AMERICA'S LANDSCAPE

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AMERICA'S MUSICAL LANDSCAPE, NINTH EDITION

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About the Author

Twenty years after completing a bachelor of music degree in music history and literature at the University of Michigan, I received an MA, also in music history, at Arizona State University, where I then taught music history and appreciation for the next twenty years. *Music: The Art of Listening* and *America's Musical Landscape* evolved for use in my classes, and I am delighted that other instructors have found them useful, too.

My interest in travel and in world cultures began early, encouraged by experiences living in the Philippines and in Japan. I still travel extensively, and when home stay busy playing the piano, cooking, practicing yoga, reading, doing needlework, and of course writing. Preparing new editions of this text provides the impetus to stay abreast of stimulating new developments in America's ever-fascinating musical landscape.

Contents

Preface

The survey course for which this text is designed affords the same broad coverage of musics—classical and popular, secular and religious, vocal and instrumental—as does the traditional music appreciation course predominantly featuring European examples. Here we tackle the happy task of introducing basic musical terms and concepts using selected examples of outstanding American music.

As suggested in the title of the text, I have often related music to other arts, finding such comparisons to have pedagogical as well as aesthetic value for nonmusicians perhaps more familiar with visual and literary than with aural experience. Asher B. Durand's stunning landscape painting *Kindred Spirits* (p. 72), an eloquent portrayal of the nature poet William Cullen Bryant and the Hudson River School painter Thomas Cole sharing reverent admiration for their country's natural splendors, in fact inspired this text, which seeks to capture some of that painting's expression of the interdependence uniting American art and artists.

The musical landscape we explore stretches from the Pacific to the Atlantic coast between Canada and Mexico, and Hawaii—the areas comprising today's United States. Though influences abound from above and below the northern and southern borders, and though each of the many cultures of North, Central, and South America and Mexico has a rich American musical landscape of its own, time constrains most American music courses to cover only some of the music, of only certain regions, within the United States. Regret for what we cannot cover must encourage us to extend our exploration as soon and as far as possible throughout all of the Americas.

- All Listening Examples and Optional Listening Examples, including Encores, are conveniently available through Spotify.
- This edition of the book includes new Listening Examples: Maria Schneider's "Walking by Flashlight" and Toby Fox's soundtrack for his video game Undertale.
- A new chapter addresses vernacular music in the twenty-first century.
- The topic of video game music, introduced in Chapter 16, is expanded and brought up-to-date in Chapter 17, including a Listening Example from Undertale.

- Relevant social and cultural information has been updated throughout. For example, consideration is given to the effects the Covid-19 pandemic has exerted on music lovers and musicians.
- More attention is given to women in music, including the earliest known female composers in America and women prominent in music today.
- The fields of music business and music marketing are brought up-to-date.

- Prelude: Introduces basic technical information concerning texture, form, and notation. Students may browse through the Prelude at the beginning of a term and return to it readily to refresh their understanding as the concepts recur throughout the course. While instructors will differ in the emphasis they place on the Prelude, it's as essential a part of the text, and the course, as the prelude of a well-written music composition is to that work.
- Part Openers: As in the previous editions, relevant social and cultural information appears before each section in Part Openers, available to those who find them valuable but unobtrusive for those who choose to leave them out. The Part Openers are not intended as material to be absorbed for test purposes but as enriching and thought-provoking information related to the music covered in that section. They set the context in which music was conceived and first experienced and broaden students' perspective of music's place in the cultural environment.
- Part Summaries: These present terms and names with which students should have become familiar, much as they might appear in a concert program or a newspaper review.
- Effective Learning Tools: Terms to Review, Key Figures, Listening Examples, Encores, and Optional Listening Examples provide students with extensive support to master the material and enhance their knowledge of American music. Thinking Critically boxes prompt further inquiry by students.

All musical examples are available in Spotify on two separate playlists under McGraw Hill Education's Spotify profile. The first list, "Ferris, America's Musical Landscape, 9e: Listening Examples," contains all the listening examples presented in the text. The second list, "Ferris, America's Musical Landscape, 9e: Optional/Encore Listening Examples," contains examples of other music discussed in the text and the highlighted Encore sections. Listening guides for the Listening Examples are included in the text and there are similar guides for many of the Optional Listening Examples/Encores among the resources available through Connect. Of course, the Internet offers innumerable opportunities for instructors and students to supplement class listening experiences with relevant examples of their choice.

I wish to express my gratitude to all in the McGraw Hill Education team who worked so hard to produce this new edition. We had strong editorial support from Alexander Preiss and Lisa Bruflodt. Brianna Kirschbaum always found the images we needed. Project manager Tracy Grenier patiently tolerated my slow adaptation to new editing processes and moved things along with outstanding efficiency. And I cannot adequately express my appreciation to Aptara Project Manager Dheeraj Kumar for his outstanding and good-natured attention to detail in the later stages of this revision.

Special thanks as well to Dr. Justin Leo Kennedy and Dr. Gil Davis, who graciously allowed us to use examples of their stunning non-traditional notation. And I'd especially like to thank Ian Ferris and Kyle Ferris for their valuable information on video game music, about which I know little and they know a great deal.

Most of all, I thank Michael Gribbroek for the valuable contributions he made to this revision. His research for images, listening examples, and pertinent information, as well as his expertise especially in the field of jazz, contribute enormously to this new edition.

This edition is now available online with Connect, McGraw Hill Education's integrated assignment and assessment platform. Connect also offers SmartBook for the new edition, which is the first adaptive reading experience proven to improve grades and help students study more effectively. All of the title's ancillary content is also available through Connect, including the following:

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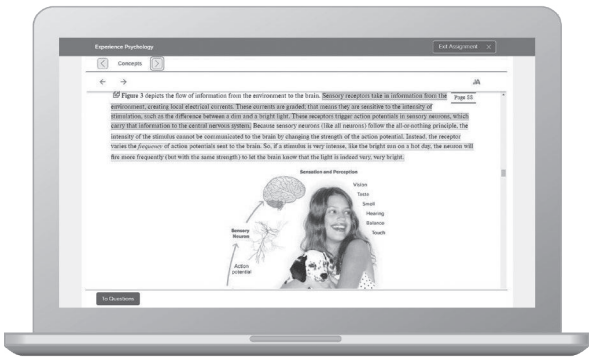

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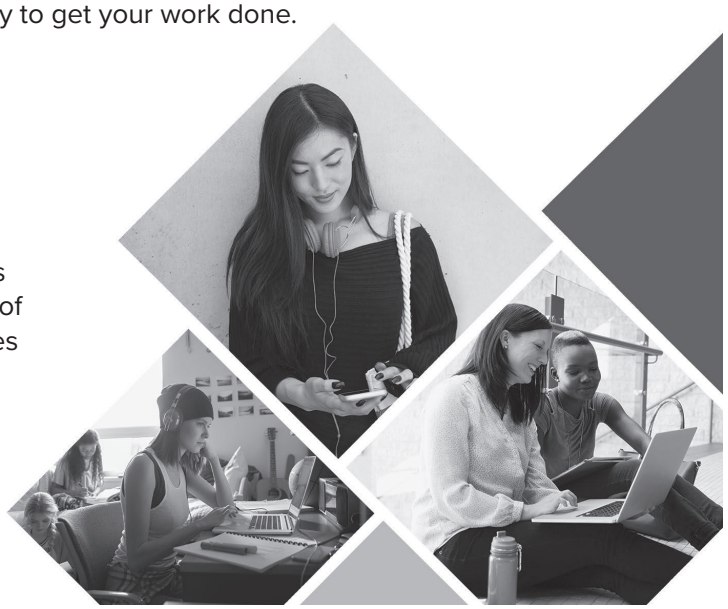

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Introduction

Most Americans today would find it difficult, perhaps impossible, to experience a day without music, so pervasive is the sound of music in our everyday lives. Music enhances many of our social, religious, and work-related experiences. Music sets rhythms for us to dance or exercise to, keeps us company at work or play, enhances our concentration and our emotional response when we are viewing a film or a musical, accompanies some religious services, helps us go to sleep at night, and makes it easier to wake up in the morning and to prepare for another day filled with the sounds we individually enjoy.

THINKING CRITICALLY

Has music ever enhanced your ability to remember something—an advertised product, for example? How does music contribute to a visual experience, such as watching a film?

From the wide field of *popular* musics, we generally develop preferences for certain kinds, or styles, over others. That is, from the incredibly rich menu of sounds available today we might choose most often to hear rap, jazz, rock, country, pop—or something else. Some of us enjoy instrumental music; others prefer song. Our tastes change over long periods of time, and our preferences may differ from one moment to another, depending on our mood or circumstance at a given time.

The great world of *classical* music, as it is often called, also encompasses a tremendous range of sounds. Unfortunately, none of the terms generally used to distinguish between the music we call popular and the music we call classical is truly descriptive of the differences we recognize between them. We can agree that music that serves no functional purpose but simply expresses an abstract concept a composer thought worth sharing—music that requires intense concentration and sometimes a measure of learning and experience on the part of the listener—differs from music that exists primarily as a means of entertainment. It is difficult, however, to describe differences between these two kinds of music without implying unintended and inappropriate judgments of value. Commonly we speak of music that requires extensive training on the part of composers and performers, and that may assume some guided experience on the part of the listener, as *classical, art, concert,* or *serious* music; but none of those terms properly distinguishes between this music and much of the music played by DJs on popular radio sites. No one is more *serious* about music than outstanding singer-songwriters in the popular fields. Many great American songs have survived beyond their days of initial popularity to become *classics* in their own right. *Concerts* are among the most important venues for experiencing so-called popular music of many kinds. And *art* suggests simply a creative means of expression, with no inherent requirement that it be simple or complex or even good. Further

confusing the issue, many so-called classical pieces have become so familiar and well-loved that today they are performed in concerts we refer to as *pops.*

The terms italicized above, however, have become inherent parts of the language of music. You will hear and read them in formal and informal discussions of music, and we will use them in this text, although with sensitivity to the unintended connotations they have acquired. Words, after all, serve only to broaden our ideas about music and our knowledge of its history. No words can substitute for the glorious experience of hearing, and understanding, the great and beautiful musics of the United States.

The more we understand about musical forms and the elements that constitute the building materials of music, the better we are prepared to enjoy music of all kinds. Recognition of the historical context in which music was conceived, and an awareness of the relationships between music and the other arts of a given period, will enhance our understanding and our pleasure. It is my personal wish that your delight in listening to all kinds of music increase immeasurably as you discover the many and varied aspects of America's musical landscape.

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Basic Properties of Musical Sound

Music, an art of organized sounds, is virtually limitless in variety and in the power to enchant and challenge our ears. However, because it never holds still, and we can neither see nor touch it, understanding music can be an elusive thing, and the world's greatest music may prove challenging to the unprepared listener.

The more we understand the qualities of music, the elements of which it is constructed, the historical-social setting in which a given piece evolved, the intent of the composer, and the contributions of the performer or performers, the greater will be our intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic rewards for listening to any kind of music. One can readily develop a sense of musical form, making it easier to enjoy a piece of some length. And while it is unnecessary to be able to read music in order to enjoy listening to it, some knowledge of how music is notated may be of interest even to the casual listener. The purpose of our Prelude, then, is to explain some basic concepts that may serve as a helpful introduction to your music experience, and to which you may refer for review throughout your course of study.

THINKING CRITICALLY

What roles does music currently play in your life?

Musicians generally recognize four **elements of music**—rhythm, melody, harmony, and timbre—as the fundamental materials of which music is composed. As we listen to music, any one of the elements—a memorable tune, a driving rhythm, the unusual sound of an exotic musical instrument—may attract our attention; but more often we respond to the combination of two or more of the elements of music without methodically analyzing the name and proportions of each.

Understanding these building blocks of music enhances our listening and provides a vocabulary with which to discuss a piece in some detail. Further, listening with *awareness* of what we hear greatly increases our capacity to enjoy all kinds of music.

Because music consists of arrangements of long and short sounds and silences, **rhythm**, having to do with time relationships in music, is the most basic of the elements. The system of music notation used in the Western world indicates the rhythm of music by giving the *proportional* length of each sound and silence; that is, written music dictates the duration of each sound or silence only in relation to other sounds and silences in the piece.

This table assumes that the quarter note equals 1 beat. Any other note value may equal 1 beat instead, the number of beats per other note values changing proportionately.

Notated Symbol	*Name*	*Rest*	*Number of Beats per Note*	*Number of Notes Equal to 4 Beats*
𝅝	Whole note	–	4	1
𝅗𝅥	Half note	–	2	2
♩	Quarter note	𝄽	1	4
♪	Eighth note	𝄾	½	8
♬	Sixteenth note	𝄿	¼	16

Rhythmic values are expressed in the familiar terminology of fractions (Table 1): The value of a *half note,* for example, is equal to half the value of a *whole note*. But the specific duration of a half note depends upon the **tempo**, or rate of speed, at which the music is performed. *Tempo,* which means "time," is one of many Italian words adopted into a virtually universal music language during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when Italians dominated music in the Western world. Foreign musicians studying in Italy absorbed the techniques and much of the terminology of their Italian masters, which they shared with their own students and patrons upon returning to their homelands. Since then, many Italian music terms have been used all over the world, remaining in common use today.

Music listeners quickly become familiar with the most common Italian words for tempos, shown in Table 2, which regularly appear in printed concert programs and often also in newspaper reviews of concerts and recordings.

Largo	Slow; "broad"
Adagio	Slow; "at ease"
Andante	Moderately slow; "walking" tempo
Moderato	Moderate
Allegro	Fast; cheerful
Presto	Very fast
Vivace	Lively
Molto	Very (*allegro molto* = very fast)
Non troppo	Not too much (*allegro non troppo* = not too fast)
Con brio	With spirit

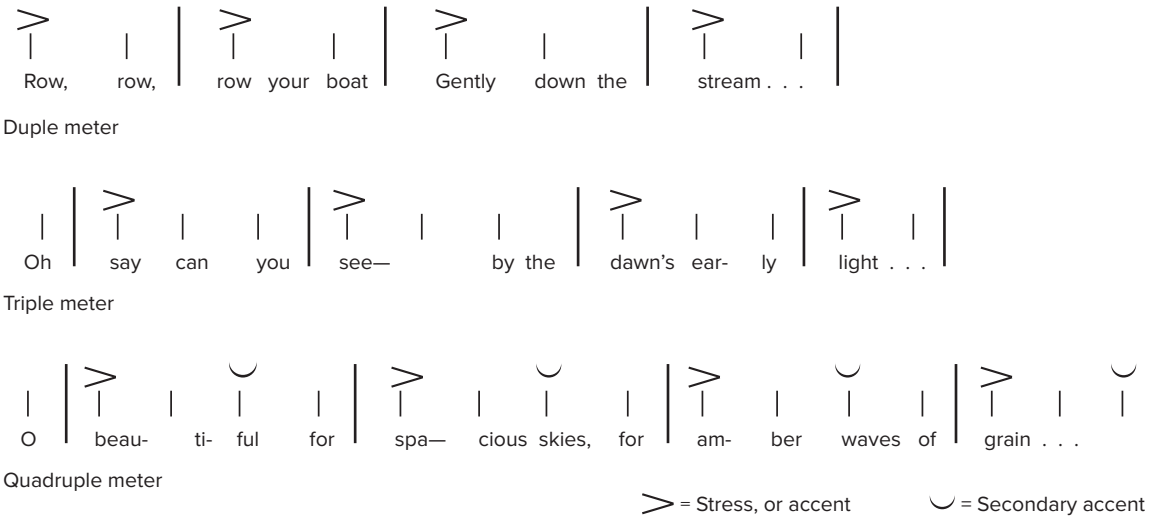


FIGURE 1
Common meters, showing accents.

Just as language is formed of irregularly occurring accented and unaccented syllables, musical sounds, too, may occur without specific rhythmic organization. If, however, musical sounds are arranged in rhythmic patterns, similar to those of poetry as opposed to prose, we say the music is metered.

Meter organizes rhythm into units called *measures,* each containing a particular number of pulses, or beats. The common meters are *duple* (two beats per measure), *triple* (three beats per measure), and *quadruple* (four beats per measure). In Western practice—that is, in music based on European traditions of the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries—the first beat of each measure is normally accented, or stressed; and if there are four or more beats per measure, there is at least one secondary accent as well. For example, in quadruple meter (Figure 1), the secondary accent falls on the third beat.

Musical sounds, called *tones,* are caused by something vibrating at a particular frequency, or rate of speed. Tones are said to be relatively high or low in *pitch,* depending upon the rate of vibration of the medium producing the sound: The faster a string on a violin or the column of air in a trumpet vibrates, the higher the level of pitch. Much as a sentence is a meaningful succession of words, a **melody** is a meaningful succession of tones of various levels of pitch. (The words *tone* and *note* may be used interchangeably, *tone* suggesting the sound as it is heard and *note* its written representation.)

Tones have letter names, A through G. The *interval,* or distance, between tones is named according to the number of tones it includes; for example, from A to B is a *second,* from A to C, a *third,* and so on (Figure 2). The most basic interval is the *eighth,* called an **octave**, the two tones of which share the same letter name and sound nearly alike. The higher tone of the octave vibrates at exactly twice the rate of the lower tone, the simple relationship of their frequencies (the ratio 2:1) causing minimal tension between them.

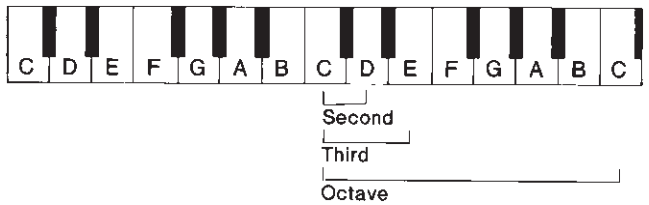


FIGURE 2
A piano keyboard, indicating intervals of a second, a third, and an octave.

All keys on a keyboard that bear the same letter name *look* the same as well, because they occupy the same position relative to other keys. For example, if we start at the left of the keyboard and move up, we see that the last white key before the third of the three black keys is always an A (Figure 2), D is always the white note between the two black notes, and so on.

Melodies are based on **scales**: stepwise rising or descending patterns of pitches within the range of an octave. By the seventeenth century, two particular seven-note patterns—the *major* and *minor* scales—had been accepted as those that best served European composers of concert music, and they continue to prevail in Western music today.

The major and minor scales each include two *half steps* (the closest distance between two keys on a keyboard) and five *whole steps* (the equivalent of two half steps). The white notes of the octave from C to C on the keyboard correspond to the pattern of the major scale, while the white notes of the octave from A to A correspond to the pattern of the minor scale.

Music based on the major scale sounds very different from music that is minor, because of the different order in which the half and whole steps occur (Figure 3). If you can play a keyboard instrument, you might play the first three notes of "Doe, a Deer" from *The Sound of Music,* beginning on C. These are the first three notes of the major scale. Now *lower* the third tone by a half step, or begin playing on A and use all white keys, and you will hear how the melody would begin if it were based on a minor scale.

We will discuss scales other than the major or minor as they apply to music covered later in this text.

Melodies of course have rhythm, the tones of a melody occurring in some order of long sounds, short sounds, or

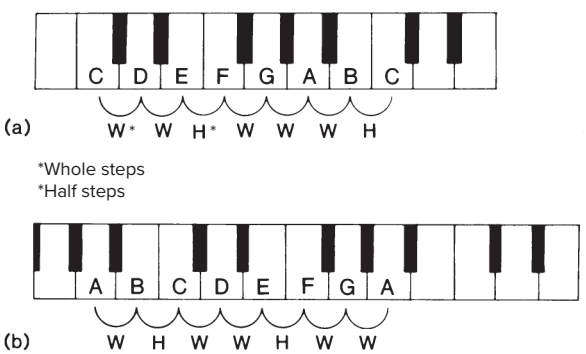


FIGURE 3
The major and minor scales. (a) The white notes of the octave from C to C on the keyboard correspond to the pattern of the major scale. (b) The white notes of the octave from A to A on the keyboard correspond to the pattern of the minor scale.

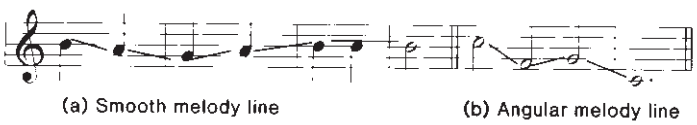


FIGURE 4
Melodic contours.

both. If a melody, such as a children's song or folk song, is particularly singable and memorable and seems complete in itself, we call it a *tune.* A different kind of melody is a brief, fragmentary melodic idea or *motive,* recurring throughout a piece, particularly in instrumental music. Probably the most famous motive in Western music is the four-note "knocking" pattern (short-short-short-long) that begins Beethoven's Symphony No. 5, identified at least as readily by its rhythm as by its melodic characteristics.

Because we may draw a line up or down from one note of a melody to the next, we think of a melody as *linear* and identify its contour as angular (with large leaps between the tones), smooth (with the tones closely connected), or some combination of angular and smooth. Figure 4 compares, for example, the smooth contour of "Merrily We Roll Along" with the angular shape of "Westminster Chimes." Other familiar tunes that might further clarify this distinction are "America" ("My Country, 'Tis of Thee") (smooth) and "The Star Spangled Banner" (sharply angular in contour).

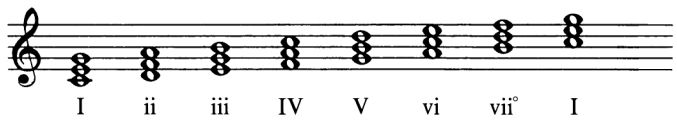
The melodies of European and American music generally are accompanied by simultaneous combinations of tones called **harmony**, defined as the sounding of two or more different tones at once in a logical or meaningful (not necessarily beautiful) manner. The system of harmony that has governed Western music for nearly 400 years, based upon the major and minor scales (the tonal scales), is called *tonality* or the *tonal system.*

Purposeful combinations of three or more different tones constitute **chords**, which enrich the sounds of Western music and please Western ears much as linear perspective adds depth and pleases the eyes of lovers of Western art. Indeed, chordal harmony, like linear perspective, is a peculiarly Western concept; both the aural and the visual concepts evolved during the Western Renaissance, and neither has become characteristic of non-Western arts. While the notes of a melody are written in succession, or in linear fashion, the tones of a chord are notated vertically, above and beneath each other.

The first tone of a major or minor scale, called the **tonic**, represents a kind of home base, from which a piece of music in the Western tradition may begin and on which it is even more likely to end. The tonic names the **key** of a composition; for example, we say a piece is in the key of A major, meaning that the tonic note is A and most of the tones are those of the major scale. For another example, a piece based on the D minor scale is said to be in the key of D minor.

Each of the tones in a major or minor scale bears a specific relationship, relatively distant or close, to the tonic. The fifth step of the scale, called the *dominant***,** is the tone most closely related to tonic. It is heard frequently during a piece, and it seems to bear almost a gravitational pull back to tonic, or home

FIGURE 5
Triads on each note of the C major scale.



base. The second-closest tone to tonic is the fourth step above (or the fifth below) tonic, called the *subdominant.*

The most basic chord in the tonal system, consisting of three alternate tones (or a third piled on top of a third), is called a **triad** (Figure 5). Triads may be built on any tone of the major or minor scale and bear the same relationship to tonic and to each other as the tones upon which they are built. Thus, the strongest relationship is between the tonic triad (often represented by the Roman numeral I) and the triad built upon the fifth note of the scale, or the dominant (V). The next-closest chord to tonic is the triad built upon the fourth, or subdominant, step of the scale, which provides a somewhat weaker drive toward tonic.

The I, IV, and V chords, then, provide the cornerstones of tonal harmony. Many simple melodies are effectively accompanied by just these three closely related chords.

The quality or **timbre** (tam′-breh) of a musical sound depends on characteristics of the medium producing it. Thus, musical instruments have distinctive timbres according to their size, the material of which they are made, and the manner in which they are played. For example, the timbre or "color" of the sound produced by a violin differs from that of a flute, and the sound produced by plucking the string of a violin is unlike the sound made when the same string is bowed.

Pitch also affects the timbre of musical sound: Notice how the high tones of a piano differ in timbre as well as pitch from the very low tones of the instrument, and how men's and women's voices are distinguished in terms of timbre as well as the range of their pitches.

Another factor affecting the timbre of a voice or instrument is the loudness or softness of the sound, called its **dynamic level**. Composers often vary the dynamic level within a piece for many reasons: to achieve emotional effects, to illustrate events described in the text of a song, or to achieve extramusical effects in descriptive instrumental music. The Italian words *piano* and *forte,* respectively meaning "soft" and "loud," are among the commonly used dynamic terms included with their abbreviations in Table 3.

As a fabric maker combines threads to create material of a particular texture, a composer uses melody lines—singly, combined with one another, or accompanied by harmony—to create texture in music. You can think of melodic lines as the threads of musical **texture**.

A single unaccompanied melodic line, whether sung or played on one or more musical instruments, is **monophonic** in texture. A song sung by an individual without accompaniment is one example of monophonic music.

Levels of Volume

Italian Term	*Abbreviation*	*English Meaning*
Pianissimo	*pp*	Very soft
Piano	*p*	Soft
Mezzopiano	*mp*	Moderately soft
Mezzoforte	*mf*	Moderately loud
Forte	*f*	Loud
Fortissimo	*ff*	Very loud

A composition with melody in more than one line simultaneously is **polyphonic** in texture. A round, for example, is a melody that may be performed by two or more voices entering at different times, producing harmony though all of the voices are singing melody lines.

A melody accompanied by other (vocal or instrumental) voices, not of melodic significance themselves, produces **homophonic** texture. Songs accompanied by chords, sung by other singers or played on an instrument, are homophonic in texture (Figure 6).

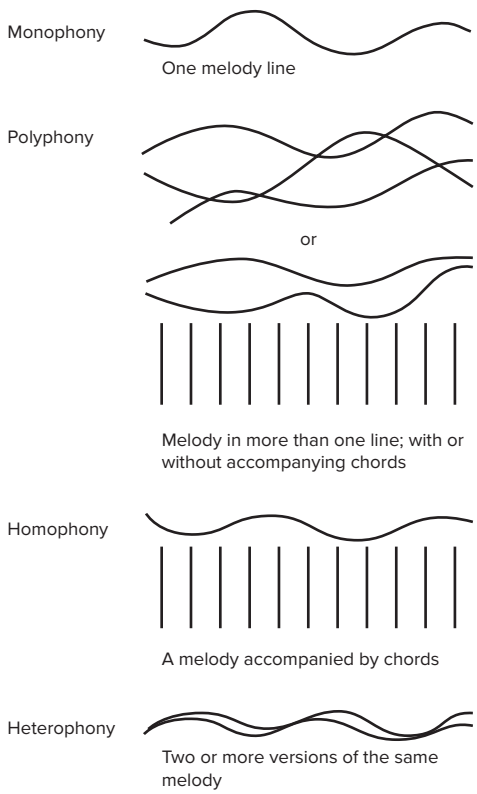


FIGURE 6
The textures of music.

When describing a piece of music, we might first mention its **genre**—that is, the kind or category of music to which it belongs, such as orchestral, choral, or folk. We also often consider the manner in which it is organized—its **form**. There are many approaches to formal design, based upon principles of *repetition* and *contrast,* with repetition lending a work unity, symmetry, and balance, and contrast providing the variety necessary to sustain interest. A play, for example, may have one or several acts, a novel a number of chapters, and a poem one or several strophes or stanzas. Similarly, an instrumental musical composition may have one or several sections, or *movements.*

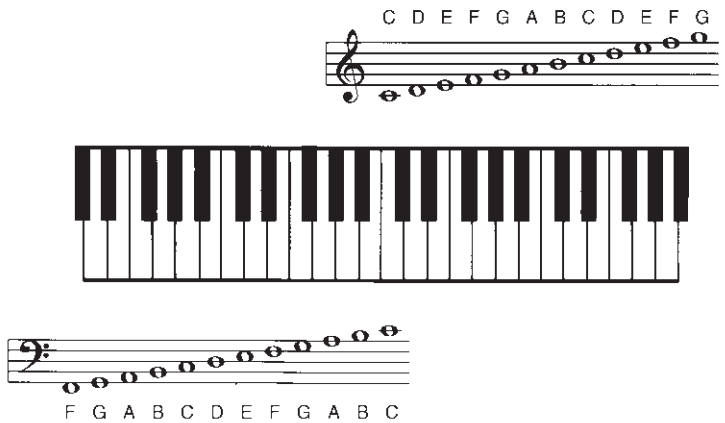
Songs, too, are organized according to textual or musical properties. The most common song form, called *strophic,* has two or more verses, each set to the same music.

Although one may well enjoy listening to and even performing music without learning to read music notation, some conception of how music is written may be of interest. For centuries, Western music has been written on a *staff* of five lines and four spaces (Figure 7). Musical pitches and rhythms are written as *notes,* and notated silences are called *rests.* The staff forms a kind of "ladder," with each line and each space representing a particular pitch. A sign called a *clef,* placed at the beginning of the staff, indicates that a particular line represents a specific pitch, thus fixing the relative position of all the other pitches on the staff.

Understanding just these basic concepts of how music is written allows us, without really "reading" music, to follow the ascending and descending patterns of tones written on a page and have an approximate idea of how the music would sound.

FIGURE 7

Pitches notated in the treble (high) and bass (low) clefs. Certain tones, including "middle C," may be notated in either the bass or the treble clef.



Because America's early settlers came from many different cultures, it took time for music to acquire a characteristic American sound; but surprisingly soon, music—like the English language—changed its accent in the New World. The manner in which the elements of music are selected and combined, the choice of timbres, various means of musical expression such as changes in dynamic level and in tempo, and the purpose for which music is intended are among the nearly indefinable qualities that determine a particular composition's characteristic sound, or **style**.

In music, as in fashion, *style* refers to a manner or mode of expression, and again as in fashion, style in music is affected by the time and the culture that produce it. For example, American rhythms may be more flexible than those characteristic of European music; and although the delay or anticipation of accented beats called *syncopation* occurs in music worldwide, its bold and consistent use gives much American classical as well as popular music a distinctive flavor. The long, irregular melodies of pieces such as Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* (Listening Example 77) are sometimes thought to reflect the informality, personal freedom, and lack of physical and cultural boundaries associated with the ideal American life. Jazz musicians, by using traditional instruments in new and unusual ways, caused Americans to alter the timbres of symphonic as well as popular musics, as we hear, for example, in William Grant Still's *Afro-American Symphony* (Listening Example 78).

The American composer Virgil Thomson (1896–1989) said, "The way to write American music is simple. All you have to do is be an American and then write any kind of music you wish." Although much American music is stylistically indistinguishable from music by European composers of the same period, perhaps you will sense in some American pieces a certain audacity, a generous expansiveness, a peculiar irregularity, or some other scarcely definable attribute that simply "sounds American."

THINKING CRITICALLY

Has music ever enhanced your ability to remember something—an advertised product, for example? If so, how?

Attendance at live performances as well as repeated and concentrated study of this text's listening examples are essential to furthering your understanding and enjoyment of music, for no written or spoken words can substitute for the impact music makes on our minds and hearts. It is not difficult to develop skills to enhance your listening comprehension and pleasure—not just for now but for the rest of your life.

First, approach each listening experience with expectations of enjoyment. Next, try to memorize music as you hear it so that it will quickly become familiar, and so that you will develop an awareness of a composition's form even as you listen to it for the first time. Remember to apply the knowledge gleaned from your class discussions and from this text to the music you are hearing. By listening actively, even *creatively,* you will participate in the successful collaboration of composer, performer, and listener that makes possible the magnificent experience of enjoying great music.

Listening Example 1 offers the opportunity to apply your developing listening skills to the well-known African American folk ballad "John Henry." We will discuss folk ballads in more detail in Chapter 2; meanwhile, notice that the song tells a story, in many verses, all set to the same music **(strophic form)**.

Listening Example 1

In the late nineteenth century, the story of a former slave who had become a "steel-driving man" passed from person to person—both Black and white—through many regions of the country. The text of the song would be adapted to local and timely conditions. Thought to have originally been associated with the 1870–1872 construction of the largest tunnel built up to that time, other versions have John Henry hand-driving his steel drill to lay railroad track. In each case, the legendary hero pits his strength against the newly invented steam drill, winning the contest but losing his life in the effort. Each time you listen to this song, try to hear something that escaped your notice before, "stretching your ears" to capture all that the performance offers.

Composer Anonymous.

Genre Folk song.

Timbre Solo male singer (Arthur Bell), accompanied by a steady hammer strike marking the beat.

Texture Monophonic.

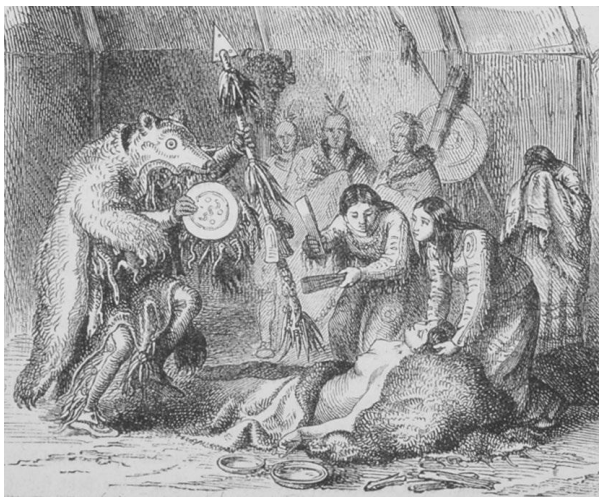
Form Strophic. Each five-line verse ends with a near-repetition of the next-to-last line.

Meter Quadruple (four beats to the bar).

0:00 *Well, every Monday mornin', . . .*
0:22 *John Henry told his old lady, . . .*
0:43 *John Henry had a little baby. . . .*
1:03 *John Henry told his old captain, . . .*
1:22 *John Henry told his captain, . . .*
1:41 *John Henry had an old lady, . . .*
2:00 *John Henry had an old lady, . . .*
2:19 *Well, they taken John Henry to Washington, . . .*
2:36 *Well, some said-uh he's from England, . . .*

elements of music
rhythm
tempo
meter
melody
octave
scale
harmony
chord
tonic
key
triad
timbre
dynamic level
texture
monophonic (monophony)
polyphonic (polyphony)
homophonic (homophony)
genre
form
style
strophic form

Chapter Opener Design photo: Ramona Kaulitzki/Shutterstock



Hulton Archives/Getty Images

Scholars believe that human experience has always included music, although music's sound and its place in society have differed widely from one time and one culture to another. Even today some people differentiate between "music" and "noise"—often disagreeing, however, on which is which—whereas others deny the distinction. Some consider sounds of nature, such as birdcalls or thunder, a kind of music; others do not. For some people, music is art, and for others it is simply an integral part of their everyday experience. Speakers of some languages have no word for music at all, although music is fully integrated into their daily experience. But always, it seems, patterns of sound—one possible concept of what we mean by music—have found a meaningful place in human society.

Although today's American music is rooted in the artistic styles and experiences of European and African cultures, long before the first white settlers or Black slaves touched the North American shores the people living here were making music of their own. Even though we have no firsthand knowledge of the music of the early North American Indians, Native American music traditions have evolved so slowly over vast periods of time that we may imagine their early music concepts bore a close relationship to those of today.

Native Americans Scholars generally believe that the people destined to be called North American Indians or Native Americans began coming to this continent from Asia between 18,000 and 40,000 years ago, crossing the land bridge then existing where the Bering Strait is today, and spreading south from Canada and Alaska into Mexico and Central and South America, and eastward to the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico. New archaeological evidence suggests, however, that the New World may have been colonized on numerous different occasions, beginning thousands of years earlier than previously thought and by people arriving from several different regions of Europe. It is possible, for example, that the people who established an ancient campsite forty five miles south of Richmond, Virginia, recently dated at around 18,000 years old, came by sea across the Atlantic rather than by land from Asia. Still, although fascinating research continues as new discoveries occur, it appears likely that *most* of the people who first arrived on the North American continent came from Siberia by crossing the Bering Sea land bridge.

Whatever their distant heritage, all early American Indian cultures shared a close dependence upon and affinity with the natural world. However, over vast periods of time they developed a very broad linguistic and cultural diversity. Thus when Christopher Columbus arrived in the region of the Bahamas, late in the fifteenth century, well over 300 American Indian cultures with several hundred languages inhabited what is now the United States. Today we generally recognize eight geographic areas, within each of which many tribes share cultural characteristics similar to each other's but distinct from those of Native Americans inhabiting other cultural regions (see Table on p. 14).

Today's descendants of the early Native Americans retain a strong reverence for and a sense of oneness with nature, expressed in their music as in all their arts—although the term *arts* here gives us pause, because traditional American Indian dry (sand) painting, weaving, pottery, basketry, and music all had spiritual and utilitarian significance without which they would have been meaningless. For example, magnificent buckskin shield covers, designed according to divine instruction, protect the wearer as much by the sacred design etched, incised, or painted on them as by the heavy material of which they are made. The Western separation of sacred and secular concepts has little meaning among Native Americans, for whom religion, art, music, and poetry are the inseparable threads—the warp and woof—of life and culture.

Pawnee ceremonial drum depicting a thunderbird hurling lightning flashes as swallows flee.
Werner Forman/Universal Images Group/Getty Images

Plains		***East***	
Northern	*Southern*	*Northeastern*	*Southeastern*
Arapaho	Comanche	Iroquois nations	Cherokee
Blackfoot	Kiowa		Creek
Cheyenne	Western Cherokee	Wabanaki	Seminole
Crow			Shawnee
Dakota (Sioux)			

Great Lakes	***Southwest/ Southern California***	***Athapaskan***
Menomini	Hopi/Zuni/Other "mesa" pueblos	Apache
Ojibwa (Chippewa)	Maricopa	Navajo
Winnebago	O'odham (Papago)	
	Pima	
	Rio Grande Pueblos (from three language families)	
	Yavapai	
	Yuma	

Great Basin/ Northern California	***Northwest Coast***	***Eskimo/ Inuit and Athapaskans***
Paiute	Bella Coola	Eskimos of Alaska, Canada, and Greenland
Pomo	Kwakiutl	Northern Athapaskans (Slave, Kulchin, Dogrib)
Shoshoni	Nootka	
Ute	Salish	
	Tlingit	

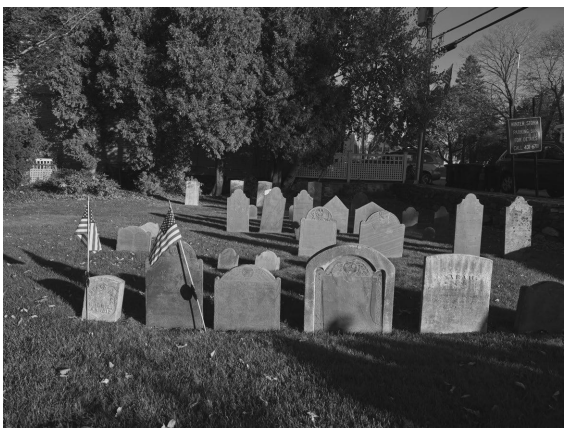
Our brief survey can only generalize about important concepts generally shared by members of different Native American cultures, especially up until the early years of the twentieth century, before which time their cultural expression remained quite consistent. During the twentieth century, acculturation brought about significant changes in Indian music, the changes varying from one region to another; yet many basic tenets of Native American culture retain their ancient values today.

THINKING CRITICALLY

What specific characteristics of Native American music you have heard distinguish it from the European or American classical or popular music with which you are familiar? Consider texture, rhythm, texts, instruments, and any other concepts that come to mind.

European Emigrants During the sixteenth century, Europeans began to arrive and settle on the North American continent in large numbers, bringing with them their various musical customs. Missionaries, adventurers, explorers, and settlers traversed the land stretching from Florida to the northern California coast. Maps and pictures drawn by these intrepid travelers, vividly depicting American Indians as they appeared to the newcomers, and the great natural beauty of the newly discovered land, encouraged other Europeans to join them in the vast New World. Soon French Catholics and French Protestants (Huguenots) in the Southeast, and Spanish Catholics and Sir Francis Drake's Protestant Englishmen in the Southwest, were persuading American Indians to join them in singing Christian songs as part of their effort to convert them to Christianity.

The Pilgrims and Puritans arriving in New England early in the seventeenth century were Protestants, whose protests against the Roman Catholic church included some concerning the performance of religious music. That century also brought English Quakers (members of the Society of Friends) as well as German-speaking Protestants, such as the Mennonites and Moravians.



Gravestone in a colonial churchyard.
M Carol Highsmith/Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

All these brave settlers left behind them a rich and varied cultural experience. Roman Catholics had enjoyed generous support for their arts, including music, from royalty and the church. The Protestant New England settlers, sharing simple tastes, generally avoided the extravagant characteristics of the music style (*Baroque*) then prevalent in Europe, but many of them loved art and music and made both a significant part of their life. The lyrical folk songs and rollicking dance tunes of various European cultures also traveled with the settlers to become a part of their new experience in their adopted homeland.

Puritan Society The more we learn about the Puritans, the more we realize how inappropriate is the stereotype of them as plain and wholly serious, for Puritan society included sophisticated men and women of keen wit and high intellect. Some brought with them their personal libraries, but the small ships carrying them to America had scarce room for such luxuries, and before long the colonists began to produce their own new literature, largely consisting of didactic religious tracts but also including memoirs, essays, and poetry.

The New World's first poet, Anne Bradstreet (1612–1672), busy wife of a colonial governor and the mother of 8, composed a significant body of poetry despite her own serious illness and the rigors of colonial life. Though she declared her peers believed "my hand a needle better fits" (than a poet's pen), she was admired then as now for her learned and well-crafted poems. Here is an example:

> *I am obnoxious to each carping tongue,*
> *Who sayes, my hand a needle better fits,*
> *A Poets Pen, all scorne, I should thus wrong;*
> *For such despighte they cast on female wits:*
> *If what i doe prove well, it wo'nt advance,*
> *They'l say its stolen, or else, it was by chance.*

Although the practical early New Englanders had little use for art for art's sake and specifically excluded art from their churches, still their daily experience was rich in artistic expression. For example, the graveyards adjacent to their plainly furnished houses of worship often contained elaborately carved and decorated headstones. They furnished their homes with many functional articles of beauty, covering tables and beds with fine needlework to provide protection from cold New England drafts, while beautifully carved furniture, handpainted dishes, and toys elaborately constructed for the delight of children lessened the severity of New England colonial life.

Although landscape painting held little attraction for early New Englanders more inclined to tame than to admire natural wonders, portraits served the practical purpose of preserving a likeness and so were highly valued. Most portrait painters were amateur artists who earned their living as farmers, as shopkeepers, or in some other trade, and who thought of themselves simply as craftspeople producing commodities of practical worth. The rather flat or linear quality of American folk art lends it a pleasing flavor distinct from the professional products of their European contemporaries. Ironically, these early artists often painted their subjects dressed in elaborate finery, suggesting an attraction to worldly goods surprising in the staid Puritan society. But how astonished these modest people would be to know the aesthetic and monetary value their work has acquired today.

The African Experience in Early America

Even before the Pilgrims' arrival at Plymouth Rock in 1620, Africans were being forcibly brought to, and made to work in, the New World. At first, African slaves constituted a minuscule portion of society in New York or New England, and even in southern colonies; but after 1700, the importation of slaves greatly increased. By the time of the American Revolution, there were slaves in large numbers in the South, where their forced services made possible the great plantations that produced the coffee, tobacco, sugar, rice, and (much later) cotton on which the southern economy relied.

During the eighteenth century, a surge of humanitarian feeling gave rise to strong movements against the continuing slave trade, which finally was prohibited in the United States twenty years after the ratification of the Constitution. However, the strong protests of Quakers and other religious groups notwithstanding, antislavery sentiment had little effect in this country until well into the nineteenth century. In New England, slavery proved unprofitable and disappeared, but in the South, the invention of the cotton gin in 1793 made slavery an even more integral part of the plantation system than before.

Forbidden to practice their familiar African religious rituals and to sing songs, dance, and play musical instruments in their accustomed ways, the brutally uprooted Africans and their American-born progeny, starved for religion, attempted to adapt traditional African musical expression to worship of the white people's Christian god. Their early efforts were mostly met with ridicule, because their white owners regarded them as "beasts" unfit to receive religious instruction of any kind; but here as in their fatherland, the slaves integrated music and faith into their daily lives.

Elizabeth Davis, née Mrs. Hezekiah Beardsley, c. 1785–1790. (artist unknown).
Yale University Art Gallery

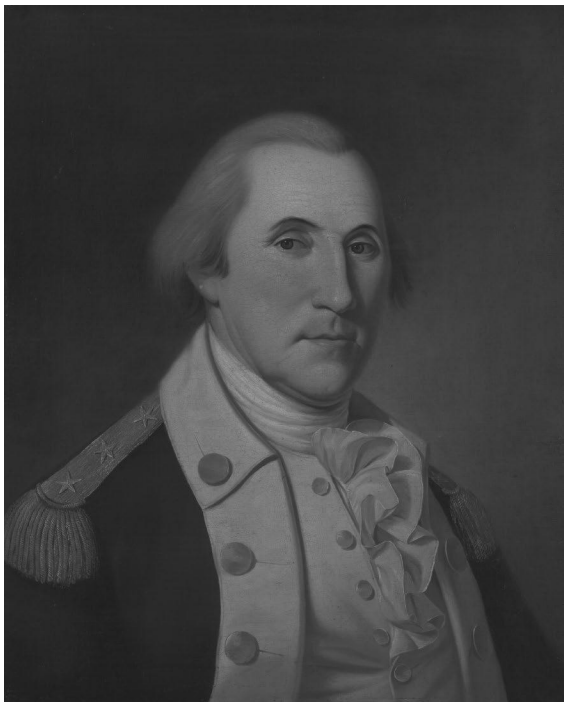
Eighteenth-century Americans of European descent reflected a strong European influence, enhanced by increased opportunities for travel and communication from one continent to the other. European artists of this time had adopted the *classical* ideals of ancient Greek sculptors and architects, who strove for perfection of form, balanced designs, and relatively restrained emotional expression. Artists on both sides of the Atlantic, in fact, from about 1750 until 1825 applied order, balance, and emotional restraint to their work, rendering the Age of Reason in social and political affairs the Age of Classicism in the arts. To distinguish eighteenth-century visual works of art rendered in this cool, reasoned manner from their ancient classical models, we call them *neoclassical* in style; but too little ancient music remains to cause confusion in terms, and the eighteenth century is known as the Classical period of music.

Paradoxically, the Age of Reason spawned several violent revolutionary movements, and Americans joined a number of European nations in firmly rejecting rule by absolute authority and establishing a republican form of government. Enlightened intellectuals—hardly impassioned fanatics—led the American Revolution, the classical influence evident, for example, in the cool, reasoned language of the Declaration of Independence, which begins "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another . . ." America's founders, led by Thomas Jefferson and influenced by outstanding French neoclassical architects, designed Washington, D.C., to be an orderly city of wide and regular streets with many grassy parks and shady trees. The simple lines and classical columns of Washington's state buildings, although not constructed until the early years of the nineteenth century, clearly represent the ideals of the Classical period during which they were planned.

Classical influence is reflected in the orderly layout of streets and the prevalence of Greco-Roman architectural style in Washington, D.C.
National Park Service/Department of the Interior

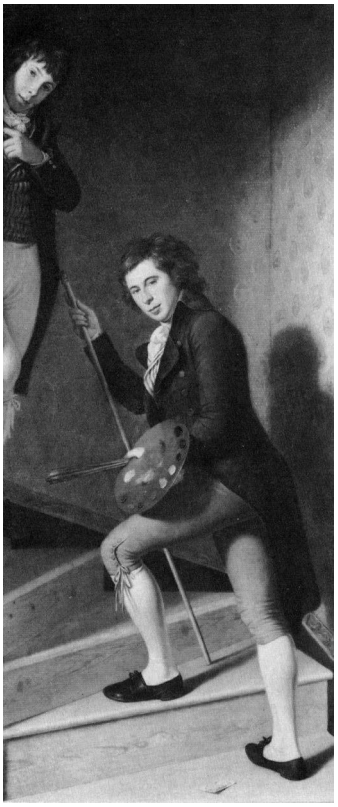
Although American artists during this century had more training and sophistication than the folk artists of the settlers' period, their finest works retained an innocence, honesty, and decorative sense distinguishing them from the more elegant European works of the same era. John Singleton Copley (1738–1815), America's greatest colonial artist, was largely self-taught. He developed a highly personal style rooted in the American tradition and governed by classical order and reserve. Becoming increasingly, though reluctantly, involved in events relating to the impending American Revolution, Copley sailed for Europe in 1774, intending to return to America when peace was attained, but in fact he spent the rest of his life abroad.

In Europe, Copley studied with the famous American expatriate Benjamin West (1738–1820), who encouraged him to paint historical and heroic subjects. Although the subsequent paintings were more elegant and polished than Copley's early American portraits, they were correspondingly less distinctive and interesting. One of Copley's later paintings, *Watson and the Shark* (1778), is of great interest, however, for in it Copley produced a warm and sympathetic portrayal of an African American man attempting to assist a white man—Watson—desperately floundering in the water. The would-be rescuer has thrown a rope, which Watson has missed, as the shark looms menacingly nearby. (Notice



Charles Willson Peale, *George Washington*, c. 1788.
Yale University Art Gallery

John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark,* 1778. Oil on canvas. Although largely self-taught, Copley effectively captured the seething action and dramatic interplay of emotions between the desperate characters in his masterful painting.
Courtesy of National Gallery of Art, Washington



Charles Willson Peale, *The Staircase Group,* 1795.
Staircase Group (Portrait of Raphaelle Peale and Titan Ramsay Peale I) Charles Wilson Peale, Raphael Peale, Titan Ramsay Peale I. Oil on canvas, 1795 89 1/2 x 39 3/8 inches (227.3 x 100 cm). Courtesy of Philadelphia Museum of Art. The George W. Elkens Collection.

how the African American's outstretched arm, mirroring that of Watson, contributes to the symmetry and the drama of this strong painting.) Such a subtle and sympathetic rendering of relations between African Americans and whites was unusual in that time, and Copley's painting is in every way a masterpiece.

Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) also studied for a time in Europe with Benjamin West, returning to America to become the leading artist in Philadelphia for many years. Peale revealed the classical thirst for knowledge in his boundless curiosity about a broad range of subjects, implementing his ideas (in the practical, classical way) by establishing the first American museum of natural history, in Philadelphia in 1802.

Peale, who fought in the American Revolution, painted fine, lifelike portraits of the leaders of the young nation. His painting *The Staircase Group,* reflecting the eighteenth-century interest in scientific measurement and optical effects, is so realistic a portrayal of Peale's sons standing on a staircase that George Washington is said to have bowed to the boys as he passed by the painting one day.

Today we recognize the dominant effects of many cultures on the evolution of American music, but the traditions and practices of all the early inhabitants—those native to the land, the early European arrivals, and the people brought by force from their African homeland—have deeply colored the complex landscape of American music. From at least the early seventeenth century, the music heard in the widely separated inhabited regions of the continent reflected highly disparate values and sounds. Nevertheless, Indian, African, and European musics had some things in common: All were more likely to be performed by amateurs than by professionals, in intimate (inside or outside) domestic or worship settings than in a concert hall, and often (although not always) with spiritual connotation. The distinctions we draw now between sacred and secular music and between high and low art—and the difficulties we experience in finding appropriate terminology to distinguish one kind of art from another—had little meaning in the early American experience.

Long before European settlers arrived in the New World, North American Indians were practicing their own vital music traditions, essential and integral to their most basic daily experience. Because their music always occurred in association with other activities—dance, religious ritual, prayer, work, recreation—their languages included no word for music itself; yet for American Indians then as today, life without music was unthinkable.

Music in Native American culture is never an independent concept. It always exists as a part of dance, celebration, games, work, or prayer. Essentially, it consists of songs imbued with strong powers to accomplish a given end, such as success in fishing, healing, gambling, or winning a bride. American Indians think of their songs not as *composed,* but as *received,* often in a dream or vision—gifts of power from the spirit world. The owner of a song may sell it or may grant someone else the right to sing it, usually in exchange for a gift; or a song may be included among the items in one's will.

Songs, which are highly valued in American Indian cultures, have been preserved through the ages not by notation but by a rich and vital oral tradition—handed down, that is, from one generation to the next through performance and memorization, stressing the necessity for completely accurate rendition. Navajos, who think of their songs as enriching experiences, sometimes count their wealth in terms of the number of songs they know. And because a basket weaver, for example, sings not only to ease the drudgery of work but more importantly to make a basket pleasing to supernatural spirits, the song must be performed and listened to with propriety.

To one unfamiliar with Native American music, it may all sound alike; but the many different Native American tribes produce music of great variety. The songs of some tribes, for example, are low-pitched, sounding practiced or controlled, whereas songs of others lie very high in the voice, pulsing vibrantly with emotion and energy. Even within a given tribe, songs for gambling, war dances, lullabies, and healing ceremonies vary widely in their sounds.

FIGURE 1.1
The pleasing repetition of geometric patterns in this lovely Navajo blanket unifies the design much as melodic repetition unifies a Native American song.
Universal History Archive/Getty Images

Although there are as many kinds of Native American songs as there are Native American cultures, some characteristics do apply to all or most. Melodic phrases generally begin on a relatively high pitch and descend without wide leaps, approximating the inflection typical of a spoken phrase. A song often consists simply of many repetitions of one or more phrases or partial phrases, much as designs on baskets, blankets, and other Native American art often consist of repeated geometrical patterns (Figure 1.1). Such aural and visual repetition has a nearly hypnotic effect, enhancing a work's spirituality and artistic coherence, while also suggesting the ideal balance of nature for which the Native American constantly strives.

Songs are usually sung by a solo voice or by men and women singing together in **unison** (all singing the same notes at the same time). Although men's voices lie an octave lower than women's, and although **call-and-response**—a solo voice alternating with a group—sometimes leads to an overlap between the leader's and the other singers' tones, there is never harmony in the Western sense. Slightly different versions of the same melody performed simultaneously, however, produce variety in the musical *texture*.

A Native American song or flute piece, consisting of melody only, is monophonic in texture. Native American group singing, however, often involves an overlap between voices singing slightly different versions of the same melody. This musical texture, called **heterophonic**, is often heard in musics outside the Western tradition. Here, too, there is no intention to produce harmony, but simply to enrich or enhance, or to perform in the most natural and comfortable way, the melodic line. Figure 1.2 is a visual representation of monophonic texture (*monophony*) and heterophony.

Song texts may be in a native language or, recently, in English. Some texts are simply a series of consonant–vowel clusters or **vocables**—neutral

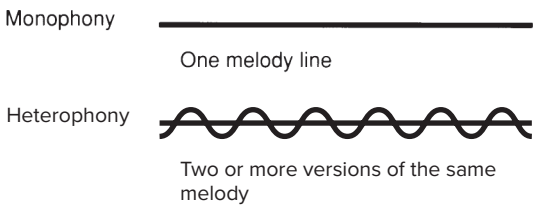


FIGURE 1.2
Musical textures, monophony and heterophony.

syllables, such as *hey, yeh,* or *neh,* which may in fact convey meaning in themselves. For example, as part of the Navajo Night Way curing ceremony, teams of young men compete in the singing of *Yeibichai (Yeh-be-chy)* songs while masked dancers, personifying the sacred spirits of their grandfathers (*Yei-bi-chai* means "spirits-their-grandfathers"), bring supernatural healing power to help the sick. Every one of the hundreds of Yeibichai songs, consisting entirely of vocables, contains the call of the *Yei: Hi ye, hi ye, ho-ho ho ho,* immediately identifying the song as belonging to this tradition. You will clearly hear the distinctive call in Listening Example 2, a Yeibichai chant song. Notice here the alternation between singing in the normal range of the voice and singing in the extremely high **falsetto** tones, lying above the normal voice range.

Listening Example 2

On the ninth (last) night of the Night Way ceremony, Yeibichai appears, accompanied by masked dancers shaking their gourd rattles, and by the unearthly call of the gods.

Genre Religious dance.

Timbre Male voices, singing in unison, accompanied by the shaking of gourd rattles. The falsetto tones heard here are particularly characteristic of this and of some other Native American songs as well.

Melody Repeated high-pitched tones interspersed with even higher cries of indeterminate pitch, producing a rather florid melodic line featuring dramatic upward leaps.

Texture Monophonic.

Form Strophic. A long phrase is repeated many times, with minimal variation.

Rhythm A steady pulse marked by rattle shakes (two to the beat).

Text Vocables punctuated with the distinctive call of the Yei.

Perhaps easiest to identify of all Native American styles is the singing of the Plains Indians, whose regions stretch from the foothills of the Rocky Mountains east to the Mississippi River and beyond, and from the Gulf of Mexico north into Canada. High in pitch, tense in quality, and harsh in tone, this sound is entirely distinct from that of European-based American music (Listening Example 3). No less is it distinct, however, from the music of other Native American cultures and from other kinds of music (simple lullabies or intimate songs, for example) of the Plains Indians themselves.

Usually referred to today as a grass dance, because of the grass braids the dancers wear at their waists, this is the stirring war dance music heard, or

Listening Example 3

To perform this stunning dance, two teams of costumed dancers enter the area, each dancer carrying a tomahawk or another weapon. Facing each other, the teams dance in place, brandishing their weapons in a threatening manner. Next, forming a circle, they move around clockwise, crouching, leaping, and yelping dramatically. Individually, the dancers simulate the motions of battle, alternately forming and breaking the original formations.

Genre Dance.

Timbre Men and women singing (approximately) in unison. Notice the tense quality of the voices and the high, falsetto tones. Some phrases are introduced by a leader's call. The insistent beat of drums and delicate shaking of rattles accompany the singers, while the yells of observers as well as participants add to the drama and excitement of the dance.

Melody Each phrase begins high in pitch and descends, much as a spoken phrase often ends lower than it began. The melody descends by narrow intervals, the only large leaps occurring from the end of one phrase to the beginning of the next.

Texture Heterophony.

Form Strophic. Each verse or stanza (or strophe) consists of a descending phrase.

Rhythm A steady, duple pulse, marked by the drums and rattles.

FIGURE 1.3
Bison dance of the Mandan Indians.
Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-28806]

imitated, in countless Western movies. The strong pulsations, the very high pitches sung in falsetto range, and the tense quality of the voices enhance the emotional intensity of this exciting music, as do the elaborate costumes and dramatic steps of the dancers, all of whom are male (Figure 1.3).

Although little music is performed by instruments alone, sound instruments, as they are called, often support or "hold up" a song. Navajo flutes, the primary melody-playing Native American instrument, are usually made of cedar wood and may be elaborately carved and decorated. Traditionally the flute was sometimes used as a courting instrument, played by a young man who trusted the wind to carry his flute-song to the woman he loved, and who hoped the sounds of his flute, by their beauty and perhaps by magic as well, would persuade her to become his bride. The Navajo flute, rarely heard during the first three quarters of the twentieth century except in casual social situations and occasionally at large intertribal gatherings called **powwows**, is frequently heard today at tribal fairs, powwows, and concerts of traditional music. It has no standard dimensions because its finger holes and air column are based on finger measurements and are therefore never the same. Each flute has its own sound and pitch. The flute repertoire now includes newly composed courting songs as well as Western-influenced classical pieces composed especially for this unique instrument.

FIGURE 1.4
Comanche gourd rattle.
McGraw Hill

Far more common and widespread are percussion instruments, especially container rattles of several kinds: A rattle element, such as pebbles, sacred corn, or beans, placed into a gourd or pot or into a container made of hide or bark, is shaken in time to the rhythm of a song or swung in a circular motion to produce a continuous sound (Figure 1.4). For certain sacred ceremonies, the shaking of deer hooves or shells suspended from a stick (a suspension rattle) produces quite a different sort of rattling effect.

Rasps, percussion instruments normally made from a long stick of wood into which notches have been carved, are rubbed with another stick or a piece of bone (such as the shoulder blade of a sheep) to make a rasping sound. To amplify the sound, the rasp may be placed on an inverted basket or on a piece of hide over an open hole in the ground.

Drums exist in profuse variety in American Indian culture and carry great importance. Some cultures believe their drum beats summon the spirits of ancestors and enhance spiritual relationships with the creator (Figure 1.5). Most drums are made of wood, with one or two heads of the skin of deer or some other animal. The Zuni, Navajo, and Apache, however, sometimes use less resonant pottery vessels or drum jars. Hollowed-out logs, or *log drums,* tall and thin or short and wide, common to the Plains area, have become the powwow drum of today.

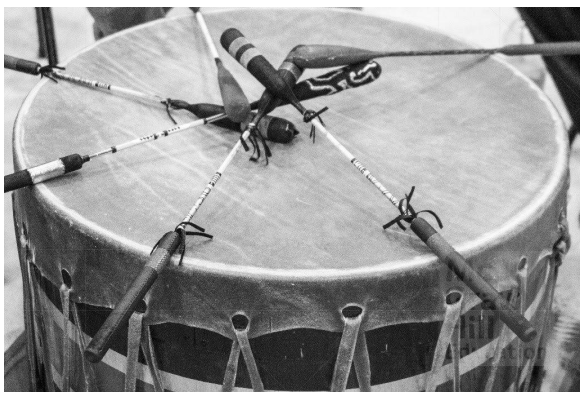


FIGURE 1.5
Decorative powwow drum.
Woodkern/iStock/Getty Images

unison
call-and-response
heterophony (heterophonic texture)
vocables
falsetto
powwow

Chapter Opener Design photo: Ramona Kaulitzki/Shutterstock

Folk music refers to simple songs and instrumental pieces whose origin has been lost or forgotten, or to music composed in an informal style traditional in certain cultures. Unpretentious, easy to remember and to perform, folk music appeals to inexperienced listeners and sophisticated musicians alike.

The folk music of the United States springs from many ethnic and cultural sources: English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, German, and other European influences abound. Africa, too—particularly West Africa—introduced an immeasurable wealth of musical sounds and traditions to folk as well as to other musics in America. Much of the recent urban and country folk music that we shall consider in Chapters 11, 14, and 17 is deeply rooted in the traditional music introduced here.

The Spanish founded St. Augustine, Florida, in 1565. It is the oldest continuously surviving European settlement in the United States, and Spanish music traditions remain strong in that area of the country. (A historian recently pointed out that not until 2055 will the flag of the United States have flown over St. Augustine as long as the Spanish flag did.) In regions of the Southwest as well, one still hears Spanish folk songs and dances and **folk hymns** (religious songs) reflecting their origins in seventeenth-century Spain or more recent Mexico. Missionary priests taught American Indians to sing hymns, for example, and Spanish troops guarding forts near the Christian missions sang ballads and love songs at their work.

Street vendors' songs, work songs, lullabies, and all manner of Spanish folk dances, or *bailes,* formed an ordinary part of the Spanish settlers' lives in the New World. Performed now as in years past to celebrate engagements, weddings, birthdays, and other happy social events, such rollicking bailes as *El Cutilio* (an Optional Listening Example and Encore, p. 29) lighten the hearts of those who hear them—though few remember how to dance the intricate steps popular 150 years ago.

One of the first kinds of religious music in California, Texas, and New Mexico was the **alabado**, a Spanish hymn, or religious song (*alabado sea*

means "praised be"). Alabados became part of a thriving Spanish folk tradition that survives today in remote villages of the American Southwest. Long and invariably sad, alabados project the profound loneliness of the beautiful but remote regions inhabited by those who sing them.

Some alabados, probably introduced by Franciscan priests, are related musically to the chants of the Roman Catholic church; newer alabados use major and minor scales (see p. 4). Like chant, the religious texts are sung without meter (see p. 3), the rhythm conforming to that of the words. Alabados performed during religious processions are sung in unison, unaccompanied except perhaps by flute figures evocative, some say, of the tears of Mary, and a twirling rattle. Alternatively, alabados may be sung by a solo voice or by a lead singer, often a priest, alternating verses with group responses. The latter method offers missionary priests, for example, a prime opportunity to teach the stories of the Bible in song.

Storytelling songs or **ballads** with roots in both Mexico and parts of the southwestern and western United States, **corridos** relate the unofficial history of Mexican or Mexican American communities and their heroes. Powerful meditations on honor and bravery, corridos focus more on the stories they tell—of heroes, villains, romances, and historic events—than the music, which usually consists of a simple melody performed unaffectedly with sparse accompaniment. During the nineteenth-century Mexican War of Independence and the twentieth-century Mexican Revolution, corridos informed the people of newsworthy events. More recent corridos have celebrated famous leaders, including Martin Luther King, Jr., and César Chavez; delivered moral messages; related tales of everyday life and love, immigration, and the drug trade; and expressed nostalgia for Mexico.

Traditionally sung by a solo vocalist accompanied by a guitar, corridos have in modern times been performed, and made more complex, by popular music groups such as Los Tigres del Norte, a highly popular Mexican band.

Listening Example 4

The story, from the early 1900s, concerns a young Mexican falsely accused of horse stealing. When captured, in self-defense he shot and killed the arresting sheriff, who had fatally wounded the young man's brother.

(The lyrics and English translation may be found online by entering the song's title as key words. Brief instrumental interludes separating each verse make it easy to follow the words and music.)

—Continued

Listening Example 4—concluded

Composer Anonymous.

Genre Corrido (norteño ballad).

Timbre Male duet, singing in simple harmony, accompanied by accordion and guitar. The instruments play a brief introduction, interludes between the stanzas, and the ending.

Texture Homophonic (chordal).

Form Strophic.

Meter Triple. Notice the **oom**-pah-pah rhythm of a waltz.

Tempo Fast.

The Texas-Mexican border performance style, called *norteño* in northern Mexico and Tex-Mex or tejano (*tay-hah'-no*) in Texas, often includes an accordion, as heard in "El corrido de Gregorio Cortez."

To enjoy another traditional Spanish music form, listen to *El Cutilio los Reyes Magos* on the Optional Listening Examples Playlist. This lively form of square dance, performed to many different tunes, challenged dancers to keep up with its fast tempo and complex steps. The fiddle here sounds scratchy, and the performance is casual, to be enjoyed as simple, popular entertainment.

There are only two phrases to this piece. Notice how the tempo of the melody speeds up at the beginning of the second phrase. This is unusual for a popular dance. The players repeat the two toe-tapping phrases without alteration in this arrangement.

The early English settlers who arrived in the New World around the turn of the seventeenth century brought few musical instruments with them; but in time, as violins and other, mostly stringed, instruments became available, the settlers and colonists played the fiddle tunes and dances familiar from their British childhood. Many traditional songs acquired new words and altered melodies,

reflecting American dialects and New World experience as they were handed down from one generation to the next.

These folk music traditions survive today in rural and mountain areas, where the style of singing and playing instruments is remarkably close to that of seventeenth-century Britain. Simple lullabies, such as "The Mockingbird" ("Hush, little baby, don't say a word, Papa's gonna buy you a mockingbird"), delightfully silly and entertaining nonsense songs, various work songs, and singing games ("Did You Ever See a Lassie," "Go In and Out the Window") all belong to the American folk song repertoire.

British folk ballads, delivered from memory by a solo voice, with or without accompaniment, offer little background information about the stories they relate, presenting the essential elements and allowing the listener's imagination free rein to flesh out the details. Although the events described often are of a dramatic, even tragic, nature, these ballads present them in a simple, direct, nearly emotionless manner, time and place remaining pleasantly abstract.

British ballads were a major source of entertainment in early America. Sung by amateurs for their own or their families' and friends' pleasure, they often included a very large number of stanzas, so that the entertainment might last as long as possible. Having survived through oral tradition, their authors unknown or forgotten, they evolved as the product of many people over long periods of time, remaining subject to alteration today. Thus, ballad singers often add, alter, or delete stanzas as they perform, lending a song local or timely relevance, or simply expressing the irrepressible creativity of the balladeer.

Among the most popular subjects for ballads is the ill-fated love affair, such as the one described in the very famous "Barbara Allen" (Listening Example 5). A favorite song of President George Washington's, this is one of a great number of folk ballads that have survived apparently intact since their British (in this case probably Scottish) origin. Some of these very old songs seem to have been

Listening Example 5

The seventeenth-century story is of young "Sweet William," who is dying for love of "hard-hearted Barbara Allen." She loves him, too, of course, and—remorseful for having repulsed his advances—soon joins him in death. A red rose and a green briar miraculously grow and join above the ill-fated lovers' adjacent graves. The words vary from one performance to another, the song having been handed down through centuries by oral tradition, but the story remains the same.

—Continued

Listening Example 5—concluded

Composer Anonymous. The ballad, sometimes called "Barb'ry Ellen" or another similar name, probably originated in Scotland in the early seventeenth century.

Genre Folk ballad.

Timbre Unaccompanied male singer (Pete Seeger).

Melody The melody, like the words, exists in several versions. It is based upon a pentatonic scale that uses only the tones of the five black notes of a keyboard.

Texture Monophonic.

Form Strophic. As in most ballads, there are several four-line stanzas, varying in number according to the particular performance.

Rhythm There is a steady underlying pulse and a general sense of triple meter. The rhythm is refreshingly irregular, and the phrases are sometimes asymmetrical, adapted to suit the informal text.

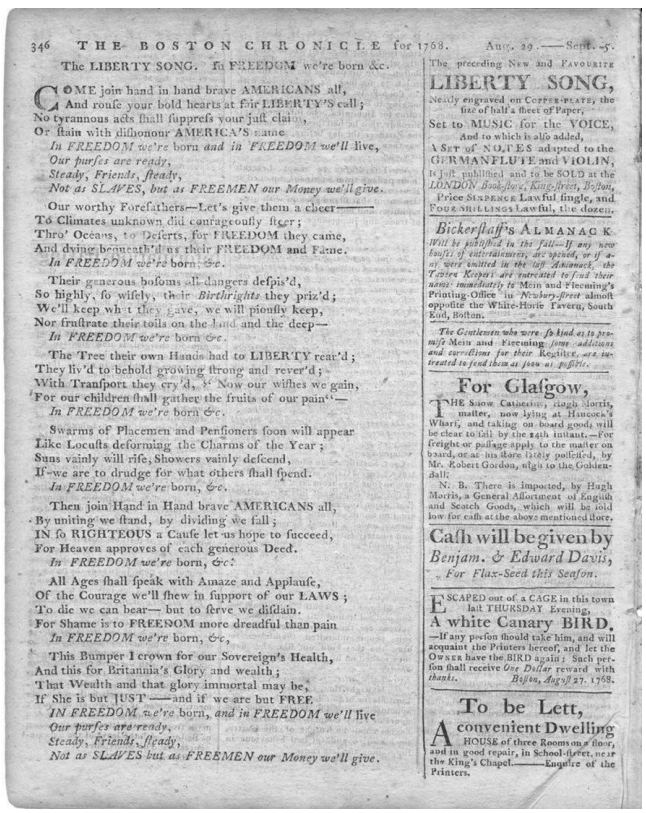
0:00 *In Scarlett Town, where I was born, . . .*
0:19 *'Twas in the merry month of May . . .*
0:39 *He sent his servant unto her . . .*
1:02 *Well slowly, slowly got she up . . .*
1:24 *Then lightly tripped she down the stairs. . . .*
1:45 *Oh, Mother, Mother, go make my bed, . . .*
2:06 *They buried Barbara in the old churchyard; . . .*
2:26 *They grew and grew up the old church wall . . .*

better preserved in America, in fact, than in the land that introduced them, and they have long been adopted into the American folk repertoire.

Like many folk and other simple melodies, "Barbara Allen" is based on a five-note, or **pentatonic**, scale corresponding to the five black notes within an octave on a keyboard. (Any five notes may be selected to form a pentatonic scale, but the black-key pattern is the most commonly used.) You might try playing this and many other tunes, including "Merrily We Roll Along," "Oh! Susanna," and "Old Folks at Home," entirely or for the most part on the black keys of a keyboard instrument.

Early emigrants also reflected the influence of another kind of British folk tradition, the **broadside**, written and printed on a very large sheet suitable for public display, or sometimes printed in a newspaper (Figure 2.1). As early as the seventeenth century, Americans began to alter traditional ballads to fit their new experiences, setting original words to old tunes and presenting them as broadsides. For subjects, some broadsides took historical or topical events, such as mine disasters, famous murders, or train wrecks; some offered moral instruction or delivered impassioned political commentary. Much like the Internet today, broadsides offered an opportunity to state one's case anonymously, often in brutally satirical terms, free from censorship or retaliation.

The first stanza and chorus of a famous patriotic ballad of the Revolutionary period, "The Liberty Song," exemplify the inflammatory character of political broadsides. (Interestingly, the author of these fervent words, set to an English air called "Heart of Oak," had urged appeasement with England and staunchly opposed revolution.)



346 THE BOSTON CHRONICLE for 1768. Aug. 29.—Sept. 5.

The LIBERTY SONG. In FREEDOM we're born &c.

COME join hand in hand brave AMERICANS all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair LIBERTY'S call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonour AMERICA'S name
In FREEDOM we're born *and in FREEDOM we'll* live,
Our purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as SLAVES, but as FREEMEN our Money we'll give.

Our worthy Forefathers—Let's give them a cheer—
To Climates unknown did courageously steer;
Thro' Oceans, to Deserts, for FREEDOM they came,
And dying bequeath'd us their FREEDOM and Fame.
In FREEDOM we're born *&c.*

Their generous bosoms all dangers despis'd,
So highly, so wisely, their *Birthrights* they priz'd;
We'll keep what they gave, we will piously keep,
Nor frustrate their toils on the land and the deep—
In FREEDOM we're born *&c.*

The Tree their own Hands had to LIBERTY rear'd;
They liv'd to behold growing strong and rever'd;
With Transport they cry'd, "Now our wishes we gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of our pain"—
In FREEDOM we're born *&c.*

Swarms of Placemen and Pensioners soon will appear
Like Locusts deforming the Charms of the Year;
Suns vainly will rise, Showers vainly descend,
If we are to drudge for what others shall spend.
In FREEDOM we're born, *&c.*

Then join Hand in Hand brave AMERICANS all,
By uniting we stand, by dividing we fall;
IN so RIGHTEOUS a Cause let us hope to succeed,
For Heaven approves of each generous Deed.
In FREEDOM we're born, *&c.*

All Ages shall speak with Amaze and Applause,
Of the Courage we'll shew in support of our LAWS;
To die we can bear—but to serve we disdain.
For Shame is to FREEDOM more dreadful than pain
In FREEDOM we're born, *&c,*

This Bumper I crown for our Sovereign's Health,
And this for Britannia's Glory and wealth;
That Wealth and that glory immortal may be,
If She is but JUST —and if we are but FREE
IN FREEDOM we're born, *and in FREEDOM we'll* live
Our purses are ready,
Steady, Friends, steady,
Not as SLAVES but as FREEMEN our Money we'll give.

The preceding New and FAVOURITE

LIBERTY SONG,

Neatly engraved on COPPER-PLATE, the size of half a sheet of Paper,

Set to MUSIC for the VOICE,
And to which is also added,
A SET of NOTES adapted to the
GERMAN FLUTE and VIOLIN,

Is just published and to be SOLD at the *LONDON Book-Store, King-Street, Boston,*

Price SIXPENCE Lawful single, and FOUR SHILLINGS Lawful, the dozen.

Bickerstaff's ALMANACK

Will be published to the Fall—If any new kinds of entertainment are wanted, or if any were omitted in the last Almanack, the Town Reports are entreated to send their names immediately to Mein and Fleeming's Printing-Office *in Newbury-street* almost opposite the White-Horse Tavern, South End, Boston.

The Gentlemen who were so kind as to procure Mein and Fleeming *some additions and corrections for their Register, are intreated to send them as soon as possible.*

For Glasgow,

THE Snow Catherine, Hugh Morris, master, now lying at Hancock's Wharf, and taking on board goods, will be clear to sail by the 24th instant.—For freight or passage apply to the master on board, or at his store lately possessed, by Mr. Robert Gordon, nigh to the Golden-ball.

N. B. There is imported, by Hugh Morris, a General Assortment of English and Scotch Goods, which will be sold low for cash at the above mentioned store.

Cash will be given by
Benjam. & Edward Davis,
For Flax-Seed this Season.

ESCAPED out of a CAGE in this town last THURSDAY Evening,
A white Canary BIRD,
—If any person should take him, and will acquaint the Printers hereof, and let the OWNER have the BIRD again; Such person shall receive *One Dollar* reward with *thanks. Boston, August* 27. 1768.

To be Lett,

A convenient Dwelling HOUSE of three Rooms on a floor, and in good repair, in School-street, near the King's Chapel.——Enquire of the Printers.

FIGURE 2.1
In 1768, *The Boston Chronicle* printed John Dickinson's inflammatory text, which he defiantly set to the tune of a popular English patriotic song.
Library of Congress

The Liberty Song

Come, join hand in hand,
Brave Americans all!
And rouse your bold hearts
At fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall
Suppress your just claim,
Or stain with dishonor
America's name.

(Chorus—repeated between the stanzas of the song)
In freedom we're born,
And in freedom we'll live!
Our purses are ready,
Steady, friends, steady;
Not as slaves, but as free men,
Our money we'll give.

—AMERICAN WORDS BY JOHN DICKINSON

THINKING CRITICALLY

What opportunities do today's political, religious, or personal satirists have to avoid prosecution by those they attack? Compare the potential for free expression in rap lyrics, cartoons, television entertainment, movies, newspapers, books, and on the Web with that of the broadsides in colonial and revolutionary America.

Less objective, abstract, and timeless than ancient ballads, American broadsides proved less likely to survive beyond the period that introduced them; thus, few of the American folk ballads we remember and enjoy today were written before the second half of the nineteenth century. But even before that time, each geographic area of America was producing songs and instrumental pieces expressing the typical local experience. Frontier people sang songs about freedom, equality, danger, and the beauty of nature in the wild. Ballads commemorated the opening of the Erie Canal (1825), the gold rush in California (1849), and other events of intense local concern. Slaves produced their own music, expressive of their particular loneliness and suffering. And songs of miners, farmers, railroad workers, and even outlaws also joined the American folk repertoire. Lullabies served every segment of the population, and play and party songs entertained adults as well as children. Performed in the same plain, direct manner as their British counterparts, American ballads reflect in their titles—such as "John Henry," "Billy the Kid," "The Erie Canal," "The John B. Sails," or "The Ballad of Casey Jones" (Listening Example 47, pp. 190–192) their uniquely American source and character.

Sailors' work songs or **chanteys** appeared as New Englanders became heavily involved in sea trade and traffic, and as sailors working on the rivers, too, developed songs about their trade. The origin of the hauntingly beautiful "Shenandoah" (Listening Example 6) is sketchy, but the song seems to have originated in the early nineteenth century in the areas of the Missouri and the Mississippi rivers and eventually to have made its way down the Mississippi to the open ocean, where deep-sea sailors adopted its rolling melody as their own. (Shenandoah was the name of an American Indian chief living on the Missouri River.) It has remained one of America's favorite folk songs.

Listening Example 6

From the 1820s, this lovely, plaintive ballad tells of a white (Canadian or American) trader who courted the daughter of Shenandoah, an American Indian chieftain, and carried her off in his canoe, only to abandon her later on the banks of the Missouri River. A favorite song of sailors—some of whom must have experienced similar conquests and subsequent remorse, and who loved to sing it while away on long, lonely voyages—the song is sometimes thought of as a chantey.

Composer Anonymous.

Genre Folk ballad (chantey).

Timbre Solo male singer (Pete Seeger), accompanied by very sparse strumming of a few supportive guitar tones and simple chords.

Melody Based on a pentatonic scale. (The occasional use of a note not belonging to the pentatonic scale does not change the pentatonic flavor of the melody.)

Texture Mostly monophonic, the guitar adding little in the way of harmony.

Form Strophic; verse-refrain.

Meter Quadruple (four beats per measure).

Tempo The slow, relaxed tempo and somewhat irregular accents, closely following the natural rhythm of the text, suggest the roll of waves and the easy sway of a ship.

0:00 *Oh Shenandoah, I love your daughter. . . .*
0:34 *Oh Shenandoah, I long to see you. . . .*
1:12 *For seven years I've been a rover. . . .*

Unlike the European settlers, who arrived in the New World of their own free will, Africans were forcibly brought to America in European slave ships, beginning early in the seventeenth century–about the time the Pilgrims arrived at Plymouth Rock. By 1700 slavery had become common throughout the thirteen colonies.

Many slaveholders harshly discouraged references to African gods and religions in any traditional song or dance. Especially British Protestants, who considered African music customs savage and heathen, did everything possible to eradicate