

Canadian musical history presents a complex pattern because its development has been spasmodic rather than continuous. Canada provides "ethno-musicologists" with one of the richest and most varied fields of research, a fact readily explained by the country's vast distances, the waves of immigration from other continents and cultures, and the consequent slow rate of "acculturation". The areas of study include not only Indian and Inuit (Eskimo) tribal music but the aurally-preserved musical repertoires of many later settler cultures – from French, English, Irish and Scottish to Ukrainian, Czechoslovak, Jewish, Icelandic and Japanese. This music has influenced serious "written-down" music only in characteristically Canadian fits and starts. In 1865 Ernest Gagnon published the first collection of folksongs from French-speaking Canada, in the evident belief that its 100 melodies exhausted the list. When, in the late 1920s, composers such as Ernest MacMillan, Hector Gratton, Claude Champagne and Healey Willan began to take an interest in the corpus of folk music, they were able to draw on tens of thousands of tunes collected in the early decades of the century by Marius Barbeau and others. They made concert settings of the tunes and employed them in "folkloristic" free compositions, perhaps in the conviction that they were putting such na-

tive sounds to creative use for the last time. And, indeed, the composers of the succeeding generation showed little inclination to follow their lead. But surprisingly enough – though again in the familiar spasmodic manner – there has developed since the late 1960s a new enthusiasm for the use of folk material by composers.

In the early Forties, fledgling Canadian composers were fond of saying that they felt as if they were the first generation of Canadians to write music. This was true only in a very special sense. Taking "composition" in its formal European meaning, the main settler cultures provide examples in New Spain from the mid-sixteenth century, in New France from the late seventeenth, and in New England from the early eighteenth. However, instead of a continuous development from such beginnings the musical history of Canada reveals a typical gap between the solitary original composition of the 1680s (by a priest named Martin) and the next works we know of. The musician of the early Canadian cities and towns was a jack-of-all-trades, one of whose talents was the ability to write music as well as teach, play and even sell it. From the late eighteenth century through the early twentieth, most of Canada's musical literature consisted of functional pieces – marches and patriotic songs, quadrilles and waltzes, Protestant psalms, hymns