



F. L. HARRISON

## FRANCIS LLEWELLYN HARRISON

1905–1987

FRANK HARRISON was born in Dublin on 29 September 1905, the second son of Alfred Francis and Florence May Harrison. His maternal grandfather, William Nash of Kilrush, Co. Clare, was a craftsman in inlaid wood who was of a marriage which united blood of English and Hiberno-Norman origins. His maternal grandmother, a powerful matriarchal figure, was a Williams from Anglesey, Welsh and Welsh-speaking. Frank's second given name, and his pride throughout his life in his Welsh ancestry, is a testimony to the strength of this tradition in the family. The Harrisons were probably an English family who had emigrated to Ireland in the seventeenth century. Frank's paternal grandfather, also Francis, was from Cork and by profession a musician. He held the post of organist at Cloyne Cathedral, and with it a clientele of pupils from among 'the quality', until some scandal caused his wife to remove herself and the children, and him to move north. From this point he figured in the family only as a lurking shadow, although according to Frank's youngest sister he used to attend incognito the competitive sessions of the Feis Ceoil in the 'twenties whenever the young Frank was a competitor.

Both sides of Frank's family belonged to the Protestant, urban tradition of Irish society, and Dublin was to be the centre of the world in which he grew up. As a small boy, his father Alfred had been sent to the choir school of Christ Church Cathedral, and later sang in the choir of the Chapel Royal at Dublin Castle. This move obviously reflected the musical ambiance in which Frank's grandmother felt the family belonged, and answered her own straitened circumstances. Leaving to one side the genetics of musical talent, it was also a move which was to have its part in shaping Frank's own professional life, for it was one which instilled into his father an abiding passion for the Church and

its music, which led him in turn to send his own boys to choir school.

In at least one other respect the circumstances of Alfred's life may well have had a long-term impact. By profession he was an accountant to the Great Southern Railway, and one of the perquisites of his job was free train trips for the children. At the end of his life Frank would still speak of the excitement of the long Saturday afternoon train rides to Cork and Galway, not infrequently in the driver's cab. His enthusiasm for steam railways never left him, and sixty years later it was to manifest itself in his splendid scale model layouts. But the impact must have been wider than just this. Frank's taste for travel and discovery, which he always had, and which was later to find a central professional place as his interests came to embrace the music of the world, never lost the boyish excitement of those early adventures.

Frank was admitted as a chorister of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, in 1912. His entry to the choir at such an early age was fortuitous, for originally he had been simply tagging along at what was supposed to be his elder brother Cecil's audition. That suggests that his innate musical abilities were evident very early, and his contemporaries at St. Patrick's were certainly to remember him as a remarkably gifted boy. All this tends to be confirmed by the fact that from the age of about ten he would occasionally play the organ for cathedral services, an arrangement which again occurred fortuitously (when the organist failed to turn up one day) but was shortly put on a more regular, if still unofficial, basis. The life of a chorister at the cathedral was intensely busy, for not only were there the cathedral services proper to rehearse and perform on the top of normal school work, but since the early nineteenth century the boys of St. Patrick's had provided the choristers for the chapel of Trinity College. This meant not only Sunday services, but also performing at functions such as Commencement Dinners. Frank loved it all and hated the holidays. The toughness which it bred came not only from the hard work involved. Frank's younger brother Brian, who was a St. Patrick's chorister a few years later, recalls how the shortest route from the family home in north Dublin to the cathedral involved traversing some of the city's rougher streets, and running the gauntlet of sectarian abuse and missiles directed at these Eton-suited Protestant choirboys. Frank himself got caught up in the Easter Rising of 1916 during one of his bicycle rides to school. In the Dublin of the 'teens, even cathedral choristers were not immune from being involved on the fringes of an ambush or a shoot-out.

In 1920 Frank Harrison won one of the two annual Cathedral Scholarships to Mountjoy School, given for ex-choristers by the Incorporated Society. His two years there were distinguished in academic terms, but since his father showed no intention of supporting him through Trinity College, he left Mountjoy in 1922 and took up a post with the Royal Bank of Ireland. Since 1920 he had however been studying also at the Royal Irish Academy of Music, where he was with John Larchet for composition, George Hewson (by then organist of St. Patrick's) for organ, and the *émigré* Italian Michele Esposito for piano. Prizes and scholarships in all these areas mark Harrison's years at the Academy, including the prestigious Vandaleur scholarships for both organ (in 1921) and for harmony and counterpoint (in 1923). At the same time he was working as organist at St. John's church in the solid Anglo-Irish district of Monkstown, and acting as assistant organist at St. Patrick's cathedral. In complete contrast, he also played the piano for the silent movies at the State Cinema, Phibsborough. No doubt Harrison had never seen his job at the Bank as more than a stop-gap, and the outstanding success of his musical activities as composer and performer must have confirmed his view. He resigned his position in 1925 and the year after was awarded his B.Mus. at TCD—music was not until 1935 an undergraduate study at Trinity, and his course would have been extra-mural. His doctorate followed four years later, for which he composed a setting of Psalm 19 for chorus and orchestra. In the same year he was appointed organist of Kilkenny Cathedral and third-form master at Kilkenny College.

His new job lasted for less than a year, for in the first part of 1930 he successfully applied for the post of organist and choir-master at Westminster Presbyterian Church, New Glasgow, Nova Scotia. The impulse for emigration cannot be seen as coming from dissatisfaction with his post at Kilkenny, for although he was not happy schoolteaching, the job at the cathedral gave him great pleasure. In part, of course, he belonged to that breed of Irishman which has always seen the wider world as its oyster—his three brothers also had distinguished careers overseas. But as a highly talented and imaginative musician, Harrison must have sensed the sterility of Irish musical life in the 1920s as he had experienced it in Dublin. As one music critic was later to write with bitterness, 'after 1916 Dublin was principally interested in war and politics . . . How were musicians going to earn a living?'. Concert life, interrupted by the First World War, effectively disappeared after 1920 as the 'Troubles' spread from country to

city. The curfew, which was eventually brought back to eight o'clock, precluded all evening concerts. The disbandment of the police force and the withdrawal of the British army, both of whose bands had provided personnel for the Dublin Orchestral Society, left a vacuum in which there was no possibility of forming a resident orchestra. Above all, there was no hall left in Dublin which could properly accommodate an orchestral concert. Through all this the Feis Ceoil continued, expanded as it had been shortly after its inception in 1897 to be not just a showcase for indigenous Irish music but a full-scale international music festival. It must have been an oasis for accomplished native musicians, and between 1923 and 1927 Harrison won three prizes for his compositions and the Larchet cup for accompanying at its competitive sessions.

Frank Harrison's career in North America was to last for twenty years, the first fifteen of them in Canada. His appointments took him from Nova Scotia to Ottawa, where he was organist of Knox Presbyterian Church from 1934 to 1935, and thence to Kingston, where he was organist of St. George's Cathedral and Resident Musician at Queen's University. In all these positions he built up a sizeable teaching connection of private pupils, as his account-books show, and continued to foster his own career as performer and especially as composer. In 1933 he was in Europe, taking lessons with the great French organist-composer Marcel Dupré at the latter's home at Meudon. Harrison had sent his *Winter's Poem* to Dupré the previous year. 'It testifies to a thorough knowledge of the instrument and to real musical feeling', Dupré had replied in accepting him as a pupil. Five years after his move to Kingston, in 1940, he relinquished his organist's position and his private pupils and was appointed to what was truly his first academic post, an Assistant Professorship at Queen's, with the brief to create a music department from scratch. From Queen's he moved in 1946 to the USA, firstly as Professor of Music at Colgate University, Hamilton NY, and finally, in 1947, to Washington University, St. Louis, again to create a new music department.

By the time he took up the Washington chair in late 1947, Harrison had achieved a clearness of vision about the direction in which he wished to take the academic study of music. He told of his plans for the new department in an interview published in the *St. Louis Star Times* in September 1947, in which he gives 'my own feeling about university music—that it should be a study in the humanities rather than a study of professional music as it is approached in conservatories ... at least at present we will

approach it from the liberal arts cultural standpoint'. This view was totally in accordance with that of Miss Avis H. Blewett, whose benefaction had made the new department possible, and who had given her strong backing to his candidacy for the Chair. Harrison's own version of this attitude to university music had, however, been maturing for some time, and since it was to become a point of principle with him, and one which was to shape the rest of his life, it is worth tracing some of the lines of his development which it gathered together.

The earliest clear context for the evolution of these ideas is that which presented itself to him in his first academic post at Queen's University, Kingston. The environment here, predominantly international and outward-looking, must have presented a sharp contrast to the milieux of Protestant Anglo-Irish Dublin and of Scots Presbyterian Nova Scotia. The friendships he made at Queen's covered a wide range—it is likely that his lifelong taste for engaging in sharp and intelligent scrutiny of enthusiasms different from his own was sharpened by these years. Also, Marxism was much in the air, and the role of the arts in society was under serious debate. Frances Smith's biographical study of one of Harrison's Kingston friends, the *émigré* Swiss painter André Biéler, sounds many notes which harmonize with Harrison's own evolving ideas. Biéler's appointment to Queen's in 1936 had been largely the work of the then Principal, Hamilton Fyfe, whose aim was to integrate the historical study of the visual arts into the humanities programme of the University, as well as to provide the base for practical artistic activities for the whole of the Kingston community. In these twin goals he received the encouragement of the wealthy Kingston patroness Agnes Etherington, to whose family fund he had turned for support in 1936, and whose patronage was instrumental in the creation of the new music department to which Harrison was appointed in 1940. The urgent sense of the need to assert the centrality of the arts in this new and growing country showed itself most clearly in the Conference of Canadian Artists which Biéler helped to organize at Kingston in June 1941. The manifestos which came from that meeting were to be echoed two years later in articles by Frank Harrison which appeared in the Kingston periodical *The School*. 'The particular value of the expressive arts is that they guide the abilities of individuals through the medium of the group into the expression of social consciousness', he wrote in an article significantly entitled 'Music in education for democracy'. Singling out the 'study . . . of the musical heritage of our civilization' as one of

the key elements in music education, he said of it that it should 'be not pursued *in vacuo*, but be treated as a cultural manifestation constantly related to the wider field of history and social development'. Finally, and perhaps most tellingly, he quoted with approval from an article by John Baldwin which criticized the way in which the 'expressive arts' were taught 'as mysteries which we can only wonder at', instead of being taught 'as the living expression of the ideas and conflicts growing within civilizations'.

In these views are laid out all the basic tenets of faith which characterized Frank Harrison's scholarly life. To skip almost thirty years, to his paper 'Music and cult: the functions of music in social and religious systems', which was his contribution to the lecture series which inaugurated the music Ph.D. programme at City University NY in 1969, we find: 'our curiosity and increasing awareness of musical behaviour should be man centred and not music centred'. To those who were somewhat discomforted in later years to see this internationally-renowned British medievalist turn (so they felt) to the alien discipline of ethnomusicology, it may have seemed like the simple pursuit of a novelty, a new enthusiasm generated by new experiences. The new experiences were certainly there, but the judgement *tout court* ignores the constancy of the impulses which propelled Harrison throughout his life, and which can be seen as implicitly there in all he did.

Harrison's post at St. Louis lasted for five years, and after three of them it became clear to him that his contract would not be renewed. He had created from nothing a professional scholarly department, encouraged a programme of music-making of the highest quality on the campus, including both 'early' and contemporary music (at his instigation Shostakovich was invited to St. Louis), and pursued his own distinguished career as a recital organist and composer. However, influential voices within the University questioned whether a music department should be giving so much of its efforts to scholarship and the championing of unfamiliar music when it could be devoting itself to the promotion of large-scale popular concerts. (*Plus ça change ...*) Mrs Blewett, the benefactress of the music department, would no doubt have proved a staunch ally in this ideological battle, but she had died shortly before Harrison took up his post, and he seems to have been left without powerful friends. In addition to all of this, his political views were considered in some quarters to be unacceptably left-wing. It was a time and place in which this would have been a burning issue. His great St. Louis friend Martin Kamen, co-discoverer of Carbon 14 and an excellent

viola-player with whom Harrison played much chamber music, has left in his *Radiant Science, Dark Politics* a telling account of how it was to be the recipient of the McCarthyite attentions which ran through Washington University in the late 1940s. Over all this hangs the unmistakable aroma of an ultimatum; but Frank Harrison was never a compromiser where matters of professional principle were involved. He obtained a handsome financial compensation from the University, left St. Louis behind him, and in the summer of 1950 crossed the Atlantic and settled in Oxford.

It is likely that the invitation to come to Oxford had been given by Jack Westrup, who had been appointed to the Heather Chair of Music in 1948, and who may have met Harrison when he was in Europe that year or the previous one. Westrup was certainly a strong champion of Harrison, and when a University Lectureship became available in 1952, it was to Harrison that it was awarded. Among his referee was the composer Paul Hindemith, with whom Harrison had studied when he was at Yale as a Bradley-Keeler Fellow in 1945–6. Harrison seems to have abandoned his activities as a composer after he came to Oxford, but there was much in that year's study with Hindemith which meshed with his own thinking about music, and which had a lasting impact. Whenever the question of 'value' in music was raised, he would recall Hindemith's distaste for the imposition of aesthetics upon musical judgement and his preference for an approach which assessed analytically the fitness of the musical work for its intended function. It may be that the year in Yale also concentrated Harrison's mind on pre-Baroque music, investigation of which was to occupy him almost exclusively during his first decade at Oxford, and intermittently for the rest of his life. Hindemith had formed at Yale a Collegium Musicum in which his students and others sang and played medieval and Renaissance music. Harrison certainly took part in this. Much of the material they performed was provided by Harrison's other teacher at Yale, and the co-founder of the Collegium, Leo Schrade. When one places this kind of pedigree alongside the development of his underlying views, it is possible to see how the attitude to musical scholarship which Harrison brought with him to England had been nurtured on soil quite other than that of its indigenous counterpart, whose central reference-points of value judgement and discriminatory appreciation of the musical object were totally foreign and indeed unacceptably woolly to him.



Harrison's work on pre-Reformation British music must have begun very shortly after his arrival in Oxford. The earliest of his papers on the late fifteenth-century choirbook of Eton College date from 1952. Publication of his three-volume edition of the Eton music began in 1956. His first book, *Music in Medieval Britain*, appeared in 1958. In the early 1960s he told me how he had felt 'compelled' to write the book by a burning desire to understand the circumstances which gave rise to the music he was editing. He also said that until then he had not 'felt ready' to write a book—he was fifty-three when it was published. The days have now gone in which a responsible scholar was allowed the grace to keep silent until he felt he had something worthwhile to say; but that *aperçu* underlines the extent to which he always sensed this book as doing something more than just opening up fresh material evidence. At this simple level *Music in Medieval Britain* is certainly a remarkable achievement. It laid out for inspection a largely unknown repertory of music, the majority of it then still in manuscript, and extending across half a millennium, with the completeness and authority of an encyclopaedia. In giving an account of this music, Harrison utilized resources which were largely new to musicology with the easy mastery of an old hand. His use of liturgical books, for instance, particularly of ordinals—hardly the most grateful of reading—produces nuggets of gold which conceal countless hours of sheer drudgery in obscure territory for which there was no guide. All this betokens labour and imagination of a high order, and at this level the success of the book can be measured by the small research industry which it engendered in the field—an industry peopled to a significant extent by his own pupils.

To concentrate on this level is, however, to miss the way in which this book fitted into the development of Harrison's thought. Consider the concept of the work that is implicit in the juxtaposition of its title and its historical scope. The arrival in British ritual polyphony of elements which can be identified as 'Renaissance', he was saying, cannot just be put down to mysterious and inscrutable organic changes in style. It is, rather, strictly dependent on shifts of attitude and requirement in the socio-cultural structures which the music is serving. Throughout he was wary (as he was always wont to be) of those speculative and high-sounding explanations which leave an uncomfortable gap of logic between 'ideas' and 'music'—'one must be terribly *cagey* in talking about "style"', he wrote to me in 1965. His message is in one sense much simpler, but one which requires constant circumspection and unflagging self-control.

Harrison's published work in the ten years or so after *Music in Medieval Britain* was predominantly concerned with particularizing and amplifying matters treated in the book. Some of it—for instance his tracing of the history of the technique of composing 'upon the faburden' or his account of the highly idiosyncratic ritual music in Ms. 1236 of the Pepys Library at Magdalene—is quite simply a technical *tour de force*. He also began to explore systematically the fourteenth-century insular repertory, which had been treated rather cursorily in the book and which was to occupy his attention periodically for the rest of his life. These years saw also the expansion of his activities as an editor of medieval music. In his edition of the Eton choirbook music he had already demonstrated that he saw the editor not just as a reliable decoder and transmitter of what a manuscript contained, but as one who had a function of re-creation which could lead to the music's re-utilization. Terminology such as this—'re-creation' and 'utilization'—was to become a familiar part of his writing in later years. Yet in the early 1960s he would use it in a way which left no doubt that he was already thinking in terms of music not as a collection of objects but rather as a continuing process in which his own work had its place. His equipment for dealing with the problems involved was formidable, his understanding of the relevant compositional techniques so complete that no imperfectly-preserved piece of intricate late medieval music, however truncated, seemed proof against his capacity to remake it in convincing form. Two editorial projects, with both of which he became associated in 1962, deserve specific mention. His involvement with the series *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, produced by the Monaco-based publishing house of Oiseau-Lyre, was to continue until the series was completed in the year before he died. For this series he produced, alone or in collaboration, three volumes of French and English music. The *Early English Church Music* project of the British Academy was initiated at his instigation, and he served for many years as its General Editor. By the time of his death more than thirty volumes had been published. To some observers these seemed to be an uneasy dichotomy between his continuing involvement in the publication of prestigious scholarly editions such as this and the views he came to express about the inflated significance accorded to the evidence of musical notation. Once again, the surface appearance belies the latent consistency. Speaking of the false division made between the 'structure' and 'use' of music, again in his lecture 'Music and Cult' of 1969, he says: 'it is manifest that a Brahms symphony

played under the composer's direction at Ramburg in 1878 is in many significant musical respects quite a different thing from the same score brought to sound by an American symphony orchestra in 1969'. His association with editorial ventures cannot be divorced from his promotion and guidance of performances, notably the series of commercial recordings of medieval music with which he was associated in the second half of the sixties. The motivation behind these and the solutions he adopted to turn notations into musical sound both point in one direction. When he specifies 'modern' instruments (such as clarinet and viola, for instance) there is a delicate balance being set up between the sound-patterns which can be elucidated as characteristic of this music's 'original' existence, and the fact that it is being re-utilized in the mid-twentieth century for quite different purposes.

In 1958 Harrison made his first official return visit from Oxford to North America, as a member of the Institute for Advanced Studies at Princeton. It was the first of a series of such trans-Atlantic visits which continued until the end of his life. In the following year he was at Yale as a Visiting Professor, and in the Spring of 1961 he was Visiting Professor at Princeton. During the latter visit, the book *Musicology* (1963) was planned with Mantle Hood and Claud Palisca as one of the Princeton series 'Humanities Scholarship in America'. With Hood, a distinguished ethnomusicologist specializing in the music of Indonesia and a former student of Jaap Kunst at Amsterdam, Harrison established a particularly fruitful rapport. Harrison's own chapters, on 'Musicology in America and the European Tradition', make it clear how he was to come to see 'the function of all musicology to be in fact ethnomusicology, that is, to take its range of research to include material that is termed "sociological"'. If there is nothing exactly new in his writing like this, it may be taken as an overt indication of his active interest in the distinct professional practice of ethnomusicology. What he did not yet have at this stage was any first-hand experience of working with living musical traditions that were not his own. In the movement towards this a key figure is Joan Rimmer, whom he had first met in the summer of 1959 and who was to become his second wife in 1966.

Joan Rimmer, trained as a professional musician, had been working as a free-lance pianist since the early 1950s, and also performing medieval music in ensemble and compiling research on the history of musical instruments, particularly the harp. Her organological research had probably blurred for her the sharp and artificial distinction between 'art' and 'folk' music; but perhaps

more significantly she had considerable experience of regional musics from around the world, which she had acquired during work assembling radio programmes from material in the BBC Sound Archives and cataloguing field recordings in the British Institute of Recorded Sound. Through her, Harrison met Mary Rowland, whose background in India and the Middle East had left her with multicultural terms of musical reference and a quite natural recourse to several distinct performance styles. She had been experimenting successfully with medieval techniques of harp-playing, and Harrison employed her in this role in performances of medieval music which he arranged in Oxford. In the summer of 1963 Frank and Joan together visited the remarkable Welsh harpist Nansi Richards, to whom Mary Rowland had introduced Joan. Even in her seventies, Nansi Richards' technique was astonishingly assured, as is evident from the recordings they made of her playing. For Frank, this was the first occasion on which he had been faced directly with a living musical tradition not his own, with techniques and preconceptions which were totally natural and yet quite other than those current in mid twentieth-century 'art' music, and which was largely incomprehensible outside its own context. A year later, in the autumn of 1964, after a spell of examining for the National University of Ireland, he had another experience of the same kind when he and Joan Rimmer went to Dunquin, Co. Kerry, and heard Sean de Hora, one of the finest exponents of Irish Gaelic song, and Sean Kane, fiddle-player and native of the Blasket Islands. This was Harrison's first real encounter with Gaelic culture, nearly sixty years after he had been born in its midst, and it was perhaps as telling as any of these experiences—an object lesson in how quite different musical cultures, each totally logical within its own terms, could co-exist within a limited framework.

From about this time, the range of his musical references enlarged dramatically. Undergraduates attending his medieval lectures in the old Faculty in Holywell would be astonished to find themselves exposed to the sounds of a Bulgarian fiddle-player or a Gaelic singer. Artificially-imposed boundaries simply fell out of this thinking. With hindsight it is possible to see how the new reference-points he had acquired quite suddenly opened up directions in which he could develop and expand ideas which he had held for perhaps thirty years. At this stage he was chiefly engaged in facing an enormous and exciting exercise in synthesis, and in his writing he was as yet characteristically cautious about how far it could be taken. His *European Musical Instruments*,

written with Joan Rimmer and published in 1964, explores in what is perhaps the comparatively grateful field of organology the possibility of investigating a musical subject in which geographical and cultural boundaries are accepted for what they are and no more. Elsewhere his published work, still predominantly concerned with medieval subjects in the manner which he had begun to essay in the fifties, showed only rarely overt signs of these new directions. When, in his paper 'Tradition and innovation in instrumental usage 1100-1450', which appeared in the *Festschrift* for Gustave Reese in 1967, Harrison introduced, almost as an aside, a parallel from folksong for the employment of instrumental idioms found in some late medieval art-songs, he was pointing the way to the kind of synthesis for which he was searching. The caution latent in that reference was not so pronounced in his more intimate discourse. Conversation with him at this period would range dazzlingly across musical phenomena from wherever and whenever they came. All barriers were down. The consuming passion was to explore by all and any means the 'how?' and 'why?' of human musical activity. In particular, he was concerned to question the extent to which practices, attitudes and circumstances which could be discerned in living musical tradition might throw light on those things in traditions no longer current. The concepts of 'tradition and innovation' articulated in the title of the paper just quoted are indicators of the direction of his thought, and they were later to be joined by others of the same kind—'tradition and acculturation', 'musical processes', 'observation, elucidation, utilization'. He had come independently to a position in which the 'musical object' had yielded its position centre-stage to a view of music as part of a human process, characterized primarily by matters such as utilization and adaptation. If he had developed instinctively an intellectual framework for this approach, what he still lacked was field-work experience in which he could see, as in a laboratory experiment, these processes actually occurring. The opportunity for such an experience came in Latin America in 1966.

In 1965 Harrison had been elected to the British Academy, and to a Senior Research Fellowship at Jesus College. In the summer he moved to California to take up a year's Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Palo Alto. During a winter break in the eastern States he and Joan Rimmer were introduced by Charles Hamm to Julian Pitt-Rivers, who had worked in the Chiapas highlands of Mexico and had tape-recordings of Indian music. Frank and Joan had been

planning a visit to Mexico in search of Indo-Spanish harps, but the music which Pitt-Rivers played them convinced them instantly that they should undertake a full field-trip to the south. The first two months of 1966 were spent travelling through Mexico, down to the southernmost state of Chiapas, where they made a full documentation of the fiesta of San Sebastian in the communities of Zinnacantan and San Juan Chamula. What they discovered was that it was not only types of Spanish sixteenth- and seventeenth-century instruments which had survived among the Maya Indians, but also structural elements of the music associated with them. Their paper 'Spanish elements in the music of two Maya groups in Chiapas', in which they published some of their results, calls this 'the striking though not unique instance of the oral transmission through about three centuries of originally written part-music'. What they had found was, in fact, a current music in which elements of discernible origin had been in some respects preserved, in some adapted, in some effectively abandoned. Their paper lays out a framework for these phenomena which includes scientific analysis of the constituent elements (patterns of usage as well as musical and instrumental structure) with historical and anthropological explanations, in a way which acknowledges the validity both of the original manifestations and also of their transformation and re-utilization. It is in that sense a hybrid of historical musicology and ethnomusicology, of a type which was to characterize much of Harrison's work from this time onwards, and whose premises concentrated his mind on matters he had been considering for some while. It was these issues which prompted him continually to ask the kind of question which rarely enters into musicological debate, but which he held as of fundamental importance; as in his entry into a correspondence on musicology which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* in the later months of 1973, which prompted from him, *inter alia*, the deceptively simple question: 'would it not be useful to recognize which of the ascertainable elements of any kind of organized sound are inevitably disposable, and which may be reassembled, and with what inevitably new elements?'

The Harrisons were to make two more field trips to South America in the late 1960s, recording music events, working in libraries and archives, and adding to their fine collection of musical instruments. The first, in the early summer of 1968, was hard on the heels of a semester which Harrison spent as Visiting Professor at Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, where he became acquainted with Dartmouth's fine Arctic collections and

the recordings made in Terra del Fuego in the early 1900s by the American explorer Charles Wellington Furlong. The second, a more extended trip, was undertaken in the summer of 1969, after a year's return visit to Princeton. Deriving from this research was the paper which they published in the *Festschrift* for Kurt von Fischer in 1973, giving an account of a manuscript from Loja, southernmost of the Andean towns of Ecuador, which contains a remarkably diverse collection of *villancicos*, covering a period of probably two centuries and made up of Hispanic, Indian and African items, all probably intended for ritual use at the *entremesas* of Christmas. Once again the concern is with musical processes, with the musical manifestations of acculturation, and with the use of the sacred *villancico* as an example of certain processes which were always of particular interest to Harrison—as he put it, 'the relaxation by some western Christian religious authorities of established sanctions of propriety and precedence at certain times and on certain occasions', and 'the incursion into liturgical situations of musico-literary materials and usages which are generally considered to be out of place in a church'.

Although the very traditional nature of the undergraduate syllabus at Oxford did not really allow Harrison to introduce into his teaching there the subject-matter of his ethnomusicological interests except as a dimension of his historical teaching, he had given some general lectures on his Mexican fieldwork which had attracted attention from members of the Institute of Anthropology. It was through personal contacts established by these lectures that there came in the winter of 1969–70 the first informal approaches about Harrison's willingness to have his name considered for the Chair of Ethnomusicology at Amsterdam. No doubt he felt himself at a watershed in his professional life. His retirement from his teaching post at Oxford was imminent, yet his life had in no way led him to the kind of plateau which made possible for him a conventional scholar's retirement. His intellectual horizons had in little more than five years expanded to the point where only something approaching a new career could begin to satisfy his tireless curiosity and boundless energy, and his zeal for imparting his thoughts to others within an academic community. He allowed his name to go forward, and in April 1970 was elected to the Chair. At the same time came the offer of a professorial post in medieval music at the University of Texas at Austin. The decision was an agonized one, not least since Austin was so close to Mexico; but it was indicative of Harrison's commitment to the direction his interests has taken

him that Amsterdam won. In October 1970 Frank and Joan moved to the Netherlands.

Harrison's predecessor in the Amsterdam Chair had been Marius Schneider, who had travelled weekly from West Germany to lecture in the large, galleried room in the Tropenmuseum which housed Jaap Kunst's library and which was, in fact, the only working space for all the personnel of the ethnomusicology department. Harrison's first task was to win from the Faculty of Letters of the University the resources to house his department in proper quarters. At the time he told me how he had 'argued the points with them every day'. It is not difficult to believe that quite literally, for his tenacity in holding to a line in argument had to be experienced to be believed. The early 1970s was a period of relative affluence in European universities, and after endless planning meetings his perseverance gained splendid accommodation for the ethnomusicologists in a converted eighteenth-century house on the Kloveniersburgwal. The six years of his tenure of the Amsterdam Chair indeed involved Harrison in continual political manoeuvring of one sort or another. By temperament this was not the kind of life to which he was best suited. In scholarly dispute he would hold his own (for years if necessary) while remaining relaxed and amiable. The business of a pseudo civil servant was another thing entirely. Although he learnt how to be a successful *homme d'affaires* in the university world, and won widespread regard for the straightforwardness with which he dealt with difficult problems, the conflicts which his post necessarily entailed took their toll. There was also through the 1970s a series of health problems. Harrison had had virtually no experience of illness, and was possessed of a loathing of doctors and hospitals and the like, and he found it increasingly difficult even to acknowledge his infirmities. This was a period during which he also had to face the death of many old friends and colleagues who had been contemporaries, and the increasing frailty of his mother, to whom he was devoted. In addition, the turbulence and violence of events in Northern Ireland deeply disturbed him.

All of this made the years in Amsterdam far less relaxed than previous life had been, and conversations with him in this period could suddenly become very touchy for reasons not immediately obvious to an interlocutor. Although Frank Harrison was in many and obvious senses an extrovert and gregarious man, a man for whom most of life was outrageously enjoyable, he also had an



intensely private streak which made it difficult for him to unburden his worries and problems to anyone. His natural defence had always been to fix his sights firmly on the scholarly matter in hand, and let other things slide into the background. Although this was a technique which in the 1970s became strained to breaking point, what it did do was to keep alive a vigorous scholarly life. In addition to building up the work of the Amsterdam Ethnomusicological Centre, he and Joan travelled widely in Europe and the Americas, attending conferences, giving lectures and undertaking fieldwork. One of their trips to North America, in late 1974, took Harrison back to Kingston, Ontario, where Queen's University conferred on him a Doctorate of Laws *honoris causa*, and where he was present at the opening of a new concert hall, named the Harrison-Le Caine Hall in honour of him and of Hugh Le Caine. This recognition, from the university at which he had first shaped his ideas of musical scholarship thirty years before, was greatly valued by him, and served as a boost to his morale during a difficult period. The host of contacts which the Harrisons made on their travels was matched by their own hospitality in the Netherlands where their immense international range of friendships was signalled by the succession of visitors to their homes, firstly in a charming house on the edge of the town of Edam, on a polder overlooking the IJsselmeer, and latterly in a diminutive Amsterdam flat only a few yards from Harrison's department, where the garden was almost totally occupied with his magnificent model railway layouts.

His inaugural lecture at Amsterdam. 'Time, place and music', had laid out the range of those concerns which had recently been occupying him and which were to be the forces with which he shaped his department into what was to become, by the last years of the decade, the European centre of ethnomusicological thought and research. With typical dispassionate clear-sightedness he examined the past and current practices and assumptions of historical musicology and ethnomusicology, and outlined a synthesis—which was peculiarly his own—in which 'time-context' and 'place-context' were united to further an understanding of 'the necessary inter-relation of structure and process' in music. Although the focus in his lecture is on ethnomusicology, the approach he outlines is central to his view of historical studies. It is a hybrid whose nature was acknowledged by him in his coining for it the label of 'anthropomusicology'. Two years after the lecture came the publication of a book with the same title which comprised an anthology of travellers' writings upon non-Western

music dating from the mid-sixteenth century to the early years of the nineteenth, a collection of extracts from some two dozen works which had been suggested and greatly stimulated by his browsing, while he was still in Oxford, in the fine collection of travel writing in the library of Jesus College. In his lecture he had pointed to this species of 'pre-academic ethnomusicological observation' as a resource which had not yet been tapped, and for the evaluative scrutiny of which no proper tools had been developed. His interest in it—like so many of his interests a pioneering one—was not simply for the augmentation of positivist information. He wished also to explore in this field those processes by which unfamiliar musics are 'decoded' by their recipients. With typical canniness, he saw that the various forms of bias that were involved in this process were not ones confined to early travellers, but were indeed ones from which modern academic observers of such musics are not immune. It was during his years in Amsterdam that Harrison pursued an interest in the music of the Celtic people in general—which led to him and his wife making a very fruitful field trip to Brittany in the winter of 1975–6—and in particular the music of Ireland. He had surveyed the medieval remains of Irish music in an article published in 1967, but now he turned his 'anthropomusicological' attention to the music of his homeland and its cultural relatives in a series of papers which had a much wider chronological span. This concern culminated in the articles 'Music, poetry and polity in the age of Swift' and 'Irish traditional music: fossil or resource?', the latter of which was read as the third O Riada Memorial Lecture at University College Cork in 1987, and published shortly after his death. In these he arrived at a complete working out of the 'man-centred' application of musicology which he had been essaying for almost a half-century. 'Music-centred' matters (such as stylistic judgement) are admitted only where they serve to illuminate the central thrust of the argument. His assumption, as he stated it in the Cork lecture, was that Irish music 'has been and is a significant element in patterns of social polity and social activity in Ireland', and he proceeded to analyse the explicit interdependence with a shrewd eye for overt and covert motive which spoke of his sensitivity to the social and political assumptions and aspirations of its utilizers and consumers.

If his own research since the mid 1960s had led Harrison into new areas of musical activity—speaking in terms of chronology and geography—it was not to be wholly at the expense of his medieval work. When he went to Amsterdam there were still

medieval projects in hand. His interest in the fourteenth-century English repertory carried over to a volume of facsimiles, published with Roger Wibberly in 1981 in the *Early English Church Music* series of the Academy, and to two further editions for *Polyphonic Music of the Fourteenth Century*, the first (1980) of motets and the second (with Ernest Sanders and Peter Lefferts) two volumes of ritual music (1983–6). There was also an important volume, undertaken in collaboration with Eric Dobson, of *Medieval English Songs* (1979), which attempted a publication, with extensive commentary, of all surviving songs of insular provenance from the mid-twelfth century to c. 1400. Despite this continuing strand, it is none the less arguable that Harrison did not foresee in 1970 just how important and bulky a part of his scholarly life the study of medieval music was to remain. His last university post was in fact in medieval studies, for on his full-time retirement from Amsterdam in 1976, he took up a part-time appointment at the University of Utrecht, and in 1977 the Harrisons moved to a spacious house in that city. At the same time he continued his association with his Amsterdam department as part-time professor. These were probably the best of his years in the Netherlands. Freed from the burdens of administration in the Amsterdam department, he was able to enjoy to the full his weekly seminars there, and to relish the exchange of ideas with a remarkable international group of graduate students. He had succeeded, where many would have failed, in making an internationally-acknowledged centre of musicological scholarship, not without personal cost, and it was entirely fitting that he should have been able in those last three years to enjoy the results of his own success. With his job in Utrecht he was again in an old university and an old university city. The large study which he shared with a colleague was in fact the Rare Book Room of the library of the Institute of Musicology.

By 1980 the implications of recession for universities were beginning to be clear, and Harrison's appointment at Utrecht was not renewed. At the same time came invitations from Queen's University, Kingston, and from the University of Pittsburgh, the former offering him a Queen's Quest Visiting Scholarship for the Fall of 1980, and the latter the Andrew W. Mellon Visiting Professorship for 1981. These two positions were to give him some of the most stimulating and enjoyable experiences of his academic career, moving between medieval and ethnomusicological seminars, and involving the kind of ethnically-mixed group of students which always drew the best from him and gave

him the greatest rewards as a teacher. But in domestic terms, this period in North America was a watershed. The Netherlands, much as Frank and Joan valued it, was not the country in which they wished to make a permanent home. After much discussion they decided on a return to England, and in the summer of 1982 settled in Canterbury. From all points of view it was the best compromise for two scholarly lives which managed between them to encircle much of the globe. The continent was easily accessible; London and the resources of the British Library were a short train journey away. In his late seventies Harrison had come to the point of consolidation of his life as a scholar. Characteristically, this did not mean for him simply retreading old ground. At the time of his death he was near to the completion of a book on *Tropes and liturgical plays in Catalunya*, a subject on which he had begun work only in the mid 1980s, and which had involved him in the mastery of a new range of linguistic, liturgical and historical material, as well as research trips to southern French and Catalan libraries and the acquisition of a new circle of scholarly friends. Although by now he was under continual medication for the heart condition which had troubled him since the 1970s, it was typical that there seemed to be no slackening in his pace of life. There were still conferences and scholarly meetings to be attended in Europe and North America, for the excitement of the intellectual exchange and for the sheer joy of travelling, seeing old friends and making new ones. Nor was any new commitment taken on with less than his usual vigour. In his eightieth year he accepted a Vice-Presidency and the Chairmanship of the Plainsong and Medieval Music Society, in whose affairs he proceeded to immerse himself with enthusiasm and devotion, and to inject into them a new vitality which could carry the Society into the second century of its existence.

Six weeks after Frank Harrison's death, his last completed paper was read out by Barry Brook at the New York conference 'Musical Repercussions of 1492', which formed part of the Smithsonian Institution's Columbus centenary programme. It was the first paper in a day whose business was dedicated to Harrison's memory, and the treatment of its subject—'The musical impact of exploration and cultural encounter in southern Mexico and Guatamala'—was a masterly statement of his work in the area and of his understanding of the place of music within a cultural context. The concepts on which symposium focused—'Explorations, Encounters and Identities'—were ones which were, as Professor Brook said in his own preface to the paper, Frank

Harrison's bread and butter. He was above all things an explorer, tirelessly curious and boyishly delighted in the pursuit of knowledge, experience and ideas, and totally heedless of artificially imposed constraints and boundaries. The man and his work were in this respect quite at one with each other. No journey with him, however short or mundane, was less than a small voyage of discovery, and a memorable and uproariously enjoyable one at that. The everyday business of living partook of the same quality. His delight in good food—which he and his wife shared, and which made the gastronomic aspects of their hospitality quite unforgettable—was an informed and discriminating exploration of the culinary culture of the world. His interest was ultimately in people, and since he was (in the least doctrinaire of ways) a natural egalitarian, this meant all people. Their classification by age or class or race might be a convenience by which some understanding could be furthered, but when these things were made into barriers he was puzzled and appalled. In all of what he did there was a kind of boldness and daring, an intense seriousness but never a note of sombreness or pomposity, which even at the end of his life could not help calling to mind the tough little Protestant Dublin choirboy caught up in the street violence of the Troubles.

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