

Women, Representation, and Music in Selected Folk Traditions of the British Isles and North America

SP 694 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm Tuesday evenings 4-270 (room 270, Building Four)
Ruth Perry, MIT Judith Tick, Northeastern

There is evidence that in many societies the bulk of the work of transmitting cultural tradition is the province of women, who, after all, are mainly concerned with the early rearing of children. Thus it is interesting to see that in the thousands of publications and recordings of Child ballads examined by Bronson (1959-72), the majority were sung by women. Female representation in many of the larger collections of European folk music is about half, and it often seems to be particularly the women who know the older material.”

Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology* (336)

“Years ago when that funny old Englishman [Cecil Sharp] come over the mountains and wrote down these old love songs that I know, I could sing like a mockingbird and wasn’t no step that I couldn’t put my foot to in a dance”

Aunt Lize Pace, from Alan Lomax’ headnote to a version of “The Mermaid,” Child # 289, in *Our Singing Country*

“One of our friends owned a real African princess. She must have been over a hundred when I knew her. . . . We dearly loved her songs, which were African ones, thrown into rough English by herself.”

Georgia Bryan Conrad, “Reminiscences of a Southern Woman,” *The Southern Workman* 30 (March, 1901), p. 168 as quoted in Dena Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals*, p. 129.

“I remember the weeping as we went across the fields to see cousin Johnny—“Cousin Johnny dead,”—the nearest cousin, the clock stopped. My aunts dressed in black with long veils, but dancing in a corner, dropping deeply and rising rhythmically from the floor—Aunt Sarah with her hair always corn rowed. The timbre of the voices of my aunts passing the farm at night, giving their special hollers. . . . About five or six years ago, in the archives of the Library of Congress, I sat listening to a recording of early blues and hollers. Suddenly I found myself weeping, weeping almost to the point of embarrassment. The timbre of the voices of my aunts had come to me from some place deep in myself, which I did not know existed.”

Undine Smith Moore, African American composer, keynote address to the First National Congress on Women in Music, 1981

This subject investigates the special relation of women to several musical folk traditions in the British Isles and North America. Throughout, we will be examining the implications of gender in the creation, transmission, and performance of music. Because

virtually all societies operate to some extent on a gendered division of labor (and of expressive roles) the music of these societies is marked by the gendering of musical repertoires, traditions of instrumentation, performance settings, and styles. This seminar will examine the gendered dimensions of the music--- the song texts , the performance styles, processes of dissemination (collection, literary representation) and issues of historiography--- with respect to selected traditions within the folk musics of North America and the British Isles, with the aim of analyzing the special contributions of women to these traditions. In addition to telling stories about women's musical lives, and studying elements of female identity and subjectivity in song texts and music, we will investigate the ways in which women's work and women's cultural roles have affected the folk traditions of these several countries.

The subject is organized both chronologically and topically. We begin with the earliest eighteenth-century collectors of folk music in the British Isles, focus on Anglo American and African American repertoires and end with the most recent folk revival of the 1960s. Readings and listening assignments are given for each week of the semester, accompanied by questions that are intended to guide thinking about the material for that week. Weekly listening assignments are also included.

REQUIRED AND OPTIONAL TEXTS

Course Pack

Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, Chs. 4-8. (The paperback is readily available or text is on line.)

Francis James Child, *The English and the Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. I.

David Whisnant. *All That is Native and Fine*.

Folk Music Journal on Mary Neal and Cecil Sharp (vol. 5, no. 5, 1989) \$5. This issue will be available for purchase in class.

Ritchie, Jean. *The Singing Family of the Cumberlands*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. Reprint edition, New York: Geordie Music Publishing, 1980.

Betty N. Smith's *Jane Hicks Gentry* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998).

Required CDs (available in MIT bookstore)

Class CD compilation. This will be available for purchase in class.

Margaret Barry, *I Sang Through The Fairs*. Rounder Records 3719 (Cambridge, MA., 1998).

Coal Mining Women. Rounder Records 4025 (Cambridge, MA., 1997). (Aunt Molly Jackson, Sarah Gunning, Hazel Dickens)

Georgia Sea Island Songs. New World Records CD 80278-2. (New York: New World Records, 1977)

Jeannie Robertson, *The Queen Among the Heather*. Rounder Records 1720-2 (Cambridge, MA., 1998).

Texas Gladden. *Ballad Legacy*. Rounder Records 11661-1800-2

Deep River of Song: Alabama. From Lullabies to Blues. Rounder Records 11661-1829-2.

Written Work

Each student will be expected to think about all the questions and to write out an answer to one of the assigned questions for that week. Frame your answer in terms suggested by the readings for that week. Please type your thoughts out on one page and bring enough copies for everyone in class. Put the week and question at the top of the page.

In addition, students will be expected to write a 15-20 page research paper on a subject approved early in the semester by either Prof. Perry or Prof. Tick. These papers should extend and deepen the investigations of the course. Grades will be based on the quality of this written work as well as on participation in class discussion.

Week 1. September 16 Overview: Women as carriers, creators, conservers and collectors of tradition

1. What is folk music? (oral tradition, multiple versions, relation to dance)
2. What is the place of folk music in society?
3. What is the relationship between music and text?
4. What are the key issues of performance practice?
5. What are the key issues of collecting?
6. What are the ideologies surrounding folk music and folk revival process?
7. What genres are women invested in? What genres are associated with women and why?
8. What kinds of stories do women privilege as a particular kind of telling? Of narrative?
9. What is the relation of women to expressive culture and folk traditions?
10. In what kinds of cultures do women function as storytellers?
11. What is the relationship between music, performance practice and text?
12. What is the relationship between narrative and gender?
13. What is the effect of music on words and conversely the the effect of text on music?
14. How does music as part of expressive culture help shape or contribute to collective historical feminist consciousness?

Week 2. September 23 Modern Exemplars of Women in the Folk Process: two generations within the Seeger Family: Ruth Crawford Seeger (1901-1953) and Peggy Seeger (b. 1935)

Class coordinated with guest residency by Peggy Seeger at M.I.T.

Questions to ask of the reading and the visiting performer: each student must come prepared with at least one specific question for Peggy Seeger geared to exploring these aspects of gender and musical tradition.

1. How are Peggy Seeger's class and gender relevant to her musical biography?
2. What is the relationship between women's place in their families and communities and how women's musical traditions are constructed?
3. How is women's music positioned in families and communities in different cultural contexts?

Readings:

Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, "Mistaken Dichotomies," *Journal of American Folklore* 101 (1988): 140-155.

Ellen Koskoff, "An Introduction to Women, Music, and Culture," in Koskoff, ed. *Women and Music in Cross Cultural Perspective* (Urbana: University of Illinois, 1987), pp. 1-23.

Beverly Diamond, "The Interpretation of Gender Issues in Musical Life Stories of Prince Edward Islanders," in Pirkko Moisala and Beverly Diamond, *Music and Gender*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000: 99-131.

Judith Tick, *Ruth Crawford Seeger. A Composer's Search for American Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997): Chapter 16, "Lomax Country," Chapter 17, "the Breath of the Singer," and Chapter 18, "American Folk Songs Go to School"

Ruth Crawford Seeger, *The Music of American Folk Song*, xv-xxix. with introductory material by Mike Seeger and Peggy Seeger and historical introduction by Tick

Ruth Crawford Seeger, *American Folk Songs for Children*, Introduction, pp. 13-48.

Irwin Silber, "Peggy Seeger—The Voice of America in Folksong," *Sing Out* 12/3 (Summer 1962): 4-9.

Peggy Seeger, *The Peggy Seeger Songbook. Warts and All: Forty Years of Songmaking*. New York: Oak Publications, 1998, pp. 7-36.

Week 3. September 30. The First Folk Revival: 1723/1765 through the early Nineteenth Century: Transatlantic Connections

1. In the literary sources for the early collectors, such as Ramsey's *Tea-Table Miscellany* (1723) and Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765), were women important informants?

2. Who sang Anglo-American ballads? Who collected them? For what audience (reader, listener, singer)?

3. What was the nature of women's work in this period? What was the place of women in their families and in community in this period?

4. What were the social contexts for making music in this period?

5. What kinds of stories do women tell? Do women privilege a particular kind of telling? In what kinds of cultures do women function as storytellers?

6. What is the relation among music, performance, practice, and text for female singers and musicians?

7. What is the relation between women and oral culture? What is women's oral culture like and is it different from men's oral culture?

Readings:

Thomas Percy, *The Reliques of Ancient Poetry* (1765) (on reserve)

Nick Groom, *The Making of Percy's Reliques*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999) , pp, 5-12; 21-30; 32-36, 40-50, 59-62, 73-80, 99-101, 116-117.

John Murray Gibbon, "Women as Folk-Song Authors," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, XLI, series III (May 1947): 47-52.*

Paula MacDowell, *The Women of Grub Street*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 58-62, 80-91.

Dianne Dugaw, "The Popular Marketing of 'Old Ballads,'" *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 21 (1987): 71-90.

Dave Harker, *Fakesong. The Manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day*. (Milton Keynes, UK: Open University Press, 1985), pp. ix-38.

David Buchan, *The Ballad and the Folk*. East Linton, Scotland: Lothian Press, 1972), pp. 51-86.

Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield, Chapters 4-8*.

Joseph Addison, excerpts from *The Spectator*.

Margaret Homans, *Bearing the Word*, pp.1-39, 84-99.

Carleton Sprague Smith, "Broadside and Their Music in Colonial America," in *Music in Colonial Massachusetts 1630-1820, Volume I. Music in Public Places*. Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980. pp. 295-332; 361-367.

Benjamin Franklin, letter to his brother about Chevy Chase [on line]

Listening:

"Chevy Chase" (referred to by Addison and Franklin) as sung Gordeanna McCulloch

"Barbara Allen" also by McCulloch

"The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington"

"King John and the Bishop" (sung by Margaret MacArthur)

"Lord Thomas and Fair Eleanor" (from *Anglo American Ballads*, Vol. 2)

"Lord Thomas and Fair Annet" (from *Classic Ballads of Britain and Ireland*)

"Sir Patrick Spens"

Week 4. October 7 The First Folk Revival part II: The case study of Motherwell and Agnes Lyle, and Sir Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802-3).

1. At the time of the “discovery” of folk ballads, who was collecting them and why? What was their interest in them?
2. What were the gender and class patterns of the informants and the collectors in the early period?
3. What is the musical history of modal (gapped) tunes and pentatonic tune types? Why have they survived in the populations where they have survived?
4. What are the literary elements of ballads such as Hind Horn, Twa Sisters, Cruel Mother, Chevy Chase, Edward, and Barbara Allen?
5. How does the music affect the narrative (i. e. in the case of Hind Horn) ?
6. What counts as a “good” tune or a “good” story?
7. What kinds of aesthetic standards can we bring to bear on traditional music and traditional texts?
8. What did Scot learn from Tibby Sheale?

Readings:

William Motherwell, review of Peter Buchan’s *Ancient Ballads and Songs of the North of Scotland, 1828*, reprinted in *Journal of Folklore Research* 31 nos. 1-3 (1994): 191-214.

Mary Ellen Brown, *William Motherwell’s Cultural Politics*. (University Press of Kentucky, 1998), pp. 10-33 (skim); read 78-102 and appendix, 163-170.

Mary Ellen Brown, “Old Singing Women and the Canons of Scottish Balladry and Song” in Douglas Gifford and Dorothy McMillan, eds. *A History of Scottish Women’s Writing*. Edinburgh University Press, 1997, pp. 44-57.

William McCarthy, *The Ballad Matrix*, pp. 11-13, 25-53, 117-163, and the three-page appendix on tunes.

William McCarthy, “William Motherwell as Field Collector,” *Folk Music Journal* V/3 (1987): 293-316.

Carleton Sprague Smith, “Broadside and Their Music in Colonial America,” in *Music in Colonial Massachusetts 1630-1820, Volume I. Music in Public Places*. Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980. 361-367.

Roger Abrahams and George Foss, *Anglo American Folk Song Style* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968): 132-64.

Amy Shuman, “Gender and Genre” in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, ed. Susan Tower Hollis, Linda Pershing, and M. Jane Young (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press): 71-88. (course pack)
Oxford University Press, 1972), selections (course pack)

Dave Harker, *Fakesong*, pp. 38-77.

Deborah A. Symonds, "Ballad Singers and Ballad Collectors," Chapter One (pp. 13-37) from *Weep Not for Me. Women, Ballads, and Infanticide in Early Modern Scotland*. Penn State University Press, 1997.

Pierre Boulez, "The Vestal Virgin and the Fire-stealer: memory, creation, and authenticity" *Early Music*, Aug.1990, pp. 355-358.

Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936)

Listening:

"Hind Horn"

"Cruel Mother"

"The Sheath and Knife"

"Lord Bateman"

"Dowie Dens o' Yarrow"

Week 5 October 15 The "classic" collection of Francis James Child

Questions

1. What is the difference between Child's first collection of ballads and his third collection of ballads (other than the title)?
2. What were Child's innovations as a collector and what implications do they have for the study of gender and folk music?
3. Pick (at least) ten ballads and count the number of men and women informants for each ballad and tabulate the results. What does this elementary exercise suggest about gender and ballads? What reservations do you have about the results?
4. How did Child's prejudices shape the canon of ballads he created? What role does gender play in the resulting canon?
5. What difference does it make that Child collected texts but not tunes?
6. Taking into account Bronson's collections of tunes, what is the difference between a text-based tradition and one based on texts and multiple musical performances? Pick one ballad as a case study.
7. Choose a Child ballad and analyze its literary effects. Do not neglect to scrutinize its gender politics.
8. For one of the Child ballads whose sources you have tabulated, note who is the center of the action, who are the villains, what is the outcome?

Readings:

Francis James Child, *The English and the Scottish Popular Ballads*, vol. I. pp. xvii-xxv; xxvii-xxxiv; 153-193.

Sigrid Rieuwerts, "The Genuine Ballads of the People": F.J. Child and the Ballad Cause," *Journal of Folklore Research* 31/nos. 1-3 (1994): 1-34 (includes two articles by Child that were published anonymously in *The Nation* (1867 and 1868).

Morris Hart, "Professor Child and the Ballad," *PMLA* 21 (1906): 755-807
Roger Abrahams and George Foss, *Anglo American Folk Song Style* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968): 165-185. (The Musical Form of Folksong)

Bertrand Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (Princeton University Press, 1959): ix-xxx; 143-184 (Twa Sisters).

Bertrand Bronson, *The Ballad as Song* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), pp. 92-132.

Polly Stewart, "Wishful Willful Wily Women: Lessons for Female Success in the Child Ballads," in Joan Newlon Radner ed. *Feminist Messages. Coding in Women's Folk Culture*. University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Listening:

"Barbara Allen" as sung by Gordeanna McCulloch

"Barbara Allen" as sung by Jane Turriff

"Edward" from *Classic Ballads of Britain and Ireland*

"Four Marys" as sung by Texas Gladden (*Anglo American Ballads*, Vol. 2)

"Twa Sisters" from the *Classic Ballads of Britain and Ireland*

"Twa Sisters" as sung by Alison McMorland

Week 6. October 21 The Second Anglo American Folk Revival: Cecil Sharp and The Founding of the English Country Dance and Folk Song Society; Mary Neal; Sharp and Olive Dame Campbell in Appalachia; Maud Karpeles.

1. Are there gender difference in the attitudes of the song collectors in the second folk revival towards 1) the folk 2) the music 3) tradition?
2. Did men and women collectors have different agendas?
3. Did men and women collectors collect from different populations? How did gender inhibit or facilitate collecting folk materials?
4. What are the politics of collection in this historical period?
5. In what ways does gender affect musical practice within Appalachian Mountain and rural English music?
6. What roles did educated rural and urban female writers, scholars, and collectors play in documenting tradition?
7. How does music function within movements for social change?
8. What is the relation of music to dance?

Readings:

David Whisnant. *All That is Native and Fine* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

Dave Harker, *Fakesong*, pp. 146-56, 164-197.

Archival resources: Olive Dame Campbell Papers on microfilm from the University of North Carolina.

Issue of the *Folk Music Journal* on Mary Neal and Cecil Sharp (vol. 5/5, 1989)

Katie Lee, "Some Experiences of a Folk-Song Collector," in *Journal of the Folk-Song Society*, I, 1 (1899): 7-13.

Betty N. Smith's *Jane Hicks Gentry* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), pp. 3-9; 65-92.

William McCarthy, ed. *Jack in Two Worlds. Contemporary North American Tales and Their Tellers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), pp. 93-106.

Campbell, O.D. [Olive Dame], *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*. Introduction by Sharp; Nos. 21, 27, 64, 65, 70, 76, 85, 87.

Listening:

"I Sowed the Seeds of Love" (in class)

"The Mermaid" (from OSC, pp. 151-2).

"The Cuckoo"

"Among the New Mown Hay"—recorded by Cecil Sharp from the singing of Alfred Edgell

Video: *Songcatcher*.

"Fair and Tender Ladies," "Pretty Saro," "The Cuckoo Bird," "Single Girl," "Barbara Allen."

Week 7. October 28. African-American Women's Folk Traditions: The Legacy from the Nineteenth Century. The Georgia Sea Islands as a Case Study of Process and Preservation.

1. What are the historic sources for African American Women's Folk Traditions?
2. How has race and racism affected the creative musical achievement of African-American women? In what cultural/ social context has the music emerged?
3. What are the cultural contexts shaping performance through family and community structures?
4. How does traditional music and performance practice reflect racialized and gendered discourse in American society?
5. How can narratives about women's lives within traditional music speak to both ethnomusicological and biographical practice?
6. Who are the important musicians emerging through 1930s and 1940s collecting?
7. What are the politics of the collectors of this music (Bess and Alan Lomax, Lydia Parrish, Zora Neale Hurston, etc.)?

8. How does this music help shape or contribute to collective historical feminist consciousness?

Readings:

Lucy McKim [Garrison], "Open Letter to John Sullivan Dwight for *Dwight's Journal of Music*, November 8, 1862: 254-55.

Harriet Beecher Stowe., "Sojourner Truth, the Libyan Sibyl," *Atlantic Monthly* 11 (April, 1863): 473-481.

Nell Irvin Painter, *Sojourner Truth*. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1996), pp. 151-57, 162-3.

[William Francis Allen, 1830-1889, Charles Pickard Ware, 1840- ...](#)

Slave Songs of the United States. By William Francis Allen, 1830-1889, Charles Pickard Ware, 1840-1921, and Lucy McKim Garrison 1842-1877. ... [docsouth.unc.edu/church/allen/menu.html - 5k - Jun 14, 2003 - Cached](#) – The introduction and selected songs ("Michael, Row Your Boat Ashore," "O Daniel," "Roll, Jordan Roll," "Poor Rosy, Poor Gal," and "Nobody Knows")

Oliver Dyer, "What I have Seen about New York," A Lecture by Oliver Dyer. *The Independent* 20, October 8, 1868.

Dena Epstein, *Sinful Tunes and Spirituals*, 252-302; 314-320.

Ronald Radano, "Denoting Difference: The Writing of Slave Spirituals," *Critical Inquiry* 22/3 (spring 1996): 506-544. (optional)

Beman, Jennie Howard. "Milly," *Independent* 33 (29 December 1881): 28

Moore, Ella Sheppard. [Mrs. G. W. Moore], "Needs of the Colored Woman and Girls," *American Missionary Magazine* n.s. 43 (January 1889): 22-25.

Octavia V. Rogers Albert, *The House of Bondage*, 1890. reprinted with introduction by Frances Foster Smith, 1988, Francis Foster's Introduction: xxvii-xliii, pp. 1-49 of the novel.

Sherley Anne Williams, "Meditations on History," in *Midnight Birds*, ed. Mary Helen Washington.

Zora Neale Hurston. Selections from Nancy Cunard, *The Negro. An Anthology*, including ZNH on "Spirituals and Neo-Spirituals" and "The Shout".

Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men*. Excerpt reprinted in Alice Walker, ed. *I Love Myself When I Am Laughing* (New York: The Feminist Press, 1979): 82-122.

Parrish, Lydia. *Slave Songs of the Georgia Sea Islands*. Hatsboro, PA: Folklore Associates, Inc., 1942. Preface by Bruce Jackson, I-X; Parrish introductory material, ix-xxiii; map on xxiv; 3-10; 108-111; 114-116; 154-55,

Jones, Bessie and Bess Lomax Hawes. *Step It Down: Games, Plays, Songs & Stories from Afro-American Heritage*. New York: Harper & Row, 1972. pp. xi-xxi; 3-8; 37-40; 43-48; 123-26; 143-45.

Jones, Bessie. *For the Ancestors. Autobiographical Memories*. Collected and Edited by John Stewart. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983. pp.vii-xxv; 30-84; 135-152.

Bernard Katz, "Songs That Will Not Die," *Negro Quarterly* I (1942): 283-88.

Cornelia Walker Bailey with Christine Bledsoe, *God, Dr. Buzzard, and the Bolito Man. A Saltwater Geechee Talks About Life on Sapelo Island, Georgia*. New York: Random House, 2000: 178-186.

Listening:

Georgia Sea Island Songs. New World Records 80278-2.

1. "Sheep, sheep, don't you know the road?"---first recording of this spiritual in 1961
2. "O Death"—a virtuoso solo dramatic gospel aria
3. "The Buzzard Lope"—dance song
4. "See Aunt Dinah"—group dance song
5. "Reg'lar, reg'lar, rollin' under " reconstructed under Lomax hand
6. "The Titanic" (also in Alan Lomax Collection Sampler and Southern Journey)
7. "Moses" (Jones part of group)
from *Southern Journey, Vol. 1*
8. "Sink ' Em Low"—a chain gang work song that is preceded by BJ talking. Recording from 1960—such a great strong voice.
9. "Beulah Land"—collaborative with Hobart Smith for Colonial Williamsburg project, 1960
10. "It Just Suits Me"—another collaboration with HS

Video: *Yonder Come Day* [McGraw-Hill] 1975.

Week 8. November 4. Early and Down Home Blues: Three Pioneers: Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Big Mama Thornton

1. How does the emergence of the female blues singer challenge the distinctions between folk music and popular music?
2. What is the relationship between folk blues and African-American women's experience?

3. How can narratives about women's lives within traditional music speak to both ethnomusicological and biographical practice?
4. How do we read the blues as text, music, and performance practice in relation to gender?
5. What happened to women in the nascent "race records" recording industry?
6. Are the texts of women's blues different from the texts of men's blues? Is there an historical difference between the early texts and the later texts?
7. Why were women the first commercially successful blues singers?

Readings:

Ann duCille. "Blue Notes on Black Sexuality: Sex and the Texts of the Twenties and Thirties," in *The Coupling Convention: Sex, Text, and Tradition in Black Women's Fiction*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 66-85.

William Barlow, *Looking Up at Down. The Emergence of Blues Culture* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989, 135-181.

Alice Walker, "1955" in *You Can't Keep a Good Woman Down*

Angela Davis, *Blues Legacies and Black Feminism*. Intro: xi-xx; 3-41; 66-90.

Sandra Leib, *Mother of the Blues*. xi-xvii, 1-48, 58-63, 164-173.

Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1968. pp. 226-241.

Hine, Darlene, Elsa Barkley Brown and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn eds., *Black Women in America. An Historical Encyclopedia* 2 vols. Indiana University Press, 1993. entries on "blues"

entry on Willie Mae Thornton in The Handbook of Texas ONLINE.
<http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/handbook/online/articles/print>

Gillian G. Gaar, *She's a Rebel. The History of Women in Rock & Roll*. Seattle: Seal Press, 1992, pp. 1-7.

Listening:

Ma Rainey, "Black Bottom"

Bessie Smith, "Jailhouse Blues," "Backwater Blues" and "Empty Bed Blues"

Big Mama Thornton "Hound Dog," "Ball and Chain"

Video: Wild Women Don't Have the Blues

Video clip in class: Bessie Smith, "St. Louis Blues"

Listening: Our Singing Country, Ozella Jones, "I Been a Bad Bad Girl" (Xerox as well)

Week 9 November 11. Mountain Women: Almeda Riddle, Jean Ritchie, Emma Dusenbury

1. What are the differences between British and American folk song and ballad repertoires and variants?
2. Compare British and American versions of “Barbara Allen” literarily and musically.
3. What are the agendas of *these* collectors? I.e. Lomax, Abrahams, the Warners, Ritchie, etc. Is there a gender difference in the agendas of collectors? Do they collect from different populations?
4. How are women’s experiences depicted by collectors and informants in Great Britain and the U.S.?
5. What is the relation between progressive politics and folk music?
6. What are the different qualities of experience and apprehension between recorded sound and the oral tradition? What difference does it make to be able to record informants’ music? How do records (i.e. both making them and listening to them) change the musical traditions of folk musicians?
7. Are the texts of American ballads—both indigenous and imported—more or less violent and/or misogynous than ballads from the British Isles? Can you see/hear any differences between these two repertoires?
8. Is there a distinct feminine vocal style? The relevant quote is from the country-music authority, Charles Wolfe: “In some communities fiddling was seen as a masculine skill, like shooting; vocal music was more of an art and often passed down through the women. Doubtless more men sang than women fiddled, but there does seem to have been some correlation between women and certain vocal styles. More research needs to be done in this area to further explore whether there is a distinct feminine vocal style.”

Reading:

Fairweather, Sharon Stapleton. *Women’s Work. Carrying the Culture*. Southern Appalachian Historical Association, 1991.

Joanne Raetz Stuttgen,” Kentucky Folksong in Northern Wisconsin: Evolution of the Folksong Tradition in Four Generations of Jacobs Women,” *Southern Folklore* 48 (1991): 275-89.

Olive Wooley Burt, *American Murder Ballads and Their Stories*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. ix-xiii; 3-31.

Lucille Burdine and William B. McCarthy, “Sister Singers,” *Western Folklore* 49 (October 1990): 406-12.

Flanders, Helen Hartness. *Ancient Ballads Traditionally Sung in New England*. Pp. 150-170, 208-212, 223-225, 230-238, 280-298.

Mary A. Bufwack and Robert K. Oermann, "The Spirit of the Mountains: Women in American Folk Music," in Bufwack and Oermann, *Finding Her Voice. The Saga of Women in Country Music* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), pp. 2-23.

Susan Cook, "Cursed Was She": Gender and Power in American Balladry," in Susan Cook and Judy Tsou ed. *Caecilia Reclaimed. Feminist Perspectives on Gender and Music*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994.

Ritchie, Jean. *The Singing Family of the Cumberlands*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955. Reprint edition, New York: Geordie Music Publishing, 1980.

Holly Tannen, "Women and the Dulcimer," *SING OUT!* 25/2 (1976): 19-21.

Cohen, Norm and Anne, "Folk and Hillbilly Music: Further Thoughts on Their Relation," *JEMF Quarterly* 13 (Summer 1997): 50-72

Abrahams, Roger D. & Almeda Riddle. *A Singer and Her Songs: Almeda Riddle's Book of Ballads*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Pr., 1970. pp. 1-49; 117-123; 147-160.

Cochran, Robert B. "All the Songs in the World": The Story of Emma Dusenbury," *Arkansas Historical Quarterly* 44/1 (Spring 1985): 3-15. ON LINE from Digital Library Plus for Arkansas.

<http://www.uark.edu/libinfo/diglib/Allsongs1.html>

Susan Eaker, "Appalachian Women and America's First Instrument. ON LINE FROM OLDTIME HERALD.

Listening:

Jean Ritchie, "The Cuckoo" and "Nottamun Town"

Almeda Riddle, "Poor Wayfarin Stranger, "The House Carpenter,"

Emma Dusenbury, "Barbara Allen"

"John Hardy" as sung by The Carter Family

"Omie Wise"

Week 10. November 18. Alan Lomax "Portraits" in the United States: Vera Hall, Texas Gladden.

QUESTIONS

1. What is distinctive about Texas Gladden's repertoire?
2. What makes her a great folksinger?
3. What do you know about her influences in terms of family, singers, and locale?
4. Compare her on these issues to Vera Hall.
5. Describe their individual performance styles.
6. What attracted the Lomaxes to these singers?
7. What is the agenda of Ruby Pickens Tartt?
8. What difference does it make that she's a woman?

9. Under what social and economic conditions is class and/or gender implicated in the survival of traditional repertoires?

7. What are the social contexts for this music? Do different social contexts affect repertoire?

8. What is the effect on a traditional singer—on style and on repertoire--of entering the wider world because of the performing circuit? Is there a gendered dimension to these effects?

9. In considering the Lomax field notes, what else might they have asked? Did their time and social location limit their research frame?

10. What kinds of practices does Alan Lomax follow in his advocacy of contemporary folk artists? What controversies have surrounded his career?

11. Compare and contrast Alan Lomax's purposes with those of Sharp.

Readings:

Hine, Darlene, Elsa Barkley Brown and Rosalyn Terborg-Penn eds., *Black Women in America. An Historical Encyclopedia* 2 vols. Indiana University Press, 1993. entries on "gospel"

Lomax, Alan. *The Rainbow Sign*. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1959), pp. 3-74, 97-119.

McGregory, Jerrilyn, "The significance of Vera Ward Hall, " *Tributaries 5: Journal of the Alabama Folklife Association*, 1994.

Brown, Virginia Pounds. *Toting the Lead Row: Ruby Pickens Tartt, Alabama Folklorist*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1981, pp.1-39, 123-29; 147-151; 162-163.

Margaret Sweeney, "Mrs, Ernest Shope: A Memorable Informant," *The Kentucky Folklore Record* 11/2 (1965): 17-24.

Southern Mosaic: The John and Ruby Lomax 1939 Southern States Recording Trip. Songs collected in Texas, Alabama, Florida, S. Carolina, Louisiana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Virginia, 1939. Southern Mosaic. Fieldnotes. Section 17: Livingston, Alabama and vicinity, May 26-30. (on Ruby Pickens Tartt, Vera Hall, Dock Reed etc.) in the Library of Congress American Memory data base. (Type in Southern Mosaic" and "John Lomax" to arrive there quickly.)

Listening:

Vera Hall on *Deep River of Song*

"Another Man Done Gone"

"Railroad Bill"

"Poor Lazarus"

"I Been Drinking

"Moaning" (I'll Soon Be Gone) Vera and Dock Hall

"Come Up Horsey"

"Titty, mama, titty.

Hobart Smith:

Cuckoo Bird, Railroad Bill, Wayfaring Stranger, Ellen Smith

Video: Legends of Old Time Country Music: Jean and Edna Ritchie.

Week 11. November 25. Alan Lomax Portraits in Ireland and Scotland: Jeannie Robertson and Margaret Barry

1. Under what social and economic conditions is class and/or gender implicated in the survival of traditional repertoires?
2. What do you notice about the performance style of these singers?
3. How are their national differences embodied in their performance practice?
4. How do musical idioms reflect national differences?
5. What do these idioms suggest about other cultural differences as well?
6. What difference does age make to a woman's singing?
7. What are the social contexts for this music? Do different social contexts affect repertoire?
8. What is the effect on a traditional singer—on style and on repertoire--of entering the wider world because of the performing circuit? Is there a gendered dimension to these effects?
9. Virtually no literature on Margaret Barry exists. How would you begin researching an article on Margaret Barry?

Readings:

Jeannie Robertson: Emergent Singer, Transformative Voice, James Porter and Herschel Gower (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995), xv-xlvi, 3-16, 36-78, 91-93, 96-97, 101-109, 151-2, 157-61, 182-83, 246-50, 255-67, 282-306.

Ellen Koskoff, "Gender, Power and Music" from *The Musical Woman: An International Perspective*. ed. Judith Lang Zaimont (Westport, Ct., Greenwood Press, 1991), pp. 176-88.

Rochelle Salzman, "Can Praxis Make Perfect?" in *Feminist Theory and the Study of Folklore*, ed. Susan Hollis, Linda Pershing, M. Jane Young (course pack)

Debora Kodish, "Absent Gender, Silent Encounter," *JAF* 100 (398): 573-78.

Kenneth Goldstein, "The Impact of Recording Technology on the British Folksong Revival," in William Ferris and Mary L. Hart, eds. *Folk Music and Modern Sound*. Jackson: University of Mississippi, 1982.

Hamish Henderson, "Jeannie Robertson as Storyteller," *Tocher* 6 (1972): 169-78.

Hamish Henderson and Francis Collinson, "New Child Ballads from Oral Tradition," *Scottish Studies* 9 (1965): 1-33.

Listening:

CDs of Margaret Barry and Jeannie Robertson

Week 12. December 2 The Music of Political Communities: Miners' Union Movement and the Movement for Civil Rights. Case Studies of Labor Songs from the Miners and Civil Rights: Aunt Molly Jackson, Fannie Lou Hamer, Bernice Reagon.

1. How does expressive culture intersect with issues of gender and race in eras of emergent identity?
2. How did gender and race intersect with patterns of collecting and recording folk music?
3. How have women used music as an instrument for social protest?
4. What are the interactions between political agency and music?
5. What is the relationship between music, class, and gender in music from labor protest movements?
6. How have women used tradition and expressive culture as instruments of social change? How have women used music as an instrument for social protest?
7. How does concern for social justice relate to feminist consciousness among white working-class women of this era?
8. How does activism change existing musical practice among women?
9. How do newly composed texts build on or deviate from existing tradition?
10. What role did traditional women musicians play in the protest movements of the 1960s and 1970s?
11. What is the nature of a "singing-school movement" as the agency for protest?
12. How does music function as an agent of social change?

Readings:

Mary Bufwack and Robert Oermann, "Hungry Disgusted Blues: Women in Protest," in *Finding Her Voice: The Saga of Women in Country Music* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1993), 108-23.

Shelly Romalis, "Music, Politics and Women's Resistance" in *Pistol Packin' Mama. Aunt Molly Jackson and the Politics of Folksong*. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999: 1-53, 127-192.

FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

Archival source:

Mary Barnicle-Cadle Papers, Schlesinger Library. (Mary Barnicle-Cadle was a folklorist and collector who linked Aunt Molly Jackson with Alan Lomax.

Kay Miles, *This Little Light of Mine: The Life of Fanny Lou Hamer* (New York: Dutton, 1993), pp. 6-29, 36-64, 78-104.

King, Mary. *Freedom Song. A Personal Story of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement* (New York: William Morrow, 1987), pp. 92-98.

Sing for Freedom: The Story of the Civil Right Movement through its Songs, ed. and compiled by Guy and Candie Carawan (Bethlehem, PA: Sing Out, 1990), pp. 175-237.

Reagon, Bernice Johnson. "Freedom Songs: My African American Singing and Fighting Mothers," in *If You Don't Go, Don't Hinder Me. The African American Sacred Song Tradition*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), pp. 100-141.

Bernice Reagon, "I hear music all the time," *Sing Out!* Undated excerpt around 1970, pp. 6-9.

Selections from *Sing Out!* 25/2 (1976): Issue on "Songs of American Women"

Reagon, Bernice. "Women's Voices. Thoughts on Women's Music in America," pp. 2-3. "My Name is Sarah Ogan Gunning," pp. 15-17.

Listening:

CD: Coal Mining Women.

CD: Freedom Songs and the Civil Rights Movement

Week 13. December 9 The Third Folk Revival: Washington Square; Later Celebrity Performers: Joan Baez and Janis Joplin

- 1.. What role did women musicians play in the folk revival movement of the 1960s?
2. What patterns of participation shaped the role of women musicians in the folk revival movement of the 1960s?
3. What is the relationship between the female singer/songwriter and the traditional folk singer?
4. How does gender mediate between urban and rural female music-making within the fourth folk revival?
5. What historic patterns of participation and reception within traditional music shaped women's roles in the Urban Folk Revival
6. In what ways do these contemporary figures reflect the influences of their predecessors in terms of repertory, performance style, instrumentation, and reception?
7. What is missing from these readings and how might they be supplemented or rewritten?

Readings:

Millie Rahn, "The Folk Revival. Beyond Child's Canon and Sharp's Song Catching," in Rubin, Rachel and Jeffrey Melnick eds., *American Popular Music. New Approaches to the 60s*. Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001: 193-210.

Alice Echols, *Scars of Sweet Paradise. The Life and Times of Janis Joplin*. New York: Henry Holt Company, 1999, pp. 38-59; 234-240; 305-311.

Ellen Willis, "Don't Turn Your Back on Love," in CD collection, *Janis*, pp. 19-22. Ann Powers, "Janis Without Tears," in CD Collection, *Janis*, pp. 31-43,

Simon Reynolds and Joy Press, *The Sex Revolts. Gender, Rebellion, and Rock 'n' Roll*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996. pp. 249-250; 269-275.

Montgomery, Susan. "The Folk Furor," *Mademoiselle*, Dec. 1960: 98-99, 118.

Staff anon., "The Folk-Girls," *Time*, June 1, 1962, pp. 39-40.

"Sibyl with Guitar," *Time*, November 23, 1962.

The Joan Baez Songbook. Introductory material, and Index of Titles. Xeroxes of "Virgin Mary" and "Barbara Allen," and "The Four Marys" and "House Carpenter," and "The Cherry Tree Carol."

Baez, Joan. *And a Voice to Sing With*. New York: New American Library, 1987. excerpts

Stekkert, Ellen. "Cents and Nonsense in the Urban Folksong Movement, 1930-1960," in Neil Rosenberg, ed. *Transforming Tradition. Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 84-106.

Richard Blaustein, "Rethinking Folk Revivalism: Grass-Roots Preservationism and Folk Romanticism," in Neil Rosenberg ed. *Transforming Tradition*, pp. 258-74.

Cantwell, Robert. *When We Were Good. The Folk Revival*. Harvard University Press, 1996, 313-352.

Hedy West, *The Hedy West Songbook*. Introduction reprinted in *Sing Out*, Jan.-Feb. 1971.

Eric Von Schmidt and Jim Rooney, *Baby Let Me Follow You Down: The Illustrated Story of the Cambridge Folk Years* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1979), Forward, pp. 24-215, 37-47, 53-58, 138-141, 222-227.

Listening:

Joan Baez, "House Carpenter," "Barbara Allen" "Mary Hamilton" "John Riley" "Geordie" "Hard Rain Gonna Fall"

Excerpts from *The Essential Janis*. "Ball and Chain," "O Lord Won't You Buy Me a Mercedes Benz?" "Me and Bobby McGee"

Hedy West, Cynthia Gooding selections