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978-0-521-86303-2 - The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”: Emerging Categories  
from Ossian to Wagner

Matthew Gelbart

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## The Invention of “Folk Music” and “Art Music”

We tend to take for granted the labels we put to different forms of music. This study considers the origins and implications of the way in which we categorize music today. Whereas earlier ways of classifying music were based on its different functions, for the past two hundred years we have been obsessed with creativity and musical origins, and classify music along these lines. Matthew Gelbart argues that folk music and art music became meaningful concepts only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and only in relation to each other. He examines how cultural nationalists motivated the earliest classification of music by origins, and how the notions of folk music and art music followed – in conjunction with changing conceptions of nature, and changing ideas about human creativity. Through tracing the history of these musical categories, the book confronts our assumptions about different kinds of music today.

MATTHEW GELBART teaches in the Music Department at Boston College, Massachusetts. His work has been published in the *Journal of the Royal Music Association*. This is his first book.

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