



MUSIC IN THE AIR SOMEWHERE: THE SHIFTING BORDERS OF WEST VIRGINIA'S FIDDLE AND SONG TRADITIONS

ERYNN MARSHALL

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Music in the Air Somewhere is a study on conventions that many West Virginians hold dear: fiddle music and folk traditions. It is also a look into the broad influences that folk music has on fiddlers' compositions and their practices. By exploring the oral histories and music of seven celebrated, life-long West Virginian musicians, Erynn Marshall illuminates the diversity of these music traditions and the culmination of fiddle song genres. These vocal and musical pieces have transformed into various forms of the art, and each can be independent of the other. Four song pieces are analyzed and contrasted in seven studies through instrumental and vocal interpretation. Characteristics such as rhythmic elaboration, melodic variation, increased ornamentation, reduced fluctuation in key and tempo, the imitation of vocal "dwells", and the addition of "ending tags" are all analyzed to explain these phenomena in fiddle-song tradition. Through the studies of these musicians' lives, oral transmission, social contexts, and analysis of various genres within the contexts, Marshall expresses how the instrumental and vocal tradition has merged and transformed over time, blurring the present boundaries and perceptions of the art. Included with this intense survey of Appalachian tradition is a CD of Marshall's field and archival recordings of West Virginia musicians Warren Cronin, Rita Emerson, Lela Gerkins, Leland Hall, Phyllis Marks, Lester and Linda McCumbers, Woody and William Simmons, Melvin Wine, and the Sandy Valley Boys.

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