



The Folk Club

of Reston-Herndon

...Preserving Folk Traditions



Vol 9, No 3; March, 1995

Folk Music - A Brief Introduction

Folk Music, music that is transmitted orally or aurally (taught through performance rather than with notation, and learned by hearing). It is composed by individuals who remain anonymous or, at any rate, are not remembered by name. Folk music is found in many of the world's societies, and it exists in different guises and under a variety of social and cultural conditions. Emphasis in this article is on the folk music of Western nations, but variety is so great that the statements giving locations and characterizations are illustrative rather than comprehensive.

Relation to the Community

Performed by members of the folk community who are not highly trained musical specialists, folk music is often thought to be closely associated with such life activities as ritual, work, and child-rearing. Folk music is said to be the music of largely rural, untutored masses in societies where an educated, economic, political, as well as musical, elite also exists, the music of the latter, by contrast, is called "classical" or "art music."

When a folk song is passed from singer to singer, it tends to undergo change arising from creative impulses, faulty memory, the aesthetic values of those who learn and teach it, and the influence of the styles of other musics known to the singers. A folk song thus develops variants, gradually changing (perhaps beyond recognition) and existing in many forms. Since many people participate in determining the shape of a song, this process is called communal recreation. Folk music is normally affected by the art music of nearby cultural centers (for example, cities, courts, monasteries), and it frequently functions as a kind of cultural backwater that retains characteristics of older art music for long periods. Folk music may also be defined as the music with which an ethnic community most closely identifies itself. It is music that generally flourishes outside institutions such as school and church.

Although this picture of folk music is basically correct, particularly for the rural cultures of Western Europe before the 20th century, a good many exceptions to this model must be noted. The boundaries between folk and other kinds of music are not clear. Songs from the realm of classical music are sometimes adopted by the folk community.

Popular music, developed in urban cultures and transmitted through the mass media, bears some of the characteristics of folk music. Folk cultures sometimes develop musical specialists, particularly instrumentalists and singers of lengthy epics. The words of folk songs may be passed on through written or printed tradition, even if the music is oral. Folk music is actually not more "functional" than other music; much of it is used simply for entertainment.

Although something like folk music exists in many cultures that also possess a learned musical tradition, for example, India, China, and the Middle East, its role in society and among other kinds of music varies. Thus, in India, a sharper line is drawn than in the West between classical and folk music. In the Middle East, a musician is likely to participate in both folk and classical genres. In Iran, folk music is called "regional music," and it is performed by musicians who are actually more specialized than those of the classical tradition. The term folk music is not accurately used to describe the music of cultures that have no musical stratification, that is, no classical music as a contrast. In general, folk music is known by the way it is taught and learned, by its relative simplicity, and by its association with an ethnic or national group.



Musical Structure

Although the folk musics of European cultures vary enormously, they share some general characteristics. The music is relatively simple, usually consisting of songs with strophic forms; that is, a short stanza is repeated with different words, several or many times. The most common stanza type has four lines, sometimes all different (ABCD), but more frequently with some repetition (AABA, ABBA, and so on). The use of antiphony, or alternation between a leader and a chorus, each singing one line or stanza, is common throughout Europe. Much instrumental folk music presents successions of lines, each repeated or varied once (AABBCCDD or AAÆBBÆ, and so on). Epic songs, with great emphasis on telling a complex story, may repeat a single musical line many times. Although the composers are unschooled, the ways of relating musical materials are often sophisticated. Thus, in Eastern Europe, the technique of transposition (repeating a line at different pitch levels) is widespread, as in a typical Hungarian form in which the second half repeats the first a fifth lower (A5A5AA).

More to Follow - If you're Interested!

Folk Club of Reston-Herndon

March 5 - April 22, 1995

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mar 5 5:00pm Celtic Thunder at Old Brogue -- Great Falls	Mar 6	Mar 7 7:30pm Folk Club	Mar 8	Mar 9 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion 7:30pm with Andrew McKnight	Mar 10	Mar 11
Mar 12 5:00pm Betsy McGovern at Old Brogue -- Great Falls	Mar 13	Mar 14 Showcase Performance Patti & Katie 7:30pm Folk Club	Mar 15	Mar 16 8:00pm Iona @ The Fokal Point, Coho Grill Columbia Md	Mar 17 St. Patrick's 8:00pm Iona @ Alden Theater, McLean, VA	Mar 18
Mar 19 5:00pm Ironweed at Old Brogue -- Great Falls	Mar 20 <i>Spring begins</i>	Mar 21 Connemara \$(9/8) 7:30pm Folk Club	Mar 22	Mar 23 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion	Mar 24	Mar 25
Mar 26	Mar 27	Mar 28 Showcase Lottery Draw 7:30pm Folk Club	Mar 29	Mar 30	Mar 31	Apr 1 April Fools Day 8:00pm Open Door Coffee House, Fairlington UM Ch, Alex
Apr 2  Daylight Savings-set ahead 1 hour	Apr 3	Apr 4 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 5	Apr 6 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion 7:30pm with Susan Graham White	Apr 7	Apr 8 7:30pm Iona @ Del Ray Coffee House, Alexandria Va
Apr 9 Palm Sunday	Apr 10	Apr 11 Showcase Performance 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 12	Apr 13	Apr 14 Good Friday	Apr 15 Passover
Apr 16 Easter 	Apr 17	Apr 18 7:30pm Folk Club	Apr 19	Apr 20 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion	Apr 21	Apr 22 8:00pm Iona @ Farthing's Tavern - St Mary's City Md

CONNEMARA

Tickets \$9 (\$8 Members)

**The Folk Club
Proudly Presents ...
7:30 PM
Mar 21, 1995
at the Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA**



CONNEMARA performs music from Scotland and Ireland, old and new. The songs and instrumental pieces which comprise their repertoire range from delicate to driving and their album "**Beyond the Horizon**" was described by the Washington Post as "a uniformly alluring collection of songs, airs, jigs, waltzes and strathspeys that possess a timeless charm and poignant beauty". Singer **Grace Griffith's** lush voice is known to DC area audiences from her work formerly as half of the popular duo **Hazlewood** and for her solo work, which won her numerous **WAMMIEs** (Washington Area Music Awards--including "**Best Irish Album**" 1994 for her solo recording "**Every Hue and Shade**") and a Maryland governor's citation for excellence in individual performance.

Cathy Palmer's many years of classical violin study have blended with celtic influences to create an alternately haunting and fiery fiddling style that have taken her to the International Gaelic Mod gathering in Nova Scotia and won her a number of awards in regional Scottish fiddling competitions. When combined with the magic of the celtic harp, Connemara creates a sound of awesome beauty.

Coming Folk Club Events

March 21 - Connemara
\$9/8

April 25 - Steve Gillette \$
Cindy Mangsen \$8/7

May 23 - Cormack McCarthy
\$8/7

June 13 - Bill Staines
\$8/7

July 25 - Richard Gilewitz
\$6/5

August 15 - Mary Flowers
Sep 26 - Tom & Chris Kastle
Oct 24 - Priscilla Herdman
Nov 28 - Roy Book Binder

Showcase Performances

March 14, the featured performers will be **Katie & Patti**.

On the first Tuesday of every month we feature a Folk Club member in a showcase two-set (25 minute) performance. To become one of these "showcase" specials all you have to do is 1) be a member of the Folk Club, 2) fill out a lottery slip by the last Tuesday of the month, 3) win the drawing and 4) practice, practice practice!

The Folk Club

President, Larry Mediate
Treasurer, Richard Flinchbaugh
Members of the Board:
Ray Kaminsky, Ellen Kaminsky
Lynn Jordan, Bill Davis
David Hurd
Jim Rosenkrans, T.M. Hanna

Newsletter Published Periodically
Editors, Mike Murray & Dave Hurd

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Ray Kaminsky - (703) 689-0444

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Check your Label - Are you expiring? "19950301" is expiring with this issue. Don't miss an issue - Don't miss the benefits of the Folk Club. Please send in your membership check (\$12.00) to keep your membership active!

The Folk Club

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Expires 19960301

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