

***Music From the Heart: Compositions of a Folk Fiddler.* By Colin Quigley. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995. Pp. xiii + 273, notes, bibliographie essay, photographs, charts, musical transcriptions, \$35 US, ISBN 0-8203-1637-7 cloth.)**

Richard Blaustein

Volume 19, numéro 1, 1997

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1087663ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1087663ar>

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Éditeur(s)

Association Canadienne d'Ethnologie et de Folklore

ISSN

1481-5974 (imprimé)

1708-0401 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Blaustein, R. (1997). Compte rendu de [*Music From the Heart: Compositions of a Folk Fiddler.* By Colin Quigley. (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1995. Pp. xiii + 273, notes, bibliographie essay, photographs, charts, musical transcriptions, \$35 US, ISBN 0-8203-1637-7 cloth.)]. *Ethnologies*, 19(1), 170–173. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1087663ar>

occasionally lost in the attention to details and motifs. The approach is clearly that of a historian, and not someone accustomed to studying the manner in which material culture can transmit information about the society in which it was produced.

This bias is demonstrated clearly in his discussion of folk-influenced architecture, elements of which he repeatedly dismisses as confusing, strange, and awkward. It is exactly this architectural awkwardness that should be studied, not put aside. Throughout the book, Early's preference for the purer classical form is evident. He describes *tequitqui's* "indigenous exuberance and love of overall ornamentation that would in the future repeatedly break free from the constraints of European taste" (p. 119). But when the same indigenous exuberance resulted in the colourful repainting of interiors, such as in the church at Tonantzintla, Early rejects it as "garish" (p. 123). Ultimately, the book seems to suffer from the constraints of European taste that *tequitqui* was a reaction against. Early's referrals to and lengthy discussions of the Neo-Classical, Baroque, Rococo, Renaissance, Islamic, and Medieval styles and orders of architecture are all valid and scholarly, but in the end Early has authored a relatively unpalatable study of architecture. Many of his chapters end in mid-discussion, with little in the way of conclusions for any chapter. The book itself ends without any real discussion of what has been described, or for what purpose besides scholarly antiquarianism. Some aspects of the book are more frustrating than others, such as a complete lack of maps and its exclusion of a glossary for the non-initiate. But in its favour, *The Colonial Architecture of Mexico* is well researched and a potentially useful reference tool, with good photographs and an excellent set of colour plates.

DALE GILBERT JARVIS

Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, Newfoundland

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Music From the Heart: Compositions of a Folk Fiddler is the outgrowth of a rich relationship between Colin Quigley, an American folk

music enthusiast who went on to become a graduate student in folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland and afterwards a leading expert on North American traditional fiddling and dancing based at UCLA, and the late Emile Benoit (1913-1992), a rural fiddler who became one of the favorite traditional performers of the Newfoundland folk revival movement in the mid-1960s. Quigley's main objective is to understand how a creative folk musician like Benoit draws upon traditional ideas and practices to express his individual personality and feelings.

Born on March 24, 1913, to parents of Acadian and Breton background, Emile Benoit was raised in the remote francophone community of Black Duck Brook (L'Anse-à-Canards) located on the Port-au-Port Peninsula of western Newfoundland, an area whose inhabitants generally had little formal education and began working full-time in their early teens. The young Emile Benoit scratched out a living through farming, logging, and fishing; and also served as a folk doctor and veterinarian. Widowed at thirty with four young children, Benoit married again and raised a second family of nine children, some of whom were still living at home when he was discovered by the Newfoundland folk music revival at the age of sixty.

Benoit's career as a fiddler began at the age of eight when his father whittled out a crude toy fiddle which his mother reluctantly strung with darning thread. A few years later, an uncle pieced together a broken old fiddle and showed his twelve-year-old nephew a few tunes. In his mid-teens Emile began playing at local dances for pay. By the 1930s, radio programs emanating from various sections of Canada and the United States were influencing Benoit's repertoire and style.

Once Emile had established himself as a competent traditional fiddler, he began composing new tunes. Lionized in his later years by folklorists and folk music enthusiasts not only in his native province but also in other sections of Canada and the United States and even in France, Benoit moved into a new set of performance contexts by the 1960s, including fiddle contests, lecture-demonstrations, folk club concerts and various forms of media including radio, television and documentary film.

Quigley's discussion of Benoit's musical worldview is ethnography of the highest order. Quigley carefully outlines Benoit's native understanding of his own music *in his own terms*. Good fiddling, like good speech, must be clear and incisive, well-articulated and distinctive: "Each musician, Emile believes, can and should search to find and develop an individual style as distinctive as the sound of his own voice" (p. 45).

Music ultimately comes from a mysterious spiritual source. Benoit asserts, "It's like a dream. Where does it all come from. Four strings, four fingers and sheew, eh? Play and play and play and play and all different kinds of notes in there eh? And when he look up, he don't know where it come from" (p. 56).

Quigley's deep personal involvement with Emile Benoit made it possible to document the various stages leading from the initial inspiration of a tune to its final realization as a titled addition to the fiddler's constantly evolving repertoire. As a rule, Benoit's new musical ideas have been stimulated by non-musical referents, generally people, places and objects. Benoit's experimentation with his new fiddle tunes have resulted in more original compositions, along with playing bits and pieces, or "rammages," of familiar tunes as well as trying to reproduce unfamiliar tunes. Benoit's creations are grounded within the traditional parameters of fiddle music based upon symmetrical patterns which he terms "rhyming." As Quigley says, "Melodic ideas that balance are likewise those which suit and answer one another to provide a sense of completed form. Rhythm is also important to this sense of completeness" (p. 92).

Quigley provides detailed transcriptions of Benoit's tunes, along with descriptive notes drawn from tape-recorded interviews. A highly creative composer, Benoit was nonetheless a very traditional player in most respects, judging from Quigley's discussion of his bowing and fingering techniques. He clearly thought of tunes in terms of finger patterns rather than keys, of which he only developed a rudimentary knowledge late in life through exposure to younger folk revival musicians.

Involvement with the burgeoning folk music scene in Newfoundland not only affected Emile Benoit's playing but also how he presented himself in public. As a youngster, Benoit played at public dances, called "hall times" in Newfoundland, and also at more intimate gatherings known as "house times." Hall times required that the solo fiddler play as loudly as possible, accompanying himself with rhythmic clogging. House times permitted more musical subtlety and virtuosity, but also called upon other folk traditions, particularly joking and storytelling. Emile's performances at house parties, *veillées* in French, were characteristically comic and boisterous. Quigley notes that Benoit was most effective in situations which replicated the intimacy of the house times, but sometimes less so in situations in which he was not the center of attention, in which his performances were (supposedly) under the control of presenters or directors.

From the beginning to the end of his musical career, Emile Benoit was always highly individualistic within the context of an established tradition. As Quigley concludes, “Emile stands revealed in this study as a model of creativity within tradition, offering testimony to the tenacity with which human beings pursue the urge to make a distinctive mark on their worlds” (p. 214).

Not only is *Music From The Heart* a tribute to a great fiddler, but also a tribute to the tenacity and creative vision of the dedicated scholar who saw it through to fruition. I have no doubt that this book will make a distinctive mark on the world of folk music scholarship and increase appreciation and understanding of the creativity of traditional artists and performers in general. Highly recommended.

RICHARD BLAUSTEIN
East Tennessee State University
Johnson City, Tennessee
