

Folk songs

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Slaves used traditional folk songs as a way to maintain their heritage in the face of not being allowed to read or write. Music has long been recognized as an effective means of passing the oral tradition as the sound and the syntax reinforce the text (Bohlman 15) Often the folk song is invoked to maintain a connection with something that is being lost to the past or to celebrate something happening in the present. They often involve the emotions that surround work such as " Pat Works on the Railway" (Lauter). Workers would sing these work songs as a way to pass the time and effort. Gandy dancers, the men who built and maintained the railroads, had a large volume of folk music that was performed as rhythmic chants to ease their mind from the grueling labor (Sloss Furnaces Presents)

Folk music often is closely associated with a cultural group. As the culture changes with time, the folk music evolves with it. Religion has had a close connection with folk music, as churches would sing folk songs reflecting the group's common bond to the church. Poor whites in the south during the early 19th century would gather around camps and sing folk songs that told of, " debt, chain gangs, and deeds of drinking prowess" (Nash et al. 560).

Groups that were socially outcast or politically disenfranchised would turn to folk music to maintain a common bond. Immigrants coming from around the world would bring their ethnic folk music to America and it would become a part of America's musical history.

Folk songs have also been a vehicle to communicate new ideas on politics and rebellion. Labor unions have traditionally used folk music as a way to mobilize and energize their membership. Modern folk singers such as Woody Guthrie and Bob Dylan have used folk music to tell of the oppressed and downtrodden. Often written and passed along without any profit motive, the <https://assignbuster.com/folk-songs/>

folk song became the anthem of the poor and troubled person.

Folk songs are the traditional form of music that exists in any culture. They are usually story songs or ballads that pass along the history of the culture. Whenever a group comes together with a common cause such as a church, work, or political oppression they will have a collection of their own folk music. The songs are not meant for the printed page; they are meant to be sung (Lauter). As they are handed down, they evolve and reflect the culture that they are a part of.