Archipelago Soundscape: Irish Music History and Vernacular Fiddle Cultures on Prince Edward Island

Kate Bevan-Baker

A Thesis
In the Humanities Program

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Humanities) at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada

February 2018

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

This is to certify that the thesis prepared

By: Kate Bevan-Baker

Entitled: Archipelago Soundscape: Irish Music History and Vernacular Fiddle Cultures on Prince Edward Island

and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor Of Philosophy (Humanities)

complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the final examining committee:

_____ Chair
Dr. Vivek Venkatesh

_____ External Examiner
Dr. David Wilson

_____ External to Program
Dr. Emer O'Toole

_____ Examiner
Dr. Mark Fewer

_____ Examiner
Dr. Jane McGaughey

_____ Thesis Supervisor
Dr. Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin

Approved by _____
Dr. Erin Manning, Graduate Program Director

Thursday, March 15, 2018

_____
Dr. André Roy, Dean
Faculty of Arts and Science

Abstract

Archipelago Soundscape: Irish Music History and Vernacular Fiddle Cultures on Prince Edward Island

Kate Bevan-Baker, PhD
Concordia University, 2018

Part of an archipelago that stretches along the seaways from Newfoundland to Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, Prince Edward Island is Canada's smallest province. It lies "cradled in the waves," (as its Mi'kmaq name indicates), off the east coast of New Brunswick in the shallow waters of the Northumberland Strait. Its moderate climate and rich red soil have allowed fishing and agriculture to prosper there over the centuries. The Island has been a landing-point for Europeans ever since Jacques Cartier arrived there from France in 1534. The subsequent influx of Acadian, Scottish and Irish settlers during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid the foundations of European settlement on the Island. Two centuries later, the cultural traits of these original settlers continue to distinguish community life on PEI. Music plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of these lifeworlds—especially, traditional fiddle music.

This thesis investigates Irish traditional fiddle music on Prince Edward Island. Drawing on field interviews, transcription analyses, archive recordings, and participant-observation at various music festivals and session venues on PEI, it focuses on the performance histories of past and present fiddlers, many of whom are carriers of dual, or "bi-musical" traditions from Ireland and Scotland. Beginning with the diasporic history of Irish settlers on PEI, the thesis maps Irish "sonic" territories across the Island, and explores the cultural memory and collective sense of place that give them musical meaning. This "deep mapping" creates a textured portrait of Irish fiddle dialects on the Island; in particular, regional and individual nuances, repertoire development, bowing patterns and ornamentation techniques. Contrasting the process of Irish ethnic fade on the Island with a recent surge of musical hybridity and transculturation, the thesis argues that the Irish soundscape on Prince Edward Island is experiencing many of the same creative challenges and transformations that impact Irish traditional soundscapes in other parts of the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have helped to bring this dissertation to fruition. I am particularly grateful to my primary supervisor, Professor Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, for his expertise and attention to detail. In addition, his encouragement and mentorship were fundamental in the completion of this thesis. Other members of my committee provided intuitive and supportive feedback over the course of the PhD program, and for their guidance I am most thankful: Dr. Jane McGaughey and Professor Mark Fewer. The School of Irish Studies at Concordia University provided continued support over the years by facilitating opportunities to present my work in its various forms—through conferences, graduate seminars, public performances and lectures.

This project would not have been possible without financial support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Concordia University's School of Irish Studies, department of Humanities and faculty of Arts & Science, the Canadian Federation of University Women, and the Ireland Canada University Foundation (Dobbin Scholarship).

I am indebted to the five fiddlers who agreed to speak with me during the fieldwork process. Their thoughtful insights have provided a wider lens through which I now view fiddling on PEI. Furthermore, guidance and attention from librarians at Concordia University, University of PEI, University College Cork, Ireland, and the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin made the research process fruitful and enjoyable. Thank you, as well, to David Widgington for creating the maps of Irish settlements and musical territories on PEI that accompany this thesis.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their love and encouragement—most of all, my loving husband, Jim, for his patience and support through this journey. Also to our son, George, who was literally by my side during the writing process that was his first year of life. Finally, a special thank you to our parents who cooked countless meals and babysat hundreds of hours throughout this adventure.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Introduction, Methodology, Context

Raison d'être: "In the Blood"

"It's in my blood." This adage, which is frequently cited by traditional players, refers to musical skills and abilities that are inherited from previous generations. For many Prince Edward Islanders, genetic ties to Ireland and Scotland have produced generations of Irish and Scottish fiddlers within the province. Whether consciously understood or not, dialectic subtleties that make up one's playing style are often attributed to one's musical ancestors. As a child, my most cherished gifts were cassette tapes recorded for me by my aunt Kate in Scotland, after whom I was named. The highlights of family vacations to Scotland were learning new fiddle tunes from her. I was eager to learn new tunes and the music captured my imagination. It truly was "in my blood." Irish tunes inevitably crept into my repertoire as it expanded during my teenage years. This music, too, resonated with me because of its strong idiomatic similarities to Scottish music. Growing up in a vibrant fiddling scene on Prince Edward Island (PEI) and observing the music makers who drifted in and out of it further piqued my interest in tracing the musical journeys that shaped this extraordinary island soundscape.

PEI is Canada's smallest province and lies "cradled in the waves," as its Mi'kmaq name indicates, off the east coast of New Brunswick in the Northumberland Strait. Its moderate climate allows fishing and agriculture to prosper. The Island has been a landing-point for Europeans ever since Jacques Cartier arrived from France in 1534.[1] The influx of Acadian, Scottish and Irish immigrants during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries laid the foundations of European settlement on the Island. Two centuries later, the cultural traits of these original settlers continue to distinguish community life on PEI. Music plays a pivotal role in the maintenance of these lifeworlds—especially, fiddle music.

In 1996, immigration historian Donald Akenson claimed that there was a serious lack of research on Irish settlement on PEI. He noted that there was, "virtually nothing except local histories that discusses the Irish in Prince Edward Island."[2] Akenson's call to action was answered by Brendan O'Grady, who completed a formal investigation into Irish settlement

[1] Willy Amtmann, *Music in Canada, 1600-1800* (Michigan: Habitex Books, 1975), 43.
[2] Donald H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Streetsville, ON: P.D. Meany, 1993), 265.

history on the island in 2004.[3] Focusing on the decline of the Irish fiddling tradition on the Island since 1970, this thesis expands on O'Grady's historiographical research and brings together historical and musical pasts to analyze the musical present.[4] While the ethnographic findings are drawn from a micro milieu within a larger island soundscape, I am keenly aware that PEI is part of a diffuse musical archipelago that stretches across Atlantic Canada from Newfoundland and Cape Breton Island to Les Îles-de-la-Madeleine, the Acadian peninsula and other riverine soundscapes along the Gulf of Saint Lawrence.

A culture is often defined by its music, language and traditions that are passed down from one generation to the next.[5] Beyond the remit of ethnically-defined culture, however, music is regarded as a universal language, with classical, jazz and traditional genres, etc. functioning as dialects within a broader linguistic frame. Using Irish traditional fiddling on PEI as a case study, this thesis explores these sonic paradigms as they pertain to music memory and performance practice. My primary research question asks how Irish traditional music became part of the repertoire of the province, and why it is of cultural significance today. Irish music history and diaspora form the backdrop to this question, whereas media ecologies and performance modalities are its foreground priorities.

Adopting a broad-based ethnomusicological perspective, Bruno Nettl emphasized the importance of investigating music within the cultural lifeworlds of its performers—in order to achieve a comprehensive understanding of any soundscape.[6] With this methodological premise in mind, my research focuses on living traditions that have been brokered by performers for over two centuries. Highlighting historical and geographic forces that shaped traditional soundscapes on PEI, diasporic cultural flows inform this research from the onset. Unlike the fast-moving innovations and cross-fertilizations of Irish traditional repertoires in urban Canada and the USA

---

[3] Brendan O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders: The Irish Settlers of Prince Edward Island* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004). Although O'Grady's pioneering work addressed Irish settlement on the island, a comprehensive music history of the Island has yet to be published. Ken Perlman's 2015 publication encompasses a broad musical exploration of traditional fiddle playing on PEI, however, an academic study has yet to be conducted. See Ken Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2015).
[4] Ken Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island: Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay, 1996), 10.
[5] Lawrence Barkwell, Lean Dorion, Darren R. Préfontaine, and Audreen Houdrie, *Metis Legacy II: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkways,* (Winnipeg: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2006), 162.
[6] Bruno Nettl, *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology* (Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1964), 9.

(as exemplified, for example, in the published work of Francis O'Neill in Chicago in the early 1900s), Irish repertoires on PEI retained older traits and subtleties that give it an "island" character quite distinct from other diasporic Irish soundscapes.[7] Yet, it has not remained untouched by "off-island" influences from other parts of Maritime Canada, the United States, (especially, the "Boston States," as New England was dubbed by older PEI musicians), and Ireland during the past century.

Previous research in Canada and Ireland suggests that traditional fiddle cultures are on the cusp of change.[8] Due to its geographic isolation, however, PEI still hosts a unique repository of traditional music, as well as a varied range of performers and performance settings. With direct and indirect links to the migration of Irish and Scottish settlers, many PEI fiddlers have one ear to the past and another to the future. Like their peers elsewhere in Canada and across the Atlantic, they too have a penchant for innovation and refurbishing of older repertoires, which they share with postmodern audiences. This innovative phenomenon is explored throughout this thesis through comparative analyses of common dance tunes—via "thick-descriptive" transcription, to paraphrase Clifford Geertz. It is hoped that in the long run, these field records will serve both academic and music communities by acting as a platform for further investigation of PEI's soundscape as it evolves and devolves in the years ahead.

Chapter One explores Irish immigration to PEI since the late eighteenth century, as well as examining notable Irish melodies (dance tunes and songs) that have marked these immigrant journeys. While a plethora or secondary sources inform this analysis, census records have proved the most reliable lens through which to track musical geographies on the Island.[9] Census records

---

[7] See Nicholas Carolan, *A Harvest Saved: Francis O'Neill and Irish Music in Chicago* (Ireland: Ossian Publications, 1997).

[8] See Glenn Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2006); David Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diasporas: Community and Conflict* (Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009); Norm Cohen, *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005); Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); and Terry E. Miller, *Folk Music in America: A Reference Guide* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986).

[9] Pertinent historical sources include: Donald Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Streetsville, ON: P.D. Meany, 1993); Feargal Cochrane, *The End of Irish-America?: Globalisation and the Irish Diaspora* (Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2010); Tim Pat Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); David Gleeson, ed., *The Irish in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South

confirm that Scottish settlers outnumbered their Irish cohorts on PEI.[10] The geography of traditional music on the Island reflects this reality. Although Irish sessions are popular, these sessions are diverse and multicultural. Fiddlers of all ethnic (and multi-ethnic) backgrounds play Irish tunes and contribute to Irish session culture on the Island. Despite the popularity of these sessions, however, PEI fiddle repertoires are still dominated by Scottish compositions at the present time.

Chapter Two considers the significance of space and place as vectors of musical identity on PEI. Emphasizing the meaning and knowledge enshrined in place, geographer Tim Cresswell describes it as a weaving and an assembly of various material and immaterial objects.[11] Adapting this theory to a musical context, I treat place as a sonic textile and explore various patterns of artistic and communal engagement through the performance of Irish fiddle music. The chapter closes with a comparative analysis of fourteen versions of *Sheehan's Reel*—which enjoys widespread currency on the Island. Analyzing multiple versions of this piece allows for a comprehensive understanding of repertorial evolution across time and space. Close readings of these variants highlight stylistic features preserved by PEI fiddlers since they were first learned from music publications in the early 1900s. Ornamentation and bowing styles, in particular, offer in-depth evidence of stylistic variations from player to player.[12] Though some are more academic

---

Carolina Press, 2010); Patrick Griffin, *The People With No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Elaine Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006); John Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation* (Toronto: University of Toronto Department of Geography, 1974); Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Michael Newton, ed., *Celts in the Americas* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2013); and O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders: The Irish Settlers of Prince Edward Island* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

[10] "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Prince Edward Island," Statistics Canada, accessed January 18, 2018, http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=11&Geo2=&Code2=&Data=Count&SearchText=Prince%20Edward%20Island&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=11.

[11] Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 37.

[12] External studies on fiddle dialects have been particularly useful in illustrating these stylistic variations. These include: Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983); Peter Cooke, *The Fiddle Tradition of the Shetland Isles* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.); Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its*

than others, case studies cited in the bibliography will prove useful in drawing valid comparisons between PEI fiddlers and Irish fiddlers in other parts of the world.

Chapter Three focuses on the development of music media and technology on PEI and the long-term impact that these modes of communication had on Island fiddlers. Beginning with mail-order catalogues in the late-nineteenth century and ending with Internet music communities a century later, this chapter traces the effect that sound technology (especially radio and 78 rpm recordings) had on the dissemination and transmission of Irish fiddle music. The high priest of radio on PEI was New Brunswick fiddler Don Messer, who dominated Canadian fiddling during the middle decades of the last century. Scores of PEI fiddlers were influenced by Messer's music and played a key role in perpetuating his style and repertoire. This chapter pays particular attention to this Promethean figure and his enduring legacy in the soundscape of the province.

The final chapter focuses on the "living traditions" of current and past fiddlers on PEI. Showcasing five practitioners from different age cohorts, cultural and geographic backgrounds, the chapter concentrates on stylistic identity, hybridity and performance. Critiquing modes of variation, rhythm, bowing patterns, performance milieux, and repertorial loyalties, this chapter

---

Diasporas; Gary Copeland, *Fiddling in New Brunswick: The History and its People* (Moncton: n.p., 2006); Gregory Coyes, *How the Fiddle Flows*, (Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 2002); Liz Doherty, "The Paradox of the Periphery: Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition 1928-1995," (PhD diss., University of Limerick, 1996); Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton* (Mississauga: DunGreen Music, 1997); Meghan Forsyth, *"'De par chez nous*:' Fiddling Traditions and Acadian Identity on Prince Edward Island," (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011); Roy Gibbons, *Folk Fiddling in Canada: A Sampling* (Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981); Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*; Dorothy Hogan and Homer Hogan, "Canadian Fiddle Culture," *Communique: Canadian Studies 3* (1977): 72-101; James Hornby, "A Survey of Fiddling in Prince Edward Island," *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1985): 7-10; James Hornby, "The Fiddle on the Island: Fiddling Tradition on Prince Edward Island," (M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982); Sherry Johnson, *Bellows & Bows: Historic Recordings of Traditional Fiddle & Accordion Music from Across Canada* (St John's, NL: Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media & Place, 2012); Edward H. Jones, *Jigs, Reels & Hornpipes: Traditional Fiddle Tunes from England, Ireland & Scotland* (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1992); Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*; Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*; Neil Rosenberg, "Newfoundland Fiddle Recordings: An Annotated Discography," *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1985): 4-6; Kelly Russell, *Kelly Russell's Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Volume 1* (St John's: Pigeon Inlet Productions Ltd, 2000); Kelly Russell, *Kelly Russell's Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Volume 2* (Trinity, NL: Pigeon Inlet Productions Ltd, 2003); Marion Thede, *The Fiddle Book* (New York: Oak Publishing, 1967); and Johanne Devlin Trew, *Place, Culture and Community: The Irish Heritage of the Ottawa Valley* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2009).

accentuates the stylistic diversity and versatility of PEI's fiddle culture. Central to this discussion is an examination of the role of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society. Largely Scottish in membership and musical philosophy, this society enjoys an omnipotent presence in the soundscape of the Island, yet Irish fiddle music has found its own niche beyond the remit of this protective body.

Theoretical Perspectives, Methodological Framework

Exploring cultural meanings drawn from diaspora, memory and space-place studies, this thesis surveys a hybrid Canadian-Irish soundscape that has changed significantly over the course of a century—yet one that has maintained much of its insular character. Unlike the melting pot metaphor often used to describe cultural change in the United States (particularly in the rural Midwest and Southern states), Canada resembles a cultural mosaic or patchwork quilt that celebrates the aesthetic beauty of diversity.[13] My research seeks to reveal this cultural mosaic on PEI through the medium of historical and contemporary sound—in particular, the sound of Irish traditional music on the island. In the process, it probes complex issues that shape "Irish" musical identity and belonging by posing questions such as:

- Do players of Irish traditional music in Eastern Canada have genetic ties to Ireland?
- Do "non-Irish" fiddlers become part of an "Irish cultural diaspora" by playing Irish traditional music that first came to Canada centuries ago?
- Has Irish diasporic culture been diluted within Canada's multicultural soundscape?
- How can one identify "Irish traditional music" in an era marked by intense "crossover" in musical repertoires and styles?

[13] Evidence suggests that immigrants to Canada became citizens and assimilated more quickly than immigrants to the United States in the past century and a half. This is particularly so in older urban centres of Irish immigration like Boston, New York, and Chicago. See Will Kymlicka and Keith Banting, "Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State," *Ethics & International Affairs,* vol. 20, no. 3 (2006): 281-304; Will Kymlicka, *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); and Will Kymlicka, *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

- Are today's fiddlers aware of the origins of the tunes they play, and if so, have the performance practices of these tunes changed over time?
- Is music notation used, or are tunes recalled exclusively by aural memory? How have these modalities changed between different generations of players?

These questions will be answered by exploring a complex process of musical hybridity, in particular, the hybridity of fiddle music on PEI. Research models developed by Roy Gibbons, Meghan Forsyth, Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg to examine hybrid forms of fiddle music elsewhere in Canada, will form the nucleus of this analysis—except, in this case, the field will be narrowed down to a micro study within a select geographic and creative space. Pierre Bourdieu's *habitus* theory will be deployed to determine how musical spaces are inter-connected (ie: session spaces, concert halls, homes, etc.) on PEI.[14] Performance and phenomenological discourse will inform this discussion.

Based on field interviews with individual players and participant observation in various session scenes on PEI, the methodological focus of the thesis makes provision for both qualitative and quantitative findings. Ethnographic observation, transcription analysis, and socio-historical research highlight performers from Irish and Scottish diasporic communities—although, primary emphasis will be given to the music these players perform rather than ethnic loyalties inferred by their backgrounds. In unveiling contemporary acoustemologies of fiddle music on the Island, particular emphasis will be given to musical transculturation, coalescence and hybridity—all of which are endemic features of fiddle music performed throughout Atlantic Canada.

Background and Inspiration: An Insider and Outsider

As a classical violinist and traditional fiddler, I have a special interest in this interdisciplinary study. My field of investigation goes beyond the music itself to explore its cultural role in society and the meanings and memories enshrined in that process. By studying music through empirical research, this thesis fuses both performance and ethnographic data. It is my hope that it will contribute to public discourse and academic research in the form of scholarly writing, music performances and professional recordings.

[14] See Ruth Stone, *Theory for Ethnomusicology* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 198; and Turino, *Music as Social Life*: *The Politics of Participation*, 120.

My background as a performer and teacher has undoubtedly enhanced this thesis. My perspectives on music, in general, and on violin and fiddle playing, in particular, have enriched the research and writing process, and allowed me to view PEI fiddling through diverse lenses. Observing fiddling on PEI as an "insider" and an "outsider" has allowed my work to penetrate to a deep level of awareness—both artistically and academically.[15] I consider myself an "outsider" as I do not live on PEI, and my personal style of fiddling is not based on any indigenous Island style. On the other hand, I feel that I am an "insider" because I lived on the Island throughout my teenage years and continue to visit and maintain family and performance networks there.

Comparative analysis has been my passion for years. This involves identifying minute details in real time while listening to live performances, or recordings of fiddle music. This "duality" of hearing and processing music simultaneously will continue to inform my research and fieldwork in the years ahead. It is my intention to continue to collect fiddle tunes after this thesis has been defended and to demonstrate the academic and pedagogical value of my research in other soundscapes where "Irish" music is played and patronized.

[15] Paula Conlon, "Bridging the Gap between the Folk Musician and Academia: An Alternative Approach to CSMT as Discussed with Thomas Kines," *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 21 (1993): 48.

Chapter 1

Irish Immigration to Prince Edward Island

The history of Irish migration to North America extends beyond shipping records, population statistics and dates of settlement. The apodictic influence of Irish culture that was transferred across the Atlantic Ocean is clearly manifested in musical traditions throughout North America today. It is rooted profoundly in the domain of living traditions, memory, post memory and nostalgia—all of which find a voice in diasporic place making. The heteroglossic process of transculturation that marks Celtic music cultures in Canada and the USA today overlaps with the settlement histories and topographies of Irish and Scottish immigrants in North America. PEI was one such nodal point. Not only was PEI on a seaway for people, it was also on a seaway for music. Dances, instruments, songs, and music books all came to North America with explorers who passed through PEI and other islands off the east coast of Canada on their way across the continent.

Beyond the domain of transcultural music making, however, the preservation of oral traditions such as music, song and dance remains at the heart of the Irish diasporic experience in North America, whether it be through direct expatriate culture, or its postpartum hybrids. Irish traditional music, however, is not a fixed genre but an ever-changing soundscape—patronized in equal measure by its ethnic keepers, as well as by those who have no ethnic connection to Ireland. It is this "inside—outside" paradox that lies at the heart of Irish music history.

The arrival of the Irish in Atlantic Canada and on PEI, in particular, began well before the Great Irish Famine (1845-1850). In fact, Irish famine migrants largely by-passed PEI.[1] Irish migrants, (seasonal workers, indentured servants, etc.), began sailing to North America in the early 1600s.[2] The most intensive wave of immigration took place between 1824-1845, which saw 475,000 Irish migrants cross the Atlantic.[3] Historian Brendan O'Grady has argued convincingly

[1] Edward MacDonald, "The Turn of the Tide," *The Island Magazine*, no. 31 (spring/summer 1992): 37; Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*, 6.
[2] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 139.
[3] William Forbes Adams, *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine* (Baltimore: Clearfield Company Inc., 1993), 410-29; and Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, "The Green Fields of Canada - Forgotten! A Reappraisal of Irish Traditional Music History in Canada,"

that most Irish immigrants who settled on PEI came before the Great Famine.[4] They were mainly Catholic and came from the lowlands of Ulster and parts of the south of Ireland. They settled in central and western PEI.[5] Scottish immigrants, on the other hand, who made up 32.3% of the population in 1881, settled overwhelmingly in the eastern part of the Island in Kings County.[6] The largest cohort of Irish immigrants came from Co. Monaghan. Reinforced by chain migration and sustainable demographics, their transatlantic networks endured (albeit, with some *lacunae*) down to the present day.[7] Although Irish immigration to North America diminished in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, this chapter argues that cultural markers such as traditional music have endured and flourished—on PEI, as well as in other parts of Canada. Organized chronologically, this chapter focuses on specific periods that witnessed pivotal changes in Irish musical immigration. It argues that the *longue durée* impact of Irish immigrants to PEI is still audible in the fiddle traditions that are present on the Island today.

First Settlers

The largest movement of people from the British Isles to British North America during the eighteenth century occurred between 1718-1775, with more than 100,000 emigrants crossing the Atlantic.[8] The Newfoundland fisheries accounted for much of the traffic between Ireland and Atlantic Canada during that period. Young Irish men and women sailed to Newfoundland to fish for cod during the summer seasons. This often included one winter season spent living through brutally-cold Newfoundland winters. Temporary settlements evolved eventually into permanent settlements by the early 1800s.[9] The cod fishery and the ultimate prospect of acquiring fertile

---

in *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed,* ed. Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 218.

[4] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 4, 93. Elliott also notes that Irish emigration to Canada peaked before 1855. Bruce Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004), 3.

[5] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 4, 70, 93.

[6] Ibid., 34, 96, 109.

[7] Ibid., 141. Since the 1990s, there has been a steady stream of cultural exchanges between Monaghan and Prince Edward Island. Akenson ranks PEI as the third most "Irish" province in Canada, after Ontario and New Brunswick. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 262.

[8] Griffin, *The People with No Name*, 1.

[9] Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 265; Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 53;

land continued to act as powerful magnets for Irish immigrants to Atlantic Canada for the remainder of the eighteenth century. Not unlike common criminals transported from Ireland to Australia in the late eighteenth-century, (but without the long sea voyage), those convicted of crimes in Newfoundland were often banished to PEI for defying the Crown.[10] PEI was controlled by Britain following the Treaty of Paris in 1763 and a Donegal man, Walter Patterson, was appointed first governor of the Island in 1769.[11] Although Irish migration to PEI did not peak until the early-nineteenth century, early colonial pioneers began arriving from Ireland in the mid- to late-eighteenth century.[12] Although these first settlers left no written accounts of their music, song and dance, it seems likely that they are the progenitors of the Island's Irish soundscape.

Post Napoleonic Exodus

Forty-four million people migrated from Europe to North America between 1821 and 1914. Considering the role the Irish played in this massive displacement of people, historian Christine Kinealy notes that "the contribution of the Irish to this flow was, relative to its size, larger than any other country's."[13] According to Bruce Elliott, the first Irish emigrants from Wexford arrived in Upper Canada in 1809, beginning a process of chain migration to the Elizabethtown region of

---

Ó hAllmhuráin, "The Green Fields of Canada - Forgotten!," 220; John Mannion, *Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography* (St John's: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977), 107; Cecil Houston and William Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 16; and Willeen Keough, "Ethnicity as Intercultural Dialogue: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 19. See also Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, "Soundscape of the Wintermen: Irish Traditional Music in Newfoundland Revisited," *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 33-46.

[10] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 57.

[11] Stephen A. Royle, "Canada: Islands, Landscapes, and Landmarks," in *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed,* ed. Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 18-19.

[12] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 4.

[13] Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006), 297. This argument is also reiterated in Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada*, 168. For further information on the Scots in North America, see June Skinner Sawyers, *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide* (London: Aurum Press, 2000), 65; Margaret Bennett, *The Last Stronghold: Scottish Gaelic Traditions in Newfoundland* (St John's, NL: Breakwater Books, 1989), 14; Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, 233; and Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 62.

Upper Canada.[14] The first ship to arrive in PEI from Wexford docked in May, 1828, followed by a handful of vessels from Cork, Waterford and Limerick.[15] In the wake of Peter Robinson's successful emigration schemes to Ontario in 1823 and 1825, Irish migration to PEI began to increase.[16] Although Robinson hand-picked the land where his emigrants settled, emigrants who arrived on PEI acquired affordable land and plentiful natural resources in a less systematic manner. Two large waves of Irish migration took place between 1810-1850.[17] One notable Irish family to arrive on the Island was the Pye family, who has been documented by Bruce Elliott.[18] It is likely that John Pye (c1779-1837) arrived with his wife and four children in 1817.[19] Natives of Tipperary, they settled in central PEI, in Queens County near Cornwall. The Pye family name was immortalized by PEI author Lucy Maud Montgomery after she was inspired to use the name for one of her main characters, Josie Pye, in *Anne of Green Gables*.[20] Despite the Pyes having had eleven more children after arriving on PEI, the family name had died out by the turn of the twentieth century.[21]

The Scots and the Irish were both peripatetic groups. The Highland Scots had suffered their own Potato Famine (1846-1856) and thousands were forced from their homes during the Highland Clearances (1760-1840).[22] As the Irish were migrating to PEI and other parts of Canada in the decades following the Napoleonic Wars, Scotland's Golden Age of Fiddling was at its peak, and new tunes from the printed collections of Scottish fiddle composers like Neil and Nathaniel Gow and William Marshall were making their way south to Ireland, and, eventually, across the

---

[14] Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 123-4. By 1870, 66.1% of Canadians of Irish origin were living in Ontario. Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 12.
[15] Orlo Jones and Douglas Fraser, "Those Elusive Immigrants," *The Island Magazine*, no. 16 (Fall/Winter 1984): 41.
[16] Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, 374. The well-known musical Leahy family is descended from the Peter Robinson settlers. Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 69.
[17] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 4-5.
[18] Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 263.
[19] It is possible that the Pye family sailed from Limerick on the *Sarah*, which docked in Charlottetown on July 25, 1817. See Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 263; and Jones and Fraser, "Those Elusive Immigrants," 38.
[20] Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 263.
[21] "Original Families," Island Narratives Program, UPEI, accessed December 8, 2017, http://vre2.upei.ca/cap/node/672.
[22] It should be noted, however, that the effect of the potato blight in Highland Scotland was nothing like that of the Great Famine in Ireland.

Atlantic with Irish immigrants.[23] This "prior" acquisition of popular dance tunes facilitated Irish integration into a "common" musical culture, which they shared with First Nations, Scottish, English and French musicians in the New World. The traditional soundscape of PEI throughout the nineteenth century was no exception, as immigrant performers from Ireland played common tunes and created common musical spaces with natives and foreigners alike.

The ethnographic *Island Magazine* examined emigrant arrivals to PEI throughout the nineteenth century in a series of articles published in the 1980s and 1990s. This archival research suggests that 33 passenger ships arrived within the first decade of the nineteenth century, and, of those, at least 20 left ports in the United Kingdom.[24] This is further corroborated by O'Grady's findings, which confirm that the majority of Irish vessels sailed from southern Ireland—from ports such as Waterford, Wexford, Cork, and Limerick.[25] Between 1842-1847, at least 13 vessels arrived in PEI, again from the south of Ireland.[26] Douglas Fraser notes that the introduction of legislation in 1842 requiring all vessels to produce passenger lists upon arrival did not accurately document emigrants arriving on the Island, since the legislation was not strictly enforced.[27]

While Canada received many Irish immigrants, over a million Irish immigrants arrived in the United States between 1815-1845. One and a half million more arrived between 1870-1900.[28] In comparison, approximately 130,000 Irish arrived in Canada between 1831-1832, and 340,000 arrived between 1845-1855.[29] Akenson claims that British North America (modern day Canada) was the first choice for Irish migrants between 1815 and the Great Famine—although he gives no numbers to support this.[30] In contrast, Tim Pat Coogan proffers some raw numbers: "the bulk of Irish emigrants to North America between 1825 and 1845 had gone to Canada, possibly as many

---

[23] Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, "The Stranger's Land: Historical Traditions and Postmodern Temptations in the Celtic Soundscapes of North America," in *Celts in the Americas*, ed. Michael Newton (Sydney: Cape Breton University Press, 2013), 190.
[24] Approximately 2000 Selkirk settlers were among the arrivals during the period of 1800-1809. See Jones and Fraser, "Those Elusive Immigrants," 37.
[25] Ibid., 37-41.
[26] Douglas Fraser, "Part One: More Elusive Immigrants," *The Island Magazine*, no. 26 (Fall/Winter 1989): 36-40.
[27] Ibid., 35.
[28] Lawrence McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* (Bloomington, IN.: Indiana University Press, 1976), 60, 70.
[29] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 197, 291. Almost 1.5 million Irish arrived in the United States between 1845-1855, compared to the 340,000 who went to Canada.
[30] Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 148.

as 450,000 in that period."[31] Fares were cheaper to British North America than to the USA and many Irish immigrants continued their journey south to the USA after a brief stay in Canada.[32] Akenson and Miller rely on quantitative and qualitative data, respectively, each proffering different views of the Irish diaspora. Of course, memory and subjectivity play pivotal roles in the study of the Irish diaspora, as Miller argues, and peoples' relationships to their own stories are complex. Similarly, post memory and nostalgia are key factors in the dissemination and transfer of traditions such as music, song and dance.

The Great Famine exodus brought at least one million people from Ireland to North America, and caused approximately one million deaths in Ireland.[33] Millions of Irish acquiesced to long arduous journeys on board coffin ships that took six to ten weeks to cross the Atlantic. Ironically, Irish immigrants arriving on PEI found some conditions similar to those that prevailed in Ireland. A three-year potato blight occurred on PEI that coincided with the Great Famine in Ireland, but thanks to short-term acts prohibiting the export of potatoes, death from starvation and related diseases did not affect the Island's population as they did in Ireland.[34]

Irish immigrants who came to Canada settled mainly in rural areas. They maintained cultural and material values as they did in their homeland. This contrasts with those Irish who settled in American urban centres (especially New York, Boston and Chicago) whose lives were shaped by fast-moving industrial change.[35] The late-nineteenth century witnessed a dispersal of Irish migrants all over North America. Chicago, for example, became home to large numbers of Irish immigrants, like Irish music collector Francis O'Neill. Coogan reminds us that, "between 1870 and 1900, the Irish-born population increased to 73,912, or 12.6 per cent of the foreign-born

---

[31] Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, 373.
[32] Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 229.
[33] McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, 55. For similar statistics, see Gleeson, *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, 5; Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, xii, 115-6; Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 284; Catherine Nash, *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, & the Politics of Belonging* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008), 30; Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 85; and Joel Mokyr, *Why Ireland Starved: A Quantitative and Analytical History of the Irish Economy, 1800-1850* (Milton Park: Routledge, 1983), 230.
[34] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 156-7.
[35] Ó hAllmhuráin, "The Green Fields of Canada – Forgotten," 219; Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada*, v; and McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, 6, 63,105. See also Kerby Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce Boling and David Doyle, eds., *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

population."[36] It is estimated that the United States was the final destination for more than one million Irish immigrants between 1815-1845, and 1.5 million more arrived during the next decade.[37]

In contrast to the American melting pot, Atlantic Canada maintained distinct pockets of Irishness. In the outports of Newfoundland, for example, mummering and set dancing have continued for over two centuries. Similar cultural continuities can be found on PEI.

The majority of Irish emigrants to PEI during the nineteenth century were from rural Ireland.[38] By 1881, the Irish comprised 23.3% of the population of PEI. These Irish, however, did not develop centripetal settlements as the Acadian French settlers did; rather they chose to make their homes along the coast.[39] Farming was their primary means of supporting families in Ireland, and this activity continued on the other side of the Atlantic. Most Irish immigrants knew how to live off the land. Throughout the 1850s, land agents depicted PEI as the "land of milk and honey" through advertisements in British and Irish newspapers: "Here then is a Colony, within twelve days journey - free from all the burthens of high Rents and Taxation, and to which thousands of respectable families are invited to repair."[40]

The journey across the Atlantic on board ships was often eased by music and dance to pass the time.[41] Music was always a key component in the movement of people. Vivid depictions from traditional songs evoke the hardships endured by emigrants who left Ireland. Oral memories on PEI, such as ballads, were used to construct images about Ireland and recall difficult journeys immigrants had made across the Atlantic. The Irish ballad *Craigie Hill*, for example, comes from Larne, Co. Antrim. It is an archetypal immigrant song about a husband leaving his wife to go to the New World; its message of leave-taking and family separation speaks to Irish immigration to PEI as it does to other parts of North America.

She said, my dear don't leave me all for another season
Though fortune does be pleasing, I'll go along with you

---

[36] Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, 308.
[37] McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, 60, 62.
[38] David Wilson, *The Irish in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1989), 12-3.
[39] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 80.
[40] Quoted in Douglas Fraser, "Part Two: More Elusive Immigrants," *The Island Magazine*, no. 27 (Spring/Summer 1990): 38.
[41] Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles*, 356.

I'll forsake friends and relations and bid this Irish Nation
And to the bonny Bann banks forever I'll bid adieu

He said, my dear don't grieve, or yet annoy my patience
You know I love you dearly the more I'm going away
I'm going to a foreign nation to purchase a plantation
To comfort us hereafter all in America

Other emigrant songs and tunes describing life in Canada include *Edward Connor, The Green Fields of Canada,* and the fiddle tune by Scottish composer James Hill, *Earl Grey*. The haunting imagery evoked by the lyrics of *The Green Fields of Canada* speaks to the universal themes of leave-taking and nostalgia for the homeland:

Farewell to the groves of shillelagh and shamrock
Farewell to the wee girls of old Ireland all ‘round
May their hearts be as merry as ever I would wish them
When far, far away across the Ocean I’m bound

But what matters to me where my bones may be buried
If in peace and contentment I can spend my life
On the green fields of Canada, they daily are blooming
And it’s there I’ll put an end to my miseries and strife

For the landlords and bailiffs in vile combination
Have forced us from hearth stone and homestead away
May the crowbar brigade all be doomed to damnation
When we’re on the green fields of America

The strathspey *Earl Grey* was composed in the mid-nineteenth century by James Hill and was adopted by immigrant Irish fiddlers on PEI. A number of Hill's compositions were published in *Ryan's Mammoth Collection* (1884). It was also published alongside *John McNeil's Reel* in *Middleton's Selection of Strathspeys, Reels & c. for the Violin* in 1870 (Fig. 1.1).[42] *Earl Grey* and *John McNeil's Reel* are considered "founding tunes" in the soundscape of PEI. They both enjoy popularity among Scottish and Irish communities because of their association with the history of Irish and Scottish immigration to the province.

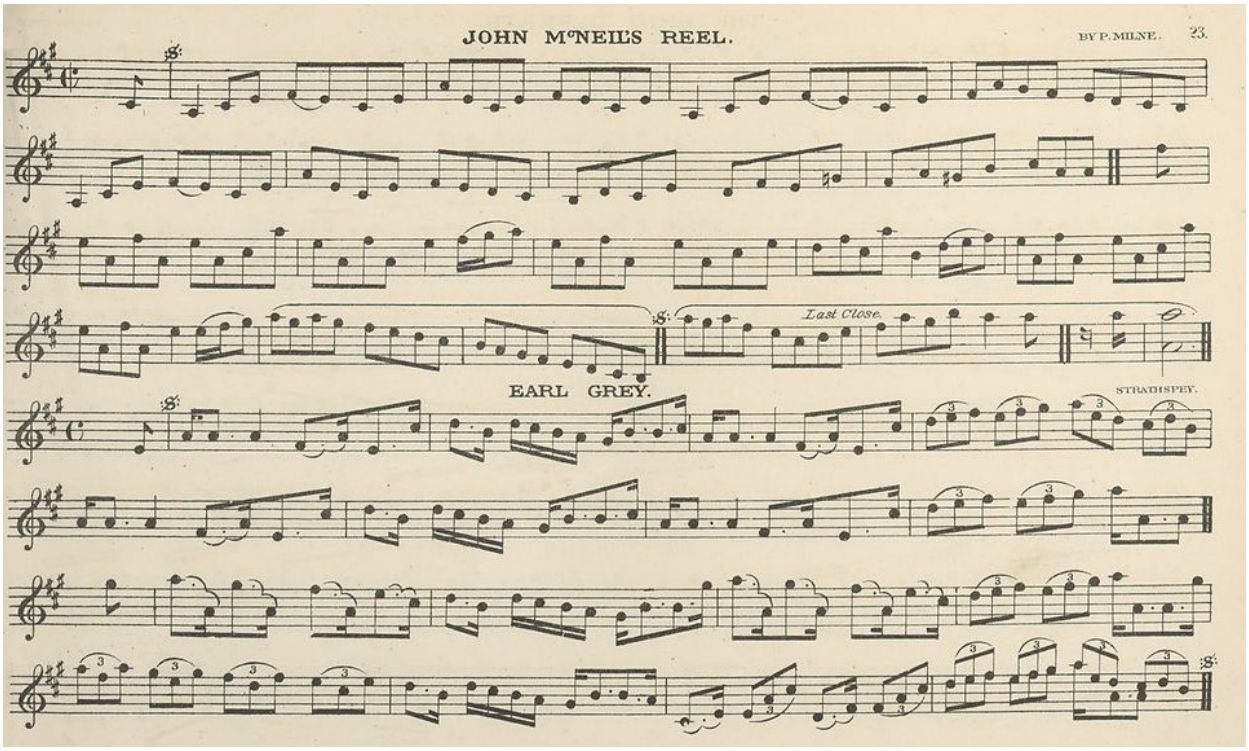


Figure 1.1 *Middleton's Selection of Strathspeys, Reels & c. for the Violin* (Keith: Charles Middleton & Co., 1870), page 23.

Illustrations in British newspapers during the mid nineteenth century showed emigrants amusing themselves below deck during long Atlantic passages—usually with a fiddler providing music for dancers (Fig. 1.2).[43]

[42] Presently known as *Big John MacNeil*, the tune is one of the most popular played by PEI fiddlers today. Middleton's publication does not indicate a composer for the strathspey, *Earl Grey*, although it enjoys widespread currency in traditional repertoires.
[43] MacDonald, "The Turn of the Tide," 38.

Figure 1.2 *Illustrated London News*, printed in *The Island Magazine*, no. 31, page 38.

Once established in Canada, Irish emigrants had access to easier and shorter modes of transportation, especially after the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1881. Bruce Elliott outlined the impact of the Canadian Pacific and the resulting ease of travel it proffered to new immigrants who could now travel across Canada by rail. Henceforth, Irish immigrants relied less on kinship-based chain migration to fan out across the continent.[44] In the years following the completion of the railroad, Irish, English and Scottish immigrants became prominent figures in the development of Canadian politics. David Wilson has observed that, "the Irish were so highly political that they energized the entire political system."[45] The resulting data from the first census of the Dominion of Canada in 1871 showed 24.3% of the population was of Irish origin.[46] On PEI, the Irish made up 48% of the population in 1881.[47]

Although they left no written records of their music, it is reasonable to assume that Irish immigrants who settled on PEI before the Great Famine brought a sizable corpus of Irish music, song and dance with them to their new homes. As historian Brendan O'Grady has shown, most of

[44] Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 191, 194.
[45] Wilson, *The Irish in Canada*, 15.
[46] Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 6; and Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 12.
[47] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 34. The 1871 census on Prince Edward Island reported the Scots accounted for 32.3% of the provincial population, and the English at 18.9%.

these pre-famine immigrants came from the lowlands of Ulster (especially rural Monaghan), as well as the south of Ireland. It is likely that some of them were Irish-speaking and sang a mix of *sean-nós* songs and English and Scottish ballads, which they would have learned from ballad sheets and chap books in Ireland. While *sean nós* failed to weather the passage of time on PEI, Irish ballads sung in English were collected by Helen Creighton and Sandy Ives during their fieldwork on the Island in the 1940s and 1950s—a century after they first arrived from Ireland with their early nineteenth-century keepers. Similarly, these Irish settlers brought their village, town and county place names with them to PEI—Emyvale, Kinkora, Kildare—which they used to name their new homes. Given the popularity and mobility of fiddles during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is likely that fiddles were the primary Irish instruments, along with the voices of singers and the feet of dancers. Over time, their repertoires and styles mixed and merged with those of their ethnic neighbours to create a unique Island soundscape.

Twentieth-Century Trickle

By the turn of the twentieth century, the population of Canada had increased by 34%, due mainly to the arrival of new immigrants from Scandinavia, as well as Central and Southern Europe.[48] The cultural influence of Ireland and Scotland, however, remained prominent. The 1901 census, for example, reported that Gaelic—both Scottish and Irish—was the fourth most commonly spoken language in Canada, especially in the Maritime provinces.[49]

Patterns of Irish emigration began to shift in the twentieth century, because of conditions at home and abroad. Emigration slowed in the early decades of the century but increased again in the 1920s. Immigration to the United States decreased in the late 1920s and 1930s because of the Great Depression and immigration strictures imposed by the government of the USA.[50] Three decades after Irish independence, over one million people left in the decade between 1951-1961; however, the population increased by almost one million during the latter half of the century.[51]

---

[48] Helmut Kallmann, *A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 199.
[49] Emily McEwan-Fujita, "Gaelic Revitalization Efforts in Nova Scotia: Reversing Language Shift in the 21st Century," in *Celts in the Americas*, ed. Michael Newton (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2013), 161.
[50] McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America* 152.
[51] Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, xiii.

There was a 50% drop in Irish emigration between 1991 and 2004.[52]

Despite the shifts in Irish immigration, Irish traditional music and dance continued to enjoy prominence in Canada and the United States—both within and beyond Irish communities. Hundreds of commercial 78 rpm recordings were made in the United States during the "Golden Age" of Irish traditional music in the 1920s.[53] The most celebrated were those made by the Sligo Masters (Michael Coleman, James Morrison and Paddy Killoran) who are still held in the highest regard by Irish and non-Irish musicians alike. They were household names in Atlantic Canada, especially on PEI. Although the Island was remote and beyond the remit of mainstream musical changes that impacted Irish soundscapes in North America, it was not untouched by them. During the 1970s, for example, there was a major push to revive fiddle music on the Island, and a parallel movement to export the ballads of the Island to national and international audiences. In 1972, Ron MacInnes' landmark film, *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* lit the fuse of fiddle revivalism in the Maritimes in 1972—on Cape Breton Island, but also on PEI, as Scottish fiddle societies were set up to teach and promote the playing of the instrument. Other revivalist forces were also at work. Paralleling the ballad boom in Ireland and the folk revival in Britain and the USA, the emergence of Ryan's Fancy as the singing ambassadors of Atlantic Canada created new musical energy that stretched throughout Atlantic Canada from Newfoundland to PEI. Hitherto unknown to Canadian television audiences, PEI's soundscape was showcased on many occasions by the three singing Irishmen who had recently emigrated to Canada and took its music scene by storm in the 1970s. The three, Denis Ryan, Dermot O' Reilly and Fergus O'Byrne formed Ryan's Fancy in Toronto in 1971 before moving to Newfoundland to attend Memorial University. Abandoning university to promote their music, the group became national icons as a result of their CBC television series Ryan's Fancy that ran between 1972 and 1981. This series was filmed in various locations throughout Atlantic Canada and featured musical guests such as Tommy Makem, Ron Hynes, Émile Benoît, and James Keane. Their stock in trade was songs of the sea, songs of Atlantic Canada, and songs from the Celtic tradition.[54] Although they had performed on numerous occasions on the Island, in January 1977, Ryan's Fancy paid a visit to a farm on PEI

[52] Cochrane, *The End of Irish-America?*, 163.
[53] Steve Coleman, "'Nonsynchronism,' Traditional Music, and Memory in Ireland," in *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices,* ed. Oona Frawley *(*Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 170.
[54] Ryan's Fancy website, accessed February 6, 2018, http://www.ryansfancy.com.

and filmed a series of Island songs that were largely unheard by mainland audiences; among them, *Our Island Home, Boys of the Island*, and the ballad, *Prince Edward Island, Adieu*:[55]

My name it is Peter Emberly I give you to understand
I was born in Prince Edward Island, that fair and virtuous land
In eighteen hundred and eighty, when the flowers were a brilliant hue
I left my native country my fortune to pursue

I landed in New Brunswick, that lumbering country
I hired to work in the lumbering woods down south of the Miramichi
I hired to work in the lumbering woods where they cut the tall spruce down
While loading two sleds from the yard I received my deathly wound.

There's danger on the ocean, where the waves roll mountains high
There's danger on the battlefield, where the angry bullets fly
There's danger in the lumbering woods, for death comes crashing there
And I have fallen victim to that great and deadly snare.

Here's adieu to Prince Edward Island, that garden in the sea
No more I'll walk your flowery banks nor enjoy your salty breeze
No more I'll see those lofty ships as they go sailing by
Their banners floating in the breeze above the canvas high.

In the period 1977-1980, singer and fiddler Denis Ryan lived in Montague on PEI and became an active figure in the local soundscape—when he was not touring with Ryan's Fancy. Although the flow of Irish-born musicians to PEI was sporadic during the latter half of the last century, it did not expire entirely. Shortly after Denis Ryan left the Island in 1980, Irish-born fiddler Nollaig Bonar set out for Canada. Born in Dublin to Donegal parents, she trained as an occupational therapist and emigrated to Prince Edward Island from Glasgow. Before leaving Scotland, she was fore-warned that Canadian winters were long and arduous. Determined to

[55] Edward Ives, *Folksongs of New Brunswick* (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1989), 99.

brave the elements, she purchased a fiddle and decided it would be her winter antidote for the next forty years. Reminiscent of the Hudson Bay clerks from the Orkney Islands who brought fiddle music to the Arctic, Bonar has been part of PEI's soundscape for four decades and continues to perform regularly at Irish sessions and house parties.[56]

Reclaiming the Old World

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the once ubiquitous Irish seemed to be less numerous, especially in the United States. Those claiming Irish ancestry in New York fell by over 100,000 in the decade between 1980 and 1990, and that number continues to decline.[57] Affirming Coogan's findings, Feargal Cochrane's research shows that the number of Americans identifying as Irish-American had fallen to 34 million in the 2000 census.[58] This may reflect the multiplicity of identities that North Americans are embracing at present. Catherine Nash illuminates this struggle for identity by outlining its complexity: "Those with Irish ancestry are thus just as likely to also have English, Scottish, German, Italian, Polish, or French Canadian ancestors. This likelihood grows with each generation."[59] Even on census data, one's choice of ethnicity is not limited to one or two ethnic origins. For example, the 2006 census data for PEI showed that 29.2% of the population was of Irish origin, according to residents who gave multiple ethnicity responses. By comparison, those who stated Irish as their sole ethnic origin were 10.9% of the population.[60] It was the Scottish, however, who claimed a plurality on the Island, with 40.5% of the population selecting Scottish as one of multiple ethnic origins. 17% selected Scottish as their only ethnic origin.[61] Data show that Celtic Tiger migration did not reach PEI. Between 1991-2000, only 665 immigrants arrived on PEI, and 0.5% of total immigrants to PEI came from Ireland.[62] The 2016

---

[56] See Craig Mishler, *The Crooked Stovepipe: Athapaskan Fiddle Music and Square Dancing in Northeast Alaska and Northwest Canada* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).
[57] Coogan, *Wherever Green Is Worn*, 290.
[58] Cochrane, *The End of Irish-America?*, 31.
[59] Nash, *Of Irish Descent,* 42.
[60] "Population by selected ethnic origins, by province and territory," Statistics Canada 2006 Census, accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo26c-eng.htm.
[61] "2006 Census: Population by selected ethnic origins, by province and territory," Statistics Canada, accessed October 14, 2015, http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo26c-eng.htm.
[62] Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Prince Edward Island."
This data refers only to the republic of Ireland.

Canadian Census reports that since 2011, only 15 immigrants from Ireland relocated to PEI.[63] Statistics Canada's 2011 National Household Survey reported that 30% of PEI residents chose Irish in their ethnic origin (compared with 39% who identified as Scottish).[64] The 2016 Statistics Canada Census Profile revealed similar results, with 27.5% of Islanders identifying as Irish in origin—as opposed to 36% identifying themselves as Scottish.[65]

The ethnic fade implicit in these hybrid (multi-ethnic/inter-ethnic) patterns seems to have had little impact on the popularity of Irish traditional music on the Island. As Irish sessions, concerts, and workshops continue to fill the annual music calendar, musical traffic between PEI and the Old World has also increased—but now in a reverse direction. During the past decade, there has been an exponential increase in the number of Irish performers touring the Island, especially for the annual small halls festival, as well as an increase in the number of PEI performers making trips to Ireland to attend summer schools and *fleadhanna ceoil*. PEI musicians also engage with the extended virtual world of Irish music making through forums like *thesession.org* and other online sites. The musical isolation of former times has now well and truly ended. On PEI, there is a vibrant chemistry between Irish diasporic history and Irish diasporic sound that brings fiddlers of all ages and ethnic backgrounds together in a communal bond, which has simply refused to pass into oblivion.

---

[63] 79% of immigrants between 2011-2016 are from Asia. Mandarin is the third most commonly spoken language in the province, after English and French. Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Prince Edward Island."

[64] "2011 National Household Survey: Prince Edward Island," Statistics Canada, accessed January 18, 2018, http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/Page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=11&Data=Count&SearchText=Prince%20Edward%20Island&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&GeoLevel=PR&GeoCode=11pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=PR&Code1=11&Data=Count&SearchText=prince%20edward%20island&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1.

[65] Statistics Canada, "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Prince Edward Island." The population of PEI in 2017 surpassed 150,000. See Kevin Yarr, "Census brings PEI's 150K population goal into question," *CBC Prince Edward Island*, last modified March 3, 2017, http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-census-versus-population-estimate-1.4008361.

Chapter 2
Space and Place in Musical Identity

Geographer Tim Cresswell posits that: "Places are constructed by people doing things and, in this sense, are never 'finished,' but are constantly being performed."[1] Anthropologist Keith Basso concurs with this perspective, yet he laments the paucity of ethnographical research on culturally expressive markers.[2] These markers include but are not limited to stories, songs and instrumental music, each of which is heavily rooted in the subjective memories of its carriers. Though these manifestations are place-based, the lived relationships that have created them are fitting examples of how awareness and meaning are found in place. Drawing on interviews with fiddlers and transcriptions of fiddle tunes, this chapter examines how Irish musicians on PEI sense the places in which they live and how that awareness is framed in their music. Phenomenology, *habitus,* and cultural flow theory inform this space-place critique.

Place Making through Place Naming

The geographer-philosopher, Edward Casey sees space as a *tabula rasa*, a blank canvas onto which the actions of people create an experienced sense of place.[3] Once inscribed, space becomes place, and one's memories and knowledge of that place continue to develop as time goes on. The most obvious manifestation of this inscriptive process is the naming of a place: often it is the first identifier used in any given situation, and the name will embody various meanings and memories from person to person. Place names in Atlantic Canada reflect Irish and Scottish immigration. On PEI, place names reinforce enduring ties between Irish emigrants and their ancestral homelands. Settlements such as Emyvale, Avondale, Belfast, Green Road, Emerald, and Kinkora gave Ireland an enduring and prominent presence on PEI (see fig. 2.1), ever since Walter Patterson, from Donegal, became its first governor in 1769.[4] Patterson attempted to have the Island's name

[1] Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 37.
[2] Keith H. Basso, "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape," in *Senses of Place*, eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996), 54.
[3] Edward S. Casey, "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena," in *Senses of Place*, eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996), 14.
[4] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 28.

changed to *New Ireland*. At that time, it was named St. John's Island because Jacques Cartier had named it *Île Saint-Jean*. Despite Patterson's efforts, Prince Edward Island acquired its current name in 1798.[5] Instances where immigrants shared common spaces are also evident on PEI. Harmony, for example, is a name given to a school district formed by French, Irish, Highland Scots, Lowland Scots, English and Dutch settlers.[6] Once named and inscribed, knowledge and memories of places began to unfurl over time. Katrin Urschel elucidates this phenomenon further by claiming that place names copper-fasten a collective sense of emplacement, becoming in the process vital "placeholders of memory."[7]

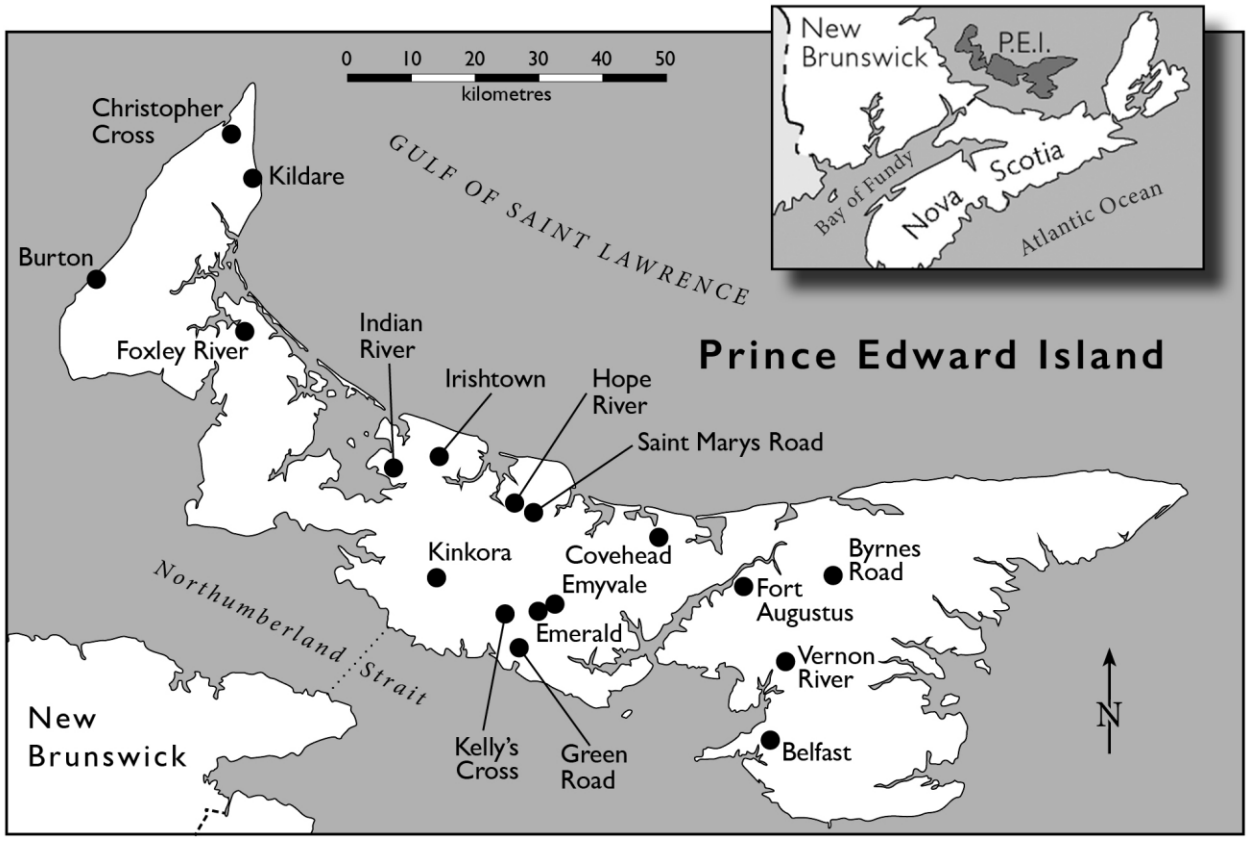


Figure 2.1 Irish Communities on PEI.

PEI-born Scottish fiddler Ward MacDonald (b. 1978) was raised in eastern-PEI and comes from a long line of Scottish fiddle players. His father's family is from Bangor, and his

[5] Ibid., 15.
[6] R. Douglas, *Place-Names of Prince Edward Island: With Meanings* (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1925), 29.
[7] Katrin Urschel, "Chronotopic Memory in Contemporary Irish-Canadian Literature," in *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices,* ed. Oona Frawley (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012), 39.

mother is from Riverton. Kings County, their native place, is predominately Scottish.[8] He grew up surrounded by a musical family and frequent family gatherings involving music and dance. His family ties to Scotland are manifested through his predominantly Scottish and Cape Breton-sourced repertoire. Playing for dancing is MacDonald's *raison d'être*, and his tempos and tune types remain true to Scottish set dancing traditions that date back to the early nineteenth century. For MacDonald, the place his family has lived for generations is his nodal point of emplacement; the familiarity of its name is potent, nostalgic and a constant reminder of his ancestral homeland. Scottish place names on PEI such as Anderson, Argyle Shore, Caledonia, Culloden, Dundee, and Inverness copper-fasten the Scottish cultural influence within the province. Mirroring Clifford Geertz's credo: "What good are roots if you can't take them with you?," fiddling repertoires, stylistic nuances and the instruments themselves are all cultural markers that were brought to PEI by the original settlers.[9] In their soundscapes, Scottish settlers were able to transform the *space* of their new home into a *place* inscribed with distinctive cultural identity, drawing on a variety of Scottish experiences and memories. Musical representation of specific locales evokes memories of place, as well as subjective interpretations of such places that vary from player to player and listener to listener, all of which are endemic in the traditional music, song and dance of the Island.

Phenomenology of Music Making

Usually consigned to the world of philosophy, (because of its founders, Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger), and literary criticism, phenomenology has been slow to gain traction in Irish ethnomusicological studies. Recent studies by Lilis Ó Laoire and Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, however, have deployed phenomenological methods—some of which are drawn from space-place models.[10] Geographer David Seamon has claimed that "phenomenology is the method to break through taken-for-grantedness, and get to the meaning structures of our experiences."[11] Viewing music making through the lens of phenomenology allows for close individualistic

[8] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 96.
[9] Clifford Geertz, "Afterword," in *Senses of Place*, eds. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996), 261.
[10] See Lilis Ó Laoire, *On a Rock in the Middle of the Ocean: Songs and Singers in Tory Island,* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow, 2005); and Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape*, (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2016).
[11] David Seamon, "Epoché and Reduction," *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology* 24, no. 3 (2014): 3.

studies on musical consciousness—essentially, an opportunity to walk in the shoes of our informants. The sonic pathways that musicians forge consist of multiple sensory spaces that comprise their musical worlds. All of these sensory spaces inform and complexify the phenomenological consciousness that leads to music making. Acknowledging the magnitude of this kaleidoscopic process, Gerry Smyth claims that Irish traditional music as a "truly global phenomenon" largely because of its aesthetic hybridity. Scott Reiss has argued that "Irish traditional music is a social phenomenon as much as a musical one. The music is preserved, transmitted, shared, and developed in musical/social gatherings, at dances, pub sessions or informal playing occasions, as well as through a network of competitions and schools."[12]

Shifts in musical spaces over time witnessed parallel shifts in cultural markers. Irish musicologist David Cooper tracked a shift from céilí house to public house during the mid-twentieth century and the emphasis that was placed not only on maintaining the community-sense of music making, but also the sale of alcohol.[13] Traditional Irish music's role in society shifted again after the folk revival in the 1960s to one of greater consumption—musically and monetarily—through large-scale performances and the increased commodification of venues.[14] Vigilant of such cultural nuance and interdependency, anthropologist Arjun Appadurai asserted that, "culture is not usefully regarded as a substance but is better regarded as a dimension of phenomena, a dimension that attends to situated and embodied difference."[15]

In addition to physical space where traditional music is shared, modernity has allowed virtual space to enjoy a prominent role in the preservation and dissemination of Irish traditional music. Online communities such as *thesession.org* create platforms for musicians and listeners to participate in discourse surrounding tunes and playing conventions. Users can submit transcribed versions of tunes, participate in discussions, as well as contribute to playlists, tune books and

---

[12] Gerry Smyth, *Music in Irish Cultural History* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009), xv.; Scott Reiss, "Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon," in *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, eds. Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003), 146.

[13] Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diasporas*, 135.

[14] Hast and Scott, *Music in Ireland,* 41; Gareth Cox and Axel Klein, eds, *Irish Musical Studies: Irish Music in the Twentieth Century* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 12; Amy Hale and Philip Payton, *New directions in Celtic studies* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000), 22; and Neil Rosenberg, *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

[15] Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 12-13.

event listings. The anonymous nature of this virtual milieu does not hold members responsible for actions or comments they contribute, allowing them to drift in and out of conversations at their leisure. Feargal Cochrane has investigated the impact of these technological advancements and claims that "modernity has facilitated our ability to live in several places at the one time, to fuse cultures, cuisines, economies and even political allegiances."[16] Irish musicians on PEI enjoy membership of both worlds simultaneously—of the physical community through live sessions, as well as the virtual community by joining forums such as *thesession.org.* Players consciously or subconsciously absorb aspects of other playing styles by participating in virtual music communities, thus contributing further to a phenomenological symbiosis that is at once local and global, intensely private and overtly public.

PEI fiddler Roy Johnstone is highly attuned to the phenomenological contours of his musical world. Interrogating the process of adhering to predetermined norms of learning tunes, he readily acknowledges the conflict between the aesthetic choice of the individual and the external conventions of established tradition. As a music teacher, he has to negotiate between both of these symbiotic spaces:

> I don't like to necessarily focus on tunes, like some players. I find the Cape Bretoners, they just play the tune over and over, and you're supposed to play exactly like them. Which is ok, but I like to focus on what each person is trying to express, you know, and their own abilities. Because to me, it's about finding your own voice on the instrument. Just to be able to mimic somebody else, that's ok to start with, but, to me, you want to be able to move beyond that and not play the tune exactly like somebody else. And, I mean, many times people can't do that. They don't have that. They don't have the neurological structure to do it, or they don't have the physical capacity to play the same way. So I find that you're trying to do this, but, you know, maybe it's better if you do it this way. Try to find your own way to do it. For me, it's more about expression and … finding your own voice on the instrument. When you play the instrument, I find you go inside the instrument, or there's some kind of marriage with the instrument.[17]

[16] Cochrane, *The End of Irish-America?*, 6.
[17] Roy Johnstone, interview with author, October 2016.

Transmission and Place

Music fills and empties space in a dual process of placement and displacement.[18] Place is made up of materialities, meanings and practices. Places exist because of the meanings, stories and narratives that travel beyond that particular locale. Places accumulate materialities and practices over time, further validating the claim that they are continually in process and ever changing. They have horizontal (the gathering and mobility of things) and vertical ("here-ness" and temporality) realities.

It is traditional music's rootedness in place that produces personal relationships to it. While the performer is invited to interpret a traditional melody in his or her own way, Western Classical music has the added element of the composer to consider. This component is often not present in traditional music, as it is "everywhere and potentially owned by everyone. [Folk music is] anachronistic, connected primarily to a previous era, but [it still lives] in the present, shaped by and responsive to contemporary events."[19] Within this milieu, performers of Irish traditional music are welcome to put their own stamp on a tune. A key feature of the "tradition" is that players are granted the freedom to interpret as they feel fit—a feature that is comparable to jazz in that a player may not play the same tune the same way twice.[20] This freedom of expression is what keeps the music vibrant and performers continually striving to reach new musical insights.

On PEI, place is a vibrant keeper of memories, the result of individual and collective lifeworlds that create and maintain layers of emplacement over time. Layers of music memory are found among fiddlers across the Island, who frame and recall tunes differently each time they play them, depending on the context in which they are performing. To be respected as part of a music community, a musician must be able to recall relevant tunes, as well as play them in a similar style to that of established players. The memory, history and genealogy of a particular tune indicates why it carries more weight and significance in one soundscape over another. Learning the names and being able to identify tunes upon hearing them is an essential component

---

[18] Nicholas Cook, "Classical Music and the Politics of Space," in *Music, Sound and Space: Transformation of Public and Private Experience*, ed. Georgina Born (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 225; and Erik Levi and Floran Scheding, *Music and Displacement: Diasporas, Mobilities, and Dislocations in Europe and Beyond* (Lanham, M.D.: Scarecrow Press, 2010), viii. See also Doreen Massey, *For Space* (London: Sage, 2005).

[19] Philip V. Bohlman, *World Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 69.

[20] Fanny Feehan, "Suggested Links Between Eastern and Celtic Music," in *The Celtic Consciousness*, ed. Robert O'Driscoll (New York: Braziller, 1981), 334.

of traditional music discourse. Indeed, many players are guilty of not being able to recall the names of particular tunes, but as long as they rely on transcriptions as skeletal, or *prescriptive* mnemonics, as Charles Seeger suggests, rather than detailed *descriptive* transcriptions, notation simply acts as a prompt, not a definitive record.[21] Those relying on staff notation will most likely recall a particular tune the same way each time they play it, emphasizing the static impact that notation has—often inhibiting freedom of expression from player to player. Breandán Breathnach believed that transcriptions only played a liminal role in Irish traditional music:

> Staff notation mostly serves a two-fold purpose for the traditional player. It elucidates a twist or turn in a tune which his ear has failed to pick up; it recalls to memory a tune once played but now forgotten. Here the notation may be likened to a photograph – the features in both cases are instantly recalled on sight and the notation and the photograph can, there and then, be dispensed with. Memory takes over as the original impression reinstates itself.[22]

While orality may be questionable as a historiographical conduit, on PEI, it is widely agreed that learning aurally from masters of the tradition is *the* only way to acquire an indigenous style.[23] In learning aurally, musicians on the Island, as in other parts of Maritime Canada, learn to sense their own musical place. It is the music's rootedness in place—in this case 'Island place'—that creates personal relationships with it. Unlike classical musicians performing Western Art music who—for the most part—respect the notational boundaries of the composer, traditional musicians put their own personal stamp on a melody by altering melodic settings, articulations, and rhythmic patterns. This is a key tenet of the traditional storehouse on PEI.

The naming of tunes is also a complex process; tunes may even have different names in different regions.[24] When relying on oral/aural transmission, variations and adaptations are natural phenomena. Stylistic differences from region to region demonstrate the impact time and space have on the music. It is no surprise, therefore, that many tune names are based on places,

---

[21] Charles Seeger, *Studies in Musicology 1935-1975* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 170.
[22] Breandán Breathnach and Seán Potts, *The Man & His Music: An Anthology of the Writings of Breandán Breathnach* (Dublin: Na Píobairí Uilleann, 1996), 98-99.
[23] Breandán Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland* (Cork: Ossian, 1996), 90.
[24] Ciarán Carson, *Irish Traditional Music* (Belfast, Ireland: Appletree Press, 1986), 8.

whether as a site of composition, or a sonic dedication to a memory shared in a particular place. Likewise, the same piece of music may move different people in a similar way, but for different reasons. As ethnomusicologist John Blacking remarked, "You can enjoy a piece of plainchant because you are a Roman Catholic, or because you like the sound of the music: you need not have a 'good ear' to enjoy it as a Catholic, nor need you be a believer to enjoy it as music. In both cases the enjoyment depends on a background of human experience."[25] For example, the PEI-based Acadian group, Barachois, transformed a setting of *Credo,* a piece of plainchant from the Catholic Mass into the style of traditional Acadian music (Fig. 2.2 & 2.3).[26] The reincarnation of this musical form from seventeenth-century Gregorian chant illustrates the chameleon-like capability of the music, as well as the capacity of listeners to enjoy it in multiple musical forms. Barachois interpreted the rhythmic contour of the melody phrase-by-phrase; the final word of each phrase, not consistent in length, generated a feeling of unpredictability and emphasized the speech-like essence of the *Credo* text. Furthermore, the simple rhythmic accompaniment of foot-tapping reaffirms the Acadian influences on their interpretation. The shape of the melody has remained intact for over three centuries, but the context in which it is performed and the overall perception of the piece has shifted in the intervening centuries—all of which vividly illustrate the *longue durée* currents that impact musical transmission on PEI.

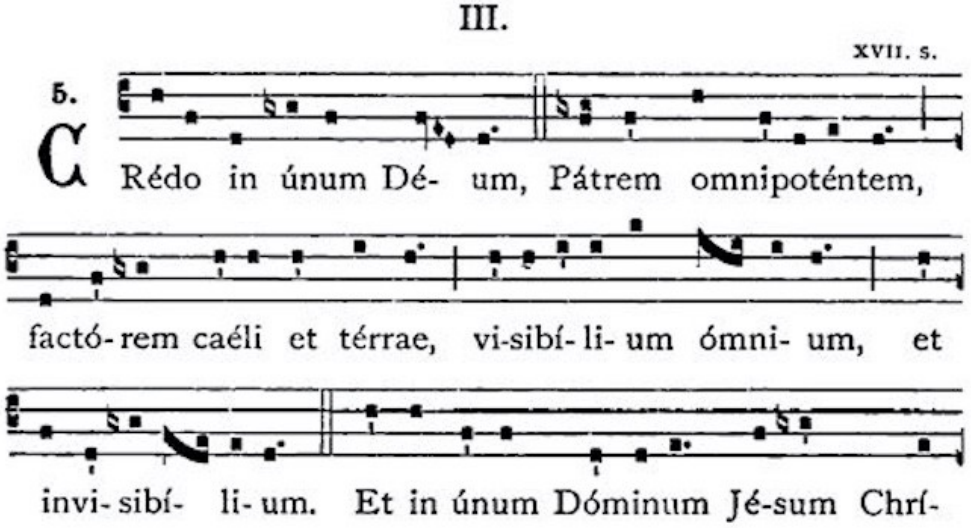


Figure 2.2 Credo III, Gregorian Missal, page 139.

[25] John Blacking, *How Musical is Man?* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973), 52.
[26] Song example found on the album Barachois, *Encore!,* (Wellington, PEI: House Party Productions Ltd., 2000), track 14.

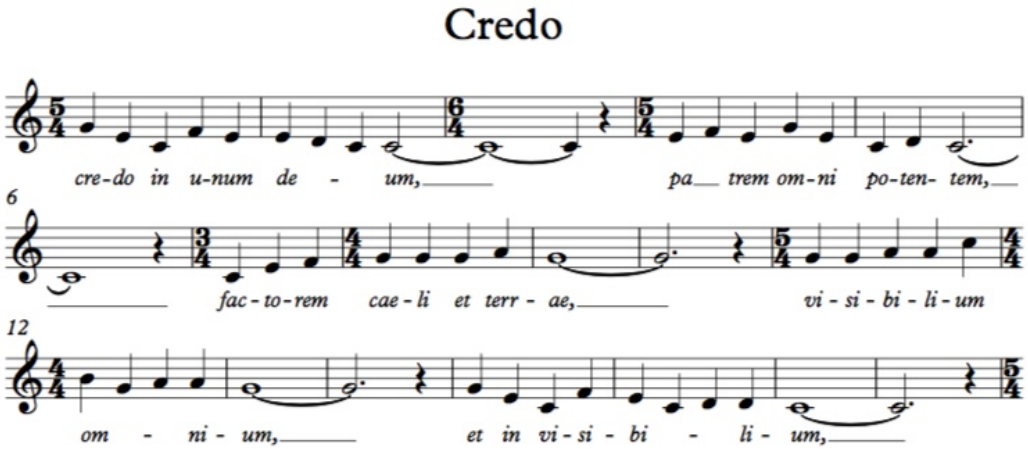


Figure 2.3 *Credo*, Barachois, *Encore!,* (Wellington, PEI: House Party Productions Ltd., 2000), track 14.

Prince Edward Island: A Sonic *Habitus*

According to collectors Breandán Breathnach and Seán Potts, "It is not origin that distinguishes folk music but its mode of transition and acquisition."[27] Sociologist Pierre Bourdieu echoes this perspective in his *habitus* theory. He argues that all musical spaces are connected—session spaces, concert halls, recording studios, house sessions. The diaspora of Irish music to North America reflects this kaleidoscopic process, in the small rural halls of PEI, as well as on the concert stages of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles. Recording technology, television and, ultimately, the Internet facilitated this linking of musical spaces across Canada.

Bourdieu defines *habitus* as a social process consisting of "regulated improvisations" that produce regularities and guide human behaviour and thinking.[28] Habitus is created through collective social processes rather than individual ones, and is a synthesis of one's habits and tendencies acquired over time. Habitus, like place and traditional music, is not fixed or permanent. It evolves over time. This theory can be applied to session-goers on PEI who have absorbed the etiquette and customs that prevail at these socio-musical gatherings. On PEI, musical spaces are constructed as part of the overall musical fabric of the province (in bars, homes, etc.). The Irish fiddler Pádraig O'Keefe (1887-1963) once justified his irregular church attendance to a priest by defending session spaces in bars by saying, "'Tis like this Father, five minutes in a church is like

[27] Breathnach and Potts, *The Man & His Music*, 92.
[28] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), 78.

an hour, but an hour in a pub is like five minutes."[29] O'Keefe's sense of habitus was perceived through the perspective of the pub session that shaped his sense of time and place, and their relationship with one another.

Another paradigm coined by Bourdieu is *fields*: the networks established in various aspects of one's life: educational, musical, cultural, religious, etc. Habitus is based on the context, or *field* in which one finds oneself at any given time. These micro environments play a key role in the power experienced by people, and in turn generate different meanings from person to person. The spaces and contexts in which traditional music is performed frame similar experiences for each listener and performer. The most common field in which Irish traditional music is played is the session space. Some musicians argue that performance context is seldom considered and that many places are deemed inappropriate for playing traditional music. The informal atmosphere that often accompanies traditional music sessions provides vital synesthesia for players and listeners, such as the "sweet tone" of a flute, or the "warm welcome" of a session space. Becoming involved in the discourse surrounding Irish and Scottish music diasporas requires immersion of both the mind and body: embodiment through playing with others, connecting with one's instrument and the surrounding environment, and recognizing the complexity of sensory ratios in this specific *field*. This allows performers to explore the cyclical interface between music and space. All these variables are critical in understanding the traditional soundscape of PEI, as well as the Irish, Scottish, French and First Nation dialects that maintain it.

The third and final concept that Bourdieu incorporates into his habitus theory is *capital*. Emphasizing that capital is comprised not only of material, economic assets, Bourdieu insists that it exists in cultural and social forms as well.[30] Each form of capital plays a central role in societal power relations and the establishment of habitus. Furthermore, cultural capital exists in multiple forms: objectified (goods such as musical instruments, sheet music, CDs), embodied (tendencies and associations embedded on one's mind and body), and institutionalized (credentials or qualifications that symbolize cultural authority). The fiddling culture on PEI reflects these branches of cultural capital; however, the fact that the University of PEI does not offer formal training in traditional music illustrates a lack of institutionalized cultural capital in this sphere; a

[29] Matt Cranitch, "Pádraig O'Keefe and the Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Tradition" (PhD diss., University of Limerick, 2006), 421.
[30] Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, ed. Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy (New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), 81.

gap which could be filled in the future by the creation of university training courses in fiddling. Traditional music in general plays a vital role in the flow of social and cultural capital. Cultural capital is acquired through experience, and traditional music sessions offer an ideal milieu in which to gain such capital. On PEI, musicians are continually gaining cultural capital unconsciously by participating in this community of music makers.

In recent times, traditional music has become a critical source of economic capital for musicians marketing their music commercially. Historically, fiddlers performed at weddings, funerals and other important social events, but compensation was seldom monetary. PEI fiddler Archie Stewart (1917-2003) reiterated the importance of the fiddler in this old cultural milieu:

> One thing, boy, you were always welcome! I heard an old fellow saying one time the three most important people in the district— the minister was the first, the schoolteacher was next, and the fiddler was next. That was the three most important people in the town: the minister or clergyman, whichever it happened to be, and the schoolteacher, and the fiddler. Couldn't have a wedding without a fiddler![31]

Most fiddlers born in the early to mid-twentieth century held several professions. Few relied on their music to survive. Fiddlers have always been highly respected on PEI, but fiddling was not a viable profession until recent times. The growing number of folk festivals has allowed musical acts from across Canada's East Coast to gain national and international recognition, and many now earn a sustainable living working full-time as performing and teaching musicians.

The late twentieth century saw traditional fiddling emerge as an independent form of entertainment, thus becoming its own form of cultural and social capital on PEI and elsewhere.[32] A parallel shift took place in Ireland, as Ó hAllmhuráin asserts: "By 1980, the use of 'trad music' as cultural capital by public and private bodies in Ireland (from Bórd Fáilte to Guinness) had reinvented its sense of identity yet again. Traditional music communities morphed into 'trad music' scenes, while the fiscal potential of the music became abundantly clear to music and

[31] Ken Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler,* 20.
[32] Evelyn Osborne, "Fiddling with Technology: The Effect of Media on Newfoundland Traditional Musicians," *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 22, no. 1 (2007): 193.

media moguls on both sides of the Atlantic."[33] PEI fiddler Ward MacDonald experienced this shift, noting the repetitive nature of some of the work he does as a fiddler, specifically a summer production at the College of Piping in Summerside: "The College show, which is exactly the same show, right, boom, boom, boom for July and August. […] By the end of it, I'm not inspired. It's like, 'Oh god, I gotta do this whole show again.'"[34]

Cultural Flow: Linking Musical Worlds

Traditional soundscapes are both isomorphic and heterogeneous; they intertwine and overlap with one another, creating an intricate and complex branch of cultural study. Indian anthropologist Arjun Appadurai has claimed that, "culture is not usefully regarded as a substance but is better regarded as a dimension of phenomena, a dimension that attends to situated and embodied difference."[35] His cultural flow theory comprises five interlocking "scapes" that shape the postmodern world—namely, ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscapes. All of these domains impact traditional soundscapes—including those on PEI.

Appadurai describes ethnoscapes as the movement of people across cultures and borders— "mobile communities of emigrants, tourists, and guest workers and sedentary communities of farmers, fishermen, teachers, and civil servants."[36] PEI was an *entrepôt* and haven for immigrants arriving on North America's east coast. Music, song, and dance are essential by-products of this traffic. Irish fiddlers on PEI readily acknowledge their debt to older ethnoscapes on the Island, while simultaneously absorbing the music of new ethnoscapes en route to their shores. Roy Johnstone, for example, has absorbed Klezmer, Métis, French and Scottish fiddling as part of his repertoire. Appadurai's mediascapes are shaped by the dissemination of information across various media platforms. Media in real and imagined music communities continue to gain traction at ever increasing speeds. Professional fiddlers on PEI are all expected to have websites to market their music, liaise with other performers, and maintain fan networks. Technoscapes co-exist with mediascapes and continue to shape traditional fiddling on PEI, as they have in the past. Recording technology on PEI now impacts virtually every aspect of the

[33] Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, *Flowing Tides: History & Memory in an Irish Soundscape* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 216.
[34] Ward MacDonald, interview with Author, October 2016.
[35] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large,* 12-13.
[36] Ó hAllmhuráin, *Flowing Tides, 3*5.

music, from teaching tools to the delivery of top-tier commercial recordings. Both of these "scapes" allow Island fiddlers an opportunity to share their place and their music with total strangers in virtual communities "at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries."[37]

Financescapes involve the movement of capital across cultural and economic boundaries. Linked with ever-shifting fiscal landscapes, financescapes are unpredictable in nature. Currencies and commodities are continually in flux demonstrating the impact of global capital on cultural goods such as recorded music, and live performances. Charlottetown fiddler Gary Chipman (b. 1944) has worked most of his life as a professional fiddler, playing at dances, concerts, weddings and other social occasions. He observed a decline in fiddling on PEI throughout the 1960s owing to advancements in technology, but a resurgence in the 1980s as audiences expressed a renewed desire for live music.[38] The monetary and cultural value of the fiddler continues to shift on PEI. Many fiddlers, like Chipman, are now able to make a living by working in the music industry, performing and teaching—a reality that was denied to most of their predecessors.

Primarily political in nature, ideoscapes are linked to power and the impact that ideologies exercise over groups and individuals—musicians included. Music is frequently used to buttress existing orthodoxies, yet it frequently challenges political ideologies and power brokers—Irish rebel songs being a prime example.[39] Tune titles and song lyrics are key indicators of music working with and against prevailing ideoscapes. Instruments too are deployed to support, or defy prevailing ideoscapes and traditions. The Highland pipes, for example, were typically used in battle and are still associated with the military today. Politically-charged tune titles reference political leaders, rebels and dissidents. Examples from the fiddle repertoire on PEI include *Lord Lovat's Lament, Killekrankie* and *The Duke of Leinster.*

The transformations ushered in by these cultural flows reinforce a constant sense of mobility and change within PEI's Irish music community. In this sense, the Island is no longer insular in a musical sense but is part of a vast sonic matrix that impacts musical lifeworlds in all parts of the world.

---

[37] Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 34.
[38] "Gary Chipman," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A245.
[39] Some prominent Irish rebel songs include *The Foggy Dew*, *Back Home in Derry*, and *Skibbereen*.

Spatial Genealogy of a Tune: *Sheehan's Reel*

Investigating various versions of *Sheehan's Reel*, this case study will serve as a thick descriptive analysis of the tune's genealogy in the fiddling culture of PEI. Ken Perlman notes this reel as one of the most widely-played tunes on the Island.[40] The transcriptions of fourteen versions of the tune from printed collections, fiddlers in Ireland, PEI and other parts of Canada are organized geographically, to show the spatial (and temporal) journey made by this celebrated piece. Based on public domain recordings of each player, the tune skeleton has been transcribed once for each performance, to underline its diversity. Bowing and ornamentation patterns have been detailed, although exact rhythmic details cannot be notated in standard transcription. Sheet music serves as a notional guideline for the traditional player. However, it generally fails to capture the layered creativity that each player brings to any given piece of music. Collector-composers such as Bela Bartok and Zoltán Kodály, were intrigued by this creative skill among folk musicians in Central Europe.[41] It is a ubiquitous feature of Celtic soundscapes on both sides of the Atlantic.

Widely recorded in Ireland and North America, *Sheehan's Reel* is also known as *Lord Wellington's Reel*, *Wellington's*, and *Joe O'Connell's Dream*, among other titles. The reel was first published in Francis O'Neill's *Music of Ireland* in 1903, and again in O'Neill's *Dance Music of Ireland* in 1907. It was later published in Breandán Breathnach's *Ceol Rince na hÉireann* (*Dance Music of Ireland*) vol. 3 (1985) and in *Allan's Irish Fiddler* (1933). Irish ethnomusicologist Liz Doherty claims that, "Frequently in an oral tradition, style is in a constant state of evolution, with older elements being supplemented with and replaced by newer elements."[42] This is very evident in the case of *Sheehan's Reel*, which has undergone considerable change after a century of recordings and transcriptions.

The tune is in standard reel format: An A and B section comprising of eight measures each. The A and B sections are repeated once each time through the tune, resulting in a total of thirty-two bars of music. The melodic contour is relatively smooth; there are no intervals greater than a perfect fourth, and arpeggios and scale-like patterns prevail throughout. The B section is in a higher register than the A, which is common in standard reel format. The B section is often

---

[40] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 53. The first measure of *Sheehan's Reel* is identical to the first measure of *The Peeler's Jacket*, another common Irish reel.
[41] Bela Bartok, cited in Nettl, *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*, 15-16.
[42] Liz Doherty, quoted in Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, 58. See also Anne Cohen and Norman Cohen, "Tune Evolution as an Indicator of Traditional Music Norms," *Journal of American Folklore* 86, no. 339 (1973): 37-47.

referred to as the *turn*, or the high section. In the original 1903 publication, there were very few bowings or articulations indicated - the slurs indicated are there to ensure that the beginning of each new measure starts on a down bow for the fiddler (it is a natural impulse for fiddlers to begin a phrase on a down bow).

The term "style" is used as an overall description of various aspects of a fiddler's playing, and it is often used interchangeably with the term "playing style." Frequently, style refers to a geographic region and the dialectical nuances that prevail in that region. Sub-categories of style include elements such as bowing, ornamentation, or rhythmic features. It is through comparison that stylistic nuances are brought to light. As Bruno Nettl asserts, it is the "ultimate purpose of description of musical style in ethnomusicology."[43] Idiomatic features of style discussed in this brief case study include: bowing direction and patterns, melodic sequences, rhythmic articulation and accentuation, ornamentation (left-hand), dynamics, double-stopping and droning, melodic variation, tuning and intonation.

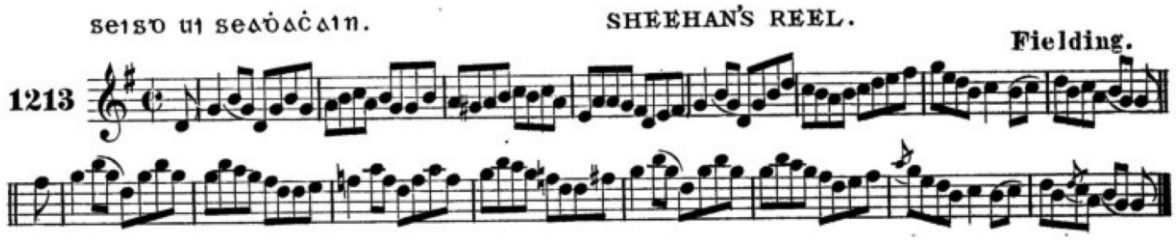


Figure 2.4 Francis O'Neill, *Music of Ireland* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1903), 229.

O'Neill referenced Reverend James K. Fielding as the contributor for this published version of *Sheehan's Reel* in 1903 (Fig. 2.4). Born in the 1860s in Co. Kilkenny, Fielding was a priest and a member of the Irish Music Club of Chicago. His main instrument was the flute, and it is not clear whether the slurs indicated in this first publication were actually used by Fielding, or if Francis O'Neill and James O'Neill (who transcribed in Francis O'Neill's work), added them after the fact.

It is interesting to note the absence of repeat signs at the end of each eight-bar segment. O'Neill's later publication in 1907, which also includes *Sheehan's Reel* (Fig. 2.5) does not contain repeat signs either. However, there is no reference to Fielding's earlier version, and the

[43] Nettl, *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*, 167.

melodic structure of the B section differs quite significantly from the 1903 publication. The B section in O'Neill's 1903 *Music of Ireland* is in the Mixolydian mode, with F naturals instead of F sharps—no PEI fiddlers play this version. The Ionian mode versions published in O'Neill's D*ance Music of Ireland* (Fig. 2.5) and in *Allan's Irish Fiddler* (Fig. 2.6) are by far the most popular settings. The only Irish fiddler until recently to have recorded *Sheehan's Reel* with a Mixolydian B section is Hugh Gillespie, who recorded the tune in the USA between 1937-1939 under the title *Joe O'Connell's Dream* (Fig. 2.14).

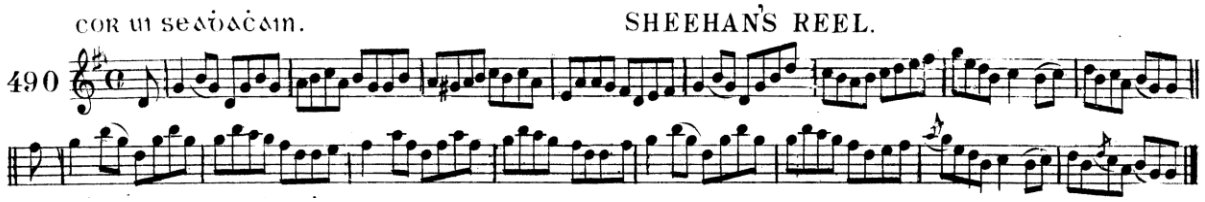


Figure 2.5 Francis O'Neill, *Dance Music of Ireland* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1907), 94.

Many fiddlers on PEI play a version of *Sheehan's Reel* similar to that which was published in *Allan's Irish Fiddler* in Glasgow (Fig. 2.6), indicating its enduring popularity in the soundscape of the Island. The chromatic neighbour tones in the second measure of the tune have been adopted by Scottish fiddlers on PEI—possibly as a result of its publication by a Glasgow publisher. The use of triplets as an ornamentation device at the end of the A and B sections is common in other versions.

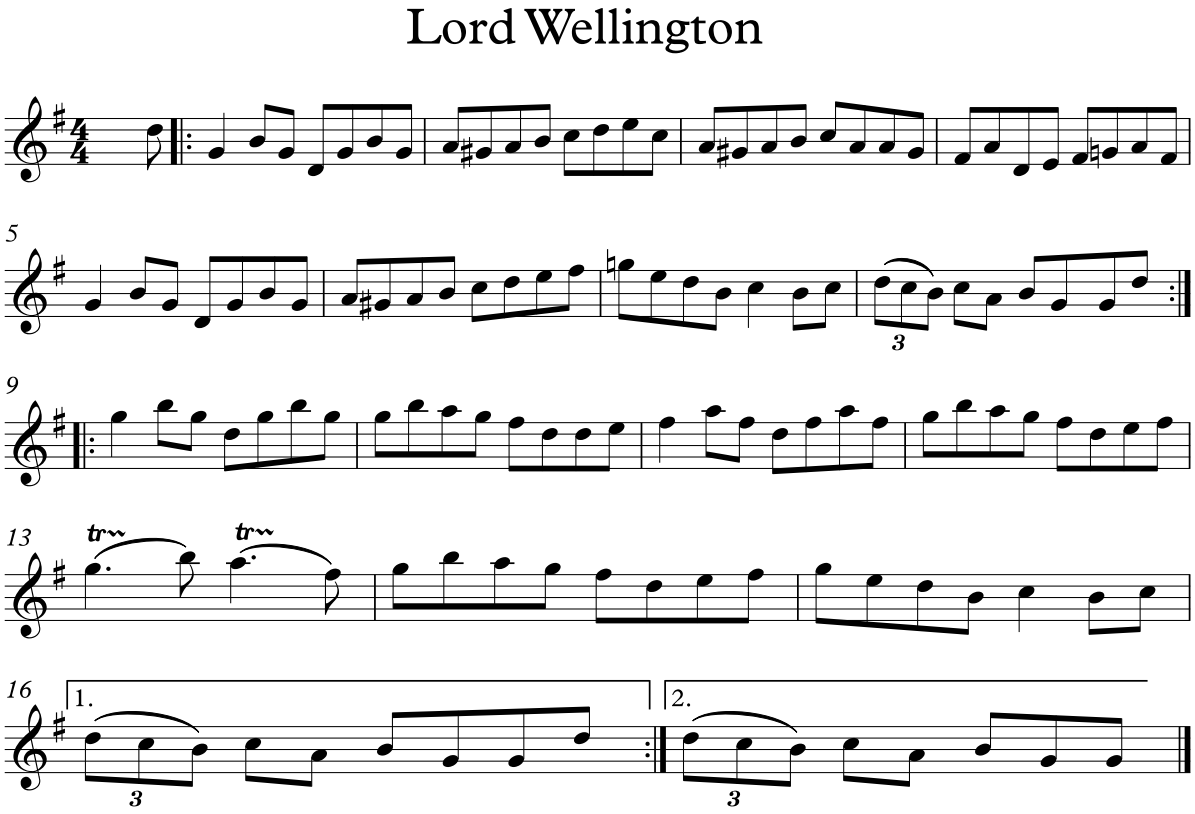


Figure 2.6 *Allan's Irish Fiddler,* Hugh McDermott and Ian Macleish (Glasgow: Mozart Allan, 1933), 17.

Eddy Arsenault (1921-2014) was a fiddler from the Evangeline Coast in East Prince County, PEI. Arsenault played *Sheehan's Reel* (Fig. 2.7) at a moderate tempo of 110 bpm, with strong foot tapping on the first and third beats. His bowing was smooth with a handful of slurs distinguishing his style throughout. Arsenault worked as a lobster fisherman and was influenced by Cape Breton fiddlers, Winston "Scotty" Fitzgerald and Angus Chisholm.[44] His playing of *Sheehan's Reel* was "clean" (uncluttered) with very few ornaments. The emphasis instead was on rhythmic drive through foot tapping and the constant use of eighth notes.

[44] Dorothy Griffin-Farish, "Eddy Arsenault: Evangéline Area Fiddler Extraordinaire," *The Island Fiddler* 4, no. 3 (2006): 1-2.

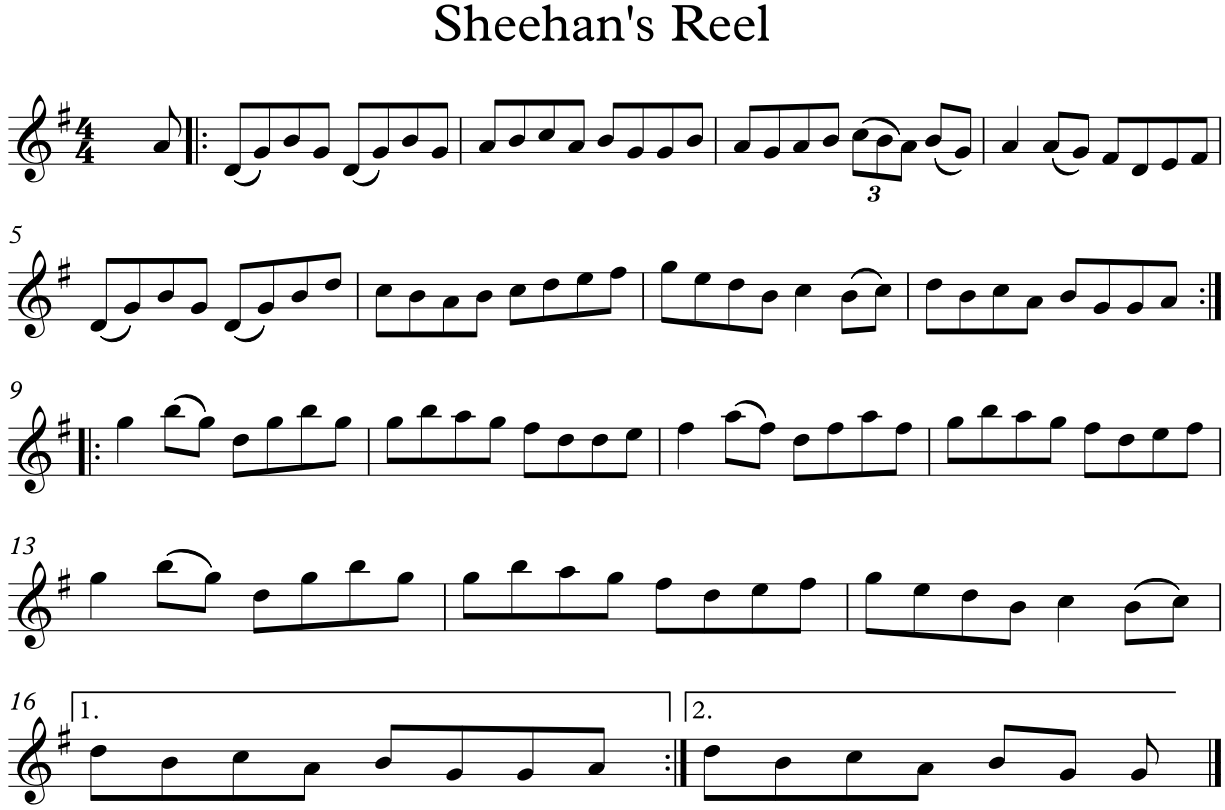


Figure 2.7 Eddy Arsenault, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

"Young" Peter Chaisson (1941-2015) was from Northeast Kings County on PEI. Chaisson's tempo was more relaxed than that of Arsenault, averaging 101 beats per minute (bpm). The dotted eighth note and sixteenth note rhythm is known as the *Scotch snap.*[45] Always grouped in twos, the 'snap' or short note, provides added energy to a piece of music. The presence of the Scotch snap in Chaisson's playing reflects the overwhelming presence of Scottish fiddlers in Kings County (Fig. 2.8). Like Arsenault, there is strong foot tapping on beats one and three, however, a near complete absence of slurs is a further indication of the influence of Scottish bowing techniques in Chaisson's playing.

[45] Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, 126.

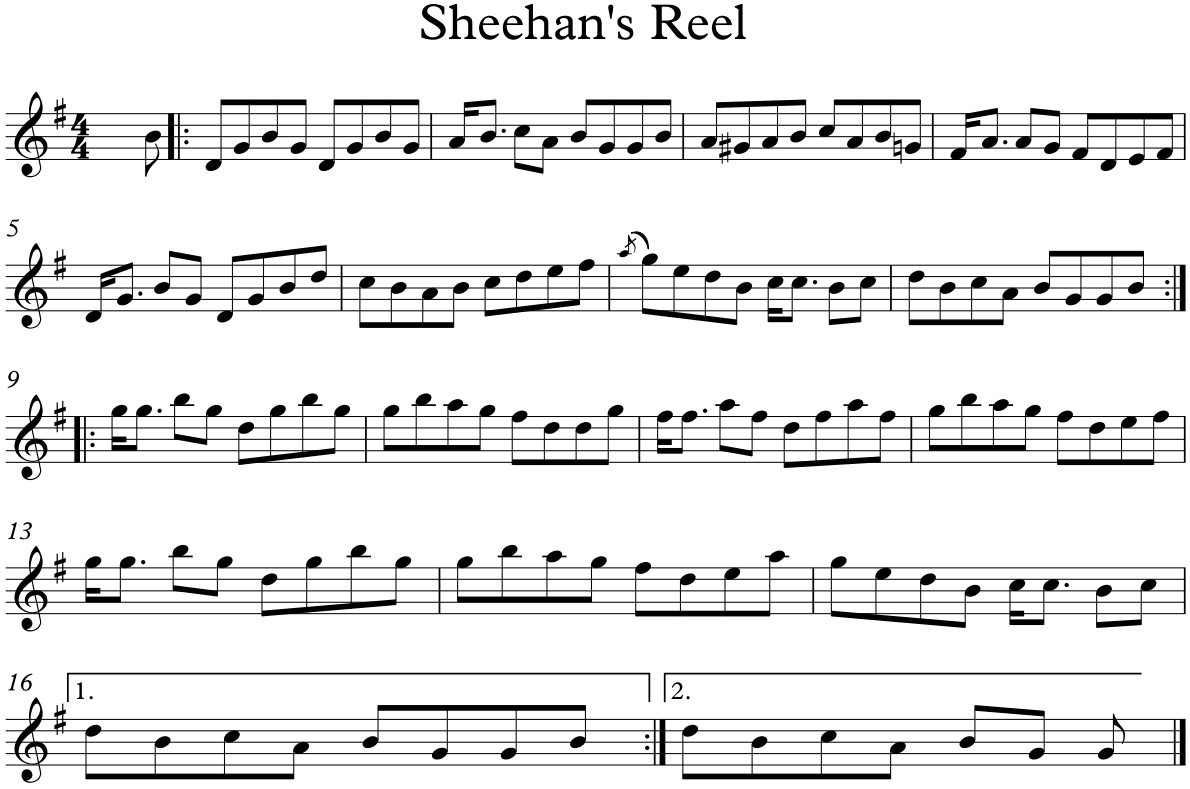


Figure 2.8 “Young” Peter Chaisson, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

Fiddler Charlie Sheehan (1907-1997) was also a native of Northeast Kings County. He played this reel almost exactly the same as Chaisson, with bowing and ornamentation essentially the same as his peer, emphasizing the homogenous regional style within the area (Fig. 2.9). The primary difference between their two settings is Sheehan’s average tempo is 110 bmp, compared with Chaisson’s slower speed of 101 bpm.[46] The lack of slurs in Sheehan’s playing indicates a strong Cape Breton influence. As Kate Dunlay and David Greenberg explain: “Cape Breton bowing consists of single bow strokes for each note, alternating down-bow and up-bow. Slurring is reserved for special effect, or to correct bow direction. The articulated bowing style of Cape Breton fiddlers is in sharp contrast to the legato bowing of most contemporary Irish fiddlers.”[47]

[46] “Charlie Sheehan,” Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A328.
[47] Dunlay and Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton*, 12.

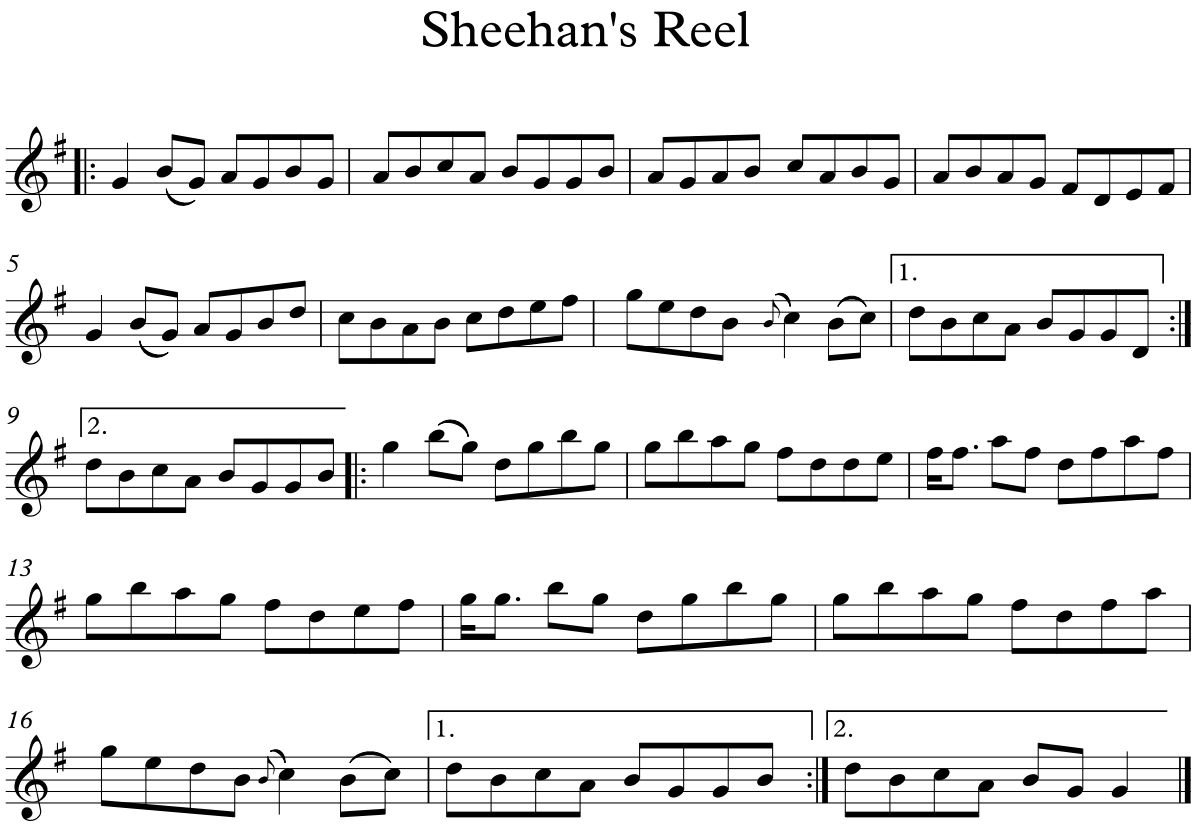


Figure 2.9 Charlie Sheehan, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

Francis MacDonald (b. 1940), a third fiddler from Northeast Kings County, has a style that is similar to those of Sheehan and Chaisson. Strong foot tapping is prominent on beats one and three, and MacDonald employed very few slurs, which is consistent with the Kings County style (Fig. 2.10). His average tempo is 109 bpm, placing all three Kings County fiddlers within nine beats per minute of each other—a fractional difference even to the astute listener.

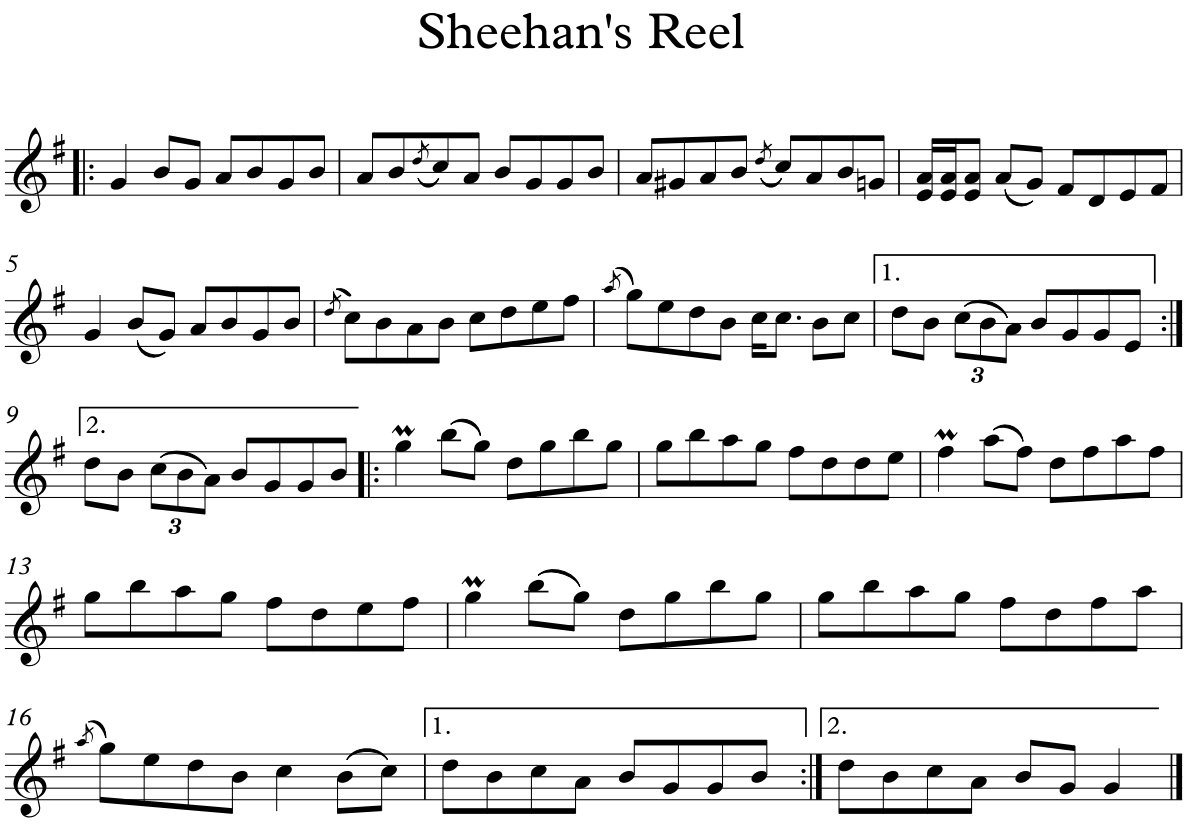


Figure 2.10 Francis MacDonald, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

Fiddler Joe Kearney (b. 1914) comes from South Kings County, although his playing style is consistent with Kings County fiddlers. Again, foot tapping on beats one and three is a defining feature of his playing. Kearney applies few slurs in his setting of *Sheehan's Reel* (Fig. 2.11). His average tempo is 108 bpm, placing it exactly within the average range of Kings County players. Few left-hand ornaments indicate a strong influence of Scottish fiddling rather than Irish, where left-hand ornamentation is usually favoured.[48]

[48] Cathy Larson Sky, "Building Bridges: Challenges in Playing, Performing, and Teaching Irish Music in the American South," in *Crosbhealach an Cheoil, The Crossroads Conference 1996: Tradition and Change in Irish Traditional Music*, ed. Fintan Vallely (Dublin, Ireland: Whinstone Music, 1999), 102.

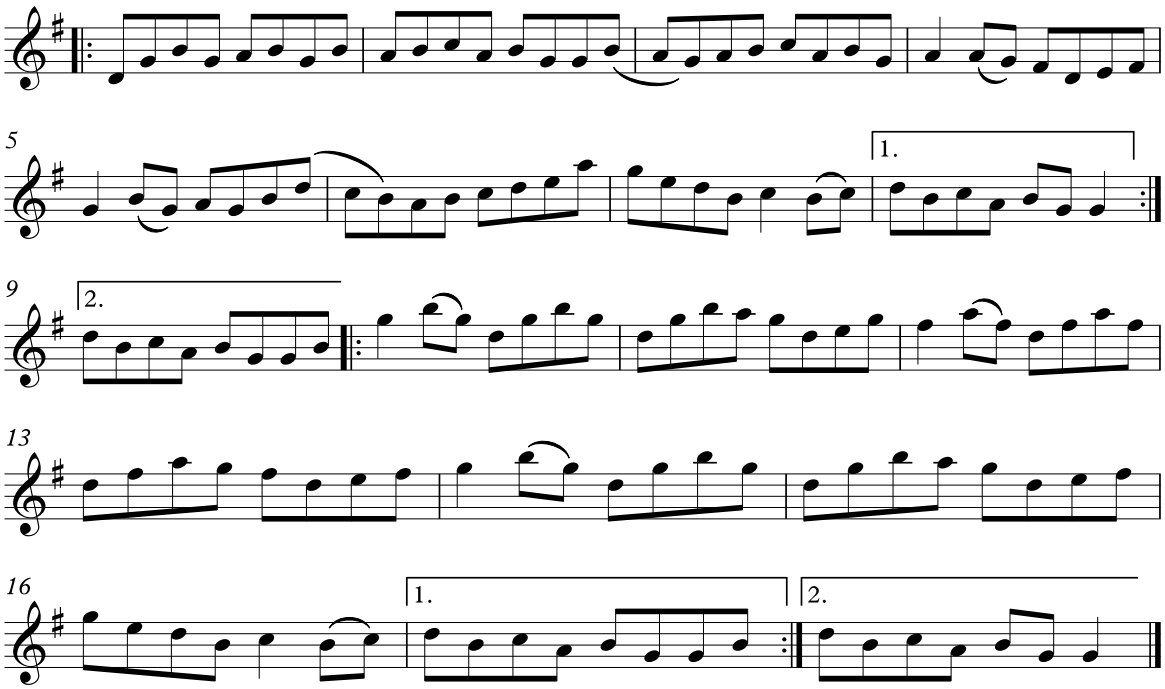


Figure 2.11 Joe Kearney, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

Roland Jay (1906-1998) played at an average tempo of 105 bpm, with a complete absence of slurs in his playing (Fig. 2.12). Jay was a native of Eastern Queens County, where fiddle styles were more Irish than those of Kings County. The constant, driving eighth notes are present almost entirely throughout his playing of *Sheehan's Reel,* and the lack of clear tonal quality produced from his technique suggests that a minimal amount of bow is being used. This is typical of many self-taught fiddlers. Jay did not tap his foot while he played, as foot tapping is a more prominent feature of Scottish-style players on PEI.

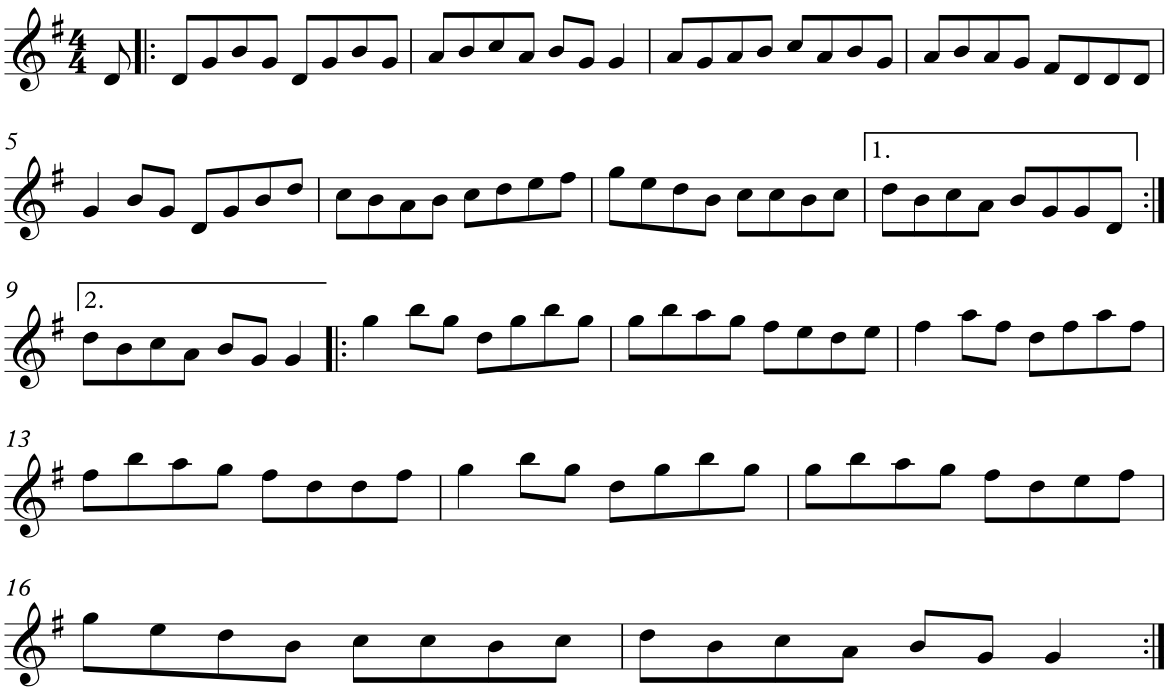


Figure 2.12 Roland Jay, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

Stephen Toole (1927-1995) was a fiddle player from Western Queens County. The transcription of Toole's setting of *Sheehan's Reel* (Fig. 2.13) is similar to the playing of Roland Jay, with the addition of some slurs. Furthermore, Toole's tempo is 106 bpm, almost identical to Jay's. The setting of *Sheehan's Reel* in O'Neill's 1907 publication (Fig. 2.5) corresponds closely with Toole and Jay's versions, which underlines the popularity of this seminal publication on PEI.

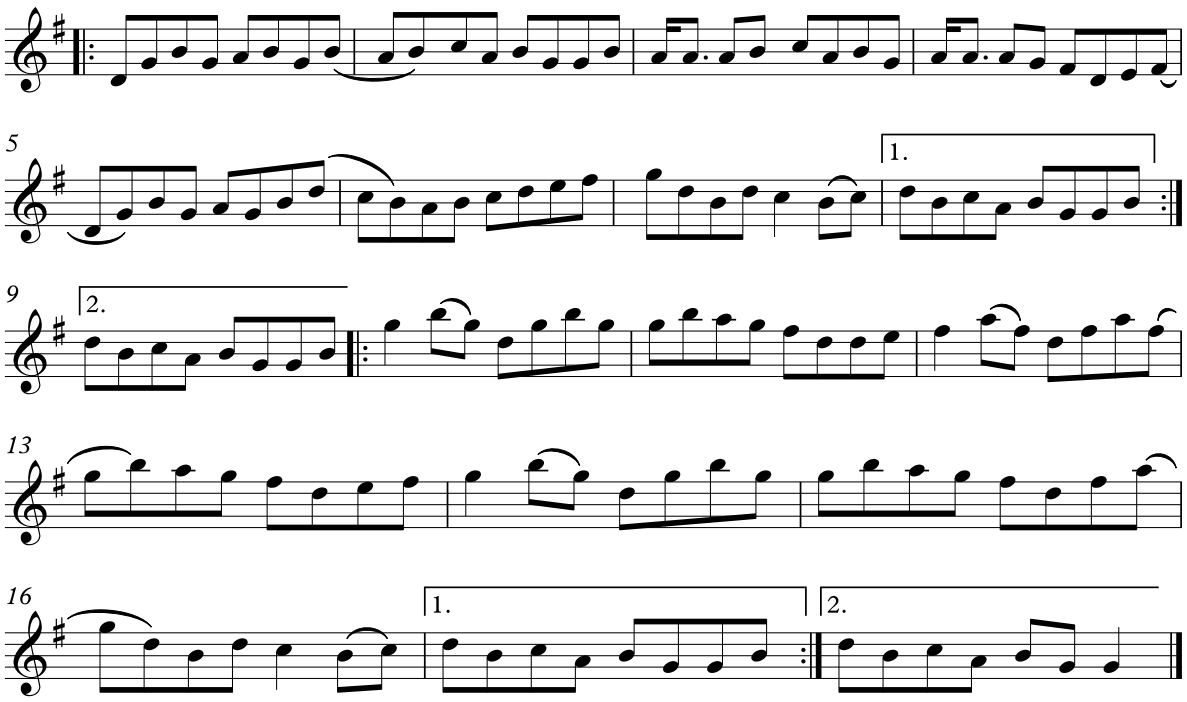


Figure 2.13 Stephen Toole, *Bowing Down Home* (field recording, 1990s)

The following four transcriptions of *Sheehan's Reel* are from Irish fiddlers and were recorded between 1937-2017. The context in which these Irish fiddlers played was largely professional, as compared to the community-oriented and often self-taught fiddlers from PEI. Indeed, some of these Irish fiddlers and their recordings have impacted PEI fiddlers and their interpretations of Irish tunes, especially since the arrival of classic Irish recordings from New York's "Golden Age of Irish Music" in the 1920s.

A Donegal fiddler who spent most of his life in the USA, Hugh Gillespie (1906-1986) played this reel at an average tempo of 122 bpm. The drastic shift to Mixolydian mode in the B section provides a distinct contrast to the Ionian A section (Fig. 2.14). If Gillespie learned this tune from a printed source, it would most likely have been from O'Neill's 1903 publication, as very few players incorporated the Mixolydian version into their playing. His bowing patterns were irregular, as some measures begin with a down bow (the typical tendency among fiddlers), and others begin on an up bow, which is less common. Donegal fiddler Caoimhín Mac Aoidh has identified a Scottish influence on Donegal fiddling, which is marked by: "A general preference

for an overall staccato style of bowing with a greater, but not total, use of triplets when ornamenting a tune."[49] Gillespie's version holds true to Mac Aoidh's theory, whereas he also incorporates unpredictable bowing patterns with triplets as a primary form of left-hand ornamentation.

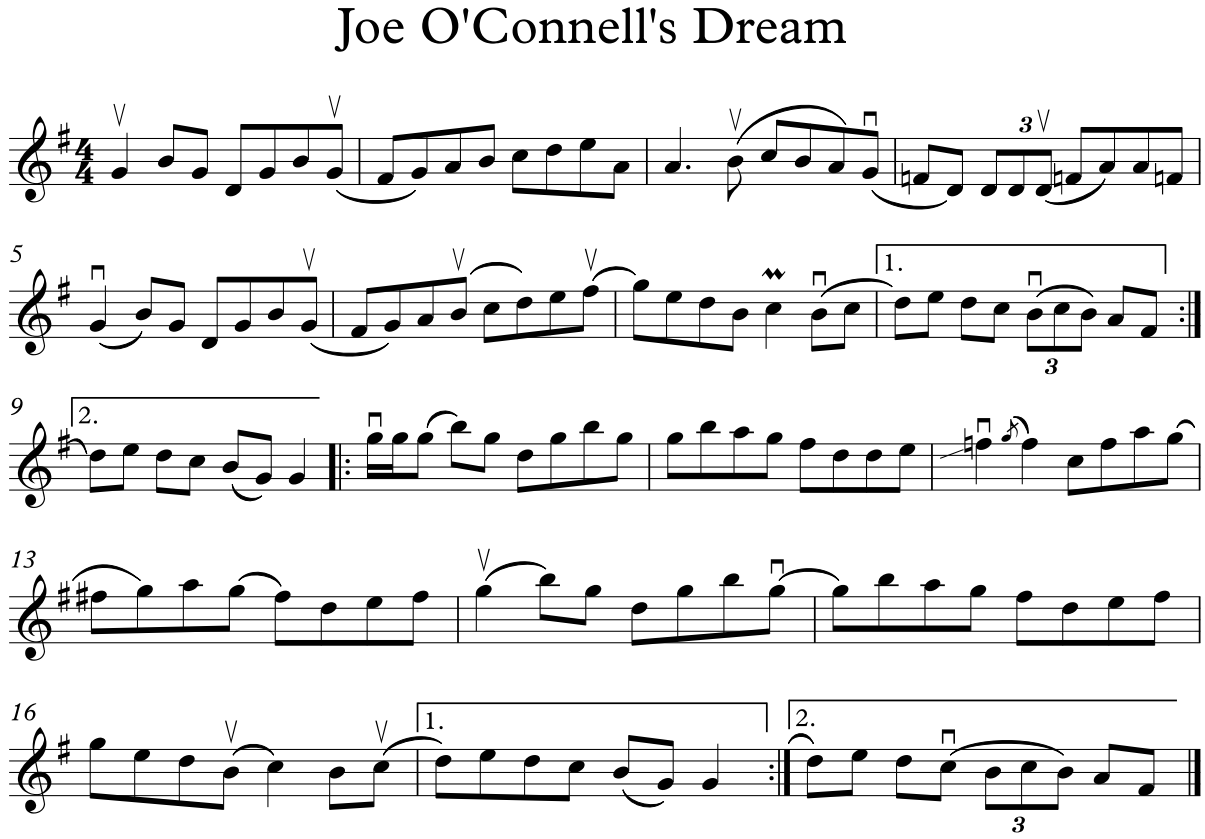


Figure 2.14 Hugh Gillespie, *Classic Recordings of Irish Traditional Fiddle Music* (Topic Records: 12T364, 1978 [recorded 1937-39]), track 11.

James Morrison (1893-1947) was one of the "Sligo Masters" who recorded a wealth of Irish traditional music in New York during the 1920s. He was known as "The Professor" as he taught fiddle, flute, and accordion to a generation of students after emigrating to New York in 1915. The most noteworthy feature of Morrison's setting is the key in which he played (Fig. 2.15). Perhaps, owing to the influence of piping, Morrison played *Sheehan's Reel*, which he called *Wellington's Reel,* in the key of A major, instead of the typical key of G major. This may

[49] Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, quoted in Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diasporas*, 65.

have been a conscious decision to set himself apart from other fiddlers at the time, or, perhaps, so that he could demonstrate his technical mastery of the instrument by playing the B section in the third position. Shifting into higher positions is not common in Irish fiddling, but Morrison was known for his fast and highly-ornamented style. He recorded *Wellington's Reel* at the very fast pace of 124 bpm, and still managed to incorporate an extraordinary amount of triplets, rolls, and slurs.[50]

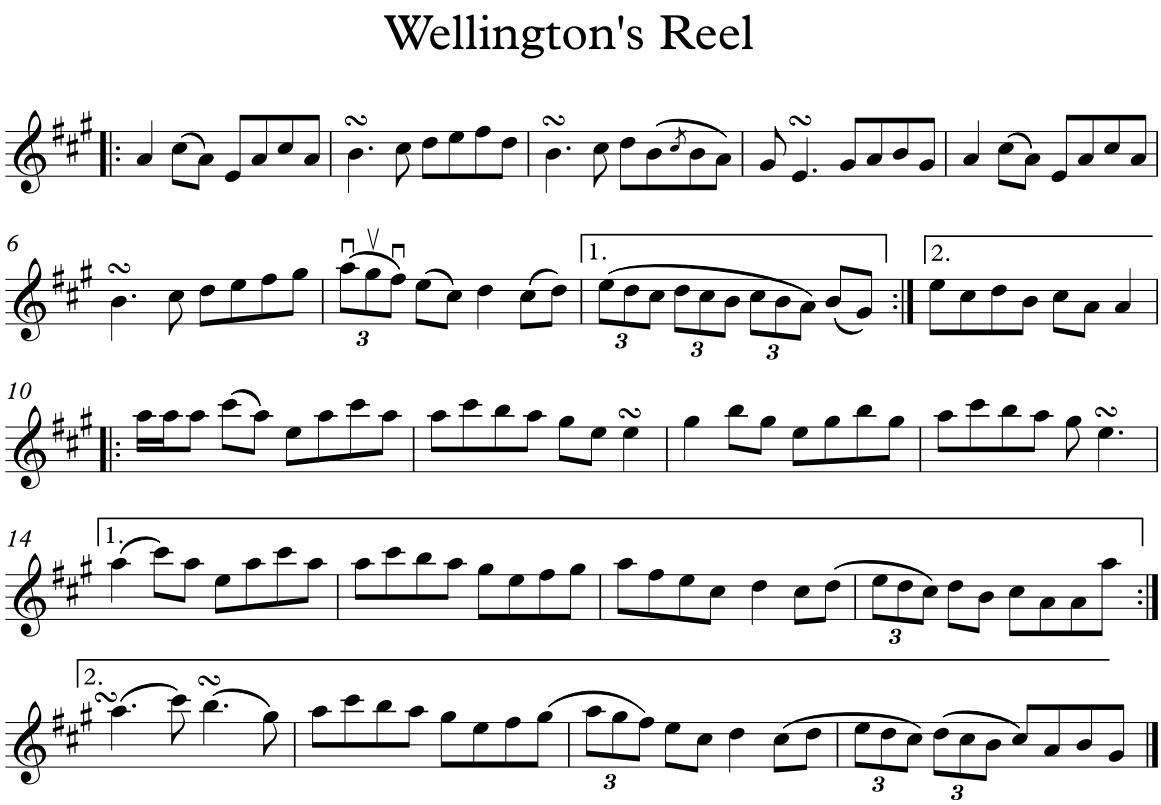


Figure 2.15 James Morrison, *From Ballymote to Brooklyn* (Shanachie, 1977-78), track 15.

James Kelly (b. 1957) was born in Dublin but now lives in Miami, Florida. An active professional performer and teacher, Kelly is well respected in the Irish fiddling world. Not quite

[50] David Lyth (b. 1940) has published three collections of transcriptions of Irish fiddlers, including Morrison's recording of *Wellington's Reel*. There are discrepancies in both the notation and bowing as indicated by Lyth. See David Lyth, *Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddling, vol. 1* (Dublin: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, 1982), 84; and "James Morrison: Irish Girl, Musical Priest, Wellington's," YouTube, accessed January 18, 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LG0i3uKp0I0.

as fast as Morrison, Kelly plays *Sheehan's Reel* at an average tempo of 118 bpm (Fig. 2.16). Unlike most of his peers, Kelly adopts the Mixolydian mode in the B section of the tune, as Gillespie did (Fig. 2.14), confirming, perhaps, the influence of O'Neill's 1903 publication. Similar to Morrison, Kelly incorporates complex triplets under long slurs, demonstrating his technical mastery and fluid bowing technique.

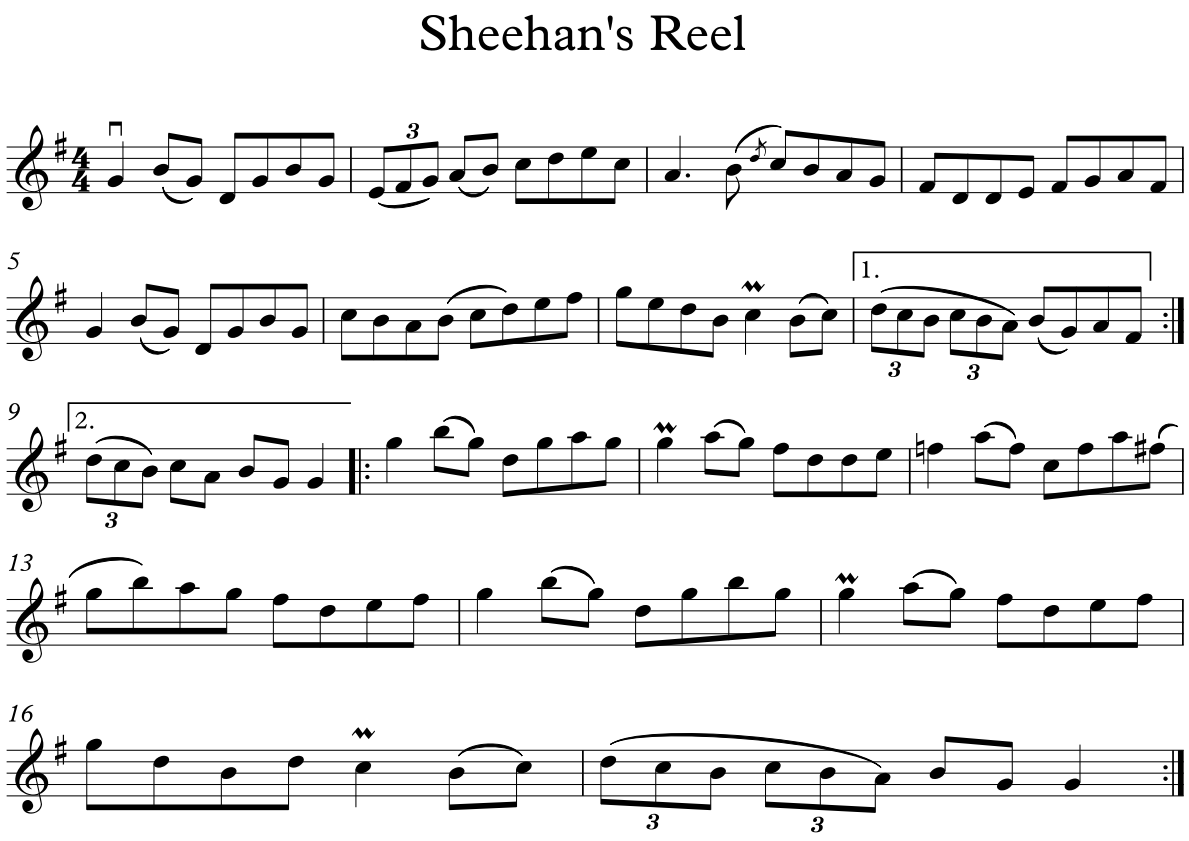


Figure 2.16 James Kelly, *Gaelic Roots: Boston College Irish Studies Program* (Boston: Kells Music, 1993 & 1995), disc 2 track 13.

Galway fiddler Fergal Scahill (b. 1982) plays *Sheehan's Reel* at a similar pace to Morrison (115 bpm). However, he employs greater melodic variation than Morrison (Fig. 2.17). Even in the repeat of the A section, Scahill varies the melodic contour and alters some rhythms to create added variation. Furthermore, the unpredictable and complex bowing patterns employed by Scahill demonstrate his advanced technique and mastery of the instrument.

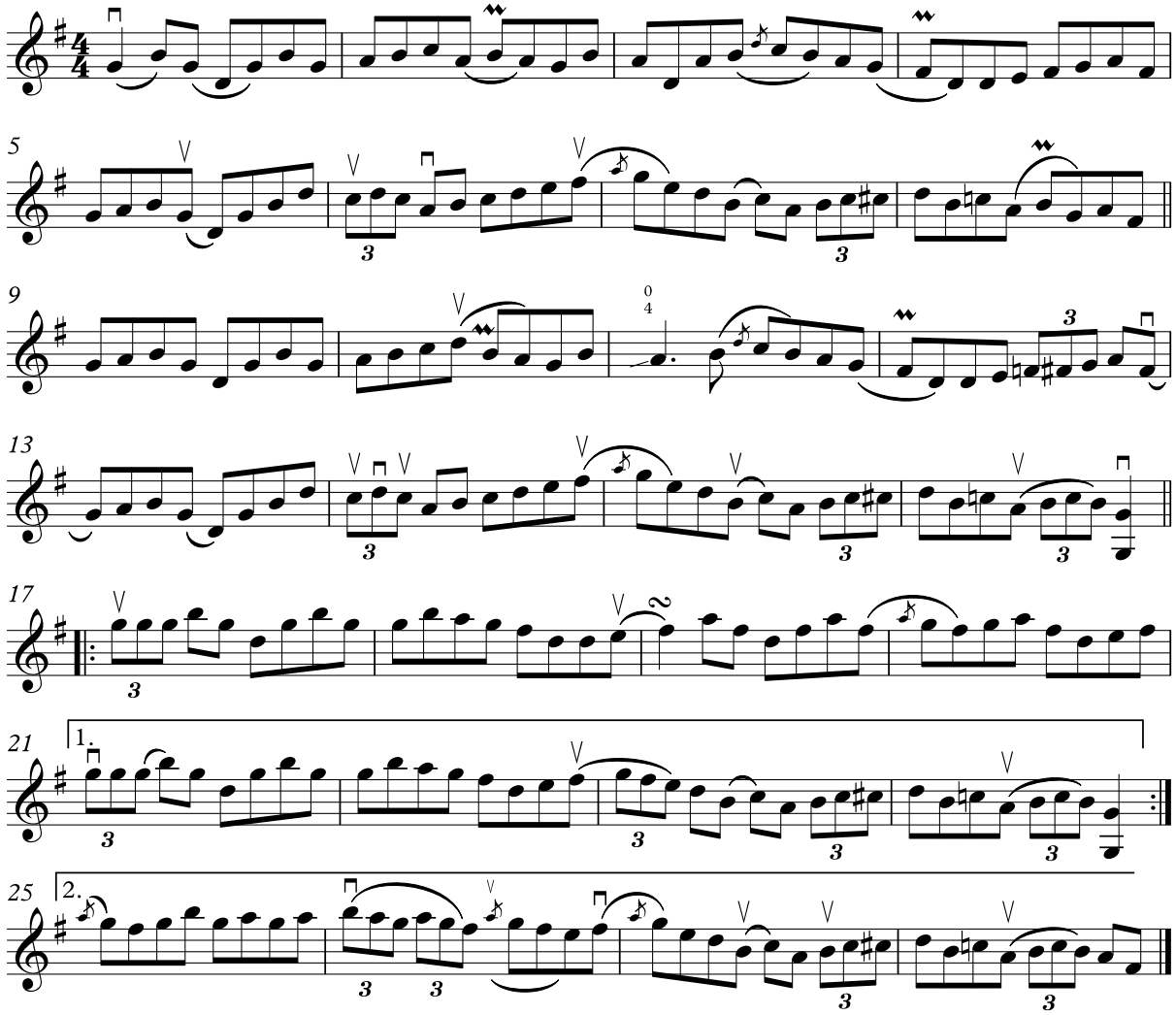


Figure 2.17 Fergal Scahill, *Tune A Day* (June 19, 2017)

Comparing the playing of Gillespie, Morrison, Kelly, and Scahill to the playing of the PEI fiddlers, one notes a considerable difference in the level of ornamentation and melodic variation. The four Irish fiddlers utilize numerous techniques and ornaments to generate unique versions of *Sheehan's Reel*, whereas fiddlers from PEI remain true to versions of the tune that were published in the early-twentieth century by Francis O'Neill. On a micro-level, Kings County fiddlers on PEI exhibit a unified, or consistent style, featuring heavy foot tapping and few slurs, whereas Queens County fiddlers employ less bow ornamentation and focus on constant, driving

rhythm throughout the melody. On a macro-level, the large-scale ontological and epistemological change that is audible/visible in the Irish fiddle settings is not at all as pronounced on PEI, where geographic isolation preserved slower overall tempos and archaic versions of tunes. Ken Perlman has noted the enduring presence of older versions of tunes on PEI and remarked that: "No matter how sweet, or lively a fiddler's playing might be, he will not get the full respect of his peers, or neighbours unless his tunes are relatively *true*. What this means is that the major themes (strains) of each tune—as it is locally known—must be played more or less intact."[51]

Regardless of its small population, sedentary communities, and archaic fiddle styles, PEI has been enriched by centuries of cultural flows in the form of musical exchange and engagement with the outside world. These artistic flows have created a vibrant sense of musical place on the Island, a *habitus* where making music—be it Irish, Scottish, or Acadian—is open and inclusive, rather than closed and exclusive.

[51] Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*, 76.

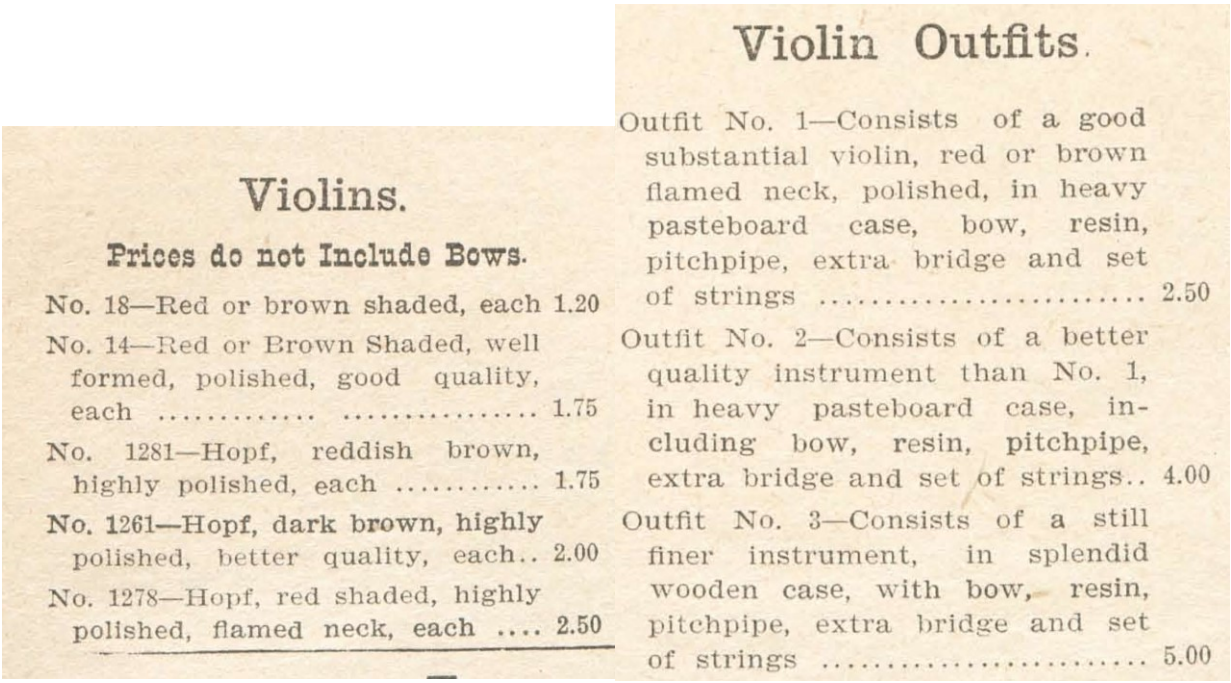
Chapter 3
Media Ecology

Media ecologist Robert Albrecht has argued that music, whether it be the rhythmic tapping of stones, or the sophisticated performance of a symphony orchestra, is the result of applied technique and technological innovation. As media and technologies are introduced and absorbed into soundscapes, the manner in which we think, feel and experience music making is radically transformed.[1] Albrecht's observation resonates strongly in the traditional soundscape of PEI. Adapting an ethnomusicological perspective, this chapter considers music on PEI as a mediated process. Starting with mail-order catalogues in the late nineteenth-century, Prince Edward Islanders imported instruments, phonographs, and recordings of popular music. Faraway urban influences reached the Island through Eaton's ubiquitous catalogues. These were followed by commercial recordings, radio broadcasts, television programs, and, eventually, the Internet—all of which left enduring imprints on the soundscape of the province.

Pioneer Consumers: Mail-Order Catalogues

Eaton's introduced its first mail-order catalogue in 1884, marking the beginning of postal retail commerce in Canada.[2] Violins were first available for purchase through the Eaton's catalogue in the 1890s starting at the price of $1.20 (Fig. 3.1). The only other stringed instruments available for purchase at this time were banjos, guitars, mandolins, autoharps and zithers. A violin was cheaper than all other instruments at that time, except for amateur-level fifes, piccolos, small-keyed accordions, single-reed concertinas, "Jews harps," harmonicas and percussion instruments.

[1] See Robert Albrecht, *Mediating the Muse: A Communications Approach to Music, Media and Culture Change* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2004).
[2] "Canadian Mail Order Catalogues," Library and Archives Canada, accessed January 10, 2018, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/mailorder/029006-200-e.html.



Violins.

Prices do not Include Bows.

No. 18—Red or brown shaded, each 1.20

No. 14—Red or Brown Shaded, well formed, polished, good quality, each 1.75

No. 1281—Hopf, reddish brown, highly polished, each 1.75

No. 1261—Hopf, dark brown, highly polished, better quality, each.. 2.00

No. 1278—Hopf, red shaded, highly polished, flamed neck, each 2.50

Violin Outfits.

Outfit No. 1—Consists of a good substantial violin, red or brown flamed neck, polished, in heavy pasteboard case, bow, resin, pitchpipe, extra bridge and set of strings 2.50

Outfit No. 2—Consists of a better quality instrument than No. 1, in heavy pasteboard case, including bow, resin, pitchpipe, extra bridge and set of strings.. 4.00

Outfit No. 3—Consists of a still finer instrument, in splendid wooden case, with bow, resin, pitchpipe, extra bridge and set of strings 5.00

Figure 3.1 Eaton's catalogue, no. 2, c.1898, page 203.

Demand from Scottish emigrants in Canada resulted in Highland Pipes becoming available through catalogue-order in 1918, at a starting price of $35 (Fig. 3.2). The price of violins had increased that same year; the starting price was $8.50 for a student-model, and the range continued upwards to $50 (Fig. 3.3). A violin was still more affordable than bagpipes. The Eaton's Catalogue did not distinguish between a violin and a fiddle until 1929, when the first fiddle became available for purchase.[3] Widespread use of the term *violin* suggests a prominence of Western Art Music until the late 1930s, when traditional music markets became more visible and the term *fiddle* came into use.

[3] "Catalogues (1880-1975)," Library and Archives Canada, accessed January 10, 2018, http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/cmc/009002-110.01-e.php?PHPSESSID=flcsqhmnskjpqh7boijdi7qjqunfb2e5h85h9thgjdea3fopjfb1&q1=fiddle&img13.x=0&img13.y=0.

Figure 3.2 Eaton's catalogue, fall and winter 1918-19, page 448.

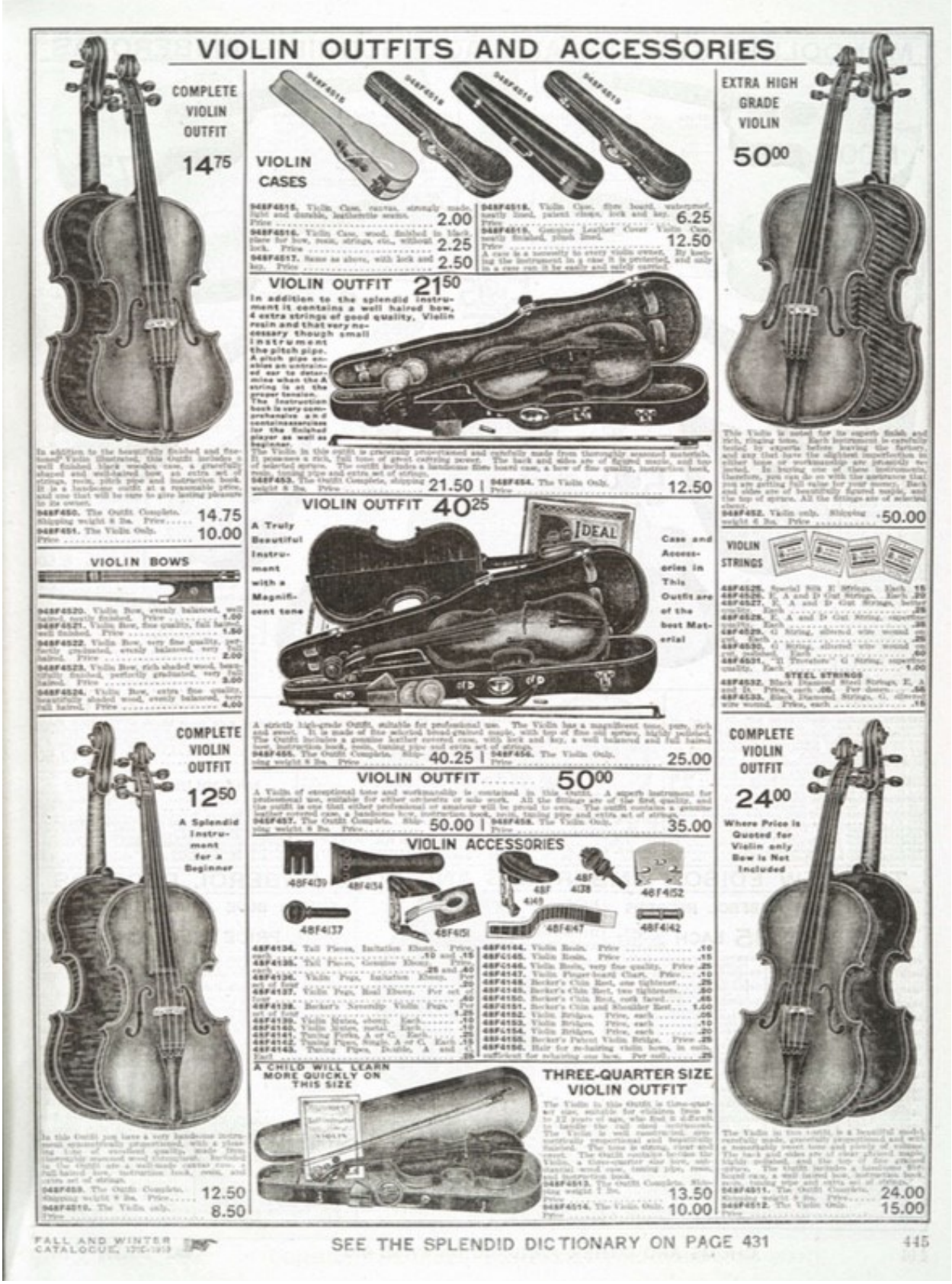


Figure 3.3 Eaton's catalogue, fall and winter 1918-19, page 445.

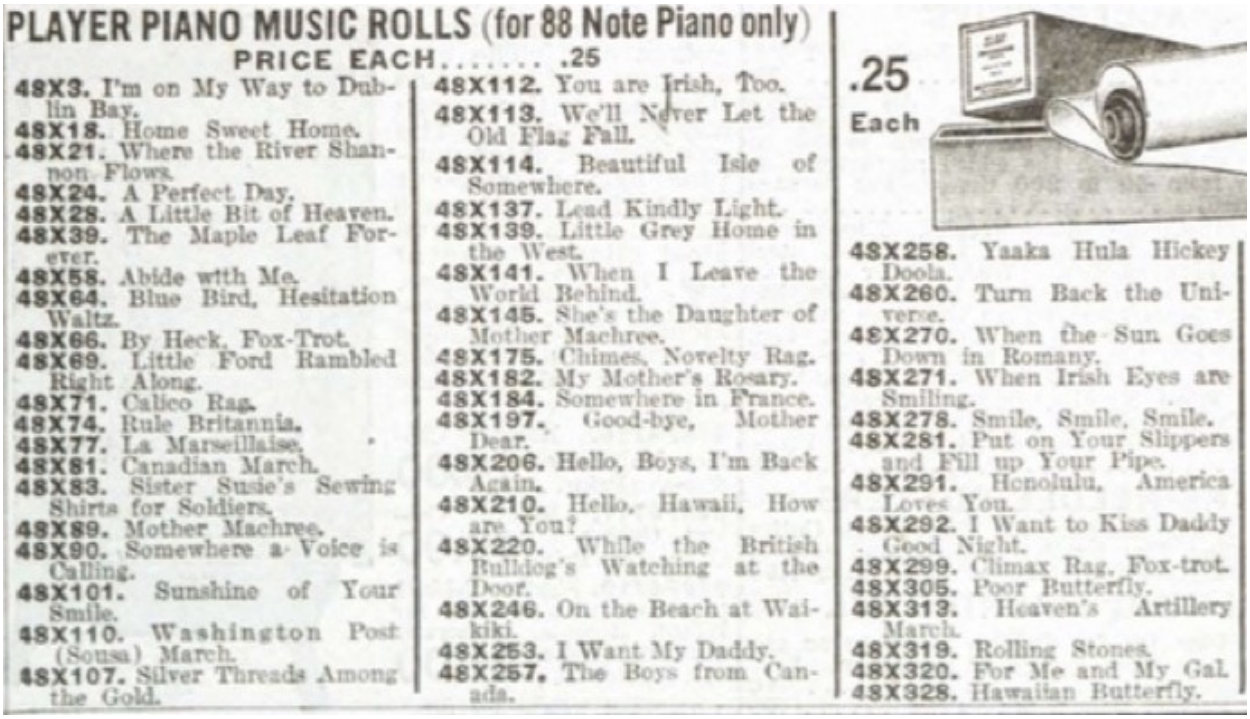
One of the first traditional music collections to be made available through mail-order catalogue was Harding's *All-Round Collection of Jigs, Reels and Country Dances,* which was first published in New York in 1905 (Fig. 3.4). It became available for sale via mail-order in 1916. Marketed as "an unusual collection of dance music," Harding's collection was quite standard in its choice of repertoire. It included many popular Irish reels and jigs, such as *The Humours of Whiskey, Green Grow the Rushes O, Larry O'Gaff, Skibbereen, The Legacy, The Connaughtman's Rambles* (titled *The Connaught)*, *The Rocky Road to Dublin, St. Patrick's Day, Haste to the Wedding, The Irish Washerwoman,* and *Miss McLeod's*. Player piano rolls from the same period featured Irish songs, such as *I'm on My Way to Dublin Bay, Where the River Shannon Flows, You are Irish, Too*, and *When Irish Eyes Are Smiling* (Fig. 3.5).


JIGS, REELS AND COUNTRY DANCES

34-301. An unusual collection of dance music arranged for the piano, but can be used for the violin, flute or organ. Has Strathspeys, Jigs, Reels, Flings, Hornpipes, Cotillions and other lively dances. 200 pieces. Published at 50 cents.

Our price..... **25c**
Postage..... **5c**

Figure 3.4 Eaton's catalogue, fall and winter 1915-16, page 275.



PLAYER PIANO MUSIC ROLLS (for 88 Note Piano only)

PRICE EACH..... .25

48X3. I'm on My Way to Dublin Bay.
48X18. Home Sweet Home.
48X21. Where the River Shannon Flows.
48X24. A Perfect Day.
48X28. A Little Bit of Heaven.
48X39. The Maple Leaf Forever.
48X58. Abide with Me.
48X64. Blue Bird, Hesitation Waltz.
48X66. By Heck, Fox-Trot.
48X69. Little Ford Rambled Right Along.
48X71. Calico Rag.
48X74. Rule Britannia.
48X77. La Marseillaise.
48X81. Canadian March.
48X83. Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers.
48X89. Mother Machree.
48X90. Somewhere a Voice is Calling.
48X101. Sunshine of Your Smile.
48X110. Washington Post (Sousa) March.
48X107. Silver Threads Among the Gold.
48X112. You are Irish, Too.
48X113. We'll Never Let the Old Flag Fall.
48X114. Beautiful Isle of Somewhere.
48X137. Lead Kindly Light.
48X139. Little Grey Home in the West.
48X141. When I Leave the World Behind.
48X145. She's the Daughter of Mother Machree.
48X175. Chimes, Novelty Rag.
48X182. My Mother's Rosary.
48X184. Somewhere in France.
48X197. Good-bye, Mother Dear.
48X206. Hello, Boys, I'm Back Again.
48X210. Hello, Hawaii, How are You?
48X220. While the British Bulldog's Watching at the Door.
48X246. On the Beach at Waikiki.
48X253. I Want My Daddy.
48X257. The Boys from Canada.

.25 Each

48X258. Yaaka Hula Hickey Doola.
48X260. Turn Back the Universe.
48X270. When the Sun Goes Down in Romany.
48X271. When Irish Eyes are Smiling.
48X278. Smile, Smile, Smile.
48X281. Put on Your Slippers and Fill up Your Pipe.
48X291. Honolulu, America Loves You.
48X292. I Want to Kiss Daddy Good Night.
48X299. Climax Rag, Fox-trot.
48X305. Poor Butterfly.
48X313. Heaven's Artillery March.
48X319. Rolling Stones.
48X320. For Me and My Gal.
48X328. Hawaiian Butterfly.

Figure 3.5 Eaton's catalogue, fall and winter 1918-19, page 448.

The extensive movement of Irish music collections across rural Canada was made possible by these mail-order catalogues. The most prominent of these collections was Cole's *1000 Fiddle Tunes* (a reincarnation of *Ryan's Mammoth Collection*, published in Boston in 1883), which was published in Chicago in 1940. The Sears Catalogue was responsible for the distribution of Cole's collection into remote areas of Canada.[4] Many tunes played by PEI fiddlers today originated in Cole's collection, for example *The Bashful Bachelor Hornpipe* (titled *Shaw's Reel* in Cole's), *Walker Street* (titled *The Laborer's Reel*), *The Maid Behind the Bar* (titled *Judy's Reel* and *Indy's Favorite*), *The Minstrel's Fancy*, and *Pigeon on the Gatepost*.

Sound Recording and the Sligo Masters

Thomas D'Arcy McGee was correct in his claim that railway connections "would bring people together and foster a consciousness of commonality" throughout Canada.[5] The Canadian Pacific Railway greatly reduced travel time and expense, and fostered an enduring relationship between

[4] Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 153.
[5] David Wilson, "Time and Space in the Nationalism of Thomas D'Arcy McGee," in *Landscapes and landmarks of Canada: real, imagined, (re)viewed,* ed. Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide (Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017), 113.

Canada and Ireland. Irish immigrants living in different provinces were no longer dislocated from one another. Shorter travel times and the accessibility of railroad networks across Canada made immigrant journeys more tolerable. Telegraph and radio followed in due course, both of which had an immense impact on the transfer of music across Canada. Immigrant-funded chain migration from Ireland diminished in the late-nineteenth century because of the ease and affordability of travel across the continent. Furthermore, efficiency of communication supported contact with relatives on both sides of the Atlantic.[6]

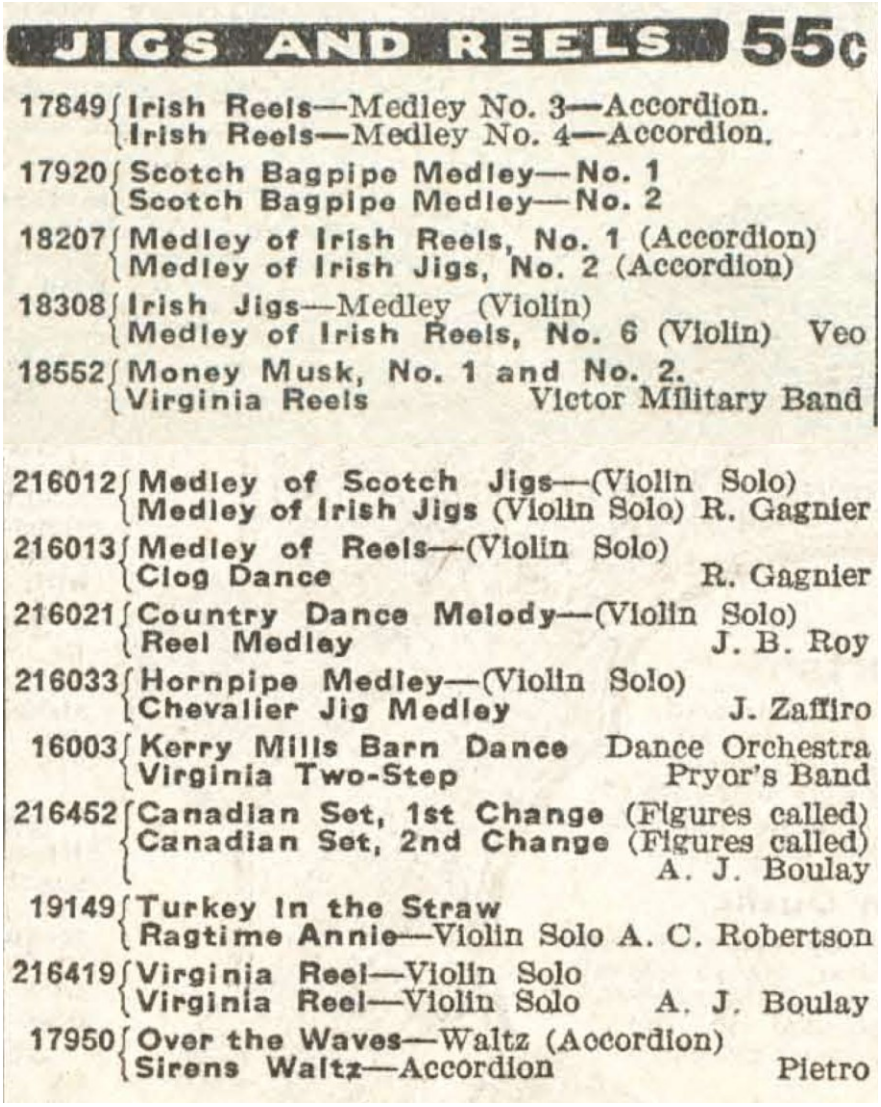
Thirty years after Thomas Edison invented the phonograph in 1877, Eaton's spring and summer catalogue in 1908 featured a number of Talking Machines (Fig. 3.6). These ranged in price from $16.50 up to $50. Demand in the United States at the time was widespread. American companies had manufactured 151,000 phonographs by the turn of the twentieth century.[7] This trend would continue to rise until the onset of the Great Depression in 1929. Musicologist Scott Spencer stressed the prevalence of recording labels, noting Decca (founded in 1929) as: "The most influential label in the migration of traditional Irish dance music between America and Ireland."[8] Decca featured a plethora of Irish recording artists, including Sligo fiddler Paddy Killoran, and Clare dancing master Pat Roche.

[6] Elliott, *Irish Migrants in the Canadas*, 191.
[7] Pekka Gronow, "The Record Industry: The Growth of a Mass Medium," P*opular Music* 3 (1983): 54-55.
[8] Scott Spencer, "Transatlantic Migrations of Irish Music in the Early Recording Age," in *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, ed. David Gleeson (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010), 59.

Figure 3.6 Eaton's catalogue, spring and summer 1908, page 269.

Sound recording allowed music to be archived with complete accuracy and distributed with unprecedented speed. These technological developments made music more accessible and recording artists were heard by people across province and country, most of whom they would

never meet. This resulted in regional styles merging and changing over time.[9] Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, European and American companies introduced improved versions of the gramophone and encouraged their consumers to upgrade to the latest models. These updated phonographs were listed in Eaton's catalogue in 1926, starting at $47.50. In the same catalogue, Irish fiddle tunes were also available on 78 rpm records by the Victor company for 55c each (Fig. 3.7). These recordings were crucial conduits of cross-cultural engagement in many Canadian provinces, including PEI, which remained isolated from mainland Canada.



JIGS AND REELS 55c

17849 { Irish Reels—Medley No. 3—Accordion.
Irish Reels—Medley No. 4—Accordion.

17920 { Scotch Bagpipe Medley—No. 1
Scotch Bagpipe Medley—No. 2

18207 { Medley of Irish Reels, No. 1 (Accordion)
Medley of Irish Jigs, No. 2 (Accordion)

18308 { Irish Jigs—Medley (Violin)
Medley of Irish Reels, No. 6 (Violin) Veo

18552 { Money Musk, No. 1 and No. 2.
Virginia Reels Victor Military Band

216012 { Medley of Scotch Jigs—(Violin Solo)
Medley of Irish Jigs (Violin Solo) R. Gagnier

216013 { Medley of Reels—(Violin Solo)
Clog Dance R. Gagnier

216021 { Country Dance Melody—(Violin Solo)
Reel Medley J. B. Roy

216033 { Hornpipe Medley—(Violin Solo)
Chevalier Jig Medley J. Zaffiro

16003 { Kerry Mills Barn Dance Dance Orchestra
Virginia Two-Step Pryor's Band

216452 { Canadian Set, 1st Change (Figures called)
Canadian Set, 2nd Change (Figures called)
A. J. Boulay

19149 { Turkey In the Straw
Ragtime Annie—Violin Solo A. C. Robertson

216419 { Virginia Reel—Violin Solo
Virginia Reel—Violin Solo A. J. Boulay

17950 { Over the Waves—Waltz (Accordion)
Sirens Waltz—Accordion Pietro

Figure 3.7 Eaton's catalogue, spring and summer 1926, page 287.

[9] Osborne, "Fiddling with Technology," 194.

Although it was preceded by smaller recording labels in the 1920s, Decca Records was responsible for the popularity and dissemination of Sligo fiddlers during the 1930s. The Sligo style was popularized by the classic 78 rpm recordings of Michael Coleman (1891-1945), James Morrison (1891-1947), and Paddy Killoran (1903-1965) who emigrated to the USA in the early decades of the twentieth century. These Sligo Masters, particularly Michael Coleman, became Irish music icons, and their recordings were transported back to rural Ireland to great acclaim.[10] The dissemination of bright, fast and smooth Sligo fiddling began a process of standardization that was augmented by radio and music competitions in the middle decades of the twentieth century. While PEI avoided the excesses of the competitive forum, its fiddlers were influenced by the music of Coleman, Morrison and Killoran, as well as other fiddle recordings of the time.

Physicist David Lyth (b. 1940) transcribed the recordings of the Sligo masters. His first volume was published by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in 1981. Reflecting on his work, he declared that: "I made these transcriptions to help understand how the magical sound of Irish fiddle playing is actually produced."[11] Sligo bowing, however, is intricate and challenging to transcribe. Irish composer Charlie Lennon noted in the introduction to Volume 1, "The music provided in this publication gives for the first time a complete description of tunes to the extent that this can be done in musical notation."[12] Though Lyth's transcriptions are significant and provide some insight into the intricacies of Sligo fiddling, critics have cited some errors and inconsistencies when compared with the original recordings.[13] Precise rhythm, articulation and dynamics are virtually impossible to represent in standard music notation. Despite the difficulty of representing their music on paper, the music of these Sligo masters found very receptive patrons on PEI, where their music survived and is still cherished today.

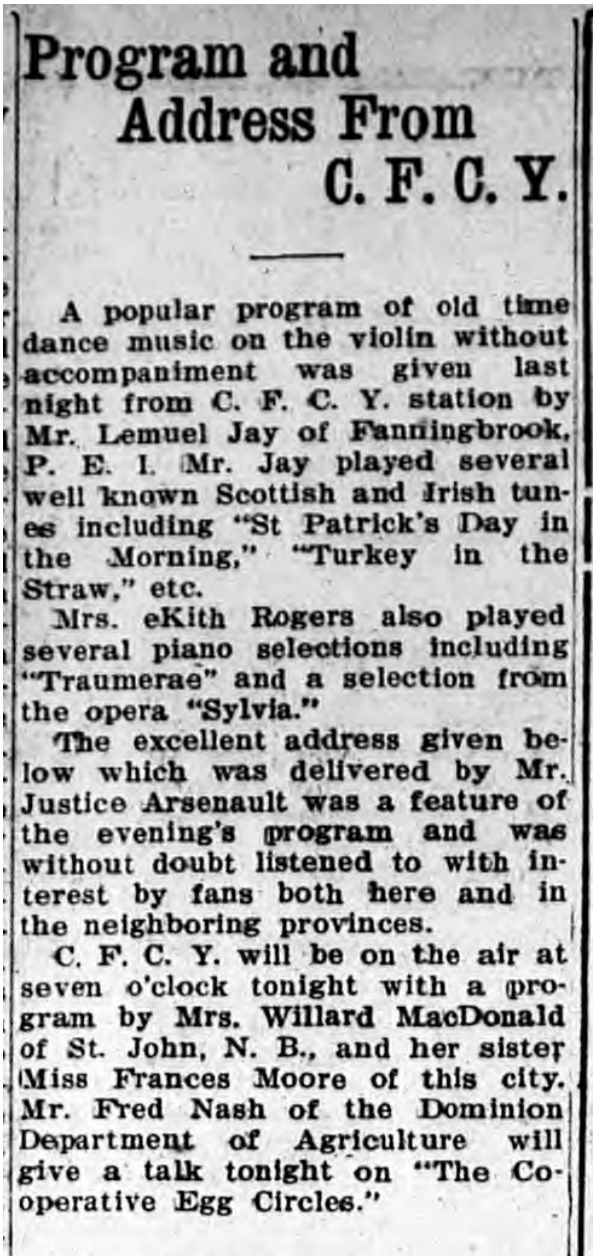
Broadcasting and the Role of Don Messer

The advent of radio in the 1920s and the resulting dissemination of "radio music" had a profound effect on traditional music in Atlantic Canada. A synthesis of older indigenous styles and new

---

[10] Spencer, "Transatlantic Migrations of Irish Music in the Early Recording Age," 53. Coleman recorded 80 sides and was active in New York City in the period 1919-1925. He continues to be a household name in Irish traditional music.
[11] Lyth, *Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddling, vol. 1*, i.
[12] Charlie Lennon, quoted in Lyth, *Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddling, vol. 1*, iii.
[13] One such review is by James Kelly, in *Ceol: A Journal of Irish Music,* vol. VI, no. 2 (April 1984): 63-64.

music from commercial recordings and radio created an idiosyncratic soundscape on PEI. Charlottetown's first radio station, CFCY, was established in 1925 and was originally known as "The Friendly Voice of the Maritimes." Its signal reached across the Maritimes to Newfoundland, Quebec, and New England.[14] This widespread coverage positioned PEI as a radio pioneer at a time when the medium was still a novelty in most Canadian homes.



Program and Address From C. F. C. Y.

A popular program of old time dance music on the violin without accompaniment was given last night from C. F. C. Y. station by Mr. Lemuel Jay of Fanningbrook, P. E. I. Mr. Jay played several well known Scottish and Irish tunes including "St Patrick's Day in the Morning," "Turkey in the Straw," etc.

Mrs. eKith Rogers also played several piano selections including "Traumerae" and a selection from the opera "Sylvia."

The excellent address given below which was delivered by Mr. Justice Arsenault was a feature of the evening's program and was without doubt listened to with interest by fans both here and in the neighboring provinces.

C. F. C. Y. will be on the air at seven o'clock tonight with a program by Mrs. Willard MacDonald of St. John, N. B., and her sister Miss Frances Moore of this city. Mr. Fred Nash of the Dominion Department of Agriculture will give a talk tonight on "The Co-operative Egg Circles."

Figure 3.8 *The Charlottetown Guardian*, March 18, 1926, page 6.

[14] Allison Lawlor, "Broadcast pioneer brought television to PEI in 1956," *The Globe and Mail*, last modified March 27, 2017, https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/broadcast-pioneer-brought-television-to-pei-in-1956/article4212840/.

Lem Jay (1882-1960) was the first PEI fiddler to play on Charlottetown radio in 1924. He hosted a 90-minute weekly program from 1925-1931.[15] An article published *The Charlottetown Guardian* in March 1926 described one of these performances, which featured Scottish and Irish tunes, demonstrating the bi-musicality of Island fiddlers, especially those living in central Queens County, where Jay was from (Fig. 3.8). The article mentioned an address given by Mr. Justice Arsenault, who claimed, "I firmly believe that Prince Edward Island has the best fiddlers in the world; and, in proof of this, I may say that at contests heretofore held, former residents of the Island have for the most part been winners. Surely all of our best fiddlers have not all left the Island - I feel assured they have not…"[16] Arsenault confirmed the reality that fiddling was a man's domain and that early-twentieth century fiddling contests were male-dominated:

> For the purpose of finding out and sending our best man to compete in Boston on April 6th we will hold a contest in Charlottetown on the night of March 30th and in this connection we will have a step dancing contest as well. The winner of the fiddling contest will get a free trip to Boston and return, all expenses paid, as the guest of the Intercolonial Club of Boston, and will, more over, stand a chance to win cash prizes. If he wins 1st prize, he will return home 'Cock of the walk.' Up to tonight, we have fourteen entries for the Fiddling Contest and seven for the dancing, and the entries are only just beginning to come in.[17]

The result of this "Great Fiddling Contest," the largest up until this time with over 1,200 spectators present and hundreds of others turned away, was published the following day on the front page of *The Charlottetown Guardian*. The winner—out of fifty contestants—was Neil Cheverie (1876-1963) from Emilra in Eastern Kings County (Fig. 3.9).[18] Often, qualifying rounds in which younger fiddlers had to compete, would take place to limit the number of contestants in the final rounds of the competitions.[19] This 1926 contest helped to revive the fiddling culture on

---

[15] "Lem Jay," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A274.
[16] "Program and Address from CFCY," *The Charlottetown Guardian*, March 18, 1926, 6.
[17] Ibid., 6.
[18] Unfortunately, a profile for Neil Cheverie is not included on PEI's Bowing Down Home Website.
[19] Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*, 221.

PEI, even though the minimum age requirement to enter the contest was fifty.[20] Cheverie placed third in the Boston contest the following month, and returned home to a reception organized in his honour by the Benevolent Irish Society.[21] The winner was Dan MacDonald, originally from Antigonish, Nova Scotia.[22] Newspaper and radio coverage of the Boston contest was widespread, demonstrating the interest and popularity of traditional fiddling at the time. Most of the tunes played by contestants were Scottish, although a number of Irish reels were also played.


NEIL CHEVERIE WILL REPRESENT THE ISLAND IN FIDDLING CONTEST

To be Held in Boston Within the Next Few Days– Fiddlers From All Over North America Will be Pitted Against Island's Best.

Figure 3.9 *The Charlottetown Guardian*, April 1, 1926 page 1.

Radio broadcasts became a defining feature of musical life on PEI. The chief priest of this new mediascape in the 1930s and 1940s was New Brunswick fiddler, Don Messer (1909-1973). By 1936, his music was being broadcast on radio programs six days a week on Maritime and, eventually, national radio. His performances featured old-timey traditional fiddle tunes, songs, and jazz.[23] His national television program, *Don Messer's Jubilee*, which ran from 1957 until 1969, was a weekly highlight for a generation of Canadians, rivalling *The Ed Sullivan Show* across the border in the USA. His long association with PEI brought national and international attention to its traditional soundscape. Ethnomusicologist Johanne Devlin Trew has claimed that:

[20] James Hornby, "The Great Fiddling Contests of 1926," *The Island Magazine*, no.7 (fall/winter 1979): 25. Cheverie turned fifty a few months before the contest, making him one of the youngest competitors. Fiddling contests were popular on PEI between 1926-1970. Apart from coverage of the Great Fiddling Contest of 1926, there is a general lack of information about these gatherings. Future contests had multiple age categories. See "Contests," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, http://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A2601.
[21] Hornby, "The Great Fiddling Contests of 1926," 28.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Keillor, *Music in Canada*, 200; Ken Perlman, "Old-Time Fiddling on Prince Edward Island," *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 39, no. 3 (November 1994-January 1995): 32-40.

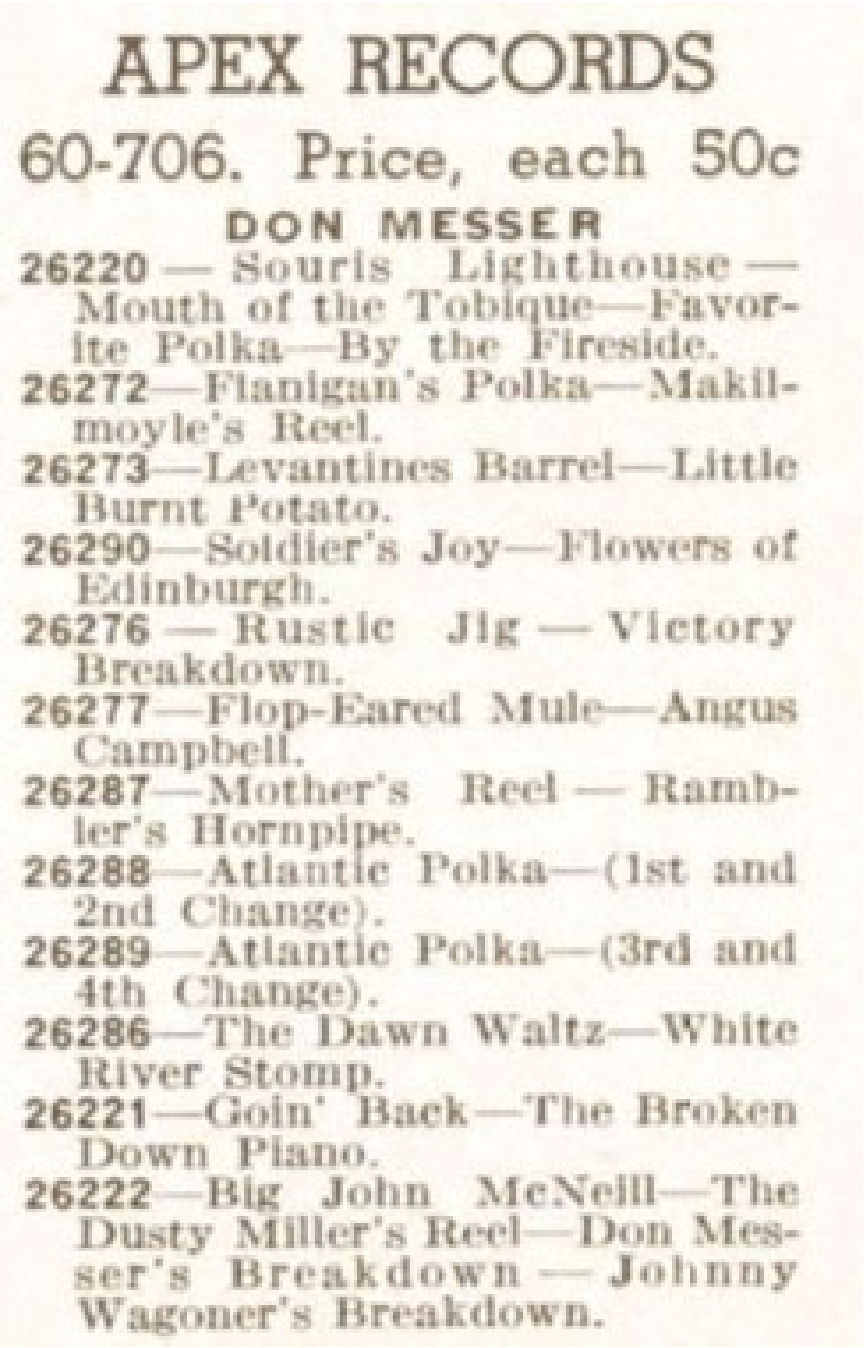
"It is commonly held that he is responsible for the homogenization of various Canadian fiddle styles into one, resulting in the disappearance of regional styles."[24] Messer was able to read music, and required his band members to be musically literate.[25] He published twelve tune books, which made his fiddle playing accessible to fiddlers for future generations.

The first mention of Don Messer in PEI media was in the fall of 1937, when he and his Musical Lumberjacks played on the Prince Edward Big Stage (Fig. 3.11). That same year, he recorded his first 78 rpm records for Apex Records in Montréal.[26] Two years later, he moved to Charlottetown and formed his group, Don Messer and His Islanders.[27] This ensemble became popular during World War II, especially among military personnel based in training camps on PEI and naval personnel who passed through Halifax, which was within listening range of CFCY.[28]

Figure 3.10 Don Messer, 1965.[29]

[24] Trew, *Place, Culture and Community*, 178.
[25] Neil Rosenberg, "Don Messer's Modern Canadian Fiddle Canon," *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, vol. 22 (1994): 30.
[26] Ibid., 25.
[27] Richard Green, "Don Messer and his Islanders," *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2nd edition, eds. Helmut Kallman and Gilles Potvin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992): 850.
[27] Rosenberg, "Don Messer's Modern Canadian Fiddle Canon," 25.
[28] Ibid., 25.
[29] "Don Messer's Fiddle," My New Brunswick, accessed February 3, 2018, https://mynewbrunswick.ca/don-messers-fiddle/.

Figure 3.11 *The Charlottetown Guardian*, September 30, 1937, page 6.



APEX RECORDS

60-706. Price, each 50c

DON MESSER

26220 — Souris Lighthouse — Mouth of the Tobique—Favorite Polka—By the Fireside.

26272—Flanigan's Polka—Makilmoyle's Reel.

26273—Levantines Barrel—Little Burnt Potato.

26290—Soldier's Joy—Flowers of Edinburgh.

26276 — Rustic Jig — Victory Breakdown.

26277—Flop-Eared Mule—Angus Campbell.

26287—Mother's Reel — Rambler's Hornpipe.

26288—Atlantic Polka—(1st and 2nd Change).

26289—Atlantic Polka—(3rd and 4th Change).

26286—The Dawn Waltz—White River Stomp.

26221—Goin' Back—The Broken Down Piano.

26222—Big John McNeill—The Dusty Miller's Reel—Don Messer's Breakdown — Johnny Wagoner's Breakdown.

Figure 3.12. Eaton's catalogue, fall and winter 1948-49, page 475.

Launching into a television career in 1957 with his program, *Don Messer's Jubilee*, he became a household name in Atlantic Canada. In 1948, Eaton's catalogue included a section dedicated to Messer, with twelve records available for purchase at 50c each (Fig. 3.12). Messer's role in Canadian musical history was immense. He developed a canon of fiddle playing that is still current today. Although folklorist Neil Rosenberg (b. 1939) has argued that: "Messer has

been criticized as a homogenizer, someone who did not represent the truly authentic fiddle music of any particular region," his influence cannot be underestimated, both as a standard bearer and a standard setter for fiddle music on PEI.[30]

Messer's emphasis on basic melody without overly ornamenting tunes is still audible in the styles of Prince Edward Island fiddlers today. The similarity of styles in the following example clearly demonstrates this influence. Peter Doiron (1924-2009) recorded *Kiley's Reel* 40 years after Messer, although his version is virtually identical to Messer's setting (Fig. 3.13 and 3.14). The tempo and bowing are similar, but most importantly, the notes that make up the tune skeleton are nearly identical in both settings. Doiron's unwillingness to employ melodic variation suggests an unwavering loyalty to Messer's setting, highlighting his enduring impact on Island fiddlers.

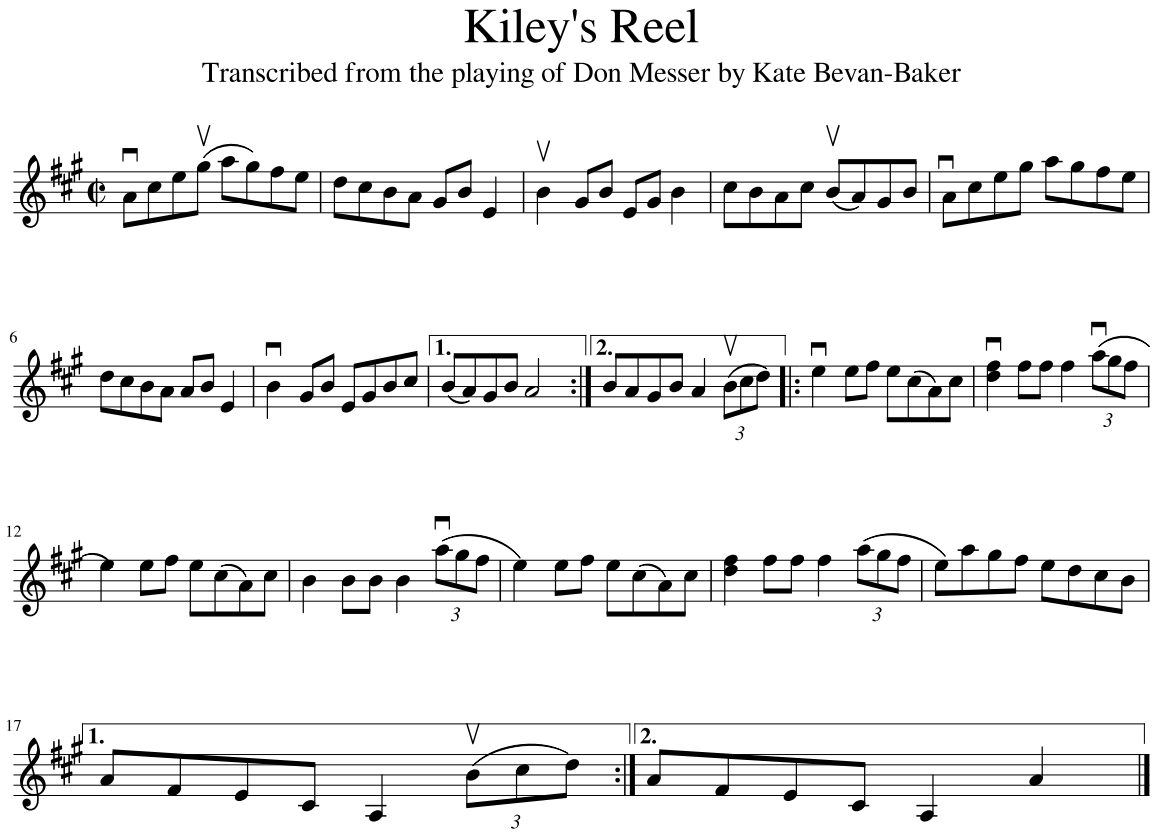


Figure 3.13 *Kiley's Reel*, transcribed from the playing of Don Messer (1953 recording).

[30] Rosenberg, "Don Messer's Modern Canadian Fiddle Canon," 31.

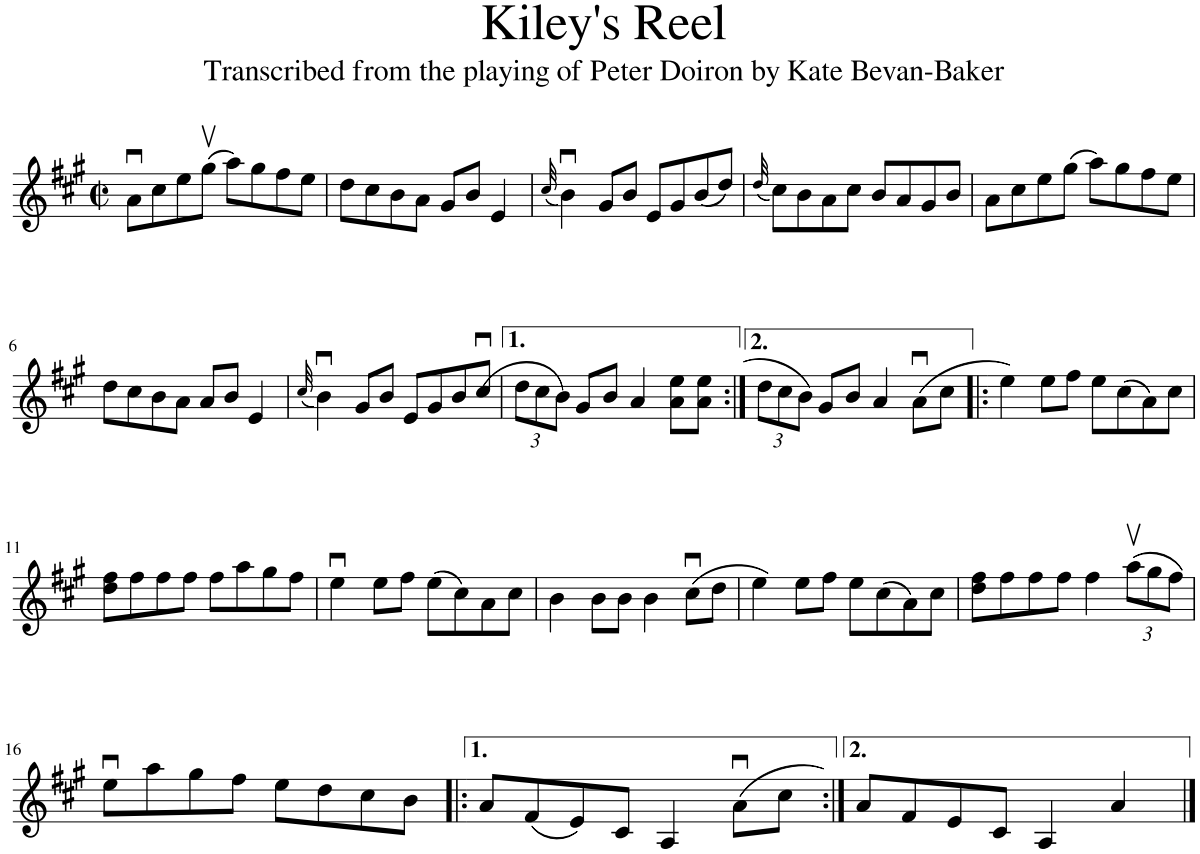


Figure 3.14 *Kiley's Reel*, transcribed from the playing of Peter Doiron (North Rustico, Prince Edward Island, 1992 recording).

The Medium is the Message

In the mid-1960s, Canadian media ecologist Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) insisted that electronic media were becoming the ubiquitous "message" of modern times. His catch phrase, "the medium is the message" inferred that the form of any medium embeds itself in the message it transmits.[31] This symbiotic process (in which media influences how its message is relayed and perceived) has had a profound impact on soundscapes and music histories throughout the world in the past half century. PEI is no exception. The acquisition of new repertoires via electronic media speaks explicitly to McLuhan's assertion that the medium is indeed the message.

Since the 1970s, technological advancement has allowed for a more varied and faster approach to learning tunes than in the early years of the twentieth century. For example, fiddlers

[31] Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1963), 7.

are now able to slow down a recording to a fraction of its original speed—thus allowing players to hear each intricacy and ornament in any tempo they desire. Prior to the mid-twentieth century, fiddlers were confined to listening to radio broadcasts and recordings in real-time. Ten-year-old PEI fiddler Luka Hall, for example, receives digital recordings at each fiddle lesson, allowing him to practice with these external tools in between lessons. He is as comfortable using his recording devices as he is his fiddle as part of his learning experience. A generation older than Hall, PEI fiddler Ward MacDonald learned his first tunes directly by ear from older fiddlers around him. Part of a generation who learned music via direct primary orality, as opposed to secondary orality (ie: via sources removed from direct tradition bearers), MacDonald came late to music technology. Hence, his preference for direct engagement with older players. If the *message* is the learning process (the varied contents and pedagogical experiences that result in learning), the new *medium* of sound technology (with its vast corpus of mechanical recordings, digital databases, iTunes, tempo altering tools, etc.) has radically altered the symbiotic process of music acquisition in the past half century. This is as true on PEI as it is any other part of the Irish traditional soundscape.

McLuhan also observed how the demand for a commodity takes off only after it has come into existence: "Nobody wants a motorcar till there are motorcars, and nobody is interested in TV until there are TV programs. This power of technology to create its own world of demand is not independent of technology being first an extension of our own bodies and senses. When we are deprived of our sense of sight, the other senses take up the role of sight in some degree."[32] Radio broadcasts, 78 rpm discs, LPs and cassette recordings now exist as mechanical archives, however, and performers are able to alter the listening experience of these older forms of media. Technological evolution has affected all forms of musical expression, communication and marketing. Cutting- edge media in the form of virtual performances, digital downloads, live-streaming concerts etc. has generated another pendulum swing in how the message is perceived by performers and listeners alike. Like their peers in Ireland, Scotland and elsewhere, young fiddlers on PEI can now relay their musical messages via performance footage on online platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. Physical location and distance are no longer barriers. Traditional musicians all over the world can now travel virtually, and play music for any audience. All of this has been made possible because the message and the medium have both

[32] Ibid., 15.

changed exponentially.

Music Media and Tourism on PEI

A product of cultural planning by former Premier Angus L. Macdonald, Nova Scotia's tourist industry has enjoyed a half-century of successful (if clichéd) marketing that features Highland pipers and clan tartans, traditional fiddlers and ceilidh dancers, who have welcomed and entertained visitors to the ostensibly Scottish province since the 1940s.[33] In contrast, PEI has had no sustained interface between its traditional soundscapes and its tourism strategy. The Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society is the main patron of Scottish music on the Island. Established in 1976 by Bishop Faber MacDonald (1932-2012) and developed by Father Charles Cheverie (b.1931), the society focuses on teaching fiddle to young people and preserving vernacular Scottish repertoires, as opposed to facilitating the development of tourism on the Island.[34]

The future of PEI changed when the Confederation Bridge was completed in 1997. Thirteen kilometres in length, the "Fixed Link," as it is known, facilitates approximately 4,000 commercial and passenger vehicles daily.[35] Up until 1997, the only way to reach PEI was by water, and a ferry service still exists.[36] A convenient and fast transit on and off the Island for natives and visitors alike, Confederation Bridge not only connects people, but also goods and services.[37] The bridge's role as a tourist conduit has been formidable. The number of tourists using the bridge to come to PEI increased by 11% in 2016. Car ferry traffic declined by 14% that same year.[38] On the Island side of the bridge, the community of Borden-Carleton boasts a vibrant

---

[33] See Ian McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954," *Acadiensis* vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1992): 5-47.

[34] MacDonald initially wanted to name the society The PEI Scottish Fiddlers Society. Bishop Faber MacDonald, "Why Play Scottish Fiddle," *The Island Fiddler,* no. 3 (June 1980), accessed January 18, 2018, http://www.peifiddlers.com/tif8006.pdf. The Fiddlers Society produces a quarterly newsletter, an example of which can be found in Appendix C.

[35] "About Confederation Bridge," Confederation Bridge, accessed December 8, 2017, http://www.confederationbridge.com/.

[36] See Barbara Radcliffe Rogers and Stillman Rogers, *Adventure Guide to Canada's Atlantic Provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Iles de la Madeleine, Labrador*, 3rd ed. (Edison, N.J.: Hunter Publishing, 2006).

[37] Godfrey Baldacchino, "Fixed Links and the Engagement of Islandness: Reviewing the Impact of the Confederation Bridge," *The Canadian Geographer* 51, no. 3 (September 2007): 329-30.

[38] "Highlights of the Prince Edward Island Economy," Prince Edward Island Economic Update 2016, accessed January 10, 2018, https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/2016-economic-update.

visitor centre that acquaints tourists with the history and culture of the Island. This centre allows visitors to book concert tickets and plan visits to performance sites. The traditional music scene on PEI now depends heavily on tourist marketing and media, and most performers have an online presence to attract tourists to their concerts. Tourist guidebooks on PEI now average 200 pages in length, and are packed with concert, céilí and session details, as well as the usual sight-seeing, food and museum attractions.[39] Canada's longest-running musical, *Anne of Green Gables*, is a main staple in Charlottetown, having completed fifty-two consecutive seasons at the Confederation Centre of the Arts. The overwhelming emphasis on traditional concerts and céilís guarantees support for local musicians—both Scottish and Irish. However, the success of these endeavors depends on the vigorous use of print and digital media to showcase musicians, singers and dancers, and make visitors feel welcome in a family-friendly milieu of small halls, quaint havens, and red soil vistas that typify the charm and mystique of the province.

Like tartanism and tourism in Nova Scotia, music tourism on PEI has not come without a veneer of invented tradition.[40] Eric Hobsbawm's (1917-2012) theory of invented tradition is clearly at work within the province. Hobsbawm argues that traditions may appear to be old, but in reality are often recent inventions.[41] Traditions are constantly shaped by society over time, promoting "unity" within cultures and the illusion of perpetual presence. The concept of Scottish clan tartans, for example, is an invented tradition. Used as an enduring symbol of national pride and identity among Scots far and wide, the clan tartan tradition owes its origin to Sir Walter Scott who stage-managed the visit of King George IV to Edinburgh in 1822.[42] Scott dressed the Hanoverian in lavish tartan, whereupon he was welcomed to Edinburgh by clan representatives, each adorned in clan tartan, newly-woven and newly-invented for the royal pageant. The process of inventing tradition goes hand-in-hand with political scientist, Benedict Anderson's (1936-2015) notion of the imagined community. This vicarious concept is based on notional

---

[39] "Visitor's Guide," Tourism Prince Edward Island, accessed January 10, 2018, https://www.tourismpei.com/pei-visitors-guide.

[40] See McKay, "Tartanism Triumphant," 5-47. Tartanism refers to the system of outward signs and symbols testifying to the supposed Scottish essence of Nova Scotia.

[41] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in *The Invention of Tradition,* eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge Press, 1983), 1.

[42] Hugh Trevor-Roper, "The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland," in *The Invention of Tradition,* eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (New York: Cambridge Press, 1983), 15. See also Tom Devine, *Clanship to Crofter's War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994).

communities that do not have face-to-face interaction among their members.[43] Imagined communities are often created by media conglomerates and virtual networks rather than emerging organically from living communities.

Associated with rituals and symbols, traditional music on PEI has not escaped invention and reinvention, particularly musical productions that are staged for tourists. While devoid of the buffoonery and iconography of the stage Irishman (for the most part), CCÉ shows that have been performed in PEI over the years have come complete with *báinín* shawls and tweed waistcoats, as well as banter and battering that owe their origin to the vaudeville stage rather than the thatched cabin in the West of Ireland. The world of imagined communities, however, has struck a more sustained chord among Irish musicians on the Island. Today, the virtual soundscapes of Facebook and *thesession.org* are as significant in the lives of traditional musicians as the lived soundscapes of the pub session, or the céilí house. Irish fiddlers on PEI play an active part in both ecologies, whether it be to attract tourists to their gigs, or share *Lord MacDonald's Reel* with a fiddler online from New South Wales.

[43] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Books, 1983).

Chapter 4
Performing Living Traditions

Traditional music is music that is transmitted orally and has been performed over long periods of time.[1] Creative evolution and devolution are endemic features of this genre. Marked by centuries of creative engagement with other vernacular traditions both on and off the Island, Irish traditional fiddling has also evolved and devolved since it first put down roots on PEI and elsewhere in Atlantic Canada. This chapter argues that Irish traditional fiddle music is a horizontal, rhizomorphic process—rather than a vertical, genetic movement. It will explore the ontological context of this living tradition on PEI, critique the current state of fiddling, proffer a detailed analysis of regional styles, and profile key players who have maintained them.

Traditional Fiddle Music in Context

The most contested debate surrounding living traditions such as Irish fiddling, is the mode of acquisition through which players learn repertoire. Traditional tunes were passed down aurally before sheet notation became available and this allowed individual variations to occur naturally, as each player shaped his or her version of a tune. Musicians remember and perform tunes differently each time they play them, just as a storyteller will never tell the same story the same way twice. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz stresses the importance of individual subjectivity by claiming that anthropological studies are also interpretations, noting that "cultural analysis is intrinsically incomplete."[2] He also emphasizes the importance of thick description, a detailed depiction of cultural phenomena such as music that allows for more detailed understanding by non-musicians. For any living tradition that is constantly in flux, thick descriptive research through recording and transcription not only preserves orally-transmitted material but creates a critical mass of empirical data so that comparative analyses can be undertaken by other scholars. Thick descriptive analysis is a particularly useful tool in the investigation of Irish fiddle styles on PEI because it allows the researcher to go beyond mere surface observation.

Conformity in the world of traditional music is virtually non-existent. Collector and

[1] Kallmann, *A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914*, 6.
[2] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 16.

fiddler David Greenberg explains that he enjoys listening to fiddlers because no two sound the same.[3] Seasoned fiddlers play tunes differently each time they play them, even if the difference occurs in slight changes in bowing, variation, or ornamentation. In the Irish canon, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to play a traditional tune. Variation and ingenuity are elements that are determined by each individual performer. Irish composer Seán Ó Riada went so far as to argue that "An imitation is only an imitation, no matter how good it is, a sign that the player lacks imagination, a confession of failure."[4] Reliance on transcription and recordings, however, suggests that imitation is encouraged, and as such, 'fails' to capture the spirit of traditional Irish fiddle-playing. Other scholars such as Niall Keegan argue the opposite, suggesting that it is impossible to learn an exact imitation: "to call a traditional musician of any merit merely an imitator of another performer would be inaccurate since a perfect imitation is impossible."[5]

Fiddlers on PEI acquire tunes through a variety of direct and indirect channels, with younger fiddlers learning more from sheet music, especially those learning through the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society. Despite its small geographic area (224 kilometres from tip to tip, and 6-64 kilometres wide), distinct regional styles are still prevalent throughout the Island, within and beyond broader ethnic traditions.[6]

Vernacular Fiddling on Prince Edward Island

Most instrumental music played on PEI is of Irish, Scottish, or Acadian origin. Repertoires include compositions from the home countries that were brought to Canada by original settlers, as well as newer compositions from PEI-born composers like Emmett Hughes and Edward P. Arsenault.[7] Frequently, when Island composers produce new material, they borrow elements from existing tunes and songs. As Georges Arsenault explained "Local song makers did not create their own tunes. They borrowed well-known melodies that suited the rhymes and themes of their own songs. In some cases, they kept lines from the original song and incorporated them

[3] Dunlay and Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton*, 9.
[4] Seán Ó Ríada, quoted in Niall Keegan, "The Verbal Context of Regional Style in Traditional Irish Music," in *The Local Accent: Selected Proceedings from BLAS, the Local Accent Conference,* ed. Thérèse Smith and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (University of Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, 1997), 120.
[5] Keegan, ibid., 120.
[6] See accompanying transcription and analysis for examples of this.
[7] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 40, 41.

into their composition."[8] This "borrowing" practice prompts a larger debate about musical identity and belonging. Based on Meghan Forsyth's thesis, it would seem that tradition did not differentiate between the ethnic background of localized tunes. Her research reveals that Acadian sessions welcome other styles of folk and traditional music, including Bluegrass, Scottish, Cape Breton, and Irish.[9] This cross-fertilization is a natural result of various immigration flows to PEI over the centuries. Cape Breton, in contrast, clung solidly to its Scottish past, with the fiddle tradition being largely soloistic. Sherry Johnson outlined Scotland's impact on Cape Breton fiddling, noting that, "while large groups of fiddlers may play together in concert finales and group lessons, one fiddler with an accompanist is the usual arrangement. Many fiddlers playing together is said to inhibit the personal expression that is so important to Cape Breton fiddling."[10] This practice has found an echo on PEI, where Scottish sessions are less frequent than Irish sessions, and the performance contexts in which Scottish fiddlers find themselves feature solo fiddlers with piano, or guitar accompaniment. Group playing is frowned upon in this milieu.

While PEI fiddle styles vary from region to region, there is an overall style that is recognized as a "PEI style." It comprises Scottish bow ornamentation, with double stops and open string droning. Double stops and drones most likely emerged as an imitation of Highland pipe drones.[11] Highland pipes were a tangible link to the homeland for Scottish emigrants to the Island.[12] A considerable number of Scottish reels and strathspeys are in A major—a key that is both friendly to fiddle players and accessible for droning open strings.[13]

---

[8] Georges Arsenault, *Acadian Legends, Folktales and Songs from Prince Edward Island* (Charlottetown, PEI: Acorn Press, 2002), 107.
[9] Forsyth, *"De par chez nous,"* 67, 206, 219. Beverley Diamond and Ken Perlman conducted research on fiddle music on PEI in the 1990s. Diamond collected a series of 'musical life stories' during the 1990s, most of which were collected during the summer of 1993 with the assistance of Roy Johnstone, a well-known Island fiddler originally from Manitoba. See Diamond, "The Interpretation of Gender Issues in Musical Life Stories of Prince Edward Islanders," 101. Ken Perlman spent the summers of 1991 and 1992 recording one hundred fiddlers from dozens of Island communities. He collected 427 tunes in total: reels, jigs, waltzes, marches, strathspeys and airs. Most were field recordings made in musicians' homes. His most recent publication builds on his research from the early 1990s. See Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*.
[10] Sherry Johnson, *Bellows & Bows,* 46.
[11] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 25.
[12] Paul Cranford, "Some Bagpipe Tunes our Fiddlers Play," *Cape Breton Magazine,* no. 50 (1989): 90-1.
[13] Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, quoted in Cooper, *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diasporas*, 65.

Various attempts have been made to safeguard fiddle styles on PEI. The Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society was formed to encourage players to come together and to teach music to a younger generation, but some players fear that they may be misinterpreting the purpose of the music by using sheet music, and regard the organization as an ensemble rather than a forum for individual players. Popular Scottish reels like *Lord MacDonald*, *Miss McLeod* (and its jig variant *The Campbells are Coming*), and *Lucy Campbell* are common standards in the repertoire of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society.[14]

Perlman describes fiddling style on PEI as a "lively blend of Scottish Irish, and Acadian-French elements," with a "full, strong yet sweet tone."[15] He also notes that most fiddlers on PEI are over sixty years old and grew up in traditional settings with no formal teaching. The majority learned techniques and tunes by imitating other players in their communities.[16] More specifically, he consolidates PEI fiddle styles into six regional divisions, labeled after each of the three Island counties: Northeast Kings, Central Kings, South Kings, Queens, East Prince/Evangeline Coast, and West Prince. Perlman's stylistic descriptions, however, are vague. Rather than separate individual and geographic differences, he says that there is "tremendous variation from player to player."[17] Contrary to Perlman, Graham argues that Scottish-style PEI fiddlers play in the Cape Breton style. In my interview with fiddler Ward MacDonald, he remarked that when he refers to "Scottish tunes," he includes Cape Breton in the scope of Scottish fiddle repertoires. Perlman suggests that Cape Breton has become the primary source of fiddle tunes for PEI fiddlers, but that most of these tunes are recently composed, rather than older Scottish tunes.[18] The present state of fiddling on PEI suggests that a wide range of styles prevail throughout the Island. In addition to individual repertoire, there are tunes that are commonly played in all Island communities. This is most likely the result of radio programs and commercial recordings. Perlman corroborates this by arguing that the hybridity of Irish, English, French and Scottish cultures has resulted in diverse repertoires among PEI musicians—regardless of their religious backgrounds.[19]

---

[14] Ó hAllmhuráin, *A Pocket History of Irish Traditional Music,* 69.
[15] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 12.
[16] Ibid., 14.
[17] Ibid., 21-26.
[18] Ibid., 21.
[19] Based on the 2011 National Household Survey, 43% of PEI residents identified as Roman Catholic, and 31% as Protestant. Statistics Canada, "2011 National Household Survey: Prince Edward Island." For further discussion on religion on PEI, see also Callum Beck, "The

Fiddle tunes originating in Ireland have also been incorporated into PEI repertoires. A prime example is *McDermott's Reel,* a very popular standard on the Island. It is named after Tyrone fiddler, Michael 'Master' McDermott.[20] Reliance on sheet music is common among the Queens County Fiddlers who provide transcriptions to all its members.[21] Each player learns the same version of a tune and performs with the rest of the ensemble in a near orchestral setting. Their repertoire is a mix of Scottish, Irish, and Old Time tunes. A large number of their Irish tunes are learnt from the published collections of Francis O'Neill. In addition to Scottish and Irish tunes, the Queens County Fiddlers also play tunes composed by local Island composers.

Irish sessions hosted by the Old Triangle Pub in Charlottetown are popular forums for sharing diverse repertoires. Recent compositions are welcomed alongside older standards. The inclusive milieu of the session allows musicians (of any level) to feel comfortable introducing new tunes and suggesting additions to set lists. Incorporating modern tunes with older tunes represents an openness to change, while still maintaining a commitment to tradition. Dorothy Hast observed similar patterns of tune accommodation in Ireland:

> While it is tempting to classify traditional music as something old, passed down from generation to generation in an unchanged way, music cultures are dynamic. In the case of Ireland, traditional music and dance forms have remained distinct genres over time, but have also changed in response to both internal and external cultural influences. New repertory, styles, instruments, and contexts for performance have been created or adopted according to need, and then either absorbed into the tradition or eventually discarded.[22]

Performance Context

The contexts in which one hears and plays Irish traditional music vary considerably on PEI. Solo playing is usually heard at concerts, or at special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Group playing is the most common form, with sessions acting as the primary forum of sharing music. Musicians generally sit in a circle and play sets or medleys of tunes together. With an emphasis

---

Protestant-Catholic Divide on Prince Edward Island, Canada: Its Creation, Growth and Resolution" (PhD diss., Open University, 2010).

[20] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 78. McDermott's eponymous tune was published in volume four of Breandán Breathnach's *Ceol Rince na hÉireann*.

[21] Courtney Hogan, interview with author, October 2016.

[22] Hast and Scott, *Music in Ireland*, 17.

on group playing, no single instrumentalist acts as the focal point. Session sizes on PEI range from a small group of five or six players, to a crowded room with more than thirty musicians playing at the same time. Irish and Acadian sessions are most prominent, while Scottish musical gatherings take the form of organized community dances and formal concerts. Also common in Acadian communities are family jam sessions and kitchen parties that range in size from a handful of players, to twenty five or thirty musicians.[23]

At sessions, players exhibit significant variation in tune choice, source and quality of performance. Versions of tunes are comparable to different recipes for a particular dish. Each players' version is their own interpretation of a tune; their own recipe of ingredients. An Irish session could be compared to a buffet, where there is a bit of everything, with each player's musical background and 'ingredients' being brought to each session. A concert given by a traditional band with pre-set arrangements could be compared to a set menu at a fine restaurant – one is not sure exactly what one will be served, but it will be all be decided ahead of time and executed with intent. Spontaneity and chance are what distinguish a session setting from a concert; the atmosphere and flow of a session is never known ahead of time.

Festivals take place throughout the summer months on PEI and draw spectators and performers from across North America. There are no music competitions as there are in Ireland. A sense of community is emphasized instead. Fiddle competitions were abolished on PEI in the 1970s because of the negative impact they had on society.[24] It was felt that contests projected a negative attitude towards the music that was intended to unify communities not divide them.[25] Instead, community festivals became the focus, with pub sessions, céilís, and kitchen parties augmenting larger gatherings. Private sessions and kitchen parties are commonplace on PEI, especially in Scottish and Acadian cultures.[26]

Fiddle camps are also popular; the most recent being the *PEI Fiddle Camp*, directed by fiddler Ward MacDonald. Other festivals and camps such as the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival draw instrumentalists from all over North America. Players are there to learn, rather than for competitive or material gain.

---

[23] Forsyth, *"De par chez nous,"* 192-3.
[24] Ibid., 144.
[25] John Gauthier, "Fiddling Contests," *The Island Fiddler*, no. 1 (June 1978), accessed January 18, 2018, http://www.peifiddlers.com/tif7806.pdf.
[26] Forsyth, *"De par chez nous,"* 315.

Playing Techniques

Despite the jokes about the difference between a violin and a fiddle, the only essential difference between the two is the style of music played on the instrument. Technique is the key attribute that separates violin from fiddle playing. Ciarán Carson notes that, "Since all traditional music can be played in the first position, the modern classical hold is not necessary: the fiddle may be held against the chest, shoulder or upper arm, with the neck resting against the palm of the hand, more or less supporting the instrument."[27] Irish traditional music can indeed be played exclusively in the first position. However, recently composed traditional tunes require players to venture beyond the first position. This suggests a desire to have a more accomplished mastery of the instrument, and underlines the influence of classical technique that has inspired fiddlers to integrate positional shifting into their playing.[28]

Vibrato is another classical technique that is widely debated in traditional fiddle playing. Carson believes it is inappropriate, owing to its dramatic effect and pretentious attitude, claiming that, "such technique has a social and aesthetic imprimatur denied to the traditional musician."[29] However, many fiddlers employ this technique, especially in slow airs. For instance, PEI fiddlers Ward MacDonald, Paul MacDonald, and Gary Chipman, use vibrato in their playing. Focusing on the sound of the *tune* rather than on the sound of the *instrument*, fiddling emphasizes the primacy of the music and takes the attention away from the player. There is no applause after a set is finished at a session, unlike classical concerts, where a violinist bows to the audience and acknowledges their applause after each selection.

Experimenting with different bow holds is a technique that is commonly used in traditional fiddling, but not in classical playing. The "TUF" bow hold (Thumb Under Frog) is a grip that many fiddlers claim provides stability and greater control over the bow.[30] American

---

[27] Carson, *Irish Traditional Music*, 18-9. First position is the basic "home" position of the left hand on the instrument. The hand is placed low on the fingerboard, close to the scroll, and a range of over two octaves is possible using the first position alone.

[28] It would be valuable to perform a detailed analysis of current fiddle players on Prince Edward Island who regularly play outside of first position and to identify reasons for this phenomenon.

[29] Carson, *Irish Traditional Music*, 19.

[30] See Carl Flesch and Frederick Herman Martens, *The Art of Violin Playing* (Boston: C. Fischer, 1924). The frog is the end part of the bow that is held with the right hand, and is often made of ebony. The mechanism for tightening and loosening the bow hair is enclosed within the frog of the bow. The origin of its name is unknown, although various theories exist.

Bluegrass fiddler Mark O'Connor is an example of a modern-day fiddler and violinist who uses the TUF bow hold. Though many classical performers do not agree with this bow grip, it works for him and other fiddlers, such as Vassar Clements, Byron Berline, and Michael Cleveland.

There are three main bow grips in classical violin playing – German, Franco-Belgian and Russian. Carl Flesch has described the differences between these three grips in Volume 1 of *The Art of Violin Playing*. The most common bow hold, Franco-Belgian, is described as having the index finger pressed down slightly sideways on the bow with some space between the index and middle fingers, while the thumb sits across and directly below the middle finger. Although beginner Suzuki Method students begin with the TUF bow grip (called the "beginner's bow hold" in Suzuki methodology), they later learn to use the Franco-Belgian hold.

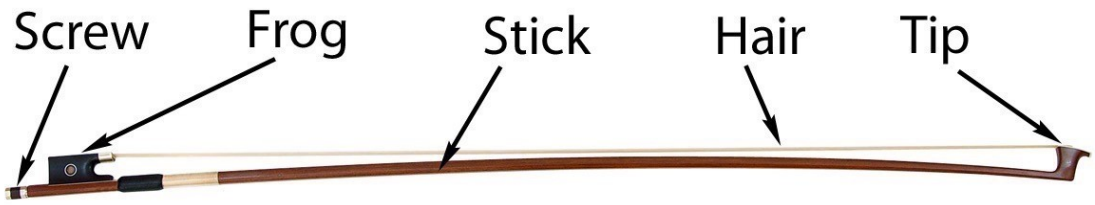


Figure 4.1 Parts of the violin bow.[31]

Many fiddlers are noted for "choking up" on the bow – that is, with a basic relaxed bow grip, sometimes five or six inches closer to the tip than usual. The TUF bow hold is not possible in this case, because the player is too far up the bow for the thumb to press on the wooden frog (Fig. 4.1). Fiddlers David Greenberg and Kelly Russell both choke up on the bow to varying degrees, and are able to produce a variety of superb sounds and articulations.[32]

Another bow grip that is referenced colloquially and in discussion forums as the "death grip" involves the hand being placed in a claw shape at the frog and the player clutching tightly, which restricts the smooth relaxed bow movement emphasized in classical techniques.[33] Since fiddlers invariably learn at home without teachers, any variation in bowing style is acceptable, as

[31] Sarah Petrusma, "Arco Violin Bowing Technique: How to Play Violin," last modified September 11, 2014, http://www.learntoplaymusic.com/blog/arco-violin-bowing-technique-play-violin/.
[32] David Greenberg, "Fiddle Tunes and Early Music," *Early Music America* 8, no. 3 (2000): 32-9.
[33] Edmund Van Der Straeten, *The Romance of the Fiddle: The Origin of the Modern Virtuoso and the Adventures of His Ancestors* (New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971), 51.

tonal quality is not always a priority for players—especially, those who use the "death grip."

There are many success stories of classical violinists being able to cross over into traditional music and 'make it' as professional fiddlers. BBC produced a TV special in 2010 comparing two of Scotland's most celebrated string players: Aly Bain, a fiddler, and Nicola Benedetti, a classical soloist. The documentary featured both performers sharing opinions on the styles of music they played, and how they chose to pursue their careers. Both were open-minded and respectful of the other's musical style. The program ended with a clip of Bain and Benedetti collaborating. The BBC succeeded in portraying two contrasting styles working in unison and in presenting positive prospects for crossover-musicians.[34]

Scordatura, or the technique of cross-tuning one's fiddle, is common especially in Old-Time fiddling in the United States.[35] Examples can be heard in Scottish tunes, perhaps to imitate the drones of Highland pipes. Reading from sheet music for scordatura, players do not need to transpose pieces; they simply read the notes and finger them as if the strings remained at their usual pitches. A number of composers and collectors of Scottish fiddle music notated pieces using this device, probably developed from lute and viol tunings, which were altered according to the key signature being played, so as to make use of open strings. On the fiddle, scordatura tuning produces a rich, ringing sound when the open strings are played along with fingered notes.[36] Fiddler and musicologist Conor Ward outlined the prominence of scordatura tuning in Ireland:

> As part of the Irish fiddle tradition, scordatura has indeed been used very sparingly. It is true that, in recent years, some of the younger generation of fiddle players have been experimenting in this field, principally Caoimhín Ó Raghallaigh, who plays in a wide variety of scordatura tunings, but this is not at all representative of the older tradition in Ireland. […] As to why cross-tuning is done in Ireland, a number of different purposes can be cited: firstly, to give a brighter, or sweeter, or more resonant tone to the fiddle, secondly to facilitate octave playing without a change of fingering, and thirdly, to create

[34] "When Nicola Benedetti met Aly Bain," *BBC ArtWorks Scotland*, directed by Janice Hopper, aired March 2, 2010.
[35] Conor Ward, "Scordatura in the Irish Traditional Fiddle Music of Longford and South Leitrim," in *The Musicology Review: University College Dublin*, no. 8 (2013): 111.
[36] Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music*, 55.

special effects, especially droning in imitation of the bagpipes.[37]

Ward MacDonald, a PEI fiddler from Northeast Kings County, plays a number of tunes in scordatura. Apart from altering the tone of the instrument, tunes played in scordatura can imitate non-musical sounds such as trains (*Orange Blossom Special*), clucking (*The Hen's March*), or bird calls (*The Blackbird*). Lem Jay (1882-1960) was another Island fiddler who played tunes in cross-tunings. A classic example of a tune in scordatura is *Big John MacNeil*, which is still a popular fiddle tune on PEI. Jay would have listened to Don Messer's version, although his 1930s recording in "high bass" tuning (AEAE) has a slightly altered melody from the Messer version he would have been familiar with (Fig. 4.2).[38] To read transcriptions in scordatura, a fiddler fingers the notes the same way as if the instrument was tuned in "home tuning" (GDAE), although the strings are, in fact, tuned to AEAE.

[37] Ward, "Scordatura in the Irish Traditional Fiddle Music of Longford and South Leitrim," 111-12.
[38] Hornby, "The Fiddle on the Island," 110-111.

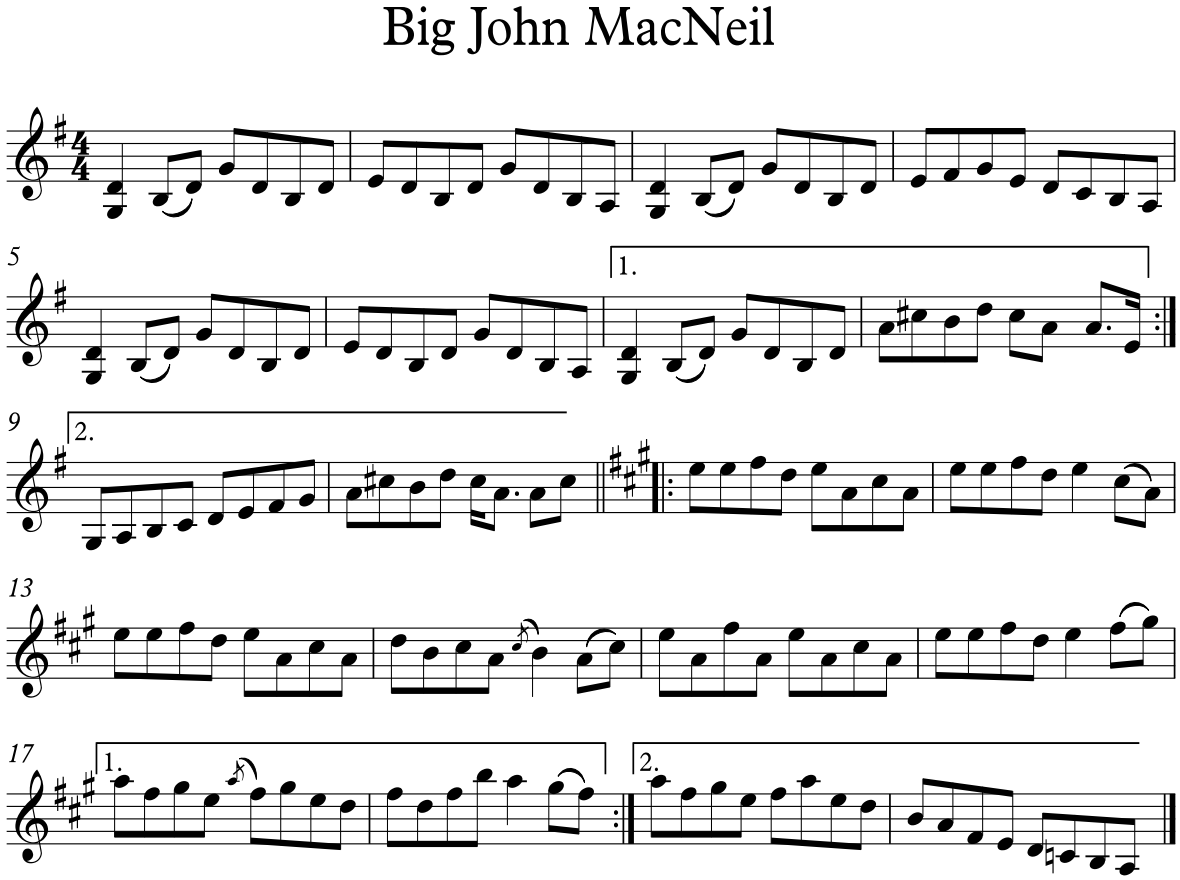


Figure 4.2 Lem Jay's version of *Big John MacNeil,* in scordatura, 1990s field recording.

Queens County fiddler Elliot Wight (b. 1935) played *Big John MacNeil* almost identically to Messer's setting (Fig. 4.3). The basic skeleton is similar to Jay's scordatura version; however, Wight is unable to drone open strings and produce as full a sound because his fiddle being tuned in home tuning, rather than scordatura. Scordatura on PEI is less prominent than in Old-Time fiddling in the USA and traditional fiddling in Ireland—owing to the temperament of instruments being tuned to different pitches and the limited tune repertoire that is suited to scordatura playing among PEI fiddlers. It would be more accessible if fiddlers owned two instruments; one kept in standard tuning, and the other used for scordatura.

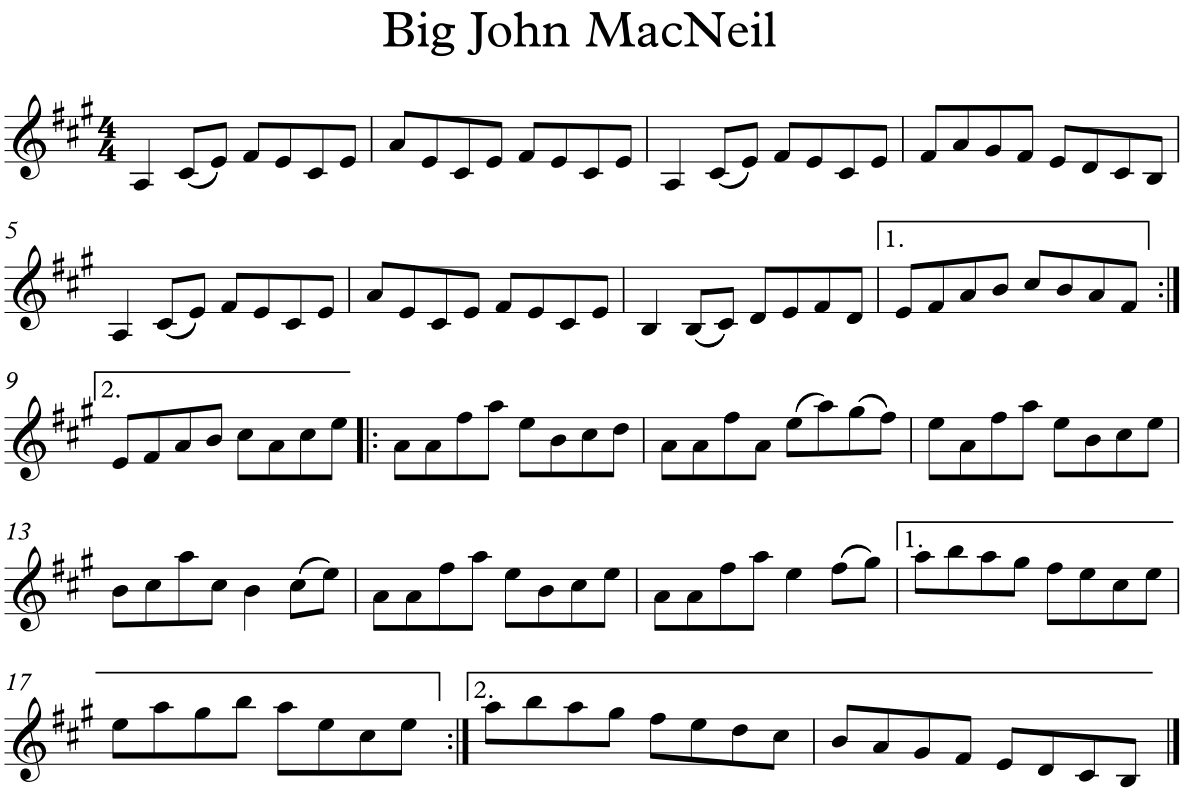


Figure 4.3 Elliot Wight's (b. 1935) version of *Big John MacNeil*, 1990s field recording.

Form in Traditional Irish Music

The general form of Irish traditional dance tunes is binary (two eight-bar sections, each repeated twice, making a total of thirty-two measures of music). These sections are commonly known as the A and B sections, (the latter known as 'the turn' in Ireland), and the melodic range of the B section is usually wider and extends higher than the A section. Since melodies consist of a single line, it allows a wide range of possibilities for melodic variation, ornamentation, and harmonic accompaniment. As Thérèse Smith explains, "Musicians within an oral tradition constantly negotiate a fine line between tradition and innovation."[39] Tunes are usually played two or three times through before transitioning to another. Hence, players have plenty of opportunity to vary the ornamentation on each repeated section. Joining multiple tunes together in medleys is popular

[39] Thérèse Smith, "From the Local to the Global, and Back," in *The Local Accent: Selected Proceedings from BLAS, the Local Accent Conference,* ed. Thérèse Smith and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin (University of Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, 1997), 1.

in almost every facet of Irish traditional music, most commonly in session spaces.[40]

The order of melodic sections in Irish and Scottish tunes also reveals stylistic sources and interpretations. Scottish fiddlers, for example, usually begin with the high section of a tune ('the turn'), whereas Irish fiddlers play the low section first. On PEI, fiddlers begin almost exclusively with the turn, demonstrating the prominence of Scottish queues and idioms.

The most popular traditional dance tunes played by fiddlers on PEI are reels and jigs. Overwhelmingly, reels make up a much greater part of fiddlers' repertoires than jigs, of which there is a mixture of Scottish and Irish. It is believed that the reel, or 'reill' as it was originally termed, originated in Scotland in the late sixteenth century and made its way to Ireland in the eighteenth century.[41] Many of these original-Scottish reels have taken on new titles and slight melodic variations in Irish fiddling, many of which are found in the repertoires of PEI fiddlers.

Methods of Variation

Since melodies are relatively short and usually repeated, players are expected to put their own stamp on a tune by varying the ornamentation. Different types of ornamentation distinguish individual and regional styles of playing. Since Irish tunes are melodic, without an emphasis on harmonic accompaniment, players are free to alter and embellish the melody slightly each time they play a tune. Ornamenting the melody and modes of variation are what distinguishes one player from another. Dorothy Hast summarizes regional styles in Ireland, noting that:

> Each of the main regional styles – Donegal, Sligo, Clare, and Sliabh Luachra – differs considerably in how ornamentation is rendered. Donegal style is characterized by bow ornamentation and single note bowings that create a more staccato attack, while Clare style is thought to be more flowing because of the player's use of left hand ornamentation and longer bow strokes. Sliabh Luachra players tend to use distinctive ostinato rhythms in their bowing, which make the music sprightly and suitable for dancing.[42]

The relationship between technique and being "in the moment" is what creates variation choices for the fiddler. Perhaps a fiddler may rehearse repeatedly and play a tune a specific way

[40] Hast and Scott, *Music in Ireland*, 59.
[41] Ibid., 67.
[42] Hast and Scott, *Music in Ireland*, 76.

every time, but variational choices are made in a single moment, consciously or unconsciously. Listening to versions of other players and recordings of the same tune gives fiddlers a framework from which to choose specific ornamentation, bowing patterns, or embellishments they wish to incorporate into their playing. This can be compared to Tim Cresswell's work on assemblage theory that stresses the importance of gathering, assembling and weaving the unique whole that emerges from the relationship of all its parts.[43] Cresswell employs the example of a house: the basic structure and foundation remain constant, but the interior and the objects arranged inside are always changing and given new places. Applying this basic understanding to music, one can imagine a player's overall style remaining the same, but the specific tunes and ornamentations deployed by that player are continually changing and adapting. These variables depend on the context and circumstances in which players finds themselves.

In general, Scottish fiddlers ornament more with their bow (altering the rhythmic patterns of a melody, or their attack, and timbre). Irish fiddlers, on the other hand, tend to ornament more with their left hand (adding embellishments to melody notes). The five examples below illustrate the most common ornaments used by Irish fiddlers on PEI.

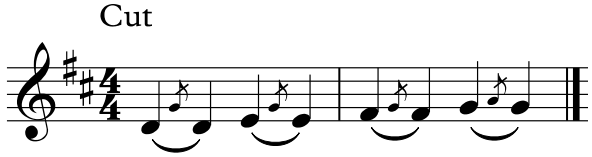


Figure 4.4 Cut: A cut is a grace note used to embellish a principal melody note. Cuts are played just before the melody note, and approached from above. Fiddlers may or may not slur when incorporating cuts into their playing.

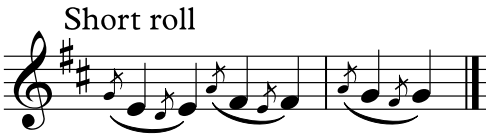


Figure 4.5 Short roll: Short rolls begin on the note above the principal melody note, followed by the melody note, the note below the melody note, and finally returning to the principal melody note. The precise rhythm varies from player to player, and also depends on the rhythm of the tune melody itself.

[43] Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction*, 37.

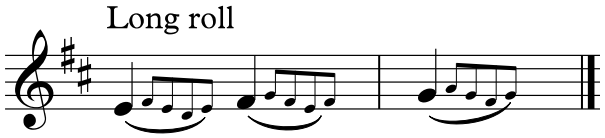


Figure 4.6 Long roll: Consisting of five notes in total, long rolls begin on a principal melody note, followed by all the notes found in a short roll. A long roll is played rhythmically faster than a short roll, and is always slurred. Like the short roll, the precise rhythm varies from player to player.

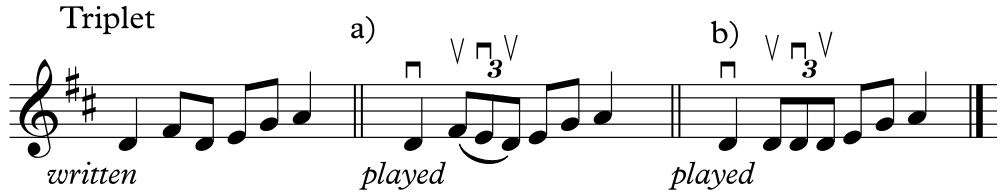


Figure 4.7 Triplet: Triplets are used to alter the melody slightly by changing two eighth notes to triplet eighth notes. Triplets can either be slurred or bowed separately, and can follow a scale-like pattern (example a), or remain on the same note (example b).

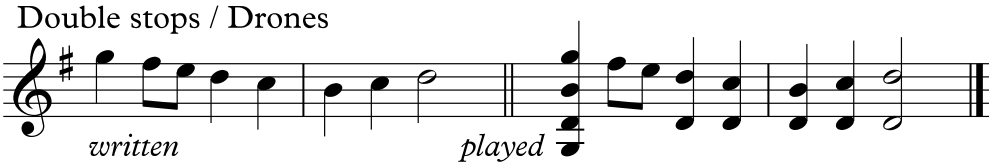


Figure 4.8 Double stops/droning: Droning utilizes the open strings of a fiddle to embellish the main melody. Chords and double stops can also be played by stopping notes on multiple strings with the left hand, and drawing the bow across both strings at the same time.

Topography of Regional Styles

The following is a critique of the six regional styles described by Perlman, as well as further analyses based on his field observations. The regions are named from the county in which the style exists (Fig. 4.9). Though there is stylistic overlap, Perlman has separated them into six schematic categories, a simplistic taxonomy that requires much more detailed evaluation.

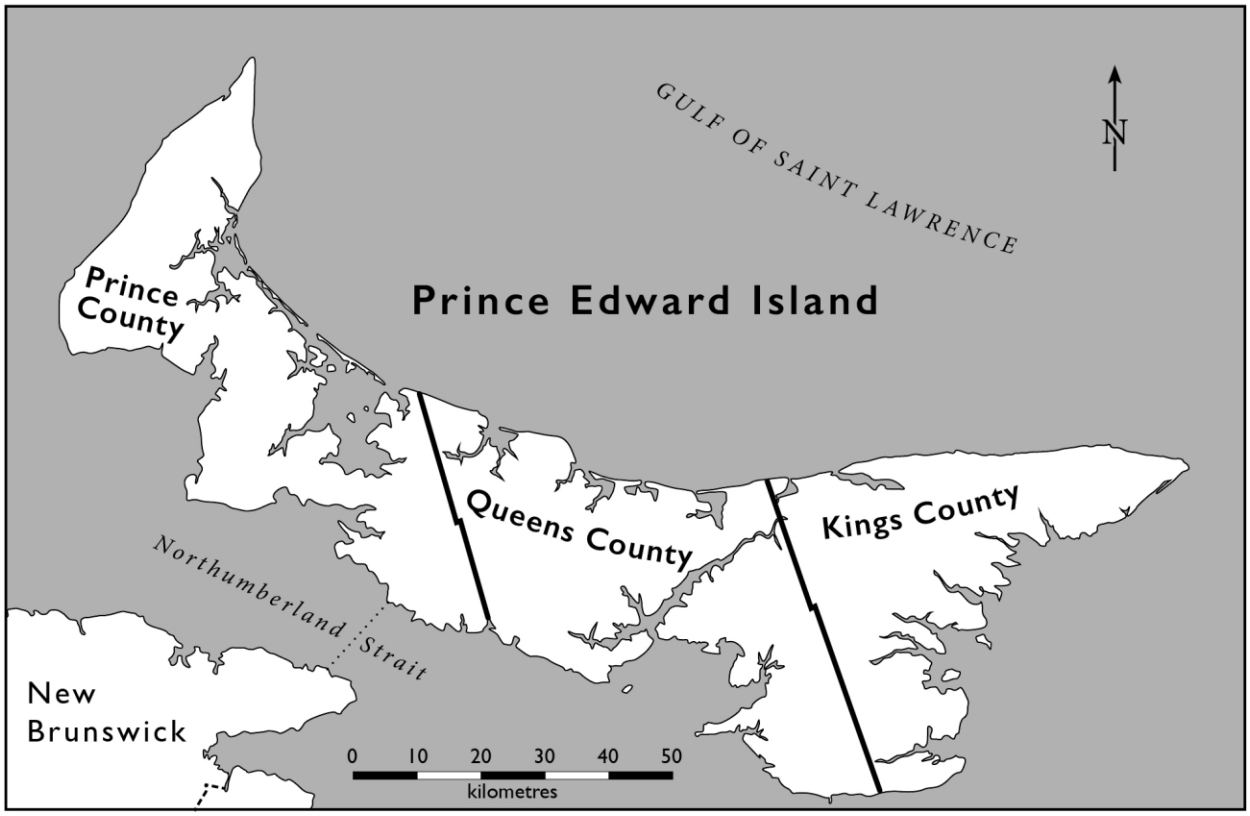


Figure 4.9 Counties on Prince Edward Island

Northeast Kings County

Perlman describes Northeast Kings County fiddlers as those musicians who: "tend to play an ornate, hard driving style heavily influenced by the Scottish-oriented fiddlers of Cape Breton. […] They tend to use a relatively abrupt style of bowing, Scottish style ornamentation, cuts, and snaps. […] The pace of their music tends to be on the moderate side."[44] This broad description tells us little about "ornate," "abrupt bowing," and "moderate pace," and may well leave the non-fiddler puzzled. In the *Traditional Violin Music of Cape Breton*, the general bowing style is described as being very articulate with few slurs.[45] Additionally, Donegal fiddling has been compared to that of Cape Breton, and is designed more for playing and listening to, rather than for dancing.[46] Perhaps, a lack of slurs and a more performative, soloistic style is what Perlman is suggesting in his depiction of fiddlers from Northeast Kings County.

[44] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 21.
[45] Dunlay and Greenberg, *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton*, 12.
[46] Sawyers, *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide*, 60.

To further analyze the Northeast Kings County style, I have selected recordings of the Chaisson family of Bear River, PEI.[47] The Chaissons have produced five generations of fiddle players and continue to produce young fiddlers today. The most prominent tunes featured in the repertoire of Kenny Chaisson (b. 1947) include strathspeys and marches, suggesting a strong Cape Breton and Scottish influence. Regarding tempo, I would disagree with Perlman on his notion of "moderate pace," at least as far as reel tempos are concerned. The pace of strathspeys among the Chaisson fiddlers is indeed moderate, but reels and hornpipes are played at a fast tempo (approximately 126 beats per minute). Kenny Chaisson's average tempo for jig playing is also fast - 130 beats per minute. This is comparable to Sligo fiddler, James Morrison who recorded one of Chaisson's favourite jigs, *The Wandering Minstrel*, in 1926 at an average tempo of 140 beats per minute.[48] J.J. Chaisson (b. 1982) also plays reels at a considerably fast tempo (115 beats per minute on average). Sligo master, Michael Coleman recorded *Lord MacDonald's Reel* at 119 beats per minute, while J.J. Chaisson's version of the tune is 106 beats per minute.[49]

South Kings County

According to Perlman, fiddlers of this region "play a shuffling, lilting style that reminds me of old 1920s-era recordings of fiddlers from the American South…their tempos are faster, they have a more rolling style of bowing, and they use less ornamentation, cuts, and snaps."[50] This vague meaningless description of a "rolling style of bowing" sounds as if it could be likened to that of Irish players from Antrim to Donegal, who "favour what may be described as a single-stroke style. They produce strong vigorous music of clear tone with an economy of ornamentation."[51] This comparison is puzzling because evidence shows that the majority of the population in Kings County is of Scottish descent, but the fiddling style appears to be more Irish than Scottish.[52]

---

[47] "Kenny Chaisson," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A237.

[48] James Morrison, fiddle player, "The Lark in the Morning/The Wandering Minstrel," recorded March 1926, Columbia 33108-F, 78 rpm.

[49] Michael Coleman, fiddle player, "Lord MacDonald's Reel/Ballinasloe Fair," recorded December 17, 1927, Columba 33237-F, 78 rpm. It should be noted that the 78 rpm recordings made by Michael Coleman in the USA during the 1920s and 1930s were a great influence on Irish fiddle playing, and are still widely available and respected today.

[50] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 22.

[51] Breathnach, *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*, 92.

[52] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island,* 20. Perlman describes Islanders living in

Joe Kearney (1914-1993) was a fiddle player from Sturgeon, in South Kings County. His style can be compared to that of the Chaissons in Northeast Kings County, with a lack of slurs and moderate tempos, especially in reel playing.[53] His recording of *Sheehan's Reel* (average tempo 105 beats per minute) is considerably slower than Irish fiddler Fergal Scahill, who plays the same tune at 118 beats per minute and includes considerably more ornamentation and slurs.[54] The variation in Scahill's recording is much more evident than in Kearney's, who tends to play the melody the same way with each repetition of the tune. Furthermore, the majority of the recordings by South Kings County fiddlers are reels, with very few examples of the "shuffling, lilting style" that Perlman describes. Another South Kings County fiddler, Attwood O'Connor (1922-2009), plays reels in a driving style with a steady tempo and minimal ornamentation. Most of his repertoire was reels, with some waltzes and no jigs.[55] Similarly, recordings made by South Kings County fiddler Archie Stewart (1917-2003) were exclusively reels. The lack of jigs, hornpipes or marches suggests that fiddlers in this region often played for dances, specifically Lancers, or Square Sets that call for reels played at a steady tempo.[56]

Central Kings County

Fiddlers from this region, specifically Cardigan and Georgetown, "represent what might be termed as an intermediate style between Northeast and South Kings. Fiddlers from this area play a lot of the Scottish and Cape Breton repertoire, but in a relatively 'straight-ahead' non-ornamented style with few-cuts and snaps."[57] Based on previous descriptions, one can presume that these fiddlers play predominantly Scottish repertoires, but do not execute the ornamentation associated with those tunes. The reel playing of Central Kings County fiddler Jimmy Banks

---

Kings County as primarily Scottish, in terms of ethnicity and culture. Prince County is mostly Acadian and French-speaking. He does not specify the origin of residents in Queens County.

[53] "Joe Kearney," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A278.
Joe Kearney's average tempo for a reel was 105 beats per minute, considerably slower than reel playing from Northeast Kings County.

[54] "*Sheehan's Reel*, A Tune a Day - 2017," Fergal Scahill Music Facebook Page, accessed December 8, 2017, https://www.facebook.com/FergalScahillMusic/videos/1334314346664897/.

[55] There are no jigs in Kearney's repertoire, according to the musical examples given on the Bowing Down Home website.

[56] "Dancing," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh:2602.

[57] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 22.

(1904-1996) was very relaxed with an average tempo of 98 beats per minute. His reels sound more like polkas than actual reels. His style is congruent with Perlman's analysis of Central Kings County style, with few ornaments, or variations. Fiddlers from this region play a wider variety of tunes, such as waltzes, hornpipes and polkas; however, reels are dominant in most repertoires.[58] The popular Irish reel, *The Maid Behind The Bar*, was played by Central Kings County fiddler Cosmas Sigsworth (1917-2003) at almost the same tempo as recordings by Irish musicians Junior Crehan, Michael Tubridy, Tommy McCarthy and Éamon McGivney.[59] These similar tempos suggest the influence of commercial recordings, especially if tunes were played for the same set dances on PEI as they were in Ireland.

West Prince County

Describing fiddle styles in West Prince County, Perlman posits that:

> Fiddlers of West Prince Co. near the towns of O'Leary and Tignish play a style and repertoire that has a distinct Acadian flavor, with strong ties in terms of style and repertoire to the fiddle-music scene in neighbouring New Brunswick. The pace of music is quite rapid compared to that found in Kings Co., and the bowing style is extremely vigorous. In fact, the bow moves so fast and extends so far afield as the fiddler attacks the strings that it sometimes seems in danger of flying out of his hand. West Prince fiddlers use few ornaments, cuts, and snaps, but their music is replete with lively rhythms and syncopations.[60]

Sidney Baglole of West Prince County (1912-1997) played with an Acadian style, characterized by a strong emphasis on beats two and four, as opposed to beats one and three that are usually emphasized in other areas of PEI.[61] Baglole also composed a number of tunes, mostly reels and breakdowns with a similar sound to American Bluegrass fiddling. His bowing was

---

[58] "Central Kings," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A2590.
[59] "The Maid Behind the Bar/Gregg's Pipes," *Music in Ireland - Various Artists*, 2004, compact disc. *Music in Ireland*'s tempo is 114 ppm, Cosmas Sigsworth is an average of 111 bpm.
[60] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 22.
[61] "Sidney Baglole," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A226.

vigorous, with a lack of slurs and an abundance of droning to add depth and volume to his playing. Dennis Pitre (b. 1941) of West Prince County also exudes a strong bowing technique, with few slurs and an airy quality to his playing because of his fast and sweeping bow changes. This is particularly obvious in his rendition of the Irish reel, *Paddy on the Turnpike.*[62]

Acadians are known to play faster than Gaelic styles of fiddling, which is frequently termed "Old-Time" fiddling.[63] As Cathy Larson Sky suggests, the importance of bowing patterns to create rhythmic emphasis is an important feature of this style, and most Island fiddlers describe their playing at "Old-Timey."[64] Central Kings County and west Prince County seem to have similar style descriptions, the main difference being the elevated tempo at which Acadian fiddlers play. It should be noted that the acclaimed Acadian group, *Vishtèn* (from PEI), market themselves as "Celtic," and not Acadian to take maximum advantage of commercial opportunities. *Vishtèn* incorporates a mixture of traditional French-Acadian songs and tunes, as well as original compositions in their repertoire.[65]

East Prince County/Evangeline Coast

According to Perlman, Abram-Village and Wellington fiddlers "blend a bit of the Scottish-Cape Breton repertoire and rhythmic attack into a largely Acadian-oriented style. This Scottish influence is due mostly to the influence of fiddler Eddie Arsenault (1921-2014), who learned a significant part of his repertoire from Cape Breton broadcasts."[66] Arsenault compares the process of adding variation and embellishments to one's playing to building a house. The basic and unornamented 'tune skeleton' is the framework and foundation of a house:

> The more you play the tune, the more you can add on to it. The more you play it, the more you can add, a few notes here and there, a few strokes of the bow. It's like buildin' a house. After the rough work is done, you gotta put on the trimming, you got to do the

[62] "Dennis Pitre," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A321.
[63] Diamond, "The Interpretation of Gender Issues in Musical Life Stories of Prince Edward Islanders," 107.
[64] Sky, "Building Bridges: Challenges in Playing, Performing, and Teaching Irish Music in the American South," 101.
[65] Additional information on Vishtèn can be found on their website: http://vishten.net/biography/.
[66] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 22.

> finishing inside. But the fiddler is about the same thing, you see. You could play the piece with just the basic note, but you could also add some note on it to make it a little bit fancier. After a while, you put the extra note in there, in order to put the finishing touch on it. After a while, when you got more practice, you add more notes, and more colour to it.[67]

Analyzing Arsenault's playing, one notices several strathspeys in his repertoire suggesting a prominent Scottish influence. However, Acadian fiddling is also present, manifested mainly through open string droning and accents on beats two and four, similar to the playing of Sidney Baglole. This French influence may have resulted from Arsenault's time spent in France during World War II. The Scottish influence in his playing was most likely developed after his visit to Scotland for VE-Day celebrations.[68] Arsenault was also a prominent folk composer on PEI. He recorded two solo albums before he passed away in 2014.[69]

Queens County

In Perlman's schema, fiddlers in this region play "what might be termed an intermediate or central-Island style – they incorporate some 'Scottish' elements into their playing, but they also tend to have a bit of a syncopated 'French' swing to their bowing."[70] The lack of clear description as to what a French "swinging" bowing style is, leaves the reader wondering just how a Queens County fiddler might sound. Scottish fiddlers use the bow more frequently than Irish fiddlers to create ornamentation. Shetland fiddler Aly Bain explains, "In Scots music, it's the rhythm that matters, not the amount of notes. Irish music is full of triplets and grace notes. In Scots music, there's less fancy stuff with the fingers but more urgency with the bow. There's more dynamic range. It's much more dignified and precise. It's very staccato, and you get that lovely cleanness in the music."[71]

Queens County fiddler Alvin Bernard (b. 1929) plays reels at a relaxed tempo, and waltzes make up a large portion of his repertoire. His style is relatively unornamented. It is no

---

[67] Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*, 110-11.
[68] "Eddy Arsenault," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A221.
[69] Ibid.
[70] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 22.
[71] Sawyers, *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide*, 61.

surprise, therefore, that Bernard has provided musical entertainment for many dances, weddings and other celebrations.[72] Gary Chipman (b. 1944) is another fiddler from Queens County who made his living as a professional musician. He began playing fiddle at age five. He first learned from his father and then took formal lessons. Chipman has a superb technical mastery of the instrument, especially in waltz playing in which he uses vibrato, slurs and variations.[73] His reel tempo is fast, averaging 133 beats per minute in *The Mason's Apron,* for example, which is comparable to Dubliners' fiddler, John Sheehan's version of the same tune that averages 138 beats per minute.[74] Fast-paced reel playing may also be heard from other Queens County fiddlers, such as Peter Doiron (1924-2009), Emmett Hughes (1921-2011), Lem Jay (1882-1960), Paul MacDonald (b. 1974), Danny MacLean (1928-2003), Stephen Toole (1927-1995), Elliot Wight (b. 1935), and Richard Wood (b. 1978).

The conclusion that can be drawn is that fiddlers from Queens County ornament mainly with the bow, but their "French Swing" may refer to additional slurs and other embellishments not usually associated with Scottish fiddling. Perlman's description of the various styles is vague and speculative. It is not helped by the fact that there is a lack of chronological detail about fiddle music on PEI prior to the 1990s. Errors and inconsistencies are frequent, not least his claim that the air *Killecrankie* is of Irish origin, when, in fact, it is a Scottish melody.[75] Contrary to Perlman, Graham suggests that Scottish-style PEI fiddlers play essentially in a Cape Breton style. Clearly, more research on the history and current state of Scottish fiddling on PEI would clarify this issue.

The present state of fiddling on PEI suggests that there is an eclectic range of repertoires and regional styles throughout the Island, some more diffuse than others. These are maintained and promoted by a plethora of fiddle societies and clubs, among them the four regional chapters of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society (Eastern Kings Fiddlers, Southern Kings Fiddlers, Prince County Fiddlers, and Queens County Fiddlers), as well as the West Prince Fiddlers Club.[76]

---

[72] "Alvin Bernard," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, "Eddy Arsenault," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A231.
[73] "Gary Chipman," Bowing Down Home.
[74] "Mason's Apron (Live)," *Wild Rover - The Best of the Dubliners*, February 18, 1998, Sanctuary Records, compact disc.
[75] Perlman, *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island*, 32.
[76] "Fiddling Groups," Bowing Down Home, accessed December 8, 2017, https://bowingdownhome.ca/fiddlers/groups.

Profiles of Fiddlers

Field interviews were conducted with five traditional fiddlers ranging in age, gender, and playing styles throughout the course of this research.[77] These interviews yielded a multiplicity of different perspectives and insights on the current state of fiddling on the Island, as well as the Island's relationships with Irish soundscapes elsewhere in the world.

The first fiddler interviewed was Roy Johnstone (b. 1949). This interview took place in his home on the Argyle Shore of PEI in October 2016. The setting was quiet in the music studio of his quaint and secluded farmhouse. His responses were detailed and thoughtful, and he provided salient insights on his musical past and his philosophy of music. The key advantage of carrying out the interview in his home was that he felt comfortable and was able to demonstrate examples of the early pieces of music he learned. His musical scrapbook from 1957 included a collection of traditional, classical, and popular music with a mixture of solo and chamber music.

Originally from Manitoba and of Scottish descent, Roy Johnstone has been active in the traditional music scene on PEI since he moved there in the 1980s. Although not from a musical family, he has made a professional career in music. He has made a number of professional recordings and toured with musicians across Canada and abroad. He hosts a weekly Irish session every Sunday at the Old Triangle Pub in Charlottetown, where most of the tunes selected are Irish. However, a mixture of Scottish, Cape Breton, Klezmer, Old-Time, French and Acadian tunes are also played as part of this session. The welcoming environment of the session allows players of any level and instrument to participate, and tunes are chosen to reflect the players who are present at any given time. Johnstone began his career by taking classical violin lessons, and became interested in traditional music as a teenager while listening to Métis fiddlers in Manitoba. He believes that his background in classical music and his ability to read music helped him to develop as a traditional musician. In contrast to his early tune acquisition experience of learning from sheet music, most of his tunes today are learned by ear: "I realized after that, if you learn a tune by ear, the chances are much better that you can remember it."[78]

Ward MacDonald (b. 1978) comes from a family of fiddlers. His father is a prominent Scottish fiddler on the Island. MacDonald began learning the fiddle at age eleven, and learned

[77] All the interviews were conducted during the fall of 2016 with ethics approval from Concordia University's REB. Signed consent forms are available upon request. See interview transcriptions in Appendix B.

[78] Roy Johnstone, interview with author, October 2016.

primarily by ear without sheet music. He recounted one story about a local storekeeper who inadvertently primed him to become a fiddler:

> I'd walk in [to the store] every week with mom for groceries and he'd say, "How are you young fellow, are you playing the fiddle yet?" and I'd say, "Nope, nope," and he might have been programming me, I'm not sure. But the first time I took a lesson, when we walked into that store the next time and he says, "Are you playing the fiddle yet?" I was some proud to say "Yep!" But I don't know, maybe he just programmed me.[79]

MacDonald currently runs a summer fiddle camp on PEI, where he invites other established fiddlers to join him on the faculty. He performs frequently at various Island gatherings, often as the only fiddler at an event with either guitar or keyboard accompaniment. This is typical of Scottish fiddling on PEI and elsewhere in Atlantic Canada. Informal group sessions are less common, while solo playing enjoys major prominence. MacDonald requested that the interview be conducted at his home in Charlottetown. Throughout the conversation, he played examples of his compositions, as well as traditional Cape Breton and Scottish fiddle tunes. Sharing personal stories of performances, collaborations and learning/teaching styles, he offered valuable observations regarding the current state of fiddling on the Island.[80]

Roy Johnstone is not a native Prince Edward Islander, nor is he of Irish descent. However, most of his repertoire is from the Irish traditional canon. On the contrary, MacDonald only plays Scottish and Cape Breton tunes, staying "true" to his musical and ethnic heritage. *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, a documentary produced in 1972, was a call to revitalize fiddling on Cape Breton Island, fearing that it was in danger of dying out.[81] MacDonald is adamant in calling for a re-assessment of fiddling on Cape Breton and on PEI, because he believes passionately that the younger generation is well prepared to carry the tradition forward.[82]

Coming from very contrasting musical backgrounds, Johnstone and MacDonald offer distinctive narratives that contribute—albeit differently—to the overall fabric of traditional

---

[79] Ward MacDonald, interview with author, October 2016.
[80] Readers can find out more about MacDonald on the Prince Edward Island Summer Fiddle Camp website: http://peifiddlecamp.com.
[81] Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, 100.
[82] MacDonald, interview with author, October 2016.

fiddling on PEI. Their repertoires vary considerably, as do their modes of transmission and acquisition of tunes. Although Johnstone did not provide any musical examples during the interview, his repertoire is available on his personal website.[83] With different learning modalities, family backgrounds, and performance styles, Johnstone and MacDonald represent two different fiddle cultures on PEI.

Irish-born fiddler Nollaig Bonar (b. 1952) presents a very different musical portrait from those of MacDonald and Johnstone. A member of the Sunday session hosted by Johnstone, Bonar emigrated to PEI when she was in her twenties. She began learning fiddle at age twenty-four driven by a desire to maintain part of her Irish culture in Canada. Having been surrounded by traditional music in Dublin, Bonar felt motivated to learn fiddle so that she could participate in sessions. She never made a living from playing fiddle, but she has been a member of musical groups in the past, and uses traditional music as a tangible link to her home in Ireland.

Bonar attended classes at the Queens County Fiddlers once a week after arriving on PEI, but has since stopped. She prefers the flexible atmosphere of Irish sessions, as opposed to the strict environment of the Queens County Fiddlers, where an emphasis on reading music and playing "standing up all together, like a choir" made the experience feel like a drill.[84] Bonar lamented the fact that there were few young people attending Irish sessions, and described the regular attendees as "a dying breed."[85] Her comments indicate that fewer younger musicians are learning Irish fiddling on PEI:

> Well, I'll tell you, it's interesting to look around the Sunday [session] at the Old Triangle, we're mainly old grey-haired people. There aren't a lot of young people at all. […] And so, I do think that the Island Fiddlers are more sustainable in a way, and they've got a critical mass, they're bringing up the younger people.[86]

One of these young fiddlers is ten-year-old Luka Hall (b. 2007) who is active on the Scottish fiddling scene. He began taking fiddle lessons at the age of six. Through the Queens County Fiddlers, his current teacher is Aaron Crane. Although he learns mainly from sheet music,

[83] See http://royjohnstone.com for biographical information and tune repertoire.
[84] Nollaig Bonar, interview with author, October 2016.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.

his lessons are audio recorded, which allows him to practice and learn from these recordings in between lessons. Hall explains that his teacher "First started off with notes and the fingerings, and he recorded some after my lesson, so I kept up with that."[87] Hall is the "resident busker" at the Guild Theatre in downtown Charlottetown throughout the summer months. Most of his tunes are Scottish, although he is not always aware of the origin of his repertoire. His fiddle idols include Cape Breton fiddler Natalie MacMaster, and PEI fiddlers Richard Wood, Cynthia McLeod, and his teacher, Aaron Crane. Hall's near-exclusive Scottish repertoire confirms Bonar's claim that few young people are learning Irish-style fiddling on PEI—a fact which is, no doubt, impacted by the success of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society which offers formal training to young musicians.

In contrast to Bonar, Courtney Hogan (b. 1990) is a fiddler of Irish ethnic background who was born on PEI. Presently in her late-twenties, Hogan is the only other informant, apart from Ward MacDonald, who was inspired to play fiddle by a relative, in her case, her great-grandfather. Although one side of her family is of Irish ancestry, most of Hogan's repertoire is Scottish. She can trace her Irish past back to Dennis Hogan, who was born in Tipperary in the late 1700s.[88] He, his wife and two children immigrated to Canada in the early 1800s, but his wife died during the voyage across the Atlantic. Hogan and his children settled in central PEI, which is close to where Courtney Hogan currently lives.[89] She explained how she became interested in learning the fiddle:

> I always grew up with fiddle music, and he [her great-grandfather] always wanted me to learn it, and so I actually started classical first. I was ten years old when I started violin lessons, and then, probably at the age of thirteen, was whenever I kind of started learning some fiddle music. And I took some lessons from Cynthia MacLeod, just learning different fiddle tunes, but I grew up learning the tunes that my great-grandfather played.[90]

Hogan hosts a weekly céilí during the summer months and also collaborates with other

[87] Luka Hall, interview with author, October 2016.
[88] "The Descendants of Dennis Hogan," The Island Register, accessed December 8, 2017, http://www.islandregister.com/hogan3.html.
[89] It is interesting to note that Hogan's uncle presently lives in the house that Dennis Hogan built in Rocky Point after arriving on Prince Edward Island.
[90] Courtney Hogan, interview with author, October 2016.

musicians in concert settings. Her style is strongly rooted in Cape Breton and Scottish fiddling and her mentors include Natalie MacMaster, Jerry Holland, and Don Messer. Hogan learns primarily from sheet music, although she also learns from old LP recordings of Cape Breton fiddler Winston Scotty Fitzgerald. Attending sessions allows her to perform with other fiddlers in group settings; however, her primary mode of performance is solo playing, which further emphasizes the current *modus operandi* of Scottish fiddling on PEI.

It is evident, therefore, that younger fiddlers seem more rooted in Cape Breton and Scottish style fiddling. Although part of their repertoire undeniably includes Irish tunes, this Irish material has been adopted into Scottish-style playing over time and is often embellished with fewer melodic ornaments and more bowing techniques, which is typical of Scottish fiddle playing. The Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society has had a profound impact on the current generation of fiddlers on PEI. Learning from sheet music is now common practice and is widely accepted by fiddlers across the province. In the past, being musically literate did not necessarily improve a fiddler's reputation, although it appears to be a standard skill among fiddlers on PEI today.[91] The lack of session spaces and opportunities for casual group playing in Scottish milieux emphasizes solo performance above all else—a practice that clearly delineates it from Irish soundscapes.

In conclusion, while Irish airs and dance tunes are still commonly played on PEI, they have taken on new hybrid identities and meanings, particularly among younger players. While melodic variation is used more frequently by younger fiddlers, the overall tempo of dance tunes remains moderate—undoubtedly, a tribute to the influence of older fiddlers. This extraordinary respect shown to fiddlers on PEI is clear evidence that Islanders are inherently proud of their tradition bearers who possess the "inborn gift" of music.[92]

[91] Perlman, *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler*, 125.
[92] Ibid., 65.

Conclusion: An Island of Tradition, An Island of Change

"If tradition is to remain, the new has to become tradition."

Ashley MacIsaac.[1]

Ethnomusicologist Philip Bohlman describes the music of diaspora as music that fuses "history and geography that connect a displaced culture to that of the homeland, or, at the very least, to a place claimed as home. The music of diaspora is about place of being and places of becoming, of connecting the present with its absence of place to the past and the future, where place can be imagined as real."[2] Although they left no written records of their music, it is reasonable to assume that the Irish immigrants who settled on PEI before the Great Famine brought music, song and dance with them, and that their "diasporic music" connected them to a sense of home—real and imagined. Brendan O'Grady concluded that most of these pre-famine immigrants came from the lowlands of Ulster (in particular, Co. Monaghan), as well as the south of Ireland.[3] It is likely that some of these pioneers were Irish-speaking and carried a mix of *sean-nós* songs and English and Scottish ballads with them to their new home. While the former failed to weather the passage of time on the Island, the latter featured in the published work of song collector and folklorist, Edward "Sandy" Ives, who conducted fieldwork on PEI in the 1950s.[4] Unlike Irish famine immigrants who bypassed PEI, these pre-famine settlers left Ireland by choice rather than by forced "invitation." Fertile and affordable land proved a prime catalyst for these Irish farmers who established an arc of agrarian communities in Queens County, PEI, many bearing the names of towns and villages in Ireland. Given the popularity and mobility of fiddles during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it is likely that fiddles were the primary Irish instruments, along with the voices of singers and the feet of dancers. Although geographic isolation may have sustained Irish dialects and styles in Irish communities like Kinkora and Emyvale, over time, a process of musical transculturation and hybridity came to characterise the traditional soundscapes of the Island, as Irish and Scottish repertoires interacted and styles mixed

---

[1] Quoted in Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle*, 77.
[2] Bohlman, *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*, 115.
[3] O'Grady, *Exiles and Islanders*, 61.
[4] See Edward Ives, *Drive Dull Care Away: Folksongs from Prince Edward Island*, (Charlottetown: Island Studies Press, 1999).

and merged. Living traditions on the Island today reflect this dual or binary amalgam of ethnic and hybrid styles of fiddling, a feature PEI shares with other island soundscapes throughout Atlantic Canada.

Musical Place and Musical Mobility on PEI

Detailed investigation of regional fiddle dialects on PEI has revealed that the indigenous fiddle style of Queens County contains trace elements that are more identifiably Irish—repertoire, bowing, rhythm—than fiddle styles in other PEI counties. This accords with census evidence, which confirms that higher numbers of Irish immigrants settled in coastal areas of Queens County than elsewhere on the Island. These Irish "home zones" still host regular Irish sessions that feature older veteran fiddlers and younger performers. While by no means exclusive in terms of style or repertoire, these nodal points represent the original sites of Irish music making on the Island, from whence it expanded outwards across the Island to adapt and merge with other styles and repertoires to create the transcultural fiddle soundscape that distinguishes the Island today.

While music imbues place with memory throughout PEI—by First Nation, as well as by European nation communities—musical place making has not remained static. Music is highly mobile and travels across time and space with human and technological change. The sedentary farming worlds of older players, however, were less susceptible to change than the mobile worlds of young players. This inter-generational schism is especially evident on PEI, both in terms of repertorial change and performance space. Ethnographic evidence suggests that old Irish fiddle tunes changed at a slower pace on PEI than in other parts of Atlantic Canada.[5] The relative isolation of the island was undoubtedly a factor in this process. So too was the loyalty of older players to "formal" published versions of dance tunes—a feature that also distinguishes older players on Cape Breton Island. The loyalty of older Irish fiddlers on PEI to an archaic published version of *Sheehan's Reel*—from Captain Francis O'Neill's 1907 collection, *The Dance Music of Ireland*—is a classic example of musical autonomy on the Island. Elderly fiddlers cling to older versions of tunes, while younger performers are drawn to "newer and brighter" ecologies of music that connect them to external mediascapes and technoscapes.

---

[5] Francis O'Neill, *Dance Music of Ireland* (Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1907), 94; "Roland Jay," Bowing Down Home, accessed January 18, 2018, https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A275; McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, 150; and Mannion, *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada*, 165.

It is possible to trace the evolution of Irish fiddling on the Island by tracking the inflow of music media and technoscapes, from novel print media in the early 1900s, to the arrival of iTunes and the Internet a century later. Early retail commerce in the form of mail-order catalogues facilitated the dissemination of music and instruments across Canada, and radically altered older regional soundscapes in the process. Printed sources that reached PEI included Harding's *All-Round Collection of Jigs, Reels and Country Dances* and Cole's *1000 Fiddle Tunes*. Both still enjoy prominence on the Island today, especially among older performers. Later during the 1930s and 1940s, radio and 78 rpm recordings facilitated newer styles and repertoires. The recordings and radio shows of New Brunswick fiddler Don Messer—a musical icon on PEI—popularized Irish and Scottish dance tunes like *Pigeon on the Gatepost, Speed the Plough,* and *Miss McLeod's Reel*.[6] These were augmented by the Irish-American recordings of Michael Coleman, James Morrison, Paddy Killoran, and Hughie Gillespie—all of whom found followers on PEI. The globalisation of Irish "trad" music since the 1990s and the ubiquitous presence of virtual Irish traditional music networks have broadened the radars of Irish traditional music making on PEI, as they have elsewhere—a process that will continue to unfurl.

The Perennial Debate: Tradition versus Innovation

Cape Breton fiddler Ashley MacIsaac's savvy axiom: "If tradition is to remain, the new has to become tradition," resonates throughout contemporary discourse on Irish traditional music—in Ireland, as well as among the constituent communities of the Irish music diaspora overseas. Tradition is an ever-changing process that adapts and re-adapts with the times. This is as evident on PEI as it is elsewhere in the world where traditional music is played. Emerging mediascapes, ideoscapes and technoscapes continue to jolt and alter orthodox notions of ethnicity, identity and tradition. Feargal Cochrane captured the perplexity of these fissures when he wrote: "the growth of digital technology has helped to muddy the geographical waters, disconnecting our sense of place from our sense of self and providing increased layers of separation between where we live and who we are."[7]

---

[6] *The Charlottetown Guardian*, "Neil Cheverie will Represent the Island in Fiddling Contest"; "Featured Tunes," Bowing Down Home, accessed January 18, 2018, https://bowingdownhome.ca/filters/tunes; Rosenberg, "Don Messer's Modern Canadian Fiddle Canon," 25.

[7] Cochrane, *The End of Irish-America?*, 185.

It is my belief that geographical waters will continue to be muddied by global flows and cultural malleability in the years ahead. The transformation of Irish identities (in Ireland and among Irish exilic communities) is a symptom of this macro process. The same holds true for mutations in Irish traditional soundscapes, where some music evolves and more becomes obsolete. Irish ethnomusicologist Susan Motherway concurs with this view—albeit, with a more pessimistic view of the outcome. She argues that "technology removes traditional music making from its performance context, resulting in a loss of cultural meaning and authenticity."[8] Just as historians and social scientists query the provenance and legitimacy of Irish identities, how they are interpreted and re-interpreted, territorialized and de-territorialized, music historians and ethnomusicologists are now interrogating the distinctiveness of Irish musical identity and, more broadly, Celtic musical identity.[9] Is this identity determined by the subjective taste of the listener, or by the style and interpretation of the individual performer? Are there pre-determined norms and variables that identify music as Celtic, or is this genre merely a figment of a nostalgic imagination that has its roots in the Romantic Movement of the nineteenth-century and owes its popularity to media spin and marketing gurus? These controversial questions are asked on PEI as they are in other communities and scenes throughout the Irish music world. Becoming part of this discourse on PEI has created a potent sense of belonging to a larger musical world—one that facilities musical discussion, as well as performance. This is especially evident among session-goers on the Island—including those with and without Irish ethnic heritage.

As this thesis has shown, the Irish soundscape on PEI is an artistic microcosm where discourses on Irish, Scottish and Acadian music intersect, diverge and rebound back again into a broader metanarrative on Celtic or World Music. Modern technoscapes and mediascapes facilitate this process— not least, in altering the methods through which Irish traditional music, and other traditional genres, are accessed and learned on the Island. Listening to recordings at slower speeds, engaging with online music communities, as well as relying on written transcriptions are now commonplace among PEI fiddlers. Previous generations depended exclusively on oral/aural transmission and direct engagement with live music making. Guided by

---

[8] Susan Motherway, "Mediated Music? The Impact of Recording on Irish Traditional Song Performance," in *Ancestral Imprints: Histories of Irish Traditional Music and Dance,* ed. Thérèse Smith (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010), 179.

[9] Recent work by Irish ethnomusicologists, Martin Dowling, Adrian Scahill, Aileen Dillane and Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin has addressed these perplexed issues.

new curriculum developments, musicians now trade genres to suit their learning styles and preferences. Players like Courtney Hogan, for example, who began training as a classical violinist are now crossing the floor to become traditional fiddlers. Pedagogical texts such as Gill Robertson's *Finding Your Fiddling Feet* and Julie Lieberman's *Alternative Strings: The New Curriculum* facilitate this process.[10] Discussing challenges faced by classical violinists who wish to become traditional fiddlers, these manuals argue that teaching methods and philosophies need to adapt to facilitate this transition. Versatility and adaptability are now the hallmarks of the "modern fiddler"—as she or he prepares to participate in today's professional music world. Preserving tradition, a sacrosanct trope in Irish revivalist and musical ideologies—especially in Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann circles—is of little consequence in this learning milieu.[11] Older musical identities have now given way to newer musical identities, based on personal musical taste and stylistic self-selection, rather than fixed ethnic moorings and loyalties.

PEI is also a site of musical commodification and branding—especially, "Celtic Music," which is vigorously marketed to tourists who visit the Island every year. "Celtic" is a brand of choice on PEI, particularly for young musicians who plan to create long-term careers in the music industry. Even Acadian players appreciate its strategic supremacy. Ethnomusicologist Meagan Forsyth, for example, notes that PEI's Acadian ensemble, Vishtèn, market themselves as a Celtic band. Their branding choice is deliberate as the chances of commercial success are far greater if an ensemble packages itself as Celtic as opposed to Acadian. Forsyth argues convincingly that "the strategic marketing of the group's music as French, Acadian and Celtic enables them to identify, and be identified with a variety of musical communities, thus broadening their audience base and facilitating their participation in various performance contexts."[12]

Contemporary Irish soundscapes—and, by extension, Celtic soundscapes—in North America appear to be disconnected from time but connected to space, a feature that helps to explain the perpetual layering of hybridity and transculturation that this genre can accommodate.

---

[10] Gill Robertson, "Finding Your Fiddling Feet," *The Strad* vol. 111, issue 1319 (March 2000): 252-256; Julie L. Lieberman, *Alternative Strings: The New Curriculum* (Pompton Plains, New Jersey: Amadeus Press, LLC, 2004.

[11] Despite the popularity of the Irish traditional music body, Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) throughout North America, there is no active chapter of the association on Prince Edward Island. The Benevolent Irish Society, formed in 1825, is the main Irish cultural association on the Island – and assumes responsibility for much of the work that CCÉ would undertake.

[12] Forsyth, *"De par chez nous,"* 56-7.

Like Irish music making in Newfoundland, Quebec, and Ontario, Irish fiddling on PEI has been marked by two centuries of musical convergence, coalescence and innovation with other genres—in particular, Scottish and Acadian. It is no surprise, therefore, that perennial tropes like heritage, identity and direction should continue to dominate this fiddle *zeitgeist,* as they have so many times in the past.

Ethnic and Métis Space, Avenues for Future Research

The transatlantic migration of Irish traditional music was not a vertical, or genetic movement, but rather a horizontal, rhizomorphic one. This continues to be a defining feature of Irish traditional fiddling music on PEI, where two centuries of transculturation have created an open-ended hybrid soundscape marked by multiple identities and diffuse layers of musical memory. Despite this cross-cultural pliancy, musical place making on the Island still involves ethnic representation and performance, material and immaterial engagement, as well as rooted and routed repertoires. All of these viscous and opaque elements make up musical place, for which there is no all-encompassing, or static definition. If, as John Ralston Saul has argued, Canada is a Métis nation, it is fair to say that its Métis soundscape has found an encompassing and enduring sense of place on PEI, where most, if not all of Canada's founding nations have found common, yet distinct, fiddle voices.[13]

Asserting the significance of space and, by extension, place in human perceptions of the world, the Chinese-American geographer Yi-Fu Tuan once remarked that "what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value."[14] There is little doubt that as a thriving transcultural soundscape in Atlantic Canada, PEI is highly valued by its music makers and music patrons. Conducting further music research in this eclectic place must invariably account for its musical diversity and transculturation—in the broadest possible sense, and with a remit that goes beyond the findings of this thesis. There is still no comprehensive music history of PEI. While future scholars should explore Scottish, English, and Mi'kmaq soundscapes on PEI, research on the Island's Irish soundscape must be expanded to account for other instrumental traditions, as well as the Island's vast storehouse of Irish songs,

[13] John Ralston Saul, *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada,* (Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2009), 3-48.
[14] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 6.

singers, songwriters, and media celebrities, from Ryan's Fancy to Stompin' Tom Connors, all of whom had a seminal stake in the Island's soundscape. Similarly, the history of Irish dancing (step and square) on the Island remains to be written, as does the history of musical spaces, from barn and house dances to small halls and concert halls, pubs and dockside platforms, which are used today to entertain tourists to the Island. While the roles of music mediascapes and technoscapes require much more detailed analyses, the relationship between musicians and the tourist industry, as well as broader trends in the commodification of musical heritage on the Island (that were briefly and indirectly referenced in this thesis), deserve detailed sociological and ethnomusicological analysis—as they do in other Canadian soundscapes. Music memory and post-memory (collective and individual), also deserve more detailed investigation, particularly from a phenomenological and space-place perspective. Similarly, repertorial mapping and collecting on the Island are in urgent need of attention. The extraordinary depth, breadth and potential of this unfinished research agenda underlines the richness of the musical lifeworlds that still lie "cradled in the waves" in Canada's smallest province.

Bibliography

Akenson, Donald H. *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*. Streetsville, ON: P.D. Meany, 1993.

Albrecht, Robert. *Mediating the Muse: A Communications Approach to Music, Media and Culture Change*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 2004.

Alburger, Mary Anne. *Scottish Fiddlers and Their Music*. London: Victor Gollancz, 1983.

Amtmann, Willy. *Music in Canada, 1600-1800*. Michigan: Habitex Books, 1975.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, revised edition. London: Verso Books, 1983.

Appadurai, Arjun. *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996.

Arsenault, Georges. *Acadian Legends, Folktales and Songs from Prince Edward Island*. Charlottetown, PEI: Acorn Press, 2002.

Baldacchino, Godfrey. "Fixed Links and the Engagement of Islandness: Reviewing the Impact of the Confederation Bridge." *The Canadian Geographer* 51, no. 3 (September 2007): 323-336.

Barkwell, Lawrence J., Lean Dorion, Darren R. Préfontaine, and Audreen Houdrie. *Metis Legacy II: Michif Culture, Heritage and Folkways*. Winnipeg: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2006.

Basso, Keith H. "Wisdom Sits in Places: Notes on a Western Apache Landscape." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 53-90. Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996.

BBC ArtWorks Scotland. "When Nicola Benedetti met Aly Bain." Directed by Janice Hopper. Aired March 2, 2010.

Beck, Callum. "The Protestant-Catholic Divide on Prince Edward Island, Canada: Its Creation, Growth and Resolution." PhD diss., Open University, 2010.

Bennett, Margaret. *The Last Stronghold: Scottish Gaelic Traditions in Newfoundland*. St John's, NL: Breakwater Books, 1989.

Blacking, John. *How Musical is Man?* Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1973.

Blanchard, J. Henri. *The Acadians of Prince Edward Island*. Charlottetown, 1964.

Bohlman, Philip V. *World Music: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Bonar, Nollaig. Interview with author, October 2016.

Born, Georgina, ed. *Music, Sound and Space: Transformation of Public and Private Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Bourdieu, Pierre. *Outline of a Theory of Practice*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." In *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, edited by Imre Szeman and Timothy Kaposy, 81-94. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

Bowing Down Home. Accessed December 8, 2017. https://bowingdownhome.ca/islandora/object/bdh%3A237.

Breathnach, Breandán. *Ceol Rince na hÉireann, Vol. III.* Dublin: An Gún, 1996.

---. *Folk Music and Dances of Ireland*. Revised ed. Cork: Ossian, 1996.

Breathnach, Breandán, and Seán Potts. *The Man & His Music: An Anthology of the Writings of Breandán Breathnach*. Dublin: Na Píobairí Uilleann, 1996.

Brown, Katie. "'The Tone of Defiance:' Music, Memory and Irish Nationalism." In *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices,* edited by Oona Frawley, 149-160. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2012.

Carolan, Nicholas. *A Harvest Saved: Francis O'Neill and Irish Music in Chicago.* Ireland: Ossian Publications, 1997.

Carson, Ciarán. *Irish Traditional Music.* Belfast, Ireland: Appletree Press, 1986.

---. *Last Night's Fun: About Music, Food, and Time.* London: Pimlico, 1997.

Casey, Edward S. "How to Get from Space to Place in a Fairly Short Stretch of Time: Phenomenological Prolegomena." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 13-52. Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996.

Cochrane, Feargal. *The End of Irish-America? Globalisation and the Irish Diaspora*. Dublin; Portland, OR: Irish Academic Press, 2010.

Cohen, Anne, and Norman Cohen. "Tune Evolution as an Indicator of Traditional Music Norms." *Journal of American Folklore* 86, no. 339 (1973): 37-47.

Cohen, Norm. *Folk Music: A Regional Exploration*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2005.

Coleman, Steve. "'Nonsynchronism,' Traditional Music, and Memory in Ireland." In *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices,* edited by Oona Frawley, 161-170.

Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2012.

Cole's 1000 Fiddle Tunes. Chicago: M.M. Cole Publishing, 1940.

Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann. Accessed January 10, 2018. https://comhaltas.ie/.

Confederation Bridge. "About Confederation Bridge." Accessed December 8, 2017. http://www.confederationbridge.com/.

Confederation Bridge. "Design." Accessed December 8, 2017. http://www.confederationbridge.com/about/confederation-bridge/design.html.

Conlon, Paula. "Bridging the Gap between the Folk Musician and Academia: An Alternative Approach to CSMT as discussed with Thomas Kines." *Canadian Folk Music Journal* 21 (1993): 45-48.

Conrick, Maeve, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide, eds. *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed.* Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017.

Coogan, Tim Pat. *Wherever Green Is Worn: The Story of the Irish Diaspora*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Cook, Nicholas. "Classical Music and the Politics of Space." In *Music, Sound and Space: Transformation of Public and Private Experience*, edited by Georgina Born, 224-238. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Cooke, Peter. *The Fiddle Tradition of the Shetland Isles*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

Cooper, David. *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and its Diasporas: Community and Conflict*. Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

Copeland, Gary. *Fiddling in New Brunswick: The History and its People*. Moncton: n.p., 2006.

Cox, Gareth, and Axel Klein, eds. *Irish Musical Studies: Irish Music in the Twentieth Century.* Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003.

Cranford, Paul. "Some Bagpipe Tunes our Fiddlers Play," *Cape Breton Magazine* 50 (1989), 90-91.

Cranitch, Matt. "Pádraig O'Keefe and the Sliabh Luachra Fiddle Tradition." PhD diss., University of Limerick, 2006.

Cresswell, Tim. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

Crummey, Michael, and Greg Locke. *Newfoundland: Journey into a Lost Nation.* Toronto: McLelland & Steward Ltd., 2004.

Devine, Tom. *Clanship to Crofter's War: The Social Transformation of the Scottish Highlands*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994.

Diamond, Beverley. "The Interpretation of Gender Issues in Musical Life Stories of Prince Edward Islanders." In *Music and Gender*, edited by Pirkko Moisala and Beverley Diamond, 99-139. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Dillane, Aileen. "Irish Traditional Music Dissemination at the End of the Long Nineteenth Century: Francis O'Neill's Music of Ireland (1903) and the City of Chicago." In *Knowledge Dissemination at the End of the Long Nineteenth Century*, edited by M. Dossena and S. Rosso, 65-88. Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2016.

Doherty, Liz. "The Paradox of the Periphery: Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition 1928-1995." PhD diss., University of Limerick, 1996.

Douglas, R. *Place-Names of Prince Edward Island: With Meanings*. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1925.

Dowling, Martin. *Traditional Music and Irish Society: Historical Perspectives.* Farnham, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014.

Dunlay, Kate, and David Greenberg. *Traditional Celtic Violin Music of Cape Breton*. Mississauga: DunGreen Music, 1997.

Elliot, Bruce. *Irish Migrants in the Canadas: A New Approach.* 2nd ed. Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004.

Eyers, Tony, "What is Traditional Music?" Published 2010. http://www.traditionalmusic.org/traditionalmusicdefinition.shtml.

Feehan, Fanny. "Suggested Links Between Eastern and Celtic Music." In *The Celtic Consciousness*, edited by Robert O'Driscoll, 333-348 New York: Braziller, 1981.

Feld, Steven, and Keith Basso, eds. *Senses of Place*. Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996.

Ferguson, Niall. *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. New York: Basic Books, 2004.

Flesch, Carl, and Frederick Herman Martens. *The Art of Violin Playing*. Boston: C. Fischer, 1924.

Forbes Adams, William. *Ireland and Irish Emigration to the New World from 1815 to the Famine*. Baltimore: Clearfield Company Inc., 1993.

Forsyth, Meghan. *"'De par chez nous.'* Fiddling Traditions and Acadian Identity on Prince Edward Island." PhD Diss., University of Toronto, 2011.

Fraser, Douglas. "Part One: More Elusive Immigrants." *The Island Magazine*, no. 26 (Fall/Winter 1989): 36-40.

Fraser, Douglas. "Part Two: More Elusive Immigrants." *The Island Magazine*, no. 27 (Spring/Summer 1990): 38-41.

Frawley, Oona, ed. *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices.* Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2012.

Gauthier, John. "Fiddling Contests." *The Island Fiddler,* no. 1 (June 1978): 2.

Geertz, Clifford. "Afterword." In *Senses of Place*, edited by Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso, 259-262. Santa Fe: School of American Research, 1996.

Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973.

Gibbons, Roy W. *Folk Fiddling in Canada: A Sampling*. Ottawa: National Museums of Canada, 1981.

Gleeson, David, ed. *The Irish in the Atlantic World*. Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2010.

Graham, Glenn. *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2006.

Green, Richard. "Don Messer and his Islanders." In *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*, 2nd edition, edited by Helmut Kallman and Gilles Potvin, 850. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992.

Greenberg, David. "Fiddle Tunes and Early Music." *Early Music America* 8, no. 3 (2000): 32-9.

Griffin-Farish, Dorothy. "Eddy Arsenault: Evangéline Area Fiddler Extraordinaire." *The Island Fiddler* 4, no. 3 (2006): 1-2.

Griffin, Patrick. *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, America's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Gronow, Pekka. "The Record Industry: The Growth of a Mass Medium." *Popular Music* 3 (1983): 53-75.

Hale, Amy, and Philip Payton. *New Directions in Celtic Studies*. Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2000.

Hall, Luka. Interview with author, October 2016.

Harding, Ed. *All-Round Collection of Jigs, Reels and Country Dances.* New York: Harding's Music House, 1905.

Hast, Dorothea E., and Stanley Scott. *Music in Ireland: Experiencing Music, Expressing Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Hobsbawm, E. J., and T. O. Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Hogan, Courtney. Interview with author, October 2016.

Hogan, Dorothy, and Homer Hogan. "Canadian Fiddle Culture." *Communique: Canadian Studies 3* (1977): 72-101.

Hornby, James J. "A Survey of Fiddling in Prince Edward Island." *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1985): 7-10.

---. "The Fiddle on the Island: Fiddling Tradition on Prince Edward Island." M.A. thesis, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1982.

---. "The Great Fiddling Contests of 1926." *The Island Magazine*, no.7 (fall/winter 1979): 25.

Houston, Cecil, and William Smyth. *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links, and Letters*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Ives, Edward. *Drive Dull Care Away: Folksongs from Prince Edward Island*. Charlottetown: Island Studies Press, 1999.

---. *Folksongs of New Brunswick*. Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions, 1989.

Johnson, Sherry. *Bellows & Bows: Historic Recordings of Traditional Fiddle & Accordion Music from Across Canada.* St John's, NL: Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media & Place, 2012.

Johnstone, Roy. Interview with author, October 2016.

Jones, Edward H., Ed. *Jigs, Reels & Hornpipes: Traditional Fiddle Tunes from England, Ireland & Scotland*. London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1992.

Jones, Orlo, and Douglas Fraser. "Those Elusive Immigrants." *The Island Magazine*, no. 16 (Fall/Winter 1984): 36-41.

Kallmann, Helmut. *A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960.

Keegan, Niall. “The Verbal Context of Regional Style in Traditional Irish Music.” In *The Local Accent: Selected Proceedings from BLAS, the Local Accent Conference,* edited by Thérèse Smith and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, 116-122. University of Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, 1997.

Keillor, Elaine. *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity*. Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006.

Kelly, James. “Review: Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddle Playing, Vol. 1 (David Lyth).” In *Ceol: A Journal of Irish Music,* Vol. VI, no. 2 (April 1984): 63-64.

Keough, Willeen. “Ethnicity as Intercultural Dialogue: Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Newfoundland.” *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, vol. 31, no. 1 (Spring 2005): 18-28.

Kinealy, Christine. *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine 1845-52*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 2006.

Kymlicka, Will and Keith Banting. “Immigration, Multiculturalism, and the Welfare State.” *Ethics & International Affairs,* vol. 20, no. 3 (2006): 281-304.

Kymlicka, Will. *Finding Our Way: Rethinking Ethnocultural Relations in Canada*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

---. *Politics in the Vernacular: Nationalism, Multiculturalism and Citizenship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Lawlor, Allison. “Broadcast pioneer brought television to PEI in 1956.” *The Globe and Mail*, last modified March 27, 2017. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/broadcast-%20pioneer-brought-television-to-pei-in-1956/article4212840/.

Levi, Erik, and Floran Scheding, eds. *Music and Displacement: Diasporas, Mobilities, and Dislocations in Europe and Beyond*. Lanham, M.D.: Scarecrow Press, 2010.

Library and Archives Canada. “Canadian Mail Order Catalogues.” Accessed January 10, 2018. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/mailorder/029006-200-e.html.

Library and Archives Canada. “Catalogues.” Accessed January 10, 2018. http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/cmc/009002-110.01-e.php?PHPSESSID=flcsqhmnskjpqh7boijdi7qjqunfb2e5h85h9thgjdea3fopjfb1&q1=fiddle&img13.x=0&img13.y=0.

Lieberman, Julie L. *Alternative Strings: The New Curriculum*. Pompton Plains, New Jersey: Amadeus Press, LLC, 2004.

Lockerby, Earle. *Deportation of the Prince Edward Island Acadians*. Halifax, NS: Nimbus Publications, 2008.

Lyth, David. *Bowing Styles in Irish Fiddling, Vol. 1*. Dublin: Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann, 1982.

MacDonald, Edward. “The Turn of the Tide.” *The Island Magazine*, no. 31 (Spring/Summer 1992): 36-38.

MacDonald, Faber. “Why Play Scottish Fiddle.” *The Island Fiddler,* no. 3 (June 1980): 3-4. http://www.peifiddlers.com/tif8006.pdf.

MacDonald, Ward. Interview with author, October 2016.

Mannion, John J. *Irish Settlements in Eastern Canada: A Study of Cultural Transfer and Adaptation*. Toronto: University of Toronto Department of Geography, 1974.

---. *Peopling of Newfoundland: Essays in Historical Geography*. St John’s: Institute of Social and Economic Research, Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1977.

Massey, Doreen. *For Space*. London: Sage, 2005.

McCaffrey, Lawrence John. *The Irish Diaspora in America*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press. 1976.

McDermott, Hugh, and Ian Macleish. *Allan’s Irish Fiddler*. Glasgow: Mozart Allan, 1933.

McEwan-Fujita, Emily. “Gaelic Revitalization Efforts in Nova Scotia: Reversing Language Shift in the 21st Century.” In *Celts in the Americas*, ed. Michael Newton, 160-186. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2013.

McKay, Ian. “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933-1954.” *Acadiensis* Vol. 21, no. 2 (Spring 1992): pp. 5-47.

McLuhan, Marshall. *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1963.

Miller, Kerby. *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Miller, Kerby, Arnold Schrier, Bruce Boling and David Doyle, eds. *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America, 1675-1815.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Miller, Terry E. *Folk Music in America: A Reference Guide*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1986.

Milne, Peter, ed. *Middleton’s Selection of Strathspeys, Reels & c. for the Violin.* Keith: Charles Middleton & Co., 1870.

Mishler, Craig *The Crooked Stovepipe: Athapaskan Fiddle Music and Square Dancing in Northeast Alaska and Northwest Canada*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

Moisala, Pirkko, and Beverley Diamond, eds. *Music and Gender*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000.

Mokyr, Joel. *Why Ireland Starved: A Quantitative and Analytical History of the Irish Economy, 1800-1850*. Milton Park: Routledge, 1983.

Moran, Gerard. "'From Poverty to Posterity:' Assisted Emigration from Connemara in the 1880s." In *Irish Migrants in New Communities: Seeking the Fair Land?*, edited by Máirtín Ó Catháin and Mícheál Ó hAodha, 93-108. Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014.

Motherway, Susan. "Mediated Music? The Impact of Recording on Irish Traditional Song Performance." In *Ancestral Imprints: Histories of Irish Traditional Music and Dance,* edited by Thérèse Smith, 168-180. Cork: Cork University Press, 2010.

---. *The Globalization of Irish Traditional Song Performance*. New York: Routledge: 2016.

My New Brunswick. "Don Messer's Fiddle." Accessed February 3, 2018. https://mynewbrunswick.ca/don-messers-fiddle/.

Nash, Catherine. *Of Irish Descent: Origin Stories, Genealogy, & the Politics of Belonging*. Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

Nettl, Bruno. *Theory and Method in Ethnomusicology*. New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1964.

Newton, Michael, ed. *Celts in the Americas*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2013.

Ó Catháin, Máirtín, and Mícheál Ó hAodha, eds. *Irish Migrants in New Communities: Seeking the Fair Land?* Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2014.

Ó Cinnéide, Barra. "The *Riverdance* Phenomenon: Crosbhealach and Damhsa." In *Crosbhealach an Cheoil, The Crossroads Conference 1996: Tradition and Change in Irish Traditional Music*, edited by Fintan Vallely, 148-165. Dublin, Ireland: Whinstone Music, 1999.

Ó Gráda, Cormac. *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory.* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999.

O'Grady, Brendan. *Exiles and Islanders: The Irish Settlers of Prince Edward Island.* Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004.

Ó hAllmhuráin, Gearóid. *A Pocket History of Irish Traditional Music*. Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1998.

---. *Flowing Tides: History and Memory in an Irish Soundscape.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2016.

---. "Soundscape of the Wintermen: Irish Traditional Music in Newfoundland Revisited." *The*

Canadian Journal of Irish Studies, vol. 45, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 33-46.

---. "The Green Fields of Canada - Forgotten! A Reappraisal of Irish Traditional Music History in Canada." In *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed,* edited by Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide, 217-41. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017.

---. "The Stranger's Land: Historical Traditions and Postmodern Temptations in the Celtic Soundscapes of North America." In *Celts in the Americas*, edited by Michael Newton, 187-208. Sydney: Cape Breton University Press, 2013.

O'Neill, Francis. *Dance Music of Ireland*. Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1907

---. *Music of Ireland*. Chicago: Lyon & Healy, 1903.

Osborne, Evelyn. "Fiddling with Technology: The Effect of Media on Newfoundland Traditional Musicians." *Newfoundland Studies* vol. 22, no. 1 (2007): 187-204.

Pahn, Michael. "The Fiddle and the Violin are Identical Twins (that Separated at Birth)." *Around the Mall, Scenes and Sightings from the Smithsonian Museums and Beyond*. Last modified 21 September, 2011. http://blogs.smithsonianmag.com/aroundthemall/2011/09/meet-michael-pahn-the-fiddle-and-the-violin-are-identical-twins-that-separated-at-birth/.

Perlman, Ken. *Couldn't Have a Wedding Without a Fiddler.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2015.

---. "Old-Time Fiddling on Prince Edward Island." *Sing Out! The Folk Song Magazine* 39, no. 3 (November 1994-January 1995): 32-40.

---. *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island: Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition*. Pacific, MO: Mel Bay, 1996.

Petrusma, Sarah. "Arco Violin Bowing Technique: How to Play Violin." Last modified September 11, 2014. http://www.learntoplaymusic.com/blog/arco-violin-bowing-technique-play-violin/.

Post, Jennifer. *Ethnomusicology: A Research and Information Guide*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Prince Edward Island Economic Update 2016. "Highlights of the Prince Edward Island. Accessed January 10, 2018.https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/publication/2016-economic-update.

Prince Edward Island Fiddle Camp. Accessed January 18, 2018. http://peifiddlecamp.com.

Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society. Accessed 15 November 2015. http://www.peifiddlers.com.

Reiss, Scott. “Tradition and Imaginary: Irish Traditional Music and the Celtic Phenomenon.” In *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip V. Bohlman, 145-170. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003.

Relph, Edward. “Varieties of Phenomenological Description.” In *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology*, Vol. 25 no. 3, ed. David Seamon (Fall 2014): 55-57. DOI: 10.13140/2.1.1134.0161.

Rice, Timothy. *Ethnomusicology: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.

Robertson, Gill. “Finding Your Fiddling Feet.” *The Strad* vol. 111, issue 1319 (March 2000): 252-256.

Rogers, Barbara Radcliffe, and Stillman Rogers. *Adventure Guide to Canada's Atlantic Provinces: New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Iles-de-la-Madeleine, Labrador*, 3rd ed. Edison, N.J.: Hunter Publishing, 2006.

Rosenberg, Neil. “Don Messer’s Modern Canadian Fiddle Canon.” *Canadian Folk Music Journal*, vol. 22 (1994): 23-35.

---. “Newfoundland Fiddle Recordings: An Annotated Discography.” *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* 19, no. 3 (1985): 4-6.

---. *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993.

“Roy Johnstone, PEI Fiddler.” Accessed January 10, 2018. http://royjohnstone.com.

Royle, Stephen A. “Canada: Islands, Landscapes, and Landmarks.” In *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed,* edited by Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide, 11-26. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017.

Rubin, David C. *Memory in Oral Traditions: The Cognitive Psychology of Epic, Ballads, and Counting-Out Rhymes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Russell, Kelly. *Kelly Russell’s Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Volume 1*. St. John’s: Pigeon Inlet Productions Ltd, 2000.

---. *Kelly Russell’s Collection: The Fiddle Music of Newfoundland & Labrador, Volume 2*. Trinity, NL: Pigeon Inlet Productions Ltd, 2003.

Ryan’s Fancy. Accessed February 6. 2018. http://www.ryansfancy.com.

Saul, John Ralston. *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada.* Toronto: Penguin Canada, 2009.

Sawyers, June Skinner. *Celtic Music: A Complete Guide*. London: Aurum Press, 2000.

Scahill, Adrian. "Riverdance and Irish Traditional Music." In *Music and the Irish Imagination: Like a Language That We Could All Understand,* edited by Thierry Dubost, 43-56. Caen: Presses Universitaires de Caen, 2003.

Seamon, David, ed. *Environmental & Architectural Phenomenology*, Vol. 25 no. 3. Fall 2014. DOI: 10.13140/2.1.1134.0161.

Seeger, Charles. *Studies in Musicology 1935-1975.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Sky, Kathy Larson. "Building Bridges: Challenges in Playing, Performing, and Teaching Irish Music in the American South." In *Crosbhealach an Cheoil, The Crossroads Conference 1996: Tradition and Change in Irish Traditional Music*, edited by Fintan Vallely, 101-120. Dublin, Ireland: Whinstone Music, 1999.

Smith, Graeme. "Celtic Australia: Bush Bands, Irish Music, Folk Music, and the New Nationalism." In *Celtic Modern*, edited by Martin Stokes and Philip Bohlman, 73-92. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003.

Smith, Thérèse, ed. *Ancestral Imprints: Histories of Irish Traditional Music and Dance.* Cork: Cork University Press, 2010.

---. "From the Local to the Global, and Back." In *The Local Accent: Selected Proceedings from BLAS, the Local Accent Conference,* edited by Thérèse Smith and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, 1-8. University of Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, 1997.

Smith, Thérèse, and Mícheál Ó Súilleabháin, eds. *The Local Accent: Selected Proceedings from BLAS, the Local Accent Conference*. University of Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, 1997.

Smyth, Gerry. *Music in Irish Cultural History*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2009.

Spencer, Scott. "Transatlantic Migrations of Irish Music in the Early Recording Age." In *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, edited by David Gleeson, 53-75. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2010.

Statistics Canada. "2011 National Household Survey: Prince Edward Island." Accessed January 10, 2018. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm? Lang-E& Geo1=HR&Code1=1100&Data=Count&SearchText= prince%20edward%20island &SearchType Begins&SearchPR=11&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1.

Statistics Canada. "Census Profile, 2016 Census: Prince Edward Island." Accessed January 10, 2018. http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang =E&Geo1 =HR&Code1=1100&Data=Count&SearchText=prince%20edward%20island&SearchType

=Begins&SearchPR=11&A1=All&B1=All&Custom=&TABID=1.

Statistics Canada. “Population by selected ethnic origins, by province and territory: Prince Edward Island (2006 Census).” Accessed October 14, 2015. http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/demo26c-eng.htm.

Stokes, Martin, and Philip Bohlman, eds. *Celtic Modern: Music at the Global Fringe*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2003.

Stone, Ruth. *Theory for Ethnomusicology*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008.

Story, George M. *Dictionary of Newfoundland English: second edition with supplement*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Straeten, Edmund Van Der. *The Romance of the Fiddle: The Origin of the Modern Virtuoso and the Adventures of His Ancestors*. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1971.

Szeman, Imre, and Timothy Kaposy, eds. *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*. Maldon, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.

The Charlottetown Guardian. “Neil Cheverie will Represent the Island in Fiddling Contest.” April 1, 1926, page 1.

The Charlottetown Guardian. “Program and Address from CFCY.” March 18, 1926, page 6.

Thede, Marion. *The Fiddle Book*. New York: Oak Publishing, 1967.

The Island Fiddler. Quarterly newsletter (March, June, September, December). Prince Edward Island, 1978-present.

The Island Register. “The Descendants of Dennis Hogan.” Accessed December 8, 2017. http://www.islandregister.com/hogan3.html.

The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler. Directed by Ron MacInnis. Cape Breton: CBC, 1971.

Tourism Prince Edward Island. “Visitor’s Guide.” Accessed January 10, 2018. https://www.tourismpei.com/pei-visitors-guide.

Trevor-Roper, Hugh. “The Invention of Tradition: The Highland Tradition of Scotland.” in *The Invention of Tradition,* edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, 15-42. New York: Cambridge Press, 1983.

Trew, Johanne Devlin. *Place, Culture and Community: The Irish Heritage of the Ottawa Valley*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977.

Turino, Thomas. *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.

University of Prince Edward Island. "Island Narratives Program, Original Families." Accessed December 8, 2017. http://vre2.upei.ca/cap/node/672.

Urschel, Katrin. "Chronotopic Memory in Contemporary Irish-Canadian Literature." In *Memory Ireland, Volume 2: Diaspora and Memory Practices,* edited by Oona Frawley, 36-48. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2012.

Vallely, Fintan, ed. *Crosbhealach an Cheoil, The Crossroads Conference 1996: Tradition and Change in Irish Traditional Music*. Dublin, Ireland: Whinstone Music, 1999.

Ward, Conor "Scordatura in the Irish Traditional Fiddle Music of Longford and South Leitrim." In *The Musicology Review: University College Dublin*, no. 8 (2013): 109-129.

Wilson, David. *The Irish in Canada*. Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1989.

---. "Time and Space in the Nationalism of Thomas D'Arcy McGee." In *Landscapes and Landmarks of Canada: Real, Imagined, (Re)viewed,* edited by Maeve Conrick, Munroe Eagles, Jane Koustas and Caitríona Ní Chasaide, 109-122. Waterloo, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2017.

Yarr, Kevin. "Census brings PEI's 150K population goal into question." *CBC Prince Edward Island*. Last modified March 3, 2017. http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/prince-edward-island/pei-census-versus-population-estimate-1.4008361.

Discography

Arsenault, Eddy. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Baglole, Sidney. “Lord MacDonald’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Banks, Jimmy. “Patsy MacDonald’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Bernard, Alvin. “Country Waltz.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Barachois. *Encore!* Wellington, PEI: House part Productions Ltd., 2000. HPP4.

Chaisson, JJ. “Lord MacDonald’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

---. “The Wandering Minstrel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Chaisson, Kenny. “The Wandering Minstrel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Chaisson, Peter. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Cheverie, Fr. Charles. “Maid Behind the Bar.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Chipman, Gary. “The Mason’s Apron.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Coleman, Michael. “Lord MacDonald’s Reel, Ballinasloe Fair.” Columbia, 1927. 33237-F, 78 rpm.

Coyes, Gregory. *How the Fiddle Flows*. Montréal: National Film Board of Canada, 2002.

Doiron, Peter. “Kiley’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Gillespie, Hugh. *Classic Recordings of Irish Traditional Fiddle Music*. Topic Records: 1978. 12T364.

Graham, Glenn. *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition*. Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2006.

Hogan, Courtney. *Firefly*. PEI: Independent, 2009.

---. *Holy Night*. PEI: Independent, 2015.

---. *Swinging on a Note*. PEI: Independent, 2012.

---. *The Red Headed Fiddler*. PEI: Independent, 2005.

Hughes, Emmett. “MacDermott’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Jay, Lem. “Big John MacNeil.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Jay, Roland. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Johnston, Sherry, ed. *Bellows and Bows: Traditional Instrumental Music from Canada.* Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media & Place Archive Series, no. 4. Beverley Diamond, series producer. St. John’s: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 2012.

Johnstone, Roy. *Being Islanders.* PEI: Independent, 2000.

---. *David’s Gift.* PEI: Independent, 2007.

---. *Devil’s Jig.* PEI: Independent, 1998.

---. *Live at Loon*. PEI: Independent, 2010.

---. *Longshore Drift*. PEI: Independent, 2008.

---. *Stark Ravin’*. PEI: Independent, 1995.

---. *Summertime*. PEI: Independent, 2002.

Kearney, Joe. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Kelly, James. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Boston: Kells Music, 1993 & 1995.

Killoran, Paddy. *Paddy Killoran’s Back in Town*. New Jersey: Shanachie, 1977.

MacDonald, Francis. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

MacDonald, Paul. “McDermott’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

MacLean, Danny. “Plaza Polka.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Messer, Don. *Don Messer and His Islanders: On The Air*. Montréal: Apex Records, 1960. 78 rpm.

---. *Down East Dancing with Don Messer and His Islanders*, *vol. 4*. Montréal: Apex Records, 1960. AL-1607, 78 rpm.

---. “Kiley’s Reel.” Halifax: Don Messer’s Jubilee, 1953 live recording.

---. *The Down East Dance Music of Don Messer and His Islanders*. Montréal: Apex Records, 1967. AL-1637, 78 rpm.

Morrison, James. *From Ballymote to Brooklyn*. New Jersey: Shanachie Records, 1977-78.

---. “Irish Girl, Musical Priest, Wellington’s.” YouTube, accessed January 18, 2018. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LG0i3uKp0I0.

---. “The Lark in the Morning/The Wandering Minstrel.” Columbia, March 1926. 33108-F, 78 rpm.

Murphy, Dennis. *Music from Sliabh Luachra*. RTÉ, 1995. CD183.

O’Connor, Attwood. “Lord MacDonald’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Pitre, Dennis. “Paddy on the Turnpike.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Scahill, Fergal. “Sheehan’s Reel, A Tune a Day 2017.” Fergal Scahill Music Facebook Page, accessed December 8, 2017. https://www.facebook.com/FergalScahillMusic/videos/1334314346664897/.

Shand, Jimmy. *Timeless Scottish Dances*. Timeless Music Company, 2013.

Sheehan, Charlie. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Sigsworth, Cosmas. “The Maid Behind the Bar.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Stewart, Archie. “Lord MacDonald’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

The Queens County Fiddlers. *Ages.* PEI: Independent, 2016. QCF-002.

---. *Forty Fiddles Flat Out!* PEI: Independent, 2004. QCF-001.

Toole, Stephen. “Sheehan’s Reel.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Various artists. *Gaelic Roots: Boston College Irish Studies Program*. Boston: Kells Music, 1993 & 1995.

---. *Music in Ireland.* “The Maid Behind the Bar/Gregg’s Pipes.” Independent, 2004.

---. *The Fiddle Music of Prince Edward Island: Celtic and Acadian Tunes in Living Tradition*. Produced by Ken Perlman. Pacific: Mel Bay, 1996. MB95393CD.

---. The Fiddlers of Eastern Prince Edward Island. Cambridge: Rounder, 1997. CD7015.

---. The Fiddlers of Western Prince Edward Island. Cambridge: Rounder, 1997. CD7014.

Vishtèn. *Live*. Independent, 2008.

The Dubliners. *Wild Rover - The Best of the Dubliners*. “Mason’s Apron (Live).” Sanctuary Records, 1998.

Wight, Elliot. “Big John MacNeil.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Wood, Richard. “Mountain Road.” Bowing Down Home, 1990s field recording.

Appendix A

Interview Questions

Section 1 – Origins

1. How did you first get started playing the fiddle?

2. What can you tell me about other family influences?

Section 2 – Development

3. How did you learn your first tunes?
(By ear? With sheet music? From recordings/radio? From a teacher/family?)

4. How did you acquire repertoire?

5. Do you currently teach? If so, what methods do you use?

Section 3 – Tunes

6. Do you practice/learn new tunes continuously?

7. What types of tunes do you mostly play? (Irish, Scottish, Acadian, others)?

8. How do you memorize tunes?

9. Which tunes are your favourites to play? To listen to?

Section 4 – Performance

10. Do you play professionally, and if so, when?

11. Who do you play for? In what context? Do you play often for dancers, or more in a performance setting?

13. Where do you mostly play? In what setting/context?

Section 5 – Influence

14. Which other (older) PEI (or non-Island) fiddlers have influenced you?

15. Where do you see things going now (in general) for fiddle music on PEI?

Appendix B
Interview Transcriptions

Nollaig Bonar – Interviewed, October 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

Kate Bevan-Baker (K): Thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me today.

Nollaig Bonar (N): My pleasure.

K: Could you start off by telling me about how you started playing the fiddle?

N: Well, I was always interested in traditional music and when I was coming to Canada, I had been warned that the winters were long, and I picked up a fiddle in a street market in Glasgow just before I came out to PEI and I brought it with me in the hopes of learning, and then I went to classes at the Queens County Fiddlers once a week.

K: Right, and how old were you when you started to play the fiddle?

N: I would have been 24.

K: Did you have any family musical influences that drew you to the fiddle?

N: No, but there was always a tin whistle or a mouth organ, and a bodhrán. I mean there's all this music around Ireland, and I really enjoyed folk music and going to sessions and stuff.

K: And could you tell mew here exactly where your family roots are in Ireland?

N: I was born and reared in Dublin, to Donegal people. My parents are from Donegal.

K: You moved to PEI when you were 24 and you've been here ever since?

N: Yeah, I moved to Glasgow for a couple of years, then I came out here.

K: When you first started learning fiddle tunes, how did you learn them, was it from recordings, or another way?

N: It would have been a little bit by ear and a little bit by note. The Queens County Fiddlers had big sheets of music that they would give us to learn from. So part of it was by ear, I'm not a very good music reader, but between my ear and the dots on the page, I can figure it out.

K: And when you expanded your repertoire, did you mostly learn tunes on your own by ear, or in a group setting?

N: Probably in a group setting. I became a member of a small group there, we were singing and playing and, probably, we would learn the tunes together by ear, and then use the notes to get it right. To correct your ear - the ear-corrector things.

K: Have you ever taught the fiddle?

N: No, never.

K: In what contexts do you usually play? Professionally, or in sessions?

N: Just sessions now.

K: Great, and do you find there are lots of opportunities for that on Prince Edward Island?

N: Well, the Sunday session that Roy has been doing now for a number of years, probably for 7 or 8 years, that's the main opportunity there for Irish music. Of course, the Island music, and Cape Breton and Scottish music are to be had, for the group playing in the Island Fiddlers' Organization, you know, the Kings County, Queens County and Prince County. They do more of everybody playing the same tune. Well, I suppose we're supposed to be like that ourselves at the

Sunday session too, but it's a wee bit more varied, you know.

K: It's nice though?

N: Yeah, it's lovely.

K: And, are you constantly learning new tunes?

N: I vary, this particular summer yes, because there was a couple here from BC who are originally from the Island, they usually come here for a few weeks in the summer, but this time they were staying for three months, so a number of us got together with them and he runs a session, or he did run sessions out in Vancouver, so a number of us would get together and we'd learn tunes with them, and with one or two other musicians. So I'm learning new tunes that people I know play so I can play with them.

K: And what type of tunes are these, Irish, Scottish, or something else?

N: They're Irish tunes. I mean I can scrap away a bit of Scottish, or whatever but, it's mainly Irish tunes that I learn.

K: Lovely. And, I suppose because you learn tunes mostly by ear, you have no trouble memorizing them. Has that ever been an issue?

N: Well, I can put my own spin on some of them, that's why It think I need the notes, because I think, Ok, well I think this it just going into this on the little lilty bit, and, perhaps, it's not quite right, so I can presume to know a tune, but I really should be going back to make sure that I've got the endings right, or whatever.

K: Do you have any favourite tunes to play or to listen to?

N: Well, just the latest ones I suppose that we're learning. Um, *The Small Hills of Offaly*, and *The*

Curlew in the Bog, I think is the name of it. Those are two tunes that we're learning. And *Spóirt*.

K: Oh, that's a lovely jig.

N: Yeah, yeah.

K: Who brought that to the session?

N: *Spóirt?* I believe it may have been either Blaine, or Helen Conboy.

N: So that's a recent one, that's a Peadar Ó Ríada, right?

K: Yes. Are there any Prince Edward Island fiddlers that influenced your playing?

N: Not really. I didn't really know any. The group we had was just … we were all from away, and no, I didn't know fiddlers on an individual basis.

K: Did you know Kim Vincent?

N: Oh yes, I knew Kim. Of course he was from away too, right.

K: That's true I suppose.

N: He was an everything fiddler, but he was very couched in Irish fiddling. He was a maestro at that.

K: Yeah.

N: I remember one time he was here and my father was here, and Kim and dad had a great mutual respect, and I remember him sitting in this chair here and my father listening, and Kim played the one tune in four different styles. Donegal, and Sligo and Clare, and it was just amazing, the same

tune.

K: Fascinating.

N: So, I would have got a few tunes from Kim. I never learned with him and I never played with hum, but I was in his company a bit and when we'd have musical parties, he would come and play. And he gave me some tunes to learn, he wrote them out for me.

K: Lovely. And my last question is, where do you see things going in general for the fiddling culture on Prince Edward Island? Do you think it's a bright future, are there young people coming through?

N: Well, I'll tell you, it's interesting to look around the Sunday at the Old Triangle, we're mainly old grey-haired people. There aren't a lot of young people at all at all. But Aaron Crane there at the Island Fiddlers' Association, he's teaching a lot of young people so, you even see little ones on Thursday nights at the Scottish, if you can call it the Scottish Session at the Old Triangle. So I don't see young people coming along to the sessions much. No, we're a dying breed that way I think, you know. I don't know if it's a dying breed, but I was talking to …….. Helen is a great dancer and fiddler, and I was talking to her daughter, and she was saying she would love to dance and she can dance, but she says my age group doesn't do that, she says there's nowhere for us to go dance. Nobody's doing the Irish dance right, she said there's no place, and I would love to be able to do that, but it's not happening. She would probably be in her thirties, maybe. And so, I do think that the Island Fiddlers are more sustainable in a way, and they've got a critical mass, they're bringing up the younger people.

K: They would mostly be playing more Scottish and more Old-Time music, not so much Irish?

N: Absolutely. Yes, they have some Irish ones too in the medleys and that, but it's like a drill, a fiddling drill, if I can call it that. They're like a choir in that they all stand up and play together, you know. Which is lovely, but it's interesting that some of them have come to our sessions because they miss having sessions. The Scottish, they don't have sessions. They'd love to be able

to do that, however, there aren't that many Scottish tunes played at our Sunday sessions. And the other thing that's interesting is to see classical players wanting to have more opportunity to play. So they're turning up at sessions, you know.

K: Hmmm, interesting.

N: Yeah, because, you've got to wait for if, if you've got an orchestra thing, you put it on and it's not going to be regular and they want to join in. So Terry was telling me—the guy from BC—we were talking about what helps and hinders the sessions. Oh no, it was somebody from Kingston who was saying, when you get the classically trained people in who are saying: "OK now, let's stop this and just start "one, two three…," so that was one of the things that made it more difficult for the casual session player.

K: Right, of course.

N: I don't know how we can drum up some younger people. I mean even the BIS [Benevolent Irish Society], just look at the sessions that are going on, they're mainly the Island and Scottish at the BIS you know, this past year. But anyway, time will tell. People still come in to enjoy it on Sunday afternoons, so that's good. But I don't know what the future [holds]. Fiddlers like, well, Roy is very versatile, but I mean it's hard work to make a living at something like that.

K: Well, thank you very much for chatting with me.

N: You're very welcome. Listen, all the best in your studies.

K: Thank you, I really appreciate you taking the time to talk with me.

Luka Hall - Interviewed, October 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

Kate Bevan-Baker (K): Hi Luka, how are you?

Luka Hall (L): Good, you?

K: Good. My name's Kate and I'm also a fiddle player, and I saw you play this past summer and I really really loved your playing.

L: Thank you.

K: I'm just wondering if you could tell me how old you are, when you started playing fiddle, and how long has it been?

L: I'm ten. I started playing when I was six, and, six-and-a-half I'm pretty sure, and I've been playing the fiddle for four years.

K: Are you taking only fiddle lessons, or do you take classical violin, or anything else?

L: No, I just take fiddle lessons.

K: Just fiddle. And Aaron Crane is your teacher?

L: Yeah.

K: Cool, and do you like him?

L: Yeah.

K: Yeah, he's great. Does anyone else in your family play fiddle?

L: No.

K: What made you choose the fiddle?

L: Well, at first, I wanted to play the guitar, but Tammy MacEachern, she said it would be too big for you, so she just said: “Try the fiddle,” so I tried it and I liked it.

K: That’s great. Were you born on PEI?

L: No.

K: Where are you from?

L: I was born in Columbia.

K: And so where are your parents from?

L: My mom’s from Summerside, and I think my dad’s from here, yeah.

K: Interesting. And do you know if you have any family in Ireland, or Scotland?

L: No, well, I do have family in Columbia, and I think my aunt lives in New York.

K: So when you first started taking fiddle lessons, did your teacher teach you by ear, from recordings, or did they teach you to read music from the sheet?

L: He first started off with like notes and the fingerings, and he recorded some after my lesson, so I kept up with that.

K: And so you’re able to read music?

L: Yeah, now I am.

K: And when you're learning new tunes, is it mostly from learning music, or do you learn from recordings?

L: I don't. I started recording. Then I just stopped doing that. I thought it was boring so, I did it by ear, no, not ear, I looked at the notes and diddle dally.

K: And then, you memorize it after you practice it from the notes?

L: Yeah.

K: Nice. Could you tell me about the places you usually play? Do you do concerts, or, you do lots of busking?

L: I busk at the Guild, and, sometimes, I play fiddle inside, if it's raining or something, and sometimes, I do gigs at the Confederation Centre.

K: Have you played for any dances or sessions?

L: Well I'll do the Old Triangle, starting in a year.

K: Great, and is that on Thursdays?

L: Yeah.

K: Cool, and do you like that? Or you're going to start?

L: I'm going to start. Well, I already started last year, but I just didn't have time for now.

K: You sound like a busy boy. Do you know what kind of tunes you mostly play? Are they

Scottish tunes, or Irish tunes?

L: Um, some could be. I do Irish mostly, yeah.

K: And do you have a favourite tune to play these days, or something that you love to listen to?

L: Yeah, I love … my favourite tune is *MacArthur's Road*.

K: That's a great one.

L: Yeah, I think it's cool, but me and Aaron are working on a tune together that me and him wrote.

K: That's great. So, you write your own music?

L: Yeah.

K: Have you written a lot of tunes?

L: No, I just wrote one tune now.

K: That's fun, so you'll probably write more in the future?

L: Yeah, exactly.

K: Awesome. Are there other fiddlers on PEI that influence, or inspire you? I guess Aaron does.

L: Yeah, Aaron, and Cynthia MacLeod, and Richard Wood. Oh, and Natalie MacMaster.

K: She's awesome.

L: Yeah.

K: And, do you think that there are lots of people learning to play the fiddle on PEI, or do you think that less and less people are playing? Do you have lots of friends who play?

L: My friend does play the fiddle. And I think a little bit of people, they might learn fiddle, yeah, on PEI.

K: So you think there's a good future for fiddle playing on PEI?

L: Yeah.

K: Yeah, lots of good teachers and places to play?

L: Yeah.

K: That's good to hear. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me, I really appreciate it.

L: Thank you.

K: Good luck with all the gigs and your lessons!

L: Thank you, bye.

Courtney Hogan - Interviewed, October 2016, Cornwall, PEI

Kate Bevan-Baker (K): Hi Courtney, thank you so much for taking the time to chat with me today.

Courtney Hogan (C): Oh, no problem at all.

K: How are you doing?

C: Pretty good, yeah, things are going really well. How about you?

K: Yeah, it's good, it's busy, but it's great.

C: Yeah. That's good.

K: Ok, do you just want to dive right in?

C: Sure.

K: So, my first question is, I just want to know how you just got started playing the fiddle, and how old you were when you first started playing?

C: Well, my great-grandfather was a fiddler. He was one of the members that started the PEI Fiddler's.

K: Yeah?

C: So, I always grew up with fiddle music, and he always kind of wanted for me to learn it, and so, I actually started classical first. I was ten years old when I started violin lessons, and then probably at the age of thirteen, I kind of started learning some fiddle music. And I took some lessons from Cynthia MacLeod just learning different fiddle tunes, but I kind of grew up learning

the tunes that my great-grandfather played.

K: Great, and were there any other family influences besides your great-grandfather? Any other fiddlers?

C: He was really the only fiddler in the family, I mean, his two daughters, my grandmother and my great-aunt, they learned violin as well growing up. But not really the fiddle tunes. They did classical more so. It was just mostly my great-grandfather that was into the fiddle music.

K: And do you have family roots in Ireland, or Scotland?

C: So, "Hogan," that name, it does come from Ireland. But the music side, isn't from the Hogan side, it's more the, I guess I would say the Gay side, which I think is English. So I don't really know a whole lot about the ancestry there.

K: That's fine. When you learned your first fiddle tunes, did you learn them from sheet music, by ear, or from recordings?

C: I mostly learned tunes from reading by note. I would read them and then memorize them.

K: And when you acquired your repertoire and kept learning more tunes, was it always from sheet music?

C: Most were from sheet music, then I started to do a little bit by ear. So I would probably say 75-80% would be by note, and the others, 20-25% would be by ear.

K: Where are you finding these written pieces?

C: My great-grandfather has binders upon binders of all music that he either wrote out, or just some other tunes that he gathered throughout the years. A lot of it is music that the PEI fiddlers played, and then a bunch from the Queens County Fiddlers, and then I just have a lot of things

like Don Messer books, things like that. And then, later on, I picked up some Jerry Holland books. I was starting to learn more tunes from Cape Breton style a little bit later on.

K: Do you teach any fiddle students?

C: I used to, probably about ten years ago, I did teach for probably three to four years. I started off teaching at National Music, and then I did it in my own home privately for about three or four years.

K: And would you give your students sheet music as well, like how you learned?

C: I did, but there were some that wanted to learn by ear as well, so I would just play a couple of bars and then get them to repeat it, but a lot of the time, it was sheet music and I taught them how to read.

K: Perfect. I know you perform a lot professionally, could you just tell me bit about the different contexts and settings where you mostly play?

C: So currently, I do my own céilís. I do that once a week in the summertime. So, it's myself and I usually get two other guests to join me. I have different guests every week to make it a little bit different. So, we play kind of the old-time traditional, like Don Messer tunes, as well as stuff that you would hear, like Cape Breton style, and then I have singers and guitar players, and a lot of the time, I do play with Fiddlers' Sons, so that's a PEI folk-traditional group, and they write a lot of their own songs and stuff.

K: Anywhere else you play besides céilís?

C: Yeah, that's mostly it. I do my own once a week, but then I play with other groups around as well. But, it's kind of the same sort of setting really.

K: Are you always learning new tunes, or do you go through phases where you have enough

repertoire that you just stick to the same old ones?

C: I'm still learning tunes, and probably a little more. I'm starting to learn a little bit more by ear. A friend of mine gave me some old Scotty Fitzgerald records, so I'm listening to those, and I'm good friends with Richard Wood, so he's always sending me tunes that he's learned, or that he's writing, and I'm trying to learn them as well.

K: You've touched on this, but what types of tunes do you mostly play? I know you've mentioned Old-Time and Cape Breton, but do you play any others?

C: Mostly that. I mean, so those would be like the waltzes, jigs, and reels and hornpipes, and a couple of rags here and there, but it's mostly that. I guess I stick to that type of genre.

K: Do you have a favourite tune to play, or to listen to?

C: I kind of like a variety. Well, I guess I should say a favourite. I love airs, like airs and laments. More of the slow side of things is probably my favourite, I would say.

K: Just my last couple of questions. Do you have any PEI, or other fiddlers who have influenced you greatly?

C: I would probably say that when I was growing up, it would have been a lot of PEI … a lot from my great-grandfather, and Cynthia McLeod was a huge influence. And then, of course, listening to the Don Messer tunes and the Scotty Fitzgerald and Ned Landry. Those were influences as well. And then, listening to fiddlers in Cape Breton, like Natalie MacMaster and Jerry Holland was a favourite as well. And the Leahy group as well from Ontario. But mostly, I would say Maritime [styles] is where I was mostly influenced.

K: And my last one is pretty open ended, but where do you see things going for the future of fiddling on PEI? Do you see lots of young people taking it up?

C: Actually I do. I think it's really good because, one of my good friends, Sheila McKenzie, she had started this organization that gets younger people involved, especially like going to shows. I mean, I put on these céilís and the majority of people who come are seniors, but we're seeing young families coming out and bringing their kids, and we're having afternoon shows, so that kids can come. And we're seeing some shows that have little square dancing sets, so that young people can get involved, and Aaron Crane is a local fiddle teacher and he's got a lot of kids coming up that are great fiddlers, and he'll put on little shows that they'll perform at. So I actually think it's looking pretty good, so that's exciting. Hopefully it will continue.

K: Do you ever go to sessions and play with other people for fun?

C: We do. We have the sessions at the Old Triangle every Thursday night. I've gone to a couple of them, but every Thursday night they have sessions where anyone can just go and bring their instruments. There's fiddles and guitars and pipes and keyboards, and everyone just jams together, as well as, every so often, we have a little music party where everyone comes over and we'll jam and things like that. Or during Christmas time and over the holidays, a couple of times a year for sure. There's a group of us that get together and just play together.

K: Well, that's great. Thanks so much for chatting.

C: Oh, you're welcome, I hope it was helpful.

K: Have a great rest of the week Courtney. Thanks so much.

C: I will, you too. Bye.

Roy Johnstone - Interviewed, October 2016, Argyle Shore, PEI

Kate Bevan-Baker (K): Do you mind telling me a little bit about how you got started, and if there were family influences, or, why the fiddle?

Roy Johnstone (R): Well, I started when I was seven, and my mother just asked me if I wanted to take violin, and I said: "Yeah, I think I would." And it was the Canadian Institute of Music. I was living in Winnipeg at the time.

K: Interesting.

R: They had offered some courses, so I started when I was seven taking classical violin. I still have my book; I can show it to you.

K: Was it, like, Suzuki method?

R: No, well, the book itself is. There isn't really a method. It's just all the tunes. This is my scrapbook [laughs] of tunes.

K: Classical? Oh, not classical at all.

R: Well, it's all kind of folky, you know, but it's just tunes. And I have a picture. I don't know if I still have it. I have a picture somewhere of me playing with this orchestra of kids, you know, when I was seven.

K: Oh nice, *Last Rose of Summer*.

R: It was a mixture. I don't even know if they still exist, the Canadian Institute of Music. Eventually, I took lessons with them for a year or two, and then, there was a guy teaching on my street, Mr. Lord. He had heard that I was taking violin, and he offered me lessons for free, if I would play in his symphony, the St. James Symphony. And so I started taking lessons with him,

which was through the Royal Conservatory of Music.

K: Interesting.

R: They did the psalms every year, that sort of stuff. So I did that for about seven years altogether. Then, I decided I'd rather play guitar, and quit [laughs].

K: Ok.

R: Yeah. And it wasn't until I finished university that I met a bunch of my friends, who were doing folk music in Winnipeg, and they said, "Oh! It would be really cool to have fiddle," and I said, "I've got a fiddle in my closet!"

K: Dig it out!

R: So I started and, actually, the first fiddle music that I started doing was with a guy [called], Christian Chevault from France, [who was] living in Winnipeg.

K: Really.

R: And started learning a bunch of his French tunes and French songs.

K: Interesting.

R: We played at the Winnipeg Folk Festival. So that was my beginning and then, eventually, I moved to PEI.

K: Did your parents play? Were they musical?

R: No. My mother played a bit of piano, but just very little.

K: Are you an only child?

R: No, my brother played piano. My sister didn't play. She had moved out before I was that age. She was quite a bit older than me. No, there wasn't a real musical influence. My neighbour, Mrs. Hughes played piano and I used to go over and play with her. But it was all kinds of music from the popular sort of classical, or popular music, you know, not fiddle music.

K: So you were always reading parts for this kind of stuff?

R: Yeah. I guess some of the first fiddle music that I heard in Manitoba would have been the Métis fiddlers. Andy de Jarlis.

K: Really.

R: Yeah. I learned some of his tunes. And I also learned a lot of popular American tunes that people seemed to ask for: *Turkey in the Straw*, or, you know, *Irish Washerwoman,* or whatever, that kind of stuff. So that was part of the repertoire I learned. And it was all from books.

K: From books?

R: Yeah. Well, all from written [material].

K: And Andy de Jarlis, did he have published, written stuff?

R: Yeah, he had stuff published, yeah. I still have some of his books here, one or two of them.

K: But you must have listened to recordings of that too?

R: A little bit but not that much, no. It was almost, "We're going to play this tune and we could go with that one." I mean Christian, the guy from France, he taught us everything, he wrote it all out actually, most of it.

K: What about ornaments? Did you just do it, feel it out on your own?

R: Yeah, the ornamentation was pretty basic, like grace notes. It wasn't anything too elaborate. It wasn't until I really started doing Irish music, and moved here to do Scottish, or Cape Breton music that the ornamentation became more complex.

K: So you acquired your repertoire from the people you played with? Did you have a growing interest?

R: Yeah, there was some, I can't remember now. There was one group, Barde, they were from Montréal, and I think one of the guys moved to Winnipeg, and I did learn a couple of tunes of theirs from their recordings. And that was probably some of the first stuff that I started to learn by ear.

K: Really.

R: And the other stuff was playing with people, and they'd say: "This is how I play this tune," and I'd try to pick it up that way.

K: Interesting.

R: But most of the early tunes I learned were from written music

K: Was it a challenge switching to learning by ear?

R: Oh yeah. It was quite a challenge. It still is, ha.

K: So you prefer learning with [written] music?

R: No, I don't because I realized after that if you learn a tune by ear, the chances are much better

you can remember it. You know, in fact, your memory is much better. But sometimes, if you don't have time and it's a complex tune, it's easier to learn from the music.

K: Have you ever taught fiddling to private students?

R: Yeah, I still teach now, just a small group. But I've done a lot of workshops. And I've taken a lot of workshops. And I like it when people teach by ear, it's a much better approach.

K: That's what you generally do?

R: I generally teach by ear and, if people really want to have the music, I give it to them at the end of the workshop, that kind of thing.

K: Do you like teaching in group settings as well?

R: Yeah, both. Usually, when we're touring in New England, I used to do three or four workshops in different places, combined with a concert. I would do a workshop with maybe a dozen people or so. And I've taken quite a few workshops with different players. So I've incorporated different elements of what I liked from each of them. I don't like to necessarily focus on tunes, like some players. I find the Cape Bretoners, they just play the tune over and over, and you're supposed to play exactly like them. Which is ok, but I like to focus on what each person is trying to express, you know, and their own abilities. Because to me, it's about finding your own voice on the instrument. Just to be able to mimic somebody else, that's ok to start with, but, to me, you want to be able to move beyond that and not play the tune exactly like somebody else. And, I mean, many times people can't do that. They don't have that. They don't have the neurological structure to do it, or they don't have the physical capacity to play the same way. So I find that you're trying to do this, but, you know, maybe it's better if you do it this way. Try to find your own way to do it. For me, it's more about expression and … finding your own voice on the instrument. When you play the instrument, I find you go inside the instrument, or there's some kind of marriage with the instrument, and, I like to do just a lot of improvising. Make stuff up, just play, enjoy. And, the dexterity and the neurological control, and all the physical stuff, all

comes along with that. Like getting bow control because the bow is such a major part of the sound you produce, you know, getting really comfortable with, being able to manipulate the bow in a lot of different ways and you can create more sounds. It's just all getting into the mystery, of the sound. It's like a mantra, in a way, you try to get inside that, and then you see where it goes. You might just do a rhythmic bouncing on the bow, you know, and then try a simple little chord pattern dealing with the left hand, and then, if there's more than one person, you could say: "OK, you keep going there; now you go, what are you going to do to that?" Well, you could do syncopation, or you could do this, or that.

K: Fascinating.

R: Elements like that. So they can start to hear the patterns, and start to develop their ears too, just listening. And, of course, you go through all the elements like, slip jigs 9/8, or slides are 12/8. Can you hear that, can you count it? Can you do it on your instrument; you know, stuff like that. So they start by being able to hear the time signatures and the tunes they're listening to. But in the beginning, I was a novice too. When you came up from books, trying to learn by ear, it was very slow. I'm still not super fast. I'm getting better, and the more you do it, the easier it gets. But I still meet people who just cannot do it. They can't seem to get off the page. There's this kind of fear, you know. But once you do it, it's so liberating.

K: That's the way it was for hundreds of years.

R: Well, exactly. There's still this idea, I think, somewhat in the Cape Breton and the Scottish community here that there's only one right way to play the tune, and that's just foolishness. I mean those old guys never played [the same]. One fiddler played the same tune. He wouldn't play identical to the other one, you know. And that was never the way. They'd hear a tune on the radio, and they'd get three quarters of the tune and the rest they'd make up. Look at Émile Benoît, I mean he borrowed stuff from everywhere. And then he added his own things.

K: And it's published that way!

R: Yeah, exactly. What's wrong with that? I mean if you're aware of where it came from, that's fine. If you're not, it's fine. It's fine too, you know. But the idea that you have to play something exactly the way somebody else does, I think it's never been that way, and they're just misreading or misinterpreting the stuff you know. So anyways, it's neither here nor there. There are so many really good fiddle players now, and most of them are learning by ear. I've done so many Irish workshops, and different workshops with André Brunet and the guys from Québec, and with people over in Ireland. And it's all done by ear. And the young kids are amazing. They just hear it and get it. They go: "Oh yeah…" and they have it.

K: They soak it up.

R: It's like building that neurological structure, an oral structure, you know. You hear that stuff and it translates right into your fingers. And I do that now with some of my students. First of all, you've got to be able to hear it in your head, and then you start to imagine what fingers are you playing, and you don't even touch your instrument, you just slowly do fingering. And then, play it and see if that works. [In the process], you're building that structure, that connection, muscular or neuromuscular thing, and it's just going to happen. There seems to be a lot of research there. If you do that without even playing the instrument, you're still making those same connections.

K: Fascinating.

R: There is so much new research in terms of music and the brain, like Daniel Levitin's book, (*This is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*, New York: Dutton-Penguin, 2007), and all that kind of stuff. It's endless, and it's pretty amazing.

K: Are you still learning a lot of new tunes?

R: Yeah, I go through phases. Like right now, I'm working on this symphony thing, so I'm not doing much new stuff.

K: Are you a fiddler with the symphony?

R: No I'm not. I'm playing with them this fall.

K: In the violin section?

R: Well no, I'm the soloist. And it's a composition that I'm working on.

K: It is jazz?

R: No, it's all traditional. It's supposed to be music that would possibly have been heard in 1864.

K: This was your project?

R: And it's some original material, and some traditional material, and material that comes from the Mi'kmaq. And I'm working with an orchestrator, and, of course, learning the software and learning the arrangements.

K: So you are doing the arrangements?

R: Well, yeah. I'm doing melody basically, chord charts, harmonies, and then instrumentation, and I'm working with Dr. Rick Covey at UPEI. He's a composition instructor. He's been really helpful. So I have an idea and, I think: "Ok, timpani here, what do you think?" So he just can put it in and we can go: "Yeah. That sounds nice, but we gotta change the rhythm in this and that, you know." But it's been fun, but challenging. And for a while I thought: "What am I doing?" But anyway, it's almost finished. It's going to be twenty-two minutes long. Sixty pages!

K: Sixty pages for you?

R: Well, the whole score is sixty pages. It's like, you know … I'm going to try to memorize it all.

K: And it's going to be recorded?

R: Yeah, it's going to be recorded. And so, I haven't been learning too many new tunes. I've learned a few.

K: Last winter you were in Ireland. Did you just try to learn as many as you could, or listen…?

R: Well I, I took workshops, I went to the Frankie Kennedy Festival. I took workshops there with Peter Murphy I think his name is. He's a young fiddler from Donegal. He's a cousin of Máiréad [Ní Mhaonaigh], from *Altan*. I think he's a cousin. He couldn't remember any of the names of the tunes, but he taught us a bunch. And I learned, probably, ten tunes in two or three days.

K: That's a lot.

R: But it's kind of the thing of where, if I don't keep playing them and I've been teaching them to the session group, if I don't keep playing them, they'll fade away. But they'll still sort of be there. If I hadn't learned something from the music, I probably wouldn't have a clue, but if somebody plays the tune, it's: "Oh yeah. I remember that!" Like, I haven't heard it for a while but I know it goes dah dah dah… I can get it back pretty quick, you know.

K: Right.

R: And so, learning other stuff, it goes into muscle memory. You don't even think about it. It just happens. But that's ok for some things because your brain can only do certain things at once. I think that even the top classical players say that for certain things, they just use muscle memory. They might say: "I'm not going through that passage because it's so complex." So, it is handy, but I think you still want to have the musical, aural thing going on, by listening and directing. In fact, a lot of the stuff that I learned from books, I'm revisiting, and I'm going: "Well, instead of playing a cut here, I'm going to play a roll, or instead of a grace note…" So, you have to unlearn it and then go back and rework it. So, it's a slow process.

K: Do you vary it?

R: Yeah, I try, and I'm trying to be more conscious. You know, I can do a cut twice here, or I can sustain this note, and do this variation. And so you build a repertoire of variations that you can use.

K: I know you play a lot of different styles. The session, is it limited to Irish, because it's at an Irish pub…?

R: No, we play whatever. And it depends [on] who comes, because sometimes quite a few of the Acadian players will come. Karine Gallant comes sometimes and Iain MacInnes. Chris Corrigate came the other day, sang a few songs, played a bunch of old rock fiddle stuff that we used to play together because I used to play with Chris years and years ago. So, it's kind of like that, you know, depending on who shows up. There's a harp player who has been coming recently, so we're playing a lot of O'Carolan stuff, just because she knows it and it sounds nice.

K: Indeed.

R: And then, if Cynthia is there, we play more Cape Breton, Scottish stuff. If Ward comes, it varies. And then, there was a guy last week, I think he was from Toronto and knew quite a bit of Irish stuff, and so we played that. So, it's open.

K: Do you have a favourite type of tune?

R: No, no, I don't.

K: And when did the jazz come?

R: Uh, I guess I started, I don't know, I started playing bluesy stuff with my folk friends. This is back in the 70s. In fact, I was teaching music in the school, at the alternative school. So, we would get singers, blues singers who were going through town, and the students would invite them to come and do a little presentation. And I started to learn how to improvise and to play

blues. But there wasn't very much jazz, it was more blues 12-bar, 16-bar stuff. Just very simple. And then, I met Doug Riley, and I met other players, and I started doing more jazz stuff. You know, I don't consider myself a jazz player, but I love some of those pieces. I love the aspect of improvising. And I think the violin's neat, you know, and there are so many players: Stuff Smith, Grappelli, Joe Venuti that just inspire you, you know. You go: "Wow," and it's very cool stuff.

K: And improvising is really Irish friendly. A lot of Irish fiddlers will just go crazy on a tune.

R: Yeah, yeah.

K: When you started playing professionally, was there a particular moment when that happened? Do you remember when you started playing for money? Did it change the way you play, or the way you thought about music?

R: Well, I guess my first professional gig would have been the Winnipeg Folk Festival with Christian, this French guy, and we were doing songs and some fiddle tunes from France, and we got paid, and I thought: "Oh, this is pretty cool!" But it wasn't, probably, I met Lenny Gallant at a coffee house, when I first moved to the Island in 1978. And I sat in with him. He was at UPEI. And he said, "Well, do you want to play together?" So we started *Lenny and Roy* as a duo.

K: Cool.

R: And still, he was writing songs, and we were doing a collection of fiddle stuff, it would have been a real mixed bag of tunes that I knew. And then, it just kind of went from there. I met other players. I joined the PEI Fiddlers, I was learning Scottish and PEI fiddling tunes from those guys. I met Kim Vincent, and Kevin Capasey, and those guys were just fanatic. Irish, you know. They would spend twelve hours a day transcribing tunes and playing in Kevin's little cabin on the Dixon Road. They were literally living on chocolate bars, and smoking, taking dope, and it was like an intensive camp. So, I'd go over there and hang out and pick up what I could. That was the introduction to Irish music.

K: And playing professionally?

R: Well, it was funny because I was always doing other things. I think it was about 1991, I was studying naturopathic medicine in Toronto. I had done my pre-med, which took like two or three years to get bio-chem and all that crap. Then, I did the two years in courses and I did really well, but I thought: "I just can't see myself sitting, practicing as a doctor." And I had this dream. This isn't what you're going to do, you know. You should be doing music! If you're going to be doing any kind of thing as a healing process for yourself, and for other people, it should be music! I had this dream, and I thought, yeah, that's right! So I went to the semester start-up of the year, and I told all my friends. I'd been with them through this really intense program for two years, and I said: "You know, I'm gonna do music," and they all said: "Well that's really good!" So, that's when I decided I was gonna just do music. And that's pretty much it since then.

K: And you must still play a lot, just for the sake of playing, for pleasure?

R: Yeah, at parties, and I'm not learning stuff, you know. It's still a big part of it. And every once and awhile, you have to go back and not lose the mystery, and not lose the love of playing. Even with this symphony thing, I was getting a bit stressed, I was going: "Can I do this? It's going to be so complicated!" You just have to trust that the process is going to evolve, you know, and stay in it. And then realize that, oh yeah, there's no need to be anxious, or fearful about this, you just keep working at it and something will come up. But sometimes, even the business end of things, like I used to do more promotion for shows, and you gotta send out the bios, and do the photos, and all that kind of stuff. You know, hustling gigs. And it's a little hard in the head. I don't mind doing a little bit of it, but after a while you're going: "I'd rather just get back to the playing and enjoyment and stuff." But you still have to pay the bills somehow.

K: Do you play for dancers often? What kind of contexts are you playing in?

R: There's usually an Irish set dancing group every Sunday at the session. And, probably, once or twice a year, they have a group that comes from Halifax and there's a big Irish dance. Do we make up sets and work it out? Yeah. I love playing for dancing.

K: And your most common performance venue is?

R: Well, for me. It's quite a variety. I did more theatre stuff in the last couple years. I did the McKenzie Theatre Show. It was more country, alternative country music, and I was fiddling, [playing] mandolin, plus a bit of backup, and everybody said: "Hey, you did really good!" and I thought: "Oh, Ok." And this show, *The Master's Wife*, so yeah. A combination of that has been good. And I think it's partly because I came from a classical background, so I can get a nice tone on the instrument. Some fiddle players can play great, but their tone sometimes … and for songs you have to be able to do a different thing. You have to go in the background and not compete with the voice. And for, you know, like working with David Weale, I worked with David with stories. It was a lot of chordal accompaniment, and just little lines, phrases, that kind of stuff. You get comfortable playing that, and I enjoyed the theatre stuff. I wouldn't say it's my calling, but I do enjoy it. I'd still rather be in a group with four or five players playing fiddle. But it's hard though to sustain a group of four of five. Just…financial logistics and everybody's time frame. Yeah, venues. It's really mixed. I mean the symphony … I see the symphony in some ways as a kind of ending the circle. I started there. I played in the symphony when I was eleven or twelve years old, and I played there for two or three years. And now, here's the symphony asking me to come back again and play. So I thought, it kind of makes sense, but it's been a challenge. A good challenge. I like to have little challenges; it keeps me motivated.

K: How do you memorize a tune?

R: If I'm thinking about learning stuff, I play it in the car when I'm driving. So if I'm thinking about learning some Tommy Peoples' tunes, I grab a CD and, maybe there will be two or three, or I might even burn a special CD with 3 or 4 of Tommy Peoples' tunes on it. I play it in the car, and let it seep in and then I decide: "Oh, this is the one I want to learn," or these two, or whatever. And then I listen to the tune phrase by phrase, you know, a couple bars at a time.

K: Do you slow it down on a computer?

R: Sometimes, yeah. Especially for the jazz stuff. I found there were so many notes in a lot of that stuff. Slow Downer was fantastic, or Audacity was what I used until I got Slow Downer. And I even have, I think it's called Guitar Trainer CD player. I got this about ten year ago, but it does the same thing, you can just put an in-and-out point on a CD and slow it down. Or change the key or whatever. Yeah, handy.

K: So, once you really know a tune, are you not really thinking about it anymore?

R: No, no.

K: And if you learn from the page, the same thing? You just have to memorize it?

R: Yeah, sometimes I find that if I memorize it from the page, I don't hear the tune in my head as easily, you know, and it's harder to do variations, if it's from the page. Whereas if I've learned the tune aurally, you can go to this, or that little phrase, "dah dah dee dah dah," I'm going to do "dah dah dah dee duh", or something, just a variation, you know, because it's coming mainly from the aural part of your brain rather than the muscle memory. With the muscle memory, once it's in there, if you want to change it, you really have to think about it, take it back, and go: "No I'm going to play this this way," and re-pattern it … not do the old pattern. And it's funny too, because my brain still works a little bit where, if tunes are very similar, I can get crossed over. If you asked me to play a certain tune, I could play it right now. But then if you ask me to play a tune very similar, and then try to play that one after, I wouldn't be able to hear it! And I'd go: "Why is that?" It's like the second tune has just moved in and displaced the other stuff. I think if you do this when you're young, though, the chances of that happening would be much less. It's like those neuro-circuits in my head are just not as clear as somebody who is younger. The other thing to do that is good for teaching, is that people should sing. You know, I never sang when I was a kid, and I did that show, and Lennie said, "That's the first time I ever heard you sing!" I really wish I had sung before. It's just part of that [learning] process, you know.

K: So you said there are lots of young fiddlers today on PEI. Is the future of PEI fiddling bright?

R: Oh, it's phenomenal. It's amazing, yeah. You know I just hope they find their own expression, and seek it out and find where it goes. I love what Ten Strings and Goat(Skin) are doing and I don't know if it's our influence, but they come to the sessions. And like, Rob, Drew and I, we all play, we play Klezmer music, we might play some gypsy stuff, you know. A variety of different things. And they're just there listening and they're playing along, and the next thing you know, they're going: "Hey Roy, did you hear this tune? We learned this amazing gypsy tune or Klezmer tune!" And they're doing their Acadian stuff, they're doing their Acadian singing but they're also doing a bunch of really interesting Middle-Eastern or Klezmer stuff, and I think musically it just opens you up. I don't know, if people want to hear *St. Anne's Reel*, they're always going to want to hear *St. Anne's Reel*, but there's so much more. And I think people should compose their own music and come out of this place. It'll reflect this place, if they do that.

K: That's it, that's my last question. Thank you so much.

R: You're welcome. I probably rambled on about a lot of stuff, but…

K: No, it's fine. It's great.

Ward MacDonald - Interviewed, October 2016, Charlottetown, PEI

Kate Bevan-Baker (K): When you first started playing, how did you first get started? Any family influences? Why the fiddle?

Ward MacDonald (W): Yeah, my dad plays, and my grandfathers played.

K: Only men in your family?

W: Well, my aunt Bonnie plays some fiddle. She'll play a whole bunch of fiddle, but she's a guitar player and piano player mostly. And she used to sing lots.

K: So did you consciously say: "I want to play fiddle," or because you saw it, or did they give it to you?

W: It kind of happened on a whim, because I was around it all the time, and I don't really know why I started. I always felt like I probably would, and, I don't know, do you remember Eugene and Gerard Murphy who used to run…? Oh yeah, you grew up on the other end. So, in Montague, there used to be the grocery store before Sobey's took over. It was called Clark's and it was owned by Gerard and Eugene Murphy, brothers, and I used to walk in there with mom when I was a kid, like four, five, six…or probably older than that. I'd walk in every week with mom for groceries and he'd say: "How are you young fellow, are you playing the fiddle yet?" and I'd say, "Nope," and he might have been programming me, I'm not sure. But the first time I took a lesson, when we walked into that store the next time and he says: "Are you playing the fiddle yet?" I was some proud to say: "Yep!" But I don't know, maybe, he just programmed me.

K: And how old were you when you started?

W: Eleven when I started. Yeah, it was kind of on a whim. I was backstage and my dad looked me, and he asked Paul MacDonald if he was teaching and he said yes, and then, he turned to me and asked if I wanted to take lessons, and I said yes. I had learned a couple of tunes on my own

before that, but …

K: That was my next question. Do you remember learning your first tune? How did you learn it?

W: By ear. Actually, it took me years to realize exactly how I'd learned it. I learned it when my dad learned it, but I didn't play the fiddle for five years after. I didn't start playing the fiddle until after. It was a tune that a group of fiddlers were playing, and he recorded the practice and then took it home, or he borrowed the tape from somebody, and he came home and he learned it from the tape, and re-wound the tape, and re-wound the tape, and I had the tune when he had the tune, but I didn't even play yet. I was twenty-five before I realized that and I was like: "Wait a second!" Hearing someone learning in the house is a whole other dimension to just having someone playing in the house, you know? It's this tune … [Proceeds to play *Lord Lovat's Lament*]

I don't know if I played it quite that way when I started, but… [laughs, then tunes his fiddle].

K: That's a bright fiddle.

W: It's very bright. It goes through phases.

K: It changes with the weather?

W: It changes with the hour some days.

K: How did you acquire your repertoire? Did you learn everything by ear?

W: I went back and forth. When I first started, I learned mostly by ear, and I took two years of lessons where the teacher wrote out notation instead of teaching us to read, which I just thought she'd taught us to read. It didn't really help. It just slowed the learning process down.

K: What was it called "mutation"?

W: Mutation. That's a better word for it actually! No, just notation, A1, A2, A3, that kind of stuff.

K: In rhythm?

W: He wouldn't write out the rhythm, but he'd give us tapes to listen to - which was good in a way. Probably, the whole point of it was that he was giving us stuff to listen to. It was probably the right move. But I wouldn't have done it with notation. I think it takes too much time, it's a waste of time.

K: So tapes?

W: Yeah, cassette tapes of him. For three years then, I learned on my own for quite a while. I sort of taught myself to read a little bit because I bought Jerry Holland's CD and book at Rollo Bay and I was listening to the tape. I was listening to the CD and I'd look up every tune to see which tunes were in the book and tried to use them both. I was probably fifteen or so, and when I was seventeen or eighteen, I took a theory course while I was at UPEI and learned to read the rhythm. Then for a while, I learned a bunch of tunes from the sheets, just like tunes I'd always wanted to learn and worked at them. But then, I played some old tunes. I did that for a few years, and then I played some old tunes and it was so much better, I went: "Oh my god, I forgot!" You know, there was so much more from what I learned by ear than what I learned from the sheet, so I haven't really learned much from sheet music since. I've never liked to leaf through stuff and read through it. I couldn't be bothered. It always starts with hearing it somewhere, and sometimes a sheet helps. That being said, there are a couple of tunes that I only had a sheet for, so I do the interpreting that way, but … I'm lazy. It's much more likely that I'll not bother with the sheet. I'm too lazy [laughs].

K: Do you teach currently?

W: Yeah, but not regularly.

K: And the method you use is by ear?

W: Start by ear as well.

K: Do you give recordings?

W: Yeah, all the time.

K: Do you give out sheet music, if people struggle?

W: Yeah, we do. But we have them try to learn it by ear, we have them sing it, and by the end of it, everyone's sort of realizing: "Ok, I'm actually learning to play by ear," and it's good. Yeah, workshops are interesting, there's a lot of different personalities coming together. People come there for almost the same reason, but not what you think. Mostly people come to a workshop, I think, to belong. They're seeking out people that are into this, the way they are. For beginners, it's a lot of social stuff, and so, whenever it's calm and they feel safe …. rapid learning happens. So, it's good, people just go away inspired, and that's the goal.

K: This is for your fiddle camp, or do you do lots of one-off workshops throughout the year?

W: Yeah. Some, but not a whole lot.

K: It's mostly groups that you teach?

W: Usually, yeah.

K: Are you continuously learning new tunes? Are you writing many of your own?

W: Yeah, it's been pretty slow the last year [referring to writing tunes], but I do.

K: What types of tunes are you playing mostly?

W: Scottish.

K: Is there a difference between Scottish and Cape Breton, do you differentiate between the two?

W: No. I find when I say Scottish, I include the Cape Breton stuff because that's what we call it here. I play a lot of Cape Breton stuff too. There are tons of Cape Breton tunes that are Scottish tunes, but the way they're played in Cape Breton does make then Cape Breton tunes. Like the life in them is coming out of Cape Breton, so they're Cape Breton tunes. Then, there are actually tunes that have been composed in Cape Breton — like all Jerry's [Holland] tunes are considered Cape Breton tunes.

K: You said you play a little bit of Old Time fiddling, or you listen to it?

W: I listen to it, yeah.

K: You don't play any other styles.

W: No. A lot of the jigs we play are actually Irish, but we don't play them the way you'd hear an Irish person play them. And for us, for me anyway, it has to do with the dancing, they swing to jigs here, so they have to be slow enough to swing to. In Cape Breton, they polka to the jig, so it's a bit faster. If you try to swing to the speed of a Cape Breton jig, you get tired out really quick. It doesn't feel good. But, if they're a touch slower, with all the same lilt and life, you're still raising the dancers the very same way, but you can swing to a jig very nicely, when they're slowed down slightly.

K: If you play for dancing, do you change the way your play, or what you play?

W: Generally when I play, I try to play like I'm playing for dancing all the time.

K: All the time?

W: Pretty much. Sometimes, I'll get wound up a little bit, like Koady and I just played for about two hours just now… it's good, I get caught up and memorize my repertoire, like what I have with him and what I have with someone else ... I forgot what we were talking about. Oh, the speed, right. Sometimes we get caught up, like it was really fun playing with Koady and we were playing wicked fast, a bunch of it, but, who cares.

K: But you could do that in performance.

W: Absolutely, and I would. It's just where it was going. I just let my mind go along with him, it was great. But at a dance, I'd keep it locked in to the crowd. How long are you home did you say?

K: Until Tuesday.

W: Oh that's too bad, there's a dance on Wednesday.

K: There's not much happening this weekend, they cancelled the session because of Thanksgiving.

W: Right, what day is this … it's Friday. I'll answer my own questions, ha-ha, don't feel any pressure [laughs]. Yeah, there's not much happening tune-wise. Last week, Jessie had a party up in Wellington… and there was a session on Thursday, that was pretty good. But Sheila hosted it yesterday, and I hosted it the two weeks before. Last night I went to Bar None. Do you know the brewery? Growler night there is Thursday night, so I went there. I generally don't like sessions, but this summer I was at a handful that I actually enjoyed, and I went: "Oh, I do enjoy this!"

K: It depends. Slow sessions …?

W: Oh, oh no way, can't do it, yuck, yuck!

K: When you learn a new tune, how do you memorize it? Do you go through a process, maybe

learn it slowly first?

W: No, not slow. I learn it at speed. When, and I preach this, there's a lot of things I preach. I preach this at our camps. For the beginners who are learning by ear, you need to slow it down and do that. But you don't spend the rest of your life slowing down every tune you're going to learn. Like, the first step is learning it however you can. You sing it, go over and over the parts that you can't get, until you get it. And it teaches you to listen, which means that every time you listen, you're a more avid listener. And the web will start growing in your head, but once you get comfortable with learning by ear, you don't need to slow things down. You're able, mostly, to learn it at that speed. And listening to it over and over and over is probably more important, without even trying it. Sometimes, you need the fiddle to figure it out. So I just play them at speed. Learn them at speed, and play them at speed.

K: Do you have to play it a lot of times before you perform it in public?

W: Sometimes, it depends on the tune. It depends more on the muscle memory of it, probably. If it's a new tune but all the muscle memory is familiar, I could play it tonight. But if there is a new muscle memory to learn, then I'd better let it percolate for a while, until that becomes as natural as all the other muscle memories. A lot of pipe tunes are like that, because they're Scottish tunes. I love the pipes, I learn lots of those tunes, but they'll do a lot of fifth intervals in the melody that we wouldn't do on the fiddle because it's a third finger plant. So, fingering it is totally different than all the other fiddle tunes, so they take a little longer. It depends on how excited I am about them, too. It's different for me learning tunes for a show. Sometimes, it's not very enjoyable.

K: People tell you: "You have to learn this tune?"

W: Yeah. It just depends on what you're doing. I did the show at the College of Piping for two years. There were some tunes I brought in and there were tunes the pipers were playing that I just had to learn. And some of them are awesome, but a few of the tunes, I would get tired of quickly. If I was doing my own show, I would play that tune once every couple of weeks. I wouldn't play it every day and every night for thirty-three performances. You get tired of some tunes.

K: For sure. How old were you when you first started playing professionally … for money?

W: For money? I don't know. I was playing for money a long time before I was playing professionally, ha-ha! I don't remember, but probably at least by the time I was sixteen.

K: You hadn't been playing long.

W: No. Five years maybe. But, I would play certain tunes and I making $50, or something. It was a big deal. That's a lot of gas money. And then, more professional stuff later on.

K: Do you still play just for the sake of playing … for yourself?

W: Yeah. Sometimes, it gets to the point though, when you're too busy to do that and everything starts to suck. Like last year, the last year that I did the show at the College, I also did a cruise ship gig right after.

K: Really?

W: Yeah, and it was seven weeks on the ship and away for seven weeks. So it was like the College show, which is exactly the same show … boom, boom, boom for July and August. By the end of it, I'm not inspired. It's like: "Oh god, I've got to do this whole show again."

K: What about the cruise ship?

W: Oh, well, it was good. But it was sort of repetitive, but not enough for me to get tired of the material. But it was faced-paced. I got on there not knowing the girls I was going to play with.

K: Was it a band?

W: It was a trio. Two girls from Nova Scotia. And so, the next day we played an hour, and the

next day, we played three hours. And then, we played three hours a day forty-seven out of forty-nine days. That was very fast, it was like, bam, learn all the stuff as best you can, as fast as you can, get it up as good as you can, because you're playing it tonight! It was intense for a few weeks, and I enjoyed that, but by the end of that year, it was like I had learned two shows in a few months, and I wasn't really playing all of my own repertoire. On the ship, there was a certain amount of tunes and a certain amount of songs. In the seven weeks, I never really got the tune fix I needed, you know. And my time was spent learning other stuff, so, it was tough. I did get out of playing what I needed to play, just for the sake of it. This past year, that's all I've done, and it's been great. So, now I'm recharging the batteries, actually feeling like playing …

K: You also play a lot for dancers, and you do big concerts. Do you like playing in small céilí halls, or big concerts?

W: It doesn't matter. What is most important for me is who I'm playing with. You know what I mean? I could sit and play with Koady Chaisson anywhere. It doesn't matter who's watching, or how many, or if any.

K: You play the same way no matter who is watching?

W: Pretty much, yeah. If I feel like playing, it doesn't matter to me who's listening. We're just gonna do that. That's the way it should be, I think. It's hard, it's not always like that. And you know, it's always good to have somebody with you that knows everything you're doing. Or, you might have half an hour of some material really worked up well with somebody but in the middle of that half hour stuff, you're like: "Oh, yeah, I'd love to rip into this set!" but it's strange and unpredictable and you can't. Then, you're thinking, and thinking is not good. I don't like to think [laughs]. Thinking causes wrinkles! I really am lazy.

K: Are there any other older PEI, or non-Island fiddlers that influenced you besides your dad, and your grandfather?

W: Yeah, lots of them. I never actually heard my grandfather play much until a few years ago.

Somebody gave me some recordings, and then I heard lots.

K: You play with your dad. You perform with him a lot?

W: Yeah. Well, not very much now. Usually, if we're playing together, I play piano for him.

K: Do you play the tunes the same way he does?

W: Not really.

K: Ornaments, and…?

W: A lot of it, yeah. It probably sounds the same to a lot of people, or to most people. We don't quite play the same though, like, our jigs are different. There's a little different thing in there. His jigs are awesome for swinging to. His jigs are awesome for that. But, I guess I do a little more with stuff that isn't just for dancing. So, it's too hard to shift the brain to try to play like him … to play together. I'd rather not because, then, I'll be mixed up the next time I'm playing alone. You gotta leave the files alone. Leave that copy right there. My friend Brett Miller, has this theory, I forget whether he learned it, or read it, or someone told him. I think I told you this. He's a piper, he's doing his PhD in Glasgow in trad music. Someone told him that there's a train of thought out there that says that the only way you can play a tune is how you played it the last time you played it. The only version of it you can hold to your memory is the last one you played.

K: Interesting.

W: Anyway, it changes the way you think about things. For me, to try and change a tune, to play along with someone tonight at a session, things being different, and then, three-and-a-half months from now, I'm ripping through a set onstage somewhere and I go into a tune and I'm like: "Oh yeah, I forgot about this one!" and I'm thinking, well the next one, and I'm like: "Oh, the last time I played that one was way back here," and now I'm mixed up about how that tune goes because I haven't fixed it since. All I need is one run-through, but you don't get a run-through

onstage. There's too much to remember, so I don't let the files get overwritten, if I can help it. I can change my own file, but not for somebody else's.

K: Interesting.

W: Sometimes it's not compatible. I'm still working on it, like Word '97 here sometimes, and: "Well that's great, your changes are nice, but my system won't open it!" So…[laughter].

K: That's a great analogy. Can you tell me why sessions aren't a Scottish thing?

W: I don't know why they're not a *Scottish* thing. I think I know why they're not a thing *here*, it's just that when the people landed here two hundred years ago with their fiddles, they had trees to cut down, you know, things to plant. And the fiddle was the main entertainment for a great number of people. They were living on farms and working hard and you wouldn't go round up your neighbours to get together and watch television together, if you have your own TV in the house. The fiddle is what you had in the house and people would play their own stuff. People would get together and have parties but, as far as I've ever been told, you might get together and learn tunes from your friends, but the point wasn't to get together and everyone play the same tune. People just have their own repertoires and so people took turns at parties. That's the way it always was for me. We'd go to parties and each fiddler took a turn. Sometimes, two might play together, very rare you might get three or more, except when kids were learning, and they're all learning the same tunes, so there'd be some small groups of them. That was new, and then there's the PEI Fiddlers' Society, which I was the president of for many years.

K: And you just won the award last year.

W: Yeah, the lifetime membership. That's pretty cool … but that being said, the Fiddlers' Society, and how it exists to promote the music. That is not actually a picture of how it existed before that. People didn't play together, but that was a new idea that Bishop Faber had when he formed the society: get all these fiddlers together to share tunes, and do their thing. And that has helped and promoted the music in a certain way, in lots of great ways, actually. But I think it does give a

false impression that: “Oh, if you wanna play fiddle in PEI, you should want to play along with everybody else,” and I think that’s barely half the world. If you want to play with other people and the social thing is what you want, and there’s lots of people who start playing at forty, fifty, sixty, or whatever, and they learn some tunes, they go out and socialize, it’s wonderful. But, for a younger person, or someone who’s really taking to it well, I think it’ll hold them back just to play along with the median all the time. You want those people. You’ve got a fourteen-year-old kid, he might learn a thousand tunes the next five years, and if he’s beside some group of people that are going to keep playing these sixty tunes for that five years, it’s going to affect him. So, the group thing I think is good for some things, but I don’t think it’s good all the time.

K: Where do you see things going for fiddling on PEI, the young people learning, etc.?

W: Oh, it’s in great shape, it’s in great shape. I’m very relieved and pleased with it. And I say relieved because, when I was twelve or fourteen, I guess before that, let me think, my dad was playing with the Queens County Fiddlers around the time that I started to play. He was actually playing with them before I started to play. I was going to the practices with him on Wednesday nights and listening, and hanging out when I was probably eleven or twelve. And then I started lessons soon after that, and I kept going to their practices. And it was a great place to be socially, and to feel that there was a community here and all that, and I bought into the philosophy of the society, which is lovely, genuine, it comes from a good place. But the story of it at that time was that Bishop Faber said: “Ok, there was a TV program called *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, it was a documentary. Have you seen it? It’s on YouTube, you can find it. And so Bishop Faber noticed that too about PEI, and it was the priests who started the Cape Breton Fiddlers’ Association there, and the PEI Fiddlers’ Society here at the same time.

K: And the Catholic priests weren’t so into fiddling before that I think?

W: These ones were because they were fiddlers.

K: They were?

W: Yeah, these ones were fiddlers. I know I've heard stuff about older priests burning fiddles. But that was quite a while ago - over a hundred years ago.

K: It's ironic how the priests started these organizations to save fiddling on Cape Breton and PEI.

W: Yeah, lots of irony, I know. Anyway, the message was that fiddling was dying off and we needed to promote it and preserve it. It's dying, it's dying, it's dying. I heard this stuff literally for twenty years. All that work we did with the Fiddlers' Society. We did lots of great things, lots of growth, everything is great. And it occurred to me one day, this is a terrible story to be telling because the story has to be updated. It's not dying, it's not dying at all, it's just fine. If you're into it and looking for it, you can find it, there's dances, there's places to hear fiddlers. The sessions are great for bringing in people who are interested in playing music together, and the Fiddlers' Society is all fiddle, you know, with some accompanists, which is cool, that's what a Fiddlers' Society should be I guess. But I see a lot of people who are learning fiddle now. They're learning lots of instruments and different styles. There's lots of groups of musicians around, and different groups of people that you see floating through sessions and going to things. Anyway, it's in great shape, it's fine. I've done a lot of organizing over the last twenty years, and I made a conscious decision a while ago to stop.

K: Because there's enough, or there's too much happening?

W: No, because I was spending more time at it, a lot of time at it, and I wanted the time for other things. There were other things I needed to do. And there was a time where I thought, like: "Oh my god, this has to be, someone has to do this work, you know, and promote these events, and do all these things," and I did that for quite a long time. But when I stepped away, it took a little time, but eventually, all these little jobs I was doing eventually got done by the right person because there's lots of talent in those groups. And now, there's lots of great things happening, great things, but I don't do anything! I don't do anything anymore.

K: You just play!

W: I just sit and play. That's what I wanna do. Sometimes, I get paid money.

K: Enough to pay the bills.

W: Yeah. But I'm not playing, I'm not depending on it for money right now, which is great.

K: That's wonderful.

W: This year's been really good, because, you know, I've only taken the gigs I like.

K: That's nice when you can say no to things.

W: Yeah, because it sucks the life out of you. It's not worth it. There's no social obligation that requires you to have to go do gigs that just suck the life out of you. Sorry, it's just not the right way. This is not the fiddler you're looking for [laughs]. That's what it feels like. So, are you playing at Hurley's?

K: Yeah. I'm going to turn this off now, unless you have any other comments?

W: Oh no, I've talked a long time about myself…

Prince Edward Island – October 2016

Appendix C

The Island Fiddler Newsletter, September 2014

The Island Fiddler

The Newsletter of the Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society

Vol. 12 Issue 3 September 2014

PEI FIDDLERS COVERED THE ISLAND IN THE SUMMER OF 2014

The Island Fiddler

View all issues of *The Island Fiddler* Newsletter - in colour *online at www.peifiddlers.com*

Editor: Anne M. McPhee 687-1521
Advertising/Distribution:
Paul Cheverie 566-3551

The Island Fiddler is the quarterly newsletter of the P.E.I. Fiddlers Society.

The *opinions* expressed herein are not necessarily those of *The Island Fiddler*. *The Island Fiddler* does not assume any responsibility or otherwise with respect to the products or services advertised.

MAILING ADDRESS
Mail: The Island Fiddler, 101 Kent Street, P.O. Box 3311, Charlottetown, PE C1A 8W5
E-mail: annemcphee@pei.sympatico.ca

P.E.I. Fiddlers Society
Established 22 May 1977 Incorporated 31 March 1983

P.E.I. Fiddlers Society Executive

Nathan Condon, President	902-439-8135
Jason Campbell, 1st Vice President	902-439-5775
Marie MacIntyre, 2nd Vice President	902-969-7104
Anne M. McPhee, Secretary	902-687-1521
Paul Cheverie, Treasurer	902-566-3551

Prince County Fiddlers
Robert Gallant 902-436-9811
robertkarengallant@msn.com

Queens County Fiddlers
Tammy MacEachern, President 902-940-5949
tammymac@hotmail.com

Eastern Kings Fiddlers
Anne M. McPhee 902-687-1521
annemcphee@pei.sympatico.ca

Southern Kings Fiddlers
Amy Swenson 902-962-2273
gagliano31@hotmail.com

Acadian Fiddlers
Dorothy Griffin-Farish 902-432-9692

Privacy Statement
Information collected is solely for use by The Prince Edward Island Fiddlers Society.

Fiddle and/or Accompaniment (+) Teachers

Argyle Shore	Roy Johnstone	Fiddle	675-2541
Caledonia	Amy Swenson	Fiddle	962-2273
Charlottetown	Aaron Crane (+)	Fiddle	388-1040
	Cynthia MacLeod	Fiddle	940-1825
	Gary Chipman (+)	Fiddle	213-4978
	Kathryn Dau-Schmidt	Fiddle	672-2711
	Kendra MacGillivray (+)	Fiddle	367-5606
	Ward MacDonald (+)	Fiddle	218-8084
	Matthew Reid	Fiddle	566-2894
	College of Piping (+)	Fid.	877-224-7473
Cumberland	Courtney Hogan	Fiddle	675-3593
Fortune	Mark Haines (+)	Fiddle	687-1404
Montague	Sheila Fitzpatrick	Fiddle	838-3334
Richmond	MacKinnon Family	Fiddle	854-2245
Rollo Bay	Kathryn Dau-Schmidt	Fiddle	672-2711
Souris	J.J. Chaisson (+)	Fiddle	687-2261
Summerside	Anastasia DesRoches	Fiddle	854-3116

Step-Dancing Teachers

Brittany Banks	902-314-7676
College of Piping	436-5377 or 877-224-7473
Jaime Bell	962-2846
Jennifer Carson	902-314-6386
Jocelyne Arsenault	854-2721
Judy MacLean	969-4100 or 566-5545
Marlys Hamilton-MacLaren	887-3385 or 439-0278
Pierrette Arsenault	854-2091
Samantha MacKinnon	892-0805
Shirley Burke	368-2416
Susan and Libbe Hubley	836-3887
Tracy Arsenault	854-3237

If you wish to be listed as a teacher, contact the editor at annemcphee@pei.sympatico.ca or 687-1521

Fiddling Related Websites

Anastasia DesRoches	www.anastasiadesroches.com
Bellows and Bows	www.mun.ca/mmap/back_on_track/b_and_b/
Billy MacInnis	www.billymacinnis.homestead.com
Bowing Down Home	www.bowingdownhome.ca
Calendonian Orchestra	www.caledonianorchestra.com
Canadian Grand Masters	www.canadiangrandmasters.ca
Cape Breton Fiddlers	www.capebretonfiddlers.com
CB Fiddle Recordings	www.cbfiddle.com/rx/
Cape Breton Ottawa	www.cbsession.com/
Courtney Hogan	www.courtneyhogan.ca/home.html
College of Piping	www.collegeofpiping.com
Cynthia MacLeod	www.cynthiamacleod.com
Evangeline Region	www.regionevangeline.com
Ivan and Vivian Hicks	www.ivanhicks.com
Judy MacLean	www.judymacleandance.ca
Ken Perlman	www.kenperlman.com
Kendra MacGillivray	www.kendramacgillivray.com
Learn Tunes by Ear	www.slowplayers.org/SCTLS/learn
Maritime Fiddlers Assoc.	www.maritimefiddler.ca
Marlys Hamilton-MacLaren	www.somersetsteppers.ca
Matthew Reid	www.mattreidmusic.com
Music PEI	www.musicpei.com
PEI Fiddle Camp	www.peifiddlecamp.com
P.E.I. Fiddlers Society	www.peifiddlers.com
Richard Wood	www.rwood.ca
Rollo Bay Fiddle Fest	www.rollobayfiddlefest.ca
Ross Family	www.rossfamily.ca
Roy Johnstone	www.royjohnstone.com
Tim Chaisson	www.timchaisson.com
Vishtèn	www.vishtenmusic.com

Anne M. McPhee

PEI Fiddlers Society News
From the Editor

No matter where you were based in PEI this summer, you didn't have to venture too far to find a fiddle event to attend, almost every night of the week. Whether you wanted to jam with a group or just listen, there was something for everyone in every community across the Island. A number of new ceilidhs popped up featuring well known Island fiddlers such as Aaron Crane's Heartbeat Ceilidh, Dunes n'Tunes with Nathan Condon and Fiddle & Song with Sheila Fitzpatrick all at the Brackley Beach Community Centre while the Treble with Girls were featured in Treble at the Corner at Orwell Corner Community Hall. Courtney Hogan-Chandler started a new ceilidh in Emerald which was also very successful.

A number of "Sessions" were held at The Old Triangle in Charlottetown this summer as well. While Roy Johnstone's Sunday afternoon weekly music sessions have been well attended for a number of years, the Thursday evening Schooner Sessions headed by Cynthia MacLeod have been a tremendous success with no sign of slowing down. Sheila Fitzpatrick fills in when Cynthia is away. The Old Triangle also hosted some great CD Releases such as the event held of Cape Breton's newest group COIG and PEI's Eastpointers.

This year, in honour of 150 years since the Charlottetown Conference, among the many free concerts in the Celebration Zone, traditional music was offered every Thursday.

And then there were all the usual summer festivals that attracted musicians from Cape Breton: Natalie MacMaster, JP Cormier, Ashley MacIsaac, Wendy MacIsaac to name only a few as well as from other parts of Canada and around the world. Rua MacMillan from Scotland and The Outside Track from Ireland performed during the Festival of Small Halls, then returned in July to seek shelter after the Stan Rogers Festival was cancelled due to Hurricane Arthur. Special concerts were quickly organized on their behalf and enjoyed by large numbers.

The Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival attracted over 100 fiddlers, dancers, singers and accompanists to the stage over the three day weekend. If only we had the space to post all their names and photos. Quite a few are featured in this issue, but many are missed and The Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree attracted many more.

Long time friends Richard Wood and JP Cormier perform before a large crowd in Dundas during the Festival of Small Halls.

Summer is the time of year that highlights the close bond PEI musicians have with Cape Breton as we travel back and forth for various events. We were all saddened at the passing of Buddy MacMaster on August 20th. He had a tremendous influence on Island fiddling and he will be greatly missed.

Judy MacLean accepts a Life Membership award from Paul Cheverie.

In other news, The PEI Fiddlers Society presented a Life Membership award to Judy MacLean at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival for her outstanding contribution to Island fiddling through the promotion and teaching of step-dancing and her many years of volunteering at events.

Mark your calendars now for the **PEI Fiddlers Society Annual Meeting on Thurs, Oct. 30th at 6:00 pm,** being held in the Pourhouse at The Old Triangle in Charlottetown. After the meeting we can join in on the Schooner Session!!

Anne M. McPhee

Eastern Kings Fiddlers
by Anne M. McPhee

The 38th Annual Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival was deemed another great success this year with fiddlers from all over PEI and beyond taking the stage to provide the big crowd with great music all weekend long. Victor Faubert from New Jersey, who has been attending every year for the past eight years said "Rollo Bay's stage welcomes more fine fiddle players, mostly in the Scottish tradition, than any other non-competitive fiddle festival I know of. It's definitely the place to be if you love that kind of music!" Who played you ask? Emceed by Marlene MacDonald, the stage welcomed: Kevin Chaisson, Tim Chaisson, Brent Chaisson, Anastasia Desroches, Jack Rankin, Stephen Chaisson, Koady Chaisson, Holly and Zoë O'Reagan, Kathryn Dau-Schmidt, JJ Chaisson, Donna Chaisson, Anita MacDonald, Ben Miller, Allan MacDonald, Diane Ouellette, Mylene Ouellette, Genevieve Deagle, Ward MacDonald, Junior Fraser, Sammy Arsenault, Charity Deagle, Donna Peters, Stan Chapman, Allan Dewar, Annika and Corrie Fruett, Rollo Bay Kitchen Group, Peter Chaisson, Buddy Longaphie, Shelly Campbell, Kenny Chaisson, Darla MacPhee, Karine Gallant, Iain MacInnis, "Creative Minds", Jesse Francis, Madison Dixon, Roger Treat, Bonita Leblanc, The Morell Fiddlers, Francis MacDonald, Collette and Janna Cheverie, Kendra MacGillivray, Dennis Boudreau, KINDLE, Peggy Clinton, Zoë and Adam Krisko, Judy MacLean Dancers, Hailee and Darcy LeFort, Queens County Fiddlers, Louise MacKinnon, Richard Wood, Kyle Gillis, Dawn MacDonald-Gillis, Anne-Louise Campbell, Marcia and Jocelyn Arsenault, Darren Chaisson, Norman, Mary Jane and Eric Leclerc, Cynthia MacLeod, Southern Kings Fiddlers, Urban MacAdam, Treble with Girls (Sheila Fitzpatrick, Maxine MacLennan, Jolee Patkai, Norman Stewart), Stephen, Brad, Andrew and Stanley Chaisson. Thanks to the Chaisson family for another great fiddle festival.

Ella Chaisson, daughter of JJ & Julie Chaisson,and Isa MacPhee, daughter of Darla & Jeremy MacPhee danced all weekend at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.

One of the highlights of the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival was a selection of tunes played by the four sons of Doreen and Peter Chaisson. From left: Stephen, Bradley, Andrew (on a surprise visit home from Australia) on fiddles, with Peter and son Stanley on guitar.

A number of Kathryn Dau-Schmidt's 2014 fiddle students enjoyed playing on the big stage at the 38th Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival. Fiddle lessons will resume on Monday, October 20 at 6:15 pm at the Rollo Bay School. Anyone is welcome to join - all ages are welcome. The classes are funded through the proceeds from the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival.

The Rollo Bay Kitchen Group front row, left to right: Jim Townshend, Anne M. McPhee, Jean Carter, Kathryn Dau-Schmidt, Bonnie Campbell, Sammy Arseneau. Back row: John Campbell, Kevin Chaisson, Marie McGaugh, Darren Chaisson and Len Gaudet.

Frank Lechowick

MORELL FIDDLERS REPORT
By Frank Lechowick

Summer has been a whirlwind for the Morell Fiddlers. The biggest event was our appearance at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival. From there we've traipsed to the Sturgeon ceilidh, Judy MacLean's Shenanigans in Little York, St. Peter's Blueberry Festival, a benefit at St. Teresa's Hall and later the Bradley-Byrne reunion there. In early August we held our early barbeque at St. Peter's park, where happily Sterling Baker was able to join in. We've had to postpone playing at the Dundas ceilidh until September. All this on top of our regular Thursday night sessions in Morell.

Our accompanists are Marion Pirch on keyboards and George Johnston on guitar and both double on fiddle when needed. We've welcomed back old-time fiddler Lorraine (MacVarish) Lynch, an Island native and annual visitor from Boston, who brought along a fine tune named after her granddaughter Angelina. The reel has been transcribed and presented to the composer in a framed copy by some of the Queens County Fiddlers.

A final note: Emmett DeCoursey is still tinkering with his motorized wheelbarrow. He is now designing a device, a sort of harness, to enable him to play a little fiddle while he drives around surveying his farm. (For an example of a harness check, you tube videos of Tracy Silverman, who uses one for the six-string fiddle he built.) Emmett's family has apparently accepted that some adjustment to their automobile policy will be required. (We hope to have more conclusive news of this invention for the December newsletter.)

Amy Swenson

Southern Kings Fiddlers
by Amy Swenson

Summer started off on a very sad note for our fiddle group. One of our original members, Hughie Jackson, passed away on June 28th at the age of 79. He had been enjoying playing the fiddle for only ten years, but had loved the music and the dancing his entire life. His hobby was seeking out and recording original fiddle tunes written by local composers and our group has been learning many of them. He and his wife Sarah were great supporters of the ceilidhs all over eastern PEI. His quiet presence at all our practices is greatly missed.

Our group played at the Sturgeon Ceilidh in early July and also at Rollo Bay on July 20th. In honor of Hughie, we played one of his favorite waltzes, Scalloway Voe, a tune from the Shetland Islands. We received kind compliments from Richard Wood who thought we did a good job of his lovely tune Celtic Touch. A new member of our group, JoAnne Ford from Beach Point, is very talented at conjuring up harmony parts and she did a fine job with the harmony on her Neil MacCannell fiddle that evening. (You can catch us on a You Tube video submitted by Urban Chaisson).

We still don't know yet what the results of that 2014 Symphony composition contest will be, but the fiddle tunes that Leo Marchildon chose for his submission are an interesting batch: the West Point Reel, the Acadian Reel, Emmett Hughes' Sister Donna Kelly, Carter MacKenzie (yay Kevin!), Richard's Constitution Reel, Reuben Smith's My Two Sons, and last but not least, the Murray Harbour Train Reel by Maurice O'Shea. The Symphony plans to play the chosen work on November 23rd, so do keep an eye on The Buzz for the results of this contest!

In the course of researching these composers, it was discovered that Reuben Smith had 15 children and at the time of his death at the age of 92, he had 110 grandchildren! Do you think this might just be a record for any fiddler ever born on this fair Isle?

Maurice, who is now 95, wrote the Murray Harbour Train Reel a few decades ago for his friend and fiddle player in Iona, Theodore McGuigan. Theo was missing the sound of the train going by his home so Maurice tried to console him with a tune which would remind him of the train. So when Maurice called me up recently and said he had a waltz he wanted me to transcribe, I figured it was one he had written years ago. But no, it turned out that the lovely Iona Corner Waltz was composed only two years ago.... Maybe there is hope for all us senior musicians, eh???

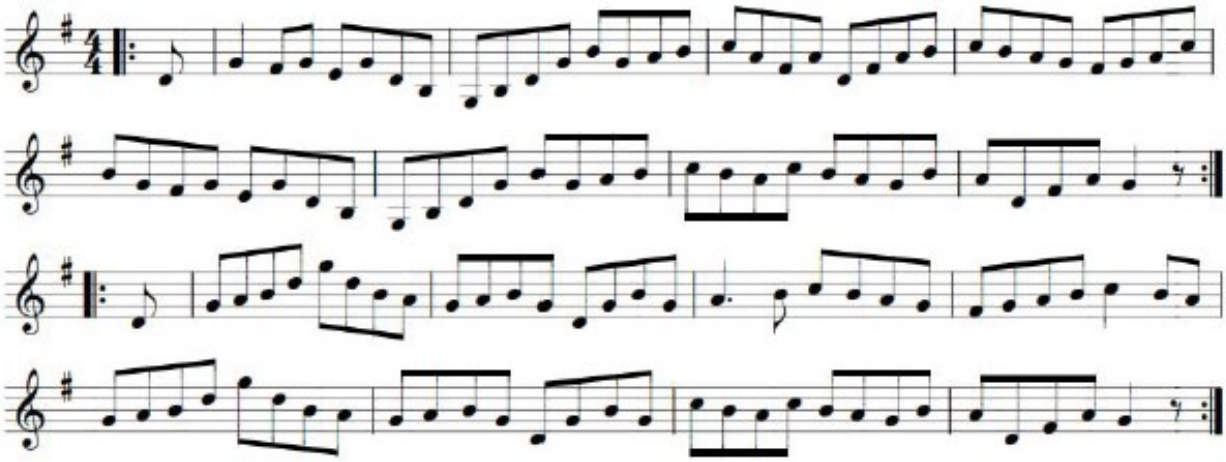
It has been an amazingly musical summer here, with great fiddling all over the place. I did manage to catch some of the music at the Roma Festival earlier this month. It was such fun to see Roy Johnstone, Steve Sharratt and Louise Arsenault playing in period costume, and the children in the Down East Dance group were totally charming with their traditional French dances. It was also a delight to attend one of the New Dominion Ceilidhs with Richard Wood and Gordon Belsher visiting Courtney Hogan. Gordon was in great form, Courtney played an awesome rendition of Jerry Holland's My Lily, Richard did a fine version of Andy DeJarlis' Silver Wedding Waltz, and the large audience was totally delighted at the end when the two fiddlers played together. What fun!

The new Murray Harbour Farmer's Market at the M.H. Community Centre has been a great success this summer (check out their website!) and the community plans a Fall Festival at the final Market on October 11th. The fiddlers will play some tunes at this event, so listen up for the newly written Iona Corner Waltz!

Our fiddle group continues to meet every other Monday night for a two hour jam session, from 7 to 9 pm, at the Rural Development Centre in Montague at Brook and Main. After we go over some new tunes, everyone present gets to pick tunes for the group to try. And by the way, we do not care if you learn tunes by ear (do bring your recording device), with my bubble notes or with regular notation! Our philosophy is that as long as learning is taking place, it does not matter how. Next practices are Sept. 8 and 22, Oct. 6 and 20, and Nov. 6 and 20. Everyone is welcome, for more info call me at 962-2273.

ANGELINA'S REEL

by LORRAINE LYNCH
Arranged by Marlene Gallant
and Gerry Cheverie



The Southern Kings Fiddlers gathered for this photo at the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival. Front row from left, Beth Knox, Urban Chaisson, Lorraine Praught, Lorraine Lynch, Emily Gregory, Grace Walsh, Owen Collier, Shirley Stewart, JoAnne Ford, Kenny Chapman. Back row from left, Frank Lechovick, George Johnson, Gavin McKenna, George Curran, Paul Demeulenaere, Bernard Farrell, Amy Swenson, Francis Stewart and Leslie Stewart.

Carolyn Drake

Queens County Fiddlers
by Carolyn Drake

Take a deep breath and exhale. Whew, what a great summer of fiddling for the members of the Queens County Fiddlers!

Playing, performing, practicing and going to concerts – that's living the musical high life in this province every summer.

It all started in late May as we played for newspaper editors and publishers from across the country at a national meeting at the Delta Prince Edward. From there, we were off to the Lorne Valley Hall for our first ever performance as part of the Festival of Small Halls, followed by playing for a special reception at Government House for the Governor General and Provincial Lieutenant-Governors from across the country. A few weeks later, Lt.-Gov. Frank Lewis invited us back to the grounds of Fanningbank, this time to play for the annual afternoon summer tea. And while the weather was a little damp and dark, our spirits were light as we played for more than two hours.

Then it was on to what is always the highlight of the summer — the Rollo Bay Fiddle Festival, where more than 30 of us, led by Aaron Crane with Jennifer Garrity on the piano, played in our usual Sunday afternoon slot. We were especially pleased to be able to play Sinnie's Jig for the first time ever on the stage at Rollo Bay, a tune written by member Marlene Gallant in honour of her late sister.

We kept to a fairly ambitious practice schedule all summer with good turnouts almost every Wednesday evening at Long and McQuade. In addition, we ventured out to the Beach Grove Home for a practice early in the summer. It's always a treat to play for seniors. It was great to welcome some of our summer folk back to play, and it was great to see some of our members take advantage of fiddle camps both here and in Cape Breton.

Many of us also made time to take in some great ceilidhs which featured members of the QCF. Jenna Cyr, Lindsey Doiron and Cailyn MacAulay, our youngest members, as well as established solo fiddler Fiona MacCorquodale, had big roles to play in a new ceilidh this summer at the Brackley Beach Community Centre, The Heartbeat Ceilidh. Hosted by Aaron, it featured performers from age 11 - 18 years – some of the most talented young people in traditional music and dance on P.E.I. If you didn't get there this summer, look for it if it returns in 2015 and don't miss it.

Aaron continued his weekly Tuesday ceilidhs, which wrapped up the end of August, at St. Andrew's Chapel, just east of Mount Stewart. Fiona also performed there again this summer, as well as at other venues throughout the province.

In addition, Aaron found time to return as a cast member of Anne & Gilbert – The Musical, which is on stage on select days and evenings until Oct. 12 at The Guild in Charlottetown. He plays the role of Moody MacPherson, a fiddling sensation who pines for Anne Shirley. If you have a chance, check it out.

The group capped off the summer season with a fantastic barbecue and fiddle session at Tammy MacEachern's new house in Hillsborough Park. Great music and plenty of food (terrific barbecuing, Tammy) made for a wonderful evening all around.

We are tentatively scheduled to start back to weekly Wednesday night practices on Sept. 10 on the second floor of the Long and McQuade building in Charlottetown. Watch your emails and The Guardian for complete details.


Cathy Campbell

Prince County Fiddlers
by Cathy Campbell

The Prince County Fiddlers ended their regular Monday night practices in late June with plans to take the summer off and resume in September. There were concerns about not playing as a group all summer and losing contact, however, this was not the case at all. We were able to perform in three parades this summer. The Summerside Lobster Festival Parade, the Tyne Valley Parade and the Kensington Harvest Festival Parade. Personally, I am a huge supporter of parade performances. I love playing outside in the summer air, being hauled down the streets on a hay wagon, showcasing traditional music at its best!! What a way to spend a few hours with my music friends. The Tyne Valley parade was a new adventure for us as a group and having several fiddlers in our group who hail from that area made it even more special. The Kensington Parade was a blast. We entered a float which consisted of the Junior Prince County Fiddlers and the Lady Slipper Step Dancers. This gave the youth an opportunity to show off their skills and they did a great job!! At all three events, the crowds clapped, tapped, smiled and danced when they heard us coming.

Prince County Fiddlers enjoyed performing in on a float in parades in Summerside, Tyne Valley and Kensington this summer.

I would like to take this time to share some exciting news about one of our young Junior Prince County Fiddlers, Emily MacDonald. Emily is the 13 year-old daughter of John and Susan MacDonald from Malpeque. This spring, Emily submitted a demo of her fiddling and she was awarded the Bishop Faber MacDonald Scholarship for $500 to attend the Gaelic College in Cape Breton. During the week, Emily took two fiddle classes, highland dance, gaelic language and piping. Emily reported "I had a lot of fun and I'm going to try and go back next year. My favourite tunes to play were, Captain Campbell, Elizabeth's Big Coat, Trip to Toronto, Mutts Favorite, Silver Bullet and Generation Jig. I want to say thank you to everyone who helped me go to the camp, it was great."

Come September, we will start our practices again with emphasis on adding new tunes to our repertoire and performing at Seniors Residences more frequently. Practices are Monday nights from 7:30 - 9:30 at Community Connections at 701 Water Street West, Summerside. New members are always welcome! For more information please contact Cathy Campbell at 436-0380.


13 year Emily MacDonald was the 2014 recipient of the Bishop Faber MacDonald Scholarship.

Dorothy Griffin-Farish

Acadian News
by Dorothy Griffin-Farish

Hi Everyone!

This summer was jam-packed with musical activities, just some of which are included here.

The Friday Night Jammers continue to meet each Friday night and are learning new arrangements. Guests are welcome. Many of their group, Edward Arsenault, Amand Arsenault and his son Norman, Dorothy Farish, and others when available, volunteer to play at local seniors' homes and manors. Most of the Jammers gave a lively concert during the summer at the Chez Nous in Wellington.

Peter Arsenault and his sister Hélène Bergeron recently performed at the Acadian Museum at the launching of John Bernard's fifth volume of his genealogical research.

The Spirit of Chautauqua, from July 14th to 18th in Summerside on Water Street and presented by Wyatt Heritage Properties Inc. & La Belle-Alliance, featured music by Brett and Zak, Mario "Fayo" LeBlanc, Dylan Rook Maddix, Carolyn Bernard, Jacinthe LaForest, Sylvie Toupin, Louise Arsenault & Hélène Bergeron in Concert, and Tim Chaisson. Island Acadian genealogist and author Georges Arsenault also spoke on Acadian Folk Music and Traditions.

Kitchen parties are held every Friday night at the Centre Expo-Festival - now called the Acadian Musical Village - in Abram Village as part of the PEI 2014 Celebrations. The official opening took place on Canada Day. Just a few entertainers include 45 Knots, Mona and Albert Arsenault, Robert Gallant, Path Durant, Louise Arsenault & Hélène Bergeron.

The Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree opened at the Acadian Musical Village on Friday, August 8th from 5 to 7 p.m. with fiddlers Denise Daigle and Marie Livingstone leading the tunes with a variety of Scottish, Acadian, Down East and Quebequois selections. A concert at 7:30 featured Louise Arsenault and family to launch their newly-released CD. Following that, fiddler Pascal Miousse accompanied by Patrice Deraspe on guitar, and Wendy and Ashley MacIsaac, both fiddlers and piano players, entertained from 9:30 til after midnight, with Jean-Francois Berthiaume doing some lively step-dancing. On Saturday afternoon, August 9th, Meet the Masters was held at Mont Carmel Hall. An almost 3-hour concert featuring Pascal Gemme of Quebec, Pascal Miousse of the Magdalen Islands, Aidan Burke of Ireland, and Wendy and Ashley MacIsaac of Cape Breton was held, with the show being followed by a barbeque and a lively family square dance. Sunday morning the music venue was the Acadian Musical Village. Those who took in the musical brunch were entertained by players including Zakk Cormier, Shane Arsenault, Karine Gallant and Iain MacInnes. The afternoon concert featured Peter and Kevin Chaisson, Karine Gallant and Patrice Deraspe, Allan and Ward MacDonald, Melissa Gallant and Mario LeBreton, David Gaudet, Peter and Albert Arsenault, with many step-dancers taking the stage. During the mornings of Saturday and Sunday there

These young step-dancers performed at the 2014 Atlantic Fiddlers Jamboree: Janelle Arsenault, Melanie Arsenault, Alex Arsenault, Isabelle Bernard, Colby Arsenault.

were workshops for fiddlers and guitar players. The weekend ended with the regular Mont Carmel evening show featuring Pascal Gamme, Pascal Miousse, the group Comas, and singer Meaghan Blanchard.

The 2014 recipient of the Golden Fiddle Award, presented during the afternoon concert, was Corinne Cormier, a very capable flute and recorder player who can play a tune as well as any fiddler and who loves to keep traditional tunes alive to pass them on to future musicians. Congratulations, Corinne!

Corinne Cormier

The Mont Carmel Summer Concert Series is seven years old this year, going each Sunday evening from July 6th to August 24th. Performers to date include Patricia and Marcella Richard, Caroline Bernard, Rémi Arsenault, Jeannita Bernard, Léonie Richard, Darla MacPhee, J.J. Chaisson, Brent Chaisson, Jocelyne Arsenault and Les Étoiles d'Acadie, Max Keenlyside, Shaun LeBlanc, Louise Arsenault and the Joe Narcisse family, the Steppeuses (Kaylee Arsenault, Lisa Bernard, Josée Gallant, Carole Bernard and Ashley Richard), "Roger Co-op" Arsenault, Lina Boudreau, Amy and Rachel Beck, Peter Arsenault, step -dancers Les Gars de par chez-nous (Gilbert, Thomas and Miguel Arsenault), along with Linda Arsenault-Richards and her daughters Isabelle and Madelaine, Clarence Gallant, 4 Cord Boys (Allan Gallant, Peter and Paul Arsenault, and Pierre Poirier), Katie McGarry, Jason Campbell, step-dancers Isabelle and Danielle Saunders, Adrienne Gallant, Bridgette Blanchard, Cynthia MacLeod, the group Harmony (Tracy Gallant, Debbie Rousselle-Montgomery, Keelin Wedge), Alex, Melanie and Janelle Arsenault, Meaghan Blanchard, Pascal Gemme and Yann Falquet from Quebec, Pascal Miousse, Comas from Ireland, Jean-François Barthiaume from Quebec, Gary Gallant, Albert, Mona and Louise Arsenault, Norman, Paula and Shane Arsenault, Zakk Cormier, Cassie and Maggie MacDonald from Nova Scotia, Heidi Ellis, and the group Les Pieds Rythmés (Renée Gardiner, Loren Enman, Mélodie Jordan and Bryanna Sharkey).

For those loving the music and songs of last year's production of *Evangeline* at the Confederation Centre, a new cast recording of the production is now available for purchase. The recording of *Evangeline* is now available on iTunes, on the Confederation Centre's website, and at the theatre gift shop, The Showcase.

In honor of National Acadian Day, August 15th, the Saint Thomas Aquinas Society, in partnership with the P.E.I. 2014 Inc. sponsored a concert featuring Vishtèn and legendary New Brunswick rock band 1755 at the P.E.I. 2014 Celebration Zone, situated on Charlottetown's waterfront. Other areas of the Island that observed Acadian Day were DeBlois, the Evangeline Region, Summerside, Rustico, Souris and Wellington. The Wellington venue had to be moved from the park to Vanier Community Centre due to the rain, but spirits were not dampened. Entertainment was provided by Michel and Cathy Arsenault and family, "Roger Co-op" Arsenault, and Jonathan and Louise Arsenault. The group "Panou", consisting of Catherine and Michel Arsenault, Paulette Duffloth, Patricia Richard, Corinne Cormier, Wayne Robichaud, Marcel Caissie & Andy Gallant, performed Saturday evening, August 16th, at the Acadian Musical Village. They were forced to turn so many people away they decided to have second show on Sunday August 17 at 7:00pm.

Acclaimed Acadian singer/songwriter Angèle Arsenault's last album, entitled "Vivre!" in French and "Home" in English, is being released on August 31st during the Acadian Festival in Abram Village, Arsenault's birth place. The double album, featuring twelve French songs and sixteen English songs, will be distributed by www.plages.net. A concert in memory of Arsenault is scheduled to accompany the album launch, featured artists being Marcella and Patricia Richard, Caroline and Janita Bernard, Christian Kit Goguen, Isabelle Thériault, Tanya Gallant, Angèle Haché-Rix, Lina Boudreau, Annick Gagnon and Sandra Le Couteur.

Pierre Arsenault, brother of singer/songwriter Angèle Arsenault, was the recipient of the 2014 Acadian Order of Merit from Gabriel Arsenault, President of La Société Saint-Thomas d'Aquin. Congratulations Pierre! Till next time, au revoir!

Events Forecast

For up-to-date events visit www.peifiddlers.com or check local listings

Sundays 2:00-5:00pm	Weekly Music Sessions	Old Triangle Irish Alehouse	Charlottetown	902-892-5200
Sundays 7:00-9:30pm	Sun Night Shenanigans	York Community Hall	York	902-566-5545
Sundays 7:30pm	Kitchen Party	St. Margaret's Parish Hall	St. Margaret's	902-687-2546
4th Sundays 7:00pm	Music in Motion Ceilidhs	Jack Blanchard Hall, 7 Pond St.	Charlottetown	902-368-8449
Alternate Sundays 6:30pm	Sturgeon Ceilidhs	St. Paul's Parish Hall	Sturgeon	902-962-3918
Second Sunday 7:00-9:00pm	Kitchen Party/Ceilidh	Cotton Centre	Stratford	902-569-2732
Third Sunday 1:30pm	Ceilidh	Seniors Active Living Centre, UPEI	Charlottetown	902-628-8388
Third Sunday 7:00pm	Kellys Cross Ceilidhs	Kellys Cross Church Hall	Kelly's Cross	902-658-2290
Last Sunday 7:00-9:00pm	Ceilidh/Concert	Bonshaw Community Centre	Bonshaw	902-675-4282
Mondays 7:30pm til Sep 22	Kensington Ceilidhs	Murray Christian Centre	Kensington	902-886-2480
1st & 3rd Mondays 7:00pm	Ceilidh Kitchen Party	Bingo Country, Riverside Dr.	Charlottetown	902-940-6702
2nd & 4th Mondays 7:30pm	Winsloe Ceilidh	Winsloe United Church	Winsloe	902-368-1233
Mon & Wed 7:30pm Jun 30-Sep 17	Ross Family Ceilidh	Stanley Bridge W.I. Hall	Stanley Bridge	866-298-8244
Tuesdays 7:00pm	Georgetown Ceilidh	Kings Playhouse	Georgetown	902-652-2316
Tuesdays 7:30pm May 27-Oct 7	Scottish Ceilidh Concerts	MacKinnon Homestead Grounds	Richmond	902-854-3513
Tuesdays 7:30pm Jul 8-Sep 16	Dunes n'Tunes	Brackley Beach Community Centre	Brackley Beach	902-659-2137
Third Tuesday 7:00pm	Lions Club Ceilidh	Cotton Centre	Stratford	902-569-3956
Wednesdays 8:00pm	Ceilidh	Silver Threads	Souris	902-687-2396
Wednesdays 8:00pm	Square Dance	Old Lorne Valley School	Lorne Valley	902-583-2759
Wednesdays 7:30pm	Ceilidh in the City	Murchison Centre, 17 Pius X Ave	Charlottetown	902-569-1133
Wednesdays 7:30pm til Aug 25	Malpeque Ceilidhs	Women's Institute Hall, Rte 20	Malpeque	902-836-4310
Thursdays 7:30pm	Ceilidh	St. Mark's Parish Hall	Burton	902-892-7948
Thursdays 7:00-10:00pm	Schooner Sessions	Old Triangle Irish Alehouse	Charlottetown	902-892-5200
Thursdays 7:30pm til Sep 25	Stanley Bridge Ceilidhs	W.I. Hall, Rte 6 & 224	Stanley Bridge	902-836-4310
Fridays 8:00pm	Ceilidh & Dance	St. Peter's Bay Circle Club	St Peter's Bay	902-961-2899
Alt Thursdays 7:30pm	Parish Productions	St. John's Anglican Church	Crapaud	902-658-2333
First Thursday 7:30pm	Ceilidh	Kilmuir Hall	Kilmuir	902-838-4768
Fridays 8:00pm	Ceilidh at the Irish Hall	Irish Cultural Centre	Charlottetown	902-566-3273
Fridays 8:00pm	Ceilidh & Dance	Dundas Ploughing Match Grounds	Dundas	902-583-2319
Alternate Fridays Jun 6-Sep 26	Ceilidh	Murray Harbour Drama Club	Murray Harbour	902-962-2792
Saturdays 7:30 Jun 21-Sep 20	Richard Wood Kitchen Party	Stanley Bridge Hall	Stanley Bridge	902-962-3204
Saturdays 9:00pm	Goose River Dance	Goose River Hall	Goose River	902-961-2205
Thursdays Sept 4 6:00pm Step Dancing classes with Judy MacLean. Former students 7pm.			Souris Show Hall	902-969-4100
Thursday October 30 6:00 pm	PEI Fiddlers Society AGM	The Pourhouse at Old Triangle	Charlottetown	902-687-1521
Sat Oct 25 2:00 - 7:00 pm	Fiddle Doo and Potluck	Murray Christian Centre	Kensington	902-963-2356

Fiddle Practices Open To The Public

Eastern Kings Fiddlers Rollo Bay 687-1521
Mondays 7:00pm Rollo Bay School Oct 20 - May 11

Prince County Fiddlers Summerside 436-0380
Mondays 7:30pm Community Connections

Southern Kings Fiddlers Montague 962-2273
Alternate Mondays 7:00pm Active Communities

Queens County Fiddlers Charlottetown 940-5949
Wednesdays 7:30pm Long & McQuade

Morell Fiddlers Morell 961-2962
Thursdays 7:30 - 9:30pm Morell Pharmacy

Acadian Fiddlers Wellington 436-5532
Fridays 8:00pm Boys & Girls Club

PEI FIDDLERS SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____ **Membership $20** _____

Address _____ **Donation $** _____

City _____ **Payable to: PEI Fiddlers Society**

Province/State _____ **Mail to:** **PEI Fiddlers Society**

Postal/Zip Code _____ **101 Kent Street, P.O. Box 3311**

E-mail Address _____ **Charlottetown, PE C1A 8W5**

Quarterly Newsletter: **E-mail** _____ **Website** _____ **Regular Mail** _____