

discussion and discovery.

Individual instructors will no doubt find areas that were omitted or cursorily mentioned, but this is inevitable with any textbook. For example, as an instructor in Atlantic Canada, my students might be surprised that the Celtic rock wave of the 1990s received only a passing mention, and artists like Great Big Sea, Ashley MacIsaac or the Rankins are not profiled. However, this need not detract from my overall recommendation. Instructors can make spaces in lectures and assignments to fill in any gaps they perceive. *Rock: A Canadian Perspective* is engagingly and accessibly written, and provides numerous points of entry into discussions of music, culture, Canadian identity and our various national and regional experiences. Hodgson's integration of material with Starr's and Waterman's existing text is convincing and purposeful, and should serve Canadian undergraduate popular music survey courses well. 🍀

Pioneers of Ethnomusicology.

McLean, Mervyn. 2006. Coral Springs, Florida: Llumina Press, 2006. 424pp, bibliography and subject index. Paper.

BY MARGARET WALKER

Ethnomusicology, the offspring of a mid-century “marriage” between musicology and anthropology, has from its inception engendered questions about what exactly the field comprises, what precisely its theories and methodologies are, and even whether or not the name is an accurate indication of its scholarly activities. I see this as not so much an identity crisis

— most individual ethnomusicologists know very well who they are and what they are doing, even if it contrasts with their colleagues' activities — but rather an ongoing debate that is a reflection of how current, adaptable, and open the field really is. A certain amount of fluidity seems a central characteristic of ethnomusicology. Shifts in paradigms, concepts, and methodologies, however, can also result in irritated reactions from scholars who feel that their legacy is under fire. *Pioneers of Ethnomusicology*, eminent ethnomusicologist Mervyn McLean's recent book, is this type of reaction. Although ostensibly about the history of the field and the “pioneers” whose work in non-Western music led to the formation of what we now call ethnomusicology, the book also contains a vigorous critique of the changes in research, teaching, and publication that have taken place in the field since the 1980s. As such, it is really two books in one, beginning as a summary of early scholars' careers and contributions, but moving into an intensely personal essay in the guise of discussing “issues.” Yet, although not precisely the straightforward compendium of information it seems, *Pioneers of Ethnomusicology* is nonetheless a worthwhile read. It is always a valuable exercise to question one's beliefs and assumptions, and McLean provides us with an unlooked for opportunity to do so.

Pioneers of Ethnomusicology is organized in five parts, framed by an introduction at the beginning and a chronology at the end. An appendix at the back of the book then threatens to make this three books in one by providing an extensive list of sample interview questions to be used in fieldwork. Part One, “The Growth of the Discipline,” sets out to

provide a history of the field that reaches back to the dawn of universities in the European Middle Ages and then traces the intellectual past of the West, focusing on the musical interests of explorers and colonial scholars. This solid situating of the field within Western scholarship is very useful if one's goal is to orient music students who are already familiar with Western music history. It also serves to present ethnomusicology as the logical heir to the curiosities of explorers, the emerging field of musicology, and the systematic scholarship of the comparativists, rather than a field of study which is in itself exotic and "other." McLean does miss a nice opportunity to connect the musical tours of Charles Burney to later fieldwork methodologies, but on the whole, this section can be seen as a valuable summary of the roots of ethnomusicological scholarship, illustrating how it arose from any number of streams of Western academic thought and scientific discovery predating the twentieth century.

The next three parts – "The Subject Divisions," "The Biographies A-Z," and "Intellectual Ancestry Charts" – are expansions of various details of Part One. "The Subject Divisions" is brief and divides the research areas of early inquiry into "Folk Music," specifically European and Anglo-American folk song, "Oriental Music," defined as music from the Near, Middle, and Far East, and "Tribal Music," which "refers to the traditional music of peoples formerly known as 'primitive'" (p. 89). McLean takes no steps towards unpacking or contextualizing this terminology, however, a noteworthy omission in light of his later discussions. Part Three, "The Biographies" is, at 156

pages, the longest section, and provides page-long summaries of the careers of close to one hundred scholars and musicians who are the pioneers of the book's title. McLean explains and defends the choices he obviously had to make with "apologies offered in advance for any inadvertent omissions" (p. 9) in both the book's Introduction and again in the prefatory pages to Part Three. The only striking omission I noticed was David P. McAllester, especially as McLean singled him out in Part One, along with Bruno Nettl and John Blacking, as an "outstanding example" of combined musical and anthropological training (p. 15). Nevertheless, as a historical summary of Western interest in music outside of the European classical tradition it is as complete as one could reasonably expect, and contains a great number of eighteenth and nineteenth-century collectors, such as Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, a French Jesuit missionary to China, and Charles Russell Day, an English soldier who became interested in Indian organology, whom one might not automatically include in a list of ethnomusicologists. McLean further clarifies his organization by explaining that while the biographies "form a reference dictionary" of pioneers, the "intellectual history charts [that follow] set out their relationships to each other" (p. 92). These charts, which make up Part Four, trace the development of ideas and approaches by connecting many of the scholars from the late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century to each other through three academic lineages: the Berlin School, the Vienna School, and the American School and the Middle Years.

All this forms a very handy resource of a sort. It is certainly a compilation

of data not generally found in a single volume and potentially offers a starting place for a variety of projects in history and historiography. The information is on the whole very solid and reinforces the types of “history of ideas” segments most of us already offer in undergraduate history and culture courses. This is compromised slightly by a very odd number of typographical and printing errors, but can still be safely included in assigned reading for students. The intent of the book seems to shift, however, in Part Five. Here McLean moves on to address “issues arising from the work of the pioneers,” which he identifies as fieldwork, archiving and documentation, transcription, analysis, comparison, and product and process. This is all fair enough on the surface, but in his expansion of these topics, McLean resumes a discussion he initiated near the end of Part One under the sub-title of “New Directions.” It is through this altercation with the present that the book becomes something quite different; it is not simply an assembly of facts about the past, nor even a thoughtful examination of the roots of the field, but rather an intense critique of scholarly trends in ethnomusicology since the 1980s, most of which McLean thinks are misguided.

“New Directions (1980-2000)” begins with a summary of concerns Alan Merriam (who served on McLean’s dissertation committee) gave voice to in a series of lectures in 1976 (pp. 67 fol.). The troublesome trends that Merriam saw emerging and which “have since been amply confirmed by events” are, in a nutshell, a move away from many of the stalwart methodologies of the past including comparison, transcription, and analysis,

and a move towards more cerebral approaches such as cognitive anthropology and theory building. McLean then links these disturbing shifts (as he sees them) to the emphasis, primarily through programmes at UCLA, on bimusicality, process rather than product, and the insertion of ethnomusicological discourse in theoretical frameworks adapted from other fields. However, although this places a large part of the blame on the American scholars Charles Seeger (as a charismatic lover of theory) and Mantle Hood (as the initiator of the concept of bimusicality), it is the final pioneer of the book, British ethnomusicologist John Blacking, who is singled out as truly liable. According to McLean, Blacking’s systematically unproven theories on the integration of musical and social structure combined with his forceful personality and charisma made him a kind of Judas whose idealistic and intuitive approach to sonic and social meaning gave the field a symbolic kiss of death.

The primary difficulty in this reactionary approach is that it fails to consider that if one is to analyze musical continuity and change in socio-cultural and historical context, then one should probably be prepared to look at academic continuity and change in the same way. The trends in ethnomusicology with which McLean takes such issue are larger trends within Western scholarship and society; it would be strange indeed if a field like ethnomusicology, which by definition deals with music as a human social activity, should remain untouched by the thoughts and philosophies of human beings in other fields of academic study. Furthermore, although most of these theoretical frameworks, for exam-

ple postmodernism, semiotics, or Marxism, have emerged from various streams of Western thought, the gradual entry of scholars into the field who are not necessarily “Western,” either ancestrally or philosophically, has also introduced important paradigms and approaches from other parts of the world. One of McLean’s great laments is the decline and neglect of transcription, which he blames largely on the emphasis of process over product. One must admit he has a point, especially in his concern that transcription may have in part been set aside simply because many current scholars do not possess the skills to hear and notate music accurately. Yet, for scholars who have undergone the vast part of their musical training in a system which does not use Western notation, the exercise of translating sound to notes on a staff might result in little value or insight. There is an undeniable element of eurocentrism in many of the methodologies of the past, and whereas this must not mean that they should therefore be summarily discarded, to insist that only scholars trained in Western music can be ethnomusicologists is equally unsupportable.

One must nevertheless resist the temptation to dismiss McLean’s concerns and observations out of hand: to react to the reactionary only compounds the problem. Ethnomusicology is, perhaps appropriately enough, a field that seems constantly to define and redefine itself in response to socio-cultural influences. A re-examination of its content and direction is therefore always in order, and all of McLean’s “issues,” when unpacked from their conservative baggage, are worth pondering. The decline

of transcription seems to stand in opposition to the rise of theorizing, yet both can be useful approaches in the quest for musical understanding. The best solution would seem to be that the knowledgeable and competent scholar should not only have a wide range of skills, methods, and theories at his or her disposal, but also have the confidence and insight to decide what is appropriate and enlightening in a given situation. The balance of attention on process and product, anthropology and musicology can be similarly considered. McLean may well be drawing needed attention to a pendulum that is in danger of swinging too far in the opposite direction. We should be careful of adopting new sacred cows to herd.

Pioneers of Ethnomusicology is, therefore, a useful and often thought-provoking read, although not for the most apparent reasons. It does provide what it promises: a detailed history of the intellectual roots of ethnomusicology and a marvelous compendium of early scholars who range from the well-known to the obscure. Yet, in its assessment of the issues arising from the work of these early scholars, it moves from history to opinion and in doing so becomes quite a different book. Nevertheless, whether or not one agrees with McLean’s evaluations of any of the trends he singles out, the opportunities for debate and re-examination that arise from his candid critique cannot but strengthen the field. 🍀