



MARIUS BARBEAU
(1883-1969)

La section suivante est à la mémoire du Dr Charles-Marius Barbeau. Nombre de ses amis et disciples lui rendent hommage et racontent leurs souvenirs. Helen Creighton parle de la fondation de la Société canadienne de musique folklorique par M. Barbeau. Kenneth Peacock raconte ses contacts avec M. Barbeau et examine les ressemblances avec les croyances bouddhistes qu'il voit dans l'approche de la nature et de la culture de M. Barbeau. Graham George raconte comment Barbeau l'a amené à s'intéresser à la Société et commente la réunion qu'a tenue en 1961 à Québec à l'International Folk Music Council.

Father Anselme Chiasson tells how Dr. Barbeau was instrumental in persuading him to publish his extensive collection of Acadian folk songs and wrote the introduction for the first volume. Father Germain Lemieux was led to his lifelong devotion to French-Canadian folklore by encountering one of Dr. Barbeau's early books, and he writes movingly of his later contacts with the man he regarded as his inspiration.

HELEN CREIGHTON

When the Canada Council was formed its purpose and my requirements fitted so exactly that I knew I must apply for a grant. But for how much? I took my problem to Dr. Barbeau and described how I would use it. When he mentioned \$10,000.00 I was aghast, for that was a large sum in 1957, but I knew his advice was sound and that he knew how much it would take to fulfill my need. He was right of course. I got my grant and others followed and that is just one of the reasons why I am grateful to such a good friend. I had met him at several conventions of the Canadian Authors Association and began consulting him in the early thirties soon after discovering folklore in Nova Scotia. In all the years since then I have never known him to be too busy to answer letters promptly or, if I appeared in person, to put his work aside and give me his full attention.

I was one of a small group that formed the Canadian Folk Music Society in 1957 when we met in his hospitable home and made our plans. This Society meant a great deal to him and he guided it well as long as his health permitted. I was always amused at annual meetings when he read the report of the nominating committee which began, "President, Myself." There was no suggestion of any other nomination and we were all content to serve as vice presidents or whatever he had in mind. He loved the limelight and was particularly charming on television where he would sing, talk about Canada's folklore, and perhaps perform an Indian dance. The number of his written words boggles the mind. We have him to thank for bringing folklore out of the remote corners where it was a part of life and preserving it as a scientific study. To all of us who are indebted to him for his example and encouragement, we must look upon our meeting with him as one of the most important moments of our lives.

KENNETH PEACOCK

I first met Marius Barbeau in 1949, a couple of years after moving to Ottawa from Toronto. We were introduced by Margaret McTaggart (née Sargent) with whom I had graduated in music from the University of Toronto. In our final year I remember Margaret travelling occasionally to Ottawa to see Barbeau for counselling on her thesis on Indian music. Now (in 1949) she was working with him at the National Museum, still on his Indian collections but also beginning to explore the world of Anglo-Canadian folk music. The Museum had acquired two of the recently-introduced BRUSH 'Soundmirror' tape-recorders, and a program was underway to transfer Barbeau's fragile Edison cylinders to tape. The process was very primitive by modern standards (the first tapes even had paper backing!) but at least it avoided further deterioration of the cylinders. In his zeal to get all the nuances of the originals into music notation Barbeau had played and re-played certain cylinders so much that, to my ear at least, very little was apparently left except faint vocalizations and dry drum beats drowned in a sea of hissings and scratchings. (The Museum of Man is currently performing miracles of electronic restoration on these cylinders with a machine invented by its sound engineer Fred Granger.)

In this connection a little story might be in order. One evening, shortly after I met Barbeau and heard his cylinders, he invited Margaret and me to have coffee and conversation at Murray's restaurant in the Lord Elgin Hotel (I forget where we had been earlier in the evening). Thinking of the all-but-ruined cylinders, I suggested that as audio technology improved it would be possible to bring singers and instrumentalists from these remote cultures right into one's living room with a sort of 'you-are-there' fidelity, and it might even be possible one day to enhance existing recordings. Barbeau seemed quite interested. Somewhat encouraged I soared on, saying that even in classical music the notation of scores had been a necessary evil in the absence of recordings. (I had always been a poor sight-reader, hence the bias toward ear-oriented learning.) At this point the atmosphere was becoming a little tense but I plodded on, finally confronting both of them with the statement: "The performance is the important thing; why do you bother doing musical transcriptions?" Barbeau hesitated just a nano-second, then released all the tension with his famous Buddha laugh saying, "Because we enjoy it!" The thousands of musical transcriptions I have done since that evening I sometimes look upon as a sort of penance for daring to confound the Buddha.

It might be fruitful to explore this Buddhist analogy further. Many nations and cultures operating within the Judeo-Christian-Islamic complex tend to be proselytizing, confrontational, even violent. Their beliefs are centred in an absolutist God, the Creator of the

universe, whose pronouncements on good and evil, heaven and hell, man and beast, sin and redemption, and all the other dichotomies revealed through His various prophets are ignored at the believer's peril. Buddhism, on the other hand, is relativistic, all-encompassing. Not "either-or" but "both-and." It is not so much a religion, in our sense of the word, as an organic process. In modern terms one might describe it as a spiritual technology and/or therapy for exploring the self and the universe. But I don't want to get too involved in the Buddhist paradigm. Just enough to suggest the Barbeau connection. For Barbeau's thinking and approach to life was of a breadth and subtlety that went far beyond our usual dichotomous way of dealing with the realities of the phenomenal world. I don't think it was intentional on his part; just a happy gift that somehow set him apart, a gift that had nothing to do with his intellectual accomplishments. In fact it added a universal dimension to his quest that was sometimes misinterpreted on the personal level. People occasionally felt vaguely threatened or even outraged when he seemed to violate their unquestioning faith in the cultural assumptions of our society. But he was operating on a level of awareness quite alien to the limited comprehension of these people. And always in a kindly manner. That is why I have used the Buddhist analogue to illustrate the scope of his vision. Just how much he knew about Buddhism itself I do not know. I do remember him speaking of early Buddhist survivals among certain Indian peoples of the Northwest Coast. Certainly his devoted research among so many Indian cultures over the years would in itself have deepened his insight into the natural processes around him.

In this connection I remember a beautiful Sunday afternoon in the fall of 1952 or 1953. It was just after my first two trips to Newfoundland. We drove north of Ottawa into Quebec's Gatineau Hills to the village of Low, an Irish community where years before Barbeau had collected Irish songs. Madame Barbeau accompanied us. The main purpose of the visit was to look up informants to see if their song variants were similar to the Irish songs I had collected in Newfoundland. As Barbeau went about the village on foot Madame Barbeau and I chatted and waited in the car. Finally she said, "Well, if anyone can persuade them to sing, Marius can!" As it turned out, everyone was busy or out enjoying the weather. So we visited a spritely Mohawk man in his eighties, Charles Cooke, an old friend and informant of Barbeau's, who proudly showed us the log house he had built years before. Madame Barbeau inquired about bittersweet. Oh yes, there was lots of it about, a particularly good patch a few hundred yards into the woods. We thanked the kindly Indian man and set off. Walking with Barbeau in the woods was like having an Indian guide, as I was later to learn during my Indian researches. He knew the names of all the trees and plants and on that occasion gave an especially evocative description of the life cycle and

habits of the bittersweet vine. The hardy finger-thick vines twist themselves up and around tree trunks, along branches to adjoining trees and large bushes to find just the right exposure for their bright orange berries which later split open to display a centre of an even more gorgeous shade of orange. Possibly having heard the lecture several time before, Madame Barbeau declared that she thought it was pure chance; the vines did not really know what they were doing. But Barbeau in his typically exuberant way almost shouted, "Of course they know what they are doing, everything here knows what it's doing, everything is interconnected!" Buddhism is sometimes berated for defining things negatively in terms of what they are not, but here was an almost perfect positive description — for the Western mind, at any rate, which might interpret the above with a more comfortably scientific concept such as 'ecology.'

Although the memory of this and many other similar comments of Barbeau remains vivid to this day. I must confess that at the time I did not fully appreciate their import. It is only in recent years after a somewhat deeper study of Buddhism, particularly quite recently under the tutelage of a Japanese Zen Master and a Tibetan lama, that I have come to see Barbeau in a new light. He was, in this sense, a 'Master' in his own right despite the different cultural matrix which conditioned his thinking. While not personally involved in myth, ritual and meditative practices, he realized their crucial importance in many cultures. Beneath the staggering erudition of his books and monographs, particularly those dealing with the totemism of the Northwest Coast Indians, one senses a quest for the invisible forces which 'inform' their visible counterparts. The immanence behind the phenomenal projections. No doubt it was the virtually identical quest which he saw in the paintings of Emily Carr that inspired his early championing of her work among the galleries and collectors of Eastern Canada. Thus encouraged, she reached in her final canvasses an apotheosis beyond artifice and differentiation, a sort of Zen-like realization where the paintings themselves become works of nature, not art.

Encouragement of others was a second career for Barbeau. Just listing the names of individuals, associations, conferences, festivals and so on would use up the space available to me. In my case he first played the role of kindly advisor whenever I had questions regarding the Indian tunes or texts I had found in his archives or library to use as a possible basis for composition. Then early in 1951 he dropped his first tiny bombshell. Would I be interested in going to Newfoundland to collect folksongs? Somewhat startled, I protested that I knew absolutely nothing about collecting folksongs. "All the better," he replied, "you have no preconceived notions and will learn as you go along; that's what I did." The prospect of travelling to the then 'exotic' Newfoundland was irresistible. I agreed. Besides, my best friend in high school had been from Newfoundland, and I

had heard many tall and fascinating tales from his father. Strange how the evolving cycle of coincidences keep reminding us of our destiny, always patiently waiting for the next round if we try to ignore it or steer a different course. My return to Newfoundland in the summer of 1952 was no surprise.

The summers of 1953 and 1954 found me recording the music of several Indian tribes from Northwestern Ontario across the prairies to the Kootenay region of British Columbia. Since virtually no research had been done on Plains Indian cultures for decades, Barbeau suggested concentrating on this area to see just what had survived. To our delight much had survived, so Barbeau arranged for a TIME magazine reporter and photographer to come to the Museum, and in due course an article appeared on my 'discoveries.' Though grateful and flattered, I somehow felt that things were getting out of hand. What had started out as something of a summer lark was beginning to turn into a career. Did I really want it? After a mini-identity crisis in the mid-1950s I decided to return to Newfoundland and finish my research there, if such research can ever be regarded as 'finished.'

When my musical explorations of Newfoundland came to an end in 1961 I spent the winter of 1961-62 putting together a rather formidable manuscript on my findings (later to be published as *Songs of the Newfoundland Outports*). Now, I felt, I could return to being a 'serious' composer again. But it was not to be. Early in 1962 I had a most intriguing discussion with Carmen Roy who had become head of the Folklore Division of the National Museum. The Museum was contemplating research on Canada's minority cultures of European and Asiatic origin. I had long been interested in the music of other cultures but had never had the opportunity of studying them first-hand. Although my pet theory of 'evolving cycles of coincidences' had not yet surfaced consciously, somehow everything seemed just right. We decided that a feasibility survey to test the waters would be in order. So I spent the summer and fall of 1962 making recordings and gathering data on between thirty and forty cultures across Canada. And, of course, another formidable report was produced (drastically summarized in *A Survey of Ethnic Music across Western Canada*). Having met the Doukhobors, the Japanese, the Lithuanians and all the others, I found myself trying to cope with several cultural love affairs simultaneously. As a result, the next decade belonged to them, not to me, although in the end I discovered it was really I who was the ultimate beneficiary of all this experience and knowledge. Now engaged in other pursuits whose outcome remains uncertain, I can nevertheless see that this study of the evolution of cultural façades has been an invaluable prerequisite. I use the word façades not in any pejorative sense but to indicate that such surfaces often obscure more than they reveal. Perhaps it is a trait I unconsciously picked up from Barbeau — it is impossible to say for sure at this point.

What I *can* say for sure is that he had a profound and still incalculable influence on my career, even to the point of changing its direction. But even 'Masters' are sometimes fallible. Although we never spoke of it, I felt during the early years of our relationship that he expected I would eventually become the sort of scholar he was. Possibly it was because we shared a certain zest for exploration of the unknown. For my part, I never had the intellectual bent, the patience or even the slightest interest in following such a career. What I admired most was the man himself, quite aside from those nuggets of insight he had gleaned as a result of his scholarship. At some point he must have relented, for there were no more TIME-type interviews or other attempts to further my scholarly career. This did not mean the end of our relationship. Quite the contrary. He continued to show interest in everything I did and supported me in every way possible.

But time was beginning to take its toll. He was, after all, past eighty, had miraculously recovered from a massive stroke years earlier, and above all, was struggling to prepare his final manuscripts for publication. Too late, it appeared. As of this writing, however (May, 1983), I am happy to report that the National Museum of Man is assembling the massive research material on his beloved Tsimshyan Indians for publication in several volumes. It should constitute the crowning achievement of his career.

I now forget the context or the reason, but at a meeting of the Canadian Folk Music Society in the early sixties Sir Ernest MacMillan was moved to remark, "There will never be another Barbeau." One could, of course, say this of anyone. Each of us is unique. But, as the saying might go, some of us are more unique than others. Such was Marius Barbeau.

GRAHAM GEORGE

It was typical of the man that my first letter from him, written on January 12th 1956, read: "Balikçi has just given me the separate (off-print) of your review on *Music in Canada*. I am much interested in what you say, in particular, of my contribution" (I had pointed out some failures of notation, particularly the placing of drum-beats on bar-lines). "Your discussion of the two songs transcribed by Sir Ernest MacMillan is certainly challenging and stimulating..." He goes on (quite unconcerned about being corrected by an unknown junior): "This gives me an idea. Would you be interested in collaborating with me, for the preparation of 50 to 70 Indian songs of the Canadian Rockies - Thompson River and Shushwap tribes of the Interior Salish?... The songs are about the best we have recorded anywhere. Now here is my invitation: would you be willing to

transcribe the music while I would attend to other parts of the work? Are you interested?"

Of course I was interested, and on September 26th 1957 he writes: "I am delighted to hear that you have now transcribed nearly half of the set of Indian songs I sent you" (not the 50 or 70; he sent me 21 and I eventually transcribed 15).

That foray into transcription led me in more directions than I could have imagined, for "le petit Marius," as he called himself, d'après le Père Prosper Vincent, demanded that I read a paper about the Salish songs at the 1961 Conference of the International Folk Music Council (my first experience of the Council of which I was to become much later for nearly twelve years secretary-general) to be held at Laval University, and that for the same occasion I should write an orchestral work based on the songs. It gave me great pleasure to do so, and - perhaps because all the tunes were composed by Chiefs Tetlenitsa and Ignace Jacob who had sung them in Ottawa in 1912 - I regard it as one of my most satisfactory works.

My next surprise from him came in March of the same year, in the form: "I hope that you will be willing to join us and become an active member of the International Folk Music Council. I have asked Miss Karpeles" (then secretary, later Honorary President of the Council) "to write to you directly about your becoming an active organiser with us for the International Folk Music Council in Canada. Richard Johnston, at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, will also work with us."

Shortly afterwards it became apparent that "active member" meant "active organiser," which in turn meant "vice-president"; and in a letter of February 4th 1958 to Maud Karpeles Dr. Barbeau refers to "leading members of our Canadian Branch of the IFMC as: Richard Johnston of Toronto, Helen Creighton of Halifax" (strictly Dartmouth, Nova Scotia), "Luc Lacourcière of Québec, Carmen Roy (his successor and my predecessor as president of the Canadian Folk Music Society) and himself, of Ottawa; and myself, of Kingston (though in fact I had only just become a member at his request). It was perhaps a drastic way of establishing an executive committee, but he liked to get things done, and done his way. Not everybody always approved.

The Canadian members of the International Folk Music Council at that time (and they constituted also the Canadian Folk Music Society) were 18 strong. They had their own name as the Canadian Folk Music Council as well being the Canadian National Committee of the IFMC because Marius Barbeau insisted that it should be so. Readers who knew Maud Karpeles will know that it took a strong man to get his own way against her wishes, and I should guess that Zoltán Kodály and Marius Barbeau were the only ones who did. They were three people of great qualities and they more than respected each other.

By the time the Québec Conference came on - the conference that

Dr. Karpeles (who received the first of her doctorates there as founder of the IFMC) referred to as "special even among the specials" - there were 48 Canadians, 50 Europeans, 83 members from the United States, 4 from the Middle East, 4 from Central and South America, 2 from Africa and 1 from the West Indies. And it can hardly be denied that this conference, "special among the specials," came into being because Marius Barbeau decided that it should.

For a less "nominative" series of statements about this my old friend - "old" because he was 29 years of age when I was born; "friend" because of his exceeding kindness to me - I refer the reader to the obituary that I had the honour to write for the *Yearbook of the International Folk Music Council* on his death in 1969.

For now, I represent his kindness in a simple note that he wrote to me - undated, but presumably before my sabbatical leave to Paris in 1966-7: "I am anxious for you and your European plans. The rumour here is that you may not be able to get away from home. Greetings. Marius." The rumour was quite wrong, but the kindness of the thought as typical as the quietness of his iron will.

Some years ago, on a train whose destination I no longer remember, I sat with another "old friend" - the words carrying the same connotations - André Biéler. Somehow our talk turned to *his* old friend Marius Barbeau, and he kept me spell-bound as he recounted the walks they had together half a century ago on the Ile d'Orléans. Later I persuaded him to write down some of these reminiscences, and now, searching through my materials to catch for the reader all that I can of this lovable, remarkable character (for it is worth bearing in mind that he was not only lovable and determined but also a lawyer, a Rhodes scholar, an anthropologist, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada with the Lorne Pierce Medal for Literature, a D.Litt (Oxon.) honoris causa, a Canada Council medallist, a vice-president of the International Folk Music Council, and entirely unassuming about all of it) - I came across this from André Biéler, written long years ago, and quoted now with his permission:

"It must have been in 1928" (the year the present writer first saw the sunset splendours of the north-shore hills folding back into eternity, and knew himself a Canadian) "that Marius Barbeau rented an old house on the Island of Orleans. It was a pleasure for me to drive him around of an evening, as at that time he had no conveyance of his own.

"As was generally the case on an outing with Marius, we would crown the evening with a 'find' of some sort.

"Having driven along the north road - 'le chemin du Roi' - as far as l'Argenteuil we noticed an old shed not far from the road. 'André - lets look and see if we can find something there' - and, sure enough, following his flair for treasures we found two cases of Port Neuf pottery that had been discarded on the purchase of a

'de Laval' separator. I still have some of the bowls purchased from the farmer as worthless junk.

"Some years later, walking down Boulevard Raspail, I saw a figure somewhat ahead, with the familiar silhouette and walking stance of Marius Barbeau. Sure enough, I having caught up with him, we fell into the same conversation as in Québec: his flair for 'finds'.

"He had just discovered, in storage, cases of Indian material sent back by Jacques Cartier from his voyage up the St. Lawrence. This material had been gathering dust for centuries in some building in Versailles, not even opened, for the lack of interest shown by France to Québec at the time.

"A walk with Marius was indeed a worthwhile experience. His gentle, high voice" (an indescribable voice - quiet, elegant, unique and unforgettable; whoever wants to hear it, and the way he used it, should acquire a copy of his warm and winning Folkways record, *My Life in Recording Canadian-Indian Folk-lore*, "his kindly manner hiding the immense knowledge of artistic creation among primitive people —"

André Biéler stops there, perhaps caught by a creative idea of his own that needed tending. But the vision of these two old friends roaming half a century ago through the roads of the undisfigured Ile d'Orléans for their 'finds' — I know no better way of closing this little tribute to a great Canadian.

PÈRE ANSELME CHIASSON

C'était en 1941.

Nous demeurions à Montréal, mon cousin le Père Daniel Boudreau et moi. Lui était étudiant et moi jeune professeur de théologie.

Nous possédions dans nos bagages des centaines de chansons traditionnelles apportées avec nous de Chéticamp (N.-E.), notre paroisse natale.

Nous avions conscience de la beauté et même de la valeur de ces chansons et nous nous demandions ce que nous pourrions en faire. À cette époque, l'abbé Gadbois se trouvait à l'apogée de "La Bonne Chanson". Nous lui écrivîmes pour lui offrir notre collection. Il ne daigna pas répondre. Nous décidâmes alors de les publier nous-mêmes.

À ce moment, Marius Barbeau était déjà devenu un célèbre folkloriste, le seul peut-être au Canada. Fonctionnaire à la Section de la culture indienne au Musée national de l'homme à Ottawa, il s'intéressait en outre au folklore des Canadiens et en particulier des Canadiens français. Il avait déjà recueilli à peu près 400 chansons traditionnelles d'origine acadienne en Gaspésie. Nous nous sommes adressés à lui et l'accueil fut des plus chaleureux.

Nous lui envoyions en décembre 1941 quelques chansons de notre recueil projeté, pour les soumettre à son appréciation et lui demander, avec une naïveté audacieuse, s'il accepterait de nous écrire une préface. Il nous répondait le 26 du même mois: "Votre envoi m'a causé une surprise fort agréable, juste la veille de Noël... Je m'empresserai de préparer une courte appréciation en guise de préface... Je l'aurais même écrite demain si j'avais la liste de toutes les chansons que vous vous proposez d'incorporer. Faites-la moi parvenir le plus tôt possible... J'écrirai immédiatement ce texte avec le plus grand plaisir". Nous eûmes l'honneur d'obtenir une préface de lui pour notre premier recueil des *Chansons d'Acadie*, publié en 1942.

Dans cette première lettre et dans les autres qui ont suivi¹, comme dans les rencontres prolongées et agréables que nous avons eues avec lui par la suite, il nous prodigua des conseils fort précieux. Nous osons affirmer, avec une petite pointe d'orgueil, qu'il fut notre premier maître en folklore. Vu que nous ignorions presque tout en ce domaine, il nous apprit d'abord à différencier les chansons traditionnelles des chansons littéraires et modernes. Il nous fit comprendre la valeur incomparable des premières par rapport aux dernières, même s'il accepta qu'on en publiât quelques-unes de cette dernière catégorie vu qu'elles étaient "connues et aimées" chez nous. Mais, il insistait pour qu'on souligne cette différence dans les préfaces. Il nous renseignait avec délicatesse: "Le temps fort et la barre de mesure doivent toujours tomber sur les accents principaux du vers", etc.²

S'il nous indiquait les quelques chansons moins traditionnelles que contenaient nos recueils, il exprimait son admiration pour les autres: "La plupart sont traditionnelles et parmi les meilleures"³. Il en soulignait plusieurs qui n'étaient pas encore connues par lui ni par personne et comme il l'écrivait: "Ne nous étaient pas encore parvenues d'aucune manière"⁴: *La Danahay, Mon père m'envoie-t-à l'arbre, J'ai bien 100 millions d'or*⁵, *Au chant de l'alouette, Je n'ai plus d'amourette, Catherinette*⁶. À chacun de nos trois premiers recueils, les seuls qu'il a connus, il nous encourageait: "Je trouve ce recueil excellent à tous points de vue. Je vous félicite et vous engage à continuer dans la même voie"⁷.

Entre-temps, des relations très amicales s'étaient créées entre nous. À cette époque, le Père Daniel et moi nous prenions nos vacances avec nos étudiants capucins sur les bords du lac Meach, près d'Ottawa. Marius Barbeau est venu y passer plusieurs soirées avec nous. Il était accompagné parfois de Marcel Rioux. Nous gardons un souvenir des plus agréables de ces soirées où nous l'entourions tous, afin de l'entendre nous raconter avec la plus grande simplicité et humour beaucoup d'histoires tirées de ses expériences passées. Il en profitait aussi, vu que nos étudiants venaient de diverses régions, pour s'informer de différentes versions de chansons ou de faits folkloriques.

Enfin, nous étions invités le Père Daniel et moi à aller lui rendre visite au Musée. L'impression qui demeure dans nos esprits c'est que son bureau lui-même (pièce 354) donnait l'image d'un vrai musée: des totems, des images d'Épinal, des figurines, des bibelots, des potiches, "reliques sans prix d'un âge ancien et ces chers souvenirs des générations disparues"⁸.

M. Barbeau s'intéressait à toutes les chansons que nous possédions encore en réserve. Or, en ce temps-là (1941-1946), les magnétophones que nous connaissons aujourd'hui n'existaient pas. Mais, M. Barbeau utilisait au Musée une machine primitive Edison qui permettait d'enregistrer sur un rouleau en cire. Nous avons passé de longues heures avec lui à enregistrer sur cette machine nos chansons folkloriques acadiennes. Je dois dire qu'à part quelques chansons que j'étais seul à connaître en entier, toutes les autres furent chantées par le Père Daniel qui chantait bien. Moi non. Ces séances d'enregistrements, sur cette machine antique, devenue objet de musée, que faisait fonctionner le grand Marius Barbeau, demeurent pour nous un souvenir très émouvant.

Plus tard, nos relations avec d'autres folkloristes éminents, entre autres Luc Lacourcière, Mgr Félix-Antoine Savard, Carmen Roy, nous ont aidés à augmenter nos connaissances et encouragés dans notre oeuvre visant à mettre en valeur notre folklore acadien. Mais alors que ces derniers, comme nous, commençaient à peine leur carrière en culture populaire, c'est Marius Barbeau qui, le premier, nous a lancés dans l'aventure de la collection d'autres chansons, de contes, de légendes et de traditions chez les Acadiens.

Nous pouvons donc affirmer que c'est grâce à l'élan donné par Marius Barbeau que nous avons recueilli un millier de chansons, une centaine de contes, de multiples légendes et traditions populaires, et que nous avons publié cinq recueils de chansons d'Acadie (225 chansons), un livre de légendes⁹, et deux autres sur les traditions¹⁰.

Nos recherches ont grandement rendu une foule de personnes conscientes de la valeur de la culture populaire en Acadie. Des enquêteurs du Musée de l'homme à Ottawa, des Archives de folklore de l'université Laval de Québec, du Musée national des arts et traditions populaires de Paris et une foule d'autres par la suite ont parcouru nos régions depuis lors. Des Acadiens en grand nombre sont allés se spécialiser en folklore à l'université Laval. Enfin, l'Université de Moncton a établi un cours en folklore acadien et fondé une section de folklore à son Centre d'Études acadiennes.

Certes, cet épanouissement de l'étude de la culture populaire acadienne n'est pas entièrement attribuable à Marius Barbeau. Mais, n'est-ce pas lui qui, faisant bon accueil à notre jeune projet, alors fragile petite graine, sut lui communiquer la chaleur sympathique et nécessaire qu'il lui fallait pour lui permettre de devenir un arbre de grande taille chargé de fruits?

Marius Barbeau aurait déjà cent ans! Il avait donc à peu près 55 ans quand j'ai pris connaissance de son *Romancero du Canada*! Oh! de vieilles parentes n'avaient bien rapporté qu'on avait vu passer Marius Barbeau en bicyclette sur les routes poudreuses de la Gaspésie en 1912 ou 1914. Mais, c'était pour moi de l'histoire ancienne.

En 1936, mes études secondaires terminées, grand passionné de la musique grégorienne, initié depuis quelques années à la lecture musicale, je mets la main sur le *Romancero* de Barbeau, dans une bibliothèque. Je parcours d'abord ce volume avec autant d'avidité que je le faisais, au collège, en lisant un roman de Jules Verne. Une mélodie en appelle une autre... et de vieux souvenirs émergent d'un passé que je considérais comme lointain. Barbeau met sous mes yeux des mélodies entendues et même chantées dans ma jeunesse, vers 1920! Ces mélodies, je les reconnais je me reprends à les aimer. Et je me dis: "Marius Barbeau a dû les aimer; il dû aimer les gens qui les lui ont chantées. Il a choisi le moyen de faire aimer ces chants et de les remettre en honneur!" J'ai relu et relu ce volume de base, tantôt pour connaître l'origine de telle chanson, tantôt pour me rendre compte, par l'analyse, de tel mode musical, de la ressemblance entre telle mélodie grégorienne et telle chanson folklorique.

Quelques années plus tard, j'ai dû reconnaître que ma vocation de folkloriste avait commencé le jour où j'ai lu le *Romancero* Barbeau. J'y ai vu comment on pouvait tirer parti de nos chansons folkloriques aussi bien pour étayer un cours d'histoire du moyen âge à vérifier qu'une classe de musique grégorienne. Un peu plus tard, quand je découvris les contes folkloriques dans certains volumes, et dans certaines revues - les pièces recueillies et éditées par Marius Barbeau - je me rendis compte jusqu'à quel point un professeur pouvait renouveler la pédagogie de l'histoire des civilisations, l'histoire de la Mythologie grecque, en racontant un bout de légende ou un épisode de récit traditionnel.

Le ressort venait de se tendre, il s'agissait d'en exploiter l'énergie! Je suis rentré vraiment en contact avec Marius Barbeau lors de mes premières publications folkloriques, à la suite de 2 ou 3 ans d'enquête dans notre région franco-ontarienne. Il savait encourager les initiatives de ses imitateurs, ou plutôt de ses disciples. Il savait également donner un bon conseil, glisser une remarque constructive pour enrichir l'expérience des «jeunes» chercheurs.

Mais le contact le plus enrichissant que j'ai eu avec Marius Barbeau c'est d'avoir été dans sa classe à l'Université Laval, vers 1955. Quelle érudition, quelle soif de s'instruire et de faire part à ses étudiants de sa vaste expérience des hommes, des livres et des choses! Je relisais dernièrement une mince publication paru à l'occasion du décès de Sir Ernest MacMillan de Toronto (*Music across Canada*,

Toronto, July - August, 1963). On y racontait les premiers contacts du célèbre musicien et de Marius Barbeau alors enquêteur chez les Amérindiens des Montagnes Roucheuses. Il est consolant de voir comment deux génies se sont compris et entraînés dans le domaine musical amérindien. Ils étaient les premiers à enquêter dans cette discipline et à publier ces documents encore inconnus des Blancs. Marius Barbeau semble avoir été aussi spontané, aussi consciencieux avec Sir MacMillan qu'il l'était avec ses étudiants en classe.

Tout l'intéressait en ce qui a trait à la culture populaire: chanson, légende, dicton, vire-langue, conte, gigue de violoneux... techniques du bois, du cuir, du fer forgé, du savon, du sucre d'érable... et même, la parlure paysanne.

Je me souviens d'un incident qui m'a montré Marius Barbeau sous son vrai jour de chercheur invétééré. Ce soir-là, on célébrait une fête quelconque au cercle universitaire, près de la porte Saint-Jean, à Québec. Après la soirée, je me trouve dans la même voiture que Marius Barbeau. C'était à l'époque de la fonte des neiges. Un peu avant d'arriver à destination, le taxi vient à traverser une couche de neige fondante et est obligé de reprendre son élan pour se tirer de cette zone peu rassurante. Je dis à haute voix: «Nous allons nous encailler, nous allons nous encailler»!

Que dites-vous là? me demande sérieusement Marius Barbeau en tirant un calepin de sa poche.

— S'encailler... Nous employons cette expression en Gaspésie pour signifier la difficulté que crée à un marcheur, à un animal ou à une voiture une surface épaisse et gluante se comportant un peu comme le lait caillé.»

Carnet en main, Marius Barbeau me questionne et prend des notes au grand désespoir du chauffeur qui attend le règlement de la facture et le pourboire.

Un autre que ce grand érudit aurait probablement hésité à profiter de l'expérience de son élève, par crainte de s'humilier. Mais Marius Barbeau donnait souvent à ses étudiants ce grand exemple d'humilité en avouant qu'il s'instruisait même en écoutant le témoignage personnel d'un jeune universitaire à peine sorti des études secondaires. Celui que Barbeau questionnait ce n'était plus un étudiant, mais un témoin, un informateur au courant de certains faits, de certains dires ou de certaines expressions locales. C'est ainsi que Marius Barbeau a enseigné à ses disciples que le plus humble des paysans peut être détenteur d'une parcelle de vérité transmise par ce véhicule presque magique de la tradition orale. C'est par l'intérêt porté aux humbles que Marius Barbeau a enseigné à ses disciples quelle richesse d'information on peut cueillir dans une seule mémoire d'analphabète, à condition d'y mettre le temps, la patience et la psychologie.

Une seule rencontre avec Marius Barbeau suffisait pour fixer à jamais dans l'esprit les traits caractéristiques de cet artiste à la figure

d'aristocrate, à l'expression facile, directe, toujours à la recherche d'un peu plus de lumière sur la culture canadienne et amérindienne, sur les coutumes spéciales de telle région. Aussi à l'aise avec un professeur d'université anglophone ou francophone qu'avec un étudiant de l'école élémentaire ou un enfant de quatre ans, il pouvait intéresser les grands chercheurs en linguistique, en littérature ou en musique, et quelques minutes plus tard faire rire des tout jeunes en leur enseignant une comptine, une vire-langue ou les faire danser une ronde au rythme d'une chanson de la Beauce auébécoise.

Un autre point m'avait frappé chez Marius Barbeau. Lui que la plupart des contemporains considéraient comme un incroyant, je ne l'ai jamais entendu dire un mot de mépris ou de dépréciation contre les prêtres, les religieux ou les religieuses. Nous étions parfois trois ou quatre prêtres ou religieux, en soutane, à ses cours; deux ou trois religieuses de différents habits suivaient les mêmes cours parmi les laïques. Jamais il n'a montré la moindre agressivité contre nous. Au contraire, il nous disait souvent que de grandes oeuvres avaient été entreprises et menées à bien par les ordres religieux ou le clergé. Il nous interpellait parfois, en riant: «C'est sur vous, mes Soeurs, mes Pères, que nous comptons pour travailler à inventorier nos richesses paysannes, parce que vous n'êtes pas ralentis par le souci du pain quotidien!»

Et qui ne connaît pas ce que Marius Barbeau a écrit sur les «Saintes artisanes»? C'est un éloge continuel à l'adresse des Ursulines qui ont été les premières à enseigner l'écriture et certaines techniques à de jeunes Amérindiennes. Ah! il soulignait parfois, en classe, le manque de connaissances artistiques de certains curés, de certaines maisons religieuses qui avaient remisé dans les caves ou les hangars à bois certains chefs-d'oeuvre dans le domaine de la statuaire ou de la peinture. Ce Marius Barbeau connaissait mieux que nous, prêtres ou religieux, les trésors d'orfèvrerie, de sculpture et de tableaux de la moindre église ou sacristie de campagne. Il parlait avec une réelle admiration du calice, du ciboire, de l'ostensoir de telle paroisse... de telle pièce adroitement ou maladroitement restaurée par tel artiste. Il avait retrouvé dans les papiers de la paroisse, tel contrat, telles conditions de restauration ou de changement. Celui qui nous donnait le cours, c'était l'artiste, c'était l'ethnologue qui n'en voulait à personne, mais souhaitait enseigner à l'élite de son pays la valeur de certains objets artistiques parfois méconnus ou vendus au premier offrant.

Je félicite à Société canadienne de musique folklorique de rendre hommage à son fondateur, Marius Barbeau, à l'occasion du centenaire de la naissance de cet érudit. Il a été un fouilleur acharné, un éveilleur de conscience nationale, un écrivain qui a ouvert des avenues dans plusieurs domaines de la musique canadienne, chez les Amérindiens comme chez les francophones de multiples régions

rurales. Je considère comme un grand privilège d'avoir pu, grâce à l'exemple et à l'encouragement de Marius Barbeau, essayer de faire en Ontario, ce que ce grand ethnologue avait fait en Gaspésie et dans Charlevoix. J'avouerai que les enquêteurs de ma génération ont eu moins de mérite que ce père de l'ethnographie canadienne qui a dû parcourir des régions entières en bicyclette et enregistrer contes et chansons sur cylindres de cire. Les enquêteurs de ma génération ont profité du magnétophone, du magnétoscope, de l'automobile et même de l'avion, pour tenter de continuer, avec des techniques renouvelées, ce que ce pionnier de l'enquête folklorique avait inauguré avant la première guerre mondiale.

On a commencé à écrire sur l'oeuvre de Marius Barbeau, on écrira beaucoup, mais je serais surpris que l'on parvienne à démontrer toute l'influence que Marius Barbeau a eu sur la musique folklorique de notre pays. Beaucoup de peuples étrangers ont connu le Canada par les écrits et les travaux de cet infatigable chercheur. Il est juste que nous rendions hommage à cet illustre Canadien et que nous le faisons connaître aux générations futures.

MARIUS BARBEAU (1883-1969)

EDITH FOWKE

(When Dr. Barbeau died I wrote an obituary for the *Journal of American Folklore* (vol. 82, 1969, 264-66). The following paragraphs are adapted from it.)

On March 27, 1969, Canada lost her leading folklorist when Marius Barbeau died in an Ottawa hospital just six days before his eighty-sixth birthday. He was mourned far beyond his native country, for he worked tirelessly to make Canadian folklore known abroad and to promote friendly relations between folklorists throughout the world.

His death deprived the American Folklore Society of its staunchest Canadian supporter. He had become a member some sixty years earlier and served a term as president in 1918. In 1916 he became associate editor of the *Journal*, a position he held until 1950. During that time he prepared ten special Canadian issues containing some of the most valuable material on Canadian folklore yet published. Of particular importance are the eight series of "Contes populaires canadiens," which presented 197 French-Canadian tales, many collected by Dr. Barbeau himself.

Dr. Barbeau was also a devoted member of the International Folk Music Council, and in 1956 he organized the Canadian Folk Music Society as a branch of the IFMC. Through his efforts, Canada hosted the fourteenth annual conference of the IFMC in the city of Quebec in 1961. He continued as president of the Canadian Folk Music Society until 1963 and was its honorary president until his death.

His contribution to Canadian folklore can hardly be overestimated. In 1947 Laval University's *Les Archives de Folklore* devoted an issue to him in which one of his most distinguished colleagues, Luc Lacoucière, paid "Hommage à Marius Barbeau" in these words: "En effet, depuis son retour des grandes écoles de Paris et d'Oxford, vers 1912, Monsieur Barbeau a consacré sa vie et ses études à nos traditions populaires. Grâce à lui, le folklore canadien occupe sa place dans l'étude scientifique des traditions comparées."

In the April-June 1950 issue of the *Journal of American Folklore* dedicated to "Dr. Marius Barbeau, dean of Canadian folklorists," the editors saluted his "high standards of scholarship as a collector and interpreter of the folklore and the folk art and folk culture of his Canadian homeland," and F.J. Alcock, chief curator of Canada's National Museum at that time, wrote: "Dr. Barbeau has been responsible for the development of folklore research in Canada, and the wealth of folklore material in the possession of the National Museum of Canada was largely collected by him and the numerous students to whom he has transmitted his enthusiasm for this type of study...Scholars and laymen alike are giving increasing recognition to the importance of Canadian folklore, and credit for this must go chiefly to Dr. Barbeau."

Dr. Barbeau was educated at the universities of Laval, Oxford, and the Sorbonne, worked as an ethnologist with the National Museum of Canada from 1911 until he retired in 1949, and continued as an active consultant of the Museum for another fifteen years. The list of honours he received would fill a page. He was awarded the Gold Medal of the Royal Society of Canada: he received honorary degrees from the universities of Montreal, Laval, and Oxford, and in Canada's centennial year he was one of the first group of Canadians to be named "Companion of the Order of Canada" — an order the Canadian government established to honour distinguished citizens who had shown "Outstanding merit of the highest degree."

After his death the Canadian Press noted: "During fifty years of research, much of it on long and arduous field trips, he produced a wealth of knowledge concerning the Asiatic migrations to North America. He delved deeply into French-Canadian folklore and into the story of the Indian peoples, their legends and culture. He gave the National Museum a collection of 195 Eskimo songs, more than 3,000 Indian, close to 7,000 French-Canadian, and 1,500 old English songs. Many of them are still on the old tube-like records that came off his Edison recorder... 'I would need two lives to process all my research,' he once said."

The work he achieved in one lifetime is almost unbelievable. In an age of increasing specialization he ranged over the whole field of folklore and anthropology, collecting and studying and describing Indian myths, ceremonials, language, music, arts, and culture,

French-Canadian folktales, songs, art, handicrafts, and architecture, and English-Canadian songs... A prolific writer and completely bilingual, he published some fifty major books, as many more pamphlets and monographs, and some seven hundred articles in over a hundred different periodicals ranging from scientific journals to popular magazines and daily papers.

Far from being an ivory-tower scholar, he spared no effort to preserve and promote folklore in as many ways as he could. In addition to his scientific works he wrote a number of books designed for the general public, and he encouraged other writers to use his materials. However busy he was, he always found time to answer the many people who wrote him for information and to receive cordially the many others who visited him at the Museum or his Ottawa home. He gave warm encouragement to anyone developing an interest in folklore, and he was quick to praise the achievements of others. He lectured at universities, spoke before numerous organizations, and appeared frequently on radio and television. He prepared several records on Canadian folk music, including one in which he tells of "My Life in Recording Canadian-Indian Folk-Lore" (Folkways FG 3502).

Few who knew him will ever forget the pleasure of listening to him illustrate his account of a collecting trip by singing a beautiful French-Canadian melody or chanting an Indian song as he beat on one of his native drums. He has been greatly missed.

NOTES (de p.53)

1. Nous en avons six de lui dans nos dossiers.
 2. Lettre du 26 décembre 1941.
 3. Ibid.
 4. Lettre du 27 avril 1943.
 5. Lettre du 5 février 1942.
 6. Lettre du 27 avril 1943.
 7. Lettre du 29 août 1945.
 8. Jeannine Bélanger. "Chambre 354, Musée National. Trois heures avec Marius Barbeau, premier artiste-collectionneur de Canada français". (*Le Droit?*) 10 janvier 1942.
 9. *Les légendes de îles de la Madeleine*, 1ère éd. Moncton: Editions des Aboiteaux, 1969; deux autres éditions aux Editions d'Acadie, Moncton.
 10. *Chéticamp, histoire et traditions acadiennes*, Moncton, Éditions des Aboiteaux, 1961, 1962, 1972.
- Les Îles de la Madeleine, vie matérielle et sociale*, Montréal, Editions Leméac, 1981.