

AN INTRODUCTION TO FOLK MUSIC

Thursdays, January 17 to March 21, 2019, 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM

Fairfield Senior's Centre, 80 Lothian Avenue, Etobicoke

www.learningunlimitedetobicoke.com

Coordinator and Presenter: Dr. Mike Daley.

Dr. Mike Daley holds a Ph.D. in music from York University and has taught undergraduate and acclaimed later-life courses at several Ontario Universities and Third Age Learning organisations. He has published many scholarly articles on American popular music and has appeared on dozens of recordings as a guitarist and singer. Mike and his wife Jill lead music-themed tours to Manhattan, Chicago, St. John's, Nashville and New Orleans through their company Musicpath Tours.

January 17: Definitions, collectors and publishers

Folk music is defined and we look at the early collectors and publishers of traditional ballads, especially Francis Child. This largely literary pursuit gave way to music collectors like Cecil Sharp and John Lomax, who transcribed and notated melodies that were disappearing in the early 1900s.

January 24: Recording folk song

With portable recording equipment in the 1930s, John Lomax and son Alan combed the American countryside, recording pioneering figures like Huddie Ledbetter (AKA Leadbelly) and Woody Guthrie. These artists adapted and composed material that brought attention to the music and set the tone for the folk revival soon to follow.

January 31: Commercial old-time music

Ralph Peer travelled the American South as a recording scout for Okeh Records, and documented country music pioneers like Jimmie Rodgers and the Carter Family. A.P. Carter of the Carter Family was a musician-collector, who found traditional material and presented it for mass consumption.

February 7: Left-wing protest song

Labour unions in the U.S. used folk music as a tool of persuasion and morale-building. Joe Hill wrote protest songs for the Industrial Workers of the World. Pete Seeger became involved in leftist politics and folk music and founded the Weavers, that helped to inspire the urban folk revival of the 1950s and 60s.

February 14: The Urban Folk Revival

The folk revival probably begins with the Kingston Trio, who formed in direct imitation of the Weavers and appealed to young audiences. They scored a #1 pop hit with "Tom Dooley" in 1958. Folkways Records presented a variety of traditional styles on LPs, including the seminal Anthology of American Folk Music.

February 21: Guest Lecturer - topic TBA

February 28: The Commercial Folk Boom

The urban folk revival became big business thanks to powerful managers like Albert Grossman, who made megastars out of his clients Peter, Paul and Mary, Bob Dylan, and Joan Baez. Dylan in particular has had a lasting and powerful influence, and his work transformed both folk and rock music.

March 7: The New Left

The protest tradition in folk music was renewed in the 1960s and promoted through publications like Broadside Magazine and singers like Dylan (before 1964) and Phil Ochs. Ochs in particular was known for his sharp wit and trenchant commentary on contemporary affairs.

March 14: The Canadians in the folk revival

Canadian singer-songwriters such as Joni Mitchell and Gordon Lightfoot launched international careers as singer-songwriters and fiddler Don Messer brought traditional tunes to Canadians and helped to define our national identity.

March 21: Contemporary folk music

Folk music continues to resonate today throughout popular culture. From Hollywood films to contemporary artists like Great Big Sea, Mumford and Sons, Ashley Maclsaac and the Duhks.

Researcher/Committee Contact and Chair: Shirley Hartt.