

**Bellowhead:
The Songbook
Bellowhead**

Faber Music (127 pages)



Boden's Bellowhead boys show you how it's done



Given the devotion Bellowhead inspire, this publication of the words and tunes to 15 of their favourite pieces is an essential public service.

The Songbook offers the opportunity for people to have a crack at '10,000 Miles Away', 'London Town', 'Roll the Woodpile Down' and 'Fakenham Fair'.

The character of Bellowhead's music lies in their extraordinary instrumental arsenal, which cannot be provided here, of course; pieces are arranged for piano, voice and guitar. The music, words and guitar chords are clear, the book is a good size to put on the piano and it even stays open as you play. So it is a pleasure to use as a songbook. But it is much more than that. It is a photo album, a history and musical reference work, too. The songs and tunes are interspersed with pictures of the individual members in performance, the entire ensemble on stage, the rather daft stagey group portraits they have made a speciality of and several rather charming shots of the musicians. I like the one of trumpet player Andy Mellon reading the paper – the *Money* section. Now the band has signed to Island Records perhaps he'll not need to do so with such intense concentration.

Paul Sartin (oboe, fiddle, vocals) has penned an elegant history of the band, from its first rehearsal in a scout hut to recording for *The Simpsons* and *The Archers*. There are neat thumbnail biographies of the band members, and each song is given a fascinating and witty introduction. So I'm tempted to recommend this music book even to those who can't play or read the dots.

JULIAN MAY

The Cambridge History of World Music
Ed Philip V Bohlman

Cambridge University Press (851 pages)



A book in search of a reader



I was delighted to find out about this book. Until I started to read it. The introduction, by Philip Bohlman of Chicago University, is a painful start. It explains, I think, that many argue that world music has no



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history, because it's largely Westerners writing about other people's history. Even if you find this sort of thing interesting, it's a leaden read.

Bruno Nettl begins the articles with a survey of publications on world music. After asking whether different societies share the same concept of music and various music-creation myths, he discusses the Enlightenment philosopher Johann Gottfried Herder, whose *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Voices of the People in their Songs), 'may be the first work to propose that each people has its music.' The *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, a massive ten-volume geographical series, receives only eight lines while the *Rough Guide to World Music*, the first edition of which sold over 30,000 copies and was dubbed the 'world music Bible,' doesn't get a mention. 'Sufism and the Globalization of Sacred Music' by Regula Burckhardt Qureshi acknowledges there are many types of Sufi music from Morocco to China, but then loses its clarity, leaving us unclear whether she's talking specifically about *qawwali* (her speciality) or more broadly about other forms. She seizes on the idea that Sufi music involves 'at least two participants, a performer and a listener' as if this is a revelation – isn't virtually all music like that?

Timothy J Cooley's 'Folk Music in Eastern Europe' introduces some of the important music collectors, such as Oskar Kolberg in Poland and Zoltán Kodály and Béla Bartók in Hungary. For me the interesting story in Eastern Europe is how folk music was used by the Socialist regimes to create the popular radio and TV choirs in Bulgaria (such as *Le Mystère des Voix Bulgares*) or how people,

particularly those in the *táncház* (dancehouse) movement in Hungary, used it as a grassroots opposition. As for the world of Balkan brass, it might as well not exist. All in all, it's hard to see who this book is for.

SIMON BROUGHTON

Finding the One: The Strange and Parallel Lives of the West African Kora and the Welsh Harp
Andy Morgan

Theatr Mwldan/Astar Artes (80 pages)



Two different harp players, two different worlds



Inspired by the collaboration between the African *kora* player Seckou Keita and the Welsh harpist

Catrin Finch, heard to great effect on the album *Clychau Dibon*, Andy Morgan's short book is a delight. In its 80 pages (160 if you include the translation into Welsh), he traces the history of their two related instruments and delves into the worlds of *Mande griots* and *eisteddfod* bards, *djinns* and druids. We learn how harps and koras are made by master craftsmen and we are told the back-stories of Finch and Keita and the significant role Toumani Diabaté played in the project. Morgan modestly insists he has no qualifications as an historian, academic or ethnomusicologist but the book displays the erudition and expertise you would associate with all three. But more than that, Morgan is a storyteller whose poetic ear means he has the gift of using words with the same inventive skill that a musician applies to the notes on a scale; there's a tempo and a rhythm, a tone and register to

WIN
We have three copies of *Finding the One* to give away. To enter, answer: What is the name of Catrin & Seckou's album?
See p5 for competition rules & address

his sentences that is captivating. His description of old Cardigan town and the concert Finch and Keita played there on a slate-dull, sodden winter's night evokes the spirit of *Under Milk Wood*; in my mind I could almost hear the voice of Richard Burton reciting the words in a rich Welsh accent as I read lines such as: 'High Street is deserted save for a couple of boys, bottles in hand, kicking an old Red Stripe tinny towards the Teifi. Factory shops, tattoo parlours, hairdressing salons, tea rooms and estate agencies are all bolted shut.' The ultimate test of a book about music is whether it leaves you with an unquenchable desire to hear the sounds being described. I'd already reviewed Finch and Keita's album and so knew the music well; but Morgan's joyful book passed the test with flying colours and sent me back to the record with new ears. Available from catrinfinchandseckoukeita.com

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

Traditional Music and Irish Society: Historical Perspectives
Martin Dowling

Ashgate Press (368 pages)



How its music made Ireland



Here's a substantial and wide-ranging account of the role traditional music played in defining Ireland, as the country moved from occupation to independence over the course of three centuries and more. A fiddle player himself and a lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast, Martin Dowling has an informed concern for how political, economic and social changes affected the purpose and profile of musicians. It's a sensitively told history, one that moves from the formative years of the 18th century to the role of traditional music in Northern Ireland's long and lingering road to peace. For its clear-sighted, even-handed analysis, the concluding chapter – nimbly negotiating the allegiances and assumptions of often fragile political, sectarian and cultural interests – is worth the price of the book alone.

Discussions of the Celtic revival in the early 20th century and the role of traditional song in the work of other Irish cultural activity – such as the fiction of James Joyce – all add their own vital contributions to an astutely argued investigation into how traditional music helped shape modern Ireland.

MICHAEL QUINN