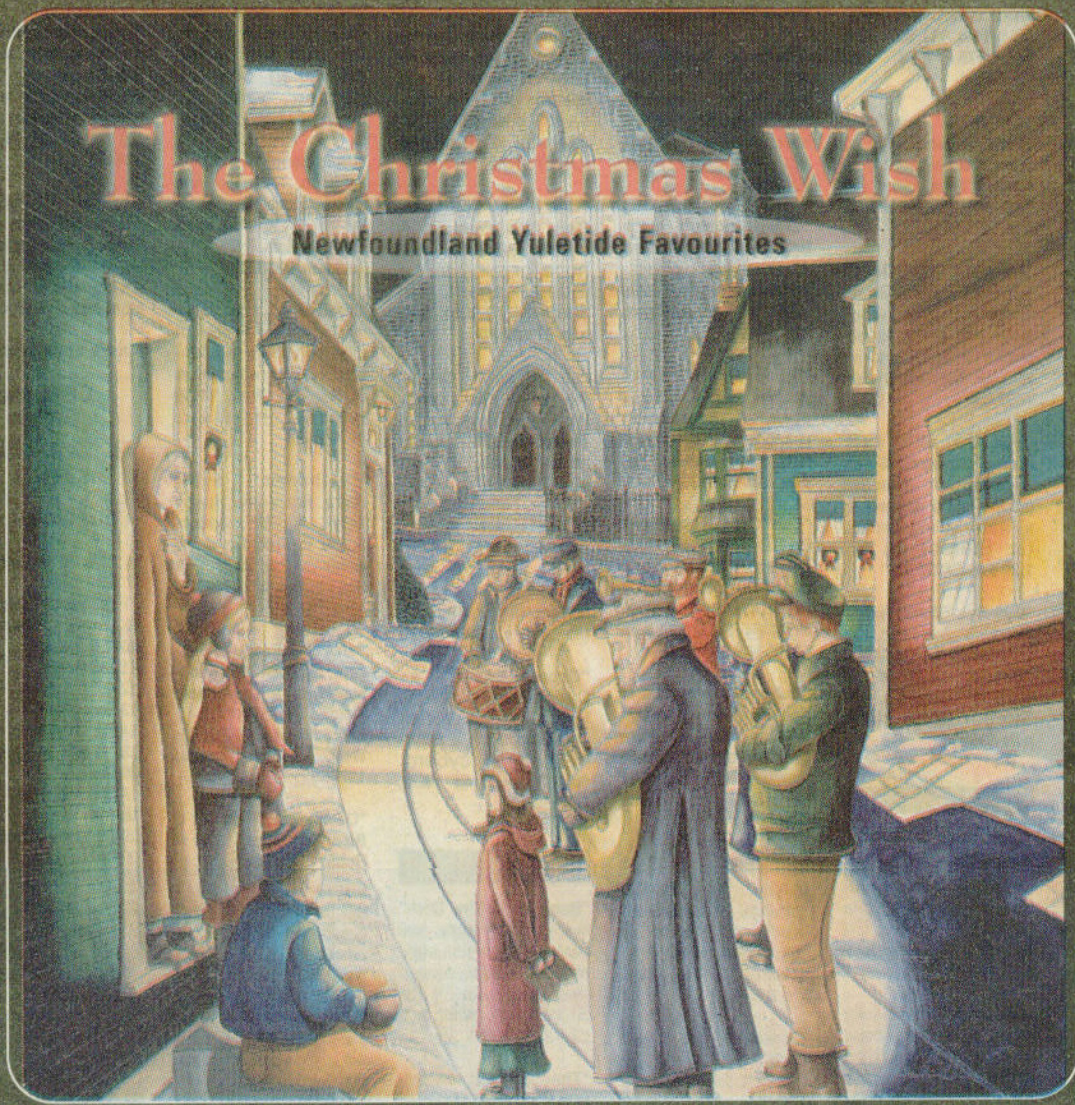


TVweek

THE PEOPLE'S PAPER
The Telegram

Television Listings for the week of November 20 - November 26, 1999



'Tis the Season.

The first Newfoundland Christmas CD of the season is out of the gate. Avalon Music, a relative newcomer to the provincial scene, launches **The Christmas Wish**, a compilation album of seasonal music featuring Newfoundland artists including Great Big Sea, The Fables, Celtic Connection, the Ennis Sisters, Pamela Morgan, the Irish Descendants and more.

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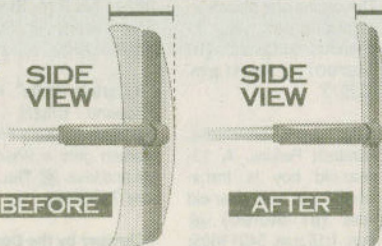
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TV Week/The Telegram

A musical Christmas wish from Newfoundland

By
MARK VAUGHAN-JACKSON
The Telegram

The latest Newfoundland Christmas CD to hit the market is proof that perseverance pays off.

The Christmas Wish, a collection of "Newfoundland Yuletide Favourites" has been on store shelves for more than a week.

Released by Avalon Music, it features the likes of Great Big Sea, Celtic Connection, the Ennis Sisters, Pamela Morgan, the Irish Descendants, Shanneyganock, Tickle Harbour, The Fables, Wince Coles, John Phillips, the Walsh Family and Ray Lake all performing their favourite Christmas music.

The seed of the idea for such a CD has been on KIXX Radio host Tony Hann's mind for several years.

When he mentioned it to Lyle Drake who, with Robert Buck, operates Avalon Music, that seed germinated.

"For to or three years now Tony has been talking about this project that he wanted to have happen, this Christmas record of the better traditional Newfoundland artists on a real trad-type Christmas CD," Drake said. "For a couple of years I've sort of listened to him about that. Then one night Robert and I were just sitting around discussing projects and I said to him 'you know, Tony's got this idea.'"

They discussed it and then went back to Hann and said 'let's do it.'"

This is the first release of its kind for Avalon Music.

Formed a year ago by Buck, who is also part of Tidemark Distribution, and Drake, who also works for Warner Music Canada, Avalon Music is in the specialty field.

It owns the copyrights to several recordings, including some of the Celtic Connection's earlier recordings. Its main business is preparing specialty compilation CDs for the convention market. It has also branched out into specialized laminated products for conventions and other related products. The Christmas Wish marks the first time Avalon Music has stepped into the role of a record label.

As they worked on the project it evolved into something broader than just a traditional recording.

"We've still got some of the traditional Christmas things but what happened was we had some artists who said 'we'd love to write a song for the package,'" Drake said.

Those original songs on this disc include This Christmas Count on Me by John Phillips; Mary's Lullaby, written by Wince Coles and performed by the Ennis Sisters; Let There be Room, written and performed by Coles; Ray Lake's Christmas Memories; Greg Walsh's What Christmas Means to Me; Dermot O'Reilly's Children's Winter, performed by the Celtic Connection; Heading Home for Christmas, performed by the Irish Descendants and



Great Big Sea were one of the first artists to sign on to Avalon Music's **The Christmas Wish** CD project. The band performs **Seven Joys of Mary** on the new disc.

one of the first songs written by Con O'Brien to be recorded.

The mix of traditional favorites, like Silent Night — performed a capella by The Fables — and an arrangement of What Child is this by Shanneyganock, blend well with the original material. And that blend is what Drake and Buck were looking for.

"One thing we really shied away from on this record were the Christmas novelty songs. There's no Jingle Bells, no Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer," said Buck.

"We didn't want Jingle Bells or Frosty the Snowman or any of that really commercial-type Christmas music," Drake said. "We wanted either the old carolling-type Christmas or something that was specific, something that was pretty near and dear to the hearts of Newfoundlanders."

Helping strike that tone is the use of images by Newfoundland artist Richard Steele for the CD cover.

"The cover artwork that we picked really reflects the theme of the album and it was pure accident that it landed that way," Buck said. "We knew what we were looking for but when we met with Richard Steele, he just said 'anything I've got, have a look and see what you think.'"

They picked two of Steele's paintings — Yuletide Interlude for the cover and I Still Believe for the inside of the CD. Now that it's out, Drake and Buck said they're more than happy with their first release as a record label.

The artists approved of the album's concept and came on side, producer Don Walsh and mixer Cory Tetford helped make the recording as good as it could be, and Steele came up with the perfect art work.

Buck and Drake said they hope this new collection will offer people a little variety when it comes to the seasonal music available.

As a side effect, they're hoping the CD will also act as something of a billboard for the artists involved.

In the CD's liner notes, Buck said, they took great pains to give full contact and discography information — where applicable — for all the performers involved.

Drake said they also hope that radio stations looking for something new to broadcast during the approaching Christmas season will opt for this new collection, showcasing as it does some of the province's best.