

1. Record Nr.	UNISA996248112203316
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Titolo	The invention of "folk music" and "art music" : emerging categories from Ossian to Wagner // Matthew Gelbart [[electronic resource]]
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Cambridge : , : Cambridge University Press, , 2007
ISBN	0-511-35340-5 1-107-17823-1 1-281-15340-0 9786611153403 0-511-35398-7 1-139-13193-1 0-511-35510-6 0-511-48191-8 0-511-35456-8 0-511-35562-9
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (xii, 287 pages) : digital, PDF file(s)
Collana	New perspectives in music history and criticism ; ; 16
Disciplina	786.2
Soggetti	Folk music - History and criticism Music - Europe - 18th century - History and criticism Music - Europe - 19th century - History and criticism Music - Historiography
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Title from publisher's bibliographic system (viewed on 05 Oct 2015).
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	Introduction; 1. Function to origin: national identity and national genius emerge, c. 1700-1780; 2. From pastoral to picturesque: nature, art, and genre in the later eighteenth century; 3. Genius versus Art in the creative process: 'national' and 'cultivated' music as categories, 1760-1800; 4. The invention of folk modality, 1775-1840; 5. 'Folk' and 'tradition': authenticity as musical idiom from the late eighteenth century onward; 6. Organic 'art music' and individual original genius: aestheticizing the folk collective; 7. Local nation and universal folk: the legacy of geography in musical categories; 8. Folk and art music in the modern western world.

Sommario/riassunto

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. 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 nationalism served as the earliest impetus in classifying 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.
