

The Fifth Peg

The Fifth Peg, owned by Jack Wall and Ed Cowan (from the Toronto Star Sep 27/62, one a clothier, the other an ad man) opened at 457 Church St. Toronto on September 29, 1961. It billed itself in advertisements as “Canada’s Most Sophisticated Coffeehouse”, with a more aggressive advertising campaign than almost anything seen in the business to date, regularly appearing in the Globe and Mail and Toronto Star after October 1962. The detail in these advertisements made it possible to establish the beginning and end dates of each run of performances more accurately than for other coffee houses. From the outset it featured well known artists often brought in from New York or beyond. The “Peg” was described by Nathan Cohen in the Star August 7, 1963 as the “most ambitious of Toronto’s afterhours clubs”. It closed around May, 1963 giving birth to the Establishment in October, 1963 at the same Church St. address. Given that association they are listed here together.

Updated: April 18, 2020

1961

Sep 29	The Travellers	G&M Sep 28 th in an article by Frank Morriss “The Fifth Peg, Church St., is Toronto’s newest coffee house devoted to Folk Music. It opens Friday night with the Travellers.”
Nov 24-26	Peggy Seeger and Bonnie Dobson	Star Nov 24 th p.34 “of the great ‘Singing Seeger’ family”

1962

Mar 3-4	Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee	G&M Mar 3 rd a notice: “ (the Peg) makes a public apology ‘to the hundreds of people who could not get in to see ... pleased to announce that their act has been held over this Saturday and Sunday’ (from 8:30)”
Apr 6-8	Harvey Berger and Edith Elgey	Star Apr 2 nd “appearing weekends”

Apr 12-15	Robert Benedetti and David Steinberg	Star Apr 13 th in an article by staff writer David Cobb titled "Jazz Set To Humor"
Apr 28-29	Len Chandler	Star Apr 28 th
May 5		Star May 5 th - an interesting interview/article by staff writer George Brooks with Carolyn Hester - discussing her definition of a folk song
May 9		
May 10-13	The Travellers	G&M May 12 th - last two nights of a longer engagement, prior to, in a G&M May 9 th advert "Their Tour of Russia"
May 17-20	Ellen Stekert and Dave Broadfoot	Star May 19 th "folk-alist" sharing the stage every week end from here with Dave Broadfoot satirist/comedian
May 24-27, 31 - Jun 3, 7-10	Ian and Sylvia and Dave Broadfoot	Star May 31 st "held over" with Dave Broadfoot Friday to Sunday in adverts too, Star Jun 7 th "held over third and final week"
Jun 14-17	Kell Winzey and Jim McCarthy	Star Jun 14 th advert
		Star Aug 10 th a humorous article on Denis Foster an itinerant musician bunking down in the "now closed for the summer for alterations" Fifth Peg
		Star Sep 27 th Gerry Barker's <i>In Town and Out</i> focuses on the Fifth Peg getting ready to open Oct 2 nd after "a four-month hiatus". The article describes the new decor and more upscale menu (steak and shrimp, 15 varieties of coffee)
Oct 2-7	Oscar Brand & Bonnie Dobson	G&M Sep 29 th - grand reopening Oct 2 nd . Open Tues through Sunday

Oct 3		Star Oct 3 rd a rather uncomplimentary (of both musicians and the room) by Ralph Thomas: <i>"It was a Grab-Bag at Fifth Peg Reopening"</i>
Oct 6	Oscar Brand & Bonnie Dobson	G&M Oct 4 th - with a children's program Sunday afternoon Star Oct 6 th p.29 (note some conflict here between the two papers)
Oct 9-14	Ian and Sylvia and the Noblick Upper 10,000 (I didn't make that up)	G&M Sep 29 th , Star Oct 10 th
Oct 11		Star Oct 11 th Gerry Barker in his <i>In Town and Out</i> describes how the "Peg" can afford the talent they're bringing in: they make deals to "television people" to "carry some of the freight"; i.e., doing/getting TV work while they're here
Oct 16-23	Folk Drifters aka The Sundowners depending on the newspaper cited	G&M Oct 19 th , 20 th Rich and exciting voices Grecco & Willard , and the Star Oct 13 th , 17 th
Oct 23-28	Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee with balladeer Lyn Gold	G&M Oct 26 th , 27 th "Titans of the blues" and Lyn Gold "west coast ballad singer" and Star Oct 24 th /27 th
Oct 30-Nov 11	Ed McCurdy and Juan Serrano	G&M Nov 3 rd , Nov 9 th , Star Oct 30 th
Nov 2-4	Ed McCurdy and flamenco dancer Juan Serrano	G&M Nov 2 nd p.27
Nov 13-18	Juan Serrano and the Chanteclairs	G&M Nov 16 th , Star Nov 14 th , 16 th

Nov 20-25

The Tarriers and Lynn Gold

Star Nov 21st, also “The Fifth Peg is expanding immediately to a 300 seating capacity

From Facebook Feb 28/20: Gary Topp: ...”the Tarriers had a hit in the 50s, Banana Boat song. They were a trio consisting of Bob Carey, Erik Darling and Alan Arkin. When I saw them around ‘61, they were a quartet with Bob Carey, Clarence Cooper, Eric Weisberg and Marshall Brickman. When I first saw and met them at the Bitter End, Woody Allen was the opening act. Marshall Brickman went on to co-write Woody’s earlier movies and co/wrote Jersey Boys. Eric Weisberg played three Deliverance theme. They were a great group, better than the rest <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=UFI2CG43UEA>

My first attempt at arranging a show was bringing The Tarriers to the 5th Peg on Church St. Two of the members were Eric Weisberg (banjo/Deliverance) and Marshall Brickman (wrote with Woody Allen and went on to co-write Jersey Boys). This was their third and final appearance in Toronto.

Nov 27-Dec 2

The Tarriers and David Troy

G&M Dec 1st, Star Nov 28th

Dec 4–9

Geula Gill and the Oranim Zabar

G&M Dec 1st, 7th, Star Nov 21st, Nov 28th

Dec 11-16

Bob Gibson with Raven & Haskett

G&M Dec 14th - also presenting the Sunday afternoon children’s concert, Star Dec 14th p.19

Dec 18-23, 26-31

Josh White Jr., Katie Lee and the Wayfarers

G&M Dec 21st, Star Dec 14th p.19, 18th, 26th, 27th

1963	Jan 1-6, 11-12	The Catch Club ‘vocal trio’ and balladeer Bob Grossman	G&M Jan 4 th , 11 th , Star Dec 28 th , Jan 4 th
	Jan 15-27	Grecco and Willard (comedy team) and Leon Bibb (singer)	G&M Jan 25 th , Star Jan 15 th “N.Y. Bright Satire Duo”
	Jan 29	Halifax Three Plus One with Bill Cosby	Star Jan 30 th in Gerry Barker’s <i>In Town & Out</i> column: Carolyn Hester sick with a virus replaced by Halifax Three Plus One and not received well by the writer
	Jan 30 - Feb 1-10	Carolyn Hester and comic Bill Cosby	G&M Feb 1 st , Star Jan 15 th , Feb 7 th , G&M Feb 8 th
	Feb 12-17	Bill Cosby and Dave Campbell	Star Feb 14 th , 15 th
	Feb 19-24	Ian and Sylvia and comic Bill Cosby	G&M Feb 22 nd (three shows Fri and Sat., two shows Sunday), Star Feb 15 th , 18 th - in Gerry Barker’s <i>In Town & Out</i> column: “ ... a pair of fast rising pros coupled with a comic who can be naughty and nice.”
	Mar 12-17	Gord Lightfoot	Star Mar 15 th
	Mar 26-31	Grier and Allan	Star Mar 29 th “satirical duo”
	Apr 2-7, 9-14	Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee with comedian Dave Broadfoot	G&M Apr 5 th , G&M Apr 6 th - an article by Michele Landsberg on Sonny Terry and Brownie McGee. Star Mar 29 th , Apr 4 th and Apr 13 th p.27
	Apr 16-21	Towne Criers with comedian Dave Broadfoot	G&M Apr 19 th
	Apr 23-28, 30-May 5	Geula Gill and the Oranim Zabar with comedian Dave Broadfoot	G&M May 3 rd , Star Apr 23 rd , 24 th , May 1 st
	May 7-12, 14-18	Leon Bibb	G&M May 10 th , Star May 6 th
	May 19-	Judy Orban	Star May 17 th “folk singer”

May 24

G&M May 24th “The Fifth Peg has closed it’s doors until fall”, Star May 25th Irving Kalb referred to as a co-owner of the Fifth Peg in an article on drugs and jazz clubs

Jun 4

G&M Jun 4th in an article on the upcoming Mariposa Folk Festival, refers to Mr. (Jack) Wall (proprietor of the Fifth Peg) as the producer the Mariposa festival.

Oct 10

G&M Oct 10th in Herbert Whittaker’s Showbusiness column: “Talking of **Establishments**, the British satiric movement has now given its name to the Toronto coffee club formerly known as the Fifth Peg, with a new policy and, it hopes, new members. It will be open Thursdays through Sundays.”

Data collection

The owners of the Peg focused their advertising on the Star and Globe and Mail. By the time it reopens as the Establishment (per below) the Tely’s What’s Going On listings have started and they become the go-to and possibly cheapest(?) site for advertising. Where I take words directly from a listing I use “quotation marks”. Where I cite an article I reference the reporter if possible.

The Establishment

The Fifth Peg took on a new life and name in October, 1963 at the same location, 457 Church St. Toronto. Per the note above: "... with a new policy and, it hopes, new members. It will be open Thursdays through Sundays." Given the legal notice in a G&M Jan 13, 1964 Classified Ad. p. 27, it's probable Jack Wall didn't own the new coffee house.

1963

Oct 17-20	Ward Allen Trio	Tely Oct 19 th " ... anyone with a date admitted free". Guitar raffle and banjo display aa part of the hoot. Pizza, sandwiches and coffee from 20 cents to \$1. Admission \$1.50, membership 50 cents."
Oct 24-27	Hootenanny Part One, featuring The Pioneers	G&M Oct 25 th
Nov 2	Chick Roberts	Tely Nov 2 nd " ... of TV's Junior Hootenany hosts a Kazootenanny for children Sunday afternoons at 2pm
Nov 9-10	Gord Lightfoot	Tely Nov 9 th " ... formerly of Country Hoedown and appearing soon on the new TV show Sing Out ..."
Nov 12-17, 19-24, Nov 26-Dec 1	John Lee Hooker	Tely Nov 16 th " ... continues this week except Monday" Tely Nov 23 rd confirming end first end date then Tely Nov 30 th appears to extend his engagement
Dec 10-15	Al Cromwell	Tely Dec 14 th
Dec 26-29	Fernwood Trio	Tely Dec 21 st
		Star Dec 31 st Gerry Barker's <i>In Town and Out</i> column: "The Establishment, the after hours folk music club which was once operated as the Fifth Peg, has closed following a mediocre three month in business."