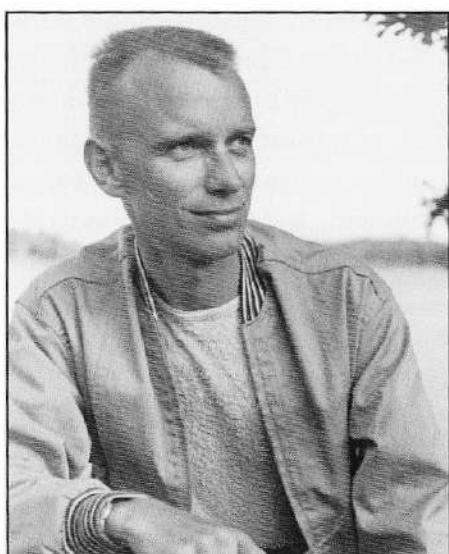


The Remarkable Kenneth Peacock

From: Tarasoff, Koozma J. *Spirit-Wrestlers: Doukhobor Pioneer's Strategies for Living*, Legas: Ottawa, 2002, pages 214-216. — Books added below. See web site: www.spirit-wrestlers.com/excerpts/2000_Obituary_Kenneth_Peacock.html

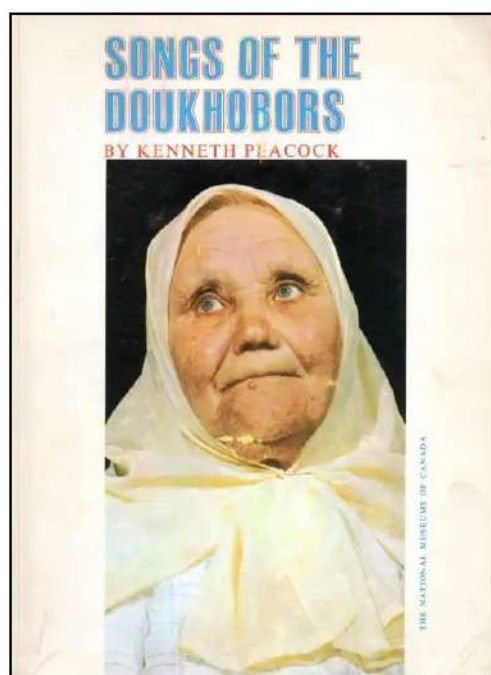
When Kenneth Peacock (1922-2000) first met the Doukhobors and heard their singing in the early 1960s, he was literally blown away 'A vast new dimension opened up', he wrote, and he immediately resolved to study their music and culture in the early 1960s (Tarasoff and Klymasz, 1995:33). Many of his photos and music are used in this book. An outstanding Canadian musician, musicologist and folklorist, Kenneth Peacock received his most recent honors in 1998 when the Folklore Studies Association of Canada awarded him the Marius Barbeau Medal for his major contribution to folklore and ethnology in Canada. In 1982 Canada recognized his pioneering contribution with an Order of Canada. As Doukhobor ethnographer, I had the pleasure of first meeting Ken in the early '60s when he invited me to assist him with pre-research contacts in recording Doukhobor music in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Because Kenneth Peacock died before his time, I want to pay him tribute for his outstanding pioneering contribution to the Doukhobors, by publishing this Obituary that I prepared.



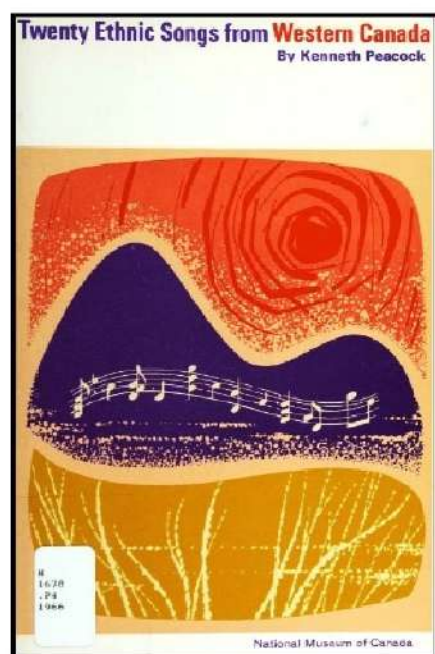
Kenneth Peacock's formal musical training began at the age of five when his parents discovered him at the piano playing tunes he had heard on the phonograph. At the age of twelve he had a juvenile dance combo that played at local school dances and lodge banquets. But classical music was his main interest and he continued playing, composing, and teaching while attending university. At fifteen he graduated from the Conservatory in Toronto and four years later completed the Bachelor of Music course at the University of Toronto. He later studied philosophy, English and anthropology and continued his music studies in Boston and Montreal. His *String Quartet #1* won the McGill Chamber Music Society Award in 1949.

That same year he met Marius Barbeau, Dean of Canadian folklorists. Kenneth worked with him on a number of projects including the transcrip-

Portrait of Kenneth Peacock, ethnographer and musicologist who recorded Doukhobor singing in 1963 and 1964.



Songs of the Doukhobors: An Introductory Outline (Bulletin 231, Folklore Series No.7.1970 — 27 songs, Russian/ English, 167 pages.



Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada, National Museum of Canada. Ottawa, 1966, 91 pages — 5 are Doukhobor songs notated with musical analysis and history.

tion of Indian music from old Edison cylinder recordings housed in the National Museum. Indian music and literature provided the basis of much of his composition during this period. His cantata *Songs of the Cedar*, based on West Coast Indian poetry, was among the compositions chosen to represent Canada for the cultural activities at the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki.

Working for the National Museum of Canada from 1951 up to 1971, Kenneth Peacock's work took him from one end of Canada to the other, often pioneering in areas where folklorists had yet to venture. When Marius Barbeau invited him to go to Newfoundland and begin to record the folk music of the people there, Peacock told Dr Barbeau: 'I don't know anything about recording'. To which Barbeau replied: 'Neither do I. You can improvise as you go along'. Peacock followed his advice.

With tape recorder in hand and a music note pad, his work in Newfoundland launched him as a multi-cultural folksong collector. After more than ten years of research, *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports* was published in 1965 as a monumental three-volume work containing over 800 songs of British, French, Irish, Newfoundland and Gaelic origins. Ken captured the moment when many people were still singing widely especially before the distraction of television. His trip opened the gate for many musicians and singers from the wider world to produce their own works.

In between visits, Barbeau invited Peacock to collect music of Cree, Blackfoot, and other native Indians of the Canadian Plains. Some of these songs along with Newfoundland material were released on two Folkways vinyl's. *Music of the Plains Indians* (1955) and *Songs and Ballads of Newfoundland* (1956) by Ken Peacock based on rare material were taken down by hand in remote areas where lack of electricity prevented the use of a tape recorder. At the end of his Newfoundland research in 1961, a West German film company hired him to make a one-hour documentary on the folk music of Newfoundland which was later broadcast on European television. He was founding member of the Canadian Music Council in 1961 and was commissioned to write an orchestral composition *Essays on Newfoundland Themes* for a special concert devoted to music based on indigenous folk tunes.

In 1962 Peacock set out across Canada to see if it would be feasible to study the folk music of immigrants from Europe and Asia. In his 11,000-mile [17,600 kms] journey he discovered a goldmine of rich materials and spent the following ten years criss-crossing the country digging for traditional music of almost forty cultures. He also began photographing and collecting the rich variety of musical instruments and folk artifacts of these cultures. His pioneering efforts formed the basis for the vastly expanded research and display programs of the National Museums of Canada. To assist this work, Peacock wrote *A Practical Guide for Folk Music Collectors* for use by researchers in the field.

When he first dropped into the Russian Doukhobor communities in western Canada he was touched by the warmth, co-operation, deep faith, and uniqueness of the singers and their voices. He published some of their singing in *Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada* (1966) and then devoted a full book on *Songs of the Doukhobors* (1970). As the first musicologist who transcribed the motifs of Doukhobor psalms into musical notes, he found that their traditional oral literature and music goes back to many centuries and continues to unite all Doukhobors today with beauty, culture, and spirit. One of the psalms he transcribed explains it best: 'The singing of psalms beautifies our souls'.

Garland of Rue (1971) appeared as a collection of Lithuanian matchmaking songs about 'the sad state of marriage'. For Peacock the songs were particularly interesting because the Lithuanian people were Christian-ized only in the 13th century. Many of their songs still contained powerful references to pre-Christian beliefs when trees, stones, the sun and the moon were gods and goddesses.



Folklorist Kenneth Peacock at the microphone with the Doukhobor USCC Youth Choir in Grand Forks, BC, July 1963.

The Canada Music Week *Newsletter* (Nov. 19-26, 1989) made this assessment of Kenneth Peacock: 'Several Canadian composers, including Harry Somers, John Beckwith and Keith Bissell, have made various types of concert settings of his folksongs, sometimes with specific artists in mind such as Maureen Forrester or the Festival Singers. And on a more popular level, professional folksingers have been using his material on recordings, radio and television for over 35 years. It has been said that his pioneering research and publications on so many cultures has contributed much to the current interest in multiculturalism in Canada.'

Kenneth Peacock was an avid reader who enjoyed the company of intellectual and creative peoples. He and composer Harry Somers were students of John Weinzwieg. Although he did not personally know Glenn Gould, the two probably passed each other in the music conservatory's halls at the University of Toronto. Peacock recalls being in Marshall McLuhen's home in Toronto in the 1950s when several professors were deeply engrossed arguing the merits of *Mechanical Bride*. As he was leaving, McLuhen, the master of 'the medium is the message', said: 'Do you know that there is a new toilet paper for executives? It is green in color and smells sweet with chlorophyll. Why? "For kissing sweet".'

During his teens, Peacock recalls when the famous Northrop Frye invited him and other students for classes in his home. 'He was a very kind person', Ken told me, 'but people were afraid of him. He was intelligent and precocious. When dealing with literary criticisms at the table, he often quoted lengthy paragraphs by memory'.

Along with colleagues Marius Barbeau (1883-1969), Helen Creighton (1899-1989) and Edith Fowke (1913-1996), Kenneth Peacock is considered a pioneer in terms of his efforts to research and disseminate music in Canada. He was also influential in the Canadian folk revival movement. His musical talents were greatly appreciated by Helen Creighton who employed him to do most of the transcriptions of her Nova Scotia collection. Also he provided musical transcriptions for Robert Klymasz for some of his Ukrainian publications. His work was readily used by such professional folk song interpreters as Tom Kines and Alan Mills. Mills autographed a copy of his book *Favorite French Folk Songs* (1965) 'To Ken who knows so much more about our songs, than I do, and whose kindness in sharing his knowledge with others is deeply appreciated'.

Although he was not interested in organized religion, Peacock was always interested in spiritual matters and the search of the inner and outer spaces. As time permitted in the 1980s, he went on retreats with a Tibetan Buddhist on top of a mountain in Vermont, USA. His search for simplicity, sincerity, depth of meaning, and beauty were revealed here as they were in his photographic interests that he developed from his youth and later used in his fieldwork.

For many years Peacock used to make his own Horoscopes and often threw *I Chings* for himself or his friends. He once threw one for me to determine whether I ought to go to Smith Falls or Ottawa for an operation on a ripped Achilles tendon. The choice was Smith Falls and the operation was successful.

His personal library was rich with spiritual, occult, and paranormal information, including such authors as Edgar Cayce, Carlos Castaneta, G.I. Gurdieff, Jane Roberts, Bertrand Russel, George Bernard Shaw, Plato, Tao, Aldus Huxley, Henry Thoreau, Norm Chomsky, R.D. Lane, Robertson Davies, Northrop Frye, and many others. Many of these volumes have since been donated to local hospitals.

Ken Peacock's correspondence, essays, and visual and auditory materials of 2,500 songs from the field collections of 552 tape recordings recently formed the *Peacock Papers* at the Saskatchewan Archives in Saskatoon. Earlier his full photographic and audio collection was catalogued and is housed at the Canadian Museum of Civilization in Hull, Quebec. He willed most of his estate to the Faculty of Music in Toronto and the Main Branch of the Ottawa YM-YWCA. The legacy of this talented musician, composer, and folklorist lives on.

Preserving, Developing, Living

Did you know that the word 'preserving' is static? It may even lead to lack of movement and stagnancy. Much better is the dynamic notion of 'developing' and actually 'living our principles'. Just talking about it is not enough. We need to do something more. Remember the saying: 'Words without deeds are dead.' Or, as Peter Seeger once said: 'Kids know, better than grownups, what we do is more important than what we say.'