

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group might never entertain, entertain, or hold the A.A. name in any related facility or outside atmosphere, but problems of money, property, and privilege should be kept separate from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining



Beyond The Law: Jay Young

Interview and Photos by Daniel J. Murphy

Just prior to the start of North Whitefield's monthly contra dance, Jay Young tunes his upright bass and reviews the evening's set list of French-Canadian folk songs. Adjacent to him, Don and Cindy Roy exchange fills on fiddle and piano, while Larry Burkett strums chords on his vintage parlor guitar. Before long, the cavernous hall at the St. Denis Catholic Church will come to life, with rows of dancers of all ages and stripes moving in time to the tunes belted out by the band. The ensemble skillfully recreates lively traditional songs from the past, while also demonstrating their continued vitality, as evidenced by the enthusiastic turnout for the gathering. Young, who practices estate and tax law at LeBlanc & Young in Portland, sat down with the *Maine Bar Journal* to discuss his interest.

MBJ: Please tell our readers about your interest in music.

JY: As a kid, I started playing the violin, but didn't like it very much and stopped before long. I then started playing folk guitar in high school. I wound up playing in rock 'n' roll and blues bands during college and a country western band after college. I went to law school and didn't play anything for three years. Sometime after that, I was in a church choir and the choir director said she found a piece of music that was nice. It had a bass part and she asked if anybody knew someone who could play bass. I said I knew a guy who had an upright bass that I would borrow and learn the part, which I did. I've still got that bass.

MBJ: What kind of upright bass is it?

JY: It's an old German veneer bass, it's not a carved bass. It's decent, but not

great. I'm mostly not playing that bass at this point. I've got another one. That got me started on upright bass, which I've been playing since the late 70s. I've played in bluegrass bands, and I've played some Dixieland. I occasionally sit in on the Irish sessions that take place around town and also with a guy named Dave Beam. Dave runs a session Wednesday nights at Andy's Bar on Commercial Street playing tunes by The Band, Hank Williams, and others. For almost 30 years, I have been playing with Don and Cindy Roy from Gorham. Don is a Franco-American fiddle player and Cindy plays piano. I just enjoy the French Canadian music that they perform.

MBJ: What is it about the upright bass that has drawn you in?

JY: I like the sound. I like playing bass because it's the bottom of the music and you've got to pin down the chord progression and keep time. I like the

upright just because it's so low tech. Electric bass doesn't appeal to me in the same way. I've played electric bass way back when, but I haven't in years.





MBJ: What is it about the French Canadian music that's appealing to you?

JY: It just feels upbeat and it's cheerful. I can imagine the Quebecois folks who came down to Maine to work in the mills, a generation or two or three back. They had tough lives and Saturday night there would be a *soirée* at somebody's house. It was a change of pace and a chance to have some fun. The music is lively and cheerful—it's great stuff.

MBJ: How often do you play gigs with Don and Cindy?

JY: It varies. This month is busy. We are doing some Don Roy ensemble gigs and also have four Fiddle-icious shows. Fiddle-icious is this fiddle orchestra that Don and Cindy started. Fiddle-

icious operates on a cycle. We start in January meeting every other Monday. Don starts teaching people fiddle tunes and there will be around 80 people at a session. There will be a lot of fiddles, occasionally a cello and a bunch of basses. We have had six to seven basses in Fiddle-icious lately, as well as guitars, accordions, penny whistles, and a couple of Celtic harps. By October, we have enough tunes to do a show as well as a series of four Fiddle-icious concerts.

MBJ: Do you enjoy the interaction in playing with other musicians?

JY: Yes, I practically never play alone. I mean, you'd think I would practice now and then, but I don't. So, if I'm not playing with other people, I'm not playing.

MBJ: What is it about playing with others that's special?

JY: It's an interesting phenomenon, playing music with other people. You wind up with this kind of joint mind, creating one music. It's not separate individuals playing separate music. How that happens I don't know, but it's a lot of fun.

MBJ: Have there been any rewarding or memorable gigs for you?

JY: We have played at a bunch of interesting places. Before the Don Roy Ensemble, I played in a small band called the Maine French Fiddlers. The band included about five fiddle players, a guitar, piano, bass, and sometimes

an accordion. That band played Prairie Home Companion a couple of times, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Library of Congress, and a lot of interesting places. At one point, we did a tour through Louisiana.

MBJ: How did you get those big engagements? Those are pretty notable venues.

JY: It started with the Carnegie Hall show for the Maine French Fiddlers. Portland used to have this Portland New Year's event where there would be multiple venues with different bands, jugglers and all sorts of other activities. Bar Graves called up Lucian Matthews and asked him to round up a band of French-Canadian musicians to play at New Year's. So, Lucian rounded up a band that included Ben Gilmet, a notable fiddle player from Sanford. There were about four Sanford guys, Lucian and his nephew Louie, Don and Cindy, and they asked me to play bass. I was sort of their ringer, a non-Franco guy. We played the Portland New Year's event, and a guy named Nick Spitzer happened to be there. Nick Spitzer has a show on NPR called American Routes. Carnegie Hall asked Spitzer to come up with a bunch of musicians to do a concert series for an anniversary. After he heard us at the New Year's gig, he called up Lucian to

invite us to play at the event. So our first gig was Portland New Year's, our second gig was a show we did at St. Joseph's College, and our third gig was Carnegie Hall. Pretty funny.

MBJ: Tell us about the excitement of playing at Carnegie Hall.

JY: It was fun. One of the things I remember about it was they had a sound guy who was one of the best sound guys I have ever worked with. Sound guys vary a lot, and they matter a lot. Essentially when you're playing up a larger room, there's not a direct connection between the band and the audience because it all filters through a sound system. The sound guy controls that filter. If he's good, nobody is conscious of the filter, which means it is almost like you are playing directly for the people in the room. If the sound guy is not good, then the musicians and the audience are conscious of the filter. Carnegie Hall was great in that they were really good at being supportive of the performers. I do not know that we were all that talented, but they acted as if we were, so that was fun. We did a couple of national folk festivals and the sound guys were similar in their approach to supporting their performers.

MBJ: Did you get good feedback from the audiences?

JY: Yes, we did. It was great. Lucian, who has now passed away, was Don Roy's uncle and got Don Roy started on fiddle. You can just trace this tradition back. Lucian's forebears came from the Boseville region of Quebec and they were musicians. Cindy Roy's forebears came from Prince Edward Island, at the far western end where there was still a French enclave that the British didn't drive out.

MBJ: I imagine that the music was an important means of preserving French culture and lore.

JY: It was. There would be these Saturday soirées at somebody's house. Don Roy said to me once that it wasn't until high school when he figured out that not all kids did that on Saturday night. It was just part of his life.

MBJ: Any intersection between your interest in music and the legal world?

JY: Almost none that I can think of. It's a complete change of pace. It just works a whole different part of my brain, playing music. It doesn't feel the same as writing wills.



Daniel J. Murphy is a shareholder in Bernstein Shur's Business Law and Litigation Practice Groups, where his practice concentrates on business and commercial litigation matters.

Beyond the Law features conversations with Maine lawyers who pursue unique interests or pastimes. Readers are invited to suggest candidates for *Beyond the Law* by contacting Dan Murphy at dmurphy@bernsteinshur.com.