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Primitive Music

This 1893 study of the music, instruments and dance of the world's indigenous peoples reflects the Victorian view that human development moved from primitive to complex along a linear evolutionary path. Despite this standpoint, it was an important contribution to comparative musicology in the late nineteenth century, demonstrating the principle that studying the music of non-European cultures and societies could help Europeans understand their own musical tradition. On the basis of his comparative analysis, Wallaschek developed a theory that music originated from rhythm and dance rather than the melody of speech. His proposed model moved forward that of Wagner, and recognised that music is embedded as a fundamental element of social interaction. The book describes music and instruments around the world, the role of singing and dance, and tonality and harmony, before discussing the origin of music and the role of heredity and external circumstances on musicality.
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Primitive Music

An Inquiry into the Origin and Development of Music, Songs, Instruments, Dances, and Pantomimes of Savage Races

Richard Wallaschek

Cambridge University Press

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF
MUSIC, SONGS, INSTRUMENTS, DANCES, AND
PANTOMIMES OF SAVAGE RACES

BY

RICHARD WALLASCHEK

WITH MUSICAL EXAMPLES

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PREFACE.

It was a suggestion of my friend Dr. Edward Westermarck that my original essays on primitive music should be revised and amplified so as to form a fairly serviceable treatise on the subject. While engaged in this work I have met with so much assistance and encouragement that I can only quite inadequately acknowledge my deep gratitude to Mrs. Plimmer, Prof. and Mrs. Sully for all the help and advice (scientific and other) they have given me from the beginning of my labours. I have also to express my thanks to Mr. R. H. Legge for his aid in preparing this English version of the work for the press, to Prof. Rhys Davids and Mr. James Sime for giving me the benefit of their knowledge and experience, and to Dr. H. R. Mill for his kind revision of the proof-sheets and for his most valuable suggestions in so many geographical and ethnological details.

As to the importance of ethnology for the science of art I need hardly say many words, it being a generally accepted fact. In the present work it has been my aim to deal with the music of savage races only, while the music of ancient civilisation has merely been glanced at whenever it was necessary to indicate the connecting links between the most primitive and the comparatively advanced culture.
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PREFACE.

With regard to technical particulars I may mention that on Dr. Mill’s advice the names of savage tribes are spelt according to the new system proposed in 1891 by the London Geographical Society. The mode of quoting adopted in this book is that I refer with l. c. to the book mentioned in the list of authorities at the end of this work.

RICHARD WALLASCHEK.

London, April, 1893.
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