

## **Marie Wall: Across the Pond**

I had no musical instrument experience at all when I arrived in Canada from England, apart from a vague recollection of “quavers and semi quavers”. As a teenager I learned modern dance and later took up ballet. I wasn’t talented enough to be a professional dancer, but I became a member of Birmingham Dance Group and took part in many operatic productions and musicals/pantomimes doing various forms of dance. Coming from a very large English city with its own Ballet Company, I was able to take part in weekly adult ballet class until I moved to Calgary.

Upon arriving in Calgary, I met my husband, the Ultimate Sports Fan; when he’s not taking part in hockey or baseball, he is watching or listening to golf, curling, football etc. etc. etc... So there I was, no hobbies and spending all my time watching alien sporting activities. What was one to do?? Then one day on the way to work I spotted the Westwinds advertisement on the LRT and went along to the meeting. I have to admit that I couldn’t get even a small squeak out of any of the instruments on the first night, but as so many people in Calgary seemed to play in bands or learned at school, hey, how hard could it be? So I joined anyway!

I steadily worked my way up and now play Alto Sax in Silver Band. I really enjoy rehearsals and the jovial banter between the band and our Fearless Leader (Rob Cesselli). The fact that I get to occasionally return to the stage in a different performing capacity is icing on the cake for me. I’ve come a long way since learning to play “Hot Cross Buns” and wondering who the heck Boots Randolph was! My claim to fame is that the dog no longer covers his ears and hastily makes an exit from the room when I’m practicing, so I must have improved.

The best ‘plus’ from joining Westwinds are the many new friends I’ve made along the way. I talk often with my old friends from the UK. One of them has also hung up her ballet shoes but moved into choreography and plays character parts in films, so we are still able to chat about our accomplishments. I’m really looking forward to our CD, because a few copies will definitely be finding their way across the pond.