

penguin eggs

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Penguin Eggs welcomes news, features and photos, but cannot accept responsibility for any unsolicited material. Please check with the editor prior to submitting any articles or artwork. We publish four times a year: Summer (June), Autumn (September), Winter (December) and Spring (March).

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This magazine takes its name from Nic Jones's wonderful album *Penguin Eggs* — a collection of mainly traditional folk songs revitalized with extraordinary flair and ingenuity. Released in Britain in 1980, it has grown into a source of inspiration for such diverse artists as Bob Dylan, Warren Zevon and Kate Rusby.

Nic, sadly, suffered horrific injuries in a car crash in 1982 and has never fully recovered. In 2010, however, he finally made a brief emotional comeback, performing at several events throughout the summer. His care and respect shown for the tradition and prudence to recognize the merits of innovation makes *Penguin Eggs* such an outrageously fine recording. It's available through Topic Records. This magazine strives to reiterate its spirit.

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Editorial



An interesting article appeared in a January issue of the U.K. daily newspaper *The Guardian*. The headline pretty much sums up the content: 'Celtic Connections to scale back on overseas acts to fight climate crisis'.

The Scottish festival's creative producer, Donald Shaw, described the issue as "the biggest challenge" facing the festival. "We cannot bury our head in the sand. It's not really enough to fly 300 artists from all around the world and justify it on the grounds that art is important. Festivals like this one are going to have to think very seriously about whether we can do that anymore."

Shaw said the move was necessary because it is "the right thing to do. It is the responsible thing to do. We all have to take responsibility for what is happening at the moment."

International musicians performing at Celtic Connections this past January flew from countries from Cameroon to Canada. It's this assortment of talent that makes his festival unique. While we can all sympathize with Shaw's concerns and admire his fortitude, such a plan undoubtedly will alter the widespread appeal of his event—as it would many of our summer festivals.

Yet climate change is real. The science is unequivocal. Disaster looms—a point tragically emphasized recently as the horror of the Australian bush fires unfolded. And

let's not forget that during two of the past three summers in Western Canada, similar fires raged out of control in parched forests, covering the region in dense smoke and, yes, affecting attendance as well as performances at various folk festivals.

We know who the main industrial culprits are. But even sectors of the fossil fuel industry now acknowledge the need for environmental guidelines, as witnessed by Teck Resources Ltd.'s decision to withdraw its \$20-billion Frontier project application in Alberta.

Our folk festivals have long been at the forefront when it comes to recycling, composting, and various other green programs. Solar power, for example, runs the occasional workshop stage PA. Free, cold water filling stations replace plastic bottles. Local public transit takes people to and from events.

If only that were the case on a grander scale. But we live in the second-largest country in the world. Our landmass includes six time zones. From St. John's, NL, to Victoria, BC, is twice as far as it is from St. John's to Glasgow. Flight plays an integral role in all our lives, regardless of the entertainment value of having access to celebrated national and international musicians and singers. Yet our lives are enriched by their appearances. Our festivals, like Celtic Connections, thrive on diversity. Clearly it's currently unrealistic to expect artists not to fly to folk events, especially as we are one of the few industrialized countries on the planet without an efficient national rail passenger service. On Dec. 19, though, aviation history was made in Canada: the first, brief flight in the world by an all-electric plane. It's a tiny step in the right direction.

And as a wise man once said, "a thousand-mile journey begins with a single step."

—Roddy Campbell