

Ethnic Minorities

As with the music of First Nations, studying the music of ethnic minorities can pose a challenge because of language difficulties and cultural differences. However, a considerable amount of research, study, and analysis has been brought to bear on the musics of a wide variety of ethnic communities in Canada. We will select from the scholarly literature on certain of those communities, including studies of Eastern European and Asian musical traditions in Canada. We will also explore the multicultural mix of ethnic music in Canada's largest cities.

To start with, one needs an overview of multiculturalism and the varieties of traditional music found among Canada's ethnic minorities across the country. Two articles in *Canadian Folk Music*, one by Ron Duffy titled "Musical Mosaic"¹ and an earlier discussion by Phil Thomas titled "Multiculturalism in Music",² provide such an introduction, especially when combined with Ramon Pelinski's article "The Music of Canada's Ethnic Minorities," which was printed in 1975 in *The Canada Music Book*.³ Another general perspective is provided by Laurel Doucette in a 1993 article in *Canadian Folklore* titled "Voices Not Our Own."⁴ And we must not forget Kenneth Peacock's pioneering (1965) survey of ethnic folk music in the West in *A Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada*.⁵

There are, of course, too many different minority ethnic groups for us to canvass the music of each one, so some choices have to be made. One obvious category is the music of Eastern European immigrants, particularly Ukrainians and Poles. Ukrainian Canadians have been the subject of much scholarship, with Robert Klymasz perhaps the leading authority in the field. Of his several articles, "Traditional Ukrainian Balladry in Canada," co-authored with James Porter, may be singled out as providing an overview of its subject.⁶ Another very interesting piece is "Ukrainian Incest Ballads from Western Canada" in the 1973 issue of *Canadian Folk Music Journal*.⁷ The fruits of Klymasz's collecting are to be found in two reports published by the National Museum: *The Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folk Song Cycle*⁸ and *The Ukrainian Winter Folk Song Cycle in Canada*.⁹

There are other Canadian scholars who have specialized in the music of the Ukrainian diaspora. One pioneer was J. Dz'obko, whose *My Songs: A Selection of Ukrainian Folksongs in English Translation* was published in 1958.¹⁰ Brian Cherwick covered "Ukrainian Music" for Volume 3 of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*.¹¹ Anthony Proracki and Alan Herderson wrote about "Ukrainian-Canadian Folk Music of the Waterford Area" in the 1974

issue of *Canadian Folk Music Journal*.¹² Four years later Bohdan Medwidsky contributed "A Ukrainian Assassination Ballad in Canada" to the same periodical.¹³ And in 2009 Marcia Ostashevski's "A Fully-Fledged and Finely Functioning Fiddle: Humour and 'The Uke-Cree Fiddler'" was included in an issue of *Canadian Folk Music*.¹⁴ Also of interest is her earlier "Identity Politics and Western Canadian Ukrainian Musics: Globalizing the Local or Localizing the Global?"¹⁵

For the music of Polish-Canadians, the first place to go is John Michael Głofcheskie's National Museum publication, *Folk Music of Canada's Oldest Polish Community*.¹⁶ Louise Wrazen is an academic who has thoroughly studied the music of the Polish community in Toronto, and her article in the 1983 issue *Canadian Folk Music Journal* provides a revealing ethnomusicological approach to an ethnic minority. It is titled "Continuity and Change in the Music of the Polish Highlanders of Toronto".¹⁷ She has also contributed "Diasporic Experiences: Mediating Time, Memory and Identity in Górale Performance" to the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music*.¹⁸ In recent times Toronto has experienced an influx of immigrants from the Middle East, and the Turkish-Canadian community there was studied in the early 1980s by Leslie Hall, reporting her findings in the *Canadian Folk Music Journal* in an article titled "Turkish Musical Culture in Toronto."¹⁹

Jewish music in various regions of Canada has received considerable scholarly attention. In 1960 Ruth Rubin studied "Yiddish Folk Songs Current in French Canada".²⁰ Two decades later, Charles Heller discussed "Errors in Transmission as Indicators of East-West Differences: A Study of Jewish Music in Toronto" in *Canadian Folk Music Journal*.²¹ The same issue also contained Judith Cohen's "Judeo-Spanish Traditional Songs in Montreal and Toronto."²² She would follow this five years later with "The Lighter Side of Judeo-Spanish Traditional Song: Some Canadian Examples" in the same periodical.²³ The next decade saw a revival of interest in Jewish-Canadian music, with Nomi Kaston's "Jewish Languages, Jewish Songs"²⁴ and George Lyon's "Klezmer in Canada, East and West—A Review Essay," both in a 1993 issue of *Canadian Folk Music*.²⁵

The oldest religious minorities in Canada tend to be of European descent. They fall into two groups: communities such as the Hutterites and Mennonites, descended from radical Protestant sects that fled persecution in their home-lands after the Reformation, and sects deemed heretical by the Catholic or Orthodox churches. Helen Martens provides a useful over-

view of "The Music of Some Religious Minorities in Canada" in a 1972 issue of *Ethnomusicology*.²⁶ For the radical Protestants, we can read Wesley Berg's *Musical Quarterly* article "Hymns of the Old Colony Mennonites and the Old Way of Singing."²⁷

The Doukhobors were a religious group driven to emigration by the Orthodox Church and the Russian state. The haven they found in Western Canada was not trouble-free, but they have survived to leave a rich legacy of their music. It has been quite extensively researched and recorded by such Canadian folklorists as Kenneth Peacock and Robert Klymasz. Peacock collected two sets of Doukhobor songs for the National Museum of Canada.²⁸ As noted above, he also wrote for the National Museum *A Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada*, which included a discussion of Doukhobor song.²⁹ Robert Klymasz's article in *Canadian Folk Music Journal* is titled "Tracking the 'Living Book': Doukhobor Song in Canada Since 1899."³⁰

We now move on to the important but difficult subject of Asian music in Canada. The largest non-European ethnic minority in western Canada has come from China. We first explore the musical heritage of Chinese immigrants: the labourers who played a major role in the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and those families who settled in the big cities, especially Vancouver, and sought to replicate their own musical traditions in their new homeland. Tim Rogers first addressed the subject of songs about Chinese railway labourers in a 2008 article in *Canadian Folk Music* titled "Hearing a Missing Voice: Chinese Railway Labourers."³¹ In the same issue Josie Chan provided more detail on the same topic in her article "Who Built the Canadian Pacific Railway? Chinese Workers from Hoisan."³²

Vancouver has always been the Canadian city with the highest percentage Asian population, so it is hardly surprising that it is also where Chinese traditional music has flourished. This was addressed by Huang Jinpei and Alan Thrasher in their article "Cantonese Music Societies of Vancouver: A Social and Historical Survey" in the 1993 issue of *Canadian Folk Music Journal*.³³ More recently, in *Canadian Folk Music* Huai Sheng Qiu addressed Chinese-Canadian folk music more specifically in his "Chinese Traditional Music in Greater Vancouver."³⁴ However, Vancouver has no monopoly on Chinese music, as Margaret Chan has demonstrated for Toronto in "East Meets West at Chinese Festivals in Toronto",³⁵ and Kim Chow Morris has argued for Montreal in "'Small Has No Inside, Big Has No Outside': Montreal's Chinese Community Breaks Out/In Music."³⁶

The diaspora from South Asia (the countries of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ceylon, and Sri Lanka) has created a variety of ethnic minority communities

in the major Canadian cities. Ethnomusicologist Regula Qureshi provides a guide to some of the research that has been done into the traditional musics of these communities,³⁷ while David Gregory's "Conversation with Kiran Ahluwalia" gives an insight into the views and repertoire of one performer of East Indian extraction who has made a name for herself on the contemporary folk festival scene.³⁸

Afro-Americans from the USA are another important minority cultural group in Canada. Helen Creighton collected from black informants in the Greater Halifax region of Nova Scotia,³⁹ and Francis Henry's piece in *Canadian Folk Music Journal* represented an attempt to update Creighton's research.⁴⁰ Since then, of course, there has been a considerable influx of immigrants to Canada from the Caribbean, a cultural change reflected in Michelle Bozynski's "Preparing for Cariwest: Music of a West Indian Dance Band" in *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* for 1996.⁴¹ This is just one indication that the subject of this section is an ever-changing and expanding topic.

Notes

¹Duffy, Ron. "Musical Mosaic," *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne* 25: 3 (Fall 1991), 3-4.

²Thomas, Philip J. "Multiculturalism in Music," *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne* 16: 3 (July 1982), 26-27.

³Pelinski, Ramon. "The Music of Canada's Ethnic Minorities," *Canada Music Book* Spring/ Summer 1975), 59-86.

⁴Doucette, Laurel. "Voices Not Our Own," *Canadian Folklore canadien*, 15: 2 (1993), 119-137.

⁵Peacock, Kenneth. *A Survey of Ethnic Folkmusic Across Western Canada*. Ottawa: National Museum, Anthropology Paper 5, 1965.

⁶Klymasz, Robert B. and James Porter. "Traditional Ukrainian Balladry in Canada," *Western Folklore* 33 (1974), 89-132.

⁷Klymasz, Robert B. "Ukrainian Incest Ballads from Western Canada," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 1 (1973), 35-37.

⁸Klymasz, Robert B., ed. *The Ukrainian-Canadian Immigrant Folk Song Cycle*. Ottawa: National Museum, Bulletin 234, 1970.

⁹Klymasz, Robert B., ed. *The Ukrainian Winter Folk Song Cycle in Canada*. Ottawa: National Museum, Bulletin 236, 1970.

¹⁰Dz'obko, J. *My Songs: A Selection of Ukrainian Folksongs in English Translation*. Winnipeg: Ukrainian Canadian Pioneers' Library, 1958.

¹¹Brian Cherwick, "Ukrainian Music," in *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Vol. 3: The*

- United States and Canada*, 1241-44. New York: Garland, 2001.
- ¹²Proracki, Anthony and Alan Herderson. "Ukrainian-Canadian Folk Music of the Waterford Area," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 2 (1974), 19-28.
- ¹³Medwidsky, Bohdan. "A Ukrainian Assassination Ballad in Canada," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 6 (1978), 30-37.
- ¹⁴Ostaszewski, Marcia. "A Fully-Fledged and Finely Functioning Fiddle: Humour and 'The Uke-Cree Fiddler'," *Canadian Folk Music/Musique folklorique canadienne* 43: 1 (Spring 2009), 1-5.
- ¹⁵Ostaszewski, Marcia. "Identity Politics and Western Canadian Ukrainian Musics: Globalizing the Local or Localizing the Global?" *Topia* 6 (Fall 2001): 63-82.
- ¹⁶Glofcheskie, John Michael. *Folk Music of Canada's Oldest Polish Community*. Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Folk Culture Studies, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series No. 33, c. 1981.
- ¹⁷Wrazen, Louise. "Continuity and Change in the Music of the Polish Highlanders of Toronto," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 11 (1983), 18-27.
- ¹⁸Wrazen, Louise. "Diasporic Experiences: Mediating Time, Memory and Identity in Górale Performance," *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 32 (2005), 43-51.
- ¹⁹Hall, Leslie. "Turkish Musical Culture in Toronto," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 10 (1982), 48-52.
- ²⁰Rubin, Ruth. "Yiddish Folk Songs Current in French Canada," *Journal of the International Folk Music Council* 12 (1960), 76-78.
- ²¹Heller, Charles. "Errors in Transmission as Indicators of East-West Differences: A Study of Jewish Music in Toronto," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 10 (1982), 53-60.
- ²²Cohen, Judith R. "Judeo-Spanish Traditional Songs in Montreal and Toronto," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 10 (1982), 40-47 & 60.
- ²³Cohen, Judith R. "The Lighter Side of Judeo-Spanish Traditional Song: Some Canadian Examples," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 15 (1987), 25-34.
- ²⁴Kaston, Nomi. "Jewish Languages, Jewish Songs," *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne* 27: 4 (December 1993), 19-23.
- ²⁵Lyon, George W. "Klezmer in Canada, East and West—A Review Essay," *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne* 27: 4 (December 1993), 25-31.
- ²⁶Martens, Helen. "The Music of Some Religious Minorities in Canada," *Ethnomusicology*, 16:3 (September 1972), 360-371.
- ²⁷Berg, Wesley. "Hymns of the Old Colony Mennonites and the Old Way of Singing," *Musical Quarterly* 80.1 (Spring 1996): 77-117.
- ²⁸Peacock, Kenneth. *Twenty Ethnic Songs from Western Canada*. Ottawa: National Museum of Canada, Bulletin 211, 1966. Peacock, Kenneth. *Songs of the Doukhobors*. Ottawa: National Museum, Bulletin 231, 1970.
- ²⁹See note 5 above.
- ³⁰Klymasz, Robert B. "Tracking the 'Living Book': Doukhobor Song in Canada Since 1899," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 21 (1993), 40-44.
- ³¹Rogers, Tim. "Hearing a Missing Voice: Chinese Railway Labourers," *Canadian Folk Music/Musique folklorique canadienne*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (Spring 2008), 1-13.
- ³²Chan, Josie. "Who Built the Canadian Pacific Railway? Chinese Workers from Hoisan," *Canadian Folk Music/Musique folklorique canadienne* 42:1 (Spring 2008), 14-21.
- ³³Huang Jinpei and Alan R. Thrasher. "Cantonese Music Societies of Vancouver: A Social and Historical Survey," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 21 (1993), 31-39.
- ³⁴Huai Sheng Qiu (translated by Ping On Cheng). "Chinese Traditional Music in Greater Vancouver," *Canadian Folk Music/Musique folklorique canadienne* 39:1 (Spring 2005), 1-5.
- ³⁵Chan, Margaret. "East Meets West at Chinese Festivals in Toronto," *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 28 (2001): 1-14
- ³⁶Morris, Kim Chow. "'Small Has No Inside, Big Has No Outside': Montreal's Chinese Community Breaks out/In Music," *MUSICultures* 36 (2009), 49-82.
- ³⁷Qureshi, Regula. "Ethnomusicological Research Among Canadian Communities of Arab and East Indian Origin," *Ethnomusicology* 16 (1972), 381-396.
- ³⁸Gregory, E. David. "A Conversation with Kiran Ahluwalia," *Canadian Folk Music/Bulletin de musique folklorique canadienne*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Winter 2003), 1-9.
- ³⁹Creighton, Helen. "Collecting Songs of Nova Scotia Blacks," in Kenneth S. Goldstein and Neil V. Rosenberg, eds. *Folklore Studies in Honour of Herbert Halpert: A Festschrift*, 137-144. St. John's: Memorial University, 1980.
- ⁴⁰Henry, Francis. "Black Music in the Maritimes," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 3 (1975), 11-21.
- ⁴¹Bozynski, Michelle. "Preparing for Cariwest: Music of a West Indian Dance Band," *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* 24 (1996), 23-31.