

## Twentieth Century Revivals

### Introduction

The foregoing chapters contain a recurring theme: adoption of the concertina followed in time by a decline in use or abandonment. Here, by contrast, I wish to concentrate on revivals of interest in the instrument during the present century. Firstly, I examine the limited use of the concertina by a small number of composers and “classical” performers; these were historically quite separate from those of the mid-nineteenth century musicians discussed earlier. I then concentrate on the endorsement and rehabilitation of the instrument within the English folk song and dance revival of the early decades of the century. Next I consider the consolidation and promotion of concertina playing under the influence of the International Concertina Association from the 1950s onwards. This is followed by an examination of the more recent “second folk music revival” and in particular the peak of “concertina consciousness” which occurred throughout the British Isles during the 1970s. This section includes consideration of the revival of the instrument in Scotland.

The period under consideration is rich in source material. The folk music revivals of the present century have recently attracted a critical literature<sup>828</sup> which, together with vast amounts of information contained in contemporary journals, articles and recordings, allows the course of concertina adoption to be charted and understood in some detail. The International Concertina Association has an extensive archive and has published a regular newsletter since the 1950s. These sources contain much material of interest and offer great potential for future study by others. In tackling the more recent period and in addressing the Scottish context, I have once more made use of oral evidence and musical examples recorded in the field.

Revival is recognised as a major concept by writers on ethnomusicology. Kartomi, for example, talks of “nativistic musical revival”<sup>829</sup> and Nettl<sup>830</sup> includes

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<sup>828</sup> E.g. Harker, Dave *One for the Money: Politics and Popular Song* (London, 1980) and *Fakesong: the Manufacture of British ‘Folksong’, 1700 to the Present Day* (Milton Keynes, 1985), MacNaughton, Adam “The Folk Music Revival in Scotland” in Cowan, Edward (ed.) *The People’s Past* (Edinburgh, 1980) pp.191-205, Munro, Ailie *The Folk Music Revival in Scotland* (London, 1984) and Boyes, Georgina *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival*, (Manchester, 1993).

<sup>829</sup> Kartomi, Margaret “The Processes and Results of Musical Culture Contact: A Discussion of Terminology and Concepts” *Ethnomusicology* 25 (1981) p.237.

<sup>830</sup> Nettl, Bruno “Some Aspects of the History of World Music in the Twentieth Century: Questions, Problems and Concepts” *Ethnomusicology* 22 (January 1978) pp.131-134.

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“preservation”, “consolidation”, “reintroduction” and “exaggeration” as potentially key elements in musical change. As Bohlman<sup>831</sup> has explained, musical revival is invariably a large and complex process, of which the performance of music from an earlier period is only part. Musical instruments are highly implicated in such processes, as this chapter demonstrates.

### **The English Concertina on the Concert Platform**

Less than a year ago, had you buttonholed that ubiquitous individual of the long ears and short memory -”the man in the street” -and told him that a London West-End audience would ever listen spell-bound to a recital of high-class music on the concertina he would probably have recommended you to undergo a rest-cure.<sup>832</sup>

Although, by the late nineteenth century, the concertina virtuoso had abandoned the concert platform for the music hall, the early twentieth century saw the emergence of at least one notable “serious” player: Miss Christine Hawkes.

Miss Hawkes was trained as a concert pianist and took up the concertina solely as a hobby by studying Regondi’s “Concertina Exercises”. After a debut at Stratford-upon-Avon, she gave her first full recital at Steinway Hall, London, in November 1907 and attracted both curiosity and critical acclaim. This was followed by a second concert in January 1908 which led to her being “inundated with offers from musical agents and shoals of letters from people anxious to learn the concertina”.<sup>833</sup> The concert was reported thus:

“A Second Evening with the English Concertina” was the somewhat strange form of announcement with which Miss Christine Hawkes drew a large number of people to the Steinway Hall last night. But the entertainment itself was distinctly pleasant, because Miss Hawkes certainly makes the very best of her opportunities. The concertina is an instrument without a personality; that is to say, there is nothing in the whole of music which it can do better than any other instrument. At best it can but copy the tone of the clarinet and the phrasing of the violin; at worst it is a reproduction of the harmonium played in single notes with the “expression” stop used indiscriminately. Miss Hawkes generally keeps the instrument at its best, and only very occasionally did a spasmodic crescendo on a low note remind us of its worst possibilities. In smooth cantabile music -for example, the slow

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<sup>831</sup> Bohlman, Phillip V. *The Study of Folk Music in the Modern World* (Bloomington, Indianapolis, 1988) pp.125-26, 130-31, 134.

<sup>832</sup> Fraser, Norman “The Cult of the English Concertina: A Chat with Miss Christine Hawkes” *Cassell’s Magazine* (July 1908) p.159.

<sup>833</sup> *Ibid.*

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movement of Wieniawski's Second Violin Concerto and Saint-Saens' "Le Cygne" -her playing was quite enjoyable and intelligence of phrasing and clear articulation of rapid passages were remarkable elsewhere when the tone was less pleasant.<sup>834</sup>

From the evidence available, it would appear that, in her revival of the instrument, Hawkes had rejected the Victorian concertina repertory in favour of that of established melodic instruments such as the violin and flute. In this she was close to the Russian school of English concertina playing mentioned in Chapter 4.0. Little is known of her further career other than the following few references.

The English composer Joseph Holbrooke (1878-1958) used the concertina in several of his pieces in the early twentieth century. His dramatic "The Bells" was premiered at the first Birmingham Music Festival in 1906, with Christine Hawkes as soloist. This employed a large orchestra, bells, percussion and chorus. The work comprises four parts, each exploiting bell sounds, with the concertina making an entrance in the second following an "animated figure from the woodwind, which, after attaining an explosive energy, calms down into an eloquent passage descriptive of the swinging and ringing of wedding bells".<sup>835</sup> As previous chapters have shown, the production of bell effects on the concertina was a common feature in amateur and music hall playing.

Holbrooke's opera "Dylan" (Op. 53), premiered in 1909 at the Queen's Hall, London, under Sir Thomas Beecham, used two English concertinas to provide chords and drone-like effects along with the woodwind. His operetta "Pierrot and Pierrette" (Op. 36) of the same year used two treble and one baritone concertinas.

The composer's interest in unorthodox orchestration may have resulted from his upbringing as his father was a music hall pianist and Holbrooke himself spent part of his early career working in the music halls and conducting spa orchestras. Holbrooke's adoption of the English concertina can also be explained by the fact that he was "a vigorous, even violent, controversialist in support of British music"<sup>836</sup> who was "prepared to acknowledge that the folklore ideal was a legitimate way of asserting British uniqueness in music".<sup>837</sup> He was, however, at odds with the specifically English musical revival in his adherence to the literary revivals of the Celtic countries.

Percy Grainger (1882-1961), who was more directly linked to British folk music through an involvement in the first folk song revival, also used the English concertina

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<sup>834</sup> The Times (17 January 1908) p.8.

<sup>835</sup> Cowe, George Joseph Holbrooke and his Work (London, 1920) p.158.

<sup>836</sup> Scholes, Percy Oxford Companion to Music (Oxford, 1938) (1977 edition) p.48. Holbrooke was, like Grainger, an advocate of the saxophone also.

<sup>837</sup> Stradling, Robert and Hughes, Meirion The English Musical Renaissance 1860-1940: Construction and Deconstruction (London, 1993) p.168.

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in a number of works. Grainger's "elastic" attitude to scoring, which allowed unusual combinations of instruments, was backed by his statement: "do not let us discard any instrument, or usage of it, without a fair trial".<sup>838</sup> In his "Shepherd's Hey", based on a Morris dance tune collected by Cecil Sharp, a baritone English concertina is given a solo in a band of 8 strings, flute, clarinet and horns. In "Bold William Taylor" of 1908, built on a setting of a song collected from a traditional singer in 1906, a solo voice is accompanied by 2 clarinets, 6 strings and an English concertina. "Scotch Strathspey and Reel" (British Folk Music Settings Nos. 28, 1901-11) has a baritone concertina along with guitars, strings, woodwind and male voices. A surviving concert programme confirms that Christine Hawkes played baritone concertina in the 1912 performance of the last mentioned.<sup>839</sup>

In the United States, Charles Ives (1874-1954) used an English concertina and chorus of accordions in a large orchestra in his "Orchestral Set No.2" of 1911-14. This piece is in three movements:

1. An Elegy to Our Fathers.<sup>840</sup>
2. The Rock Strewn Hills join the Peoples' Outdoor Meeting.
3. From Hanover Square North at the end of a tragic day (1915) the voice of the people again rose.

In this work, the composer's use of the free-reed instruments can be seen as suggesting primitivism, homeliness and nostalgia, while acknowledging a debt to American sacred music and amateur domestic music making.

Although her "classical" concertina playing was somewhat anachronistic, Hawkes managed to carry the idea of the English concertina as a "serious" instrument into the twentieth century. The limited endorsement by composers added to this and pointed the way to popular revivals later in the century.

### **The Concertina in the English Folk Music and Dance Revival 1900-1945**

It can be said that the folk song revival had its roots in the work of early collectors, editors and publishers working in Scotland and Ireland in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, it is the activities of certain key individuals in England in the second half of the last century which is normally taken to herald the revival proper. These are credited with having "first revealed to the musical world the

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<sup>838</sup> Quoted in Bird, John Percy Grainger (London, 1976) p.291.

<sup>839</sup> Grainger's "Folk Music Settings" was played at the Aeolian Hall, London on 28 May 1912: Bird, Percy Grainger, endpapers.

<sup>840</sup> The slow opening movement was originally entitled "An Elegy for Stephen Foster" after "the only American composer for whom Ives had unqualified enthusiasm": Bruce, Neely Ives and Nineteenth Century American Music (Chicago, 1977) p.30.

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fact that the English countryside was still vocal<sup>841</sup> and with paving the way for the establishment of the Folk Song Society in 1898 and its subsequent development. In identifying material for preservation, these collectors were highly selective, applying criteria which privileged that thought to be ancient, uncorrupted, rural, authentic and non-vulgar. In addition to simply recording and publishing their findings, they also sought to “re-propagate” them through choral, sacred, school and other “rational” musical institutions, as it was strongly felt that native folk song could be a valuable resource in musical education. Others, such as Percy Grainger, whose use of the concertina was discussed above, exploited the symbolic as well as the melodic potential of the material in their own artistic compositions.

Cecil Sharp, who was probably the most influential of the mediators of English folk song in the early twentieth century, was also responsible for the collection and promotion of traditional English folk dance in both its ritual and social forms. Harker has argued<sup>842</sup> that Sharp’s work was tied to an ideology which embraced the romantic notion of a “Merrie England” of times past. Folk song and dance were seen as tangible links with this past which offered great potential in the development of a new “national” musical culture to balance prevailing continental influence at the “art” level and to counter the Americanisation and commercialisation of popular taste. As with song collecting, only “authentic” dance practices were given attention, and as a result whole areas of popular dance and its music were ignored as modern, corrupt or foreign.

Sharp’s first encounter with “folk dance” was through the performance of a Morris team at Headington Quarry, Oxfordshire in 1899. The group was led by one William Kimber (1872-1961)<sup>843</sup> who was recognised by Sharp not only as a major source of information on dance and its music but also as a model of the tradition-bearer; a valuable missing link with the romantic past:

What Kimber had from his father and his father before him was the experience and technique of a skilled craft handed down, as if through a guild, from the Middle Ages, and stretching far back before that to the secret societies which practiced the medicine religions that conditioned life in England before Christendom.<sup>844</sup>

Kimber, who played for the dance on an Anglo-German concertina, was to become an emblem of the “second folk- revival”.<sup>845</sup> At first glance, however, his adoption by Sharp as a “source” musician is contradictory on a number of counts. Firstly, rather

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<sup>841</sup> Scholes, *The Mirror...*, p.782. See also Karpeles, Maud “England II: Folk Music” in *NGDMM* Vol. 6, pp.185-7.

<sup>842</sup> Harker, *Fakesong*, pp.172-197.

<sup>843</sup> Chaundy T.W. “William Kimber: A Portrait” *JEFDSS* Vol.VIII, No.4 (1959) pp.203-11. and “William Kimber Obituary (1872-1961)” *JEFDSS* Vol.IX, No.3 (1962).

<sup>844</sup> Kennedy, Douglas *English Folk Dancing Today and Yesterday* (London, 1964) p.44.

<sup>845</sup> *The Topic Catalogue of Recorded Folk Music* (London, 1978) p.28.

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than being of ancient pedigree, Kimber's Morris group had been revived only some months before Sharp's visit through the encouragement of a local antiquarian, the original side having disbanded over a decade earlier. Secondly, Kimber was a relatively young man (around 27 years when he met Sharp) and, thirdly, he played a modern instrument with urban connotations. These included several against which the revival was set, such as music hall and popular dance, and which hardly fitted the concertina for recognition as a "modern substitute for the one-handed pipe and tabor, the one man band familiar in Shakespeare's day".<sup>846</sup> Sharp's judgement was not, however, totally ill founded. The main source of Kimber's art was his father William Kimber Senior, the retired foreman of an original Morris side which had danced as far back as 1847 and who had frequently provided its musical accompaniment on fiddle or concertina (he also played penny whistle in the local drum and fife band).

William junior remained active throughout the first half of the present century and from recordings of his playing<sup>847</sup> we can hear his fluid facility in dance accompaniment and a mastery of the Anglo-German concertina's capability for giving a rhythmical "lift" to the music. We also find the use of the full repertory of techniques peculiar to the instrument, such as unison playing and playing in thirds, discussed in Chapter 6.0 where it was also noted that the use of the Anglo-German concertina and diatonic button accordion in traditional dance was compatible with, and may even have had stylistic links with, older country fiddling practice. Styles and methods of folk dance accompaniment have, in any event, always been subject to change. It is likely that the instrumental preferences for dance accompaniment were never standardised at any time or in any location. One survey<sup>848</sup> of illustrations of the May-day dance at Padstow, Cornwall, from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, for example, found a variety of seemingly ad hoc musical instrument combinations, with the melodeon appearing as often as the Anglo-German concertina.

Sharp gained much from his association with Kimber. From him he noted twenty dance tunes which were subsequently published, and he also learned the techniques of many dances which were to form the canon of the dance revival. It was the dance steps and basic melodies, however, which attracted Sharp and not the instrumentation and performance style and it was not until the "second folk revival" of the 1960s and 1970s that players came to recognise these aspects of Kimber's music as important.

In 1911, Sharp and others established the English Folk-Dance Society "with the objects of preserving and promoting the practice of English folk dances in their true traditional forms".<sup>849</sup> This saw the revival of dance tunes (collected in the field and gathered from eighteenth-century written sources) in parallel with that of traditional

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<sup>846</sup> Kennedy, *English Folk Dancing*, p.43.

<sup>847</sup> Kimber's playing was released on commercial recordings in 1935 and 1947-8. There are later discs from Topic (12T49), Folktracks (FSA983(T)) and The English Folk Dance and Song Society (LP1001).

<sup>848</sup> Hall, Reg and Mervyn Plunkett "May-Day, Padstow" *Ethnic* Vol.1, No.3 (Summer 1959) pp.16-17.

<sup>849</sup> *GDMM* Vol.III (1954) p.236.

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song; and the two spheres came together officially in the establishment of the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1932. Those associated with the Folk-Dance Society travelled the country demonstrating folk dance and encouraging the establishment of dance groups and the reforming of Morris teams which had disbanded. The demonstrations were invariably accompanied by piano arrangements, the inclusion of traditional dancers and players such as Kimber being rare. In the new dance teams, the style of musical accompaniment as well as the dance techniques were often reconstructed or even reinvented. Douglas Kennedy, a former Director of the English Folk Dance and Song Society, described his own attempts to devise an appropriate musical accompaniment to English folk dance during the 1940s:

My wife and I joined forces with another couple living near us in Hampstead to establish a folk dance quartet and we practiced assiduously together. Our leader was the fiddler Nan Fleming-Williams, and she with her husband (guitar), my wife (concertina) and myself (side drum) all suggested and tested theories and any hints that might lead to an increase in 'life' in our playing.<sup>850</sup>

Around the same time, during a dance festival in Edinburgh, a player of the Anglo-German concertina who learned in the Morris traditions of Lancashire was approached by these London based musicians in search of the elusive secrets of dance accompaniment. He recalls:

Douglas Kennedy. He has his wife play an English. Well she come to me then and she says "How is it" she says "we've photographed your doings and all that and listened to you but when we play for it we can't sound like you?" So I says "The point is this: you've got to be born in Lancashire and you've got to have the Lancashire dialect."<sup>851</sup>

In other words, Fred Kilroy stressed that his music was part of a local oral tradition which required to be understood on its own terms if the revivalists were to make any progress in borrowing from it. Other related traditions were also studied:

Only isolated individuals survived to preserve what had been a widespread tradition so the Society had to build from scratch, thankful that there was always the traditional resources of Ireland and Scotland to guide it.<sup>852</sup>

The failure to build on native traditional musical practice and the new settings and functions (one of the first settings for revived dance was London girls' schools) meant that the dance lost much of its raw energy. Within the gentility of the revival there

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<sup>850</sup> Kennedy, *English Folk Dancing*, p.27.

<sup>851</sup> Fred Kilroy in Ward, Alan "Fred Kilroy: Lancashire Concertina Player, Part 2" *Traditional Music* 3 (1976) p.6.

<sup>852</sup> Kennedy, *English Folk Dancing*, p.103.

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was little room for the sound of the country fiddle, the melodeon and Anglo-German concertina. The more “refined” English concertina was more commonly used but the piano accordion, discussed in the previous chapter, took centre stage. The ascendancy of the accordion was marked by the publication of an edition of Sharp’s music arranged for the instrument in 1937.<sup>853</sup> Observers, writing in the 1950s, noted how players of the accordion struggled to recapture the spirit of the older double action free-reed instruments “by pumping the bellows and hitting the keys percussively”<sup>854</sup> while a more recent commentator has criticised the effect these instruments have had on dance accompaniment:

The heavy influence of piano settings of Morris and folk songs adopted by the EFDSS had a bearing on their choice and use of the piano accordion. They never seemed to bother about the instruments in the same way that they took pains to write details of the songs and dances in notation, ignoring the dance style of the music, which is a great shame... Piano accordions are very difficult to play gutsily, in fact the very nature of the instrument makes it easy to play slushy and schmaltzy, with too much heavy bass.<sup>855</sup>

By the late inter-war period, the concertina had become so marginalised in the revival that when The Rev. Kenneth Loveless, a pupil of William Kimber, joined the English Folk Dance and Song Society in 1936, the dancing at its London Headquarters was accompanied by “an orchestra” whose members “viewed the whole business with a horrified stare”<sup>856</sup> when he attempted to join them on his Anglo-German concertina. The situation was less critical in Morris dance outwith London where the Anglo-German concertina survived among working-class musicians and was brought into revived dance groups.<sup>857</sup>

Although by the time of the Second World War the initiative of “the first phase of the Folk-Song Revival had petered out into amiable irrelevance”,<sup>858</sup> a new impetus to research, revive and perform traditional song and dance came with “the second folk music revival”. As discussed later in this chapter, this had more fundamental consequences for the fate of the concertina.

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<sup>853</sup> Karpeles, Maud (ed.) English Folk Dance Tunes Collected and Arranged by Cecil Sharp and Adapted for Piano Accordion (London, 1937).

<sup>854</sup> Hall and Plunkett, “May-Day...”, p.17.

<sup>855</sup> John Kirkpatrick in Wayne, “The Concertina Revival, Part 2”, p.9.

<sup>856</sup> Loveless, Rev. Kenneth “The Story of an Anglo Concertina” NICA (1955) p.16.

<sup>857</sup> For example, see Haworth, Dorothea “The Manley Morris” English Dance and Song Vol.XXIV, No.4 (Winter 1972) pp.129-130, Schofield, Derek “Concertina Caleb” English Dance and Song Vol.46, No.2 (Summer 1984) pp.2-6 and Ward, “Fred Kilroy...” p.7.

<sup>858</sup> Harker, Fakesong, p.231.



## **Consolidation: The International Concertina Association**

By the end of the Second World War, the concertina band movement had largely died out and social and demographic change and the loss of earlier opportunities for musical contact left many concertinists isolated. The International Concertina Association was established in London during the early 1950s in response to this. The Association was founded with the aims:

1. To re-popularise the concertina.
2. To encourage ear-players to read music.
3. To lay down a proper musical foundation for the new generation of players.
4. To have close co-operation between concertina and accordion players.
5. To select district organisers for local work.
6. To form a Central London Concertina Orchestra.<sup>859</sup>

These show the enduring strength of the concertina's associations with "rational recreation" and confirm the dominance of the piano accordion. The make-up of the Association's first elected Committee is also illuminating. This included Harry Minting, a Director of C. Wheatstone and Co. (which would suggest a degree of business opportunism in a period of declining interest in the instrument but for the fact that he was also an active player), Desmond Hart, who was closely associated with the accordion world as a publisher and organiser, Alf Edwards, a leading professional concertinist, and Mrs. Kennedy of the English Folk Dance and Song Society.<sup>860</sup> Despite its title, the Association's activities were mainly centred upon London. However, by 1953 there were 175 members throughout Great Britain and meetings had been held in Birmingham and in Manchester where the concertina band, which had died out during the war, was revived. The Association's first annual festival was held in 1955 and by 1960 its membership had reached around 300, drawn mainly from players of the declining variety theatre,<sup>861</sup> sacred institutions, concertina bands and the ranks of amateur and semi-professional players. Their repertory drew on the published concertina music of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and popular music of the 1920s and 30s and, in reflection of its emphasis on high standards of sight reading, use of harmony and part playing, the Association helped set up a "concertina school" and taught music reading to members. Differing

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<sup>859</sup> NICA 2 (circa January 1953).

<sup>860</sup> Report on the 4th Annual General Meeting of the International Concertina Association (24 January 1953). Copy in National Library of Scotland.

<sup>861</sup> Including several discussed in Chapter 7.0. The Fayre Four were popular visitors to early festivals.

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standards were accommodated through a range of graded competitions held at the annual festivals. A carol service held at Holy Trinity Church, Hoxton, London in early 1955 was led by members playing:

1st. Trebles (one doubling Piccolo)	9
2nd. Trebles	6
Tenors	4
Baritones	2
Basses	2
“Experts” playing special parts with full harmony, obbligato and counter melodies	6

Around one third of the players were women, a fact which surprised a member from the North of England where, through the band tradition, the concertina had remained a man’s instrument.<sup>862</sup>

A small number of skilled players were central to the early success of the organisation. The multi-instrumentalist, Alf Edwards (d.1985), was a central figure in the early Association as an outstanding performer, teacher and arranger. He was responsible for the Association’s Concertina Orchestra and its reduced form, “The Kensington Group”, which gave performances throughout the 1960s and claimed a BBC television broadcast of a Handel “Concerto Grosso”<sup>863</sup> as a major achievement.

Alf Edwards was the leading recording “session” concertina player of the post-war period and could draw upon a vast personal experience. Ewan MacColl noted in the early 1960s that he:

Must be in his sixties at least. Knows and is known by almost every musician in the business. Played every kind of gig, thirties dance band, music hall, busked on beaches at seaside resorts, pit orchestras, the lot.<sup>864</sup>

He played in “big bands”, made regular radio broadcasts on concertina from 1928 onwards, appeared as a player in many films, performed solo (including an early Aldeburgh Festival at the invitation of Benjamin Britten<sup>865</sup>) and made several gramophone records.<sup>866</sup> C. Wheatstone and Company Ltd. published several of his

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<sup>862</sup> Letter to editor, *NICA* 2 (new series, February 1955). A photograph of this concert is reproduced in Monichon, *Petite Histoire...*

<sup>863</sup> 22 November 1963.

<sup>864</sup> MacColl, Ewan *Journeyman: An Autobiography* (London: 1990) p.324.

<sup>865</sup> Noted in Wills, Liz “A Concertina Revival” in *The Musician of the Salvation Army* (July 28 1973) p.473.

<sup>866</sup> *Ha’penny Breeze* (Columbia, number unknown), various 78 rpm records (Nixa, numbers unknown), *The Art of the Concertina* (Prestige Records, 13060).

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arrangements, including “Under Freedom’s Flag” by Felix Nowewieski and “The Lost Chord” by Sullivan, both of which were firmly within the Association’s canon. His tutor for the English concertina, also published by Wheatstone in 1960,<sup>867</sup> was to remain the only modern manual for some time. This book was in the spirit of the Victorian guides, comprising a systematic introduction to the concertina backed by exercises in different techniques. Edwards composed and arranged much music for the Association orchestra. One of his most enduring influences, however, resulted from his involvement in the folk music revival of the 1950s and 60s considered later in this chapter.

Frank Butler, who joined the Association in 1954, was also influential in consolidating concertina interest through his work as a teacher, enthusiast and prolific arranger and composer of music for the instrument. He produced many arrangements for the Association orchestra and a large number of his solos which were published in the Association newsletter or sent out in a duplicated form. These arrangements reveal the boundaries of the Association’s canon. The contents of his “Concertina Mini-Tunes”, a small collection published in September 1985, illustrates this well:

Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair	Stephen Foster
La Cinquantaine	
Londonderry Air	
I’ll take you home, Kathleen	
Bonnie Charlie’s now awa’	
Chorale	Haydn
Organ Grinder’s Song	Tchaikovsky
Waltz	Brahms
Harmonious Blacksmith	Handel
Lindy	Syd Langton
Aloha He	
Ribbon Dance	
Four Sea Shanties	
Four Traditional Dance Tunes	

Much of the music for Association festival competitions was selected and arranged by Butler and these pieces can be taken as an indication of the internal standards and expectations of the organisation. Like Alf Edwards, Butler had a role in the adoption of the concertina in the folk revival of the 1960s and 1970s, mainly on account of his skills as a teacher. This encouraged him to publish a tutor for the English concertina<sup>868</sup> in the mid 1970s which is still in print and to which he added supplementary exercises, studies and solos<sup>869</sup> around ten years later. His family links

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<sup>867</sup> Edwards, Alfred Wheatstone’s Instructions for the English Concertina (London, 1960).

<sup>868</sup> Butler, Frank The Concertina (Duffield 1974 and New York 1976).

<sup>869</sup> Butler, Frank Concertina Two (London, 1983).

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with important concertina personalities of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries guaranteed him a role as a major source of history relating to the instrument.<sup>870</sup>

Arthur Clements of Northampton (b. circa 1905), a noted soloist, was a keen competitor at Association festivals from its inception and became a player with the Kensington Group.<sup>871</sup> He played an English concertina of enlarged compass which he exploited to the full in his own arrangements and compositions. The programme of a recital given to Northampton Musical Appreciation Society in November 1986<sup>872</sup> illustrates his preferred repertory:

#### **Concertina solos by various arrangers.**

The Heavens are Telling	Haydn	Arr. Geo. Case
Nocturne	W. Vincent Wallace	Arr. Regondi
Ave Maria	Gounod	Arr. Stanley
Luci di Vienna		Arr. T. Prince
Till I Wake	A.W. Findem	Arr. Clements
Air with Variations	Schubert	Arr. F. Butler
The Long Day Closes	A. Sullivan	Arr. W. Pearce

#### **Music for other instruments arranged for concertina by Arthur Clements.**

Sonata No.4	A. Dvorak
Impromptu	Schubert
Sonatina in Bb	Tarne
Holy City	Stephen Adams
OSZ (Autumn)	Lisznyai Gabor

On account of the high regard in which Clements was held and the presence of other prominent members as arrangers, this selection can be taken as representative of the aspirations of the early members of the Association.

The Association helped rekindle interest in playing among musicians who had abandoned the instrument during the war years, brought together musicians from different spheres and helped keep older playing styles and repertory alive well into the

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<sup>870</sup> I am indebted to Frank Butler for lodging copies of the Association newsletters and other material with the National Library of Scotland following my interest expressed in correspondence with him. See also Richards, Alex "The Frank Butler Story" *Concertina Magazine* 9 (Winter 1984) pp.20-22.

<sup>871</sup> Butler, Frank "Melodies and Harmonies" *Concertina and Squeezebox* 18 and 19 (1989) pp.69-74.

<sup>872</sup> *NICA* 341 (November/December 1986) p.11.

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second half of this century. An examination of the Association newsletters shows that it was continually concerned at the lack of younger and provincial members. Musicians in these categories were, however, already adopting the concertina through the influence of a new phase of folk music revival.

As a London based organisation, the International Concertina Association had little direct influence in Scotland although membership lists show a small number of Scottish players during the 1950s and 60s. David Haxton, who was discussed in Chapter 9.0, noted how membership of the Association encouraged him to maintain an interest in the concertina through a period of isolation from other players, its newsletter and library supplying him with a regular source of music arranged for the instrument. Similarly, this community of interest compensated Victor Kersley of Hawick for the absence of other local concertina players and allowed him to correspond with, meet and share music with like minded musicians elsewhere in Great Britain.

### **The Concertina in “The Second Folk Music Revival” 1945-80**

In the period immediately following World War II, the British Isles experienced a “second folk music revival”. Evolving from the earlier phase and combined with the influence of revival in the United States, this phenomenon involved new directions and emphases. Although the earlier approach to the rediscovery and rehabilitation of the music of the past remained central, some performers adopted a more liberal attitude to repertory and style. On one hand, great emphasis was placed on “authentic” reproduction in performance, while on the other, there was a desire for the modernisation and reinterpretation of collected material. The creation of new songs and music in traditional styles was common and many artists introduced influences from other popular music forms and practices.

The second revival was heavily influenced by contemporary developments in North America. New “folk song” (skiffle, American protest song, negro spirituals, blues revival...) was heard alongside the music of native “source” singers. In this strand of the movement, greater emphasis was placed on the content of the songs than on their arrangement and although unaccompanied singing was common, the guitar, banjo and zither became popular supports to the voice. These trends were often in tension with the aesthetics of more “purist” revivalists.

The idea of traditional music as an important force in education remained strong but found new targets. One history of the revival notes that, during the 1950s, the aim was “to give the skiffle clubs a better understanding of British folk music”,<sup>873</sup> suggesting that such music was an alternative to prevailing foreign (i.e. American popular) or more “decadent” popular musics which offered a return to the assumed

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<sup>873</sup> The Topic Catalogue (London, 1978) p.2.

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simpler cultural values of an imagined past. National (i.e. English, Scottish, Irish etc...) and regional repertory and styles (e.g. Cornish, "Geordie", Lancashire etc...) received special attention, paralleling, perhaps, an emerging interest in local history. As many artists played to a national (and international) audience, regional texts were no longer tied to individual locations but became common currency.

As in the earlier phase, individuals were highly influential in setting the agenda and course of the revival at both national and regional levels. They have included influential "source" singers and musicians, key revival performers and entrepreneurs. In its early stages there was a strong political element with socialist intellectuals putting great effort into the revival with the idea that a broadly defined folk music might be an important tool in the rediscovery and reconstruction of working class roots and popular social history.

During the 1960s and 70s, the movement attracted a large following through its network of folk song clubs and festivals and was supported by specialist magazines, record companies, radio programmes and a hierarchy of professional, semi-professional and amateur performers. On a commercial level, traditional music and song offered opportunities in a music market eager for new and exotic sounds and musical directions.

### **English Folk Dance**

The concertina, recognised by, yet never central to, the music of the earlier folk dance revival in England, was to find a more enduring role in this post-war phase. Within the second revival, English ritual and Morris dance enjoyed renewed attention from young people, and the concertina was reconfirmed as an appropriate instrument for musical accompaniment. Critical of the earlier revival's concentration on historical repertory at the expense of appropriate style and spirit, musicians attempted to promote a more robust and vigorous approach to the performance of English dance music by drawing attention to surviving "country" musicians and taking inspiration from the "ceilidh" traditions in Scotland and Ireland. Older concertina players, such as William Kimber,<sup>874</sup> were rediscovered and their repertory and playing styles studied more sympathetically than before.<sup>875</sup>

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<sup>874</sup> Other "source" musicians included Anglo Players Caleb Walker and Scan Tester and the English concertina player Tom Prince. See Schofield, "Concertina Caleb", Smith, Vic "Scan Tester" Folk and Country (March 1972) pp.20-21, "Interview with Scan Tester" Traditional Music 4 (1976) pp.4-10, "Scan Tester in Perspective" Southern Rag 21 (July 1984) p.19, Stradling, Rod and Danny "Tester Talking" Folk Roots 31 (January 1986) pp.11-13, Hall, Reg I Never Played to Many Posh Dances... Scan Tester, Sussex Musician 1887-1972 (Essex, 1990) and "Tom Prince", obituaries in NICA 339 (September 1986) pp.8-10.

<sup>875</sup> For a discussion of the discovery of English traditional musicians, see Ward, Alan "Southern English Country Music" Traditional Music 4 (1976) pp.11-12.

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During the 1960s a series of “Anglo Meets” were held at Cecil Sharp House in London “which enabled up to two dozen players to swap tunes and styles loosely based on the Morris repertoire”<sup>876</sup> and publishers responded to increased interest in the instrument.<sup>877</sup>

Although the Anglo-German concertina became the most favoured model in English folk dance, C. Wheatstone and Co., by then under the ownership of Boosey and Hawkes, attempted to capitalise on the renewed interest by producing around 1955 their budget “May Fair” English concertina which was “specially designed for the Folk Dance Player”.<sup>878</sup> This product met with little success as older concertinas of superior quality were still readily available on the second- hand market.

Folk dance remained a major element in the revival but dance music became important for listening as well as for dancing, as discussed later.

### **Folk Song Accompaniment**

A useful means of charting the adoption of the concertina in the second revival is through a survey of the output of Topic Records of London, “the first British company to issue folk music discs”.<sup>879</sup> This firm had a strong influence on popular taste within the revival. Of the 248 long playing records issued between the late 1950s and 1978, around one quarter (68) included the sound of the concertina and this proportion is greatly increased when those discs which could have no place for the instrument (e.g. solo fiddle music) are discounted. On most records the concertina is used in the accompaniment of traditional song. Highly influential among the early releases from Topic was a batch of “theme” albums covering various aspects of traditional music and song of the British Isles. Typical of these is The Iron Muse published in the late 1950s and reissued in 1963.<sup>880</sup> Like others in the series, the disc was compiled, arranged and produced by A.L.Lloyd who, as Artistic Director of the company from 1957, “used this increasingly influential position... to select what was suitable from his perspective for club performers in Britain”.<sup>881</sup>

The content of the record reflected the interest in the extractive and manufacturing industries which Lloyd had already pursued in his influential book Come All Ye Bold Miners: Songs of the Coalfields<sup>882</sup> and other works. Although the method and ideology of Lloyd’s reconstruction of the industrial musical heritage is

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<sup>876</sup> Wayne, “The Concertina Revival, part 2., p.4.

<sup>877</sup> For example, Francis and Day’s Anglo-Chromatic Concertina Tutor (London, 1965), Blanford, D.E. Francis Day’s Pocket Book of Folk Songs for Anglo-Chromatic Concertina (London, 1966), Wetstone, J. How to Play the Anglo-Chromatic Concertina (London, n.d.), Ham, P.A.L. “The English Concertina in 10 Minutes” English Dance and Song (April 1965) p.78.

<sup>878</sup> Contemporary advertisement reproduced in Concertina Magazine (Summer 1983) p.3.

<sup>879</sup> Munro, The Folk Music Revival..., p.60.

<sup>880</sup> Topic 12T86.

<sup>881</sup> Harker, Fakesong, p.236.

<sup>882</sup> (London, 1952).

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controversial,<sup>883</sup> its influence was great. In keeping with his debt to Cecil Sharp and other pioneers, Lloyd was at first adamant that folk song should be unaccompanied.<sup>884</sup> However, he did come to accept instrumental accompaniment in the face of the influence of the dominant forms of youth music: skiffle, rock and roll and American “folk”.<sup>885</sup> In reluctantly accepting the instrumental “backing” of folk song, Lloyd was obliged to privilege treatment which was appropriate in ideological as well as musical terms and thus turned to the concertina, a British (i.e. non-American) instrument born in and of the industrial revolution and laden with traditional and working class associations.

The Iron Muse uses the concertina as song accompaniment on 12 out of 17 tracks. On all but one track it is played by Alf Edwards, the leading professional concertinist already discussed in connection with the International Concertina Association. Edwards brought accomplished, confident playing and entered into the spirit and character of each piece with little sign that he was playing directly from sheet music. His accompaniments include jaunty chordal playing against Matt McGinn’s “The Foreman O’Rourke” and a “barrel-organ whine”<sup>886</sup> to “Come a’ ye Tramps and Hawkers” but it is the lively heterophony of the fiddle, concertina and voice on “The Spinner’s Wedding” and “The Dundee Lassie” which typifies the accompaniment style on the record. Edwards subsequently appeared on many other records produced by Lloyd.

Lloyd’s reconstruction and rehabilitation of industrial song was shared by the revival singer Ewan MacColl with whom he cooperated since the late 1940s. Both toured England and Scotland in the 1950s with Alf Edwards as accompanist and all three worked together with Peggy Seeger and others between 1957 and 1964 on the compilation of “The Radio Ballads”, eight documentaries which used actuality material, music and song. MacColl recalls the musical preparations for these:

Peggy spent a fortnight making and writing out the musical arrangements and compiling tapes and scores for the musicians. Some of the scores had whole sections left in them for the musicians to improvise (which baffled Alf Edwards, the concertina wizard, for the first three or four radio-ballads, he afterwards became quite proficient at, as he put it, surviving without the dots).<sup>887</sup>

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<sup>883</sup> See Harker, Fakesong, Shepard, Leslie “A.L. Lloyd -A Personal View” in Russell, Ian (ed.) Singer, Song and Scholar (Sheffield, 1986) pp.125-132, Palmer, Roy “A.L. Lloyd and Industrial Song” *ibid.*, pp.133-146 and Gammon, Vic “A.L.Lloyd and History: A Reconsideration of Aspects of Folk Song in England and some of his Other Writing” *ibid.*, pp.147-164.

<sup>884</sup> Vaughan Williams, R and Lloyd, A.L. The Penguin Book of English Folksongs (Harmondsworth, 1959) p.9.

<sup>885</sup> Folk Song in England, p.397-8.

<sup>886</sup> Harker, One for the Money..., p.175.

<sup>887</sup> MacColl, Journeyman..., p.322.



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Lloyd and MacColl collaborated on several projects, including a number which featured their mutual interest in shanties and sea songs, Scottish and English ballads and industrial song. Edwards' involvement in these and on other records by MacColl helped spread and consolidate the combination of English concertina and voice as a "sound ideal" of the revival. I would suggest, for example, that the popular idea of the concertina as an instrument of sea shanty accompaniment received substantial reinforcement through these collaborations.

The Iron Muse also features a young revival singer, Lou Killen of Newcastle, accompanying himself on English concertina in the new industrial song "Farewell to the Monty".<sup>888</sup> In this (Tape Item 11.1), the concertina allows unobtrusive support of the open rhythm of the song through the use of drones and sustained chords in a manner which would not have been possible in accompaniment by the guitar or banjo, the principal alternatives adopted by the revival.

In a brief memoir, Killen describes how he worked out his accompaniments in isolation from other players by just feeling his way around the instrument, preserving what worked and abandoning that which did not sound right to his ear.<sup>889</sup> This recalls the method of the sacred music player Peter McCabe who was discussed in earlier chapters.

Other young singers adopted the concertina, including Peggy Seeger, Sandra Kerr and John Faulkner (Figure 11.1) who were associated with "The Critics Group" of London which explored aspects of repertory, song content, presentation and accompaniment in a workshop situation. Bob Blair (1938- ), from Kirkcaldy, Fife but now living in Glasgow, was a member of the group in the 1960s and credits Peggy Seeger with having spread the gospel of concertina playing in the revival:

B.B. Peggy's theories were quite clear on the use of the concertina... Peggy had quite, a quite strong theory of accompaniment, how songs should be accompanied, certainly how British songs should be accompanied as distinct to American and the concertina lends itself to the style of accompaniment quite remarkably as much as the fiddle but it was easier to learn to play than the fiddle I've got to say.

S.E. So you think Peggy Seeger had a major influence on how the concertina was used?

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<sup>888</sup> This song is discussed at length in Harker, One for the Money..., pp.177-180. Killen made other recordings for Topic and subsequently moved to the United States where he has contributed greatly to the recent revival of interest in the concertina.

<sup>889</sup> Killen, Louis "A Portrait of the 'tina Player as a Young Cat" in Concertina vol.1, No. 3 (Summer 1983) pp.8-11.

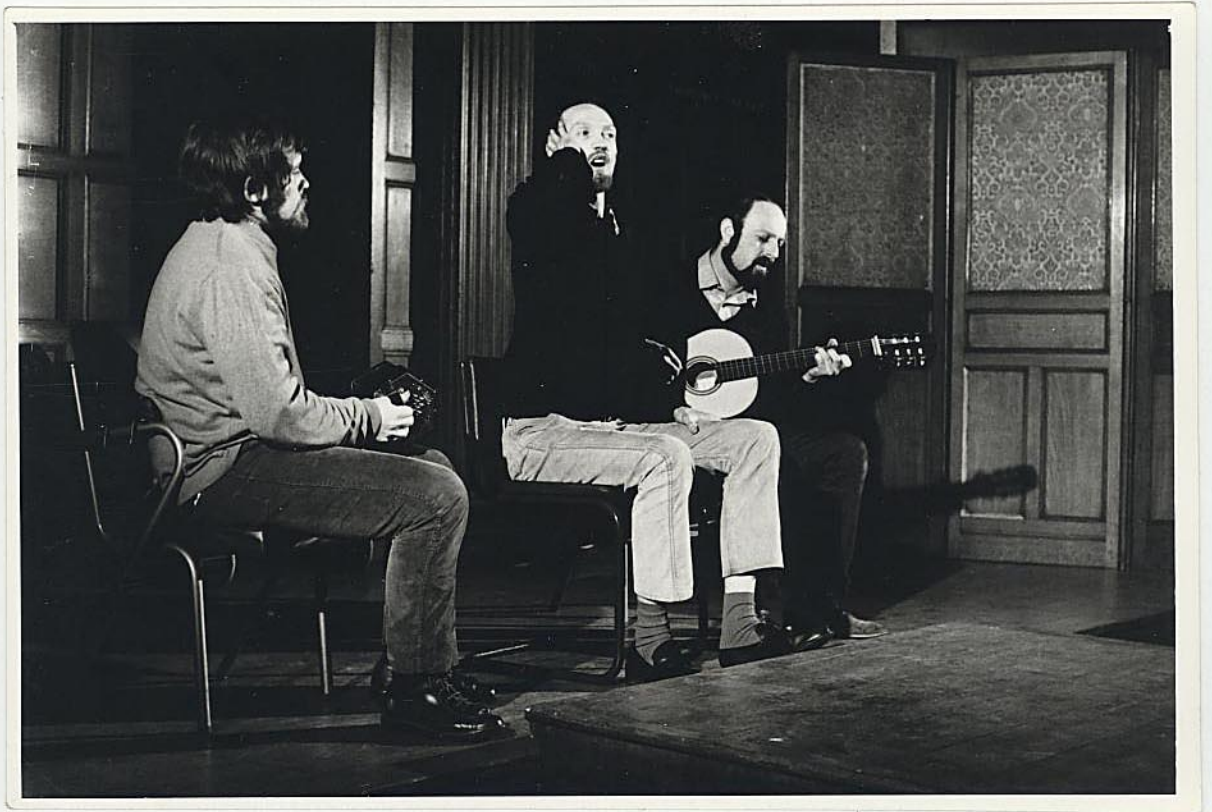


Figure 11.1 Ewan McColl accompanied by John Faulkener,  
London c1968.  
Source: Collection of Edward McGuire.

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B.B. Oh, without a doubt! Alf [Edwards] was the first guy [but] Alf was restricted. Alf always used music. Alf would not accompany Ewan or anybody without a bit o' music in front of them and that certainly didnae fit into Ewan's scheme o' things or the way he saw music performed.

As Peggy learned the concertina he stopped using Alf... Peggy's accompaniments... fit in with her theory of how songs should be accompanied: never interfering with the singer, adding to them, lifting the song occasionally, putting a wee tag in if necessary but never interfering with the song.<sup>890</sup>

Bob notes how Seeger held weekly concertina classes for members of the "Critics Group" and ran accompaniment "workshops" at folk song seminars throughout England and Scotland during the late 1960s and early 1970s at which she demonstrated the potential of the instrument.

The concertina also found a place in the folk song clubs for the same reasons of portability, volume and versatility that made it suited to the music hall and mission station. The cabaret atmosphere of the club shared many of the characteristics of the smaller music hall and, just as in the halls, the instrument could be used as a prop and for "conducting" communal singing. By the mid 1970s the use of the English concertina in traditional song accompaniment had become de rigueur.

#### **Instrumental Folk Music**

The folk music revival also involved a rediscovery of purely instrumental music played for listening. Turning again to the influential The Iron Muse, we find Lloyd opening and closing each side of the record with a short selection of eighteenth and nineteenth century dance tunes from Scotland and Northumberland which, in title at least, had associations with the mining and manufacturing industries ("The Bonnie Pit Laddie", "The Jolly Colliers", "The Weaver's March" etc...). The music was played by an ad hoc group of musicians under the title "The Celebrated Working Man's Band". Of the "miner's tunes" Lloyd says:

In the past the collier's tradition of folk dance was strong, and even today some of the finest sword dance teams in Europe are to be found among the miners of Tyneside and Yorkshire... The melodies here are of the kind that the North-eastern miners enjoyed in the pubs at pay Week, or at weddings, or on the dusty green of the pit villages of a Sunday evening... latterly, in the pit villages the dances were played by small groups comprising, say, fiddle, concertina (melodeon) or pipe

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<sup>890</sup> Bob Blair: Eydmann 94.01.A4.

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and cello or drum. Our modest band is formed on the model of such humble ensembles.<sup>891</sup>

Material presented in Chapter 10.0 confirms that Lloyd was, in fact, correct, for such bands had been highly active in the mining areas of Scotland and North East England right up to the end of the 1930s. He was, however, looking to the past, for although social dance was still thriving in the mining areas, its accompaniment had been modernised through the use of the accordion, drum kits, piano, saxophone and trumpet and the repertory reflected a wider canon of popular music. Furthermore, to revive this type of ensemble (i.e. ad hoc, informal, unrestrained, etc...) was to isolate and privilege just one aspect of what had been an eclectic “plebeian tradition” while ignoring the reality of other forms of music already highly integrated into industrial society through choirs, amateur orchestras, brass bands, etc..., all of which carried messages which conflicted with Lloyd’s ideology (i.e. messages of organisation, patronage, uniformity, formal education, control etc...). Again Lloyd’s formula was highly influential and a similar approach to repertory, instrumentation and presentation was emulated in a number of emerging groups such as The High Level Ranters in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and The Clutha in Glasgow.

Folk music groups formed the setting for a degree of experimentation and change within the revival and we find the concertina used in early attempts to combine traditional music and song with jazz and rock elements in the work of such bands as Pentangle and Steeleye Span in England and Horslips in Ireland. The revival also saw experiments in the use of traditional instruments in a more “orchestral” manner. The Irish group, the Chieftains, which was formed under the direction of Sean O’Riada, a composer well aware of the ensemble playing of other European cultures, consciously set out to form a new national music by bringing together traditional musicians from different parts of Ireland to play his arrangements.<sup>892</sup> The use of the Anglo- German concertina, played by Michael Tubridy of West Clare, in their concerts, broadcasts and recordings suggested novel ways of using the instrument in combination with others. This experimentation paralleled a major revival in the performance of Irish traditional music from the late 1960s onwards.

### **The New Virtuosi as “Go Betweens”**

In the lively “folk-scene” of the late 1960s and early 1970s, a number of artists gained sufficient status to work as soloists and “session” musicians, including a small

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<sup>891</sup> Lloyd, A.L., Liner notes to The Iron Muse. In a personal communication in 1992, Colin Ross, who played fiddle on the record, recalled how the selection of instrumental music was made by Lloyd who chose much of it on the strength of appropriate titles from The Northumbrian Minstrelsy of 1888. An examination of the collection (Volume 2, p.21) shows two of the tunes (“Keelman o’er the Land” and “Sma’ Coals and Little Money”) printed together, just as they are performed on the record. Although from North East England, Ross had no experience of these tunes in local circulation before he heard Alf Edwards play them from the written page.

<sup>892</sup> See, Harris, Bernard and Freyer, Grattan (eds.) The Achievement of Sean O Riada (Ballina, 1981) and Meek, Bill Paddy Moloney and the Chieftains (Dublin, 1987).

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number of concertina players. Of these, Alistair Anderson (English concertina) and John Kirkpatrick (Anglo-German concertina) were “canonised” by the revival, their status being due not only to their technical skill but also their influence on the subsequent popular use of their respective types of concertina. Space does not allow a detailed discussion of these musicians but their contrasting approaches, geographical origins and choice of instrument type would render them highly appropriate for more in depth comparison elsewhere. Anderson (1948- ) came to folk music in the 1960s under the influence of radio and gramophone records and became involved with his local folk song club at Newcastle-upon-Tyne where he met Lou Killen. By 1967 he had joined The High Level Ranters and was working as a “session” player for Topic on records in the fashion of The Iron Muse.

From his earliest venture into traditional music, Anderson developed a deep interest in the repertory and styles of Northumberland and played regularly with older musicians in the area, although there were few concertina players around. His early recordings also show an interest in the music of Ireland and Scotland, with a particular preference for the fiddle music of Shetland, which was “rediscovered” in the revival, and for the showy chromaticism of Skinner and other nineteenth-century fiddle composers which is so suited to the English concertina. In performance, he demonstrates an overriding concern with the melodic line and he uses only a limited degree of ornamentation. His solo performances include a number of “novelty” items and classical pieces and he has developed a dramatic swinging technique which is a memorable part of his “show”.

Anderson has been highly conscious of his own role in the promotion and development of the English concertina as an instrument of traditional music and has welcomed change:

Every instrument has its time of innovation. As far as I can see, when a new instrument arrives into a strong living tradition it is taken up by the musicians in the area and if it proves suitable they first start by copying the style of the other instruments currently in their musical environment. Soon, however, the instrument itself starts suggesting things to the individual playing it and so his style starts to develop into something dependent on the instrument and of course, his own feelings about the music. When there are several players in the area there tends to be a cross-fertilisation of ideas and although the individuals will all have slightly different styles, the tradition will develop as a whole, dependent on the musical environment, the instrument and the musicians themselves.<sup>893</sup>

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<sup>893</sup> Wayne, “The Concertina Revival, Part 1”, pp.8-9.

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He has actively sought to stimulate interest in the concertina through teaching and in 1974 produced an influential tutor book and gramophone record.<sup>894</sup> This publication offers further evidence of an approach which is notable for its encouragement of variation and personal interpretation in traditional music.

John Kirkpatrick (1947- ) came to the concertina through Morris dancing in London where he grew up. His first instruments were the melodeon and British Chromatic button accordion<sup>895</sup> but he took up the Anglo-German concertina in his late teens within the English Folk Dance and Song Association.<sup>896</sup> With a background in the folk dance revival rather than the Edwards-Lloyd-MacColl axis, it is not surprising that he chose the Anglo-German concertina which was more an instrument of dance accompaniment. He became a full time musician around 1970 and has made several gramophone records which include songs, Morris music, country dance tunes and, like Anderson's first solo records, some classical music.

He has worked hard to develop his own "English" [i.e. non Irish or Scottish] style and includes a full range of techniques to "enhance the rhythm and add lift and bounce and danciness"<sup>897</sup> to his playing; these include ornamentation, playing in thirds, sixths and octaves and the use of the left hand for playing chords, as in his accordion playing. Kirkpatrick is the principal "session" musician using Anglo-German concertina and has appeared on many gramophone records. He has also been involved in a number of musical experiments in the field of "folk-rock" and has collaborated with "early music", rock and punk musicians.

Both Anderson and Kirkpatrick have influenced the course of the adoption and use of their respective concertina types on an international scale. Of the two, Anderson has been particularly influential in Scotland for a number of reasons. He often plays north of the Border, Northumbrian music is very closely linked to that of the Scottish tradition and he has included a large amount of Scottish music, much of it from published collections, on his many gramophone records.

Ledang has proposed the use of the term "go-betweens" to describe musicians who act as active agents of musical revival by forming a link between the styles and repertory of "old-timers" and the "contemporaries" of the revival proper.<sup>898</sup> Given the influence of these two musicians and their work to reconstruct and develop repertory and styles of playing, both clearly fit Ledang's definition.

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<sup>894</sup> Anderson, Alistair *Concertina Workshop* (London, 1974), *Concertina Workshop* (Topic, 12FRS501) (1974).

<sup>895</sup> This is the accordion associated with the Scottish accordionist Jimmy Shand. Although popular in Scotland this type was rare in England at the time.

<sup>896</sup> Wayne, "The Concertina Revival, Part 2", p.9.

<sup>897</sup> Kirkpatrick, John "How to Play the Anglo, part 3" *NICA* 337 (May 1986).

<sup>898</sup> Ledang, Ola Kai "Revival and Innovation: The case of the Norwegian Seljefloyte" *YTM* 18 (1986) pp.145-155.

## **The Concertina in the Folk Music Revival in Scotland**

Scottish composers did not turn to their native traditions in the same manner that Holst, Grainger, Vaughan Williams and others had looked to English music and song. The “Scottish National Group” of composers, most of whom were born in the 1860s, were decidedly European in outlook and less concerned with traditional precedents in their expression of Scottishness. The composers of the inter-war “Scottish Renaissance” were also internationalist and more concerned with the country’s vernacular literature than its musical roots. The flowering of musical activity after 1945 saw an expansion in the number of orchestras, composers, companies and festivals but this too, up to the 1970s at least, was modernist and had little concern for indigenous traditions.

There was a revival of interest in Scottish fiddle music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries led by James Scott Skinner, William Honeyman and others and a large number of folk song collectors were also active at the time. This work had little effect on composers of “art” music.

Those responsible for the revival of country dance in Scotland did not, in the main, turn to living musicians but to the vast wealth of written music in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century manuscripts and printed collections.<sup>899</sup> I have already discussed how dance bands became standardised under the influence of The Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, radio and gramophone records, and how, after 1930, the accordion (in both button and piano forms) had assumed a central role. By the 1950s, many bands were including modern popular music from a variety of sources within their repertory and accordionists also played “continental” material of European origin or character. Dance music also found a place in the “Scottish entertainment” which flourished during the 1950s and 60s in holiday resorts, variety theatres and on television (e.g. “The White Heather Club”).

The concertina had little or no place in these developments and by the late 1960s was heard only in the residual pockets discussed in earlier chapters.

The early period of the second folk music revival in Scotland paralleled that of England but with some interesting differences. There was a strong “protest” element in the Scottish revival, closely linked to nuclear disarmament campaigns, and also embracing elements of nationalist sentiment. The revival was not just a rediscovery of an earlier heritage of music and song but also a deliberate reaction against dominant forms of commercial entertainment, whether London/America originated or native “tartanry”.

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<sup>899</sup> E.g. Shand, Annie Old Scottish Music Collected and Adapted for Scottish Country Dances (Glasgow, 1932).

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Ailie Munro has noted the “powerful and seminal influence”<sup>900</sup> of MacColl in Scotland, a fact which is borne out by my informants who were active in the revival and my own experience as an interested teenager during the late 1960s. Much of the revived music and song in the influential performances, records and broadcasts by Lloyd, MacColl and “The Critics Group” was of Scottish origin and therefore young musicians in Scotland had no difficulty in accepting the authority of their style and accompaniment along with their repertory. It is not surprising, therefore, to find the concertina taken up by emerging singers such as Ian MacKintosh and Archie Fisher. In fact, so strong was the idea of the concertina as a folk song accompaniment that the well known singers Robin Hall and Jimmy MacGregor used an accordion with a “concertina sound” to capture the appropriate effect on a number of their recordings of sea songs.<sup>901</sup>

The concertina was used extensively by Roy Williamson of The Corrie Folk Trio (later the duo, The Corries) of Edinburgh whose audience reached well outwith the confines of the “folk scene” itself.<sup>902</sup> The instrument is heard on their 1968 album Kishmul’s Galley<sup>903</sup> in an instrumental selection and in song accompaniment and on the 1970 album Strings and Things<sup>904</sup> to accompany the song “Hieland Harry” and in a selection of fiddle tunes from Shetland. In the latter selection (Tape Item 11.2) the concertina is played along with the harmonica to give a full “reedy” sound suggesting the “ringing strings” (playing two strings simultaneously) of the Shetland fiddle tradition. The music is paced faster than in the tradition and can be viewed as something of an instrumental tour de force within The Corries’ programmes, which consisted mainly of song.

A number of ensembles arose in Scotland after the fashion of the band featured on The Iron Muse. The Clutha from Glasgow numbered two concertina players among its ranks and used the instrument in both song accompaniment and in instrumental selections.<sup>905</sup> Similarly, The Gaugers, a trio from Aberdeen, featured Peter Hall’s concertina along with fiddle, tin whistle and collective voices. Their music includes traditional music from all parts of Scotland and songs delivered in their local dialect.<sup>906</sup>

Hamish Bayne, a member of the Edinburgh folksong group, The McCalmans, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, used the concertina regularly in performance as did his friend Tom Ward of Leven, Fife, who discovered the instrument through the playing of Alf Edwards:

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<sup>900</sup> Munro, The Folk Music Revival..., p.96.

<sup>901</sup> Robin Hall, personal communication, 1983.

<sup>902</sup> There are two early photographs of Williamson with concertina in Williamson, Karen Flower of Scotland: Roy Williamson, My Father (Nairn, 1993) pp.47, 98.

<sup>903</sup> Fontana STL5465.

<sup>904</sup> EMI Columbia SCX 6442.

<sup>905</sup> The group made several records for Topic.

<sup>906</sup> The group released the record Beware the Aberdonian (Topic Records, 12TS284), around 1977.



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It eh, was roughly about 1968, 69 and what I'd been doing was that I was playing the guitar with a fella called Chuck Fleming [who] played the fiddle. I played the guitar, not very well, and did a bit of singing - as a duo played round the pubs and clubs and sort of things and eh, the more I played the guitar the more I realised that I was no guitarist, you know. Barely competent would be a pretty good description. So I really was looking for an instrument that was going to be versatile 'cause I was doing a bit of singing at the time so I was looking for an instrument that I could accompany myself with, that was portable. I didn't want a big instrument like a guitar, sort of anything like that, something you could play tunes on as well because playing with Chuck I was beginning to get quite a bit of interest in tunes, dance music and that sort of thing. So I thought about it for a while and I thought about instruments like fiddles and whistles and mandolins but, I mean there were people playing those and I felt what I also wanted was an instrument that was fairly rare in the very limited folk field and I thought about it.

I thought about pipes -they were fairly impractical and eh, at that time we used to listen to a chap called A.L. Lloyd and his records and he had people on it like [Martin] Carthy and [Dave] Swarbrick and he had this concertina player called Alf Edwards on it... He gave it a smashin' sound. It was very smart and it was very sympathetic to songs like sea shanties which we used to do and what have you and eh, I can't remember when, but a penny dropped at one time and I said that's the instrument I want because to me it was a very sweet sounding instrument, a smashin' sounding instrument. It was small, it was portable, immensely versatile and just really fitted the bill and eh, that's what I wanted and of course in Edinburgh at that time they just weren't to be had.<sup>907</sup>

Tom searched second hand dealers in the city for months before he managed to acquire an instrument lying in the basement of a local music shop. He taught himself using Alf Edwards' tutor which he found most satisfactory. Working in isolation from other concertina players he developed a lively, relatively unadorned style of playing dance music and, like so many Scottish musicians, he was attracted to the compositions of James Scott Skinner. His playing of Skinner's "Ward's Hornpipe" involves long passages in a single bellows movement (Example 11.1).

The 1970s saw a rise of interest in the performance of traditional dance music on the concertina for listening:

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<sup>907</sup> Tom Ward: Eydmann 85.06.A1.

long bellows "breath"

tempo ♩ 184

Ward's variations on bar \*

bar \* as written by Skinner

Ward plays the hornpipe with a distinct lilt. There is an emphasis on the first and third beats of each bar and the first of each group of four quavers is lengthened slightly; Ward's flowing style contrasts with Skinner's dotted version.

Example 11.1 Ward's Hornpipe.

Source: Composed by James Scott Skinner and published in The Scottish Violinist (Glasgow, n.d.) p.43. As played by Tom Ward, transcribed by Stuart Eydmann from tape Eydmann 85.06.A8.

## *The Life and Times of the Concertina*

In the 1970s the most striking growth has been on the instrumental side. The guitar may still be the most common instrument but the native instruments (fiddle, pipes, concertina) have become familiar in all Scottish clubs.<sup>908</sup>

During the 1970s, a number of groups arose in Scotland presenting mainly instrumental music under the influence of The Chieftains. The Boys of the Lough was formed in 1971 to bring together music from the Scottish, Irish and Northumbrian traditions. Founder member Robin Morton from Northern Ireland had already used the concertina to accompany his own singing following inspiration from the playing of Lou Killen and Alf Edwards<sup>909</sup> and now combined it with flute and fiddle. His unadorned playing was featured on the group's first recording in a selection of music from Shetland.<sup>910</sup> On subsequent recordings and performances, the concertina was used to provide drone backing to pipe tunes and to provide a chordal accompaniment in slow airs played strongly on flute and fiddle.

Gordon Hotchkiss (1946- ) from West Lothian and now resident in Glasgow, took up the English concertina while a student in Edinburgh during the late 1960s in order to accompany his performance of "cornkisters" and "bothy ballads". He later developed an interest in the instrumental music of the bagpipe and fiddle traditions as a member of The Whistlebinkies traditional music group during the period 1972-1976. In his accompaniment of the song "Cam' ye o'er Frae France?" (Example 11.2) he uses simple, yet effective, triads, easily fingered on either side of the concertina. Playing along with bagpipes pitched in the key of Bb, Gordon was continually faced with the choice between reorganising the reeds inside his concertina so he could use it as a transposing instrument or learning the music a semitone higher than normally written.<sup>911</sup>

The revival of interest in the use of the concertina in instrumental music was reflected in the inclusion of competitions for concertina playing at festivals organised by the Traditional Music and Song Association of Scotland. This is a principal institution of the revival which seeks to:

Encourage and put before the public the traditional music and song of Scotland. Genuine Scots music and song is always in danger of being swamped by the commercial aspects of mass media.<sup>912</sup>

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<sup>908</sup> MacNaughton, "The Folksong Revival in Scotland", p.202.

<sup>909</sup> Wayne, "The Concertina Revival Part 2", pp.9-10.

<sup>910</sup> The Boys of the Lough (Trailer LER 2086).

<sup>911</sup> Bagpipe music is written "in A" but sounds a semitone higher. Normally, when not playing with the bagpipes, the fiddler, accordionist or concertina player will play in the key as written.

<sup>912</sup> Advertisement, in concert programme for The Boys of the Lough (1975).

tempo  $d = 104$

*flute, fiddle and voice*

*concertina*

Cam ye o'er frae France? Cam ye down by Lun-on?

Saw ye Geor-die whelps And his bon-my wo-man?

were ye at the place ca' d the Kitt-le Hous-ie?

saw ye Geor-die's graze Rid-ing on a goos-ie?

**Example 11.2** Cam ye o'er frae France.

Source: Traditional, as played by Gorden Hotchkiss with the Whistlebinkies. Transcribed by Stuart Eydmann from tape c.1975 in the collection of Edward McGuire.

### *The Life and Times of the Concertina*

In playing instrumental music, most revival players adopted a simple, melodic style which contrasts with that of the band, music hall and sacred traditions mentioned earlier. In some cases this may have been a deliberate form of “primitivism”, although such a style is not incompatible with the monodic tradition in Scottish music already discussed in the connection with the rural musician Peter Campbell in Chapter 9.0.

Norman Chalmers (194?- ) is an exception among the early champions of the concertina in the Scottish revival in that he did not originally adopt the concertina to accompany his own singing. During the 1970s he was very active as a player at festivals and “sessions” in pubs and a member of several folk groups. Family connections with the island of St. Kilda inspired his interest in Gaelic music, including the “west coast” style of button accordion playing, and his flowing style with crisp grace notes and little harmony reflects his interest in the bagpipe repertory and style (Example 11.3). In the example, Norman’s playing illustrates a trend in instrumental music in the revival in Scotland from the late 1970s onwards which saw a more thorough approach to the interpretation of fiddle and bagpipe music, with borrowings (e.g. ornamentation) from the related Irish tradition. His playing does not attempt to directly imitate the bagpipe sound so much as draw out its essential qualities.

The most striking aspect of the concertina revival in Scotland is the fact that few young players have had any direct contact with the older generations of musicians discussed in earlier chapters. There were exceptions to this. For Tom Ward, a chance encounter with a concertina player when he was a child kindled his interest:

Well, I first got interested in the concertina when at a Burns supper actually, in the village... where one of the performers actually played the concertina and he played, naturally at a Burns supper, he played some of the Burns airs, tunes for the songs. “Flow Gently, Sweet Afton” actually is one that I can remember and it really, it really got to me because I felt it was a lovely instrument. The harmonics and everything fitted together so beautifully and he used the old fashioned swinging technique which actually brings the instrument into its best, I think really in solo airs or anything like that.

I never met him, actually, again and I was really quite a young boy at the time but I never really forgot it and that really started the interest in the instrument really.<sup>913</sup>

Some others came from families which had some involvement in evangelistic activities. Geordie McIntyre of Glasgow, for example, had a number of evangelical singers in his family, including his uncle Neil McIntyre (“Scotland’s Blind Evangelist”) and grandfather Dugald McIntyre who played concertina. Despite

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<sup>913</sup> Tom Ward: Eydmann 85.08.A1.

tempo : ♩. = 126

hardly sounded

etc

typical bagpipe version

etc

 sounds nearer  but is often notated more simply as I have chosen to do.

**Example 11.3 The Skye Man's Jig.**

Source: Traditional, setting by Duncan Johnstone and published in Duncan Johnstone Collection of Jigs and Hornpipes Volume 2 (Glasgow, 1979) p.31. As played by Norman Chalmers, transcribed by Stuart Eydmann from gramophone record Jock Tamson's Bairns (Temple TP002, 1980).

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having rejected the religious message, such young players did retain certain aspects of musical behaviour associated with their home environment including, informal communal singing and the use of the concertina.

The revival players' acquisition of their instruments is also of interest here. With some, the concertina was handed down within their family and this kindled some obligation to play, to maintain a link with the past, even though there was no direct contact with older players. For others, the discovery of an old instrument in a saleroom or second-hand dealer's shop was led to its "rescue" -a physical act paralleling the "collection" of folk music and song which, of course, was central to the revival. The decision to play often came later.

### **"Concertina Consciousness" in the 1970s and 80s**

By the mid 1970s, the concertina was adopted not only as an instrument appropriate to the revival but also as its emblem. It was possible, for instance, for a record company to employ as the sleeve design of a gramophone record<sup>914</sup> a "honeycomb" made up of different concertina end-plates, despite the fact that the instrument was hardly used on the disc. The high degree of "concertina consciousness" could not have been reached, however, without the contribution of a small number of enterprising individuals who worked to promote, make, publicise and supply the concertina at the time. The most notable of these was, without doubt, Neil Wayne. Wayne became interested in the concertina while a student at Nottingham during the 1960s and began to collect old instruments and documentary evidence relating to their invention and manufacture. Around 1970, he published "The Concertina Newsletter" (later "Free Reed") which sought to spread information among enthusiasts.<sup>915</sup> Having established a network of contacts he went on to develop a retail business dealing in concertinas, and a specialist company, "Free Reed", was formed to issue records of revival players and field recordings of older musicians. Links were made with the International Concertina Association, and workshops and seminars were established at folk music festivals. Wayne's substantial archive of material relating to the concertina forms the basis of his private "Concertina Museum" near Derby.

Ledang has identified "accessibility" (i.e. availability) as a key prerequisite in the revival of any music instrument.<sup>916</sup> This was certainly a crucial factor in the case of the concertina. Despite increasing demand, concertina production in Great Britain during the 1970s was very limited. Only the companies of Wheatstone, which had been taken over by Boosey and Hawkes in the 1950s, and H. Crabb and Son were making instruments and their combined output could be counted in dozens per year.

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<sup>914</sup> "The First Folk Review Record" advertised in *Folk Review* Vol.5, No.1 (November 1975).

<sup>915</sup> The newsletter had a circulation of 900 in 1972 and 1500 in 1974 with over half of the subscribers members of folk clubs.

<sup>916</sup> "Revival and Innovation...", p.154.

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Much of their work was concerned with the overhaul and repair of existing instruments rather than the manufacture of new ones. In the early 1970s, a new English concertina could cost up to £250 and an Anglo-German model £150, with a waiting time of over 12 months.<sup>917</sup> Most prospective concertinists therefore depended on the second hand market where instruments could be acquired more quickly and cheaply. A number of specialist dealers operated to meet demand and prices rose accordingly. In a short time, however, new concertina makers emerged from within the ranks of the folk revival and a wider infrastructure of suppliers and repairers developed to meet demand.

Colin Dipper (1948- ) of Heytesbury, Wiltshire, commenced concertina manufacture around 1972 and had made over 100 instruments by 1984.<sup>918</sup> Steve Dickinson, who had become interested in the instrument through folk music in the early 1970s, purchased Wheatstone and Co. as a going concern from Boosey and Hawkes in 1974<sup>919</sup> and Hamish Bayne, the prominent Scottish folk singer and musician mentioned earlier, commenced production of his “Holmwood Concertina” some years later.<sup>920</sup> Each of the new makers operated as a small cottage industry making instruments to order. Their designs are based on the best instruments of the past and there is much emphasis on the highest quality materials and hand finishing.

Despite the healthy second-hand market and the rise of new manufacturers, the cost of a concertina remained a major influence on levels of adoption. By 1980, the revival of interest in the concertina had taken on an international dimension with demand for instruments coming also from Europe, Australia and North America where good concertinas could change hands for thousands of pounds. With the rise in value there was also an interest in the concertina from the antique trade and the instrument now features regularly in the sales catalogues of Sotheby’s and other auction houses. In response to increased demand, the Italian company Bastari and the German company Hohner began factory production of English concertinas and the retailer Hobgoblin introduced instruments built by hand in their Sussex workshops which were “designed to fill a specific gap in the market”.<sup>921</sup> These mid-priced instruments, which employed innovative internal layouts and non-traditional materials to reduce costs, met with some success with amateurs.

The increasing popularity of the concertina also led to new demands for learning facilities. Mention has already been made of the published tutors of Edwards and

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<sup>917</sup> Price list of H. Crabb and Son, London, c.1970.

<sup>918</sup> “Colin Dipper: An Interview” *Concertina and Squeezebox* Vol.2, No.4 (Autumn 1984) pp.14-21; “Colin Dipper Exposed” *Concertina and Squeezebox* 12 (1986) pp.26-31; “The Shantyman Concertina” *Concertina and Squeezebox* 21 (Autumn 1989) pp.11-15.

<sup>919</sup> Letter to the editor, *Journal of the Galpin Society* XLV (March 1992) p.200. See also “Dickinson Concertinas” *Concertina Magazine* (Autumn 1983) pp.2-4.

<sup>920</sup> “A Budding Concertina Masterbuilder in the British Midlands” *Concertina and Squeezebox* 18 and 19 (1989) pp.64- 68. My archive contains a recording of a seminar on concertina making led by Bayne in Edinburgh, 24 March 1989 (Eydmann 89.01.A1-A27).

<sup>921</sup> Advertisement in *Concertina and Free Reed* Vol.1, No.2 (Spring 1983) p.15.



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Butler which were pressed into service and of Alistair Anderson's influential guide. Richard Carlin published a tutor, "The English Concertina", in New York in 1977 which was aimed at the folk revival player and a few years later new tutors for both English and Anglo-German concertinas were issued in Great Britain.<sup>922</sup> More recently, further playing guides have been published in the United States to meet growing demand there.<sup>923</sup>

Neil Wayne's "retiral" from the folk music world, with the demise of his business and the closure of "Free Reed" around 1980, marked the end of the peak of revived interest in the concertina in Great Britain. Subsequent waves of "concertina consciousness" passed through both North America and Australia where similar communities of interest and infrastructures emerged.

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<sup>922</sup> Watson, Roger Handbook for English Concertina (London, 1981) and Handbook for the Anglo Chromatic Concertina (London, 1981).

<sup>923</sup> For example, Quann, Fred A Handbook of the Concertina (Tampa, n.d.) and the video cassette Townley, John The Seaman's Concertina: A Beginning Guide to the Anglo Concertina in the Nautical Style (Mendocino, n.d.).

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