Book Section:

eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/

"TRADITION," VERNACULARISM, AND LEARNING TO BE A FOLK MUSICIAN WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Simon Keegan-Phipps

Lucy Wright

Abstract

This chapter considers the role of social media (broadly conceived) in the learning experiences of folk musicians in the Anglophone west. The chapter draws on the findings of the Digital Folk Project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (UK), and begins by summarizing and problematizing the nature of learning as a concept in the folk music context. It briefly explicates the instructive, appropriative, and locative impacts of digital media for folk music learning before exploring in detail two case studies of folk-oriented social media: (1) the phenomenon of *abc* notation as a transmissive media and (2) the Mudcat Café website as an example of the folk-oriented discussion forum. These case studies are shown to exemplify and illuminate the constructs of traditional transmission and vernacularism as significant influences on the social shaping and deployment of folk-related media technologies. The chapter concludes by reflecting on the need to understand the musical learning process as a culturally performative act and to recognise online learning mechanisms as sites for the (re)negotiation of musical, cultural, local, and personal identities.

Keywords

discussion forum, folk music, notation, online learning, social media, tradition, transmission, vernacularism

Introduction

The great majority of "folk" and "traditional" musicians in the Anglophone West (and beyond) make use of a range of social media networks and digital resources when seeking out and

learning repertory and skills: instrumentalists look for or discover unfamiliar tunes and songs in online archives; attendees at pub "sessions" make recordings on their mobile phones of others singing or playing for future learning; singers identify Broadside ballads on sharing sites, such as SoundCloud, to be committed to memory for performance at their local folk club; and folk musicians of all kinds request and dispense knowledge of such material's provenance or significance via a range of specialist and public social media platforms. The digital reality of contemporary folk music practice, however, contrasts starkly with certain underlying conceptions about the genre. Folk music has historically been understood as the product of an "oral" tradition, shaped and—to some extent—defined by the practice of face-to-face learning and transmission. Indeed, some notion of the oral tradition has long been considered a fundamental characteristic of the genre by its practitioners, despite latter-day scholarly critique of the concept (e.g., Boyes, 1993; Harker, 1988; Pendlebury, 2014). Digital media and technologies actually represent the latest in a sequence of transmissive technologies (e.g., homemade manuscripts, broadsides and printed editions, analogue audio and video recordings) that have influenced what folk music is performed, how, when, and by whom. But despite the potential of digital practice to further disrupt underlying assumptions about face-to-face transmission, those assumptions nonetheless continue to endure. These apparent contradictions raise important questions about the nature and conceptualization of folk musics in the contemporary, digitally mediated world. What are the impacts of digitally-mediated learning on the sounds, behaviors, and concepts that underpin folk music? And conversely, how do folk musicians reconcile the lauded, "traditional" status of oral transmission with the digitally-mediated practices of learning and dissemination conducted online?[1]

In this chapter, we will concentrate on the ways in which folk musicians use social media as a part of their learning process, focusing primarily on participants' conceptualisation of their digital practices and the degree to which the use of social media coheres with existing notions of folk transmission. After problematizing the concept of "learning" as a category of activity within folk

music participation, we will offer some historical and ideological context for the adjacent, fundamental concepts of transmission and community. Following a brief explanation of the specific primary research to which this chapter speaks, we will then go on to consider the breadth and impacts of social media on participants' development. Finally, we will present two case studies of folk-oriented social media and explore the ways in which these mediations—of musical material and communal knowledge, respectively—reflect contemporary manifestations of (perceived) traditional process and vernacular access.

Researching Folk Music in the Digital Milieu

Combined with the ready accessibility of the culture to adult learners and the explicitly participatory, "grassroots" nature of various folk music genres, this broad engagement with digital technologies among folk musicians has recently made their learning communities particularly valuable case studies for exploring the precise structures, characteristics, and impacts of online music learning processes. The subject has received particular attention in the United States and Canada, specifically in relation to online learning among American and Irish (or more broadly "Celtic") traditional music communities (e.g., Kruse & Veblen, 2012; Waldron, 2009; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2016; Waldron & Veblen, 2008). Nonetheless, the scholarly criteria driving much of this research has in turn focused study upon three particular elements of activity, thus drawing attention away from others. Firstly, the availability of a (seemingly) discrete set of online artefacts relating to folk and traditional music learning has meant that this virtual site has become an important "testing ground" for theoretical and methodological developments aimed at cyberethnography of learning more generally (e.g., Waldron, 2011). The impact in such scenarios is close consideration of activities that are explicitly educational (albeit nominally "informal") and scrutiny of online activities that is rarely contextualized by ethnography of offline behaviours (Waldron, 2016 being a notable exception). Secondly, research in this area, drawn to highlighting the parallels of *participatory culture* commonly discussed in relation to YouTube, has concentrated on the learning

potential of videos on that particular site, with the treatment of other online materials as largely supplemental to video resources. And, given that explicitly "teaching" videos tend to concentrate on technical aspects (i.e., learning to play an instrument), this has led to an appreciable preoccupation with instrument-specialist sites and instrument-specific materials (e.g., Kruse & Veblen, 2012; Waldron, 2013). Finally, the educationalist approach has embedded within studies an inclination to discover what the folk case study might reveal to other, naturally didactic or directive music [learning] cultures. For example, Kruse and Veblen (2012), in their investigation of a range of "folk music"-related instructional videos, rejected from their scope "videos that simply presented the playing of a folk tune for aural purposes only" (p. 80), despite the fact that these are unquestionably the most ubiquitous, most regularly consulted, and, therefore, arguably the most significant online learning resources to folk musicians in general.

This last point leads us to acknowledge that a focus on educational processes within folk music is particularly important for demonstrating that learning is not a monolithic process, nor is it one that is necessarily distinct from doing, conceptually or operationally. To frame this point, we can turn to Turino's (2008) recent attempts to distinguish between *presentational* and *participatory* musics, focusing in particular on the clarity or absence of a performer/audience distinction as the defining characteristic. In summary, Turino's model defines *presentational* music as that which is characterized by an absolute distinction between performers and audience, while *participatory* music denotes activities where such a distinction is fundamentally absent. The reductionist implications of the model have since been critiqued on the grounds that few, if any, musical activities can be said to exist entirely and consistently in one or other category (e.g. Camlin, 2014), but Turino's participatory/presentational dualism is nonetheless a helpful reminder of the extent of variety in the social structuring of musical activities and of the cultural politics of art in western societies that have seen presentational forms elevated in status far above participatory activities.

In the scheme of this dualism, the genre of folk and traditional music is, for most practitioners (i.e., "grass roots" amateurs), markedly participatory: that is to say, the physical (offline) experience of playing folk music is expected to take place in broadly accessible and inclusive contexts, such as the session, wherein all present are expected—or at least permitted—to take part, and no clear performer/audience distinction is enacted. But these two broad "types" of musical culture can be further illuminated in terms of the clarity or absence of a second distinction: the distinction between *rehearsing* and *performing*. Folk music culture is a particularly good example of an environment where participation in a session, singaround, or folk club (ostensibly *performing*) plays a vital role in any musician's acquisition and development of both repertory and technical skills, whether or not a specific musician self-identifies as a "learner." Although instructive technical tuition (in whatever form) is commonly necessary to instil the skills or knowledge sufficient to perform a basic tune or song, once a musician reaches the stage of being able to freely recall a modest repertoire within a session, "learning" additionally becomes an embedded element of participation in such face-to-face activities. From this point, an individual's efforts to develop—both within and outside these contexts—are increasingly focused on stylistic features and ultimately on the acquisition (i.e., memorization for recall) of new material. The acquisition of new repertory for the purposes of recall and performance in face-to-face contexts— along with the skills necessary to achieve that efficiently and effectively—is therefore the central focus of much, if not the majority, of self-directed folk music "learning" that takes place online.[2]

Folk and Media: The Concept of Transmission

Any discussion of folk music and learning requires a brief introduction to the concept of "transmission," since this idiosyncratic conceptualization of the pedagogical process plays such an important role in forging the identity of so many folk musicians and their music. In recent years, many contemporary folk arts participants have become decidedly critical of some former "foundational myths" of the early folk revival; indeed, the current resurgence of interest in English

folk might be characterized by its rejection of some of the more dogmatic beliefs of previous revivals (Keegan-Phipps & Winter, 2014). It is important to acknowledge that individuals differ in their opinions, assumptions, and conceptual points of reference—some accepting the "received history" of the movement (as it is referred to by Boyes, 1993, p. xvi) while others revel in that history's critique and subversion (as reflected in the work of the influential English folk band *The Imagined Village,* whose name invokes the title of Boyes' revisionist text). The idea of an oral tradition nonetheless remains a familiar trope in folk music discourse and participation. In particular, the discursive figure of the "tradition bearer" (i.e., one whose repertory has been learned without the aid of commercial or print media, e.g., Baumann, 1996; Eydmann, 1995) continues to be a celebrated or revered construct within the communities we have studied.

The ways in which folk musicians learn, therefore, hold conceptual and ontological significance for the genre. Transmission (that is to say, the process by which a musician came to acquire a tune or song) is understood by some as one important way to gauge the potential authenticity and value of a performance. The community-focused and highly participatory music-making environment of the folk scene emphasizes face-to-face interaction and, despite the long-established presence of a wide variety of printed notations, "learning by ear" is still a common—and for many an aspirational—method of developing a memorized repertory. This view was exemplified in a recent editorial for the English Folk Dance and Song Society's blog by award-winning English folk performer Jon Boden, who asserted that "the practice of memorising songs and music is at the very heart of the folk movement and we should keep the aspiration for a collectivist memorized tradition at the forefront of our minds as performers, teachers and advocates of traditional song and music" (Boden, 2016). In this respect, folk music making differs significantly from most other common musical genres in the West, where the musical content is not generally defined or legitimized as being "of the genre" according to perceptions of how it is—or has been—learned.

As a central protagonist of the "first" English folk revival—usually accepted as taking place between the 1880s and 1920s—the educator and antiquarian Cecil Sharp is arguably the individual most clearly responsible for the primacy and longevity of oral transmission as a definitive feature of folk music. His forthright, pioneering, and now widely critiqued attempts to lay out a clear definition of folk song (and of "the folk" as carriers of that song) involved defining the latter as, "the unlettered, whose faculties have undergone no formal training, and who have never been brought into close enough contact with educated persons to be influenced by them" (1907, p. 4). For Sharp, the process by which songs were passed from illiterate generation to generation via an oral (or aural) tradition was vital for achieving and sustaining the essential character and, ultimately, the social and political significance of a people's folk music. "One man sings a song," he wrote, "and then others sing it after him, changing what they do not like" (p. 15). For Sharp, folk song transmission was characterized by three main principles: *continuity* with the past, *variation* over time by individual singers, and *selection* of preferred modifications by the folk community (p. 16). These principles were later enshrined in the definition of folk music by The International Folk Music Council (Karpeles, 1955, p. 23).

It is a regularly acknowledged irony that the same revival movement to dictate the definitive significance of oral/aural transmission for folk music was also responsible for disrupting any such transmissive process (Boyes, 1993; Harker, 1985; Wright, 2017). In order to "get the songs sung" (Fox Strangways, 1924, quoted in Francmanis, 2002, p. 10), the widespread publication of collected materials became a predominating output of the revival process and instigated a long-standing ossification and veneration of transcriptions from this period. In actuality, the presence of printed song sheets is now known to have long preceded the English folk revival (see Atkinson, 2014), but the concerted effort of the early revivalists towards an educational imperative for folk music represented a new development in the life of printed folk materials. Similarly, England's "second folk revival" (c. 1950s-1970s) was accompanied, and to a large extent propelled forward, by the

newly increased availability of sound recordings and hi-fis. Modes of learning during (and after) the

second revival continued to follow the oral tradition narrative, with many enthusiasts seeking

opportunities to learn from surviving "source singers," but an increase in record releases and

instructional publications also inspired a boom in learning privately at home. In this way, novice

participants were able to experience—and replay—the sounds of the "source singers" they sought to

emulate: the Topic Records label was instrumental in introducing budding folk singers to songs and

voices from the remotest parts of the British Isles via the *Voice of the People* series (Brocken, 2003,

pp. 55-61). The creation of homemade audio recordings throughout the later part of the twentieth

century via increasingly portable devices and media formats—from cassettes to MiniDiscs to

mp3s—has been significant in providing new ways for musicians to create learning resources for

acquiring repertory (Keegan-Phipps, 2013), and these various types of material now form a

significant portion of the vast array of user-generated content relating to folk music that can now be

found online. Waldron (2016) has pointed to this phenomenon as consolidating Irish traditional

music's status as "a participatory culture in both on and offline contexts" (p. 90).

<div align="center">

Folk and Social: The Significance of Community

</div>

The aforementioned "second folk revival" was a significant departure from the romantic

nationalism of the first, drawing instead from postwar socialism and heavily influenced by the

ideologies and popularity of the American folk and blues movement. The aims of this second wave

of folk revivalists was to provide a shared context for the celebration of proletariat (including

industrial) histories and narratives. This marked a shift away from the rustic, pastoral emphases of

the first revival and toward the documenting and performing of music and songs of the industrial

working classes. Folk singer and collector, A. L. (Bert) Lloyd wrote of the transformation from "the

old lyric of the countryside" to "a new lyric of the industrial towns…reflecting the life and

aspirations of a raw class in the making" (1967, p. 316). The second folk revival also shifted much

of the emphasis away from textual "authenticity" and toward the fidelity of a vernacular performance style and context.

The second revival thus developed the blueprints for many of contemporary folk's most established participatory spaces (i.e., sessions and folk clubs), reflecting widespread rejection of "elitist" presentations of musical performance (i.e., via the concert stage) and discomfort with the capitalist trappings of the developing pop music industry. In its place, folk revivalists favoured the development of their own, more communally- and egalitarian-minded models. The institution of the folk club, run by committee and usually held in the back room of a pub, provided new opportunities for amateur participation and created a network of venues in which to see a new professional class of revival folk performers (see MacKinnon, 1993, pp. 70-76). Even less formalized music making also appeared in the form of instrumental "sessions," also commonly located in pubs; these were consolidated as a powerful context and vehicle for promoting the vehemently vernacular act of traditional music making in Scotland and Ireland during this period, although in English folk culture (where vocal music predominated, and instrumental music was more commonly reserved for accompanying dance) instrumental sessions were less significant until later in the twentieth century.

A significant legacy of the second folk revival, then, has been a generalized DIY ethos, manifest in peer-to-peer learning conducted informally at folk clubs and sessions and more formally through workshops held as part of the growing festival circuit. Perhaps most significantly, the shift towards peer-led workshops has later helped to transform newly professionalized revivalist performers into source musicians, from whom other participants might aspire to learn. In England, it was not until the 1990s that folk education became a more formal, institutionalized prospect, culminating in the establishment of the Bachelor's degree in Folk and Traditional Music at Newcastle University in 2002 (Keegan-Phipps, 2007; Hill, 2009). Today, a wide range of face-to-face learning options are available to the novice folk musician, including academic courses at post-secondary institutions; workshops and programmes facilitated by folk development agencies, such

as Shooting Roots; and evening classes and beginners' groups hosted by folk organisations, such as the Folk Choir and Youth Folk Orchestra hosted by the English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) at Cecil Sharp House in London. Many professional and semi-professional folk musicians also offer services as music teachers, working peripatetically in schools and offering one-to-one classes on a regular basis. At the same time, a large number of publications and websites cater to the educational needs of folk arts participants at all stages of their development, from highly specialist tutorials on aspects of musical technique to bumper books of songs and tunes intended to build repertoire.

The genre, then, is shaped by the combination of two powerful but oddly separate discursive forces. Its origins, at least in part a scholarly construct, have successfully instilled an emphasis on "oldness" of both content and transmissive process. Subsequently, folk's later guise as a vehicle for working class identity has similarly cemented vernacularism (i.e., the belief that the object in question should be accessible to, and in the common interests of, "the masses," broadly perceived) as an essential feature of the music and culture. The related—but not synonymous—processes of learning folk music and developing as a folk musician continue to represent an important stream of activity for participants to perform and renegotiate both elements. Furthermore, as the latest media development to make an impact on the transmission of folk music and its attendant cultural capital, the internet has become a particularly rich site for the re-articulation of these distinct authenticities. We will go on to offer a broad phenomenological survey of online, social media activities in general, before then focusing on two case studies that exemplify key tensions between the tropes of traditionalism and vernacularism in the contemporary process of folk music transmission.

The *Digital Folk* Project

The research presented in this chapter is drawn from *Digital Folk*, a three-year research project funded by the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council and aimed at understanding the extent, roles, and cultural implications of digital practices among folk arts participants in England

and beyond. Drawing on the perspectives of a multi-disciplinary research team from the fields of ethnomusicology, media and communication studies, ethnochoreology, and performance-led research, the project has employed ethnographic methods of semi-structured interviews and participant observation, as well as aspects of e-fieldwork and an online survey. This variety of data has enabled the documentation and analysis of folk arts participation on the internet and its intersections with unmediated experiences and face-to-face interactions. While our predominant focus has been folk arts participation in England, including diaspora practices such as Scottish Country and Irish dancing, the expansive (often deterritorializing, see Cremate & Powell, this volume) affordances of online communication have meant that we have frequently engaged with online resources based outside of the UK and have maintained within our purview a comparative awareness of a wide range of folk arts activities to be found across the Anglophone world. Similarly, we have concentrated our attentions mainly on "grass roots" participants, while simultaneously recognizing that, in practice, the boundary between amateur and professional music-making is consciously blurred in the contemporary folk world. It is perhaps more accurate, therefore, to suggest that we have tended to privilege study in and about the contexts of participatory music making, regardless of participants' personal status, which might at different times be described as amateur, "semi-pro," and professional.[3]

Our study has considered digital participation in its broadest sense and has frequently documented aspects of social media engagement as it relates to both the folk musician's ongoing practice and their development or learning. For the purposes of this chapter, and cognisant of boyd and Ellison's (2008) definition of social media as that which fosters the space to gather, organize, and facilitate multiple modes of address to and from individuals and groups, we have taken social media to include all and any shared communicative practices that are mediated by web-based digital technologies. In this way, social media represents an alternative form of cultural interaction to that

of unmediated face-to-face encounters, but one that similarly blurs the boundaries of learning and doing.

Folk and Social Media: Approaches to Learning Online

Despite the surface incongruity of folk music's popularly perceived antiquity and the (similarly envisaged) ultra-modernity of digital communications, uptake of social media practices amongst contemporary folk arts participants is now widespread across all ages, locations, and performance styles represented in the Digital Folk project's research. Many folk arts practitioners make use of a range of online resources. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to go into the detail of subcultural and interpersonal differences in behaviour and attitudes relating to this type of activity, it is important to stress that no single narrative or technique exists. Common activities relevant to this volume include the populating and re-appropriating of generic SNS platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram as well as the creation and use of dedicated folk arts discussion boards and user-generated archives. In some respects, folk's emphasis on participation and accessibility mirrors the participatory affordances of Web 2.0. Indeed, the early popularity of community-led sites such as the discussion board Mudcat Café (mudcat.org, established in 1994) and tune sharing site The Session (thesession.org, established in 1998) as well as mailing lists such as eCeilidh (begun around 1997), may have contributed to the easy passage of the folk community onto later SNS platforms. Prior to this, several enduring folk arts discussion lists were established on ARPANET university networks, such as the Morris Dancing Discussion Listserv (MDDL) at Syracuse University in 1988, suggesting that, far from functioning at a remove from modern technological advancements, folk arts participants might in some ways be considered comparatively early adopters.

The Digital Folk Survey, completed by more than 800 folk arts participants around the world between 2014-2017, found that 94% of respondents considered that they themselves make use of social media sites in the course of their folk activities, with 78% identifying as regular users.

Reasons for using social media varied among the survey respondents and interviewees, but common themes emerged. For large numbers, specialist social media platforms were consulted to build or strengthen repertory, supplementing or replacing published (sometimes out-of-print) tune compendia or geographically-dispersed physical archives: "[it] gives me access to songs, tunes and instruction [that would be] otherwise hard to get." This repertory-building often combined the searching of collaborative online databases for known answers with the "live" tapping of the folk world's online "hive mind." Participants posed questions and engaged in debate, frequently generating content at the same time as new materials, opinions, and solutions came to light: "it's good for…racking people's brains." Also significant were the opportunities afforded by social media to find and advertise face-to-face activities ("I've learned of a few events I would not otherwise have known") and for maintaining connections with other acquainted participants between meetings ("I use messenger to keep in touch with friends who folk"; "it connects me with other participants and organizers"). This interconnection between online and lived folk music spaces was strongly emphasized by most respondents, and such activities were generally conducted in tandem, with online, social media learning supporting the face-to-face learning and participation conducted in offline folk music settings. In only a very small number of cases was social media participation considered to outweigh or outrank participation in face-to-face folk arts activities: "I have learned a great many songs from Mudcat and YouTube, and post my own recordings on Facebook…I participate much more in these ways than in person." This communal awareness and shared significance of online-offline convergence makes a notable contribution to broader discussions on that subject such as offered by Waldron in this volume.

Our findings, drawn from the combination of survey data, fieldwork observations, and interviews, suggest that social media learning might be helpfully understood as falling into three distinct but intersecting strands of activity. Firstly, novice folk musicians commonly engage in *instructive* online learning, whereby the learning experiences draw on digital materials that are

found on or through the social media platform and that are explicitly intended and designed to play the role of an educational resource. These learning encounters may include reference to YouTube videos such as those explored by Kruse and Veblen (2012), but also include the acquisition of new knowledge about the music through, for example, exploring a user-generated online archive or through asking questions of other network users, since these are recognized as deliberately transmissive resources. Secondly, *appropriative* online learning takes place where a learner identifies content that has been circulated via social media for non-educational (i.e., entertainment) purposes, and then utilizes that content for the acquisition of new knowledge (normally repertory) or skills. In this process, the content is used as a model, where the learner generally engages in an independent, self-directed act of emulation, such as the "listening and copying" technique observed among popular music learners by Green (2002) and explored in detail by Miller (2012).[4] Thirdly, social media facilitates learning via a process of indirect, *locative* signposting, whereby musicians discover and subsequently gain access to face-to-face participatory music-making events, which can themselves be subdivided into those that are explicitly educational in their purpose and design and those that are not. Participants are normally connected to events in this way by discovering via social networking the details of when and where they will take place. In all three modes of learning activity, however, the learning itself is predominantly done through rehearsal and performance in the offline world. In the majority of cases, a learner will engage in the discovery, selection, and initial rehearsal phases alone before consolidating the repertory or technique learned through performance with and to others. Simultaneously, folk-oriented social media participation often performs a wider function as a crucial form of social and cultural preparation for entering the specialist spaces of folk music participation, educating the learner in the established conventions of *how to be a folk musician* as well as providing them with the necessary information and skills (repertory, event logistics) required to participate.

Within the category of locative signposting, social media also functions as an important tool for organising and negotiating "offline" experiences that are explicitly intended to facilitate learning. Several well-established national and international folk arts events have begun to open up to the possibilities of social media learning for enhancing the face-to-face participation they offer through a process of informal "flipped learning" (for more on which see e.g. Bergmann & Sams, 2014). Here, recruitment to a purposefully educational event (commonly workshops) often uses social media not only to raise awareness of the event itself, but also to offer up to potential attendees repertory that might surface there (see for example Figure 1). The "slow session," exemplified in the tweet in Figure 1 (or a variant on that title: "slow and steady session," "beginners' session," "nice and easy session," etc.), is a common phenomenon within the tunes-oriented element of British folk session culture. Where a "normal" session carries the expectation of involvement from relatively skilled or experienced musicians and an emphasis is placed on the playing of common repertory already learned by the musicians present, the "slow session" is consciously intended for beginners and those still learning the common repertory of the main session to join in the act of developing their knowledge of the tunes.[5]

Figure 1: Tweet from Glasgow Fiddle Workshop, 12th June 2017.

As well as preparing attendees for what will be learned/played at a slow session, social media may also be consulted—often for repertorial inspiration and other information—on phones or tablets within the physical contexts of the slow sessions themselves. This often happens to an extent not seen in environments that are not explicitly educational or learner-oriented in nature. Specifically, the practice of searching for materials on YouTube for demonstration purposes is more prominent at these "slow sessions" than at other participatory music making events. Nonetheless, access to—and attendance at—such group learning events is by no means universal among newcomers to session culture, and the fact that learning is generally based around the playing or singing (and ultimately the memorizing) of single-line melodies means that many learners rely on solitary (homebound) practice time, along with time spent participating in the physical company of other more seasoned musicians, to develop their repertory. Meanwhile, it should be acknowledged that there are variations in the extent and nature of social media engagement within the context of

16

face-to-face events among the different folk and traditional musical cultures studied: for instance, the consultation of Tunepal (described by its designer as a "a query-by-playing [i.e., sound-recognition] search engine for traditional Irish tunes," Duggan, n.d.) within an Irish traditional music session would not be considered the behaviour of a novice and would be received more comfortably by attendees than, for example, the accessing of folk-oriented media on a device within an English folk club or singaround.[6]

    In general, social media engagement among folk musicians is widespread and wide ranging in its role as a facilitating resource for learning, although the nature and extent of engagement with social media of this purpose differs significantly from genre to genre and individual to individual. A common feature among the great majority of cases, however, is that the learning is intended as preparation for unmediated, communal musical participation of some sort. Within this context, a range of digital sites, tools, and practices have developed that are specifically designed or have been later oriented for the needs of folk and traditional musicians. In the sections that follow, we consider in greater depth two case studies of the digital folk music technoscape to illustrate how online interactions within the folk music world have continued to mirror the embedded cultural and political value systems and aesthetics of tradition and vernacularism.

Digital Transmission: *abc* Notation

abc is a notation format used frequently in the sharing of traditional musics of the British Isles, especially Celtic instrumental tunes. Figure 2 shows an example of this notation. The top six lines are the "key code" information that precedes the "event code" description of a tune presented in this format. They provide fields of information that then translate the details of the tune rendered beneath. X = the index field - a version number, to differentiate tunes of the same name and sharing other characteristics; T = Title; R: Rhythm - for labelling the tune by tune family; M = Metre - read by the software as a numeric value of default note lengths per bar, similar to a time signature in

stave notation; L = default note length; and K = Key signature. A number of instructions in the code of the tune itself mimic visual features of stave notation: "|" is a barline, while "|:" and ":|" represent the beginning and end of a repeated section, respectively.

```
X: 6

T: Jack Robinson

R: polka

M: 2/4

L: 1/8

K: Gmaj

|: D2 G2 DG B2 | c2 A2 A4 | FG A2 FG A2 | GAbc d4 |

edce d2 B2 | cBAB A2 G2 | D2 G2 FGAB |1 A2 G2 G4 :|2 A2 G2 GAbc ||

|: d2 B2 cd e2 | e2 A2 A2 Bc | d2 B2 cd e2 | edcB A4 |

GAbc d2 B2 | cBAB A2 G2 | D2 G2 FGAB |1 A2 G2 GAbc :|2 A2 G2 G4 ||

|: D2 G2 D2 BB | c2 c2 A4 | FG A2 FG A2 | GBd^c d3 d | edce d2 B2 |

cBAB A2 G2 | D2 G2 FGAB |1 A2 G2 G2 E2 :|2 A2 G2 G2 Bc ||

|: d2 B2 cd e2 | e2 A2 A2 Bc | d2 B2 cd e2 | edcB AcBA | GAbc d2 B2 |

cBAB A2 G2 | D2 G2 FGAB |1 A2 G2 G2 Bc :|2 A2 G2 G3 E ||
```

Figure 2: An *abc* rendition of the traditional English polka, Jack Robinson.

It should be acknowledged that various versions of a non-stave notation system, based on representing pitches through their alphabetic names and often referred to as *abc*, have been used by individuals and groups of traditional musicians for decades, at least since the 1980s (see for example Veblen, 1991, pp. 71-77). Nonetheless, the standardised form of *abc* notation that now prevails across traditional music genres on- and off-line began as one individual's form of notation to act as his *aide memoire* for noting down melodies he had heard in sessions. The individual

credited with its initial design is Chris Walshaw, who dates its genesis to the end of 1991. As a budding player of the Irish traditional flute and unable to read standard Western stave notation, Walshaw needed a method for noting down tunes he had heard in sessions in order to call them to mind or learn them at a later date (Chris Walshaw, interview, June 12, 2015). His simple solution was based on letters equivalent to note names to represent pitch and, later, numbers to represent note duration. In around 1992-3, however, Walshaw found himself needing to share these transcriptions with bandmates who played transposing instruments and relied on stave notation. As someone with developing computing expertise (he is now a Reader and Principal Lecturer in Computing and Informatics at the University of Greenwich, UK), he repurposed his *abc* notation as the basis of a code: "I developed this software that I could use to go from typing the notes in *abc* and then transposing it and then printing the dots for other people" (ibid). It was also significant to him that his notation could be realized using standard type text in order to enable both the digital storage and transmission of a tune through text-only communication (i.e., early e-mail). Soon after he began sharing this software online, in 1993, others began to rework the code for interfacing with other musical score programmes. Today, dedicated software and plugins not only allow the *abc* code to be translated into alternative visual formats (specifically stave notation), but also enable *abc* to be played through the computer's speakers as digital audio files, such as MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) files.

The code is now ubiquitous on the internet and fundamental to several of the largest specialist traditional music sites and resources on the web, including The Session, Digitrad, Folktunefinder, and Tunepal, all of whom rely on *abc* as their basic input format. For this volume, with its emphasis on social media, this list is significant inasmuch as it includes not only among the most widely consulted resources on British, Celtic, and American folk music, but also resources that are directly or indirectly 'crowd-sourced' in their collation of content. Tunepal, the audio-recognition-based search resource for Irish traditional music, is made possible due to the searchable

text format on which *abc* is based, hence its developer, Bryan Duggan, making the unequivocal statement that "there would be no Tunepal […] without the *abc* language" (Bryan Duggan, interview, July 14, 2016). On The Session, for example, the *abc* rendition of a tune is presented as "raw materials" that can be converted to stave notation with the click of a button, but it is also the format by which any contributor must submit a tune, and it is the first thing a user of the site sees when clicking on a search result. Having discovered tunes, the text-based *abc* allows musicians to build individual banks of repertory, either through independent copy-and-paste from the web source or through linking to personal accounts on the sites where the material has been found. In these ways, the notation format has quickly become a familiar and internalized feature of the traditional music landscape. The existence of earlier forms of *abc* notation notwithstanding, and despite the inherent transferability of an *abc* notated tune "back" into pre-existing transmissive media (i.e., stave notation and audio), the ubiquity of Walshaw's standardized form in traditional music contexts across the internet seems to have been a significant factor in its becoming a prevalent visual medium for folk musicians in and of itself. Fieldwork and anecdotal evidence suggest that it is now the primary form of notation for many instrumentalists worldwide—especially those participating in Celtic traditional musics. In other words, many traditional musicians now read and musically realize (i.e., "play from") *abc* notation in real time, in much the same way as other musicians (including other folk musicians) might read and play from stave notation. At workshops of Irish traditional music, for example, learners of new material are routinely offered "the dots or the *abc*'s" on paper as follow-up materials for rehearsal after the event. It is, of course almost impossible to estimate the full extent of its pervasiveness and use in this way or the role of pre-existing variants of the *abc* format in underpinning uptake of notation among musicians. Nonetheless, the affordances of the medium in the form discussed above seem to have coincided well with the musical and ergonomic requirements of participants in this genre, ensuring a cycle in which its omnipresence in corners of the internet devoted to folk and traditional music has

contributed to its becoming a vastly successful visual transmissive medium in offline participation. It is not only a social medium in its ability to enable community-wide (and community-building and -articulating) dissemination of participatory cultural material, but also a medium that illustrates the potentially complex and proliferating impacts of technological innovation on offline experiences and practice.

One final anecdote from the field has revealed another significant quality of the code likely to have contributed to its success as a popular visual medium. While conducting research at a festival, Digital Folk project researcher Cinzia Yates found herself in an informal conversation with a young (late teens) banjo player at a bar. She explained the nature of the research she was carrying out, and the banjo player indicated that he learned primarily through reading *abc* notation (he did not read "dots"). Cinzia explained that she had, only that week, interviewed the person who invented the medium (i.e., Walshaw); at this, the banjo player was stunned. Surely, the young musician mused, the inventor of *abc* notation must be really old, if he can even be still alive!? It became apparent that the banjo player's incredulity was based on the assumption that *abc* was in some way "ancient"—at least as old as stave notation—since it was infinitely more "simple" in its content than the arcane lines and symbolic language of stave notation.

One contributing factor, then, for the successful promulgation of *abc* as a folk music medium (although it should be acknowledged that it has now been taken up for similar purposes by popular musicians) is that there is an accessibility—perceived and real—to this kind of cipher notation. As Waldron and Veblen (2008) have indicated, *abc* notation reflects the needs and expectations of the traditional music genre for which it has been developed by providing a "blueprint" of a tune's basic structural content rather than a prescriptive text to be adhered to in performance (p. 103). By the time they come to learn tunes without the assistance of direct instruction, folk musicians have already reached a level of proficiency that includes instinctive knowledge of note names, and the habitual western practice of counting metric pulse enables a

straightforward recognition of numbers as a symbol of duration. But more than this, the perception of *abc*'s accessibility (relative to stave notation) is meaningful for articulating the cultural capital of transmissive media among folk musicians. Given that folk/traditional culture (at least in Euro-American society) is so strongly associated with both oral transmission and conscious opposition to the hegemonic "establishment" (from which it is politically, ideologically, and culturally distinct), it would seem that *abc* has been successfully adopted by self-identifying traditional musicians in part because it is notably different from the consecrated systems of the institutional art world. Despite its recent development, it would appear to embody a response to the timeless imperative for functional efficiency.

Beyond its impact in facilitating the transmission of large amounts of traditional musical material—from a range of genres and traditions—across much of the globe, the cultural meanings and overall significance of *abc* notation are multifaceted and complex. Its success within the folk world has much to do with the fact that, despite being a "fixed" visual media, its ability to be "read" by sound-generating software means that it is able to support the process of "learning by ear" that is so closely associated with oral transmission and a "living [as opposed to ossified or stagnating] tradition." Nonetheless, the fact that the code has the ability to be distributed, stored, and decoded in such a large variety of ways (and has had this ability since the early days of the internet) speaks to the vernacularism of folk culture; that is to say, the apparently democratic open access of the internet as a platform for everyday (and every-[wo]man) creativity speaks to the ideals of inclusive, unregulated, and self-consciously organic participation as instilled through the postwar socialism of the mid-20th century folk revival. Furthermore, the story of the incredulous banjo player is a significant—and timely—reminder that an individual's understanding of media is available to culturally entrenched apprehensions in similar ways to the traditional material that (in this case) such media is intended to mediate! Here, the origins of the *abc* digital media format had been subjected to an unconscious myth-making process, based on top-down interpretations and

associations. Waldron and Veblen (2008) have already made the link between *abc* notation and

McLuhan's (1967) famous statement that "the medium is the message" by indicating the role of the

internet —as medium—in the development of the notation (p. 103). We argue, by extension, that

abc notation *as a medium* carries the "message" of folk and traditional music within its roles,

applications, histories (real and perceived), form and function.

"The Crowd That We've Assembled": The Mudcat Café

In our survey, the term *social media sites* was left purposefully undefined to enable

respondents to provide further information about the kinds of online media they considered to be

social. As such, while generic platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were widely

referenced, community specific platforms were also frequently mentioned. Beginning as small-

scale, personal interest projects, The Mudcat Café and The Session websites have grown

exponentially since the early 2000s to become key sites for learning and disseminating community

knowledge in the folk arts. Built and developed through community-generated content, both sites

function as informal archives and pre-empt more official (institutional) online resources.[7]

The Mudcat Café (colloquially known as "Mudcat") is a popular online discussion forum

and song and tune database that has become a central hub for many folk and traditional music

participants on the internet. Based in Philadelphia, USA, the platform was established in 1996

primarily as a Blues music appreciation site, but grew exponentially to include other forms of

British, Celtic, and American folk. It has fostered an active community of contributors, which to

date has generated more than 4 million messages on 100,000 different topics.

Mudcat was created by Max Spiegel, then a 22-year-old philosophy graduate, who

combined his knowledge of website building (learned during the "dot-com-boom" of the mid-90s)

with a passion for the "finger-style" music of Reverend Gary Davis, Robert Johnson, and

Mississippi John Hurt. Spiegel recalls that, prior to the growth of the World Wide Web, access to

information and recordings from the Blues music tradition were difficult to come by as they were

predominantly contained within physical archives and collections spread across the country. At the same time, enthusiasts of Blues music were widely dispersed and no central outlet existed to enable social connections with other like-minded individuals:

> When I was in college…we would take trips to the Library of Congress and we would go to our local library. Research was arduous. So, I was just taking the things I had learned, that I was personally fascinated by, and putting them up on static pages […]. I was someone in my early twenties with a great love of traditional music [but] in my peer group there was no one to share that with…I went online to find people to share my enthusiasm with and…apparently, I wasn't alone. There were lots of people that were isolated in their geographic communities…and we found each other online. (Max Spiegel, interview, May 24, 2016)

In common with many pre-Web 2.0 productions, Mudcat began as a static website, with a single content-creator, but a chance landing on another Blues site while searching for Leadbelly lyrics led Spiegel to his future Mudcat collaborator, song collector Dick Greenhaus, signposting the next phase in the trajectory of the site. Greenhaus's server project, The Digital Tradition, hosted by Xerox PARC, comprised an extensive database of song lyrics and tune notations, including materials from Blues, American and British folk, and Irish traditions.[8] Greenhaus had been at the vanguard of the early digitization movement, compiling the contents of personal (physical) songbooks belonging to American folk music participants since the late 1980s (Greenhaus, 1999). Disseminated initially on floppy disks amongst festival-goers, the database was later installed online, but after receiving threats from music publishing companies regarding copyright infringement, many lyrics pages were removed from the public domain.

Spiegel was eager to make these materials publicly available again and proposed a solution; the merging of Mudcat and The Digital Tradition database on a server hosted in his own home. Shortly afterward—following numerous emailed queries and amendments from traditional music

enthusiasts worldwide—Mudcat was made into an interactive site, with an editable database functionality. The Digital Tradition quickly expanded to include the lyrics for more than 9000 songs, many with accompanying midi files created by contributors. In addition, Mudcat opened a public forum, in which users could discuss and debate important topics related to folk and traditional music and contact other folk music participants worldwide. Currently, discussions are divided into two sections, one for musical topics and another "below the line" for non-music-related conversations, enabling the development of social as well as transactional relationships. The ready searchabililty of The Digital Tradition database as well as the novel possibility to tap into the collective knowledge of the folk music community made Mudcat one of the first—and biggest— online sites for folk music learning, receiving millions of hits every day at its peak in 2005. This form of peer-to-peer learning remains a strong feature of many experiences of folk music participation online: "It's the community that had the intelligence, not me," Spiegel explained; "it's amazing how much information you can get out of the crowd that we've assembled" (interview, May 24, 2016).

Despite its longevity as a platform (outliving many larger social media sites such as MySpace), the threat of litigation still hangs over many of the materials in Mudcat's Digital Tradition database. For Spiegel, the decision to host Mudcat personally represented a conscious act of resistance against what he perceives is "the still-corrupt publishing industry," which seeks to establish ownership of traditional materials that had been recorded by commercial artists. While many mainstream web hosts were intimidated into removing the offending pages, Spiegel joked that as "a 22 year old kid" with "nothing in my bank account," he could always "throw [the server] in [his] trunk and head off to Iceland" (interview, May 24, 2016).

Such a position reflects a wider personal commitment to promoting freedom of expression, the implications of which are clearly evident across the Mudcat platform. Significantly, Spiegel equates this egalitarianism with a specifically "folk" approach to the dissemination and

safeguarding of traditional materials: "folk music is subversive in a number of ways, and my stance on freedom of speech [corresponds with] my stance on uncensored, unfettered tradition" (ibid). Contributors are perceived not merely as contemporary folk music participants discussing their everyday practice, but as protagonists in a wider folk music transmission narrative that adapts to embrace the possibilities of technological advancement. For this reason, the Mudcat discussion forum asserts little in the way of formal moderation. The website is overseen by a small team of volunteers, purposefully selected to ensure a diversity of backgrounds and expertise. As Spiegel explains, "we have liberals and conservatives and librarians and union negotiators and Vietnam vets and draft dodgers…and I specifically chose them…so that we can learn and be proper caretakers of the scholarship that is possible here" (ibid). Contributors are not required to disclose their identity and it is only relatively recently that users have been given the option to create a verified account. Although Mudcat is sometimes criticized for its unregulated discourse—which can sometimes (de-)generate into disagreement and trolling—Spiegel generally resists the invocation to edit or remove posts, except in cases of slander or specific personal attack. Furthermore, he argues fiercely for the need to maintain the accessibility of the website for all potential users.

> I've designed Mudcat as a very simple website. There's no graphics or images or fanciness. It's very utilitarian because bandwidth is always an issue and I've always been fighting [for] people with very old computers, very poor people without fast computers…so it's built very light to support everybody and everything trying to access it (ibid).

The importance of making folk materials available to people of all ages and social status is crucial to widespread conceptions of folk music as a fundamentally communal, participatory genre; a shared heritage that should not be restricted to a particular group or class of people. In a similar way, the discussion board also enables non-scholars to access materials and discourses on folk that were previously hidden behind paywalls or institutional barriers. For example, online interactions

between UK-based and US Mudcat contributors offered a first-hand example of the significant links between song traditions in England and Appalachia.

In addition, the threads are, Spiegel suggests, the direct contemporary equivalent of the oral tradition—albeit one conducted digitally, instead of face-to-face. "[A]ll we've done there is facilitate the oral process," he explains. "You're learning…in a conversation[al] style, which is how we learn in an oral tradition." (interview, May 24, 2016). However, Mudcat does not simply replicate the Master-Apprentice model of music learning, in which music students learn—in real-time—from an expert individual or small group. The discussion forum's ongoing edit facility enables the continuation of dialogue over much longer periods and multiple contributors may re-visit and expand on pertinent topics over the course of many years. As such, learners can explore a subject from multiple perspectives, as described by people from different geographical regions at different moments in time—also adding their own voice to the corpus of material. Spiegel perceives this as a crucial development in the continuation of tradition, which exceeds the possibilities of print media and its inevitable fixing of singular viewpoint at a given moment in time:

> without a digital tool you can't have real folklore put down. [...U]nless you're hearing it in its traditional sense which is songs being sung in a pub with a group of people, but we can't learn everything that way—you can't get 4 million messages in there…this is the closest we have come to scholarly folklore in a printed format (ibid.).

In this way, Mudcat might be considered reminiscent of Gregory Bateson's description of the "metalogue"—a manner of communication in which the function of the conversation adds something to its meaning (Bateson, 1972, p. 12). The possibility for folk music participants to take part in an ongoing discussion—and thus documentation—of a music culture in action promotes an understanding of the folk music genre which is dynamic and evolving. It also enables a form of social media learning that is fundamentally rooted in community discourse and which can be experienced as a collaborative process of exchange with other folk music participants. Indeed,

Mudcat also deals in locative learning opportunities by promoting face-to-face or "meet space" interactions via extensive links pages that provide comprehensive information about events and festivals taking place worldwide, including regular international "Mudgatherings"—opportunities for forum participants (nicknamed "Mudcatters") to meet and make music in person. It is uncertain whether all Mudcat participants share Spiegel's vision of being part of a "new oral tradition"; however, the decision in 2015 by the US Library of Congress to archive the website—both its Digital Tradition database and discussion forum—suggests that the interplay of musical and social knowledge elements are widely recognized and valued beyond the folk music community as well as within it.

Conclusions: Folk Transmission in the Digital Age

The facilities for folk music learning examined above are shaped as much by an investment in vernacularism as they are by explicit invocations of antiquity and "traditional" methods *per se*. Particularly interesting for our research has been the observation that many participants are not instinctively troubled by the apparent incongruity of traditional music and digital technologies. Toward the end of the Digital Folk Survey, respondents were asked "Are there ways of using digital media or technology that you would consider inappropriate for folk activities?" Of the 517 responses, the most common single response was the simple answer "no" (150 responses), with many more qualifying a negative response on the basis that folk music participation should be allowed and expected (if not required) to conform to the cultural and creative norms of the day:

"It's a living tradition . . . not set in aspic! everything moves with the times."

"Tradition is a living thing. There's nothing wrong with it evolving with the use of whatever is available."

"Of course, these technologies and media are becoming their own traditions."

"I think times change and society evolves with technology. Music is from the heart - it absorbs references from tech, politics, life events - I think it's an artistic choice, nothing more."

Nonetheless, numerous responses to the question fell into the category of "no, but...," illustrating the ongoing tension between these dual concepts of antiquity and vernacularity revealed in the reconciliation of folk arts with digital practice. It might be for this reason that respect of both elements is required in physical participation spaces, resulting in interviewees and survey respondents reporting on the active discouragement of social media—or other digital technological—engagement during many face-to-face folk music-making events. As young Sheffield-based fiddle player Nicola Beazley recalled, "I've been glared at once for getting my phone out [in a session] to record something…[people think] you're just chatting to your mates on Facebook…[but] I'm recording it because I want to learn it!" (interview, May 11, 2016). Her experience suggests that, as elsewhere in society, general assumptions about the use and usefulness of social media activity influence acceptable behaviour, and the introduction of social media activity into the lived environments of folk music participation is a cultural moment of transition for folk music in the digital age.

The case studies offered in this chapter indicate that it is highly problematic to identify "'learning" as a discrete category of practice among folk musicians. The concept of learning necessarily—and often overtly—overlaps with or equates to processes of researching, developing, preparing, and connecting. In this way, the folk and traditional music scene offers much to our broader knowledge of music education in on- and offline contexts, since it constitutes a cultural environment in which "learning" is not purely a method for acquiring the skills and knowledge to

subsequently take part in a cultural performance, but is a culturally performative act in itself. That is to say, it is a personal and public enactment of socially negotiated and affirmed cultural and aesthetic values. Nonetheless, the centrality of collective immediacy as an underlying aesthetic of much contemporary folk arts practice makes it unsurprising that an unquestioned aim of most explicit learning activities is to enable participation in unmediated, face-to-face folk music events, such as sessions and folk clubs. The range and nature of folk musicians' learning methods to reach such objectives are, however, varied. And while categories of instructive, appropriative, and locative learning can be discerned in the social media use of folk musicians, these strands of activity are, in practice, interconnected and nebulous. This chapter, therefore, has surveyed a variety of available mechanisms and processes, but from the perspective that no one monolithic narrative of folk music learning exists.

Folk musicians are engaged in a process of transmission that continues to be influenced by, framed in terms of, or otherwise compared with historically-rooted ideologies and definitions of folk. Folk and traditional music exemplifies the added value to the researcher of drawing widely upon the history of that culture's development. By considering the definitive ideologies that have shaped folk and traditional music as a concept, we are able to move beyond a phenomenological account of musical practice and toward making richer sense of the adoptions, adaptions, and rejections of media technology in the contemporary milieu and of their meanings and associations for the musicians we study. In the realm of social media, historically-informed ideologies and identities are invoked in the creation, development, and proliferation of a new specialist medium (*abc*) that, although inherently visual, sustains "traditional" processes of aural transmission and is sufficiently limited in its prescriptive properties as to encourage personal variation around skeletal musical structures. The case of *abc* notation represents a clear illustration of what Nancy Baym (2010) has dubbed the "social shaping of technology," a constructivist narrative in which "the consequences of technologies arise from a mix of 'affordances'—the social capabilities

technological qualities enable—and the unexpected and emergent ways that people make use of those affordances" (p. 44, see also Quan-Hasse, this volume). Meanwhile, the inclusive ethos of Mudcat Café, and its explicit framing by its organizers and users as a contributing repository within an ongoing narrative of communal knowledge and values, points to the site as exemplifying a more subtle process of technological reconciliation. The discursive connections made between folk ideology and the now ubiquitous and unremarkable format of the discussion forum are an important reminder that we should seek to understand not only the "use" that people make of a technology's affordances, but also the *meaning* that people assign to those affordances and how those meanings are constructed, negotiated, and articulated within wider—including offline—cultural contexts.

References

Anderson, J. R., & Bower, G. H. (1972). Recognition and retrieval processes in free recall. *Psychological Review, 79*(2), 97–123. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0033773

Atkinson, D. (2014). *The Anglo-Scottish ballad and its imaginary contexts*. Cambridge: Open Book Publishers.

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of the mind: Collected essays in anthropology, psychiatry, evolution, and epistemology*. London: Jason Aronson Inc.

Baumann, G. (1996). *Contesting culture: Discourses of identity in multi-ethnic London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Baym, N. K. (2010). *Personal connections in the digital age*. Cambridge, Polity.

Bergmann, J., & Sams, A. (2014). *Flipped learning: Gateway to student engagement.* Eugene: International Society for Technology in Education.

Boden, J. (2016). The memorised tradition. In *English folk dance and song society*. Retrieved from https://www.efdss.org/floor-spot/blog/231-august-2016/3905-thememorised-tradition

boyd, d., & Ellison, N. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 13*(1), 210-30. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x

Boyes, G. (2010). *The imagined village: culture, ideology & the English folk revival* (2nd Revised edition). Leeds: No Masters Co-Operative Limited. (Original work published 1993).

Brocken, M. (2003). *The British folk revival: 1944–2002*. Aldershot: Routledge.

Camlin, D. A. (2014). Whose quality is it anyway? Inhabiting the creative tension between presentational and participatory music. *Journal of Arts & Communities, 6*(2–3), 99–118. https://doi.org/10.1386/jaac.6.2-3.99_1

Duggan, B. (n. d.) About. *Tunepal*. Retrieved from https://tunepal.org/index.html#!/about

Eydmann, S. (1995). The concertina as an emblem of the folk music revival in the British Isles. *British Journal of Ethnomusicology, 4*(1), 41–49. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09681229508567237

Francmanis, J. (2002). National music to national redeemer: The consolidation of a "folk-song" construct in Edwardian England. *Popular Music, 21*(1), 1–25. http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0261143002002015

Green, L. (2002). *How popular musicians learn: A way ahead for music education*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.

Greenhaus, D. (1999). About the digital tradition. *Mudcat Café.* Retrieved from http://www.mudcat.org/DigiTrad-blurb.cfm

Harker, D. (1985). *Fakesong: The manufacture of British folk song, 1700 to the present day*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Hasselmo, M. E., & Wyble, B. P. (1997). Free recall and recognition in a network model of the hippocampus: Simulating effects of scopolamine on human memory function. *Behavioural Brain Research, 89*(1), 1–34. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0166-4328(97)00048-X

Hill, J. (2009). The influence of conservatory folk music programmes: The Sibelius academy in comparative context. *Ethnomusicology Forum, 18*(2), 207–41. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17411910903141882

Karpeles, M. (1955). Definition of folk music. *Journal of the International Folk Music Council, 7*, 6-7. https://www.jstor.org/stable/834518

Keegan-Phipps, S. (2007). Déjà vu? Folk music, education, and institutionalization in contemporary England. *Yearbook for Traditional Music, 39*, 84–107. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/20465012

Keegan-Phipps, S. (2013). An aural tradition with a pause button? The role of recording technology in a North East English folk session. *Ethnomusicology, 57*(1), 34–56. http://dx.doi.org/10.5406/ethnomusicology.57.1.0034

Keegan-Phipps, S., & Winter, T. (2014). Contemporary English folk music and the folk industry. In C. Bithell & J. Hill, (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of music revival* (pp. 489-508). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kruse, N. B., & Veblen. K. K. (2012). Music teaching and learning online: Considering YouTube instructional videos. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education, 5*(1), 77–87. http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jmte.5.1.77_1

Lloyd, A. L. (1967). *Folk song in England*. London: Lawrence & Wishart.

MacKinnon, N. (1993). *The British folk scene: Musical performance and social identity*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

McLuhan, M. (1964). *Understanding media: The extensions of man*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Miller, K. (2012). *Playing along: Digital games, YouTube, and virtual performance*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pendlebury, C. (2015). *Jigs, reels and hornpipes: A history of "traditional" dance tunes of Britain and Ireland* [Master's thesis]. University of Sheffield. Retrieved from http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/8262/

Sharp, C. (1907). *English folk song: Some conclusions*. London: Simpkin; Novello.

Turino, T. (2008). *Music as social life: The politics of participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Veblen, K. K. (1991). *Perceptions of change and stability in the transmission of Irish traditional music: An examination of the music teacher's role* [Doctoral dissertation]. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Waldron, J. L. (2009). Exploring a virtual music community of practice: Informal music learning on the internet. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education, 2*(23), 97–112. http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jmte.2.2-3.97_1

Waldron, J. L. (2011). Locating narratives in postmodern spaces: A cyber ethnographic field study of informal music learning in online community. *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education, 10*(2), 32–60. Retrieved from http://act.maydaygroup.org/articles/Waldron10_2.pdf

Waldron, J. L. (2012). Conceptual frameworks, theoretical models and the role of YouTube: Investigating informal music learning and teaching in online music community. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education, 4*(2–3), 189–200. http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jmte.4.2-3.189_1

Waldron, J. L. (2013). User-generated content, YouTube and participatory culture on the web: Music learning and teaching in two contrasting online communities. *Music Education Research 15*(3), 257–74. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14613808.2013.772131

Waldron, J. L. (2016). An alternative model of music learning and 'Last Night's Fun': participatory music making in/as participatory culture in Irish traditional music. *Action, Criticism, and*

Theory for Music Education 15(3), 86–112. http://act.maydaygroup.org/volume-15-issue-3/act-15-3-86-112/?

Waldron, J. L., & Veblen. K. K. (2008). The medium is the message: Cyberspace, community, and music learning in the Irish traditional music virtual community. *Journal of Music, Technology and Education 1*(2–3), 99–111. http://dx.doi.org/10.1386/jmte.1.2and3.99_1

Winter, T., & Keegan-Phipps, S. (2013). *Performing Englishness: Identity and politics in a contemporary folk resurgence*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Wright, L. (2017). Girls' carnival Morris dancing and contemporary folk dance scholarship. *Folklore 128*(2),157–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/0015587X.2016.1231486

Notes

[1] In this research, we define as "folk musicians" anyone who self-identifies with the label, typically those involved, to some extent at least, in the activities and contexts associated with Anglophone and Celtic contemporary folk and traditional music "scenes." However, while this chapter's ongoing reference to a "folk" scene, world, movement, or music culture reflects widespread community usage, we recognize the problems inherent in portraying a singular, cohesive community of folk musicians and understand folk music as a flexible denomination, "a cultural construct undergoing constant discursive renegotiation by [its] participants" (Winter & Keegan-Phipps, 2013, p. 8). The label "traditional" is recognized as similarly problematic, and is used here as it is by folk musicians to invoke constructed notions of historicity, authenticity, and legitimacy in various and fluid combinations.

[2] The relationship between processes of recognition and free recall (to adopt the terminology of memory studies, see Anderson & Bower, 1972; Hasselmo & Wyble, 1997), is a fascinating element of traditional music session culture that is beyond the scope of study, but ripe for future research.

[3] It is common for well-known, touring musicians to be simultaneously involved with small scale, participatory events in their local area, while lesser-known performers occasionally (or even regularly) accept a fee for aspects of their music-making.

[4] This act of repurposing recorded performances for modelling has been more common among more advanced participants, whose abilities to play "by ear" are commonly stronger than those of more novice learners, but the process was made significantly more achievable for neophyte participants when YouTube began supporting HTML5. This began in 2010 and was completed with the adoption of HTML5 as YouTube's default language in 2015. This change in the site's infrastructure introduced arguably one of the most educationally significant affordances of the website in recent years: the ability to reduce the speed at which a video plays back, without altering pitch (a process discussed in relation to user-generated session recordings in Keegan-Phipps, 2013).

[5] The sense of expected progression from a "slow session" to a standard session is often made clearest by the scheduling of the former to precede the latter on the same evening in the same venue.

[6] These variations between conventions of accepted practice across different folk and traditional music cultures are often subtle and generally relate to the nature of both the technology's affordances in each case and the musical materials involved. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine them in any great detail, but it suffices to indicate that the use of—and attitudes toward—social media are not constant throughout the expansive cultural landscape surveyed by this project.

[7] See for example, the English Folk Dance and Song Society's Full English archive, made available online in 2014.

[8] Xerox PARC—now known as PARC (Palo Alto Research Centre Incorporated)—is a distinguished research and development company credited with pioneering numerous technology platforms including personal computers, graphical user interface, laser printing and the ethernet. The early hosting of the Digital Tradition database at Xerox PARC creates links between the later Mudcat Café website and an organization at the center of information technology development.