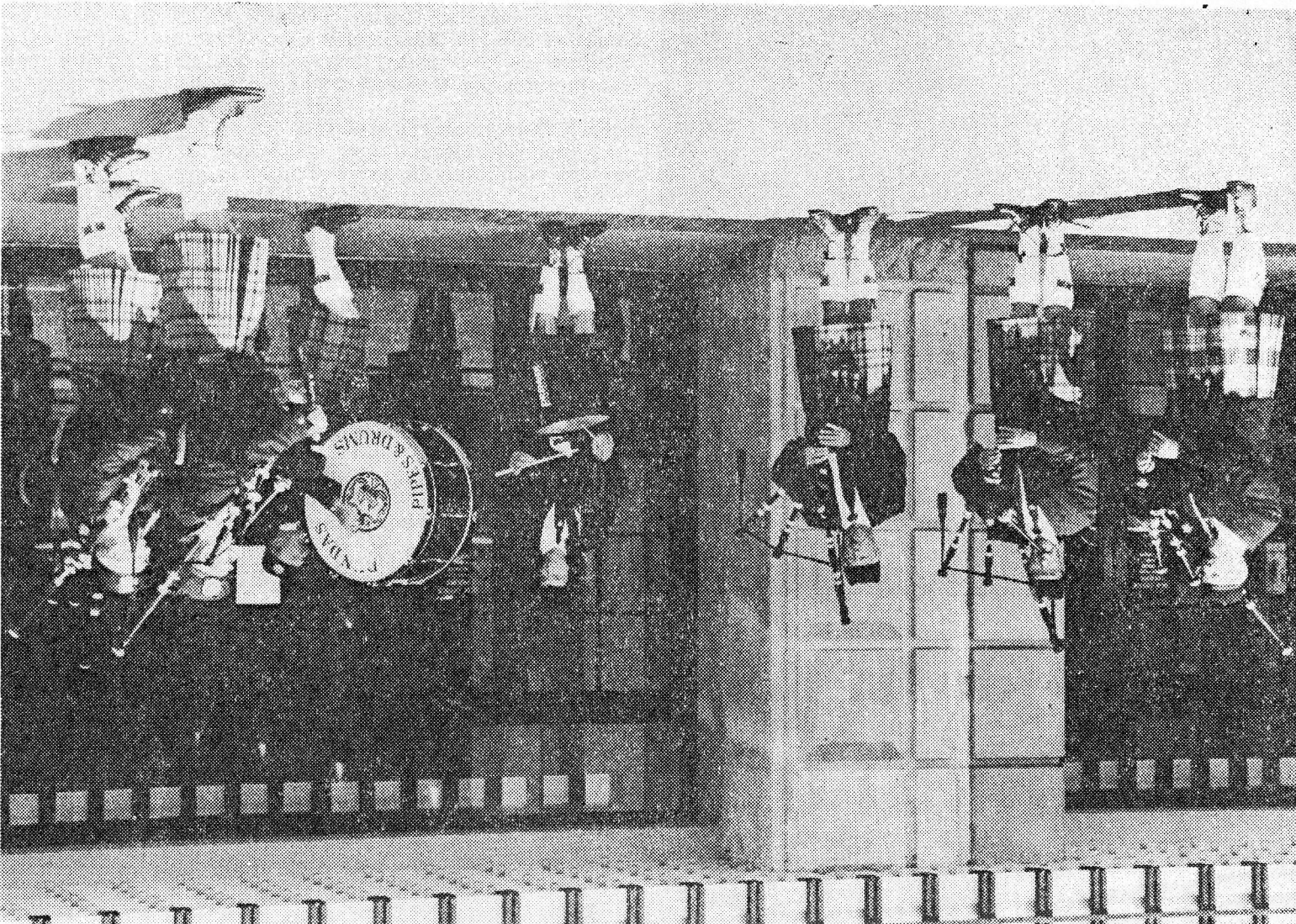


Toe-tapping fiddle music raises curtain on city Scottish Festival

Pipers get this week's annual Scottish Festival off to a start Sunday at the Sanderson Centre.

Expositor Photo



By Sheena McKinnon, For The Expositor
In order to get the Scottish Festival under way this year, organizer Andy McDonald arranged for something just a bit different.

Making their first appearance in this city on Sunday were the Cape Breton fiddlers, accompanied by Bobby Brown and his Scottish Accent band.

Members of the Dundas Pipe Band were also on hand to give the afternoon show at the Sanderson Centre the proper Scottish Festival flavor.

The pipe band will be at the all other events of the festival which resumes Thursday. Celebrity haggis eating, with CBC radio personality Bill McNeil, will be held Thursday night at Waterfront Park which is also the site of Tartan mini-golf Friday.

Saturday the festival moves to the Civic Centre for dancing competitions and the Irene King concert.

Sunday's show was a combination of hootenanny, square dance tempo, Scottish country dance music, pibroch (traditional bagpipe music), and offbeat Scottish humor — but for three hours, it was light-

hearted, at times sentimental, entertained.

The audience, although small, was more of a "down east" crowd, obviously delighted with the Cape Breton fiddlers — and rightly so.

This quartet — John Donald Cameron, Wilfred Gillis, John Cote and Carry Pizzarello — could almost set the flowers on the carpet to dancing.

Add the great backup music of Bobby Brown's band, and you had to resist the temptation to call for a dance set. Being a Canadian audience, resist they did, and it took quite a while to get some hand-clapping and toe-tapping under way.

'Fiddle-agility'

It was a treat to watch and listen to fiddler Carry Pizzarello, not only during his excellent solo rendition of the Hungarian dance "Czardas", but throughout the entire show. He seemed to be really enjoying himself.

Wilfred Gillis also demonstrated his "fiddle-agility" as he zipped through some Old Tyme Fiddle Tunes, his own compositions.

But for sheer versatility, one has to give

credit to the members of the Scottish Accent. Leader, manager, pianist, accordionist, and would-be comedian Bobby Brown, is well known in the Scottish dance circuit for his musical excellence.

When she isn't pinch hitting for Bobby on the accordion or piano, Kathleen Frazer turns vocalist, giving recognition to Rita McNeil with the singing of "Home to Cape Breton".

Drummer Warren Beesley serves as part-time vocalist as well. He, too, offered a Canadian composition, one by the late Stan Rogers, a tale of the ship The Mary Ellen Carter.

When Warren is singing, Laird Brown takes over on drums. Don Wood not only plays bass, but also is the band's sound consultant. All of this is co-ordinated by Blair Scott.

More grass roots than sophistication, an oasis from the ghetto blasters, this program accomplished its goal. It entertained — and you didn't have to be Scottish to enjoy it. Bobby Brown suggested that they might come back next year. I hope they do.

Sheena McKinnon is a freelance writer from St. George.