

## Colin Cater on the circular process of folk music

I do not believe for a second that oral tradition is a linear process, because if you believe that then oral tradition is a process of degradation, through which things gradually become destroyed. I believe it's a circular process, and that there are- and that the various different types of input into it are every bit as important as the various different types of output. I therefore don't recognise any sense of distinction between distinction between tradition and revival. It's totally spurious.

I also don't have any discomfort with the idea that people sing what they've learned from the various things that have influenced them, particularly in the formative years of their lives. I believe that there needs to be an absolutely major collection, and that collection needs to be very eclectic in what it recognises as legitimate, and that if that were to happen it would blow the lid off the top of 'folk music', because the amount of music of the 20s, 30s and 40s that would be collected in and among the jewels of songs that are of greater antiquity, the amount of reasonably contemporary music, so outweigh. Now the interesting thing for me, how is it that reasonably contemporary music can be changed by the oral process. What is the oral process? Is it just a process of remembering and regurgitating? No, it's a process of internal transformation.

*Read more about the interview on Essex Archives Online: [SA 30/7/1/7/1](#)*