
this sonic creation, pairs of women face each other and rapidly interchange rhythmicized noises, combined with audible breathing. Occasionally a story underlies the games and a competitive spirit is often evident.

Indian folklore is less homogeneous. Although many tribes believe each song is the personal property of an individual, most of their traditions reflect the diversity of the four main geographical and cultural units across Canada. The art form characteristic of the Pacific Northwest Coast Indians is the totem pole. Each figure on these ancestral family trees had its own song. Whenever a chief acquired a new distinction through war or marriage, a figure or emblem was carved and a song conceived. The Athapaskans recognize two main classes of song: "happy" – dance songs sung to accompaniment of a drumbeat, and "sad" – slow, unaccompanied, and sung solo. The annual Sun Dance, a religious and social event lasting from two days to two weeks, is the most important ritual for the Plains Indians, while the Indians of eastern Canada celebrate the earth's cycles with eight major ceremonies held during the year.

Nobody seriously attempted to catalogue the music of the aboriginal peoples until the end of the 1800s, when Ernest Gagnon (1834-1915) published *Les Sauvages de l'Amérique et l'art musical*. Some years later, the anthropologist, ethnologist and folklorist, Marius Barbeau (1883-1969), undertook more scientific and exhaustive research. Both men also documented French Canadian folklore, with varying results.

French folklore

Ernest Gagnon calculated that 100 songs constituted the whole heritage of French Canadian folklore. With the assistance of the National Museum of Man, Marius Barbeau managed to collect, within a relatively short time, a minimum of 10 000 melodies and texts. Further research added some 70 000 other versions.

With the coming of the industrial revolution and the proliferation of the media in Canada, folklore rapidly lost much of its popularity. Yet it never completely disappeared. Radio-Canada and the folklore archives at Laval University, Quebec, preserve and promote folklore, while some performers, such as singer La Bolduc (1894-1941), fiddler Ti-Jean Carignan (1916), chansonniers Gilles Vigneault (1928) and Edith Butler (1942) return to this traditional music as a source of inspiration.