

11 | The British Folk Revival: Mythology and the ‘Non-Figuring’ and ‘Figuring’ Woman

MICHAEL BROCKEN

During the mid-1990s (1994–1997) I successfully completed my doctoral research concerning the British folk revival, its histories, and its various manifestations up until that time. A year or so after my graduation in 1998, the thesis was uploaded in its entirety to Rod Stradling’s *Musical Traditions* electronic magazine-cum-website (www.mustrad.org.uk). Following this, in 2002 Ashgate enquired about publishing the research in book form. As a consequence, in 2003 under the title of *The British Folk Revival 1944–2002*, about two-thirds of the work was edited and published by Ashgate; it has remained more or less in print ever since.¹

It is now, however, in need of a thorough update-cum-rewrite and I suggest this because (i) it appears somewhat historically prescient and also because (ii) in 2014 I effectively ‘returned’ to the folk revival when BBC Radio Merseyside asked me to present the *Folkscene* radio programme alternating each week with the legendary folk music broadcaster Stan Ambrose.² Sadly, Stan passed away in 2016, so I am now the sole ‘voice’ of the show. Re-immersing myself as I did, I could see that the folk scene had thrown off at least some of its weighty ideologically constructed demons, and by doing so had rearticulated itself into a far more exciting, proactive, and entertaining environment than the one I had previously studied – especially regarding the contemporary ‘figuring’ of women (versus historical ‘non-figuring’)³ – although there is much still to be done.

Gender and My Mid-1990s Thesis

For that earlier doctoral research, I had not considered writing much about gender issues. I felt that my research findings were controversial enough as they stood: drawing attention to the many problems encountered by myself regarding the trajectory of folk music ideology, business, and dissemination at that time. Also, not being female, I did not feel entirely qualified to engage with the alarming stereotyping of women I had come across. However, in the seventh chapter of the thesis gender was discussed a little. As one example, I cited an interview with my former guitar tutor,

local folk singer Bob Buckle. Bob informed me of a gig that he and his singing partner Pete Douglas ('the Leesiders') had played at Ewan MacColl's folk club (I think it was the Scots Hoose in Moore Street, London) in the 1960s. After the evening's proceedings had 'officially' drawn to a close, he asked MacColl a question: 'what about women?' Bob recalled the response:

From what I can remember it was just when women's rights started to get a little press. Ewan said that women had to stand in line behind the rest of 'us' [i.e. the implication being that the 'us' was men]. The class war came first; then we could deal with women's issues. But I was never really convinced that he had any interest in gender issues. He had laid out his political stall years before, and stuck to it.⁴

I can still recall feelings of revulsion upon hearing this. Although I had never been a follower or fan of MacColl (I didn't care for his Marxist and later Maoist politics or his Critics Group purisms), I certainly respected much of both his and Bert Lloyd's research. However, the more I learnt about this folk 'axis', the more I mistrusted their formalist a priori critical/historical determinisms, which appeared to hold scant respect for any kind of radical emancipation for women (or anyone else, for that matter). MacColl's reported misogynist comments certainly resonated across my research, for these masculine tropes disguised as 'policy' reeked of the folk revival that I had come to know.

Looking back now, I suppose it all reflected the misogynist nature of British society at that time: one seldom feels that the popular music scene to which one is drawn is a representation of broader society, but (one way or another) it usually is. I much later learnt that the legendary folk singer Shirley Collins had also found both MacColl's and Lloyd's attitudes towards her as a female artist contemptible. According to Colin Irwin:

Shirley never really conformed to the perceived wisdom of the folk revival, as voiced by Ewan MacColl, Bert Lloyd and others of an ilk who sought to shape folk song . . . to further their political agendas . . . She doesn't have much good to say about the MacColl school of revivalism – or Bert Lloyd come to that . . . she never did forgive Lloyd for his patronising (Shirley used the word 'snidey') original sleeve note description of her on [the LP] *Sweet Primeroses* as 'a sweet singer from Sussex'. 'I didn't like either of them [stated Shirley]. They were Svengalis in their way who wanted to shape people and shape the way things were . . . I wanted to go it alone and do what I thought was right and do what I wanted to do.'⁵

Such blithe dismissals of women in the British post-Second-World-War folk revival (a kind of 'here, but not here' ghostly shadow) should also be

placed into the historical-political matrix of mid-twentieth-century British Marxism. As Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson have commented:

When in the 1960s, women in the new left began to extend prior talk about 'women's rights' into the more encompassing discussion of 'women's liberation', they encountered the fear and hostility of their male comrades and the use of Marxist political theory as a support for these reactions. Many men of the new left argued that the gender issues were of secondary importance because subsumable under more basic modes of oppression, namely class and race.⁶

Both Bob Buckle's comments concerning MacColl and the above quote from Fraser and Nicholson made it into my PhD thesis, but were not present in the published Ashgate text. I cannot recall whether the decision to omit these important statements was mine, or my editor's, but I know that I later regretted it, for it was quite evident that the one key element of the British folk revival's musical-historical discourse was its overtly masculine narrative. Indeed, it was only via such a limited, myopic focus that the folk scene's self-directed hagiography could even exist: stitching together 'acceptable' folk fragments in a male-oriented *post hoc ergo propter hoc* fallacy. This artificial masculine linear narrative ('because of this came this') connected only those 'facts' deemed appropriate.

I found all folk clubs to be particularly problematic in this respect, with most members projecting into folk performances particular kinds of masculine-interpreted social and musical fantasies that gratified their folk 'historical' inclinations. Ruth Finnegan (whose work I still admire) acknowledged that 'folkies' in Milton Keynes in the late-1980s 'associated their music, and hence themselves, with "the folk" – ordinary people – in the past and present',⁷ but I felt that she had neither recognised or articulated that this 'ordinary people' visage-cum-fantasy was effectively a masculine-centric hypothesis (the authentic working-class male) communicated within a male-dominated environment (the folk club, the pub). To me, it all appeared, not only part of the male sphere of socialisation, but also authority.

Towards the end of my research I came to feel that I had not even scratched the surface of the 'non-figuring' folk woman, and felt that as long as folk music performances in British folk clubs continued to be devised from masculinised politico-heritage tropes, they would continue to marginalise in song and dance not only female roles, but also other partially hidden folk music narratives (e.g. those concerning race, sexuality, mental illness, etc.). To me, the folk club was a recidivist environment: a patriarchal, self-indulgent (albeit somewhat contested) place of worship, out of step with broader societal

developments. Back in 1989, Finnegan had also suggested that women felt relatively comfortable in the folk clubs she attended in Milton Keynes, but from my own research I found this not to be the case (I still hold ethnographic research on the topic). By 1993 Georgina Boyes was already declaring:

For all its apparent innovation and variety, the Revival was **hidebound** [my emphasis] by historical theory. Determinedly reproducing a policy of authenticity ... the Folk Revival had succeeded ... but unless its fundamental concepts of the Folk and folk culture were rejected, the movement had no possibility for development.⁸

Folk clubs were undoubtedly in a demographic predicament of vast proportions: for example in an article concerning the young folk club organiser Jane Threlfall, *Folk Roots* editor Ian A. Anderson suggested that:

For the future a new generation of organisers is required; clubs in the '60s were run in the main by people barely out of their teens, and there's no reason why this can't happen in the '90s. For though Jane Threlfall wasn't deterred by the people round her being twenty-odd years her senior, many young people, even those that enjoy the music, are put off.⁹

Actually, as projected in my thesis, a marked decline of folk clubs did come about. These days the 'traditional' club is merely one facet of a healthier, disparate, and voluminous folk music environment.¹⁰ There exists a folk scene that encapsulates all different kinds of venues, events, and musical performances from great festivals and concert halls, to arts centres, and tiny house gigs. The folk scene still has a long way to travel in advocating a plurality of ethics, beliefs, and epistemologies, but at least it has now largely rejected the concept of humanity as a unitary male-informed 'given'. What follows are, I hope, examples of this: firstly, excerpts from two discussions between myself and two 'figuring' women currently involved in the 2019 British folk music scene: one, a female folk music performer, the other a female folk music business woman. Secondly, I also include in my summary a small vignette concerning one of my former music students, 'Mary'.

Folk Music Performance: Emily Portman

Emily Portman is an integral part of the British folk scene's current 'new wave'; she is a highly regarded singer, writer, and concertina player, and has recently won several awards.¹¹ For example, she was the 2013 holder of the

BBC Radio Two Folk Award for 'Best Original Song', and in the 2016 Folk Awards she was nominated for 'Best Singer'. In addition, Emily is a member of the Furrow Collective. This group also features Lucy Farrell, Rachel Newton, and Alasdair Roberts. They were awarded the prestigious 'Best Band' in the 2017 BBC Folk Awards. Emily lives in Liverpool, and she briefly presented BBC Radio Merseyside's *Folkscene* prior to myself. She has written articles for *fROOTS* magazine, and has given lectures on ballad studies at Cecil Sharp House and at The International Ballad Conference. She also teaches on the traditional music degree at Newcastle University. I would admit that I'm a fan of her work and have played several Emily Portman and Furrow Collective tracks on *Folkscene*.

As a new Furrow Collective tour approached (including an important gig lined up on 23 April 2019 at the Liverpool Philharmonic Music Room), Emily came into BBC Radio Merseyside to co-present *Folkscene*. Rather than interview guests per se, I have a policy of asking guests to co-present the programme. So, in addition to promoting their event and/or new release they might simply comment as and when they feel is appropriate. This awards the programme a more relaxed 'organic' feel which at the same time befits the aesthetics of the twenty-first-century folk scene. I also later visited Emily at her home, on 30 May 2019, to continue our conversation a little.

Following a lively discussion of both Emily's solo career and the Furrow Collective tour and latest album, I asked her, what it was like as a woman on the folk scene in 2019. Emily responded:

I only have my own experiences to go on; the other weekend I was down at King's Place in London, part of a 'Women in Music' panel discussion, and there was a conversation going on about women and folk music . . . Rachel Newton was leading the discussion, my agent Sarah Coxon, *Songlines* editor Jo Frost, and Sarah Jones of the EFDSS (English Folk Dance and Song Society) were on the panel. Conversations like these are important: raising issues like the casual objectification of women on stage, and gender imbalance on festival line-ups. I hope that young female performers today won't face any of the things that myself and other female performers have faced – those over-familiar older male fans (or promoters, or hosts) who insist on hugs, comperes who comment on your appearance rather than your music, or the patronising sound engineers who assume you know nothing. These small instances can add up to create inequalities, but with a little awareness they can be prevented.¹²

I responded by stating that during my mid-'90s research, I came across a great deal of tokenism, with folk authenticity residing for many in the masculine, not the feminine. Emily replied:

Yes; organisations such as FairPlé (in Ireland)¹³ and the BIT Collective (in Scotland)¹⁴ discuss the lack of visibility for female instrumentalists. . . . Female folk singers, often surrounded by male accompanists, are considered the norm. But less is expected of female instrumentalists. It's a common story for audiences and promoters alike to *still* be surprised when female instrumentalists can actually play as well as their male counterparts! There are some brilliant instrumentalists out there, for example Kathryn Tickell, Rachel Newton [to name but two] who incidentally are the only women to have ever won instrumentalist of the year at the Folk Awards. Why is that and why are less women choosing to forge musical careers, particularly as instrumentalists? Perhaps they think it's not viable or they're losing confidence at some level.

Partly it's to do with visibility and challenging stereotypes. PRS Research has shown there are a lot of girls learning instruments but they're not going on to be performers. I remember when I went to university playing guitar, I looked at all the brilliant male guitarists and felt there was no point in continuing to play. I considered my experience an isolated one, but it came up on the panel discussion that most of us had lost confidence and given up playing at some point.

We can start countering this early on, with parents and teachers taking care not to lead their child into an instrument because they are a girl or a boy. A lot of instruments are unconsciously gendered – not just the guitar – we need more female pipers, for sure! I do think there's a growing awareness in education: Lucy Green's work, for example, and traditional music can offer so many different ways of learning.

Emily also remarked:

Maybe it's a bit naïve to think that [on the folk scene] we're exempt from these gender biases. The folk scene is known for being inclusive – so some women have felt very vulnerable when starting a conversation about gender inequalities, nobody wants to cause offence, especially to all those wonderful people who put their heart and soul into encouraging young folkies – we don't mean you! It's hard to criticise or speak out without coming under fire for being 'man-hating' or just whinging about nothing. But what seems to be emerging is a growing sense of awareness that can hopefully move us towards making the folk scene as enabling towards women as men.

Also, from personal experience, wider issues about being a self-employed parent and musician need addressing. Being freelance is precarious and not always conducive to earning money and freelance women can end up looking after the children and forgoing their careers. It can be difficult to justify childcare costs and even more difficult to go away on tour. You don't want to turn down the gig: aside from loving performing there's the money needed to live, band dynamics, and of course the perceived pressure of keeping up your visibility.

For me, seeing performers like Eliza Carthy and Nancy Kerr have families and continue to perform was inspiring and it's becoming, quite rightly, far more usual. Not

to say it hasn't been a challenge. I toured with both my kids when they were babies and found some venues to be wonderful and others to be hugely challenging, sometimes with no back-stage area or any space to breastfeed or store milk. Ultimately it makes all the difference if venues are able to accommodate musician parents – it means we can continue to do our jobs, in a profession that isn't geared towards family life. It's also a great step forward to see folk festivals taking the need for gender equality on board and questioning whether they always need that all-male band to end the evening. Hopefully this won't just turn out to be tokenism and will create a sea-change in the way that things are programmed, in the gendering of musical instruments, in the way that people think it's alright to comment on what a woman is wearing rather than what instrument she's playing . . . We're heading in the right direction and hopefully soon these panel discussions won't be deemed necessary!

(On the practicalities of trying to combine a freelance career with parenthood, see also Chapter 16, 'Women in the Music Industries: The Art of Juggling'.)

Emily also brought up the issue of singing what might be described as 'badly chosen' traditional song material. We discussed this at some length, agreeing that the rape, infanticide, and murder narratives contained in some ballads and traditional songs require at the very least discussion, re-contextualisation or perhaps 'answering' in a new song (as Emily has done in her song 'Borrowed and Blue'). After all, popular music is kinetic and perhaps, just like Marx's 'modern man', should **not** be preserved as if 'in aspic'. (For another account of a woman's experiences in the contemporary British folk scene, see 'In Her Own Words: Practitioner Contribution 2', by Virginia Kettle.)

Folk Music Business: Rose Price

Rose Price is a folk and acoustic music promoter 'born, bred, and buttered within the city walls of Chester'.¹⁵ For the past five years Rose has promoted under the name of SoundBox at such venues in the city as 'Upstairs at the Lock Keeper', St Mary's Creative Space, and St Mary's Handbridge Centre. Rose was previously an editor for two editions of the *Chester Standard* series of local newspapers. The 'SoundBox' moniker emerged from her weekly 'what's on' column of the same name. Kate Rusby and Jacqui McShee's Pentangle were two early promotions, together with a stint for Chester Fringe, devising, and curating pop-up music events, and also booking O'Hooley & Tidow for what was their debut performance in Chester. Rose had been involved in folk and acoustic music for a long time:

I started comparatively young by the standards of the day and was fifteen at the time. Chester was a very 'folkie' place when I was younger, and it was a distinctly male-dominated environment. I'd been asked to join an established folk duo, prominent in the folk scene then and had never been into a folk club before . . . There were scarcely any local female groups or solo performers. This was undoubtedly due to the generally accepted perception of a 'woman's place' . . . etc. The guys called the shots and I felt that I had to follow. I suppose I respected their experience, too – that was the way it was. Now times have caught up with all that – ostensibly!¹⁶

Rose also informed me that:

Opportunities to study folk at music colleges have resulted in increased numbers of females emerging in performance and recording contexts. Yet women are still not necessarily well represented at folk festivals. Ironically, attempts to integrate and be accorded the same respect in the business of music making and promotion, has often highlighted a resistance from males that's out of step with contemporary assumptions about 'equality' for women. Attitudes can still be bullying, however passively (or not), sometimes.

I asked her whether she felt it actually 'mattered' being a 'female folk music promoter' (i.e. whether a discussion about gender and folk promotion was even relevant), to which, she replied:

It does matter, but I suppose there's always an element of subjectivity. If you mean do I feel that being a female promoter makes a negative difference, I think possibly it can do. Not so much in working 'remotely' with male booking agents, but perhaps locally. Worse, I think, is when a woman feels 'grateful' for being treated with any semblance of respect by male colleagues! I've developed as a person and a promoter over the last twenty years – but yes, I'm wary – and some of that wariness is justified. I'm now more aware of the potential for obstructive male attitudes to frustrate and hamper the endeavours of women in the folk music industry; from committee room to concert stage. In the North-West [of England] there are definitely certain factions and still a lot of ground to be made-up . . . [For example] local festivals can still demonstrate an appalling gender imbalance in their programming.

Regarding the current folk music industry, Rose found that 'if you don't go through an agent and deal directly with the artists, it can be far easier'. I replied that as a radio presenter I dealt on a regular basis with many female publicity people, to which Rose replied that one might interpret this as women 'being handed the worst job'. She knew 'from personal experience' that press release work was a 'very time consuming, and often thankless, job'. She suggested, too, that such work might even be 'passed on to women, referencing the secretarial/admin role, traditionally

associated with females'. However, she also stated 'these days, from an agency perspective, it's not overly male dominated, especially in the larger agencies where they need to cover a wide artist roster'.

I enquired whether, as a female promoter in Chester, she ever felt exposed:

Yes sometimes, if I'm honest. At times it's a bit like fighting an establishment; this can be territorial too – so yes, I do. Also, I feel 'tested' sometimes [i.e. as if others are 'testing' her]. At meetings with council officials and councillors, and non-governmental committees, they can be inappropriately competitive. Whereas we all seem to get on OK on the surface, perhaps with a nod to political correctness, occasionally I feel that the male 'pulls rank' (whether or not he holds any rank!). A female making the same stand would be viewed as . . . troublesome and an irritant!

The discussion moved on to folk music festival organisation: we both noted that the 2019 Wirral Folk Festival had returned following a year's absence in 2018 brought about by the illness of one of the organising committee. Previously, Rose and I had discussed taking over the festival's management for a year, rather than see its removal from the UK festival calendar; but nothing came of it. Upon its restoration, the festival continued to be organised by a committee. I asked Rose whether she might have put herself into a position of joining a committee to help organise and/or promote a folk festival (i.e. rather than sole-promote, as she currently did). She replied that she felt there might be 'too many battles that would be unwanted distractions' and felt that at present:

Hanging on to the reins at SoundBox is preferable, even though there are still some administrative hurdles. All things considered, the SoundBox venture allows certain freedoms to permit use of personal judgement, integrity, and gut instinct regarding programming, how SoundBox presents to its audiences, how I deal with our venue owners/managers, agents, artistes, etc. Whilst it's not a doddle by any means, it's distinctly preferable to being on a committee with those who may not share the same core values. The 'faffing' around that goes on in many committee meetings can also become an [unwanted] entity in itself.

Rose also suggested that:

A festival committee around here might be very entrenched! Also, as a woman, I might end up conceding an argument that I should really win. So, I would rather promote on my own, with the support sometimes from two or three people I already know and trust; if anything goes wrong, then it's my responsibility. I would rather not retreat into currently male-dominated environments, such as festival-based committees or pub-based folk clubs.

Rose had booked an interesting line-up of artists to play at both 'Upstairs at The Lock Keeper' and at St Mary's Creative Space between September and December 2019: mixed-gendered band Road Not Taken, the Chris Cleverley Trio (including Kim Lowings and Kathy Pilkinton), Chris Foster, Hannah Sanders & Ben Savage, Mishra, and Belinda O'Hooley & Heidi Tidow.

Overall, one might argue that this is an extremely well-balanced programme as far as gender is concerned; out of the fifteen 'featured' artists presented, eight are women and seven are men. These figures might also represent a growth in gender equality across the twenty-first-century British folk scene. For example, since my return to BBC Radio Merseyside in 2014, over 65 per cent of the 2,000-plus tracks I have presented on *Folkscene* have been performed by women: as soloists, in single-gender or mixed-gender duos, trios, and bands. In fact, as Rose has mentioned to me on several occasions, she tends to book those she admires, or those who have previously 'gone down well' at the venues she uses; for example, such popular artists might include (say) O'Hooley and Tidow, as much as (say) Jim Moray; at the very least, 'promising' news for the budding female folk artist.

Summary

I recall supervising a female folk-rock performer at Liverpool Hope University shortly before resuming my radio career in 2014. 'Mary' was approaching completion of her third-year dissertation, the topic of which was the logistics of self-promotion and performing in a mixed-gendered 'folk-style' band. She fronted a mixed female/male unit consisting of two guitarists, a bassist, a fiddle and part-time melodeon player, and a percussionist. They were raw, but had a good sound. They were looking forward to a busy summer, having received several festival bookings between June and September: 'almost enough to make a living' she quipped. 'Mary' informed me that a discussion had taken place the previous day between herself and a Liverpool-based promoter: the band had been booked as a support, but were informed by the promoter that some 'disappointment' had been expressed because they were not an all-girl band. Apparently, the promoter suggested that a former female member of the group, who had recently left, might be encouraged to return 'so that they would appear more of a girl band to the local brewery "guys" sponsoring the gig'. More females on stage apparently 'avoided the likelihood of complaints': tokenism, of course.

'Mary' asked whether I thought they should continue with the booking. I suggested that they might consider withdrawing, because, not only was it typecasting women, but also took no account of the guys in the band. It also struck me that such issues were not simply tokenistic, but also redolent of 'non-figuring' female choices and status. However, a little later that day, I came to change my mind: after all, those anti-female philosophical mono-discourses we persuaded ourselves to follow had been replaced by a tapestry of micro-threads of convergences and contingencies together with micro-circumstances demanding contingent responses.¹⁷ Therefore, I determined to speak to 'Mary' again. I would tell her that there was little to be gained from reducing such complexities to one overall meta-philosophical stance: take the money, play the gig, have a good time, move on.

I saw 'Mary' again on campus the following morning and before I could even get a word in edgeways, she said 'we've decided to keep the gig and are taking the advice to add back "Emma" [the musician who had previously left]. The money's good, we are only on for forty minutes, so: "so what?"' As it turned-out, the promoter in question was female and pressure from the (surprise, surprise) all-male brewery marketing staff was falling on her, rather than the band per se. Although this female promoter appeared to possess power, that power was considered disruptive by the brewery team. 'Mary' suggested that the promoter lacked 'real' authority because she was a woman. So, she and her band had realised they were not victim-performers, per se, and attempted to debate a more multi-layered resolution to this convergent sphere of music performance and music business activity. This created a different starting point for 'Mary' to reflect on her role as a female folk/rock bandleader, as she fashioned a more contingent time-based inflection to the issue: it was more conditional than universal. By doing so, she might have even helped the promoter to maintain her hard-won music business-related status. Evidently, circumstances were not ideal, but neither were they as binary as first appeared. Yes, perhaps the promoter had attempted to 'swerve' the issue by placing it into the hands of 'Mary' and the band. Yet 'Mary' had geared her response specifically towards the micro-context: convergence and contingency supervened mono-philosophical thought.

Any configuration of language-games is contingent: even those mono-historical 'tablets of stone' previously placed before us older 'folkies' by MacColl and Lloyd. Further, all popular music futures are determined by tolerances, borderlines, and frames of reference; for all music scenes create borders and 'frames'. Scenes tolerate as they define via contingent and contextual fields of representation. However, borders surrounding 'tradition(s)'

can exist to encapsulate or purify. As important as they might be in the name of tradition, symbols created by and through the historically rooted folk orthodoxy should no longer frame a so-called 'consensus': one in which the woman 'figures' only via male rhetorical tropes.

Perhaps the most useful way of understanding the many strands of the twenty-first-century British folk scene is via how it has come to recognise and respond to contextual, transient, and discursive musical and social spaces, interventions, and interactions. Within such discursive spaces we are able to allow representations from the past to stand, but can then critique them via the edges and limits of our sonic inspirations and delineations. Whether we like it or not, historical misogyny was once as integral to the social framework of the British folk scene as it was to the social framework of British society. We should not deny this historical fact, but instead express our subjective freedom by and through our actions and creative responses; such subjectivity will serve us well as a reminder not to withdraw into the British folk revival's previous patterns of behaviour, especially regarding the 'non-figuring' woman.

In all the examples discussed above, contingent, contextual, and provisional 'figurings' appear to be far more stable representations of female realities than the masculine-informed folk mythologies in which women were conceived as the 'non-figuring other'. If the British folk scene of the twenty-first-century can be truly described as vitally important popular music praxis, one in which social and cultural mores and issues such as feminism and gender equality are openly debated alongside a priori tropes of tradition, then in spite of the afore-discussed historically appraised recidivism, the awareness that abounds across the scene in terms of egalitarianism and fairness should help foster a variety of exciting and relevant discourses in which young women (and men) might pro-actively engage and 'figure'.

Notes

1. Michael Brocken, *The British Folk Revival 1944–2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
2. I had also previously presented a BBC radio show between 1998 and 2007: *Brock 'n' Roll*.
3. The expression 'figure' is drawn from the work of Meaghan Morris; see Meaghan Morris, *The Pirate's Fiancée: Feminism, Reading, Postmodernism* (London and New York: Verso, 1988), 1–23.
4. Bob Buckle to Mike Brocken (interview), December 1995.

5. Colin Irwin, sleeve notes to the Shirley Collins reissue CD, *The Sweet Primeroses*, Topic Treasure Series, Topic TTSCD003 (2018).
6. Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, 'Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism', in Thomas Docherty (ed.), *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), 422.
7. Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67.
8. Georgina Boyes, *The Imagined Village: Culture, Ideology and the English Folk Revival* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 240–1.
9. Ian A. Anderson, *Folk Roots*, 136 (October 1994), p. 31.
10. 'Traditional' in the sense of existing within the matrix/history of the post-Second-World-War British folk revival.
11. See Portman's website at: www.emilyportman.co.uk/ (accessed 11 December 2020).
12. Emily Portman to Michael Brocken (interview), 30 May 2019.
13. FairPlé, formed in 2018, helps to address the gender imbalance in Irish traditional and folk music; see: www.fairple.com/ (accessed 11 December 2020).
14. The BIT Collective identifies, explores, and helps to deal with gender inequality in Scottish folk and traditional music scenes; <https://en-gb.facebook.com/thebitcollective/> (accessed 11 December 2020).
15. See Price's website at: <https://roseprice.jimdofree.com/> (accessed 11 December 2020).
16. Rose Price to Michael Brocken (interview), 13 May 2019 at Telford's Warehouse, Chester.
17. For example, see Jean-François Lyotard, 'Some of the Things at Stake in Women's Struggles', translated by D. J. Clarke, W. Woodhull, and J. Mowitt, *Sub-Stance*, 20 (1978), 9–17.

Further Reading

- Brocken, Michael. *The British Folk Revival 1944–2002* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003).
- Finnegan, Ruth. *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).