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J. F. and T. M. Flett. Traditional Dancing in Scotland. With an Appendix Dancing in Cape Breton Island Nova Scotia by F. Rhodes. Nashville, Tenn. Vanderbilt University Press. 1966. ix + 313 pp. \$8.95.

Jean J. McLellan

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REVIEWS

major scale, will be found to correspond in the sequence of their intervals to the seven 'Church' or 'Ecclesiastical' Modes. This is a fact the more remarkable in that the correspondence seems to be fortuitous, for the Church Modes have other theories for the process of their formation (too abstruse to be discussed here). (p. 11)

Mr. Collinson's first step should surely have been to describe the basic Church Modes as a natural and expected background, with or without a reference to their probable origins in the Ancient World. He could, thereafter, have described the "gapped" scales.

The lack of perspective which these quotations reveal could be very misleading to the reader who does not already possess a wide knowledge of music history.

The author concludes one part of his text by emphasising that the songs he has discussed "are not something extracted from old manuscripts; they are still sung in Scotland today." The emphasis on traditional music as a colourful, living art—one which Mr. Collinson is doing much to perpetuate—is a most commendable and attractive feature of this book, even if this particular antithesis seems parochial in the face of so much other fine music which has been reborn (and is very much alive) *through* extraction "from old manuscripts."

THOMAS MESSENGER
ROYAL SCOTTISH ACADEMY OF MUSIC

J. F. and T. M. Flett. *Traditional Dancing in Scotland. With an Appendix Dancing in Cape Breton Island Nova Scotia* by F. Rhodes. Nashville, Tenn. Vanderbilt University Press. 1966. ix + 313 pp. \$8.95.

J. F. and T. M. Flett have made painstaking research with obvious enthusiasm for their *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*. It is a well produced book describing the social dancing activities of the Scottish people prior to 1914 with brief references to later years for purposes of comparison.

In the lively pictures they conjure up of weddings, ceilidhs and travelling dancing masters, a light-hearted side of the Scottish character

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emerges in contrast to the somewhat humourless dourness so often attributed to the Scot. The delightful illustration by courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum is well chosen and entirely in keeping with the contents.

The technical descriptions of movements, figurations and dances, tend to presume, in the reader, a basic knowledge of dancing and music. Nevertheless, they are clear and interesting and leavened by quotes which indicate the objective humour of the authors.

Of particular delight for this reader is the chapter (9) dealing with Shetland Reels. To anyone who regrets modern uniformity, these descriptions seem to reveal a more natural response to music, a wider variety of steps with more grace and imagination than is evident to-day. This and other chapters could well arouse in teachers a desire to revive some of the old interpretations, to regain individuality and enrich the demonstration of group dances.

This book is rewarding reading for the serious student of the dance and of considerable value to those whose interest lies in placing dancing in perspective within the historical social structure.

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