

EDITORIAL NOTES

Articles in this issue are again quite varied. Gordon Smith, an ethnomusicology student working for his Ph.D. at the University of Toronto, presents a discussion of the attitude of nineteenth-century musicians to plainchant, with special reference to Ernest Gagnon's pioneer collection of French-Canadian folk songs. He emphasizes the importance of that collection as a reflection of French-Canadian society, citing reactions to it when it was first published.

Jay Rahn, a Canada Research Fellow in the music department of York University, presents the second instalment of his suggestions for harmonizing English-language folksongs. Where his first article in the Journal's 1986 issue described the general considerations to be considered in harmonizing folksongs, this time he concentrates on the tunes that present special problems, and gives concrete suggestions on how to deal with them.

Judith Cohen, who has specialized in the music of the Sephardic Jews, discusses some of the lighter types of folksongs, describing the different categories and illustrating from items in her own collection.

Pierre Chartrand discusses improvisation in folk dancing, pointing out that the tendency today is to preserve dance patterns with emphasis on the steps, neglecting the function and context. He notes that popular dances, particularly the jig as danced in Quebec, allowed the individual dancer to improvise, thus providing the variations that are so important in all types of folklore. The emphasis on a rigid pattern leads to presenting folk dances as formal spectacles and this tends to destroy them as a living part of community life.

Lisa Waxer, a student in the music department of the University of Toronto, describes the way in which Dr. Tapan Kumar Bhattryya, an expert on the music of India, has adapted the traditions of Indian culture to Canada by making his teaching methods more flexible than they could have been in his native land.

David Ennis, who holds a Masters degree in music from Carleton University, has studied the fiddling techniques common in the Ottawa Valley, and gives a detailed analysis of a tune played by musicians with somewhat different backgrounds to show the variations that can occur in the same numbers.

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