

ABSTRACT

From Icon to Identity. Scottish Piping & Drumming in Scandinavia

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In the 1960s, a few individuals in Scandinavia got so interested in Scottish Highland piping and pipe band drumming that they started to play themselves, although there was no existing tradition for this music in Scandinavia, and they formed a small community of dedicated pipers and drummers.

The major objectives of this thesis is to analyse the background to why and processes through which the marginal culture of Scottish piping and drumming spread to and developed in Scandinavia as well as to interrogate what use and function this genre of music may have in Scandinavia.

Highland piping emerged as part of the clan chiefs' power structure in the Gaelic clan society of the Scottish Highlands in the sixteenth century. Later, the Great Highland Bagpipe was adopted by the British army where it retained its function of representing political power, further strengthened by the formation of bands of pipers and drummers in the nineteenth century. The bagpipe also became a strong romantic icon of Scotland, an image spread over the world by the British army and later by mass media, making the Great Highland Bagpipe *the* bagpipe.

Many of the Scandinavian pioneers acquired their interest at the encounter of the impressive appearance of a pipe band. In the thesis, the mechanisms behind the formation of an interest as a fantasy and its realisation are discussed against a framework of psychoanalytical concepts related to identity and personal identity choices facilitated and required by modern Western society.

The Scandinavian enthusiasts met with a very strong tradition of Scottish pipers and drummers who were more than willing to share their knowledge and culture. By means of books, recordings and a few lessons, a number of Scandinavians managed to learn and develop their playing, gradually copying the Scottish tradition.

The initial interest of the pioneers was directed both towards the music and the iconic extramusical aspects of the genre, but today the music and the competitive aspects of the genre are at the centre of interest for most players. The general audience in Scandinavia still sees the genre as an icon of Scotland or as something exotic.

The pioneers sought an identity in the icon of an exotic genre of music but found an identity as members of a small world-wide community of like minded musicians.