

By Henry Adam Svec

American Folk Music as Tactical Media

American folk music has long presented a problematic conception of authenticity, but the reality of the folk scene, and its relationship to media, is far more complicated. This book draws on the fields of media archaeology, performance studies, and sound studies to explore the various modes of communication that can be uncovered from the long American folk revival. From Alan Lomax's cybernetic visions to Bob Dylan's noisy writing machines, this book retrieves a subterranean discourse on the concept of media that might help us to reimagine the potential of the networks in which we work, play, and sing.

"Both media ecologist and archeologist, Henry Adam Svec in this powerfully revisionist book shows how the folk revival's communications milieus, metaphors, and, in a brilliant reading of Bob Dylan, its songs, had already discovered that 'the folk and the machine are often one and the same.' From Lomax's computer-generated Global Jukebox and Dylan's Telecaster to today's music apps and YouTube, from the Hootenanny to the Peoples' Mic, the folk process, then as now, Svec argues, reclaims our humanity, reinventing media technologies to become both instruments of resistance and fields for imagining new societies, new selves, and new futures."

Robert Cantwell, author of *When We Were Good: The Folk Revival*

"An intriguing addition to the archive on Tactical Media, Svec's analysis of the American folk revival begins from the premise that acoustic guitars, banjos, and voices have much to teach us about technological communication and ends, beautifully, with an uncovering of 'the folk' within our contemporary media environments. What takes center stage, however, is the Hootenanny, both as it informs the author's own folk-archaeological laboratory of imaginary media and as it continues to instantiate political community - at a time when the need for protest, dissent, and collectivity is particularly acute."

Rita Raley, Associate Professor of English at the University of California, Santa Barbara



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RECURSIONS

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