



The *Huggett Family* is not what you would call an ordinary family. Parents *Leslie* and *Margaret* children *Andrew* (20), *Jennifer* (18), *Ian* (16) and *Fiona* (14) form a unique musical group that plays, sings and dances Renaissance, baroque and contemporary music.

All of them play an incredible variety of wind and string instruments (well over 30) with strange names like *krummhorn*, *rauschfiette*, *nakers* and *gamba*; they earn an adequate living giving concerts in costumes designed and made by *Margaret* and *Jennifer*, they are professional musicians right down to the tips of their handmade shoes. With all that, they are thoroughly delightful, unpretentious people; a happier, healthier, more loving family would be hard to find.

The family has released two albums that are unfortunately no longer easily available. The first, *The Huggett Family* is an album mixing *Andrew's* original songs, contemporary hits, and traditional folk songs, all arranged by *Andrew* and performed by the family.

The second, *Renaissance Delights*, consists of arrangements of 21 songs, dances and instrumental pieces dating from the 15th to the 17th centuries. Both were recorded at AIR studios in London and produced by *George Martin*, one-time producer of the Beatles.

They're a handsome family too: father *Leslie*, born and raised in England, attended the Royal College of Music in London and played French horn with Sir *Thomas Beecham's* Royal Philharmonic; he emigrated to Ottawa in 1954 and played horn with the Ottawa Philharmonic. An accomplished baroque musician, he also directed chamber music series for CBC radio and television and worked for various boards of education. *Leslie* handles all the family's business affairs, writes lyrics, and with son *Andrew*, arranges the music the family performs.

Wife *Margaret*, also English-born, holds two degrees from the Royal Academy of Music in London and is principal researcher for

the family's concert programmes. With *Leslie*, she is responsible for part of the children's musical education and is co-arranger of much of the music they perform.

*Andrew*, the first-born, began studying oboe in New York when he was just 11 years old. When the family was awarded a Canada Council grant in 1970, *Andrew* studied wind instruments at the Trinity College of Music in London and the lute as well. He commuted to Switzerland to study Baroque oboe and in 1972, studied viola at the Guildhall School of Music in London, receiving a Canada Council on his own in 1973 to continue studies and research in Baroque music in England. He arranges much of the family's music and composes contemporary "folk" songs as well.

Both parents, as classically trained musicians, come from the hard school of disciplined hours of practice and concentration; they are blessed with that ability to analyse their performances which comes after years of concert work; self-criticism ensures the continuing high quality of their music.

Their children started playing musical instruments at the age of six. "We just grew up around music," remembers *Andrew*. "It has always been part of our lives, so it seems the most natural thing in the world to be playing and performing together."

The parents knew they were just beginning as a family performing group; the children were very young, from five to ten years old, and their parents were well aware of their musical potential. The commercial route was not the way to develop that potential, they felt, so they sent the children off to separate Orff classes. The parents soon started their own Orff classes in Ottawa and *Margaret* developed her own ideas on the subject, teaching and giving demonstrations in Canada and the U.S.

As the other children grew and became proficient on various instruments, they were integrated into the family ensemble. There is still a "student frame of mind, which is