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- S: Miss Harper?
- T: Yes, can I help you?
- S: hi, my name's Eric Paterson, I am a journalism student, I wanted to ask you about the orchestra.
- T: I'm sorry, Eric, but the orchestra is only open to music majors.
- S: Really? well, see...
- T: But the policy is changing next year. After that, if you've taken three music courses, you will be able to audition.
- S: well, I have taken some music courses and I do play the double bass. so, maybe that's something to think about. But actually, I was here about something else.
- T: oh, sorry, It's just... I get that question all the time, so...
- S: That's ok. Thing is, I work for Magna -- the school paper -- and I'm reporting on last week's concert. Now, I went to it and I really enjoyed it, but now I'm looking forward for some background knowledge.
- T: well, I can refer you to some of the students in the orchestra if you'd like a young musician's point of view.
- S: uhh.. I guess that might be helpful, but I am really looking for a little bit of scholarly perspective. Some history of the music that was performed that evening, where it originated, how it's developed over the time.
- T: well, some of the musicians kind of specialize in Appalachian music. In fact, that's part of the reason we performed it, so you really should talk to them too. uh.. Ok, so we were playing Appalachian music from communities in the Appalachian Mountain regions of the United States.
- S: All right.
- T: Do you really think to keep this all in your head?
- S: Oh, don't worry. All I need are few key facts, I am sure I can keep them straight until I get back to my dorm.
- T: So the music is generally based on the folk ballads and instrumental dance tunes. It started with Scottish and Irish immigrants who brought over their styles of music. It's called Anglo-Celtic.
- S: So people brought their musical traditions with them.
- T: Well, this Anglo-Celtic music was considered an important link to the past for these people, which you can see in the way that Appalachian singers sing ballads. They have sorts of a nasal quality to them, like in Celtic ballads. In their new land, some of the lyrics were updated, you know, to refer to the new locations, and the occupations that settlers had in America. but at the same time, lots of ballads were still about castles and royalty, lords and laddies, stuff like that, which is what they were about originally.
- S: OK, and were that some sort of banjo I saw on the stage during the performance?
- T: Yes, we are lucky that one of the students, Stewart Telford, has a nineteenth century banjo -- a real antique. He's able to play in most the traditional styles. Did you know the banjos are of African American origin, and that settlers in Appalachia adopted banjo for their folk music? They became very common in traditional Appalachian music, along with the guitars and violins, of course. But if you want to learn about that banjo, talk to Stewart.
- S: That's great, Miss Harper. Thanks a lot. Now, can you recommend me any resources where I can look up more about this?
- T: Sure, I have a great book, a student has it today, but you can borrow it tomorrow if you'd like.