

## Where the Rainbow Ends – Songbook



***Flipper Flanagan's Flat Footed Four*** is now in its forty-fourth year of laughing and singing together. Being a Flipper has meant living the dream at the end of the rainbow. We have collected these songs so that you can recognize when life is a pot of gold at the end of your rainbow. Thunder Bay is a magnificent destination for any trip and it is a wonderful home. With many of our songs we invite you to explore all the amazing nooks and crannies.

## The Voyageur

The city's past echoes the life of **The Voyageur**. If you're not here yet, we hope you're traveling home. Bob wrote this song based on the experiences he'd had at Old Fort William Historical Park and while attending rendezvous celebrations throughout Ontario and Minnesota. Jamie applied his linguistic skills to create the French verses. He had help with the grammar and pronunciation and then did his best. Bob plays mandolin in this song, with Brian on bodhran, Jack on bass and Jamie on lead vocals and guitar.

## The Voyageur

Bob Balabuck and Jamie Gerow

*Heave ho, travelling home!  
Our toil is almost done  
This journey's end will reach the Bay  
Before the setting sun  
Before the setting sun*

The mighty voyageurs are we  
Our backs broke with pain  
Water our friend, "La Vieille" our foe,  
Our struggle never wanes.

Mes camarades chantent en cadence  
"C'est l'aviron!"  
Marque le rythme, pagaye  
D'un même façon.

Laden with furs from the west  
Our journey to Fort William  
Rendezvous with distant friends  
In woods of pine and trillium

En avant les canoes  
Le repos et la pipe  
Métis, francais, l'écossais  
Forment tous une équipe

It's not for riches that we seek  
Nor easy life of few  
But adventure in our hearts  
Paddling birch canoes.

Les hivernants, mangeurs de lard,  
Coureurs de bois  
Les engagés et les commis  
Asservi aux bourgeois.



## The Woodstove Song

A campfire sing-along on the shores of MacLeod Lake with the Cormier and O'Quinn families, Newfoundlanders who have found a home in Geraldton, Ontario, was the inspiration for the next song. They shared with us the names of the key working parts of a woodstove and we share those with you in **The Woodstove Song**. Jamie and Brian share the lead vocals in this tune. Bob plays left-handed five-string banjo, Brian plays bodhran, Jamie plays six-string guitar and Jack plays bass on this tune.

## The Wood Stove Song

Bob Balabuck, Jamie Gerow, Brian Thompson and Jack Wall

*Come all you ladies fair  
And listen to our song  
The lesson is important  
You don't want to get it wrong.*

*I love to spend the evening  
In her arms beside the wood stove  
She has to know the meaning  
Of the parts the make it work  
Lifter, leg and poker  
Damper, hole and scraper  
All the things you need to know  
On a cold night with your girl.*

Taffy just won't do it  
Screech might touch her heart  
Porch climber is better  
For the cuddlin' part  
Forget about the lantern  
The light comes from the stove  
Don't forget to stoker  
On cold night's down by the cove.

*Now our lesson's done, watch her belly glow  
Flames jump in the grate and flicker through the door  
The glitter of her coals like the twinkle in her eye  
The porch climber did it's job these memories never die*



Paper sticks and matches  
Piled with special care  
Light it from the bottom  
Use the bellows, give her air  
Smoke goes up her chimney  
Sparks go past her flue  
Reaching in the night sky  
Where stars all shine for you.

Move closer to the hearth  
There are lessons there to learn  
The poker stirs her ash  
To make the fire burn  
The lifter lifts her plate  
And on her stove pipe hole  
You have to use her damper  
When the chimney starts to glow.



# Thompson's Jig

Bob Balabuck



Bob wrote ***Thompson's Jig*** for his friend and fellow Flipper originator, Brian Thompson. Bob usually has his inspirations for fiddle tunes at three o'clock in the morning when he leaps out of bed, grabs his fiddle and begins to play. His wife Susan is an incredibly tolerant woman. She hasn't smothered him in his sleep yet. Then at four o'clock in the morning, Bob phones Jamie and plays the tune over the phone to him. Jamie's wife Mairi is even more tolerant. On this tune, Bob plays first and second fiddle, mandolin and tenor banjo. Jamie plays guitar. Brian's bodhran playing gives it that driving rhythm. Jack plays bass and Dean Hample joins us with his tin whistle.



## Toujours Ensemble

A speech by Michael Ignatieff in 2006 inspired Jamie to write ***Toujours Ensemble***, a song about national unity. We are grateful to Bev White, Carol Volbracht and several Francophone friends who helped Jamie with the French words and pronunciation. They did their best. The errors are all Jamie's.

## Toujours Ensemble

Jamie Gerow

*Toujours ensemble, toujours ensemble,  
We will always be together.  
Toujours ensemble, toujours ensemble,  
From today until forever.*

Voix chantant en harmonie  
Sonnent ensemble en tant qu'une.  
Taper des mains et pieds gambilles  
Coeurs battants le sentier commun

Voices raised in harmony  
Sound as one delivery  
Hearts that drum a common beat  
Clapping hands and dancing feet.

Routes qui courent de mer en mer  
De mon coeur à ton coeur  
De l'ouest en est, chemins de fer  
Liant coeurs et âmes en paix

Roads that run from sea to sea  
Join heav'n, earth and you and me  
Steel rails binding the west to east,  
Embracing hearts to live in peace.



## **The Golf Song**

**The Golf Song** is dedicated to Jamie's friend and neighbour, Paul Dennison. There are few golfers more committed to the sport. This is the story of a thrifty golfer who finds many ways to avoid paying great sums to follow his passion. Besides Bob's playing right-handed banjo on this piece, both Jamie and Bob golf ambidextrously, although badly.

## **The Golf Song**

Bob Balabuck, Jamie Gerow, Brian Thompson and Jack Wall

I ain't payin' green's fees every summer's day  
I'm sneakin' on the back nine when the golf pro looks away  
Please don't ridicule me or my Scottish ancestry  
I'm not cheap, just thrifty 'bout the golf I love to play.

*Fore! Fore! Fore! For a birdie, par or eagle!  
Fore! Fore! Fore! Count each stroke to keep it legal  
Four! Four! Four! At the clubhouse raise a cheer.  
Four! Four! Four! That's the order for our beer.*

I won't be buyin' balls in your fancy golfing shop  
I borrow snorklin' gear to harvest this year's crop  
I hunt for balls in the woods, the search is quite haphazard  
But you can fill a five gallon pail where the water is a hazard.

My clubs are old but they still work, my woods are mad of wood,  
Titanium's for outer space and graphite might be good  
I play the game both left and right, my irons are mismatched,  
Divots fly either way, I leave the fairway patched.

The way I golf is free; I don't get in a flap  
It's all the same, a hole in one or three strokes in the trap.  
I don't cheat and I don't swear and I don't get upset.  
Play it where it lies, I say, how good can this life get.

## Where the Rainbow Ends

***Where the Rainbow Ends***, our title song, is a tune about optimism and recognition that the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is right here in front of us. Bob is playing right-handed banjo where the rainbow ends.

## Where the Rainbow Ends

Jamie Gerow, Brian Thompson and Jack Wall

Outside's looking good from the inside  
But inside don't seem the place to be  
My soul's been sold for a paycheque  
Inside my head a voice screams for relief...  
...and it says...

*Don't bet on the future, 'already lost the past  
Inside lane is slow, the outside's way too fast  
Keep drivin' down the middle  
You're standin' where the rainbow ends.*



Saved all my things for hopes and better  
Waitin' for my ship to come in  
While the sun sewed diamonds on the water  
I held a raincoat against the storms of sin

Funny how we get to where we end up being  
In spite of dreams of mice and men  
Better check out the road you traveled  
Hopin' it ends at home.

*Don't bet on the future,  
You're standin' where the rainbow ends...*



## **The Sisu Chainsaw Store**

Laurie's Hardware that used to be on Bay Street in Thunder Bay was a congregating point for gentlemen holding court in the Finnish language. It was the inspiration for **The Sisu Chainsaw Store**, an imaginary place where all the Finnish jokes come true. We deliver them with the utmost respect. Bob's left-handed banjo can be heard with the guitar from Jamie, mandolin for Brian and Jack on bass.

## **The Sisu Chainsaw Store**

Jamie Gerow and Brian Thompson

*Spend some time with the chains and blades  
The oil, the files and the sharpening gauge,  
Good friends you made at the Sisu Chainsaw Store.*

There's Weino the Fearless who let down his guard  
ADrinks now and then, down the street at the bar  
The waitresses know when he orders here  
One finger held high means a round of four beer

There's Sulo the Simple who didn't understand  
His chain was slower than cutting by hand  
Back to the store 'cause he was annoyed  
When they pulled the cord he said, "Hey what's that noise"

If you're there for lunch you take the risk  
Eating moyaka and steamed lutfisk  
Usi cooks for a friend or two  
Be brave 'cause your soup's lookin' back at you

Close the shop; go to Laurie's if you wanna  
'Cause every night, he's make-a da sauna  
Birch switches good for the skin you know  
Then run out naked, jump in the snow!

*Si....su...sisu, sisu,, Si....su...sisu,  
Si...su, Sisu Chainsaw Store.*

## Whalen's Ride

Bob did considerable research and reminiscing to write **Whalen's Ride**, the century long history of the tug boat that is now on display on the Kaministiquia River. The Whalen's role as our local icebreaker is fondly remembered by the band members who watched it while standing on the ice in the harbour. Bob would like to thank Jeff Sumner of the Thunder Bay Historical Museum for help with the research and John Curnew for inspirational words and insights. Bob plays left-handed banjo on this song. Jamie plays six string guitar and sings the lead vocals. Brian plays mandolin and Jack plays bass.

## Whalen's Ride

Bob Balabuck

*Ride, Whalen, ride  
On the mighty Great Lake's waters  
Glide, Whalen, glide  
Doin' what you ought to  
On the mighty Great Lake's waters.*

For nigh on eighty years she made pathways in the harbour  
Ploughin' through the ice at ten miles an hour  
Nicknamed "Mighty Atom" by the good man Russell Brown  
She'd tear the ice like crimped rice  
And sail on back to town.

With tons of steel chain on her iron stern did go  
Her bow up high and proud as thick ice smashed  
below  
From rivers Kam and Mission belching thick black  
squall  
The Whalen tugboat harbour bound  
Safe passage one and all

So to the mighty Whalen we now raise our glass  
A noble symbol of our bay as history comes to pass  
On land tourists stand to look the Whalen o'er  
As aging men n their wake  
Watch silent from the shore



## Mike the Pike

We need to go fishing more and reading the works of Bernie Schneiders and Gord Ellis over the years have told us about all the fishing trips we missed. **Mike the Pike** is a testament to the conundrum that all fish must experience when we present them with that tantalizing lure. Bob's banjo of choice for this tune is right-handed. Jamie is playing guitar and the slide licks. Brian is playing a Remo pocket shaker with Jack on bass.

## Mike the Pike

Jamie Gerow and Brian Thompson

For a hundred years, king of the lake,  
Suckers and walleye, minnows and fries,  
Few left living, in his wake,  
Mike's so big, he's the angler's prize.

*Charge the boat, bite the line  
Tail dance, dive and wait,  
Shake the hook, steal the bait,  
That's the fight of Mike the Pike.*



Mike the Pike, doin' his dance  
On shoals and reefs, around the lake  
Lie in ambush, or seek romance  
Grab'em and eat'em, swallow them whole  
His last day on earth was perfect bliss  
Found Little Miss Pike, her gills all flared  
Dinner or date, he couldn't miss  
Such was the life of Mike the Pike.

Instincts conflicted, he gave her a glance  
Swallow or court her, what to do?  
Decision made, on with the dance.  
She'd be his bride that afternoon.  
Evolution's rhythm, his tail did beat,  
But hunger grabbed him, he changed his mind  
Shock and surprise at his defeat  
He'd been hooked by a hooker at the end of a line.





## **Nakina! Nakina!**

Bob Balabuck

When we played for the Nakina, Ontario eighty-fifth anniversary, Bob had to cover for a string break. This banjo tune evolved from that moment and we soon added the call ***Nakina! Nakina!*** during practices and performances. Bob plays left-handed banjo and mandolin in this version. Jamie plays six-string guitar, Jack plays bass and Brian plays mandolin. Dean Hample adds the fine fiddle solo to round out the tune.



## Widow's Watch

In coastal towns, whether by the sea or on the shores of the damn big lake, houses near the shore often have railed platforms built on or into the peak of the roof. These rooftop platforms are called **Widow's Watch** and inspired Jamie Gerow and Dean Hample to write about the suffering of the seafarers wives, waiting for the returning ship or the tragic news.

## Widow's Watch

Jamie Gerow and Dean Hample

Well he's off just once more with his wave to the shore  
And his off hand remark, "Don't you worry."  
But the work with the crew's the only way to make do  
So she tries hard not to show it.  
And when the winds whip the tide  
Tears form in her eyes 'cause she knows it's spring time again  
Once again he will make a line through those waves  
And leave her 'til autumn

*For the love a fisherman she'll wait on the piers  
For the love of a sailor she'll shed salted tears  
For the love of the ocean they pay with their years  
Sacrificed youth on those waters.*

Now the town late at night is a beautiful sight  
With the boats asleep in the bay  
Alone on the beach she walks out to the reach  
And stares out to the sunset  
Somewhere tonight til dawn's early light  
He'll lay awake dreaming about her  
With the ache to his bones, he'll wish he was home  
And once more beside her.

Now up on the roof where the pigeons do roost  
Is a door that leads to the sky  
And a small plank platform where the boardwalk's all worn  
By her mother and grandma before her  
She looks out to the sea and knows all too well  
That the news that is so late in comin'  
Is all words that will break her heart in their wake  
When her widow's watch vigil is over.



## Tall Ships

When Jamie and his friend Rod Jackson were performing as “The Overlanders”, they waxed nostalgic for the days of wind and sail and wrote **Tall Ships**. Thanks Rod, we need to write some more. Bob plays mandolin on this piece. Jamie plays twelve string guitar and sings the lead vocal. Brian plays bodhran and Jack plays bass.

## Tall Ships

Rod Jackson and Jamie Gerow

Give me the salt sea air me boys  
And a star bright sky at night  
I long to feel the swaying deck  
And the wail when the sheets are tight.

*No joy for the landlocked sailor  
No place in this harbour town  
Sit with me lads and hear my tale  
And buy me another round.  
And the tall ships are callin me  
No matter where I roam  
And the Tall ships are calling me  
No port will I ever call home.*

Set sail from the River Clyde  
Bound For Galloway  
But a gale fast came upon us  
So we anchored in Oban Bay

So join me in this song me boys  
While I wait for the sea to rest  
And pray for the wind to fill me sails  
Come blowing from the west.

When a frigate heels into the wind  
And the bow pounds through the swells  
I'll know the joy of the open sea  
'Til I hear the last eight bells.





## The Outlaw Bridge

**The Outlaw Bridge** was the first connection over the Pigeon River between Fort William, Ontario and Duluth, Minnesota. Legend has it that the bridge was designated "Outlaw" because the likes of Capone had used it for smuggling during Prohibition. In truth neither government sanctioned the bridge when the Rotary Clubs built it to facilitate their meetings. Jack has fond memories of this great place to gather and party. Bob plays left-handed banjo on this rousing bluegrass tune.

### Outlaw Bridge

Jamie Gerow and Jack Wall

*Heading to the Outlaw Bridge  
Find some honeys at the Outlaw Bridge  
That booze from cross the Pigeon  
Seem to double up my vision  
There's a party at the Outlaw Bridge*

Friday night there's always a dance  
With Devon Road girls you get a chance  
To go behind the hall and get a kiss  
When you're done, you've had your fun  
You tell her that she's number one  
Then go on back to find another Miss  
All night long you stamp your feet  
Dancin' to that border beat  
Goin' on to midnight just like this.  
When Devon's done, there's Poplar Creek  
And Sheriff Light he's watchin the street  
As the boys go down to make a liquor run

On Sunday mornin', comin' to,  
Don't know what you're gonna do  
About that hammer pounding in your head  
You find a honey in your arms  
In the morning light she's lost her charms  
When her Pa shows up you're sure that you are dead.  
And by the Pigeon you find religion  
Say your prayers and make a decision  
To head on back to that border bridge.  
Safe again in Nolalu,  
Knowin' what you gotta do  
Before you ever go back there again



## **Chekai, Chekai Boychek**

While working in a hospital, Brian met an ancient gentleman who told Brian how he had been a cowboy and explained that the language of Canadian cowboys was Ukrainian. ***Chekai, Chekai Boychek*** or *Wait, Wait Little One* captures the spirit of those times and the hardships that all new Canadians must experience. The song ends with a version of the Kolomyjka which was taught to Bob by his father. It may have come from the West Carpathian mountains, but Bob learned it in Westfort from his father Walter Balabuck, to whom this version is dedicated.

## **Chekai! Chekai! Boychek!**

Brian Thompson and Jamie Gerow

*Chekai! Chekai! Boychek!  
How are you tonight?  
Chekai! Chekai! Boychek!  
It's lonely tonight.  
Riding in the Canadian West  
Dreaming of the Ukrainian Steppes.*

His bride at the church, the love of his heart  
Promised to follow and make a new start  
Put down his sabre and picked up a rope  
Memories of Kyiv in this new land of hope

Dreams of her face in Odessa's sun  
When he held her softly, tears had begun  
At night round the fire the mandolin  
Joined by bandura and sweet violin...

Dreams of the Ukraine to keep him warm  
Long lonely nights in Saskatchewan  
Red boots for dance, black for the ride  
Made Cossack-style in soft supple hide.

"The moon is the Cossack's sun!" pappa said  
Ride fierce in battle and smile til you're dead  
Hide pain and sorrow just as a man must  
Dance the hopak, kick up prairie dust.

