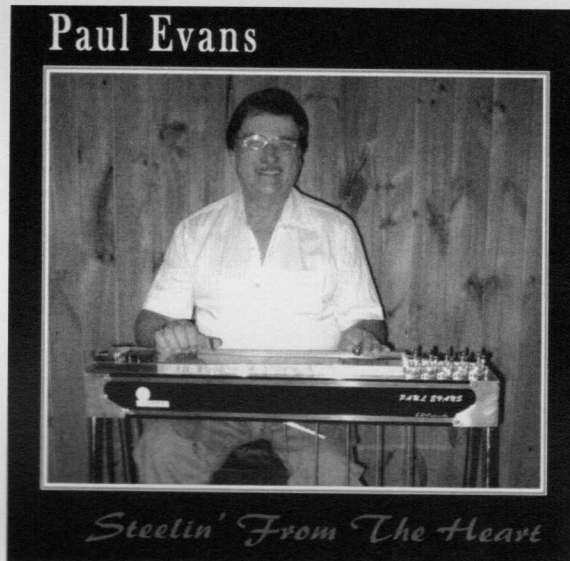
*I don't normally do CD reviews of past recordings. That being said, I recently received 2 CD's of separate recordings by Linda & Paul Evans, from Oshawa, Ont. Since I don't have anything new to review, I thought I would give these CD's a listen.*

## CD REVIEW STEELIN' FROM THE HEART - PAUL EVANS

Paul Evans has been playing steel guitar since his first band with his brother, Dave. He played lap steel back then, but soon progressed to a full pedal steel guitar, like the Furlawka steel he plays today.

This 11 song CD was recorded in 2003 and features the late, great, Doug Deveaux on guitars, Tom Mark, dobro, June Eikhard, fiddle, & backup vocals by Linda Evans, Anita Perras, & Frank Woodcock. Engineered & produced by Paul Evans. Many of the songs are classic country songs like Faded Love, Last Date, & I Love You Because. Standout tracks are Bars of Steel, Harbour Lights, & Life's Railway to Heaven. Paul is a good steel guitarist on all of these songs. He

plays it safe, but he may want to take more risks on his next CD. Paul is a good steel guitarist on all of these songs. He plays it safe on most of them, but might want to challenge himself on his next CD. He has the chops.



## CD REVIEW SWEET MEMORIES - LINDA EVANS



It's quite obvious that Linda Evans has been singing for quite a while. Her voice lends itself to gospel and she has a controlled dynamic range. Linda's CD was recorded at Ambassador Records in

You Ever Get Tired of Hurting Me, to Once a Day & Together Again. Linda has a good strong voice, but some songs are more ideal for her style of singing. Linda sings Apartment # 9 with ease, and

Oshawa. Featured musicians include, Steve Piticco, bass & lead gr., Paul Evans, steel gr., Robin Evans, fiddle/tracks, Backup vocals, Frank Woodcock. Produced by, Paul & Robin Evans.

The 12 tracks include traditional country songs such as, Don't

she's right in the pocket on I'm Still Not Over You. Someone Had To Teach You, seems to suit her voice well. Nice harmonies with Frank Woodcock on the classic, Sweet Memories.

CD Contact info.:

Email - [ambassdr@ambrec.com](mailto:ambassdr@ambrec.com)

Website: [www.ambrec.com](http://www.ambrec.com)



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# MUSIC & MEMORIES



*At the 1993 International Plowing Match in Walkerton. L to R - Martha Heywood, Muriel Grummett (wife of original Barn Dance steel guitarist, and Barn Dance Pioneer, Dan Grummett), and legendary Barn Dance performer, Earl Heywood, promoting & raising funds for the Barn Dance Entertainment Museum in Wingham.*



*Blyth Barn Dance Director & singer, Bill Simmermaker, with recording artist, Kevvy Canuck at a Blyth Barn Dance Jambouree, while guitar player, Hughie Elder looks on.*



*A version of the CKNX Circle 8 Ranch Gang. Front Row L to R - Hugh Elder, Len Love, George Jordan. Rear Row L to R - Don & Cora Robertson, Ross Mann.*



*Another version of the CKNX Circle 8 Ranch Gang. From L to R - Ernie King, Donn Robertson, Ross Mann, Cora Robertson, Harvey Mann, Hugh Elder.*



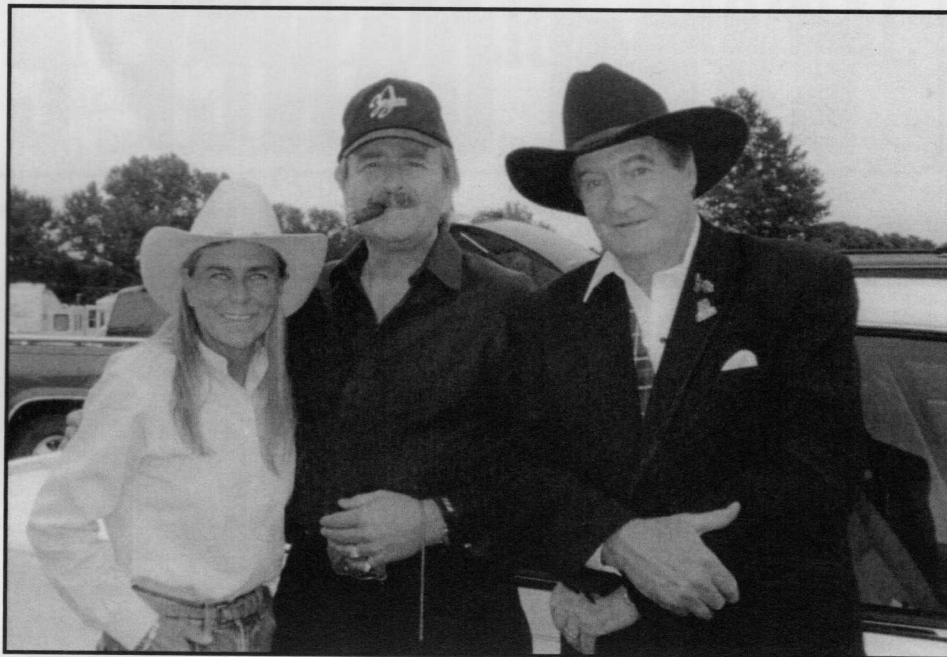


## Country Calendar

by Doreen Brown  
(Toronto and  
surrounding area)

Country Calendar updates  
have been postponed. May  
everyone stay healthy!

Country Cheers,  
*Doreen Brown*



Seen here at the Iowa Old-Time Traditional Country Music Festival. L to R - Singer/recording artist, Jett Williams with her husband, Keith Adkins, and Cdn. Singer/recording artist, the Legend of Newfoundland, Michael T. Wall.

Please check  
***thebardance.ca***  
for Barn Dance Shows  
& possible cancellations.

# NEWS TIDBITS

## BARN DANCE JOURNAL

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## Booking the Barn Dance

If you are interested in more  
information about booking  
the Barn Dance Musical Production,  
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Barn Dance Bookings,  
P.O. Box 68,

Wingham, Ont. N0G 2W0;  
or call 519-530-8000

E-mail: [webmaster@thebardance.ca](mailto:webmaster@thebardance.ca)

♪ Country/bluegrass musician, Al Widmeyer, and bass player, Brian Moon, were recently inducted into the Purple Hill Hall of Honour. They both perform in the Purple Hill house band.

♪ Country recording artist, Wolfe Milestone, was a guest recently on Bryce Butcher's radio show at Erin Radio, 91.7.

♪ That crazy entertainer, Kevvy Canuck, is releasing a new single and video called 'The 401'. Everyone will be able to relate to this one. The video will have guest appearances from people you know. It promises to be Kevvy's best effort yet. Watch for it on YouTube, and request it on radio.

♪ Juno award winning country artist, Larry Mercey, will be inducted into the London Music Hall of Fame later this spring.

♪ The Forest City London Music Awards has nominated the rockin'

blues band LTZ. The band features, Cheryl Lescom, Rick Taylor, Chuckee Zehr, Grant Heywood, and Marc Shickluna.

♪ A new book by rock & roll empresario Tom Waschowski, to be published this year, will include a chapter about the Heywood Family and the career of Grant Heywood.

♪ Grant Heywood has been recording and producing music over the past two years of the Covid pandemic. Some of the projects he's been involved with include, Stewart McKee, Mark Diatollevi, the Heywood/Richards duo, as well as Grant's own solo recordings.

♪ Naomi Bristow has been touring parts of the U.S. recently, mainly Texas, and is gearing up for a busy performing season.

♪ Congratulations to Naomi Bristow, on recently winning the Texas Country Female Vocalist of the Year Award.

# BARN DANCE CORNER

by Peter Saros

Knowing what the emergence of the CKNX Barn Dance in 1937 meant to the development of local country musicians in both the town of Wingham, Ontario, and the rest of southwestern Ontario, it is heartening to know another new home for country talent is similarly being built stateside in 2022.

The Black Opry, a home for Black artists, and Black fans of country, blues, folk, and Americana music, was founded in 2021 by Holly G, a writer and flight attendant from Virginia. The Washington Post reports that, "Holly started the Black Opry from her bedroom last April, as an attempt to heal her relationship with the genre."

She started by first creating a website to promote artists of colour. The origin story of The Black Opry is familiar to countless barn dance shows from the heyday of radio in-

sofar as the response was positive, immediate, and overwhelming. Think of the early stories of Reg Douglas and crowds so big they shut down Josephine Street in Wingham to watch in the Saturday Night Barn Dance broadcasts live from the CKNX studio every Saturday night.

Holly reports that within two weeks of creating the website name "Black Opry," she was overwhelmed with feedback from artists, singers, and fans wanting to pitch in and help the effort toward building a community for the nascent, but long-neglected, group of musicians. So many requests for performances and concerts flooded in that Holly G was forced to hire a booking agent to manage it all.

New Orleans artist Joy Clark said, "It's hard to imagine yourself in a space where you don't see yourself." The Black Opry Revue became a mirror for Black musicians and reflected all the latent enthusiasm and pent-up energy back onto a population wanting to see -and hear- its voice in the music it loved.

And people crawled out of the woodwork to share and contribute to that experience. The Black Opry quickly became a new, welcoming home

for them.

Again, the similarities between what the founding barn dance radio shows meant to white southerners, and what the CKNX Barn Dance meant to rural Canadians, is the same motivation driving people of colour and other marginalized communities to support The Black Opry.

Playing the CKNX Barn Dance was the great ambition of so many local musicians and singers. Reaching its stage was the ultimate achievement and validation of who these musicians were and where they came from. The Black Opry has quickly become something similar Holly G says, "...Well, now we have a community. And when you have a community, your voice is a lot stronger. And when your voice is stronger people hear you."

And just like the Barn Dance, The Black Opry Revue reached its full potential only when it hit the road.

When the Black Opry Revue played a gig at Nashville's *Exit/In* last December, Holly G new her community had arrived. They have since played in Memphis, Houston, Chicago, and Atlanta.

*The Show must go on!*

## THE BARN DANCE MUSEUM

The Barn Dance Museum at 273 Josephine St. Wingham, is **temporarily closed** until further notice. Sorry for the inconvenience.