

## ROCK MEETS BONE PROGRAM NOTES

These twelve half-hour radio programs, broadcast on CKDU-FM in the fall of 1989, are listed in order of their broadcast dates.

### **Rock Meets Bone #1    *WORKING THEATRE*    Sept. 22, 1989**

A literacy program with a twist. Mulgrave road Co-op Theatre collaborated with Guysborough County people to create *Time Out*, a play based on their own lives.

In this program - The Working Theatre Project - is a moving example of grassroots empowerment: an unusual blend of amateurs and professionals, of theatre not for plays, but for people.

For years, Mulgrave Road Co-op Theatre has been involved in many different forms of community-based theatre in northeastern Nova Scotia. In the spring of 1989, in co-operation with Canada Employment, they began working with some local people who wanted to improve their reading and writing skills. As part of this literary upgrading project the participants created, and performed in *Time Out*, a play about a baseball team...

Participants:

Hughie Ashe, Elizabeth Byard, Sue Clyke, Ernie Daniel and Ruth Scott.

Co-ordinators:

Debbie Dort, adult education community worker, and  
Chris Heide, playwright and former Mulgrave Road Artistic Director.

### **Rock Meets Bone #2    *HELEN CREIGHTON*    Sept. 29, 1989**

Nova Scotia Gold, Part One. In this last interview before her death at 90, the renowned folklorist fondly remembers "the fine people" who gave the world their songs and stories. With archival recordings.

Dr. Helen Creighton is perhaps best-known for her discovery of *Farewell to Nova Scotia* which she first heard on a rainy day in 1933. For over 60 years, Dr. Creighton's work as a collector of Nova Scotia's old-time songs and stories has been recognized and admired throughout the world.

As a member of the first pioneer generation of North American cultural explorers armed only with disk recorders and a belief in the importance of oral traditions, Helen Creighton sought out and saved the songs and folklore that form the cultural and spiritual heritage of this province.

Excerpts from her collection of recordings, now housed in the Nova Scotia Archives, are heard in this program, sung by Dennis Smith of East Chezzetcook, Mrs. R.W. Duncan, Mrs. Gallagher of Chebucto Head, Enos Hartlan of Southeast Passage, and William Reilly of Cherry Brook.

The interviewer is Peter Lieberon, a composer living in Nova Scotia (featured in Rock Meets Bone #10).

Helen Creighton:     [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen\\_Creighton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Creighton)

**N.B.**    The original source tapes of the interview with Dr. Creighton are missing.

**Rock Meets Bone #3 CLARY CROFT** Oct. 6, 1989

Nova Scotia Gold, Part Two. Musician, folklorist and educator Croft was the archivist of the Helen Creighton Collection; his performances and reflections illuminate much of her work. With archival recordings.

Born in Sherbrooke, Guysborough County, Clary Croft developed a keen interest in Helen Creighton's collection of old-time Nova Scotia songs while working as a singing troubadour and folklore researcher at Sherbrooke Historical Village. When Dr. Creighton donated her entire collection of Maritime folklore to the Province of Nova Scotia in 1986, Clary was chosen to organize it for the Archives. To his delight he spent two years immersed in her work, cataloguing, describing and preserving over 16,000 items.

As an archivist, teacher, interpreter and performer, Clary Croft carries on Dr. Creighton's work. In his enthusiasm and passion for our cultural heritage he follows her in the tradition of giving back to the community what they both received. He passes on her songs to schoolchildren, educators, folklorists, and the general public throughout Nova Scotia, across Canada, and in the United States.

The interviewer is Peter Lieberon, a composer living in Nova Scotia (featured in Rock Meets Bone #10).

Clary Croft: <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/clary-croft-emc/>

**Rock Meets Bone #4 ROBBIE O'NEILL** Oct. 13, 1989

Leo Kennedy of Canso, an itinerant peddler with cerebral palsy, inspired playwright / actor O'Neill to create *Tighten the Traces, Haul in the Reins*. With music and song by Nathan Curry.

Leo Kennedy was born in 1925 with cerebral palsy, a neurological disorder whose symptoms include impaired muscle function, lack of coordination and spastic movement. Nonetheless, Leo discovered his livelihood early in life and made his living as a door-to-door peddler, travelling throughout northern Nova Scotia and Cape Breton. He was welcomed into homes and admired throughout the region for his gutsy humour and uncompromising kindness.

When Robbie O'Neill performs as Leo Kennedy he walks on stage, introduces himself, and gradually enters Leo's character. His voice changes, his body twists, he hunches over and walks around knock-kneed, punctuating the performance with Leo's own jokes about his disability and sharp bursts of his unique raucous laughter.

When Robbie toured *Tighten the Traces, Haul in the Reins* through Nova Scotia in 1989 he was accompanied by musician and singer Nathan Curry, heard in this program.

Robbie O'Neill: <https://www.nimbus.ca/authors/bio/robbie-oneill/>

**Rock Meets Bone #5 SARAH DENNY** Oct. 20, 1989

Rescued Voices: the transmission of Micmac chant and dance. Sarah Denny chants, and tells her remarkable story to Ruth Holmes Whitehead, ethnologist.

At a time when the Micmac were in danger of losing their culture, a courageous woman called Sarah Denny stepped forward to rescue and revitalize many of their dances and chants. Historically, only men had chanted in public. Mrs. Denny began to realize that the old men who knew the Micmac chants were dying - without passing on their knowledge; she decided to do something about it. She was the first woman to be given permission by the Micmac Grand Council to chant publicly.

A devout Catholic, Sarah Denny was instrumental in collecting and publishing hymns of the Church in Micmac. The more traditional music of her people, however, lay very close to her heart. These chants include welcoming songs, invitations to dance, marriage chants, chants for calling up power and for war, and the chants for the famous Snake Dance.

The interviewer is a friend of Mrs. Denny: Ruth Holmes Whitehead, staff ethnologist at the Nova Scotia Museum.

**Rock Meets Bone #6 GEORGE ELLIOTT CLARKE** Oct. 27, 1989

Black life in Digby County. Poet, journalist and community organizer Clarke's poetry and passion grew from his childhood and work among Afro Nova Scotians.

Born in Windsor Plains, Nova Scotia, George Elliott Clarke first visited Weymouth Falls as an 18-year-old city boy from Halifax, and was enchanted and moved by the community spirit he discovered in this rural village. When he returned to Digby County seven years later it was to a different world. As a community development worker he helped to organize the movement which protested the death of Graham Cromwell, the trial of the man charged with killing him, and the acquittal by an all-white jury. This period became a major influence in Clarke's first major literary success, *Whylah Falls* -

[http://waterfrontviews.acadiau.ca/flash/clarke/clarke\\_whylah.htm](http://waterfrontviews.acadiau.ca/flash/clarke/clarke_whylah.htm)

George's readings in this program are all from this work, which at that time was a work-in-progress titled *Weymouth Falls Suite*. Also at that time he was employed in Ottawa as Executive Assistant to MP Howard McCurdy, who was a candidate for leadership of the NDP.

In 2016, Mr. Clarke was named Canadian Parliamentary Poet Laureate.

George Elliott Clarke: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George\\_Elliott\\_Clarke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Elliott_Clarke)

**Rock Meets Bone #7 TALES UNTIL DAWN** Nov. 3, 1989

Gaelic story-telling, song and music. The Cape Gael Co-op meets in Glendale to talk, sing and celebrate in the old tongue. Organized and translated by John Shaw and Jim Watson.

Scottish Gaelic is a founding language in Nova Scotia; its survival as a community language is one of the little-known cultural and social miracles of our time. Nowhere within Nova Scotia has Gaelic life been more completely maintained than in the Glendale area of Inverness County, Cape Breton. This region's economy has always been based on the primary industries of agriculture and forestry. Here the Gaelic community of Glendale still celebrates its traditions of singing, dance, storytelling, wit and Scottish violin music.

Within Gaeldom the most meaningful expression of culture is a social one, with common living memories and skills shared in a way which all can enjoy. For our portrait of this small rural community we brought together Gaels who have shared the poetry, excitement and depth of their traditions on countless occasions:

Patrick MacEachern, Jimmy MacKay and Johnny Joe MacDonald; joined by the widely-known Middle Cape storyteller Joe Neil MacNeil for folktales, humorous anecdotes and local history; singer Roddy MacInnis with his store of local and Old World songs; and Alec Francis MacKay, a fine Gaelic stylist on the violin - accompanied on piano by Natalie MacMaster.

The format and English summaries are by John Shaw and Jim Watson of Cape Gael Associates Co-operative.

John Shaw: <http://www.ed.ac.uk/profile/john-shaw>

**N.B.** The original ("raw source") Gaelic recordings are on three cassettes: 7A, 7B, & 7C. However, 7A holds only the rough portions of 7B & 7C that were selected for inclusion in the broadcast.

In other words, the complete original recordings are found on 7B & 7C.

This advice applies to the digitized versions as well as the original analog versions on cassette.

(7A was made as a compilation of chosen excerpts for the final version. It was an intermediate step in the editing process, so the editor didn't have to go through all the originals every time a selection was needed.)

**Rock Meets Bone #8 JOE CORMIER / JERRY HOLLAND** Nov. 10, 1989

The migration of two fiddlers. Acadian Cormier left Cheticamp in Cape Breton to make a living in Boston; Holland was born in Boston but made his way "home" to Cape Breton. With pianist Mary Jessie Gillis.

Joe Cormier and Jerry Holland are two of the best-known names in Cape Breton fiddle music. These masters have similar stories: their talents were nourished by a family tradition of music-making, and each realized in his youth that he had to emigrate to flourish. The twist is that they moved in opposite directions.

For Acadian Joe Cormier, born in Cheticamp, the economic hardship of raising a family in Cape Breton drove him to "the Boston states" in the 1960s, where he joined thousands of other expatriate Maritime families.

One of those families was Jerry Holland's. Jerry was born in Boston but realized very early that his heart and his true home was in Cape Breton. So he, too, moved on.

Joe Cormier: <http://www.acadianfiddle.com/artists2/2015/1/29/joe-cormier>

Jerry Holland: <http://www.jerryholland.com>  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry\\_Holland](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerry_Holland)

**N.B.** We chose Jerry Holland's tune *My Cape Breton Home* as the signature theme for *Rock Meets Bone*. Jerry kindly recorded a solo fiddle rendition for our radio series, heard at the beginning and end of every program.

**Rock Meets Bone #9 PHILIP GLASS** Nov. 17, 1989

From New York to Nova Scotia. This acclaimed composer wrote much of his opera, theatre and film music during his past twenty summers on the seacoast of Cape Breton. With excerpts from his "portrait operas."

Philip Glass first arrived in Cape Breton from New York City during the "back-to-the-land" migration in the late 1960s, when he was looking for a quiet place for his children to spend their summers. Although he has faithfully returned every year, his work habits change very little, whether in New York, Brazil or Inverness County.

His first opera, *Einstein on the Beach*, is regarded by some as the seminal music theatre work of our time. That was followed by two more operas: *Satyagraha*, which was about Ghandi, and *Akhmaten*. The music excerpts in this program are from those operas as well as Philip's solo piano recordings.

The interviewers were publisher Sam Bercholz and composer Peter Lieberon.

Philip Glass: <http://philipglass.com>

**Rock Meets Bone #10 PETER LIEBERSON** Nov. 24, 1989

A newcomer's view. Composer Lieberon, who taught music at Harvard, talks about the creative process and Nova Scotia as inspiration. With excerpts from recordings by the Boston Symphony and Peter Serkin.

Before moving to Halifax with his family in 1988, composer Peter Lieberon was Professor of Music at Harvard University. His music first came to international attention in 1983 when his Piano Concerto was premiered by his friend Peter Serkin with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Seiji Ozawa. Peter's move to Halifax was prompted by his appointment as Executive Director of Shambhala Training International, a meditation program founded by his Buddhist teacher, Chogyam Trungpa. One of the orchestral works inspired by this connection was *Drala*, an excerpt from which is heard on this program. Also heard is some of Lieberon's piano music performed by Peter Serkin.

Peter Lieberon: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Lieberon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Lieberon)

**Rock Meets Bone #11 COLLAGE** Dec. 1, 1989

The pains and pleasures of living and making art in Nova Scotia; a collage of anecdote and commentary by artists born here and "from away."

(To clarify any confusion about *Collage* and the program *Introduction to Rock Meets Bone*, listed as #1 on the grey brochure *Rock Meets Bone*: they are nearly identical except for the title, plus a few comments from the producers (Sam Bercholz, Denault Blouin, and Brian Guns). The brochure was produced after the broadcast series had finished on CKDU. It was felt that *Collage* would make an excellent initiation into the style and content of the RMB series that we were promoting to the Maritime Provinces Education Foundation and other institutions. So we tweaked it, renamed it and called it #1.)

This is a selection of in- and out-takes from the entire *Rock Meets Bone* series - a weave of the voices, the music, reflections, passion and tenderness, wit and spontaneous performance that went into the whole collection. A celebration of Nova Scotia culture in 1989 - by hearing, once again, from the artists who create it out of their everyday lives.

Participants: Sarah Denny, Peter Lieberon, Anne Comfort Morrell, Philip Glass, Robbie O'Neill, Gaelic singers and storytellers, Dr. Helen Creighton, Clary Croft, William Reilly, Alistair MacLeod, Debbie Dort, Ruth Scott, George Elliott Clarke, Joe Cormier, John Shaw and Jerry Holland.

**Rock Meets Bone #12 ALISTAIR MacLEOD** Dec. 8, 1989

A Cape Breton Christmas. This major Canadian writer reads *To Every Thing There is a Season*, and pays tribute to Maritime poet Alden Nowlan.

Although Alistair MacLeod's Scottish ancestors migrated to Nova Scotia in the 18th century, he was born on the Canadian prairies. However, his family moved back to Cape Breton when he was 10, and into the farmhouse in [Dunvegan](#), Inverness County that his great-grandfather had built in the 1860s. That Cape Breton environment became the source, the inspiration and the setting for most of his writing for the rest of his life.

Alistair taught English and creative writing at the University of Windsor for over 30 years, returning with his family in the summers to his Cape Breton home - and his writing "castle" perched on a cliff above the ocean, looking out over the Gulf of St. Lawrence and Margaree Island.

Alistair MacLeod speaks of his writing technique, and some of his advice to students in his creative writing classes. Most of this program is occupied by Alistair's reading of his superb Cape Breton Christmas story, *To Every Thing There is a Season*, originally commissioned by The Globe and Mail. He ends with a moving elegy to one of his mentors, Alden Nowlan.

The interviewer is Denault (Denny) Blouin.

Alistair MacLeod: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alistair\\_MacLeod](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alistair_MacLeod)

SUPPLEMENT:  
**“THE STORY OF *ROCK MEETS BONE*”**  
as broadcast on CBC Radio’s *Atlantic Airwaves*

This will provide some context for the production of the *Rock Meets Bone* radio series.

In 1990, the year following the CKDU broadcasts of *Rock Meets Bone*, CBC Radio’s *Atlantic Airwaves*, under the direction of its producer Glenn Meisner, re-broadcast slightly-edited versions of two RMB programs - Sarah Denny: *Rescued Voices*, and Joe Cormier/Jerry Holland: *Migration of Two Fiddlers*.

Glenn Meisner became curious about the inspiration or “backstory” behind our production of the twelve RMB programs, and invited its principals - Sam Bercholz, Denault (Denny) Blouin, and Brian Guns - to be interviewed for a special *Atlantic Airwaves* edition, *The Story of Rock Meets Bone*.

On January 29, 1991, we gathered in CBC Radio’s studio for our group interview conducted by Glenn Meisner. Brian Guns then mixed portions of that interview with excerpts from several RMB programs, and wrote the continuity script for CBC announcer Brian Sutcliffe.

Both the original unedited studio interview (the “Raw Source”) and the finished broadcast aired on CBC’s *Atlantic Airwaves* are included in this collection.