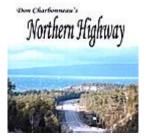
Mp3 Don Charbonneau's Northern Highway - Folk: Gentle



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Canadian Folk Music to add to your collection with a sprinkle of Northern stars, big crashing Lake Superior waves, colors of the fall, rugged coastline and leaky boats. 13 MP3 Songs FOLK: Gentle, FOLK: Traditional Folk Details: Northern Highway The last link of the Trans-Canada Highway was finally opened in 1960 making Canada accessible by road from coast to coast for the first time. Highway 17 North from Sault Ste. Marie to Wawa proved to be the most difficult and costly to complete. The section of highway between Montreal River and Wawa was said to have cost a million dollars a mile. This part of the Trans-Canada Highway became a very popular tourist route featuring the incredible Lake Superior Coastline as a backdrop. It was traveled (and still is) by people from all over the world and from all walks of life. This highway has inspired many artists to write songs and poetry, and to photograph and paint the landscape. I decided to write a collection of songs that reflects some of this northern highway's history. The story begins in Agawa Bay and ends near Thunder Bay with a song dedicated to the memory of a great Canadian folk hero, Terry Fox, who left us with a million dreams. Inspiration What inspires someone to write a song, paint a picture or tell a story. For me that's an easy question to answer. I live in an area of Northern Ontario that is beautiful, and pristine. The people that live and work here still have that pioneer spirit that developed this country and they all have a story to tell! The Songs Agawa Bay: We had a High School reunion in Wawa a couple of years ago (50th) and I was invited to participate in a craft show that was being held at the school. I overheard a conversation about a father asking his son to scatter his ashes in Agawa Bay once he had passed away... I worked at Agawa Bay Park back in the early seventies and still stop there when traveling this part of Highway 17. The sound the wind makes blowing through the pines with the waves breaking on the shore...what a symphony! This place just feels really good. I was happy to hear that violin player Don Reed would be available to play on this album. Don has

performed with many musicians including Dwight Yoakam. He plays his violin on Agawa Bay and 1959. The Mary Jo: I got the inspiration for this song after reading a small Wawa history book written by local historian, Johanna Rowe. The story is set in the mid 30's and is about two passenger-supply boats (the Caribou and the Manitou) that made regular trips to Michipicoten Bay. These ships sailed from Owen Sound and often made their way to Michipicoten Island and the Pukaskwa delivering supplies and passengers. These boats docked at "Government Dock" on Michipicoten Bay. Their arrival was welcomed by many people who would travel from Wawa by car(a long trip in those days). Part of the old dock pilings can still be seen at this historical site situated at the mouth of the Michipicoten River. Land of the Cree: My wife Jude and I have been attending a craft show in Moosonee Ontario for the last couple of years. We both really enjoy this trip which takes us on Highway 101 East to Chapleau, Folyet, through Timmins and then Highway 11 to Cochrane Ontario. Here our van is loaded on The Little Bear Express for a four to five hour train ride to Moosonee. The historical Moose River located directly in front of The Polar Bear Lodge where we stay was an important trading route and was known has the fur highway connecting James Bay to Lake Superior. Moosonee is home to the Cree First Nation and is steeped in native lore, culture and tradition. I was sitting in my room overlooking the river when a huge flock of Canada geese landed. I wondered where they were coming from and I wrote this one line..."using well worn celestial paths they migrate from land to land"... George From Moosonee: George is a real person and you'll find him singing and playing his guitar whenever there's a social gathering and busking at the railway station during tourist season. Here is how I first heard and met George: I was busy in my craft booth last year at the Moosonee Trade Show which is held at the local arena. All of a sudden I could hear someone singing... an old Hank William's tune. I looked up on a stage set up above the penalty box and there stood this gentleman in front of a microphone singing. You couldn't hear his guitar because it wasn't amplified. He kept on singing old country tunes one after another-it was incredible! I enjoyed George's music and decided to write the song. Mystic Isle: I visited Michipicoten Island several times in the late sixties. I have many fond memories of this mystic isle and one day will make another voyage. This song is dedicated to all those mariners that travel the magical waters of Gitchee Gumme in their fragile crafts! My grandaughter Alex Charbonneau added background vocals to this song. Still a Friend to me: Long term relationships seem to be rare in this new age. This song is dedicated to my best friend and my wife Jude. Written at the kitchen table a few years back and recorded with voice and guitar only. The Ballad of Tom

and Melissa: I wrote this song after listening to an interview that Shelagh Rogers had with Tom and Melissa Gallant last fall on her CBC radio show "Sounds Like Canada". I was really moved listening to their incredible story. I pulled my vehicle over and decided to write down a few notes and this song was created. The following is a from a preview of the book Tom wrote: "... Tom and Melissa Gallant sat in their car at an intersection outside Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, one early summer evening in 1992. After a decade of romance and adventure, they were at a crossroads in their lives. Melissa wanted to settle down and start a business. Tom wanted to sail their schooner around the world. They had decided to go their separate ways. As they entered the intersection, one notorious for brutal accidents, their car was hit by a bus. When Tom woke up in the Fisherman's Memorial Hospital and asked about Melissa, all anyone could say was, "It doesn't look good." She was in intensive care in Halifax. She was in a coma, being kept alive by machines. This is the story of what happened in the months that followed. It is also the story of a love affair full of high seas adventure and romance, of life lived far from the conventions of polite society. It is the tale of two lives shattered in an instant, forever changed by an unmerciful twist of fate. Melissa's brain had suffered a catastrophic trauma. When she woke from the coma, she would not know who she was or who Tom was. She would be unable to talk, walk or feed herself. Theirs was a love facing the greatest of challenges. This is a book about redemption conferred by accepting the hardest things in life with an open heart..." Tom and Melissa survived the accident and continue on their journey! Northern Highway: Hwy 101 East is a nice little highway that weaves it's way across the Arctic and Atlantic watershed line. We were coming home from a show late last summer and ran into a big rain storm. The weather cleared and we enjoyed a beautiful northern moon illuminating the tamarack and jackpine that line this highway and later were treated to a great light show. We had traveled this same road going in the opposite direction a few days before and had the opportunity to see a few bears, moose and a rare sighting of an eagle. The Hills of Agawa: Lawren Harris (member of the Group of Seven) first came to Algoma in May of 1918. He was recovering from a nervous breakdown that was brought on by the death of his good friend Tom Thomson who drowned in Canoe Lake Algonquin Park in July of 1917 and his younger brother Howard who was killed in action in February 1918. Harris fell in love with this wild country. He returned here to paint on many trips and brought along these other members of the group, A.Y.Jackson, J.E.H. MacDonald and Frank Johnston on sketching trips in Algoma. These artist went on to paint some of the best work of their careers - here in Algoma and the Hills of Agawa. Benjamin's Dream: I

knew nothing about Benjamin Chee Chee until two years ago when a couple came into our craft store in Wawa. It was still early in the tourist season and the shop wasn't very busy. I had just finished putting up some of Sky Polson's art work and the gentleman commented on Sky's art and told me it remind him of Benjamin's Chee Chee's work. He began telling me a story about when he lived in Ottawa years before (This man was in his mid-seventies) and had a friend there that bought many of Chee Chee's sketches. Benjamin would show up at a local hotel (usually on a Friday or Saturday and would have some his work for sale) Many native and non native artists struggle to make a living with their art and will make use of different types of venues to sell their work-sometimes even door to door. Benjamin Chee Chee had a short career as an artist but left us with with many beautiful pieces of his world. This song is dedicated to him and these other native artists, Norval Morrisseau, Sky Polson and Leonard and Carl Beam. -Thank you for sharing your vision and leaving us with a part of your world! 1959: I spent my childhood growing up in a few northern communities. We lived in Cache Bay Ontario for a number of years. This small village is situated on the north shore of Lake Nipissing. I remember when the first drive-in movie theatre was built on Highway 17b between Cache Bay and Sturgeon Falls. A few of us would sneak around a farmer's field and watch all the action on the old silver screen - with no sound of course! This song is for my mother Claudia Charbonneau-she always makes me smile! Oiseau Bay: Oiseau Bay is situated on the Lake Superior coastline east of Terrace Bay. I spent quite a bit of time at Otter Head Cove and the Puskaskwa area years ago. I have written a few songs about my travels and experiences in that area on my first album Songs From The Coastline. I was in White River a couple of years back playing at a house party and someone shared a story about her grandfather trapping the Oiseau Bay area during the depression. My grandfather trapped around the same time in the (land of the white moose) Foleyet area. He didn't make a whole lot of money but was able to keep his family fed during those rough depression years. My daughter Dawn sings background vocals on this song - her great grandfather would be proud! Running Free This song was written after a trip to Thunder Bay my wife and I took last spring. At the time there was a lot of news about the 25th Terry Fox anniversary. Terry did make a stop here in Wawa and my wife shared some of the stories she had heard and asked me to consider writing a song. There have been so many stories written about this incredible Canadian that I wasn't sure I could add anything new. That same night we were watching the news on television and a short video clip of Terry came on. It was early morning and a fog was lifting. Terry was running up a hill and looked like he was

really struggling and I realized that he was trying to accomplish an almost impossible task and was quite determined to do just that! I really enjoyed writing this song and never tire of performing it.

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