

music with folk music. But the real distinction is between folk music and art music—between music which is spontaneous, untrained, and intuitive, and that which is cultivated, conscious and intentional. For example, immediately the spirituals passed from the unconscious life of the Negro into the conscious American mind, they became popular art music.

Second, art music brings with it composer and audience. In folk music neither exists. All are composers, and music is common property. The split between musical and unmusical, composer and audience, implicit in all art music, comes with civilization.

Third, modern dance music is international. Folk music is local only. Swing is a world form—its "hits" are "hits" everywhere. American dance music stands to the twentieth century as Italian music stood to the eighteenth, universally comprehensible. But music then was a perquisite of the aristocratic and landed classes. The focus has shifted since, and with democracy in politics we have democracy in music also. The minuet was the dance of the aristocracy, the waltz the dance of the middle classes, but jive is for every one.

Fourth, that if the Folk Song is dynamic—that is, continually growing and taking on new life—swing is static. Springing from an individual mind, it can go no further. Gramophone, radio, and film have sent swing to every part of the earth, but, once recorded, whether on disk, sound track, or sheet music, it is at an end, and no further growth is possible. In Folk Song, you are able not only to accept or reject a tune, but to leave on it an impress of your own, however slight. Swing you either accept or reject, nothing more. Even the tunes you enjoy become tedious, because you cannot vary them or bring to them anything of your own, and in time you reject them also, and so the tunesmiths are kept busy. Dance music now is as impersonal as it is universal.

Fifth, in folk music, technique is unimportant. The only instrument was the unaccompanied human voice and it

had no value in itself except as an instrument, a means. In swing, technique is all-important, the instrument paramount. It is Benny Goodman's clarinet, Harry James' trumpet, Tommy Dorsey's trombone—ever faster, hotter, dirtier rhythms. This points to a preoccupation with virtuosity, which in turn points to a lack of content. To fill this gap they are drawing more and more on the classics, and straining their technical resources. This is always symptomatic of a lack of genuine inspiration.

Last, swing has two sets of standards, musical and commercial, which are hard to reconcile. There is often a split, and the balance is upset. When this happens, some sort of debasement usually results. The decay of the folk song began as soon as it was commercialized.

Swing, then, is not folk music. Does it matter? I doubt if it does. Folk music is almost extinct—with the universal education promised, it will be dead in another century. But I do not think swing is very important either. It is the popular music of our time, and all popular music is short-lived. It will attach itself more and more directly to the radio, and particularly the films, which will soon be the meeting-place of all the popular arts. Serious music will be the specialized enjoyment of a relatively small clique, as poetry is to-day, and will find its inspiration elsewhere.

