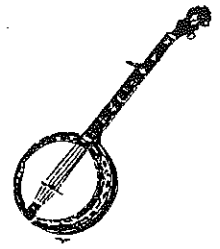




The Folk Club

of Reston-Herndon

...Preserving Folk Traditions



Vol 9, No 6; June, 1995

Folk Music - A Brief Introduction

(Cont'd from May)

Many work songs are found in Western cultures and, especially, in the folk music of African-derived cultures in the Americas. The purpose of some work songs is to increase the efficiency of work through rhythmic sound. Others, with texts that concern agricultural activities and other work, function to build the solidarity of the working group. Among this group are sea chanteys, cowboy songs, and railroad songs, many of them narrative and thus also ballads.

Further types of folk songs include love songs, songs of general entertainment such as those sung by young people in the Balkans while taking walks on holidays, and marching songs sung in earlier centuries by soldiers on long marches. Children's songs include lullabies, game songs, and counting-out rhymes, as well as nursery rhyme songs that have an educational purpose. Another type is religious folk songs, that is, hymns sung in rural churches and existing mainly in oral tradition.

The main purpose of instrumental folk music is to accompany dance and, secondarily, marching. Although special pieces for instruments only are found throughout Europe and the Americas, instrumentally performed songs are also common. Occasionally, dancing is accompanied by singing. In Scandinavia, narrative ballads were once used for dancing.

Instruments

Each folk culture has a large number of instruments. Some, such as bagpipes, are found throughout Europe; others, such as the Sardinian launeddas, a set of three reed pipes played by one musician, are used in limited areas. Western folk instruments can be classified by their origin and history. The folk cultures of Europe and Asia share their most archaic instruments with simple tribal societies; they include rattles, simple flutes, wooden trumpets, Jew's harps, and drums and are frequently used for archaic rituals or by children as toys. Another category is that of instruments brought to Europe from other cultures, particularly from the Middle East; examples include the Yugoslav gusle, held upright on the musician's knee, and the hammered dulcimer, found in Western Europe as well as in

Hungary (where it is known as the cimbalom), but probably originating in Iran. A third category is made up of instruments developed in the folk culture itself, such as fiddles made from wooden shoes in the Low Countries. The largest group of instruments comprises those taken from urban culture, such as the violin, clarinet, double bass, and accordion, which were adopted without much change. Some instruments, once widely used in art music, were later relegated mostly to folk use; examples include guitars, mandolins and dulcimers, and the Norwegian Hardanger fiddle, a violin with sympathetic strings. The hurdy-gurdy, a fiddle using mechanical stops instead of fingers to change the pitches and sounded by a rosined wheel instead of a bow, was once used in church and art music; it was later simplified for folk use.

Folk music instruments are often played solo or to accompany singing. Ensembles of instruments of many kinds are also found. They include nonprofessional versions of art music ensembles such as brass bands and Scandinavian groups of fiddles. Particularly common in central Europe is a combination of two violins with double bass. Many other groups combine one melody-producing instrument with drums and other percussion. Ensembles of drums and wind instruments (particularly oboes) are also found in folk music of southern Asia and the Middle East. In some instances one person plays two instruments, as in the pipe-and-tabor (flute-and-drum) combination of Western Europe and South America and the violin and mouth organ in Hungary. The number of ensemble types is vast, but in general folk ensembles resemble chamber music ensembles rather than orchestras, in that no two instruments play precisely the same part.

Folk Music in the Modern World

The picture presented thus far applies to folk music as it has existed in the past centuries and continues to exist in a few isolated valleys and village cultures. Most folk cultures, however, have changed greatly in the last hundred years. Printing and the mass media have given them access to urban culture. Members of folk communities have moved to cities and continued their traditions in changed form. Urban music has, likewise, been affected by folk music. Thus, many phenomena once on the border of folk music have taken on greater importance. Some examples: European ethnic groups now living in American cities keep up their traditions at festivals and parties to preserve their

ethnic integrity (not the original functions of the songs). Dissenting political and social movements of the left and the right have made a practice of writing and performing songs in folk style with words supporting their causes. American folksingers of rural origin, such as the Carter family in the 1930s, or with academic backgrounds, such as Pete Seeger, have become major urban entertainers. This is true in Europe, Asia, and Africa as well. Popular music makes use of folk styles, and mixed styles such as country and western music, folk-rock, soul, and gospel music have emerged. In Eastern Europe, talented rural folksingers have been given formal musical training in conservatories.

The typical folk community has been exposed to many kinds of musical influences. In the former republics of the USSR, instruments once played solo were organized into orchestras that entertained in large cities. Contests, folk festivals, and tourism have all made inroads into the relative isolation of the folk community and its music. The character of folk music has changed greatly since World War II, and the lines separating it from other kinds of music have become blurred. Nevertheless, folk music as a worldwide phenomenon, although changing, shows no sign of disappearing.

"Folk Music," Microsoft (R) Encarta. Copyright (c) 1993 Microsoft Corporation. Copyright (c) 1993 Funk & Wagnall's Corporation

Another Fine Memorial Day Weekend Campout!

Once again the faithful gathered on the mountain in rural Virginia for singing, fellowship, and general good times, but this year there was a twist (no, it wasn't that it rained on Sunday), it was the inauguration of workshops at the campout. A new and wondrous tradition has begun and we are sure that it will continue and flourish. Who knows - Omega may be in trouble.

There wasn't time to build more than a single workshop - but plenty of variety accompanied this featured event -

"String Changing (The Ins, Outs and Secrets Thereof)"

Now it should be pointed out that this extended series of clues and hints did not include the autoharp or the hammered dulcimer. It was just too much

material to cram into a two-day session to include those many-stringed instruments. A future 5-day session is being considered with anticipated celebrity speakers to cover the over-12 stringed instruments - look for details in a future mailing.

Among the many interesting nuances shared at the workshop were:

Making curly-queues of the long ends.

Exquisitely evenly turned wrappings on the tuning pegs.

How not to lose the holding pegs in the hole in the instrument (and how to retrieve it if you do).

Cutting strings to the right length (and how to recover if you cut the wrong string)

Restringing a 12-string guitar in under 4 hours.

How to find wire pieces in the shag carpet.

...and many many more!

Almost incidental to these captivating workshop sessions was the opportunity to enjoy the ongoing music which followed the restringing sessions. The constant tuning adjustments which accompanied the music (you knew new strings stretch, didn't you?) added a fine opportunity to discuss lyrics in the middle of the songs, to plan the Labor Day workshops on tuning which will undoubtedly take place, and to get another beer.

Now some may wonder how this exciting workshop concept began, as I recall it was with a statement like, "I change 'em once a year whether they need it or not - just to be professional, and this is the time" and off we went. Some do it in winter, some as part of spring clean-up, others believe the heat of summer is essential - there is no end to the theory and folklore surrounding this marvelous activity.


So, for those of you who considered camping out on the mountain this Memorial Day, but didn't for one reason or another, you can now see that what you missed cannot be replaced and you should seriously consider making early and concrete plans for the Labor Day retreat which is sure to bring joy to the hearts of folksingers everywhere. See you there at Dave's Cabin.



Folk Club of Reston-Herndon



June 4 - July 15, 1995

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
June 4 Washington Folk Fest - Glen Echo Pentecost 2:00pm Hickory Grove @ Herndon Festival	June 5	June 6 7:30pm Folk Club	June 7	June 8 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion	June 9	June 10
June 11 12:00pm Hickory Grove @ Antique Car Fest - Sully	June 12	June 13 Bill Staines 7:30pm Folk Club	June 14 Flag Day	June 15 <small>Corpus Christi</small> 7:30pm Frederick Folk Club @ Ceresville Mansion 8:00pm Shenandoah Coffeeshouse - Middleburg	June 16	June 17 <small>Outlands Celtic Festival</small> 7:00pm Hickory Grove @ Concert by Lake Thromont, Md 8:00pm Shenandoah Coffeeshouse - Shepherdstown WV
June 18 Outlands Celtic Festival Calordan, Sweet Harmony  Father's Day	June 19	June 20 7:30pm Folk Club	June 21 Summer begins	June 22	June 23 4:00pm Hickory Grove @ Frederick Fest of Arts, Md 8:00pm Shenandoah Coffeeshouse - Winchester	June 24 Mountville Folk Fest - Middleburg, VA 11:00am Hickory Grove @ NOVA Fine Arts Fest - Reston
June 25 <small>Mountville Folk Fest - Middleburg, VA</small> 2:00pm Hickory Grove @ Nation's Cup BBQ Battle - Oregon 6:00pm Hickory Grove - Ori Falls <small>Concert on Green</small>	June 26	June 27 Showcase Lottery Draw 7:30pm Folk Club	June 28 7:30pm IONA @ Friendship Hts Vill Ctr - Bethesda	June 29	June 30	July 1 8:00pm Open Door Coffee House, Fairlington UM Ch, Alex
July 2	July 3	July 4 Independence Day 4:00pm Hickory Grove @ Vienna 4th of July	July 5	July 6	July 7 7:00pm Hickory Grove @ Potomac Overlook Park	July 8
July 9 6:00pm IONA @ Grt Falls Concerts on the Green	July 10	July 11 Showcase Performance 7:30pm Folk Club	July 12	July 13	July 14	July 15 8:00pm Shenandoah Coffeeshouse - Shepherdstown WV

Coming Folk Club Events

- June 13 - Bill Staines** \$9/8
- July 25 - Richard Gilewitz** \$7/6
- August 15 - Mary Flower** \$9/8
- Sep 26 - Tom & Chris Kastle** \$7/6
- Oct 24 - Priscilla Herdman** \$9/8
- Nov 28 - Roy Book Binder** \$9/8

Showcase Performances

In June we will not have a featured showcase due to the Staines Concert.

On the second 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 Rosenkraus, T.M. Hanna

Newsletter Published Periodically
Editor Dave Hurd

Publicity & Information
Lynn Jordan - (703) 437-7766
Dave Hurd - (703) 573-6855

Bookings
Ray Kaminsky - (703) 689-0444

ATTENTION! ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Check your Label - Are you expiring? "19950601" 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 (still just \$12.00) to keep your membership active!

The Folk Club

of Reston - Herndon
at The Tortilla Factory
648 Elden Street
Herndon, VA 22070
c/o David A. Hurd
1405 Cottage Street SW
Vienna, VA 22180

Expires 19960301

Mr Richard Flinchbaugh
9712 Cymbal Dr
Vienna, VA 22182