

## The Oxford Handbook of Music Revival

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765034.001.0001>

Published: 2013

Online ISBN: 9780199984619

Print ISBN: 9780199765034

### CHAPTER

## 4 Antiquarian Nostalgia and the Institutionalization of Early Music

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<https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199765034.013.011> Pages 73–93

Published: 16 December 2013

### Abstract

This article has been commissioned as part of the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Music Revival* edited by Caroline Bithell and Juniper Hill. This essay explores modern performances of medieval music as a phenomenon of musical revival. The revival of early music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be traced back to an early modern musical antiquarianism that saw medieval and folk music traditions as intimately related. In the revivals of medieval and folk music in Europe, antiquarians obsessed about the idea of restoring traditions to a hypothetical original and pure state. Both revivals underwent a remarkable institutionalization in the nineteenth century that was indispensable to their becoming bona fide academic disciplines. In comparing approaches to early music and folk music, key central concerns arise in both cases: their origins in the activities of early modern academic societies; nostalgia for the past and, nostalgia's corollary, dissatisfaction with contemporary culture; an obsession with written sources paired with an academic validation of oral performances; and a specifically nineteenth-century trend toward institutionalization in the wake of industrialization.

**Keywords:** universities, academies, history, antiquarianism, European folk music, early music, music revival, industrialization, medieval music, nostalgia, Native Americans, American Indians, romancero

**Subject:** Musicology and Music History, Ethnomusicology, Music

**Series:** Oxford Handbooks

THIS essay explores modern performances of medieval music as a phenomenon of musical revival. The revival of so-called early music, better known for most of the modern period as “ancient music,” was crucial to defining other musical revivals, specifically that of European folk music. The revival of European medieval music, like that of European folk traditions, originated in early modern antiquarianism and was shaped by its obsession with the restoration of things to an original, pure state. Both revivals underwent a remarkable institutionalization in the nineteenth century indispensable to their becoming academic subjects worthy of being included in this book. In comparing approaches to early music and folk music, key central concerns arise in both cases, as surveyed in this essay: their origins in the activities of early modern

academic societies; a nostalgia for the past and, nostalgia's corollary, a dissatisfaction with contemporary culture; an obsession with written sources paired with an academic validation of oral and illiterate performances; and a specifically nineteenth-century trend toward institutionalization in the wake of industrialization.

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Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, the Western tradition of reviving early music started long before the nineteenth century. In this essay, I shall distinguish between what I shall term early music and Early Music, with a focus on the former. We may define early music as reflecting a modern nostalgia for a musical past considered ironically superior for its presumed innocence; and Early Music, as an institutionalized performance movement peaking out of this general movement in the late twentieth century. More often than not, the history of the so-called Early Music movement has been related by partisan performers and musicologists, as some ethnomusicologists have recently stressed (Livingston 1999: 67–68 and 74–77; Shelemay 2001: 6–10). Early Music ↪ historians frame their account as a revival beginning in the nineteenth century—either early or late 1800s, depending on the author—and culminating in the late twentieth century, capped off by a period of decline and, according to at least one expert, “the end of Early Music” (Haskell 1988; Haynes 2007; Sherman 1997: 20; Taruskin 1995, 164–172). So goes “the extraordinary revival of Early Music,” as one source puts it (Cohen and Spitzer 1985). But such a predictable, century-long rise-and-fall narrative is suspiciously neat and, ultimately, historically shortsighted. For Early Music—a label exclusive to the closing decades of the twentieth century, as detailed below—should be understood as belonging to the longer history of early music.

The Western fascination with early music goes back to the sixteenth century and the phenomenon of antiquarianism. Antiquarians studied not only Greek and Roman antiquity, but the more recent Middle Ages, which they in fact also called “antiquity.” They believed that ancient things, including ancient music, should be revived, resurrected from oblivion. Antiquarians also theorized about the connection between contemporary folk traditions and antiquities, musical or otherwise. As they saw it, contemporary folk traditions held the key to resurrecting ancient songs. After the early modern period, antiquarian interest in music grew, following trends arising out of the industrialization and capitalization of Europe and the Americas. The most crucial development relating to more recent times was the emergence of the industrial university in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In the late 1900s, almost as an afterthought to these major developments, the expression “Early Music” became common coin. But for centuries before this, early music—meaning the traditional, antiquarian enthusiasm for ancient music—had thrived, along with its sister, folk music, as I shall relate throughout this essay.

## Antiquity and Its Music

From the earliest antiquarian studies, the word “antiquity” included the Middle Ages. When the late fifteenth-century scholar William Worcestre traveled England looking for English antiquities (“antiquitates Anglie”), he included cultural relics of the court of King Arthur in his searches (Worcestre 1969: x–xi). From the sixteenth century onward, English and French antiquarians called the Middle Ages “antiquity,” as in John Leland’s *De antiquitate Britannica* (1534–1550) and Claude Fauchet’s *Recueil des antiquitez gauloises et françoises* (1579) (Evans 1956: 1–32). It was crucial at this time to associate the less loved Middle Ages with the more prestigious Greek and Roman antiquity. In chapter 3 of his landmark work *La deffence et illustration de la langue francoyse* (1549), for example, Joachim du Bellay contended that although medieval French was not as illustrious as ancient Greek or Latin, it was great in its simplicity; its speakers “expressed their thoughts with bare words, without art or ornament” (Du Bellay 1970: 22–28).<sup>1</sup> Long after the 1500s, this implicit association of medieval antiquity with that of Greece and Rome would remain key to validating the Middle Ages as a distinct historical period worthy of study.

p. 75 The study of medieval antiquity was prompted by a modern nostalgia for a golden age. Endemic to this nostalgia was antiquarians' repulsion by their own modern times. The seventeenth-century antiquarian Michael Drayton, for example, shunned his own "lunatique Age," bemoaning his contemporaries who would "heare of nothing that...savors of Antiquity" (quoted in Evans 1956: 15). Far from being a recent idea, this shunning of the present out of love for the past goes back to early modern antiquarianism. To this day, the nostalgia for a lost golden age remains a prominent theme in the pursuit of musical antiquities. Ethnomusicologist Kay Kaufman Shelemay has compared the Early Music movement to Steven Spielberg's blockbuster film *The Lost World* (1997) "because of the manner in which both of these endeavors to construct and transform the past in the present" (Shelemay 2001: 6). Harpsichordist extraordinaire Wanda Landowska once confessed that the music of Bach and Couperin represented a perfection that she thought her contemporaries could only hope to attain (Landowska 1996: 24 and 28). More recently, one scholarly enthusiast has written regarding performers of early music: "living in our time, we do well to holiday in saner ages" (Godwin 1974: 15).

**Figure 4.1.**



"An Example of the Rulers or Chiefs in Virginia." From Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, pl. 3.

(Reproduced with permission of the Royal Ontario Museum.)

p. 76 Significantly for the later dialogue between musicology and ethnomusicology that is the theme of this essay, early antiquarians treated the then recently discovered Americas and their inhabitants as a kind of parallel to medieval antiquity. As they saw it, both the Middle Ages and the so-called New World were home to noble savages. In *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, Thomas Harriot stated that although indigenous "Virginians" (i.e., Algonquians of North Carolina) "have no true knowledge of God...and are destitute of all learning, yet they pass us in many things, as in sober feeding and dexterity of wit in making...things so neat and fine" ([1588] 2007: 59) His illustration of Algonquian chiefs elaborates on this, showing elegant, muscular warriors with delicate tattoos covering their bodies (Figure 4.1). As Harriot and other European observers of the New World saw it, Indians of the Americas, like the ancient inhabitants of Europe, possessed a natural greatness that modern Europeans had lost. Montaigne lauded the Tupí of Brazil as men endowed with "a very pure and simple naïveté" and free of modern artifice (Montaigne 1906: 270). The same word Montaigne used to describe South American indigenous peoples, "naïveté," was already strongly associated with the good old days (*bon vieux temps*) of medieval France (Haines 2004: 50–

51). English observers took a similar perspective. In his 1627 *History of Great Britaine*, John Speed described ancient Britons as “poor and rude” but filled with innocence—“simple and farre from those artificiall frauds, which some call wit and cunning” (1627: 179). Marveling at their nakedness and “hardiness,” Speed supplemented his discussion with engravings of the Picts taken directly from Thomas Harriot’s *Briefe and True Report* published a few decades earlier (see Figure 4.2). Such “patience” as the early Britons exhibited “we find even now...in the wilder Virginians” (180–181), Speed declared, directly linking the ancients of Europe and the primitive inhabitants of the Americas.

Thus, sixteenth-century European intellectuals conceived of the inhabitants of both the Middle Ages and the New World as carved out of the same ancient mold: barbaric and savage on the one hand and innocent of modernity on the other. The Tupí may have been cannibals, Montaigne argued, but their society was superior in many respects to that of modern Europeans. For the Spanish clergyman Bartolomé de la Casas, the inhabitants of the West Indies were “the most devoid of wickedness and duplicity...of any people in the world” (Montaigne 1906: 268; de la Casas 1974: 38). Just as du Bellay had argued for the similarities of medieval French and ancient Greek, so Montaigne did for the tongues of the Tupí, praising their poetry as “Anacreontic” and their “sweet language” as having Greek-sounding endings (279).<sup>2</sup> Thomas Harriot felt that medieval Europeans were just like American Indians in their wild innocence; as he put it, “the inhabitants of Great Britain were in times past as savage as those of Virginia” (Harriot 2007: 73). To demonstrate this point, Harriot followed his illustrations of early Algonquians with five images of the Picts who lived in early medieval Britain. His depiction of a Pict warrior, a ferocious-looking, tattooed headhunter, intentionally resembles that of the early Algonquian chiefs found earlier in the same work (Figure 4.2; compare Figure 4.1).

The concept of a single, vague premodern antiquity encompassing ancient Rome and Greece as well as the Middle Ages endured long after the 1500s. Especially telling is the variety of expressions used to describe medieval antiquity from 1600 to 1800: among others, “Gothic,” “Saxon,” *moyen temps*, *moyen âge*, and, of course, “antiquity” (Voss 1972: 73–75; Evans 1956: 15, 20, and 29).<sup>3</sup> Not until the late nineteenth century were the now accepted labels for the Middle Ages and Renaissance first used, and this mostly in non-English publications. Jules Michelet’s *Histoire de France* (1833–1867) is often credited with popularizing “Moyen Âge” and “Renaissance” (Voss 1972: 99), but only in the mid-twentieth century did English-language publications on music unanimously switch to the now standard “Middle Ages.” Still in 1901, for example, the label “Middle Ages” was absent from *The Oxford History of Music* (Woolridge 1901). Consensus was finally reached around midcentury, as signaled by Gustav Reese’s landmark *Music in the Middle Ages* (1940). In sum, from 1500 to 2000, antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance were usually amalgamated into one sprawling, vague antiquity.

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Figure 4.2.



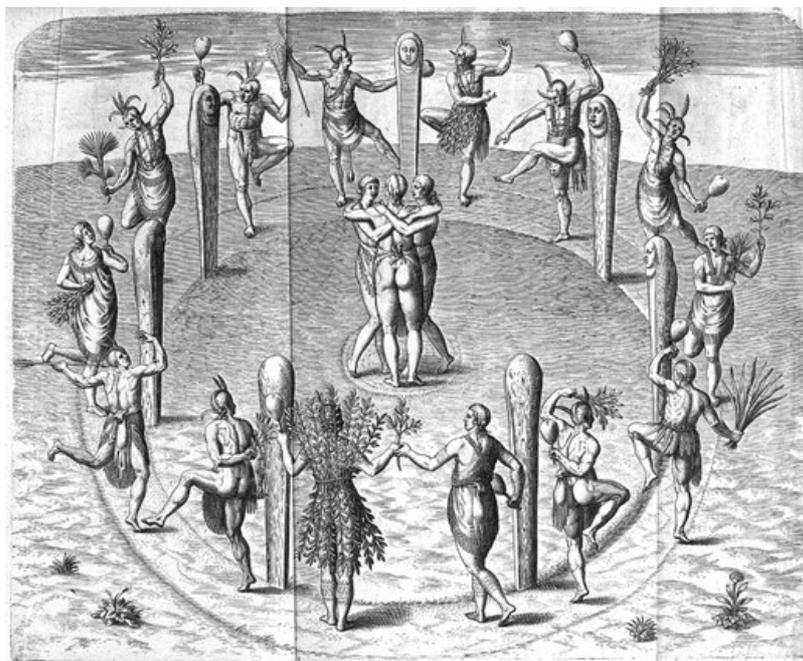
“A True Picture of a Pict.” From Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report*, app., pl. 1.

Antiquarians throughout these five centuries frequently used the concept of revival when discussing things ancient. The word “revival” as signifying the restoration of old things owes its existence to antiquarian studies, as Neil Rosenberg has pointed out; he has identified the earliest use of the word “revival” in this sense from the 1660s (1993: 17). Early modern antiquarians made it their goal to restore (*restaurare*) ancient things to a pristine state, if necessary by first resurrecting them from obscurity (Howard 1990: 15). For example, at the very start of his book on English antiquities, William Camden made clear his intention “to restore Britain to its Antiquities, and its Antiquities to Britain” (1695: preface). As antiquarianism slowly morphed into archeology, the study of old objects and not just old literature became increasingly important. From coins to monuments, antiquarian-archeologists excavated and revived the past. Writing in the late 1660s, Thomas Sprat raved that “many of the lost Rarities of Antiquity will be hereby restor’d,” many of which had “been overwhelm’d in the ruins of Time” (quoted in Evans 1956: 29). The revival of ancient things from “the ruins of time” endured as a favorite notion of the antiquarian-archeological movement. The French author Chateaubriand wrote in the early 1800s of Pompei as a “living antiquity” that “had spent twenty centuries in the bowels of the earth” (Chateaubriand 1969: 1505, cited in Haines 2001a: 25).

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From the sixteenth century onward, the concept of restoration–resurrection–revival was also applied to the songs and music of antiquity. For example, the sixteenth-century historian Claude Fauchet published the texts of the songs of the *trouvères* from the medieval “antiquité françoise,” whom he claimed to have “extracted, as it were, from the prison of oblivion where ignorance had kept them in a confused heap” (quoted in Haines 2004: 80).<sup>4</sup> Except for the case of plainchant mentioned below, the application of the concept of revival–restoration to the performance of songs or other music came a little later, in the 1700s. Given the antiquarian precedent, it is no surprise that eighteenth-century English academic societies devoted to performing music of the past labeled their subject “ancient music,” adopting an antipopular ideology characteristic of their sixteenth-century antiquarian predecessors.<sup>5</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the father of the French Concerts historiques, Alexandre Choron, might have been quoting Claude Fauchet some three centuries earlier when he wrote of musical amateurs “who came together to perform pieces of ancient schools, and to pull them out of oblivion” (quoted in Wangermée 1948: 187). The label “ancient music” endures to this day, as in the Academy of Ancient Music or the Studio de musique ancienne, two thriving Early Music ensembles. It is important to stress that musical antiquarians of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries viewed their subject with a mixture of repulsion and curiosity, an attitude that originated in sixteenth-century antiquarianism. Charles Burney, for example, would write disparagingly of “Gothic antiquities,” whose study “can furnish but small pleasure or profit to an enlightened and polished people” (Burney 1782: 41). For most of the period 1500–2000, then, what is now known as “early music” was called “ancient music.” Rooted in the antiquarian activity of restoration, what could be labeled the ancient music movement also inherited from its antiquarian parent a fascination with indigenous American peoples as reflecting a pure but wild mentality long lost to moderns (see Figure 4.3).

**Figure 4.3.**



“The Virginians’ Manner of Dancing at their Religious Festivals.” From Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report*, pl. 18.

In reviving ancient music, antiquarians frequently called on contemporary folk traditions. To give a few examples: in restoring plainchant, sixteenth-century European Catholic authorities appealed to the oral performance of chant “handed down from a most ancient time”; Montaigne turned to popular songs or *villanelles* of Gasconne, France, for the literary revival of medieval secular song; and the Count of Tressan in the eighteenth century used peasant songs of the Pyrénées to reconstruct medieval epic songs (Haines

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2004: 51 and 106–108; Hayburn 1979: 35). These and other musical antiquarians believed that contemporary folk traditions contained in kernel form old performance traditions that had not been written down. In fact, their association with illiteracy was paramount to their authenticity. Montaigne, for example, praised the peasants of Gascogne for being free of the knowledge of “science or even writing” and thus able to produce “popular and purely natural poetry” (quoted in Haines 2004: 51). A little over three centuries later, ancient music enthusiast Wanda Landowska praised the “admirable old songs” of the peasants from her native Poland; “they make art without being poisoned by the pride of progress” (1924: 17). For learned antiquarians, popular or folk traditions were well suited to the naïveté of ancient song, to its simple and natural character. Because of the aforementioned connections that sixteenth-century Europeans saw between the Middle Ages and the New World, they also linked these two musical traditions. European visitors to the Americas were frequently drawn to the music and dance traditions of indigenous Americans, since they believed these resembled the ancient European folk dances with which they were familiar. Thomas Harriot, for example, describes Algonquians’ festive dancing as an idyllic ritual full of sensual joy and energy, suggesting a New World echo of the lost European golden age (Figure 4.3). During their “large and solemn ceremony,” Harriot relates, three maidens (“the most beautiful they can choose,” he adds) dance in the center of a circle. The nearly naked and embracing maidens are shown surrounded by dancers and “stakes resembling veiled nuns’ heads,” writes Harriot, imposing medieval—or at least Christian—imagery onto a distinctly non-Christian musical ritual (Harriot 2007: 69).

Paradoxically, while antiquarians looked to oral traditions for the revival of ancient things, they also relied on academic knowledge to extract ancient music from popular oral performances. In the revival of chant, for example, erudite counterreformers in France and Italy believed they needed to restore (*restituere*) chant from its state of oral corruption (*corruptio cantus*) and to purge (*purgare*) it of certain corruptions that had accrued over time like mold on a monument (Hameline 1997: 14 and 20). So the intellectuals took it on themselves to discriminate between what was authentically ancient or not in popular oral musics. The same mentality can be observed in secular music of the same period, in the purported revival of Greek music by the Florentine Camerata or in the French *vers mesurés à l’antique* created by the Académie de poésie et musique (Haines 2004: 75).<sup>6</sup> Musical imagination could also be used to supplement historical sources. John Dryden, for example, based his heroic epic *King Arthur* (1691) on scholarly medieval authors such as Bede —“to inform myself...concerning the Rites and Customs of the Heathen Saxons,” as he wrote. As for the musical setting of his poem, Dryden left it in “the Artful Hands” of Henry Purcell, “who has Compos’d it with so great a Genius, that he has nothing to fear but an ignorant, ill-judging Audience” (quoted in Davies 2000: 255 and 273). The restoration of early music, then, apparently required literate, academic knowledge, even when based on popular or illiterate traditions.

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To sum up the preceding section, the quest for early music originated in sixteenth-century antiquarianism and an interest in ancient music. One of the defining elements of musical antiquarianism was nostalgia for a premodern golden age. Another was the belief that a subterranean connection existed between contemporary folk traditions and the ancient music of Europe. The premodern golden age included the music of indigenous Americans that antiquarians saw as providing a novel insight into the lost early music of Europe. Both American Indians and early Europeans were seen as savage but noble and as superior in many ways to people of modern times. Early modern antiquarians viewed folk traditions—from the peasant songs of Gascogne to the indigenous dances of Virginia—as shedding light on the lost musical worlds of early medieval Europeans. As these antiquarians saw it, these traditions could help restore musical antiquities. In the revival of ancient music from the sixteenth century onward, antiquarians saw themselves as pulling musical works from obscurity and resurrecting them in order to make them available as printed texts to the general public for their cultural edification.

## Early Music and the Postindustrial University

Eventually, in the predominantly academic circles where the pursuit of ancient music thrived, the adjective “ancient” would be replaced with the even vaguer adjective “early.” As I have already mentioned, this label “ancient music” persisted into the twentieth century. One of the best known cases of this is Wanda Landowska’s *Musique ancienne* (1901), which was awkwardly translated into English as *Music of the Past* (1924). Landowska devoted the fourth chapter of her book to *le mépris pour les anciens* (“contempt for the old masters”), a chapter in which she pitted the “religion of musical progress” against “the great masters of the past” (Landowska 1924: 18 and 1996: 31). By *anciens*, Landowska meant the composers of the seventeenth and eighteenth century that she favored; but the word *anciens* also followed a traditional antiquarian nomenclature. Landowska’s musical *anciens* belonged by implication to a vaster and vaguer antiquity than the baroque, one ranging anywhere from around the birth of Christ to just before her time. Still current in the 1920s, when the English translation of Landowska’s book was published, the expression “ancient music” or *musique ancienne* was officially supplanted only a half century later by the moniker “Early Music,” which had become standard in English by the late 1900s. What brought about this change?

The most significant event contributing to the christening of early or ancient music as Early Music was the remarkable transformation of the university following the Industrial Revolution. Prior to the late 1700s, the university had largely remained the constrained, esoteric environment it had been since the Middle Ages, focusing on disciplines closely related to philosophy-cum-theology and catering to small numbers of students. This changed at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with Germany leading the way. The Prussian template for postsecondary education was that of a government-sponsored, hierarchical bureaucracy. Now swollen to unprecedented numbers, the population of universities ranged from undergraduates and graduates to administrators and professors, the latter devoted primarily to the printing of their research in the booming industry of academic publishing (Clark 2006: 255–264). New universities sprang up in the 1800s to accommodate more and more students. Along with these came fashionable, new “luxury disciplines” (*Luxuswissenschaften*) such as botany or Romance philology (Craig 1984: 70). The doctor of philosophy degree was created, with graduate students producing dissertations in these new disciplines. Starting in the 1800s, a deluge of doctoral dissertations poured in, a majority of these being in the then fashionable domain of philology or historical linguistics (Clark 2006: 183–184, 220–223, and 500–508).

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By the late 1800s, philological studies had become the model for yet another “luxury discipline”: the science of music, or *Musikwissenschaft*. The earliest German professorial appointments in historical musicology (*historische Musikwissenschaft*), the branch of musicology devoted to European art schools and artists (*Kunstschulen, Künstlern*), were nearly all held by scholars of medieval and Renaissance music (Adler 1885: 16; Haines 2003: 130–131). Other types of *Musikwissenschaft* also flourished at this time. The so-called systematic branches included the study of non-Western music that Guido Adler in 1885 named *Musikologie*. The latter “new and praiseworthy field connected” to systematic musicology, Adler wrote, had focused on “folksongs of different peoples, lands and territories” (1885: 14).<sup>7</sup> This folk song branch of musicology, later known as ethnomusicology, flourished alongside its Western historical counterpart in the heyday of the German postindustrial university, notably in Berlin, with Erich von Hornbostel and Curt Sachs (McLean 2006: 39–42 and 249). By the early 1900s, the German academic model, including the two main branches just mentioned of the novel science of *Musikwissenschaft*, had transferred to North America. German émigrés such as Franz Boas at Columbia University and Leo Schrade at Yale University mentored a new generation of North American musicologists in the first half of the century (115–116).

An echo of the extraordinary economic boom that had prompted the German postindustrial academic phenomenon of the late 1800s resounded in North America a little over a half century later. Following World War II, postsecondary institutions multiplied in the United States and Canada. Colleges and universities

were hastily erected to meet unprecedented demands, and student enrollments soared thanks to the baby boom and to funding packages like the famous GI Bill (Hacker and Dreifus 2010: 35–37). The performance of ancient music, previously the province of antiquarians, now blossomed in the university in the form of student ensembles or collegia devoted to such performance. By the final decades of the twentieth century, the so-called Early Music ensemble had become a staple in music faculties and departments (Haskell 1988: 161–188). To the only slightly younger ethnomusicological contingent in academia, the pandering to Early Music seemed, and indeed was, unfair. The mood of the late 1990s can be seen in Bruno Nettl’s satire about a “scholar from Mars” who remarks on the curious habit of university music students speaking of the great masters of Western music as if these masters roamed departmental halls (Nettl 1995: 11–42 and 130–135). It should be noted, however, that ethnomusicology experienced an only slightly delayed version of Early Music’s trajectory in the postindustrial university. The 1950s and 1960s also witnessed the emergence of ethnomusicology in North American academia, initially outside music departments and faculties but joining their ranks in due course. Over the last few decades, related performance groups such as the Gamelan ensemble have rivaled their Early Music counterparts. It goes without saying that *Musikwissenschaft* and its performance ensembles, along with the entire “multiversity” system of the late 1900s, has suffered in the early twenty-first-century crisis of the global capitalism that made the industrial university possible in the first place (Hacker and Dreifus 2010: 1–9; Clark 2006: 139 and 163).

Quite late in the industrial university’s development, the label “Early Music” became common coin. If one was to speak of early music, then the main question became “Earlier than what?” In the first half of the twentieth century, there was no standard chronological limit for the adjective “early.” In 1901, for example, the Stainers labeled “early Bodleian music” (i.e., music collections of the Bodleian Library in Oxford) as compositions “ranging from about A.D. 1185 to about A.D. 1505,” thereby excluding most of the Middle Ages and nearly all of the Renaissance (Stainer and Stainer 1901). The cutoff date for Early Music began to firm up after World War II. With the spree of English musicological publications typical of this period came such anthologies as Carl Parrish’s *Treasury of Early Music* (1958), subtitled “an anthology of masterworks of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and the Baroque era.” The musicological boom in North American academia and related publications during the crucial 1960s canonized the idea of early music as beginning sometime after the fall of the Roman Empire and ending around 1750. By 1973, the concept had become official with the first issue of the journal *Early Music*.

Yet almost as soon as it became an accepted idiom, Early Music grew world-weary. Historians such as Harry Haskell performed autopsies of the so-called revival of Early Music, worrying that its global popularity had gotten out of hand (Haskell 1988: 189–197). The now celebrated debate surrounding authenticity around 1980 focused on the presumably correct way of performing older music and which performances could be considered closest to those from hundreds of years ago (Leech-Wilkinson 2002: 141–147; Taruskin 1995: 3–47). The authenticity debate was generated in greater part by academic scorn for the unexpected proliferation of Early Music ensembles and related activities outside academia (e.g. Renaissance fairs), both in performances and in sound recordings. In the lead-up to this intellectual storm in a teacup, the popular long-playing vinyl record had played an important role. The unprecedented possibilities of recorded sound had led performers of ancient music to make exaggerated claims, such as Thomas Binkley’s statement that his renditions of medieval music brought its performance “close to the elusive original, an accomplishment thought impossible just a decade ago” (quoted in Haines 2001b: 374). Recorded sound had made early music more compelling than ever. Here as with antiquarianism, enthusiasts borrowed liberally from contemporary folk traditions in the re-creation of early music. In the 1930s, for example, Max Meili used a Swiss mountain song; at the end of the century, several groups borrowed from classical Arabic music (quoted in Haines 2004: 244–249). Apocalyptic pronouncements at the turn of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries about the decline or even end of Early Music should not overshadow the fact that, as I have argued in this essay, academic interest in restoring ancient music has endured for centuries and does not appear likely to end anytime soon.

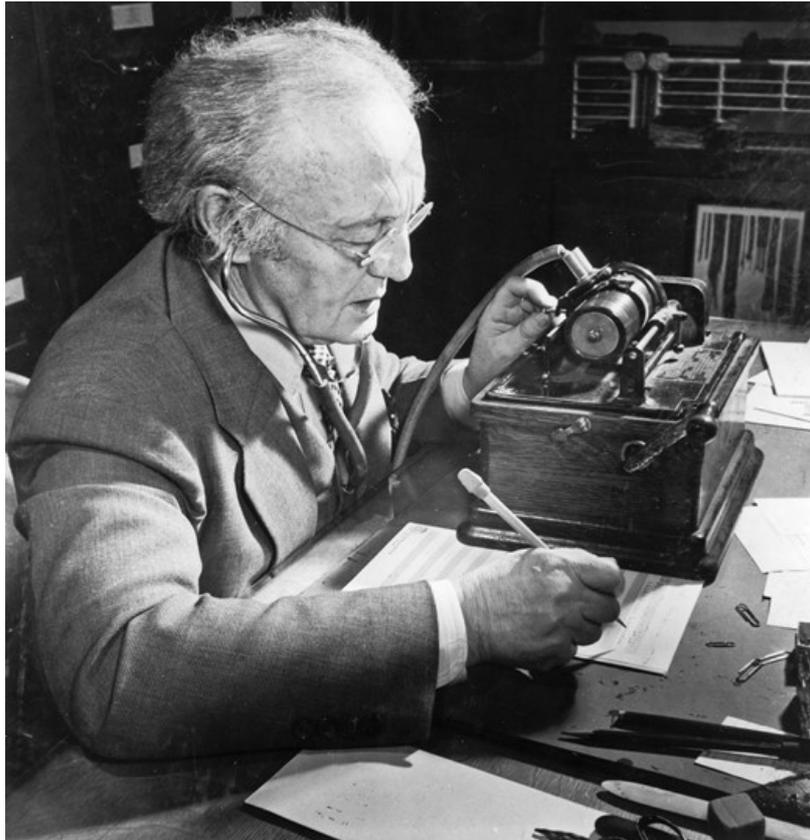
## Early Music and Folk Music

At this point, it should have become apparent to the reader just how closely related are the revivals of early music and of folk music. If hagiographies of Early Music have fallen prey to an overly simplistic rise-and-fall narrative, as stated at the beginning of this essay, so have histories of Western (i.e., European and North American) folk song revival. In fact, these histories follow nearly the same basic outline as their early music counterparts. The revival of European folk music is usually said to have started in the nineteenth century, prompted by Johann Gottfried Herder's *Volkslieder* (1778–1779) (Baumann 1996: 73). As with Early Music, this folk music revival is portrayed as beginning around 1800, with a high point in the middle of the twentieth century (Rosenberg 1993: 4–6). Here, too, the entry of folk music studies into the mainstream of North American universities during the 1950s and 1960s is regarded both nostalgically and pessimistically by writers who, it should be noted, personally experienced this period (2 and 16–17; Jackson 1993: 73–83). Compare, for example, Bruce Jackson's dramatic opening at a 1984 symposium on folk song revivals—"a folksong revival occurred in America thirty years ago"—with Bruce Haynes's description of "our movement" in the 1960s as a "revolution...reacting against the established style" (Jackson 1993: 73 and Haynes 2007: 40–41). Nostalgia yields to middle-aged skepticism, however, as each sees the 1960s as foreshadowing a decline. For Jackson, the folk song revival of the 1960s "became ordinary," since it carried within itself "the seed...of its own destruction" (1993: 79–80). Haynes laments the lack of improvisation and "the cover band mentality" in recent Early Music performances that had characterized it some forty years earlier (2007: 203–214). As ever, musical antiquities breed longing for the past and condescension for the present.

For the historiography of folk music, as with that of early music outlined earlier, this conventional rise-and-fall narrative from 1800 to 2000 does not stand up to closer inspection. Indeed, early music and folk music grew up together. And throughout these growing-up years, the concept of revival played an important part, as I have already suggested in my discussion of Europeans' attraction to the dances of indigenous Americans in the sixteenth century and Landowska's praise of Polish peasant songs in the twentieth.

Another signal case of the twin development of early music and folk music is that of the *romancero*, which can boast of being one of the most successful genres in the history of modern print. It began its life in the late Middle Ages as a collection of vernacular songs or *romances* "enjoyed by people of low and servile condition," as one mid-fifteenth-century writer put it (Mérimée n.d.: 14, n. 1). The early printed *romancero* flourished in Spain as part of that country's bid to become the leading power in Europe and the New World. By the 1700s, the *romancero* had spread outside Spain, emblemizing various nationalistic literary heritages; French antiquarian collections of *romans* were based on the Spanish *romancero*. When Herder published his *Volkslieder* in 1778–1779, he drew on this vast *romancero* literature (Haines 2004: 125–141; Mérimée n.d.: 29–32). Rather than an innovator of folk song, Herder was a continuator—and at times even a plagiarist—of a tradition that had existed for three centuries before him. By the nineteenth century, the *romancero* was even more closely associated with national folklores, with Jacob Grimm and Lord Byron among its disciples (Mérimée n.d.: 17 and 33–34). Considered an early source of European folk song, *romanceros* often mixed critical editions of medieval lyric song and national folk music, as in Paulin Paris's work *Le romancero françois* (1833) or Prosper Tarbé's *Romancero de Champagne* (1863–1864) (Haines 2008: 189–190). For many, songs of the Middle Ages and romances from the postmedieval *romancero* came from one and the same primitive folkloric fund (190). As a result of this frequent association of ancient song and folk song, nineteenth-century critical editions of medieval texts were poised in the twentieth century to become the template for printed editions of folk songs.

Figure 4.4.



Marius Barbeau transcribing a song from the phonograph.

(Reproduced with permission of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.)

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The well-known spree of folk song publications in the first half of the twentieth century includes a little-discussed work by the anthropologist Marius Barbeau, *Romancero du Canada* (1937) (Haines 2008: 189–190; Rosenberg 1993: 5–6). Barbeau’s collection is representative of its time and of the illustrious *romancero* tradition and exhibits conventional sympathies between early music and folk song as well as certain assumptions long held by antiquarians, as discussed earlier. Throughout *Romancero du Canada*, Barbeau argues that French emigrants to Canada in the sixteenth century marvelously preserved the folk songs of their native land. In many cases, he goes on to say, their songs go further back than the early modern era. At the time of Barbeau’s writing, the question of what constituted a legitimate or scholarly critical edition of folk song had become pressing. Barbeau based his 1937 *Romancero* on songs he had recorded over twenty years, patiently transcribing each version from phonograph recordings (Figure 4.4). Barbeau was working in a relatively new field; Hornbostel’s landmark essay on transcribing sound recordings had appeared in 1909, and pioneers in this area such as Francis Densmore and Béla Bartók had started their work only a decade or so prior to Barbeau’s publication (Haines 1999: 4; 2008: 185). Although Barbeau’s musical editions did not rival in intricacy those of Bartók, his scrupulousness in taking all variants into account was downright philological. Following each song in *Romancero du Canada*, he catalogued all known versions in North America and Europe, beginning with the many recorded versions he had made, each listed like so many manuscript variants of a medieval text. Just as his antiquarian predecessors had done, Barbeau aimed to extract the ancient songs of France from the folk songs of his Canadian *romancero*. Trained in the methodology of the postindustrial university, he did this by using the philological method of collating all versions and presenting a critical edition. Following this learned scheme, Barbeau planned to restore these songs to an original state, like so many “Gothic temples worn out by the wind and the rain,” as he wrote (Barbeau 1937: 83).

In *Romancero du Canada* and elsewhere, Barbeau glorified the Canadian folksingers he recorded, calling them *jongleurs*. His Canadian *jongleur* resembled in some ways the noble savage revered by antiquarians and archeologists. Like the indigenous American musicians or popular singers of rural Europe, Canadian *jongleurs* did not rely on writing, Barbeau claimed. Their illiteracy did not prevent them from performing feats of memory rivaling those of literate modern minds; “their memory was prolific” and “their stock of songs was novel and inexhaustible,” he wrote (quoted in Haines 2008: 193). Inexplicably, the songs of the Canadian *jongleurs* originated in the Middle Ages and further back yet to “the Celtic era” (Barbeau 1937: 122). Proof of this presumably lay in melodic scales (such as the D mode of “Renaud”) or poetic themes (such as the pastoral and morning-song themes in “Lisette”) (78, 129). But mostly Barbeau’s assertion of the antiquity of French-Canadian folk songs had to be taken on faith. On more than one occasion, he described how a song was rescued from oblivion. Of “Le Prince Eugène” he wrote that “it was on its way to complete oblivion...when we caught it just as it was about to disappear” (22). Such claims were motivated by a strong Quebec nationalistic movement at this time. In the first half of the twentieth century, French Canadians needed to assert their independence from English-speaking North America on the one hand and from France on the other (Haines 2008: 188–189). Throughout *Romancero du Canada*, Barbeau asserted that French folk song had been better preserved in Quebec than in France. For example, “Sommeilles-tu, ma petite Louison?” had vanished from France, he wrote, but was still sung in the Montreal region (Barbeau 1937: 118).

p. 87 Throughout his prolific career, Barbeau maintained a love-hate relationship toward philology. Raised in rural Quebec, where he was taught that real art “had to be imported from Europe,” as he would later remember it, Barbeau studied anthropology at Oxford and the Sorbonne. A decisive encounter with Franz Boas in 1913 prompted him to return to Quebec and study the neglected folk songs of his own heritage (Haines 2008: 185–186). What Barbeau had learned from the relatively new science of anthropology he now proposed to apply to a corpus of songs that was rooted, as he saw it, in the Middle Ages. The Middle Ages, of course, called for a medievalist’s approach, namely, the science of philology. In the mid-1910s, when he set out to record and transcribe the songs of his native *terroir*, Barbeau, like other ethnomusicological pioneers at this time, was very much working out his methodology as he went along. Early on, moved by an instinctive reverence for medievalism, he looked to Romance philology for inspiration (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5.



Jean Beck holding his handmade instruments.

(Reproduced with the permission of Thomas Dalzell, grandson of Jean Beck.)

p. 88 In 1916, Barbeau sought the help of Jean-Baptiste Beck, a musicologist who had trained in philology. Beck had emigrated from Europe to North America in 1911 following his implication in the death of prominent medievalist Pierre Aubry the year before. Aubry had evidently committed suicide, while fencing, following his loss of a unique lawsuit against Beck for musicological plagiarism (Haines 1997; 2001c; 2002b: 363–366; 2004: 214–218). Recent research has uncovered that during the same period, Beck was being sued in Strasbourg by the husband of his lover, who was the mother of two children by him and whom he had failed to support financially (Solberg 2009). The contentious Beck fled to the United States and was working at  
p. 89 Bryn Mawr University when Barbeau contacted him. He at first ignored Barbeau’s letter. After some prompting from Franz Boas, Beck responded to Barbeau’s invitation to help him transcribe French-Canadian folk songs. Like many medievalists of his day, including his nemesis Aubry, Beck strongly believed in the linkage of medieval and contemporary folk song. His own background included a stint as a café-concert ensemble director in Paris. Throughout his scholarly career, Beck often performed medieval music, sometimes with popular songs. Around the time of his first encounter with Barbeau, Beck was collaborating with famed café-concert performer Yvette Guilbert (Haines 2004: 241–242). As part of this active

performance side career, Beck made his own medieval musical instruments; his collection included many stringed instruments, some with elaborate decorations (Figure 4.5). I have detailed elsewhere Beck's epistolary debate with Barbeau in 1917 concerning the transcription of French-Canadian folk songs (Haines 1999). The gist of this debate was that each man defended the scientific integrity of his academic training for essentially the same reasons. At one point, Beck claimed his "philological rigor" was superior to what he perceived as Barbeau's loose anthropological approach. Barbeau professed a "historical exactitude" superior to Beck's penchant for creative liberties (1–3). That is to say, both men had similar methodologies that necessarily diluted science with subjectivity; not surprisingly, since the twins historical musicology and ethnomusicology emanated from the same maternal *Musikwissenschaft*.

**Figure 4.6.**



Juliette Gaultier singing at the 1928 Canadian Folk Song and Handicraft Festival.

(Reproduced with permission of the Canadian Museum of Civilization.)

Despite their presumed irreconcilable differences, Beck and Barbeau ended up collaborating some ten years later on an event that Neil Rosenberg has considered seminal in the history of folk revivals, the 1928 Quebec première of Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de Robin et Marion* (Rosenberg 1993: 6). This musical play by the medieval *trouvère* was arranged for modern orchestra by Beck and performed by the orchestra of the Vingt-deuxième Royal Regiment twice in late May 1928 (Haines 2002a). The New World performance of this "old folk comedy opera," as one paper put it, was the brainchild of John Murray Gibbon, who predicted that it would be a "musical sensation" (Haines 2002a: 287).<sup>8</sup> Gibbon had planned the *Jeu de Robin et Marion* as part of the second Canadian Folk Song and Handicraft Festival, a five-day extravaganza of songs, dances, and art

compositions by the Canadian heavyweights Healey Willan and Ernest MacMillan.<sup>9</sup> Like Beck and Barbeau's arrangement of the *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, other performers at the festival, such as the Bytown Troubadours and Juliette Gaultier (Figure 4.6), freely mixed medieval music and imagery with Canadian folklore.<sup>10</sup>

## Conclusion

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p. 90 The case of Barbeau and Beck's collaboration serves as a fitting conclusion to this essay on the history of early music revivals. As we have seen, this history began in earnest during the sixteenth-century push for antiquarian research. Antiquarians thought of early music as belonging to an immense, amorphous antiquity running from classical Greece to the late Middle Ages. As they viewed it, the concept of revival or restoration became crucial, since they regarded antiquities as lost and as requiring resurrection from oblivion. Endemic to this explicit concept was the implicit notion of nostalgia: the longing for a long-lost world free of the literacy and industrialism that plagued modernity. In this sense, the indigenous people of the Americas that Europeans were discovering in the sixteenth century stirred this nostalgia, reminding them of their own "medieval antiquity."

Musical antiquarians and, later, archeologists—the phrase "musical archeologist" was eventually coined in the nineteenth century (Haines 2004: 165–166)—regarded contemporary folk traditions, both in the New World and closer to home, as indispensable to the restoration of early music. Folk music, as they saw it, transmitted orally what written sources could not: the early music of the West in its most primitive and naïve form, untainted by the literacy of modern print. Following the industrialization of the university in the nineteenth century, the same basic view of the intimate relation between early and folk music continued in musicological studies, and this view persists to this day. With these academic developments in the nineteenth century, the antiquarian search for early music was eventually institutionalized as Early Music in the late twentieth century. As their predecessors had, these musical antiquarians turned to contemporary folk traditions for the restoration of old sounds.

Despite their institutional differences, the studies of folk music (in the branch of musicology first known as *Musikologie*) and European art music (belonging to *historische Musikwissenschaft*) have often interacted, as the case of medievalist Jean Beck and anthropologist Marius Barbeau makes clear. They may have initially disagreed over the proper way of transcribing French-Canadian folk songs. But their vision of early song remained compatible enough to ensure their landmark collaboration at the 1928 Folk Festival in Quebec, followed by a lifelong friendship. In the decades after the Quebec première of Adam de la Halle's *Jeu de Robin et Marion*, Barbeau visited Beck on several occasions and cited him more than once in his publications on French-Canadian folk song. When Beck died in 1943, Barbeau paid a visit to Beck's widow. Shortly after this, Louise Beck wrote to Barbeau thanking him "for your courteous words of the role my husband played in your work,...I know that he would have been very proud" (Haines 1999: 4). If such sentiments aptly summarize Beck and Barbeau's relationship over some four decades, they also serve as a model for the interaction between *historische Musikwissenschaft* and *Musikologie*, two disciplines that, like early music and folk song, have more in common than not.

## Notes

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1. "La simplicité de notz majeurs, qui se sont contentez d'exprimer leurs conceptions avecques paroles nues, sans art & ornement."
2. "la poésie...tout à fait Anacreontique...un doux langage & qui a le son agreable, retirant aux terminaisons Grecques."
3. *Moyen âge* is the French expression for "Middle Ages," the period between antiquity and early modern times.

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4. *Trouveres* were medieval song-makers of northern France active in the thirteenth century. ↵
  5. See Weber (1992: 28–29 and 47–56), who considers the expression novel in the eighteenth century.
  6. *Vers mesurés à l'antique* refers to French poetry, popular in the Renaissance, fashioned according to ancient Greek metrical verse.
  7. “Ein neues und sehr dankenswerthes nebensgebiet dieses systematischen Theiles ist die Musikologie...di sich zur Aufgabemacht, die Tonproducte, insbesondere die Volksgesänge verschiedener Völker, Länder und Territorien.”
  8. Festivals, box 72, file 14, 1, Marius Barbeau Collection, Canadian Museum of Civilization,.
  9. Programs, box 170, file 1, 9–11, Marius Barbeau Collection.
  10. Festivals, box 72, file 14, 23; Programs, box 170, file 1, 11, Marius Barbeau Collection.

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