

# IANA dedicates Fiddling Fest to Charlie Peter

Charlie Peter, Athabascan fiddler, loved music. As he said in an interview, "Music, it never get old. But you and I we get old, but not music. Some people they like to go on the snow-go or baseball game, but me, what I like in this world is music. I like Music."

Charlie Peter passed away this year but his influence on Athabascan musicians continues. The Institute of Alaska Native Arts is honoring Charlie Peter by dedicating this year's "Third Athabascan Old-Time Fiddling Festival" to his memory.

Charlie Peter, born in 1902 at a fish camp several miles south of Fort Yukon, was the son of Peter O'William and Belle Alexander. He recalled the first fiddler he had heard, an Athabascan Indian by the name of Jacob Luke. Charlie wanted to copy him. Charlie's father made him a fiddle out of a maple syrup can and picture cord wire using thin willow and twine for a bow and pitch for resin. Even though his playing gave his mother headaches and he was told often to stop, he never gave up trying. A teacher at Fort Yukon who played piano taught Charlie how to read music, which he appreciated. Eventually Charlie had a real fiddle to play.

He continued to learn by listening to fiddlers: Jacob Luke, Alexander John, Artie Linkletter and Charlie Loola. By the time he was 79 years

old in 1983, Charlie estimated he had been playing for public audiences for over 50 years. He not only played for live audiences but portrayed "Sammy Sam," a fiddler, in the feature length film *Spirit of the Wind*, recently re-released as *Attila*. Some of his tunes were also included in the album "Music of the Alaskan Kutchin Indians."

He willingly donated his time to entertain people, playing for special events and holidays at Fort Yukon, Arctic Village, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Fairbanks and even Seattle. About 10 years ago he and his wife Agnes moved to Fairbanks to live. Charlie was one of the first fiddlers that the Institute of Alaska Native Arts invited to perform at the 1st Athabascan Old-Time Fiddling Festival. He happily accepted that invitation and the invitation the following year for the 2nd festival.

Agnes Peter remembers her husband as hardworking, making sure the family was well supplied with firewood, and a man who loved to hunt and watch baseball games. He liked to watch the Goldpanners play, and attended many of their games. If he enjoyed baseball as much as he enjoyed fiddle music, the Goldpanners had a great fan.

Charlie Peter is survived by his wife Agnes, and sons: Tommy Peter, Larry Peter, Melvin Robert, Gordon Robert,

Joe Druck; daughters: Marian Ginnis, Mildred Peter; 15 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

We will all miss hearing Charlie Peter play at this year's Athabascan Old-Time Fiddling Festival but his music will be heard through other musician's tunes. He knew all the tunes, his favorites being Cherry Waltz, Three O'Clock In The Morning and Tennessee Waltz. He eagerly volunteered to play, even offering to play with an interviewer, saying, "If you play fiddle I'll play with you right now. We'll play some polka." So we honor Charlie Peter's love of fiddling and music by dedicating this year's festival in his memory.

The 3rd Athabascan Old-Time Fiddling Festival is scheduled for November 14-16, 1985 in Fairbanks at the Eagles Hall.

This year the festival has been extended to include a day of workshops on dance step instruction on Thursday the 14th. Pre-registration will be required for the workshops on dance step instruction of Thursday the 14th. Pre-registration will also be required for the workshops which will be held at the Eagles Hall. As in past years, the festival will include day performances and evening dances on the 15th and 16th. The evening of the 16th will have a complete list with scheduled performances, profiles of musicians and photographs.

Tickets for daytime performances, evening dances and the banquet dinner will be available for sale at the Institute's office at 524 Third Avenue on November 5th. Tickets for past festivals' dances have sold out within a half an hour after doors opened.

Jean Flanagan Carlo, Executive Director of IANA stated, "The Institute is very pleased to announce that this year, in addition to grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Alaska State Council on the Arts, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough, IANA has received generous corporate support from Doyon Ltd., the Native regional corporation based in Fairbanks."

The Institute of Alaska Native Arts is a statewide Native arts organization with non-profit status which advocates for and provides services and programs to Aleut, Eskimo and Indian artists. The Institute receives support from the State of Alaska Department of Education, Division of Museums, Alaska State Council on the Arts, National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency and private contributions.

For more information and to register for the dance workshops, contact the Institute of Alaska Native Arts at 524 Third Avenue in Fairbanks or write P.O. Box 80583, Fairbanks, AK 99708 or call (907) 456-7491.