

Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, eds. 2003. *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*. Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities No. 1. Lanham, Maryland and Oxford: Scarecrow Press Inc.

Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe is the first in a series entitled *Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities* published by Scarecrow Press and edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman.¹ The series encourages ethnomusicologists to return to an examination of the processes of music making in Europe at the beginning of the twentieth-first century:

Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities aims to provide a critical framework necessary to capture something of the turbulent dynamics of music performance, engaging the forces that inform and deform, contest and mediate the senses of identity, selfhood, belonging and progress that shape "European" musical experience in Europe and across the world (np).

Celtic Modern builds on this aim, centring on "Celtic" music as it is played, listened to, and interpreted by practitioners, participants, enthusiasts, and critics in the modern world. The book is a collection of nine essays on various aspects of Celtic music in the British Isles, France, Australia, Canada, the Mediterranean, and United States. The Introduction by Stokes and Bohlman and the "Afterword: Gaelicer Than Thou" by Timothy D. Taylor also provide valuable contextual dimensions and discussions around the issues raised in the books' articles.

"Celtic" is the central springboard term for the volume. Drawing on different Celtic musical sites, the authors explore the implications and impacts of this label, deconstructing the concept and providing arguments from differing points of view. In the Introduction, Stokes and Bohlman explore issues and sites related to the production of Celtic music, traditional and modern. Articles in this volume examine Celtic musics and identity (Bithell, Smith, Trew, Wilkinson, Symnon, Taylor); politics (Bithell); globalization/world music (Smith, Reiss, Valley); diaspora (Smith, Trew, Taylor), and as Stokes and Bohlman phrase it, "Celtic within global flows" (Cadden, Griffiths, Reiss and Valley) (2).

One of the major questions *Celtic Modern* asks is about "sourcing" Celtic music: Where does it come from? These essays encompass Ireland (Reiss, Valley), Scotland (Cadden, Symnon), Brittany (Wilkinson) and Wales (Griffiths). However, Ireland still manages to take centre stage in terms of general references and discussions, especially for diasporic communities (Smith, Trew, Taylor). This partly reinforces the general perception that Celtic means Irish. Notably, English traditional music is left out of the dialogue entirely. While agreeing that the British Isles and Brittany (apparently excluding England) are considered Celtic nations, many of authors of these essays engage the issue that the global is local, but that the local is not always global; or that while Celtic music includes all of the above regions, music made in those areas is not necessarily Celtic (Bithell, Smith, Wilkinson, Symnon).

What is Celtic music? Eight of nine chapters deal with traditional musics and their modern extensions. The latter includes discussions of Celtic music as a subgenre of world music, particularly in relation to the Afro-Celt Sound System group (Smith, Reiss, Valley) and the introduction of the *didjeridu* (Smith, Cadden). Several essays also discuss bush bands in Australia (Smith), *fest noz* in Brittany (Wilkinson), fiddle music in Canada (Trew), pipe bands in Scotland and Australia (Cadden), as well as pub sessions (Stokes and Bohlman, Smith, Reiss, Valley, Wilkinson, Symnon, Taylor), and Irish *sean-nós* singing (Stokes and Bohlman, Valley). While music is the centre of each article, the authors also focus on social issues surrounding the making of that music. For example, Reiss argues that innovation is part of any healthy tradition; but Valley contradicts him, stating the two are mutually exclusive. Meanwhile, Cadden weighs in on the compositional practice of innovative drumbeats in pipe bands, which gives each group a

¹ Other books in this series include *Albanian Urban Lyric Song in the 1930s* by Eno Koço (2004); *The Mediterranean in Music: Critical Perspectives, Common Concerns, Cultural Differences* edited by David Cooper and Kevin Dawe (2005); and *On a Rock in the Middle of the Ocean: Songs and Singers in Tory Island, Ireland* by Lillis Ó Laoire with several collaborators (2005).

distinctive sound. Reiss and Valley also examine the strong reactions to the 1995 Irish television series *A River of Sound*, which celebrated the growing and changing tradition of Irish music (154-55; 211-14).

Celtic Modern also deals with *who* is Celtic. Indeed, identity is a central focus in this collection. There is little debate that people in Ireland consider themselves Celtic. However, as Symon and Willkinson point out, many Scottish and Breton people were surprised to discover they too are considered to be Celtic. That said, Willkinson demonstrates how musicians move easily between the Breton world of *fest noz* and that of transnational Celtic music (226). Who qualifies as Celtic is also a question in diasporic regions, such as Australia and North America. As both Smith and Trew discuss, the descendants of Irish immigrants in Australia and Ontario, respectively, hold on to their ancestral identity of Irishness in their new land. However, they pick and choose what they wish to use from that identity. For example, in Australia, their construction of an Irish identity attempts to leave out Catholicism (75). Similarly in Ontario, Trew illustrates how for the most part the Orange Order became more of a community organizer rather than fanatical religious group (100-105). Interestingly, this volume begins with an article on Corsica, whose author Bithell argues against a long held view of Corsicans as connected to a Celtic heritage. Bithell believes that there are strong political and musical comparisons, and Corsicans feel a rapport with the Celtic people's marginalization by colonial forces.

This book is well organized and balanced, with a variety of writing styles, from academic, heavily referenced texts to an engaging interview transcription (Symon) and a personal experience/reflection (Taylor). There are interesting headings throughout the articles, such as "Of Megaliths, Brains and Blood" (Bithell), "Gucci-Paddy" (Valley), the descriptive "The Tradition/Innovation Debate" (Reiss), and the counter-argument "'Tradition' and 'Innovation' are Not Compatible" (Valley). The contributors are varied, including both musical academics and academic musicians. While readers need not be well versed in the history of these specific traditions, (the articles provide ample historical context), it is best if they have some background in Celtic music, since many of the concepts and issues discussed in these essays assume a basic knowledge. I recommend *Celtic Modern* to both scholars and students. The authors of these essays discuss engaging issues and describe varied contexts that help us to understand the changing nuances of Celtic music in the modern world.

One final comment: With the burgeoning interest and activity in Celtic music in Atlantic Canada over the past several decades, an essay or two on this important Celtic music revival site would have been a welcome addition to this valuable book.

Evelyn Osborne