



Ón gCos go Cluas

From Dancing to Listening

Edited by
Liz Doherty and Fintan Vallely

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Fiddle and Dance Studies
from around the North Atlantic 5

The Elphinstone Institute

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to study, conserve, and promote the culture of North-East and Northern Scotland.

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Contents

	Introduction	
	<i>Liz Doherty and Fintan Vallely</i>	ix
1	Fiddlers, dancing, art and utility: what isn't traditional? <i>Neil V. Rosenberg</i>	1
2	'The concert era' – innovation in Hardanger fiddling around 1900 <i>Håkon Asheim</i>	14
3	Square sets as 'folk' dance in Cape Breton community life <i>Jørn Borggreen</i>	25
4	Néillidh Boyle: replacing traditional concepts of storytelling in exploration of the acoustic art <i>Katie Boyle</i>	30
5	Participatory music in the Irish Gaeltacht <i>Éamonn Costello</i>	38
6	Revival of 'crooked' fiddle tunes in the performance of contemporary Quebec traditional music <i>Jean Duval</i>	48
7	The great divide: recent trends in the technical approach to the fiddle in Norway <i>Ånon Egeland</i>	58
8	On first hearing: the John Junner Collection of Scottish and Irish music recordings <i>Stuart Eydmann</i>	66
9	Galician fiddle versus tambourine <i>Alfonso Franco</i>	76
10	The status of the master-fiddler in eighteenth-century Scotland <i>Ronnie Gibson</i>	86
11	Foot-oriented fiddling among the Mississippi Choctaw: R. J. Willis and the house dance <i>Chris Goertzen</i>	92
12	Joe Holmes: the singing North Antrim fiddler <i>Len Graham</i>	104
13	Truth, beauty and authenticity in folk music <i>Ingrid Hamberg</i>	108
14	Follow the band: playing old-time tunes in new performance contexts <i>Gregory Hansen</i>	117
15	More than buzzing bluebottles: new contexts for Irish céilí bands <i>Daithí Kearney</i>	126

16	Traditional style: the student singer and the folk industry <i>Sandra Kerr</i>	136
17	‘Listen how the fiddle cries and laughs’: traditional Lithuanian fiddling in Soviet-era Siberia <i>Gaila Kirdienė</i>	141
18	Arranging traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle tunes <i>Ragnhild Knudsen</i>	154
19	New directions in contemporary fiddle playing in Norway <i>Gjermund Kolltveit</i>	160
20	The Donegal ‘Highland’ tunes: origins and movement of a dance-driven genre <i>Caoimhín Mac Aoidh</i>	168
21	A favourite Scotch measure: the relationship between a group of Scottish solo dances and the tune ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ <i>Mats Melin</i>	177
22	‘Fiddle icons confidential’: the making of a portrait <i>Nicole Murray</i>	188
23	‘ <i>Bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin</i> ’: dance, music, and community in Árainn <i>Deirdre Ní Chonghaile</i>	195
24	Scottish fiddle music in Australia in the twentieth century <i>Emma Nixon</i>	207
25	The fiddle as a symbolic creative therapeutic tool in music therapy <i>Josie Nugent</i>	213
26	Off the record: Irish traditional musicians and the music industry <i>Leah O’Brien Bernini</i>	218
27	Change and stability in Irish-American-Newfoundland fiddle tunes <i>Evelyn Osborne</i>	222
28	Cape Breton ‘crossroads’: cultural tourism, and the nature of ‘traditional’ <i>Janine Randall</i>	236
29	The FiddleLights project: an artist’s recording of bow-hand movements in fiddle tunes <i>Elisa Sereno-Janz</i>	247
30	Constraint and innovation in the traditional fiddle repertoire of Cape Breton <i>Sally Sommers Smith</i>	258
31	‘Jack is yet alive’: fiddle lessons in Shetland Isles schools, 1973–1985 <i>Pam Swing</i>	266
32	Examining the Irish connection in the southern American fiddle repertoire <i>Paul Wells</i>	275
	Select Bibliography.....	284
	Contributors.....	297

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Introduction

LIZ DOHERTY AND FINTAN VALLELY

Traditional music has moved from a primary purpose of servicing dance, to expressing artistic preference. This is particularly so for the fiddle, one of the most versatile, accessible and universal of acoustic instruments. The 2012 NAFCo conference set out to explore its current popularity in North Atlantic musics in terms of the shift of folk cultures' interest from social process to aesthetic product. The outer fringes of traditional melody-making now shade into other forms – jazz, contemporary classical, rock and pop – and indeed the antithesis of genre, so-called 'world' music. In 2012 we asked the questions: 'Is Alan Lomax's "cultural grey-out" to become reality?' and, 'Will traditional fiddling decompose into a cloud of intermeshed idioms and clichés expounded with fabulous but empty virtuosity?'

Ón gCos go Cluas addressed the process, product and the potential of this progression with eighty papers from all regions of the North Atlantic. Each had startling difference, not only confirming that each individual genre is set to preserve its boundaries and uniqueness, but showing or reminding us that the historical processes of revival, revitalisation, preservation and protection are no post-World War II phenomena, but have been active for more than a century in Europe.

The 32 papers in this volume relate to a broad sweep of geography, a range of depths of analysis, and, perhaps most interestingly, a spilling over of interest in the ethos of traditional musics into the visual art world. The rigid, methodical, precise written scholarship that grounds these papers is mediated to the aesthetic and artistic worlds by the tremendous imagination and esoteric fantasy of those engaging with painting and digital imaging, with healing, political survival and professional performance.

Most important, the timeliness of the conference topic is justified by the words in these pages. For it has been plain to see for a half-century that one-time popular dance (now 'traditional') is no longer the chosen social meeting ground for today's young people; the music instead has gone back into itself as an independent aesthetic form and re-emerges with astonishing virtuosity with all the hallmarks of a 'classical' form. This, in tandem with a softening of 'anti-folk' societal attitudes is producing wonderful new challenging music interfaces which are boosted by the possibility of 'mining' the notated resources from past centuries. It is the latter endeavour which underlines the fact that it is clear that there has always been intense application to the aesthetics of traditional musics at all times in all countries, and that those who are involved in them as 'classy' players and aficionados alike have – so to speak – been here before.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

This volume ties up loose ends and throws light on many areas of speculation. The papers are refreshing in their enthusiasm, reportage and thinking, the product of writers who are in most cases musicians first. They are a stimulating platform from which to move on, in understanding the paradox of the survival and thriving of indigenous music forms in the twenty-first century. We hope that musicians and musicologists alike will appreciate their diversity in this light.

1

Fiddlers, dancing, art and utility: what isn't traditional?

NEIL V. ROSENBERG

My thinking on the topic of the intersection of fiddle music and dance is shaped by ideas about art and utility which for me also affects how I view 'tradition'. In discussing these terms I speak mainly from the perspective of my research in Canada's Maritime Provinces, particularly New Brunswick. Since I believe that ethnographic scholarship, built on the principle of participant observation, rests upon a foundation of self-knowledge, I open each section with personal history. I begin with fiddlers.

Fiddlers

I started on classical violin lessons at the age of seven, my first recital coming a year later. But it was not until I was ten that I got my first aurally-learned tune, 'The Irish Washerwoman', from a fellow violinist in the community symphony; I thought of it as a melody, not a fiddle tune. At that time and place (post-war, American western middle-class), fiddling was stigmatised, and I knew virtually nothing about it. In 1954 as a teen, I abandoned violin and the school orchestra to play 'folk music' on the guitar with my peers, and then in college I discovered bluegrass in which I played banjo. Fiddling is an important component in bluegrass,¹ but even so, it took me several years to get beyond the stigma to appreciate and understand it. By then I had embarked on a career studying and teaching folklore, and in 1961 I moved to the Folklore Institute of Indiana University for graduate studies. Its founder, folktale scholar Stith Thompson, had been inspired by European folklorists, and the *Handbook of Irish Folklore* was an important text for us.

In Indiana I pursued parallel apprenticeships in the academic and music businesses.² When I wasn't studying, I played bluegrass and old time music with good fiddlers and other musicians in a variety of contexts including shows, jam sessions, dances, recordings and broadcasts.³ During my years as an apprentice folklorist, there was a broadening of interest in the discipline from the study of the forms of folklore to a search for its definitions – a search dominated by the idea of performance. By the 1970s folklore was being defined as 'artistic communication in small groups'.⁴ Today, when they talk about what in an earlier time would have been called 'Folklore', folklorists often call it 'expressive culture' or

‘intangible cultural heritage’. Starting in 1967, I began meeting younger folklorists who were fiddlers studying fiddling: Alan Jabbour, Richard Blaustein, and Miles Krassen. By 1968, the year I left Indiana, I had begun my own research on fiddling: buying records, learning fiddle tunes,⁵ and interviewing musicians.

At the core of my research was bi-musicality, what Burt Feintuch defines as ‘the learning of musical performance practices from traditions other than the scholar’s native music’.⁶ I quickly discovered that ‘bi-musical’ was also ‘bi-cultural’; I later described my studies as ‘a mixture of going native and doing research’, which to me resembles the immigrant experience.⁷ It is significant that Feintuch mentions ‘traditions’, for while folklorists redefined the name and definition of their discipline, they still retained the word ‘traditions’ to describe the things communicated or expressed. Like any widely used term, this means many things to many people. Viewing it broadly, Henry Glassie suggests that tradition is ‘the creation of the future out of the past’, tied both to history as ‘a process of cultural construction’ and to culture as ‘old ideas newly enacted’.⁸ ‘Tradition’, he adds, ‘is the means for deriving the future from the past ... History, culture and the human actor meet in tradition’.⁹ I learned about tradition in the music business as a witness and participant, and by hearing about it in interviews and conversations, all preserved on tapes and in detailed field notes written soon after the events. Much of what I heard consisted of stories people told about their own lives – what folklorists call ‘personal experience narratives’.¹⁰ The narratives I heard from and about musicians conveyed what I call their *persona*. These musicians and those in their community told stories that shaped and affirmed their roles as actors, like the ‘doers, knowers, and marketers’¹¹ participating in NAFCo 2012, as described by Ronström in 2008. Studying their discourse reaffirmed the impressions I gained as a scholar-performer committed to bi-musicality. I concluded that music performances always have *transactional* value – they are not only art but also have utility. This is why I speak of the music business. If you are a musician playing your music, and anyone else is there with you, then *ipso facto* you are participating in a music business *transaction* (this I will explain, in due course, using examples from my work as a folklorist and ethnomusicologist).

In 1968 I came to Memorial (Newfoundland’s provincial university), hired to organise an archive and teach courses in the Department of Folklore. I quickly learned that, in Newfoundland, the accordion was a very popular instrument, which often played dance music associated elsewhere with fiddles. Indeed, local dialect identified ‘the fiddler’ simply as a person who plays for dances.¹² Whatever instrument performed it,¹³ this local old-time music consisted of differing forms and repertoires that overlapped with each other and with what I already knew from elsewhere: local, national and international repertoires mixed together uniquely in each community.

Major papers for my folklore courses required fieldwork, and here I learned from my students about the region’s music business. In 1971, one such paper came from a student who borrowed a tape recorder from our archive and taped his wife’s uncle, a fiddler named Emile Benoit. The paper got a good grade and I really liked the recordings, which the student deposited in our archive. With his permission I sent a sampling of them to Mike Seeger, a friend who was working to find suitable performers for Mariposa, Canada’s largest and oldest folk festival. As he was one of the New Lost City Ramblers, I knew that he was

deeply interested in old-time music. My covering letter described Benoit's cultural milieu and praised his broad repertoire and vigorous style. Seeger wrote back: 'Mariposa is more in need of combination singer-musicians from the French community and will probably lean towards Quebec because of the expense'.¹⁴ Today, Emile (who died in 1992) is, along with Rufus Guinard, one of the pillars of contemporary Newfoundland fiddling repertoire and style. But that didn't begin to happen until later in the 1970s.¹⁵

From a music business point of view, I see in this experience three transactions: (1) Emile performed music for his niece's husband to help him with his term paper; (2) the husband used the taped performances to help pass my course; and (3) I used some of his recordings in an unsuccessful attempt to represent Newfoundland culture through its music, and Memorial's study of this, at a national venue. All three followed transactional patterns familiar to me from the music business: collection, academic promotion, and cultural representation. Experiences like this convinced me I needed to learn more about the folk music business elsewhere in Canada, so in 1972 I began field research in New Brunswick.¹⁶

From this point on in this paper I will be drawing from the field notes, tape tables of contents, and tape transcriptions associated with this research, a large body of written data that I now revisit after decades of neglect. It includes eight loose-leaf binders (which I have indexed) and a banker box of files. These documents were created because I sought to learn more about the relationship between folk music (what I now prefer to call vernacular music)¹⁷ and country music, the dominant contemporary popular music of the rural Maritimes in the 1970s. I have already published a number of articles about this research along the folklore-popular culture continuum, but as of yet only a few have focused on fiddling. These have looked at the career of Don Messer, not only the most influential Canadian fiddler of his generation but also a pre-eminent figure in the country's popular music. Messer, who died in 1973 at the age of 64, had been broadcasting and recording since the 1930s. By the 1960s his weekly television show, *Don Messer's Jubilee*, was one of Canada's most-watched programmes, surpassed only by *Hockey Night in Canada*. He and his cast toured nationally for decades. In the summer of 1972 I attended a show by Messer and his band at the Woodstock, New Brunswick annual community festival, Old Home Week. Held in an arena, the show featured old-time fiddling and sentimental country songs,¹⁸ and it was followed by a fiddle contest. Then the floor was cleared and Messer's band played for ballroom dancing.

Afterwards I spoke with the contest winner, Mac Brogan, from the town of Chipman. That fall I began my research with a survey of printed and recorded sources, and in the summer of 1973 I conducted a field survey, visiting and interviewing Brogan, retired country star Kidd Baker, country DJ Charlie Russell, and Earl Mitton, a fiddler who'd made records, done broadcasts, and played dances. In September 1974 I moved to Pleasant Villa, a small village in New Brunswick's Saint John River valley, to start a sabbatical year doing fieldwork in the region. I wasn't totally focused on fiddlers, but fiddling was an important part of the local vernacular and popular music. I met many fiddlers and heard stories about others. One I kept hearing about and whose music I eventually heard via recordings, but whom I never met, was Eloi Leblanc, an Acadian from College Bridge, a small town near Moncton. Everyone who spoke of him began by saying he was 'a great old-time fiddler'. His career as a public performer began on Moncton radio with the Bunkhouse Boys. He then

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

went to play with the Maritime Farmers on a Saint John radio show heard throughout the region. Finally, he ended up in the band of country singer Ranceford ‘Kidd’ Baker. Based in Woodstock, and later in a suburb of Toronto, Ontario, Baker’s show toured all over Canada and down into thirty-eight of the United States; he was also on national radio and made records.¹⁹

When Leblanc worked for Baker, he was known only as ‘Fiddling Cy’, and old-time musicians went to Kidd Baker shows just to see and hear him.²⁰ Vic Mullen, who worked in Baker’s band on his last tour in 1958 told me about Leblanc’s music:

He was a solo fiddle player, he didn’t play much background, he played good waltzes and he played great breakdown and hornpipes and that sort of thing in a little different style from the average fiddle player around. Had his own thing, it was sort of a French lilt to it but it was not the staccato stuff. Very true. Light and smooth.²¹

Fiddling Cy never spoke as such on stage, but he did do comedy. He wore a black tuxedo and a bowler hat. Mullen described a popular routine:

He did an imitation of an old-time spring wound gramophone where he would start on the low register and play, I think he played ‘Money Musk’ or one of those tunes that are kind of repetitious in one section and he’d start it low and Kidd would wind him up, and he kept going faster and higher, and no way could you believe that it wasn’t a real phonograph if you weren’t watching. You know – if you could hear it and not see it. And then he’d run down and Kidd would get behind him and wind him up again and it was a simple little act but he had it so good, so neat on the fiddle that it was really interesting and really catchy.²²

Baker also told me of other pantomime comedy routines,²³ but the musicians who spoke to me about Cy (known as Eloi to friends and bandmates) didn’t mention this: it was his fiddling that stuck in their memory. After Baker retired in the late fifties, Eloi Leblanc returned home to College Bridge where he lived the rest of his life with his sister. He became a noted exemplar of Acadian fiddling, often playing for cultural functions at the Université de Moncton. A record company formed by some producers from the local Radio Canada (CBC) station issued an album in 1977, and today field recordings of him made in the 1970s and housed at the Université de Moncton’s Centre d’Etudes Acadiennes Anselme Chiasson can be heard and downloaded at the website of La Famille Léger, an Acadian family band based in Seattle, Washington.²⁴ Eloi Leblanc created a career with his gift as a fiddler. The various transactions he engaged in were valued for differing qualities as his persona shifted from Cy to Eloi: art, entertainment, and cultural representation. One type of transaction – the cultural events at the university – led to other transactions: recordings.

Every fiddler I knew about in this region was thus involved in the music business, somehow. They played at contests, country shows, dances, parties, benefits, political rallies, jam sessions, recording sessions and so forth. Many knew each other, as they were part of a network of specialists and enthusiasts, each with their own persona. Each had personal experience narratives about transactions that helped them explain and define themselves.

Contest fiddler Mac Brogan repeatedly told me how he'd beaten Canadian fiddle champion Johnny Mooring at a contest in Mooring's home town of Springhill, Nova Scotia; the reason given was that the judges were sequestered, and the fiddlers' names weren't announced, just numbers, so that personal identities couldn't affect the decision. When Mac told this story in the mid-seventies, Mooring, who had recently been murdered by a jealous husband, was a much talked about figure.²⁵ Mac artfully attached a personal experience narrative about his successful fiddle transaction to a fresh tabloid murder story. I now turn to dance.

Dancing

When I began learning classical violin, my brother started tap dancing lessons; he practiced to a record. At the age of ten I was introduced to square dancing in my fifth-grade school class; this we did in the gym to recorded music. My parents enjoyed ballroom-style dancing, which they did mainly at parties and clubs, and I, as a teenager, experienced a ballroom dance cotillion which was part of school-related dance lessons. For those, our instructor provided live music in the form of a small combo fronted by horns and piano.²⁶ I also attended socials held by a local modern dance teacher, in which folk dances, to live piano accompaniment, were prominent. Folk dancing was popular at my college, but never to live fiddle or accordion music.²⁷

Dancing and fiddling were indeed not connected in my experience until I was an adult in Indiana, where I began meeting fiddlers who played for square dances. I played a few times at two different dances in neighbouring Brown County: one in the local state park lodge, the other at a country music park's barn. The former was for tourists, the latter for locals, and both featured square dances. At the state park there was a caller, but at the country music park barn each set ran its own figures, and there were also couples dances to contemporary country music. Here surreptitious drinking by the men in the parking lot sometimes led to fights and the sheriff would be called. In interviews, older Brown County fiddlers told me that in the early years of the century before these parks existed, people square-danced in their houses, similar to dance events I had heard of while studying folk-country connections in the Maritimes: the Doane Brothers from Shelburne County on Nova Scotia's South Shore told of growing up at such house dances.²⁸ Many young men knew a few fiddle tunes so they could 'spell' each other, and so no-one at the dance had to play all night. Mac Doane met Don Messer at such a dance and eventually he and his brothers worked in Messer's band, the New Brunswick Lumberjacks.²⁹ They played dances at rural halls in the Saint John River Valley, Saturday night events which were still being held (and at some of the same halls, and with some of the same dances) when I was in Pleasant Villa thirty-five years later. Community dances were important events in Pleasant Villa. Just down the road from us was the Queenstown Orange Hall in which, during our year there, the Orange Society held dances and an annual picnic (the only 'Orange' events that I heard about during my stay). But the hall was also rented out from time to time and early in the winter after I moved in, some Queenstown women organized an Athletic Association benefit dance, for which they hired two local musicians, an accordionist and a guitarist, who in turn recruited me to play with them.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

The rehearsals that ensued were mostly excuses for musical partying. Our leader, the accordionist, was reluctant to become known in the community as a dependable dance musician, as he didn't want to be bothered to provide music this way all of the time, preferring to play as he pleased at parties. My experience with this first dance event taught me the social politics – transactions, if you will – behind these events.³⁰ A few months later another dance musician, African-Canadian singer and tenor banjoist George Hector, was hired to play for a 4H Club³¹ benefit at the same Hall. Hector, whose performances with The Maritime Farmers had made him regionally famous, brought along a good fiddler and a guitarist, and I was asked to sit in on banjo. Entire families – men, women, and children – came to dances at the Queenstown Orange Hall, food and non-alcoholic drinks were sold and served, and between dances the men went out to their cars for a drink, just as they did at the barn dance in Indiana.³²

What kind of dancing took place? Mostly, couples danced to country music. Some older pop standards like 'In the Mood' were expected, as was a rock and roll piece or two at the end of the evening. There was a mixer, 'The Paul Jones', in which men and women formed separate lines and then danced in two big counter-rotating circles. When the music stopped, single men and women partnered with whomever they were next to for a couples dance.³³ This was done five times, and for the band, it meant playing a new tune for each segment. There were also square dances which everyone knew like 'The Quadrille' and 'The Grand March and Circle', for which no caller was needed. These, like similar ones in Newfoundland, had five parts and were done to familiar fiddle tunes like 'Wagoner', 'Year of Jubilo', and 'The Irish Washerwoman'.³⁴ Sitting in at the 4H benefit led to my recruitment by Hector to play banjo and guitar with him at several Canadian Legion halls downriver. The repertoire was similar, but because there was a bar, no families were present and the atmosphere was different. I encountered other kinds of dancing too. One man told me about his square dance club (hobbyists who met weekly during the winter, dancing to records with a live caller). He spoke of attending square dance festivals across the border in Maine where there was good live music by some former country stars and a well-known caller.³⁵

In contrast to this formal activity, I also witnessed dancing at parties, like the anniversary celebration of an Acadian woodsman at his 'camp'³⁶ near Chipman. I noted that as we played, 'there was a lot of dancing – step dancing to the fast stuff and waltzing or fox trots to the slow stuff'.³⁷ One dance I attended at a veterans' club in Fredericton, the provincial capital, provided live music (mainly contemporary country music songs) for couples dancing; there was a bar, the patrons were young and middle-aged, and most of the men were veterans. Step dancing not only took place at parties, it was also institutionalised in combination with fiddle music at contests and at the big provincial folksong festival in Miramichi.

Studying dancing in this way (as a participant observer using bi-musicality as a technique) was a challenge. For, while I interviewed dance musicians, made field notes about dance, and recorded dances, the actual provision of music for dancers distanced me. Instrument, sound system and stage were markers of difference. While our music was shaped for them, and their expectations and requests affected our music performances, we acted and were treated as specialists. For most people, dancing was a pleasant musical contact sport

which, like most amateur sports, was taken seriously, and regulars at the Orange Hall dances could offer pointed critiques of a band if it hindered their dancing pleasure.³⁸ But some, like the square dance club and step-dancers at contests and festivals, practiced it somewhat more consciously as a staged art.

The music for dancing could come from either recordings or live musicians, and those who ran and called dances were key figures: the connections between fiddling and dancing went from strong to weak depending upon a variety of such factors. The fact that fiddlers generally knew about dances and had opinions about the connections between the arts of dancing and fiddling leads me now to consideration of *Art*.

Art

I was raised on art museums, the literary arts, and art music concerts. I believed the arts existed for their own sake. Frames, stages, recordings, and print: all separated the work of art from its creator. This modernist perspective was reinforced in college. The 'new critics' who taught in the fifties focused on works of literature in this way and so did those writing about abstract painting.

In contrast, my experience with music taught me about the art creator's perspective. When I started playing folk music, my parents began calling upon me to perform for 'the company' at cocktail parties. Records were made; concerts and radio followed. My role as a performer required me to have a personal repertoire and style. In emulating favourites, I unconsciously learned creative skills like arranging and musical execution. Knowing about music in this way – from within – made me aware that each performance is a work of art in which skill, training, inspiration, and practice all play a part. It was easy for me to understand and agree with the redefinition of folklore as 'artistic communication in small groups', for in studying storytellers I noticed many similarities between the performance skills they needed and those in the music business. By the time I began fieldwork in the Maritimes³⁹ I was viewing my work as an exercise in bi-musicality that included studying art-criticism within vernacular music systems. Issues of art were rarely spoken about directly, but my experience with one New Brunswick fiddler in which this did happen was instructive. In 1974 Mac Brogan told me about Oscar Egers, a Chipman construction worker who was the son of a famous fiddler from 'the Ridge', a nearby rural neighbourhood. Everyone knew Oscar was passionately involved in fiddling – that was his persona. Mac told me: 'He knows his dad's old tunes, but plays a variety of other stuff and is particularly good on waltzes'.⁴⁰ We met at a fiddle contest: I was a judge, Oscar a contestant.⁴¹

Oscar had grown up listening to his dad at home and Don Messer on the radio. He hung out with other young men who played the fiddle, like Gerry Robichaud who later moved to New England and made records. Oscar was 'in his element' at parties. He made it his mission to find out peoples' musical talents and to make them feel comfortable about performing in front of others at parties. One regular at these jam sessions with small audiences was Dave, a neighbour who played the guitar and sang well.⁴² Since Oscar also performed in more formal settings such as weddings, political rallies and dances, his repertoire also included the latest popular country favourites as well as older music from various sources.

All of which Dave was able to play too, but was nervous about performing in public, so he rarely joined Oscar then.

My Maritime informants didn't spend a lot of time playing records when I was around. But Oscar did have a collection of recordings by fiddlers he admired, and could proudly show me the first album of Gerry Robichaud, his old friend who'd made good in the States. He also had several albums by Sean McGuire, the influential Irish fiddler who brought techniques and ideas of classical violin to Irish fiddle music somewhat in the same way as Don Messer did for Canadian fiddle music.⁴³ But Oscar's greatest enthusiasm was for Cape Breton style fiddling, the style of which he loved but which he didn't play himself. He claimed he couldn't master the right hand wrist work needed for inserting the essential 'snap' to the notes. He prized too his records of Winston 'Scotty' Fitzgerald, Cape Breton's most widely recorded and broadcasted performer in the fifties and sixties,⁴⁴ and who had local connections in that his guitarist, Estwood Davidson, was from Chipman.⁴⁵ Oscar had a story he liked to tell about meeting Fitzgerald, which I heard in the following circumstances. Oscar called me unexpectedly one cold winter Sunday evening. He and Dave were in Upper Hampstead, just a few miles down the river road from Pleasant Villa, with Doug, a regular listener at his parties. They were visiting Doug's father-in-law, a prosperous farmer. He asked me to bring my banjo along and join them, as they were 'on a little tear' or maybe 'a toot' (cutting loose after a stressful Saturday night). When I arrived at the farmhouse, Oscar told me they'd been invited to provide music the previous day at a housewarming where, from the beginning, the room in which they were playing was filled with women 'howdying' loudly back and forth across the space, catching up on the news. Then, as they continued to play, someone turned on the stereo, a massive eight-speaker affair. In addition to the people at the housewarming who liked old time music, there was also 'a hard rock crowd', and '*they'd* decided to listen to *their* stuff' too. It had been a frustrating evening, Oscar saying it reminded him of the time Winston 'Scotty' Fitzgerald had come to visit him.⁴⁶ Fitzgerald and Estwood Davidson were visiting Chipman, and Oscar had been talking about this at work, having arranged to invite Fitzgerald over to his house for the evening. He was very happy when Fitzgerald and the Davidsons arrived: 'I was in my glory', he said, proud to be visited by this famous fiddler – 'violinist, really', he added – and it had been quite an occasion. Unfortunately, a fellow worker who'd arrived 'loaded drunk' spoiled it. He barged up to Fitzgerald and said: 'I hear you're quite a fiddler, dear, give us "The Mockingbird"'. Oscar repeated this for emphasis, as the tune (actually 'Listen to The Mockingbird') is a nineteenth-century programmatic showpiece that Oscar and many other fiddlers considered hackneyed and overplayed and, compared to the complex and demanding Cape Breton fiddle music, was boring and banal. Then the drunk tried to sit in Fitzgerald's lap, causing such a row that the visitors had to leave. Oscar mimicked the voice of Estwood Davidson's sister-in-law while going out the door as she commented on the drunken buffoon: 'Didn't he know there was high-class people here?' at which everyone had laughed. Oscar's stories constituted a parable about art, told during an evening of music-making that ended with one of the guests opening negotiations to hire us for the St. Patrick's Day dance at a nearby Legion.⁴⁷ In linking the previous night's frustration with people who didn't appreciate his music to his experience with high-class artist Fitzgerald, he sent a message via personal experience narratives to

his hosts about his persona. These were his expectations for audience behaviour toward his music that night and, by extension, the future. This brings me to utility.

Utility

'Utility', like 'transaction' and 'value', is a word often associated with economic theories. But the usefulness of art extends beyond the bottom line. Social and emotional values that cannot be quantified play significant roles here. Oscar was willing to share his art to help others – to make it useful – but only under certain conditions. His pleasure in the art of music came when he was playing at jam sessions with a small attentive audience. He actively worked to place himself in these situations, and that required transactions. That was the heart of his business: it was there that he made his music useful to himself and to others. Music is particularly useful for dancers. When I began playing for square dances in Indiana I found it fun to really get into a tune, but eventually the excitement would run out and it became more work than play. Still, the exercise built muscles that were useful in other contexts.⁴⁸ The transactions had utility for me in the realms of learning and practice in addition to the utility of my music-making for the dancers. Music transactions can have unexpected utility. In my first interview with Mac Brogan, he connected contests to dances, telling me about the judging at an important Nova Scotia fiddle contest where each player was required to:

play a jig and a reel and a waltz. And you're judged, in Amherst now, you're judged like, so much on each one. And I've seen real good women fiddlers over there. But they couldn't play a good waltz
[N: Hmm. I wonder why?]

I don't know, they just [he searched for words] all they ever done was play old time music, like, I guess, never played for dances or anything, but that's what helped me.⁴⁹

Don Messer recognised and utilised this fact. He played dances throughout his career, recorded fiddle tunes with dance calls, and used 'dance' in the titles of his fiddle tune books and record albums. His television show included a four couple dance troupe, the Buchta Dancers.⁵⁰

Messer had died just after I started my research four decades ago, and since then much has changed. Since music and dance in New Brunswick and the other Maritime provinces are now different in such aspects as repertoires, styles, venues, and social values, I now ask: what from this old experience is relevant today? I think it is important for us to be able to talk about our music business across the genre differences that separate us, and studying the variety of *transactions* in the music business is one way of doing this. This has taught me that art and utility are two sides of the same coin and that the production and marketing of art is shaped through the fabric of transactions. This brings me to tradition.

Tradition

I end with the question: 'What *isn't* traditional?' In my introduction to *Transforming Tradition* I examined the thinking of folklorists who connected 'tradition' to the idea of performance as 'the nexus between the individual and the society'.⁵¹ Today, I see performance as one part

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

of a transaction, always nesting in a cluster of traditions. Tradition exists not just in how and what the fiddler plays or the dancer steps, but in how fiddle contests are run, who organises the dances, and a myriad of other practices. Henry Glassie says:

Tradition can be static, and it can be fluid; it can whirl in place, revolving through kaleidoscopic transformations, or it can strike helical, progressive, or retrograde tracks through time.⁵²

Vivid words, but I think you will find it worth your while to look carefully at your own music business life, with the idea that your daily transactions involve traditional patterns. I have found this vital to making decisions about how to utilise my own art and to understand how others utilise theirs.

Notes

¹ ‘Father of Bluegrass’ Bill Monroe, in an interview with Ralph Rinzler, described the fiddle as ‘the first child’ of the bluegrass instrument family (the banjo was the fifth – after mandolin, guitar, and bass). Bill Monroe and Ralph Rinzler, ‘Ralph Rinzler Interviews Bill Monroe’ (Track 21), on *Happy Birthday Bill Monroe: Dawg Plays Big Mon*, Acoustic Oasis ACD-77, 2011. The liner notes indicate that the interview was recorded in New York City by David Grisman in 1965 and was previously unissued.

² See Neil V. Rosenberg, ‘Picking Myself Apart: A Hoosier Memoir’, *Journal of American Folklore*, 108, no. 429 (1995), 277–286.

³ Shorty Shehan, Roger Smith, Vassar Clements, Bernard Lee, Birch Monroe, Byron Berline, Thurman Percifield, Jimmy Campbell, Pat Dunford, Art Rosenbaum, Clayton McMichen, and Benny Martin, are the names of fiddlers that I can recall playing with.

⁴ See Dan Ben-Amos, ‘Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context’, in *Toward New Perspectives in Folklore*, ed. by Américo Paredes and Richard Bauman (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1972), pp. 3–15.

⁵ On the banjo and the mandolin.

⁶ Burt Feintuch, ‘Editor’s Introduction: Words in Common’, *Journal of American Folklore*, 108, no. 430 (1995), 391–394.

⁷ Neil V. Rosenberg, ‘Strategy and Tactics in Fieldwork: The Whole Don Messer Show’, in *The World Observed: Reflections on the Fieldwork Process*, ed. by Edward D. Ives and Bruce Jackson (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p. 145.

⁸ Henry Glassie, ‘Tradition’, *Journal of American Folklore*, 108, no. 430 (1995), 395–412 (p. 395).

⁹ Glassie, p. 409.

¹⁰ ‘PENs’ in the jargon of folkloristics.

¹¹ Owe Ronström, ‘Fiddling with Pasts: From Tradition to Heritage’, in *Crossing Over: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 3*, ed. by Ian Russell and Anna Kearney Guigné (Aberdeen & St. John’s: Elphinstone Institute & Dept. of Folklore/School of Music/MMaP, 2010), pp. 265–282.

¹² George M. Story, William J. Kirwin, and John D.A. Widdowson, eds, ‘Fiddle’, in *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 2nd edn (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 173.

¹³ Fiddle, accordion, harmonica, voice – all were used for dances in historic outport Newfoundland.

¹⁴ MS, personal letter to Neil V. Rosenberg, 6 March, 1972.

¹⁵ The process that started the contemporary Newfoundland fiddle music revival began in 1974 with recordings from MUNFLA of Benoit and Guinard. Kelly Russell heard a demo tape that included them prepared by Peter Narváez for a public open house showcasing research at Memorial. See Peter Narváez, 'Country Music in Diffusion: Juxtaposition and Syncretism in the Popular Music of Newfoundland' in *Sonny's Dream: Essays on Newfoundland Folklore and Popular Culture* (St. John's: Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive Publications, 2012), p. 273, fn. 6.

¹⁶ Neil V. Rosenberg, 'Studying Country Music and Contemporary Folk Music Traditions in the Maritimes: Theory, Techniques and the Archivist', *Phonographic Bulletin*, 14 (1976), 18–21.

¹⁷ Narváez gives a good introduction in the first paragraph of his 'Newfoundland Vernacular Song', in *Sonny's Dream*, p. 105.

¹⁸ I wish I'd taken notes! There may have been staged dancing but I think I would have remembered that.

¹⁹ LeBlanc's career fits well with the model I present in Neil V. Rosenberg, 'Big Fish, Small Pond: Country Musicians and their Markets', in *Media Sense: The Folklore-Popular Culture Continuum*, ed. by Peter Narváez and Martin Laba (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1986), pp. 148–166.

²⁰ From my fieldnotes (6 May 1975) after interviewing dance accordionist Gordon Stilwell in Saint John, NB.: 'Gordon said he would go to Kidd Baker shows just to see Fiddlin' Cy who was a fine fiddler and could really fill in behind singing, etc.'

²¹ Vic Mullen, interview with author, Dartmouth, NS, 28 July 1978, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), accession number 75-288, tape F3087/C3083.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Ranceford 'Kidd' Baker, interview with author, Woodstock, NB, 2 August 1973. Baker prefaced his description of Leblanc's act with a discussion of ethnicity in his audiences. He told me Eloi was with him for thirteen years.

²⁴ Bio (with photo) from: *La Famille Leger*, <http://www.acadianfiddle.com/artists2/2015/1/29/eloi-leblanc> [accessed May 2015]. A recording of Leblanc was included on *Bellows and Bows: The Anthology of Canadian Fiddle and Accordion Music*, ed. by Sherry Johnson, CD06, St. John's NL: Centre for Music, Media and Place, Back on Track Series, 2012.

²⁵ Mooring can also be heard on *Bellows and Bows*.

²⁶ See Dawn Williams, 'How to Make Use of Private Label Rights Products and Not Fail!', <http://www.r-o-d-d-y-t-r-u-m-p-e-t.cc/olcott.html> [accessed May 2012, not found in 2018], and <http://www.northwestladybug.com/2007/10/smattering-of-memories-of-growing-up-in.html> [accessed May 2012]. Both describe the Berkeley dance cotillions of Dart Tinkham – first from a musician's viewpoint, the second from a dancer's perspective.

²⁷ I was unaware of 'old-time' as a musical category until the New Lost City Ramblers began their career in 1959.

²⁸ I describe the Doane brothers in my article, 'The Politics of Organology and the Nova Scotia Banjo: An Essay in Honour of Beverley Diamond', in *Music Traditions, Cultures, and Contexts*, ed. by Robin Elliott and Gordon E. Smith (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2010), pp. 181–207.

²⁹ Vernon Doane interview with author, Gunning Cove, NS, 23 November 1974, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), Accession number 85-241, tape F7778/C7863; John Maxwell 'Mac' Doane interview with author, Saint John, NB, 17 April 1975, Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), Accession number 85-241, tape F7796/C7881.

³⁰ Older women from locally prominent families organized the benefit. Everybody had party lines, and there were few secrets! It took them about four months to hear that a new musician had moved into Pleasant Villa. Imagine Alice Munro writing about this – rural New Brunswick was not very different from rural southern Ontario and the Ottawa Valley, places she writes about so compellingly. Indeed, much of these transactions and the discourse surrounding them reminded me of my mother’s family, small farm town people from southern Michigan who’d migrated to Washington State.

³¹ ‘Head, Heart, Hands, and Health’ are the 4 Hs in the green four-leaf clover that is the logo/symbol of this youth development organization with a rural/agricultural focus, formed in the U.S. in the early twentieth century, eventually becoming international. See ‘4-H’, Wikipedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/4-H> [accessed May 2012].

³² Drinking was a constant topic! In a predominately Protestant milieu I heard stories of alcoholism, teetotalling, backsliding; the dangers of the road life of touring musicians, the pleasures of drinking and playing music at parties, etc.

³³ ‘Well you right and left and then you, when you meet your partner, you dance’. ‘Mac’ Doane interview, op cit.

³⁴ All three of these tunes were in Don Messer’s repertoire.

³⁵ The former country stars were Ray and Ann Little. He told me the name of the caller, but I failed to note it. I wasn’t thinking of dance at that point – early in the fieldwork – as part of what I was studying. Later, in 23 July 1975 issue of the Woodstock Bugle, I noticed an ad for a square dance: only the name of the caller was given.

³⁶ Cottage, cabin, etc.: a rural weekend/vacation home.

³⁷ From my fieldnotes (12 October 1974) Salmon River (near Chipman), New Brunswick: ‘It was as if a dance and a jam session were going on at the same time, a very easy and pleasant situation, considering the general drunkenness. At various times each of the musicians was embraced and kissed by a well-juiced lady whose persona included, apparently, ‘letting go’ at parties like this. At one point a drunk was observed dancing about with a 5–6 inch trout in hand’.

³⁸ I’d gone to a dance hosted by Fredericton radio country singer Aubrey Hanson. Not long after that, at a time when I was out of town, George Hector played a dance there. ‘People had been quite happy with his music for the dance, and had liked it much better than the music provided by Aubrey Hanson which was denounced for its perfunctory nature, especially the Paul Jones and Grand March and Circle’. Fieldnotes (1 August, 1975) Queenstown, New Brunswick.

³⁹ When I began studying folk music and ethnomusicology, one of the first intellectual challenges I encountered concerned the arts. The concept of ‘art’, I learned, rested on some kind of concept of aesthetics. My teacher, Alan P. Merriam, was just writing *The Anthropology of Music*, and, in a chapter entitled ‘Aesthetics and the Interrelationship of the Arts’ he discussed ‘the difficulty of cross-cultural application of the aesthetic concept’. Merriam argued that he couldn’t know for certain if his first nations and tribal African musical informants had a concept of aesthetics about their music. He couldn’t know for certain because they didn’t talk about the six ‘components’ of the aesthetic concept. I came to view this as a tree-falling-in-the-forest kind of argument.

⁴⁰ This quote is indirect, taken from my fieldnotes.

⁴¹ Oscar placed second.

⁴² Also a regular was Mac Brogan, the contest fiddler who’d introduced me to Oscar. Unless the party was at his house, he didn’t play any fiddle. He carried a thumb pick and an electric bass to parties at Oscar’s in Chipman and nearby. At the time he’d just had open-heart surgery, his health was sometimes precarious, so he didn’t party as much he had in the past.

⁴³ ‘Sean McGuire’, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sean_McGuire [accessed 20 May 2012].

ROSENBERG *Fiddlers, dancing, art and utility: what isn't traditional?*

⁴⁴ 'Winston Fitzgerald', Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Winston_Fitzgerald [accessed May 2012].

⁴⁵ Davidson's brother Bill played fiddle with Hank Snow; another brother George Davidson was a noted local storyteller and character.

⁴⁶ Oscar's Fitzgerald story in my fieldnotes, (2 February 1975) Upper Hampstead, NB.

⁴⁷ Details were discussed – pay, band members, what's expected in the way of music and so forth, and that's how the evening ended.

⁴⁸ Our Junior High School Orchestra rehearsed weekly and twice a year at graduation, as new graduates paraded across the stage, we played Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*. It seemed to go on forever. We Orchestra members became so bored by it that we tried to negotiate with one graduating class to play something else. But they refused to deviate from the sentimental favourite, so *Pomp and Circumstance* it was.

⁴⁹ Mac Brogan interview with author, Chipman, NB, 5 August 1973. Available at the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), accession number 75-288, tape F3092/C3088.

⁵⁰ For more on Don Messer, see Lester B. Sellick, *Canada's Don Messer* (Kentville, NS: Kentville Publishing Company, 1969); Li Robbins, *Don Messer's Violin: Canada's Fiddle* (Toronto: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2005); Johanna Bertin, *Don Messer: The Man behind the Music* (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane Editions, 2009).

⁵¹ Neil V. Rosenberg, 'Introduction', in *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 1–25.

⁵² Glassie, p. 405.

‘The concert era’: innovation in Hardanger fiddling around 1900

HÅKON ASHEIM

In pre-industrial rural Norwegian communities, the role of the fiddler or *spelemann* was clearly defined. They would play for dances and festivities, and during summer time many were busy playing for the traditional three-day weddings. Back in 1850 most such *spelemenn* had probably never heard of ‘concerts’, which was then a way of music-making which only existed in cities. But this was about to change in several ways: new music from Europe – the *runddans* (waltz-style) music – was spreading, new social customs were developing, as were pietistic movements which revived the earlier opposition of religion to fiddling and dance culture. As a response to the challenges of new times, Norwegian Hardanger fiddlers developed their own concert culture in the decades around 1900 – a culture with many fascinating features, the impact of which can still be felt today. This period – the ‘concert era’ of Hardanger fiddling – represents a cultural innovation not only in the way in which old music is adapted to a new social situation, but also in that totally new music content was inspired by that situation. Equally interesting is posterity’s reaction to these innovations: part acceptance and part rejection. We who are performers of Norwegian traditional music today need to be aware of this historic background, since it has contributed to the shaping of our repertoire as well as our ways of making music in social contexts.

Fiddlers were not alone in wishing to preserve traditional music and other non-material folk art despite social and cultural modernisation. In the nineteenth century, Norwegian artists and scholars of the National Romantic Movement studied and collected folk poetry and music intensively. The first important collector of folk melodies was Ludvig M. Lindeman (1812–1887), whose work was published from the 1850s onwards; composers like Edvard Grieg based many of their best-known compositions on melodies from Lindeman’s and similar collections. Artists and intellectuals of the Romantic Movement indeed created the very concept of folk music, even though at the same time folk music was still alive in its own environment of *spelemenn*, dancers and singers – a world of ideas and concepts quite remote from the ideals of romantic artists. Nevertheless, the first concerts with genuine Norwegian folk music came about as a result of the meeting of these two worlds.

Beginnings of concert fiddling

The first concerts of Norwegian traditional musicians mainly featured Hardanger fiddle playing, a practice which persisted for a long time, during which the Hardanger fiddle gained recognition as a national symbol. The first musician to use it in a concert was probably the world famous violin virtuoso Ole Bull (1810–1880), in Paris, 1833, and the next may well have been the traditional fiddler Torgeir Augundsson from Telemark, nicknamed 'Myllarguten' (the Miller Boy; 1801–72). This happened in Kristiania (now Oslo) in 1849, at a concert arranged by Ole Bull on the most prestigious concert stage of the city, the Mason's Lodge. According to the advertisement, Ole Bull was to 'assist' Myllarguten,¹ that is, Bull played a separate section. The concert attracted an audience of 1,500, enabling Myllarguten, who at that time was very poor in spite of being the most popular fiddler of a relatively large region, to buy a farm with his fee. At this Kristiania concert, Myllarguten got enthusiastic applause, but his music must have been unfamiliar to the majority of the urban audience. However, an anonymous newspaper review – obviously written by a musically competent person – shows a surprisingly good understanding of the qualities of traditional music:

Extremely peculiar is this '*Vildtspel*', [wild playing]² or his treatment of the four motifs of which the *halling* usually consists. Th. Audunsson dissolves each of these motifs in its constituent parts, in such a way that he takes a single part of one of them and connects it to a single part of the other one and as an ending forces the whole melody to come forth, but always varied both by new harmonic connections and by syncopated or in many other ways nuanced bowings. It is this rich and masterfully executed variation which gives Th. Audunsson's playing a kind of classical touch which all foreign violinists in the world would be at loss to copy.³

The determination of an exact number of motifs (four) in the analysis of the *halling* form is surprising, and probably the only one of its kind, for in the *halling* genre in general, as well as in the short-motif tunes of the *springar* and other Norwegian fiddle genres, the number of motifs vary a lot. Nevertheless, this is one of the earliest known attempts to analyse the short motif and variation form of Hardanger fiddle music.⁴ It also underscores Ole Bull's judgement of the artistic quality of Myllarguten's playing.

The concert era

Myllarguten went on several concert tours after this, including to Sweden and Denmark, and other fiddlers followed his example. Concerts with Hardanger fiddle players became frequent from the 1880s, by which time the traditional use of the Hardanger fiddle in celebrations and dances had begun to fade; wedding traditions changed and became simpler, and by the early 1900s, the accordion had largely replaced the fiddle as the popular dance instrument. Research into the biographies of concert fiddlers shows that their motivation for going on concert tours was centred on the same factors that were important to Myllarguten: earning money and achieving fame, but now in a larger geographical area. The fiddlers' concerts became such a marked phenomenon that folk music historians have named the period from about 1880 to World War II 'the concert era' in Hardanger fiddle history.⁵

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Some of the concert fiddlers (*konsertspelemenn*) became remarkably popular around 1900, even in parts of Norway that did not have strong Hardanger fiddle or other folk music traditions. Sometimes audience numbers exceeded 1,000, especially in America, where several of these fiddlers toured in areas with Scandinavian immigrants. Recordings and accounts of the best of concert fiddlers' playing, show evidence of both the high quality in their music and their creativity.

Perhaps the most famous of all concert fiddlers was Lars Fykerud (1862–1902) from Telemark. His brother, Hans (1860–1942), had actually started to play concerts before him, and his success in the early 1880s inspired the younger brother and several other fiddlers to try concert playing. Both brothers spent several years in America. Lars Fykerud was a brilliant and self-conscious musician, but he wasted the fortune he earned in America, and returned to Norway, sick and ruined. Other important players of this generation were Sjur Helgeland (1858–1924) from Vossestrand, who never went on big tours, but whose playing was acclaimed on concert or competition stages, and Eivind Aakhus from Setesdal (1854–1937), who emigrated to the US in 1878 and had numerous concert tours, one of them with Alexander Bull, Ole Bull's son.⁶ From the 1880s and onwards, some older fiddlers like Leiv Sandsdalen (1825–1896), Ola Mosafinn (1828–1912) and Knut Dahle (1834–1921)⁷ also tried the concert business. They experienced the economic side of it in different ways: Sandsdalen had to compete with the younger Hans Fykerud, so if Fykerud announced a concert in the same city as him, Sandsdalen advertised his own concert anew to a reduced price; Ola Mosafinn, like several other fiddlers, was cheated of his concert income by a 'friend' who was supposed to help him collect it.



Figure 1 Jørn Røn (1843–1911) and Olav Moe on 17 May 1892. The differences between generations are shown in dress fashion, the choice of bow type and the bow and fiddle holds.

Photo in Valdres Folk Music Archive

In the early 1900s, a new generation of fiddlers appeared on the concert stages. Among the most famous were Olav Moe (1872–1967; see Figure 1) from Valdres,⁸ discussed more extensively below; Torkjell Haugerud (1876–1954; see Figure 2),⁹ one of the greatest sources of different Telemark traditions; Arne Bjørndal (1882–1965),¹⁰ Mosafinn's pupil and the founder of the important folk music archive Arne Bjørndals Samling in Bergen; and Halldor Meland (1884–1972),¹¹ whose elaborate versions of many tunes from his native region, Hardanger, are often quite different from the old, short dance tune versions. The first female fiddlers to have considerable success with concert tours were Signe Flatin Neset (1912–1975)¹² and Kristiane Lund (1889–1976),¹³ at a time when the vast majority of both concert and other fiddlers were still men. Sound recordings survive of all of the above mentioned fiddlers, except Myllarguten, the Fykerud brothers and Leiv Sandsdalen.¹⁴

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a fiddle piece. The top system, labeled 'A', consists of two staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 6/8 time signature. It features a sequence of notes with a trill (tr) at the end. The second staff continues the melody with similar notation. The bottom system, labeled 'B', also consists of two staves. It shows arpeggiated figures with various fingerings (1, 2, 3, 4) and scordatura notation (flats) for the first two measures, followed by in natura notation (naturals) for the remaining measures.

Figure 2 Excerpts from *Huldrejenta* by Torkjell Haugerud, composed 1897. New ways of using the old *scordatura* (indicated at start): A. Passage to the parallel minor, shifts. B. Arpeggios. Top: *scordatura* notation, below: *in natura*.

While the Hardanger fiddle was rarely played north of Sunnfjord before 1900, its role as a national symbol and the success of its practitioners in concert tours and competitions (see below) may explain the fact that it was adopted by many fiddlers further north from about 1905, especially in the regions of Nordfjord and Møre og Romsdal. Some natives of this part of Norway who started as regular fiddle players became active concert musicians with the Hardanger fiddle: such as Ivar Kjellstad (from Sunnmøre, 1868–1914) and Hallvard Ørsal (Nordmøre, 1875–1943).

Competitions, Swedish parallels

Also starting in the 1880s, competitions were arranged to help keep traditional fiddling alive, and this became an important parallel history to that of folk music concerts.¹⁵ Several of the competitions were arranged in Bergen in the years around 1900 and were forerunners

of the annual national contest (*Landskappleiken*), which was arranged for the first time in 1923 and is still running. The competitions became important gatherings for those interested in traditional music and dance. They took over some of the role of the old markets as opportunities for performers to show their skills, meet other folk musicians, and also for those who couldn't or didn't want to go on concert tours. But the famous concert fiddlers often participated in competitions too and would often get the highest prizes. Indeed, Lars Fykerud won the first local competition in Bø, 1888, Sjur Helgeland, the first larger scale one in Bergen, 1896, and Olav Moe the next there in 1897.

National romanticism, which was strong in Norway, together with Ole Bull's initiatives, may explain the fact that this concert and competition trend started so early in this country. Actually, the fiddlers' concerts played a significant part in an early stage of the history of Norwegian public concerts. In Sweden, which was in union with Norway until 1905, the corresponding trend of *estradspele* (stage playing) didn't start until 1906, the year of the first Swedish folk music competition in Gesunda.¹⁶ Norwegians usually say that 'the Swedes come up with all new things before us', but this case seems to be an exception.

The concert fiddlers' repertoire

A big part of the fiddle music played on Norwegian concert and competition stages from the 1880s (see Figure 3) consisted of traditional tunes: mostly dance tunes, sometimes wedding marches or *lydarslått* (listening tunes).

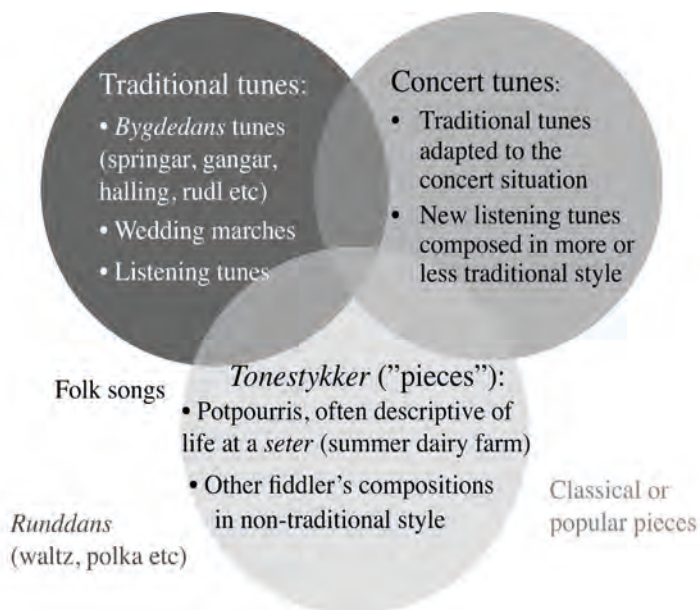


Figure 3 Genre categories in the concert repertoire of *konsertspelemenn*.

It is hardly surprising that the latter category, the 'listening' tunes, was to grow significantly during the 'concert era'. Most concert fiddlers composed pieces that were influenced by

romantic artistic ideals, very often evoking the atmosphere and sounds of the *seter* life – transhumance, summer dairy farming as it was still extensively practised in large parts of Norway and Sweden in the 1800s, and still is in some places. The pieces often had a potpourri form: typical ingredients would be imitations of the cow-calling of dairy maids, cow lows or cuckoo calls, and fragments of fiddle tunes or folk songs. One of the sources of inspiration for such compositions was probably Ole Bull's popular rhapsodic violin piece *Et Sæterbesøg* (Visit to a *Seter*). Most such rhapsodic fiddler compositions did not survive changes in music fashion however, but one exception is Sjur Helgeland's *Budeiene på Vikafjellet* (The Dairy Maids at Vikafjellet).¹⁷ However, some of the more traditionally-sounding listening tunes that were composed, developed or became popular during the concert era are still often played. Among these are *Kivlemøyane* from Telemark, a tune cycle rooted in ancient melodic material and legends,¹⁸ and Sjur Helgeland's version of 'Bygdatrøen' (see Figure 4), in which he used the old *scordatura* to achieve parallel octaves at an impressive speed.

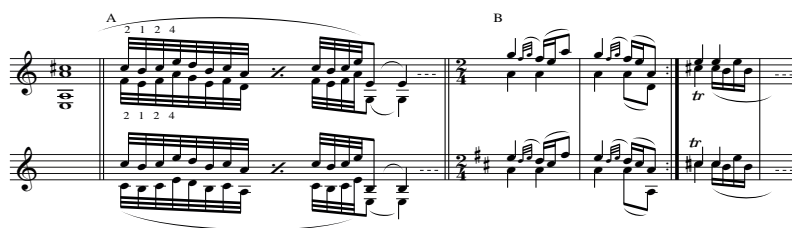


Figure 4 Excerpts from Sjur Helgeland's version of 'Bygdatrøen', listening tune attributed to Nils Mørkve ('Bygdatrøen', 1781–1857). The *scordatura* indicated at start favours parallel octaves (A), and it has the tuning of the two top strings in common with the well-known *scordatura* a-e1-a1-c#2 – parts of the tune are in the style of a *halling* in that tuning (B). Top: *scordatura* notation, below: *in natura*.

An interesting example of the potpourri genre, and one of the pieces that only survives in recordings of the composer's own playing, is *Sæterliv* (Seter Life) by Olav Moe (see Figure 5). Moe was in many ways a typical *konsertspelemann*: his background was that of an ordinary rural *spelemann* from Valdres in eastern Norway, he was very active on the competition and concert stages, starting around 1900 (he toured in the US 1906/1907, see Figure 6), and his political views were nationalistic without being right-wing. His concert repertoire was also typical: tunes from his home district, 'national' repertoire which was common to many concert fiddlers, and self-composed programmatic pieces (e.g., *Sæterliv*). In the concert programme printed on his poster, all three repertoire groups are represented (see Figure 7). Moe's piece *Sæterliv*, starts with a melancholic folk song melody which was popular at that time – *Sjå soli på Anaripigg*. Olav Moe played it with traditional intonation, but sometimes with a violin-like vibrato. The next part is almost identical to the introduction of Sjur Helgeland's *Budeiene på Vikafjellet* – which, in turn, is based on cow calls from western Norway. In the rest of *Sæterliv*, Olav Moe used motifs from two Valdres folk songs, in some places enhancing their dance-like rhythms – especially in the final *springar* part following the cow-low imitation, an illustration of the dairy maid's happy dance when the cow finally answers her calling.¹⁹ Typical of this genre, only a very small part of the melodic

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

material is actually composed by Moe; his contribution consists mainly in the combination of elements, the transitions and the adaptation to the instrument.

The musical score for *Seterliv* is divided into several sections with specific tempo and performance markings:

- Tempo rubato** ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 115$): The first section, titled "(Sjå soli på Anaripigg)", includes markings for *rit.*, *a tempo*, and *rit.*.
- ♩ = 120**: The second section, "(From 'Budene på Vikafjell')", includes markings for *accr.* and *a tempo*.
- Rubato** ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$): The third section includes a *Flug.* marking.
- Slow halling tempo** ($\text{♩} = 86$): The fourth section, "(From 'Lårus')", includes markings for *tr.* and *rit.*.
- Rubato** ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 56$): The fifth section includes markings for *tr.* and *rit.*.
- ♩ = ca. 40**: The sixth section, "(From 'Ro fjorden')", includes markings for *tr.* and *rit.*.
- Springar tempo** ($\text{♩} = 150$): The seventh section, "(cov low)", includes markings for *tr.* and *rit.*.

A legend at the bottom left indicates that a double-headed arrow (↔) represents "about 1/4 tone higher" and a single-headed arrow (→) represents "lower".

Figure 5 *Seterliv* (*Seter* Life) by Olav Moe, composed about 1900. Author's transcription, based on recordings of Moe from 1946, 1952 (Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation) and 1959 (Norwegian Folk Music Collection).

Most of the traditional dance tunes played on stage by *konserterpelemenn* belonged, however, to the oldest dance category, the *bygdedans* tunes (mostly *springar*, *halling*, *gangar* and *rudl*), as the *gamaldans/runddans* category (waltz, polka, mazurka and *reinlender*) was still felt to be too modern to be presented as 'Folk' or 'National' music. But after the concerts, fiddlers would often play this more modern music for social dancing. Classical pieces, popular or salon pieces were rarely played by concert fiddlers, with some exceptions: there is an account of Hans Fykerud playing the well-known song *Brudeferden i Hardanger* (The Wedding Procession in Hardanger, originally for male choir) by romantic composer Halfdan Kjerulf in a concert in Copenhagen – and according to the review, he played it 'with a too high fourth step, like most of the fiddle tunes'.²⁰



Figure 6 Map of Olav Moe's tour in the US autumn 1906 – summer 1907, based on his autobiography (Moe 1969).

The Fykerud brothers also made fiddle versions of traditional song melodies and played them separately in concerts, whereas other concert fiddlers would play song tunes mostly as parts of potpourri pieces.

The fiddle tunes were partly played in the traditional way, without musical changes and with foot-tapping as an important rhythmic accompaniment. But many concert fiddlers were influenced by classical violinists' habits: standing up instead of sitting while playing, holding the instrument under the chin instead of the old position against the chest, and playing without foot-tapping. Tunes were sometimes changed to fit the concert situation, for instance by freeing them from the strict dance tempo and rhythm, or making the tunes longer – instead of repeating them once or several times, as it is common to do when playing to dance. The free short-motif structure typical of the majority of Hardanger fiddle music is well suited for variation,²¹ improvisation and extension of the tunes, and this was done

to a great extent in the concert era. However, in the course of the 1900s, playing through the tune twice became the most common way of performing fiddle tunes in concerts and competitions – and this goes for both short and long tunes.

Sometimes tunes changed so much that they would be called a *lydarslått* (listening tune) instead of a dance tune. New tunes were also composed in this category and even the potpourri pieces were often called *lydarslått*. But this was not an altogether new category,

Olav Moe
Konsert
med foredrag.

Konsertprogram:

1. Gangar.
2. Sæterliv.
3. Tussebrudi.
4. Hilmæringja.
5. Gjenta ved vogga.
6. St. Tomasklokkorna.
7. Fanitullen.
8. Kiviemøyarna.
9. Heksedansen.
10. Vårstemning.

Frå ymse blad:

Catharina Eiling i „Morgensposten“, Oslo:
— „Der er naar hans spil en blæst og
frønsomt, en smukt og bellar, som ikke er
ubødelig hos andre fagligspillems, og som
på det beste harmoniserer med hans egne vore
nære fæsteden —“

*Doktoren Jon Nørving i „Nordmanden“,
Amerika:*
„Det er den fine kunst, en kunst som går
ad hæl og så dygt at man står stille.“

*Eg stog som frå jardi i hansen vore
og leker med yngler blide.
Eg spøst og såg det haloge man
og mynne ljone og fride.*

*Eg sat som trella i stene og berg
og såg den i dulle holar.
Eg strida gjennom vill og grav
og kvepnaste vordakapitlar.*

*Op så denne glimrende behavik, så fin og
svolger, så sikker, og soverde.“*

Foredragsemne:
Vår heimlege tone.

Som folketalar

er Olav Moe kjend og kjær, velkomen og yrd og hev vore mykje fagna på sine
foredragsterder over heile Noreg, Danmark, Sverige og Amerika m. v.

Inngangspengar kr. 1.00.

De Jørmøli Træstet, Pappem

Figure 7 Olav Moe’s concert poster. His posture and fiddle hold, compared to that in Figure 1, and especially compared to the older Jørn Røn in that photo, shows that he now has become a typical concert fiddler. The inclusion of a talk (*foredrag*) in the concert programme is also characteristic.

since the playing of listening tunes already existed as a local entertainment form in Valdres from at least the early 1800s (c.50 of these tunes are preserved in tradition, most of them published in Nyhus, 1996); and some old wedding tunes from other districts – those that were not marches – could also be classified as 'listening' tunes.

The historic contributions of the concert era

It is difficult to conclude whether or not the concert activity described here actually made Hardanger fiddling sound different, since there are no sound recordings from before the concert era. But it is possible to sum up the contributions of the concert era to folk music history with reference to fiddling genres and their properties (see Figure 3). One might say that the era changed the genre range of Hardanger fiddling: most noticeably in the period itself, with the folk music-based potpourri as a passing fashion, but also over a longer period, since the listening tunes today still make up a more important and varied category than before the concert era. The heritage left by the concert fiddlers forms an important part of modern fiddlers' musical and cultural platform; this is mostly thought of as positive. But it is also thought of as negative in the sense of reaction against some of its ingredients, such as the 'potpourri genre', too strong a classical influence, or too much emphasis on the 'national' element as opposed to local playing style. The concert era was a time of innovations, and these were partly preserved in tradition, and partly rejected by later generations. From a modern perspective, what interests us is how popular the concert fiddlers were in their own time, as well as the variety of their repertoire and its close connection to the historic period, despite the concert situation. This is reflected in the preserved material: brilliant recordings of traditional dance tunes are found alongside potpourri compositions which seem outdated to us in terms of music taste, but which are virtuosic and imaginative in their attempts to adapt to the audience of the time. Some concert fiddlers were among the most important transmitters of tradition to new generations, while at the same time showing a compositional talent which has not always been recognised.

To find an equally creative period in Norwegian traditional music, one has to go to the most recent decades, with their explosion of innovation and professionalism among young folk musicians. But there is one important difference between these two periods: in the first, creativity was displayed in the adoption of the concert stage and the exploration of musical form in solo playing, whereas today, it is mainly shown in ensemble playing and crossover activities.

Notes

¹ *Christiania-Posten* [newspaper], 12 January 1849.

² Literal translation. The word was sometimes used to denote folk music playing in general, or playing without written music; it could also refer to the importance of improvisation and variation in this music.

³ *Morgenbladet* [newspaper], 17 January 1849; author's translation.

⁴ More recently described by, for example, Tellef Kvifte, *On Variability in the Performance of Hardingfele Tunes – and Paradigms in Ethnomusicological Research* (Oslo: Taragot Sounds, 2007),

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Levy Morten, *The World of Gorrlaus Slåtts* (Copenhagen: Forlaget Kragen, 1989) and briefly by Pandora Hopkins, *Aural Thinking in Norway: Performance and Communication with the Hardingfele* (New York: Human Sciences Press, 1986), pp. 165–70.

⁵ A. Bjørndal, and B. Alver, *Og Fela Ho Lét*, 2nd edn (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1985), p. 60.

⁶ Many typical concert tunes were published in E. Aakhus, *Gamle og nye Slaattar* (Oslo: Norsk Musikforlag, 1925). See also Eivind Aakhus: 3 tunes recorded on phonograph by O. M. Sandvik in 1931.

⁷ Knut Dahle: Recordings by The Gramophone Record Co. 1910, published by Buen Kulturverkstad 1984 (Gamle spelemenn på 78-plater I), re-issued online in 2012.

⁸ Olav Moe, *Olav Moe – hardingfelespel frå Vestre Slidre*, CD TA1, Talik Records, 2000.

⁹ Torkjell Haugerud: A large selection published by Buen Kulturverkstad in the 1980s–1990s (Torkjell Haugerud – slåtтар, Haugerudspel 1–5), re-issued online in 2012.

¹⁰ Arne Bjørndal: Some tunes on the album *Slåtтар frå Voss, Hardanger og Krødsherad* (NRK/The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation 1974, re-issued as CD by Talik Records, 2009). Another selection published by Buen Kulturverkstad 1990 (Gamle spelemenn på 78-plater V), re-issued online in 2011.

¹¹ Halldor Meland: Recordings in the archive of NRK/The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation.

¹² Signe Flatin Neset, *Signe Flatin Neset*, Talik Records, 2012.

¹³ Kristiane Lund: *Gamle spelemenn på 78-plater III* (Buen Kulturverkstad, 2011; online version 2011).

¹⁴ Sjur Helgeland and Ola Mosafinn: Pathé recordings made by William Farre 1911. All of Mosafinn's recordings were published on cassette by Buen Kulturverkstad 1984 (Gamle spelemenn på 78-plater I), and re-issued online in 2012. One of Helgeland's recordings, *Bygdatrøden* (see Figure 4), was published on the CD *Budeiene på Vikafjellet*, Spelarhaugen Folkemusikk, 2008.

¹⁵ A good account is found in Chris, Goertzen, *Fiddling for Norway: Revival and Identity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), p. 25

¹⁶ Ville Roempke, 'Lyssna til toner från hembygd och fädernesland: Om estradspelets framväxt i svensk spelmanshistoria', in *Sumlen* (1977), 94–124.

¹⁷ Transcriptions in S. Nyhus, *Bruremarsjer og lydarslåtter for hardingfele* (Oslo: Musikk-Husets Forlag, 2003).

¹⁸ Transcriptions in T. Haugerud, *Slåtтар* (Oslo: Noregs Boklag, 1957); and Nyhus, 2003.

¹⁹ Transcriptions of the song tunes 'Liaros' and 'Ro fjorden' appear in Ø. Gaukstad, 'Valdrestonar', in *Valdres Bygdebok VII* (Leira: Valdres Bygdebokforlag, 1973), tune numbers 401 and 612.

²⁰ That is in accordance with traditional Hardanger fiddle intonation, where a high or neutral fourth is common. *Politiken*, citation in T. Trykkerud, 'Hans Hanson Fykerud', in *Årbok for Norsk Folkemusikk* (1994), p. 8.

²¹ Tellef Kvifte, *On variability in the performance of hardingfele tunes – and paradigms in ethnomusicological research* (Oslo: Taragot Sounds, 2007).

Square sets as folk dance in Cape Breton community life

JØRN BORGGREEN

When I first visited Cape Breton in 1999 as a tourist, I became aware of the presence of a strong dance tradition in certain communities, but also what I perceived as a seemingly chaotic situation on the dance floor. Being a dance instructor myself, I was somewhat frustrated, yet I wondered whether there were descriptions of such apparent chaos and, if so, where could I see them? Yes, indeed, there are ‘descriptions’, but they are oral, only in the mind of the prompters. Nothing, or near to nothing, was ever published or written down. My initial research on the internet and in libraries gave very meagre results, but through e-mail exchanges with people in Cape Breton I found out that I had to come into direct contact with those who carried the knowledge. As I dived deeper into the subject, a picture began to develop and a very good reason for my study emerged. This took ten years and the result is published in the form of a booklet, now in its third edition.¹

History of the dance

Before square dancing came to Cape Breton around the turn of the twentieth century (1890–1900), there was an established tradition of dancing that predated French, Scottish, and Irish immigration to the area in the late 1700s.² Later, the ‘square’ formation originated in France and England, and is represented in many quadrille dances carried abroad by emigrants. The Caledonian and the Lancers became the most popular forms from the turn of the twentieth century,³ and in the 1920s and 1930s, new figures were added to the old forms with the importation of quadrilles from New England. Instructions for the new square dances came partly from mail-order books and partly via Cape Bretoners who went to Ontario and the USA as itinerant workers and returned for summer reunions;⁴ the same, also, was done by travelling musicians or dance instructors who went from place to place teaching and setting up dances.⁵ The quadrille dances of that time were done in homes, at weddings, at barn raisings, and such, but in the late 1930s the first public dances began to be held in schoolhouses, and later in parish and community halls. Square dancing became very popular in the 1950s and 1960s, but declined in the 1970s, though the dance music itself was revived through the efforts initiated by the documentary *The Vanishing Cape Breton*

Fiddler in 1970. In the late 1980s the dancing was revived, as described in Mats Melin's 1997 comprehensive account of the history of the square dance on Cape Breton.⁶



Figure 1 Map of Cape Breton.

Square dancing in Cape Breton in earlier days was guided by a prompter, as Johnny Stamper stated in 1988:

The way we learned in those days, you'd go to a dance in Boisdale or Bras d'Or or George's River. That used to be a great thing and, if you wanted to try to dance, you could drive 'er all night long! So, I started picking it up. We had the real sets in those days; today they've got them all mixed up. We had the Lancers and the Caledonia. I used to know that Caledonia well myself; I prompted a lot of them at one time. There were four figures in our set and I have a book on that. But, you see, they don't understand it today. The Scottish music started to die out and this darn rock 'n' roll came in and ruined everything! But it's starting to come back now, just here in the last few years.⁷

Peggy MacDonald Beaton noted:

Then, when you'd go to a dance, they'd have 'ladies to the right and gents to the left' and that's when everyone would be step dancing. And when we used to go, they'd be prompting the sets and it was like a drill, really nice to do and nice to watch – two slow figures and two fast. But today, if you get a prompter, they won't listen!⁸

As the role of the prompter diminishes, instead, in each of the sets one couple is 'looked to' as most knowledgeable and sets the timing for the figures.

Dancing today

Square dancing on Cape Breton at present takes a number of different forms with rather diffuse borderlines between them. At one end of the spectrum there are performance groups that give shows with very strictly rehearsed dances that are gracefully danced and display the figures in a form very close to the original. In that category I particularly note the *Just Four on the Floor* project,⁹ a collection of three square sets prepared as teaching material for the public schools in Nova Scotia; I consider it an important initiative for keeping this dance form alive.

During the busy summer season square dancing is an important part of gatherings when family, friends and community members meet at social events, it may be a kitchen gathering, a ceilidh, with music, songs – often in Gaelic – and a square set. If the event is advertised as a square dance, it will often have square sets alternating with couple dances. These events are mostly dominated by the locals, both those who live in the community and those who come back from abroad for a summer reunion. No caller is in action; everybody knows the dance and only four couples are allowed in a set. This creates a community togetherness, where the square dance is a basic instrument, as found at such places as Washabuck, Glendale and Christmas Island (see Figure 1: Map of Cape Breton).

At some of the busy tourist places, such as the parish hall in Baddeck, a ceilidh is announced on several – if not all – nights of the week during the summer; the venues are normally community or parish halls. As part of the programme, a square dance is announced and people present are invited into square sets. A caller/prompter both takes part in and conducts the dance, while the large number of non-dancers watch. Since the prompter is in charge, they choose the traditional local form of the square set, rendering the occasion a good opportunity to see a specific local set. At the other end of the spectrum, three or four dance halls around the central part of the west coast have very well-attended weekly square dances during the summer. Here, the tourists outnumber the local dancers and the dance style is strongly influenced by that. Many more than four couples are allowed in a set and, once a figure starts, the dancers determine how long the music should play, as well as when one movement is over and the next begins. This is a very dynamic form of dancing, appealing to the younger generation, and is especially popular in the halls at Glencoe Mills and West Mabou. Jigs and reels are used throughout a dance event, often interspersed with a strathspey for a solo step dance.

The present compilation

This compilation of square sets has its origin in two study tours to Cape Breton during the summers of 2001 and 2003. It is based partly on interviews with, and notes from, both formerly – and currently – active prompters, and partly on video and audio recordings made at square dances. Published material, as well as material found in archives was also consulted. The results are published as *Right to the Helm*.¹⁰ In this, the dance descriptions are kept as close to the original calls as possible. Since there are different definitions for many of the moves and positions, due to the non-standardised nature of the dances, *Right to the Helm* uses the language of New England contra dances in an effort to be understood by a wider public.

A list of the places to which I have allocated specific dances is given, too, with a number in parenthesis, indicating how many (if more than one) different variations exist within that community: Baddeck (3), Big Bras d'Or, Cape North (2), Chéticamp, Glendale, Ingonish, Inverness (3), Mabou, Margaree Forks, St. Peter's, Sydney, Washabuck and West Bay. Since many Cape Bretoners moved to Boston, Massachusetts, where they continued to play music and dance, the Boston Set is included in the study as a distinct set of its own, and it is presently enjoyed at dances at the French-American Victory Club and at the Gaelic Society at the Canadian-American Club. Also, since the Lancers and the Caledonian are the most often-mentioned immediate predecessors of the square sets, these two sets are also included in the study. The French speaking community around Chéticamp has an additional rich tradition with its own definitions, which are beyond the scope of this study. For those interested in this subject, refer to *All Join Hands: A Guide to Teaching Acadian Traditional Dances in Schools*.¹¹

In spite of the accreted 'indigenous' nature of the Cape Breton square sets, several figures occur more or less frequently. The most popular are those where the gents in turn get to dance with all the ladies in the set. 'All join' is by far the most common introductory call in Cape Breton square dancing; it means 'join hands in a circle and go up to the centre and back', and to me it signifies the awareness of being together in the dance – you are dancing not only with your partner, but with a group of people, your neighbours. During my study, I noticed a comment by John Alex MacMullin MacNeil who recalls from the late 1930s:

There was no round dancing in our day; it was all square sets. There were two different styles of dances: *The Caledonian* and *The Plain Lancer* – two different things altogether. I was years on the floor prompting. You'd go to the north and it was all Caledonian. You'd go to the south and it was all Lancers.¹²

And indeed, when one looks carefully at the individual figures of the dances, a certain pattern arises: in that, six or seven of the sets have figures that are similar to one or two of the Caledonian figures, and another six have patterns similar to The Lancers figures. On the map, a line from north-west to south-east divides the north with the Caledonian style from the south with The Lancers style (see Figure 1). This gives an indication of how the new figures were added on to the old framework of dances.

The future

I see a striking similarity between Cape Breton and Ireland with respect to indigenous dances that are – or have been – on the verge of being forgotten, but have, happily, been revived. Cape Bretoners ‘must balance a fine line between – on the one hand – maintaining the unique character of the different sets and – on the other hand – institutionalising the dances so that they become rigid museum pieces with many rules and no changes. The most likely way to do this is to maintain the social aspect of these dances. This can be done by providing relatively unstructured events at which the dances can be enjoyed’.¹³ With respect to square dancing, I see positive things happen occasionally. In Cape North, St. Peter’s, and Sydney, dance sessions during the winter, a dancer wrote to me: ‘We somehow knew the dances because we have been doing them years ago; now we see them explained in print it’s like rediscovering our own sets’.¹⁴

Indeed, at the Glencoe Mill dances introductory instructions are given to newcomers to the dance. The whole of Cape Breton should be considered in connection with this form of dance, because it has roots in all parts of the island and, collectively, the forms should all be seen in a wider perspective. The square sets of Cape Breton are such a unique piece of folk culture that it would be a great pity if it were not to be preserved and developed. All in all, square dancing enjoys healthy and enthusiastic participation in Cape Breton, and this promises to keep a traditional dance form active. However, since tradition is – and should be – constantly changing, it is important to preserve the original forms in some manner. I see the present study as a small contribution to that – to not forgetting the sources – giving more people the opportunity to see the beauty in these dances and to actually take part in them.

Notes

¹ Jørn Borggreen, *Right to the Helm: Cape Breton Square Dances*, 4th edn (Jyllinge, Denmark: Jørn Borggreen, 2015).

² Barbara LeBlanc, Mary Janet MacDonald, Betty Matheson, Dianne Milligan, Dolena Roach, *No Less No More, Just Four on the Floor*, Report (Halifax, NS: Dance Nova Scotia, 1997).

³ LeBlanc et al.

⁴ Maggie Moore, ‘Cape Breton Dancing’, in *Scotland’s Dances* (Edinburgh: Scottish Arts Council, 1994), pp. 17–21.

⁵ Dianne Milligan [private communication, 2001].

⁶ Mats Melin, *One with the Music: Cape Breton Step Dancing Tradition and Transmission* (Sydney NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2015).

⁷ Allister MacGillivray, *A Cape Breton Ceilidh* (Sydney, NS: Sea-Cape Music, 1988).

⁸ MacGillivray.

⁹ LeBlanc et al.

¹⁰ Borggreen.

¹¹ LeBlanc et al.

¹² Private correspondence.

¹³ Borggreen.

¹⁴ Private correspondence.

4

Néillidh Boyle: utilising traditional concepts of storytelling in exploration of the acoustic art

KATIE BOYLE

Néillidh Boyle (1889–1961) was an exceptional musician, performer, composer and folklorist. His music typifies that of a Master of the Art of Fiddle Playing, within both the Donegal Fiddle idiom to which he belongs and the wider Irish Traditional Music paradigm. He was born in Pennsylvania to emigrant parents from Donegal, but returned to Ireland at the age of ten where he pursued a long and successful career as a musician, spending his final year in Glasgow, Scotland. His music reflects the historical and geographical context of his life, and his perspective on traditional Irish music was conditioned by an underlying fear of its eventual disappearance. Néillidh made the unusual decision to voice these opinions, recording them along with his music, and providing an insight to the thoughts at the core of his playing.

Whilst his music contains many of the idiosyncrasies of the Donegal fiddle tradition, his style transcends that of the region, incorporating stylistic features from various alternative sources, including the lilting of his mother and grandfather; the Scottish fiddle idiom; contemporary classical musicians (in particular Yehudi Menuhin, Fritz Kreisler and Jan Kubelic); his natural surroundings; and, most famously, the music gifts bestowed upon him by ‘the fairies’. The release by *Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí* of Boyle’s recordings from 1937 to 1953 reveals an exceptional individual character – a purist as well as an adventurer – who displays an emotional creativity that captures the imagination and is indicative of a certain musical genius. This paper will examine the unique idiosyncrasies and influence of a musician who reinvented the fiddle idiom, taking it beyond the standard dance setting, transcending traditional concepts and displaying exceptional maturity with a continuous exploration of the acoustic parameters of the fiddle as an instrument in the art of storytelling.

In order to understand the music of Néillidh Boyle it is imperative to appreciate the historical and geographical contexts in which Néillidh lived. He was born in Easton, Pennsylvania in 1889. The family moved back to Ireland when Néillidh was 8, and in 1937 he was married to Annie Sweeney in Donegal. So he was 48 when he married. Of their six children, Paddy, the eldest, followed his father on the fiddle, and all of the children played traditional music in their family band. They moved to the Gorbals, Glasgow in 1960 where

Néillidh died the following year. He was brought home to be buried in Dungloe. By this time, Néillidh had had a long and successful career as a fiddle player, contributing to the elevation of the status of the Donegal tradition. He made several recordings which give us clear insight to the music that he played, and, at his own insistence, he also articulated his opinions on recordings made by Peter Kennedy for the BBC in the 1950s. These are central to the research presented here.¹

Boyle spent most of his Donegal years at Cronashallog where the family had a small farm. He worked at the fiddle each day from the age of eight, permitting him forty unimpeded years of musical development prior to his late marriage. Yet in his later life he was dedicated to his children, passing on to them his love and passion for music, which has now been passed on to later generations. Music, to Néillidh, was indeed a means of family communication, something he had learned from his maternal grandfather, Pádraig MacSweeney, who ‘rocked me in the cradle and from him I got my first experience of Irish music’. Pádraig had been a famous storyteller and singer in his day, a gift that he passed on to Néillidh’s mother, Nancy. She, in turn, was a lilter and singer who was held in high regard by Néillidh. She was, indeed, romanticised in the local press as being ‘the ideal Gaelic mother’ following her death. This clearly had a profound effect on Néillidh’s music:

She used to lilt for me and sing for me and many times she made me cry. I don’t hear any of our singers at the present time that can put the same blas [...] that has the same effect on me as she had in her singing.

Nature

Boyle found great inspiration in the people who surrounded him. But he also drew much from his natural surroundings, and one contemporary newspaper article describes his only tutors as ‘the winds, the waves, the birds and the murmuring of the brooks’; his playing of ‘The Blackbird’ and ‘The Fox Chase’ are excellent examples of this. Interviews with his daughter, Anna, establish that it would appear that Néillidh was the composer of a particular piece he called ‘The Fox Chase’ or ‘Hill of the Hunt’. There is no recording of Néillidh playing any such piece, but shades of it may remain in a piece played by Johnny Doherty which was popular with Micky and Francie Byrne (the Dears) and has since been played by younger musicians such as Aidan O’Donnell. It may well be that Boyle’s carefully nurtured composition may have inspired this piece. But it can certainly be said that he was innovative in his compositions and was a pioneer in using music to tell a story, something undoubtedly linked to his time spent touring as a musician for the silent cinema in which he brought stories to life with his ability to recreate sounds.

In his recording of the slow air, ‘The Blackbird’, Boyle mimics the sounds of birds. Imitations that are uncanny, not least for the fact that he played these two octaves above high E, a truly remarkable achievement on the fiddle. In order to perfect his bird representations, he cycled from Cronashallog to Dunlewy before dawn, Dunlewy being a forested area with more trees and birds than were in his hometown. There, he would listen in the darkness and train his ear to pick up the subtleties of birds. A hill behind the family farmhouse was the site of a fairy ring in which Néillidh reports making his first encounter with the fairy

folk and their music, which features frequently in the folklore traditions of Donegal.² In his recordings with Peter Kennedy, he tells of attending a fairy wedding where he heard ‘two of the greatest fiddlers in Ireland [...] But thanks be to God [...] they bestowed a lot of their knowledge on me, and I have practised since a lot of their styles and I have got that secret’.

My original reaction to this story was to view it in a historical context, as a vehicle through which Néillidh was attempting to capture the imagination of apathetic listeners as he was an avid story teller. But, it could be viewed as Néillidh attributing his talents to a higher order; viewed in this context one can see why the fiddle player may have been hesitant to record his music, and my understanding of this through discussions with his family, is that he was very superstitious and believed that his music had to be treated with particular respect because it was not entirely his own, but a gift bestowed upon him.

These anecdotes show that Néillidh Boyle was musically immersed in his surroundings. He breathed music every day of his life like the air that kept him alive, and he even used nature’s own acoustic creations to practice; for instance, he used to play in a small valley across from a ‘spink’ (a large rock formation) so that he could hear his own echo and so be able to critique his own playing. Passionately dedicated to his music, Néillidh aspired to reach his full potential through all available means. He was intrigued by his contemporaries from outside of Ireland and, in particular, those in Scotland. At the age of fifteen, while on a trip to Glasgow, Néillidh, had the opportunity of hearing one of those influences: the classically trained William McKenzie Murdoch, who earned the title ‘the Scottish Paganini’. Néillidh committed himself from a young age to mastering classical violin technique and it is evident in his playing that his technical ability became outstanding. He was captivated by such players as Yehudi Menuhin and Fritz Kreisler, as well as Jan Kubelic, who was actually invited to hear Néillidh play on his visit to Ireland. Highly regarded by his peers, Néillidh was known throughout Ireland through his broadcasts on Radio Éireann. Musically engaged to the highest level, he aspired to master the instrument in the same manner as the classical virtuosi of his time.

The 1930s brought jazz and Néillidh joined a local band called the Dungloe Quartet, which played regularly at dance halls where, in order to be heard without the use of amplification, Néillidh had to tune up to F and play in higher octaves. The use of scordatura became a hallmark of Néillidh’s playing and conditioned his brilliant tone and accuracy of pitching in high octaves. Yet, still, Boyle was immersed not only in his physical surroundings and influenced by world class musicians, but his playing was imbued with the typical idiosyncrasies of the Donegal fiddle tradition. To analyse his style within these symbolic boundaries, it is necessary first to summarise ‘the Donegal tradition’. As stated in *The Northern Fiddler*, ‘regional styles’ should be approached with caution: ‘One has to distinguish between what is a purely personal style of playing and what is a regional style – a fiddle aesthetic shared by several fiddlers in the same region’.³

The so-called ‘Donegal’ regional style is therefore set within certain parameters. Its overall general style is normally categorised as a system of complex bowing coupled with relatively un-ornamented finger work. Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh offers some useful insights:

BOYLE *Néillidh Boyle: utilising traditional concepts of storytelling*

The geography and vastness of the county has contributed to the wealth of different styles which can be found here today. Just as the peoples' accents can vary from townland to townland, so does the interpretation of music, which we call 'style'.⁴

Dermot McLaughlin also makes an interesting observation regarding the preservation of a particular style. He suggests that regional artistic integrity was, in fact, protected by the lack of interference from the media, and, indeed, the geographical location of Donegal meant there was little interference from other regions.⁵ Along with a few others, Boyle may have proved an exception, but, for the most part, the Donegal fiddle tradition was frequently dismissed by the wider traditional music community.

The isolation of this stylistic tradition within Ireland was not necessarily reflected in its relations with certain other fiddling traditions. For example, there is a very strong link between Donegal and Scottish fiddle traditions, and in particular between Donegal and Shetland. Néillidh Boyle drew influence from the playing of McKenzie Murdoch, and likewise the music and compositions of James Scott Skinner were part of his repertoire. But, it must be borne in mind, too, in this regard, that there has historically been an exchange between the two idioms rather than a transfer from one to the other, and so, 'Donegal' and 'Scotland' have each remained within their own boundaries or style. Mairéad Ni Mhaonaigh explains this relationship:

Those ties are evident in the amount of Scottish tunes heard in the average repertoire of a Donegal fiddle player. Highlands or flings, strathspeys and Scottish marches are played with the Irish repertoire of jigs, reels and hornpipes. But these tunes are not played exactly as they are in Scotland – they are changed and developed [...] people make the tunes their own.⁶

Néillidh Boyle geographically belongs to 'The Rosses' style which is typified by Johnny Doherty. It is a lively up beat style characterised by long drawn out single bows and less frequent ornamentation:

The use of one bow stroke per note. The up and down strokes of the bow are given the same rhythmic emphasis and there is an avoidance of rhythmic syncopation [...] the players of this style call it strict tempo [...] influenced by the staccato sound of the highland pipe [...] Finger ornamentation when used is based on the highland pipes.⁷

But while Boyle shows some of these idiosyncrasies, he is certainly not characterised by them: his style steps outside the geographical boundaries, more coloured by the external influences already mentioned. Danny O'Donnell, another master fiddler from the Rosses, believed that Néillidh's mother's influence was more evident in his playing than any other. Her lilting predated the melodies played by the majority of other fiddlers, thus Néillidh's music as learned from her emanated from a much older stylistic tradition: 'Néillidh Boyle . . . did have the lilt, with the decorations in his fingering on the fiddle. The rolls and the triplets he played all came from the lilting'.⁸ Néillidh discusses these decorations, the importance of

what he calls ‘embellishments’ of the music, and although he introduces rhythmic variation with the bow, he had also mastered left hand articulation, producing beautiful ornamentation.

‘Miss McLeod’s’

The influence of Boyle’s mother’s lilting manifested itself in complex finger work, which Néillidh emphasised as critically important to embellishing a tune with grace notes, a technique that he considered requires years of practice and was too often done inappropriately:

All our Irish music has to be embellished, we only get it in the music books very plainly, what I might call a skeleton, or the bones, no beef. You must put the beef on it. And the beef is the embellishments. There [are] different ways of embellishing Irish music. We have different kinds of grace notes and it takes years of practise to know how to handle these [...] Some [players] use them [inappropriately] and it would be far better to have left them alone as they are either too soon or too late for the principal tone.

The reel, ‘Miss McLeod’, was used by Boyle to demonstrate his approach to embellishments (see Figures 1). The first time round the tune he plays it simply, then he ‘puts the beef on it’.



Figure 1 The ‘bare bones’ of the B part of ‘Miss McLeod’. Embellishment applied, the second time round (B3).



Figure 2 Here, Néillidh’s use of the short roll on the A and C#, along with the use of grace notes, allow for melodic variation and a very precise articulation through ornamentation. Boyle’s use of embellishments is systemic in the rest of the tune, and he varies there use for further melodic variation. Thus, the phrase is played differently the third time round the tune (B5).



Figure 3 Further melodic variation on the B part of ‘Miss McLeod’.

What is important to be noted from these examples is that Boyle was trying to convey and explain within the structure of music that a grace note isn’t worth playing if it is put in the wrong place (see Figures 2 and 3). So, too, in his recording of ‘The Harvest Home’, he is teaching the listener about bowing (see Figure 4):



Figure 4 Boyle’s ‘Harvest Home’.

Here, Néillidh demonstrates his ability to use both ornamentation and bowing to articulate the phrasing, producing different rhythmic effects.

Articulation: bowing

In Dermot McLaughlin’s opinion: ‘The way the bow is used dictates the rhythm, pulse and drive.’⁹ Yet, for Néillidh Boyle, there is no transcription of his bowing possible, since there is no video footage of him playing. However, auditory analysis suggests that he was highly competent in his technique. In this instance he fitted comfortably within the Donegal single bowing aesthetic as well as being able to employ the use of slurring. With regard to his recording of the hornpipe, ‘Harvest Home’, his interview describes the tune as an excellent exercise for bowing technique:

There’s a lot of bow work in ‘The Harvest Home’ which is very good exercise for the right hand. There is no training for a pupil as good as our Irish reels. There’s plenty of bow work and there’s plenty of finger work and that’s what’s wanted. In my opinion, they are much better than any of the exercises in the books.

Single, fast bowing is used as a means of driving the rhythm forward. The variation in the bowing allows the player to demonstrate his competence and the flair of his right hand. While such playing is an example of the ‘strict tempo’ Donegal aesthetic, nevertheless, through listening to the recording, it is clear that he uses cross-string slurring, something that is typical of the greater ‘Irish Traditional’ idiom but not of the Donegal idiom. Boyle thus was able to exploit various techniques and was not bound by the single bow characteristic of his geographical location.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Some of what Néillidh Boyle practised and spoke of is addressed elsewhere, notably by Arthur L. Salmon in ‘Emotion and Technique’:

The difference between technique and emotion is the difference between mechanism and life. It is the conjunction of the two that makes the rare performer, the player of genius [...] Technique is the letter, emotion is the spirit [...] Thoughts that lie too deep for tears, too deep for verbal articulation, may yet not lie too deep for music; that is music’s glory [...] It is the emotion that we want, in all art that speaks truly for the human soul.¹⁰

This is heard in Néillidh Boyle’s interpretation of traditional Irish music, heavily influenced by the tonal expressiveness of his mother’s lilting, which impelled perhaps his use of minor and modal keys, particularly in his playing of airs, in imitation of the *blas* that was instilled in him as a young child:

And I would like to cry and I would have to start to play the fiddle first for some sad Irish air. And once I would play a few notes, I would burst out crying. There is a lot of sadness, mostly all of our Irish music is composed with some sad event.

Today’s musicians may understand the idea of shaping music around emotion, but it is a difficult thing to describe in words, as it is a very personal experience. My understanding of Néillidh Boyle’s words is that music is a means of communication, it’s a means of expressing the soul. This is repeated by Tommy Peoples:

I agree totally with Néillidh Boyle when he said that Irish music’s ornamentation cannot be written or vice versa, played properly from the written notes. It has to be in the blood. The music expresses Joy, Terrible Loss, Hope, Love and Defiance. It has stayed with us when we had our people crushed by oppression, our language killed by force and intimidation.¹¹

Néillidh Boyle lived and breathed music in all forms it presented itself to him in: classical, jazz, as well as regional styles, non-local traditional influences, and, of course, underlain by the influence of his mother’s lilting. This incorporation of techniques from outside his native tradition might reinforce the idea that when Néillidh renounced modern popular music as ‘jungle music’ he was not necessarily rejecting all other types of music. That is why it is important to understand the historical context. He was a virtuoso player who demonstrated great command of his instrument and incorporated external influences. He used the mastering of his instrument’s potential to express his deepest passions and emotions, similar to how literary geniuses like Joyce or Yeats, through their understanding of language, became adept at conveying the most complex ideas, emotions, and images. Boyle was a master of the instrument and knew that by mastering techniques from other genres of music he could create a unique and indelible style: ‘The fiddle can take out everything that’s wanted. If the player has the power and the command to do so, the fiddle will respond to his aims’.

Notes

¹ Quotations below are from these recordings unless indicated otherwise. See Peter Kennedy Collection, British Library, <https://sounds.bl.uk/World-and-traditional-music/Peter-Kennedy-Collection/025M-C0604X1238XX-0001V0> [accessed 22 May 2015].

² Áine Ní Dhíoraí, *Na Cruacha Scéalta agus Seanchas* (Baile Atha Cliath: An Chlochomar, 1985).

³ Allen Feldman and Éamonn O'Doherty, *The Northern Fiddler: Music and Musicians of Donegal and Tyrone*, Appendix II, 'Fiddling Styles' (London, New York, Sydney, Cologne: Oak; Belfast: Blackstaff, 1979), pp. 248–250.

⁴ Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh, 'A Night of Donegal Fiddle Music', in *Earagail Arts Festival* [brochure] (15 July 2003).

⁵ Dermot McLaughlin [personal communication, 1991].

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Feldman and O'Doherty, p. 249.

⁸ Danny O'Donnell interview in Feldman and O'Doherty, pp. 145–149.

⁹ Dermot McLaughlin [personal communication, 1991].

¹⁰ *The Musical Times*, vol. 65, no. 972 (1 February 1924).

¹¹ Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, *Between the Jigs and Reels: The Donegal Fiddle Tradition* (Leitrim: Drumlin Publications, 1994), p. 13.

Participatory music in an Irish Gaeltacht district

ÉAMONN COSTELLO

The dramatic modernisation that An Cheathrú Rua (Carraroe) in the Conamara Gaeltacht¹ has experienced from the mid-twentieth century onwards, has brought about a state of technologically-induced social isolation² amongst the local population. This feeling of social isolation is mirrored by the loudness of Conamara Country and Western (CC&W) performances, which inhibit verbal communication and therefore community bonding. In the past in Carraroe, the performance of *sean-nós*³ and Irish traditional music was a fully participatory, and a highly intimate event. As such, it helped to reinforce the community bonds essential for sustaining the area's economy which, up until the early 1960s, was a co-operative labour system. The introduction of industry to Carraroe brought an end to this system, and, by extension, *sean-nós* lost its function in the community. To compound matters, due to the influence of Romantic nationalism, *sean-nós* is widely seen as an index of an idealised primitive Gaeltacht, which bears little resemblance to contemporary Gaeltacht life. CC&W music sung in Irish/Gaelic⁴ has become the dominant music genre of the area, partly because the cosmopolitan nature of CC&W subverts the primitive image of the Gaeltacht fostered by Romantic revivalists. Since Carraroe is one of Conamara's major socialising hubs, it is, in my opinion, a synecdoche for the Conamara Gaeltacht.

An Cheathrú Rua / Carraroe

In order to fully understand the relationship people in Carraroe have with traditional music and with CC&W, we need to briefly discuss some aspects of the area's history and demography. The Galway Gaeltacht of Conamara has a population of 40,052, which is 47% of the total Gaeltacht population nationally.⁵ However, during the Celtic Tiger years, the suburbs of Galway city (consisting mainly of English language speakers) extended out into the Conamara Gaeltacht district, and it is estimated that today about 12,000 of the Galway Gaeltacht population lives in the city's environs. The County Galway Gaeltacht covers a geographical area of 1,255 square kilometres, which is 26% of the total national Gaeltacht land area. The largest settlement areas in this Gaeltacht district are An Spidéal (Spiddal) and An Cheathrú Rua (Carraroe). Carraroe village lies approximately 45km west of Galway City in the centre of a peninsula that overlooks Casla Bay to the east and Great-man's Bay to the west (Cuan an Fhir Mhóir). There are three public houses, two hotels, one nightclub,

and numerous bed and breakfasts in the village. It also has a primary and a secondary school, the latter serving many of the surrounding town-lands. The National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) runs a number of third-level outreach education courses from Áras Mháirtín Uí Chadhin⁶ in the village, and both Radió na Gaeltacht⁷ (the National Irish-language radio station) and TG4⁸ (the National Irish-language television station) are based nearby, as are a number of Údaras na Gaeltachta⁹ industrial estates. Over the past forty years Carraroe has gone from being predominately a pre-industrial economy to one which is technologically advanced, and highly specialised. The main industries in the area today are in: pharmaceuticals, electronics, and multi-media.

Technological advancement and industry, within a capitalist framework, has brought innumerable benefits to the Carraroe area, but it has also contributed to the fragmentation of the areas' sense of community. Up until the mid-1960s, the vast majority of people in Carraroe made their living from a mixture of small scale farming, inshore fishing, and turf and seaweed harvesting.¹⁰ The labour intensive nature of these types of work meant that a co-operative labour system – known as *meitheal* – was the norm in Conamara (as it was in much of rural Ireland). *Meitheal* meant that neighbours would help one another with harvesting and other farm work. Although the practice is generally viewed as a mutual exchange of labour, it also embodies a strong element of civic-responsibility and charity. Thus, members of the Carraroe community who were unable to contribute to a *meitheal* themselves because of illness or infirmity, would nevertheless receive aid at harvest time from their neighbours. By its very nature, *meitheal* depends upon and reinforces strong feelings of community belonging. In the past, music-making in Carraroe also functioned to deepen the sense of belonging, and as such it was an important component of *meitheal*.

The pub culture we associate with contemporary Ireland is a relatively new phenomenon. In the past, Carraroe public houses were almost exclusively patronised by *bádóirí* (boatmen), the men who sailed the Galway hookers (inshore sailing vessels that ferried goods such as turf, wood, flour, kelp, and salt into and out of Conamara). For the *bádóir*, the public house was the place to find work or a crew. Therefore, prior to the 1950s, the Carraroe public house was not just a location for socialising, but an extension of the male working world. During the early decades of the twentieth century, the people of Carraroe did not have the disposable income to spend on luxury items, such as alcohol. Rather, they drank *póitín*, an illegal drink brewed and distilled locally. Since it was tax free, it cost much less than the excise-regulated alcohol sold in public houses. The illegal status of *póitín* meant that it could not be consumed in public. This, combined with the fact that public-houses were generally not frequented by women, meant socialising with alcohol in Carraroe was a domestic affair. Yet certain country dwellings were known as 'open-houses' because neighbours and members of the wider community would visit these private houses on certain nights to dance, sing and musick¹¹ together. These gatherings were referred to locally as *timanaí* (times), and also involved women. *Timanaí* forged amongst those in attendance a strong sense of togetherness, elemental to a culture dependent on *meitheal*. The Irish Public Hall Act of 1935 made dances in such country houses illegal, and had a significant effect on vernacular music in Carraroe, and in Ireland generally, but the reasons for the waning of *sean-nós* and traditional music in Carraroe are more complex. I believe that the Carraroe

populace turned away from *sean-nós* and traditional music as a reaction to the prescriptive discourse of Irish Romantic cultural nationalists, who used *sean-nós* as a vehicle for their own political agenda (which I will address later in this paper). Also, since *sean-nós* and traditional music were part of a cultural formation centred on the *meitheal*, they went into decline along with it.

The industrialisation of the Carraroe area meant that *meitheal* was no longer an essential part of Carraroe life. Consequently, the strong sense of community belonging and civic responsibility fundamental to *meitheal* was also no longer essential. It is important to note that the introduction of industry to Carraroe and Conamara did not in any way destroy some kind of prelapsarian idyllic community. Life in Conamara, and on the Aran Islands, during the nineteenth and for much of twentieth century was one of extreme hardship and poverty. From the mid-nineteenth century until the 1980s the area was socially depleted by emigration. The development of industry in Conamara not only brought a better standard of living to Carraroe, it also helped to redress a sense of inferiority felt by many in the area, which was fuelled by abject poverty and a dependency on State unemployment benefits.¹² Today, the lifestyle of the average Carraroe inhabitant is more or less the same as that of suburbanites¹³ anywhere in the westernised world. S/he lives in a modern dwelling with every convenience, is heavily car-dependent, and is connected to the wider world through the internet, and other media. Yet Carraroe, and the Gaeltacht generally, still seems to exist in a space between the modern contemporary world and its pre-industrial past, a situation which I believe adds, in no small part, to the disjunction of community in the area, a disjunction that exists, at least partly, because of the construction of the very idea of the Gaeltacht.

Romantic nationalism's construction of the Gaeltacht

Cultural nationalism is the 'nation building' aspect of nationalist movements. It incorporates music and dance as vehicles to unify different groups in order to create a nation.¹⁴ Romanticism is an ideology concerned with recreating the past in the present. Therefore, Romantic Cultural Nationalism is a process of creating a nation based on an imagined past. Irish Romantic Nationalists (Gaelic Revivalists) were inspired by Johann Gottfried von Herder's theory that every language was the expression of a unique culture, and that a culture could only be understood in terms of its language. For Gaelic revivalists the Irish language was regarded as being the fundamental and immutable corner stone of 'authentic' Irishness. Von Herder's theory implies that culture can be learned, but while Irish Romantic Cultural Nationalism accepts this interpretation to a certain extent, fundamentally it takes the view that only the native speaker is truly authentically Irish, because only the truly native speaker thinks in Irish. Gaelic revivalists viewed the native Irish speaker not only as a source for language revival, but as the living remnant of pre-colonial Ireland, an ancient Gaelic culture, unaffected by Anglicisation. Gaelic revivalists changed the meaning of the term Gaeltacht. The term, which originally meant 'the Irishry' or 'native Irish', is now used as a label for the Irish-speaking districts of Ireland.¹⁵ For Gaelic revivalists the Gaeltacht was seen as the ideal template on which contemporary Irishness should be based.¹⁶ However, the marrying of 'authentic' Irishness to specific locales ultimately frames the native Irish speaker as an ethnic group apart from the rest of the Irish population. Although some people

from the Gaeltacht take pride in their status as ‘authentic Gaels’, many resent being so stereotyped as such ‘noble peasants’.

In 1893 a number of prominent Irish intellectuals established Conradh na Gaeilge (the Gaelic League), Ireland’s main Irish cultural nationalist organisation of the twentieth century. The league employed *timirí* (tutor-organisers) and *múinteoirí taisteal* (travelling teachers) to travel to the Gaeltacht districts. Their objective was to ‘educate’ the native speaker as to the value of the Irish language, which was being abandoned by the Gaeltacht community at the time for pragmatic reasons. Revivalists viewed the Gaeltacht as an ancient-Gaelic reservation in an otherwise modern and Anglicised Ireland, and they felt compelled to protect this reservation from becoming modernised. Colonisers often see themselves as parent/protectors to the childlike colonised.¹⁷ As such, the Irish Romantic Movement can be viewed as a continuation of the colonial process that had begun in Ireland many centuries earlier, what Zumthor (1990) calls ‘internal-colonialism’. Many Gaelic revivalists equated modernisation with Anglicisation, which was anathema to the nationalist agenda. More recently, some sections of the Irish language movement have attempted to distance the language from its association with nationalism; instead there has been a concerted effort to vindicate the language both as a live element of Irish society and as an endangered cultural expression of a minority group within Irish society.¹⁸ Yet the Gaeltacht continues to be framed as a ‘reservation’ of ‘authentic Irishness’, albeit a retreating one. Although ideologically opposed to modernising the Gaeltacht, over time, cultural revivalists have come to realise that if there was any hope of preserving the Gaeltacht they needed to tackle the issue of poverty there, and this led to the introduction of industry to the area.

Gaeltacht economy and the Gaelic revival

Numerous initiatives have been enacted over the years, by cultural nationalist organisations and the Irish state, to safeguard the Irish language in Gaeltacht districts, culminating in the formation of *Údaras na Gaeltachta* in 1980. The *Údaras* initiates various employment projects and schemes such as the development of industrial estates in Gaeltacht locales to which various industries have been enticed with attractive grants. With the object of stemming emigration and preserving Gaeltacht culture, these have been the primary catalyst behind Carraroe’s technologically-induced social isolation. In essence they have been the vehicle for the modernisation of the area. Yet, the Gaeltacht is still generally viewed as being of the past, and the Gaeltacht community is widely seen as being responsible for preserving the Irish language and Irishness in general. Even though the Gaeltacht has benefited a great deal financially (from language tourism, enterprise initiatives, and government grants) and, in terms of status, its population has periodically resisted the prescriptive discourse of being ‘of the past’. The emergence of CC&W is one expression of this resistance, as it subverts any idealised image of an ‘authentic’ Gael; it resists the internal-colonialism of Romantic nationalism because it is cosmopolitan popular and modern, in many ways the antithesis of *sean-nós* song.

Musicking in Carraroe

Sean-nós song is considered by some to be the root and foundation stone of Irish traditional instrumental music. The term was first used at the beginning of the twentieth century, by Irish language revivalists, as a label for a style of traditional Irish language song from the Gaeltacht.¹⁹ Language revivalists regard vernacular Irish-language song in two ways. Firstly, because of its language content, it was seen as a vehicle for language revival,²⁰ and secondly, it is widely seen as an aural metaphor for the Gaeltacht and ‘authentic Irishness’. But in addition to Irish-language song, the traditional song repertoire of the Gaeltacht contains numerous English and macaronic songs. Yet language revivalists, such as Conradh na Gaeilge and an t-Oireachtas,²¹ have only considered the Irish-language portion of the Gaeltacht repertoire to be authentically Irish, and so the term ‘*sean-nós*’ functions to differentiate Irish-language song from other forms of vernacular song performed in Ireland, both inside and outside the Gaeltacht districts. *Sean-nós* is generally classified according to region, associated with parts of the following counties which are classified as Gaeltacht areas: Galway, Mayo, Donegal, Waterford, Cork, Meath, and Kerry. Gaelic revivalists thus turned the Gaeltacht into a spatial metaphor for authentic Irishness, and *sean-nós* into an aural metaphor for the Gaeltacht.

‘Authentic’ Irishness, for Gaelic revivalists, is imagined as being the binary opposite to Englishness,²² which is equated with the so-called western art style of singing. Of all the vernacular styles of singing performed in Ireland, Conamara *sean-nós* is widely regarded as being the furthest removed from the western art style, which means that it easily is regarded by revivalists as being the most authentically Irish of all the *sean-nós* styles. The copious use of melismatic ornamentation combined with nasalisation and a stressed voice production process are features which have become somewhat of a stereotype of the Conamara style, and these features have contributed to Conamara *sean-nós*’ privileged position. Indeed, most revivalists have overlooked traditional music in Conamara in favour of *sean-nós* song, viewing Conamara *sean-nós* as being a cultural remnant of an ancient Gaelic civilisation,²³ a type of Gaelic art music, which would form the basis for contemporary Irish art music.²⁴ Consequently much of the vernacular instrumental music and dance tradition of Conamara has been dismissed by revivalists because it was regarded as being the crude and bawdy expression of a peasant class. However, in the past, *sean-nós* in Carraroe did not stand apart from instrumental music and dance; instead music, song, dance, and storytelling were different aspects of the same process, the process of musicking which reinforced community bonds at the country house dances.

John Millington Synge in an account of his travels throughout Conamara makes reference to an encounter with an elderly man near the village of Carraroe (which he calls ‘the poorest village in Ireland’) in 1905. He informed Synge that there was no longer any music to be heard in the area:

Though in the old times it’s many a piper would be moving through those houses for a whole quarter together, playing his pipes and drinking poteen [sic] and the people dancing round him; but now there is no dancing or singing in this place at all, and most of the young people is [sic] growing up and going to America.²⁵

The above quotation is consistent with the observation that Irish vernacular music was silenced for a time after the great Famine of the 1840s and 1850s;²⁶ it also illustrates the drain that emigration was having on the Carraroe community. However, it also indicates that instrumental music and dance were originally part of the country-house dances in Carraroe.

In the recent past, the country house dances in Carraroe were primarily participatory events, and this form of musicking mirrored the general culture of Carraroe; neighbours who shared *meitheal* together would further strengthen community relations by musicking together. Everyone attending such a country house dance would be expected to have their own 'party piece', very often a song. Nowadays it is difficult to sing *sean-nós* without being aware of the burden of responsibility one has to the tradition.²⁷ *Sean-nós* singers are not just viewed as performers: they are often regarded as heroic, carrying on a legacy from their forbearers. *Sean-nós* has consequently been elevated to become a specialised practice, so much so that many in Conamara today who are able to sing would be reluctant to perform a *sean-nós* song in public, for fear of being seen as 'not traditional' or just 'not good enough'. By framing *sean-nós* as 'art' music, Gaelic revivalists have in essence appropriated the recreational musicking of the Carraroe community making Irish traditional music and *sean-nós* in particular an index of an imagined Gaeltacht, based on a primitive ideal. This imagined Gaeltacht bears little resemblance to actual Gaeltacht life either contemporary or historic, and it is regrettable but understandable that some members of the Carraroe community would come to reject *sean-nós* and traditional music because of its association with such a caricature of their community. CC&W emerged in the 1980s both as an expression of a subversive voice from within the Gaeltacht community, and as a contemporary vernacular form of Gaeltacht recreational musicking.

Music in Carraroe today

Today a visitor to the village of Carraroe in search of music is likely to encounter CC&W, popular electronic-dance music, traditional instrumental music and possibly, but rarely, *sean-nós*. Popular electronic dance-music is performed on a regular basis in the village's one night-club. The most common music is CC&W, and local professional and semi-professional groups regularly perform in Carraroe public houses. A circuit exists for these bands which encompasses much of Conamara, and parts of the UK and North America, where a strong Conamara diaspora exists. Although Country and Western is popular all over Ireland, particularly in rural Ireland, Conamara Country is unique because it is sung in Irish. This style of music first emerged in the 1980s, influenced by the showbands that regularly toured Conamara and the growing popularity of the Nashville sound. However, unlike many other Irish country singers John 'Beag' (junior) Ó Flatharta (the man credited with inventing this genre) felt it was wrong for him to sing with an 'American' or Mid-Atlantic accent.²⁸ He also felt strongly that his music should reflect his own surroundings, culture and environment.

By performing with amplification, and with non-traditional instruments such as drum machines, John Beag, and those who followed after him, subverted the image of the Gaeltacht as a primitive ideal. They created a genre of music that indexed the cosmopolitan nature of contemporary Connemara. Cosmopolitanism is a type of 'trans-state cultural formation with common habits of thought and practice shared among groups of people in

widely dispersed “locales”²⁹. But: ‘cosmopolitanism is always simultaneously local and translocal; people in each local site will develop a somewhat distinctive combination of habits drawn from the cosmopolitan formation’.³⁰ Therefore, while CC&W bears a number of similarities to American Country and Western music, such as instrument choice, chord progressions, and guitar licks, it is also distinct in a number of ways. CC&W bands often include a button accordion player, or a keyboard player with a keyboard-synthesiser set to sound like a button accordion. The prominence of the button accordion sound in CC&W, an index of the older musical tradition of the area, links this contemporary genre with the past, and the use of Irish-language vocals also marks the localness of this genre.

While many individuals in Carraroe are drawn to CC&W, *sean-nós* song and traditional music are widely regarded with a mixture of apathy and scorn. Carraroe, like other Gaeltacht areas, has of course benefited from its position as a reservation of ‘authentic Irishness’, and while many of Carraroe’s population acknowledge this and are proud of their position in Irish society, many others resent the framing of their community as a primitive ideal. ‘Semantic snowballing’ refers to the potential collecting of multiple layers of indexical meanings around a single sign-vehicle, and it is a useful concept for deciphering Carraroe’s relationship to *sean-nós*. My own research indicates that, for the reasons outlined above, many of the Carraroe’s population (to varying degrees depending on the individual) regard the genre simultaneously with a mixture of pride, affection, sentimentality, apathy, shame and scorn. I propose that this is due to the fact that, although primarily an index of the imagined Gaeltacht of Romantic cultural nationalism, *sean-nós* contains indexical traces of *meitheal* and community belonging. But, CC&W not only subverts the ideal of Gaelic revivalists, it is also free of the cultural baggage that has marginalised *sean-nós* in Carraroe.

CC&W events in Carraroe, indeed, are strongly reminiscent of *sean-nós* song events and other country house music traditions generally. CC&W songs tend to be story songs, celebrating local heroes or chronicling local events, and of course they are sung in Irish, all features shared with the *sean-nós* tradition. CC&W songs are played in waltz or jive time to facilitate dancing, and a particular idiosyncratic form of jiving has emerged over the years, reminiscent of *sean-nós*³¹ dancing.³² It is tempting therefore to view CC&W as a reworking of the Irish music song and dance tradition of the former country house dances, and arguably CC&W is a living vernacular Irish music genre. However, CC&W events differ significantly from the older country house dances in a number of ways. CC&W is performed in public houses, spaces that tend not to be as intimate as the kitchen of a country house. Couples dancing at CC&W events appear to be very aware that they are on display and in this regard dancing at CC&W events is as much presentational as it is participatory,³³ differing from country house dances, which were fully participatory events.

CC&W bands almost always perform with amplification at high levels relative to the size of the venues. This means that verbal communication at these events can be quite problematic. Although it is well understood that the fostering of community spirit does not necessarily require verbal communication, in this instance I believe amplitude is acting as an extension of technologically induced social isolation. In some instances loud music may function to help create a shared sense of togetherness and belonging amongst participants,³⁴ but here I propose that the isolation that has become a daily reality for many in Carraroe is

being mirrored by the loudness of the CC&W bands. In the not so distant past *meitheal* was elemental to Carraroe life, and could only function in a community that had a strong sense of togetherness. The country house dance was a ritual where music, song, and dance functioned to reinforce the sense of community belonging that was necessary for maintaining the smooth running of a co-operative labour system such as *meitheal*. Technological advancement has brought countless benefits to Carraroe, but it has also eroded the sense of interdependence and togetherness that existed in the recent past, a situation which has directly influenced how, and what kind of, music is performed in the area.

Conclusions

Because of the influence of Romantic cultural nationalism *sean-nós* is widely seen as an unchanging idiom. Musicians and singers in the Gaeltacht wishing to experiment with *sean-nós* would have to navigate the perilous waters of preservationism and notions of authenticity; Country and Western not only seems relevant to contemporary Gaeltacht life, it is free from the cultural baggage that threatens to drown *sean-nós*. I have argued that the loudness of CC&W events mirrors the social isolation of contemporary Gaeltacht life, perhaps by doing so CC&W acts as a cathartic release for this community. A growing number of young *sean-nós* singers have emerged in Conamara in recent years. The Joe Heaney underage *sean-nós* singing competitions held annually in Carna as part of Féile Joe Éinniú (the Joe Heaney Festival) is well attended as is the underage singing competitions at the Oireachtas. However, *sean-nós* remains a marginalised genre and most singers rely on singing competitions as their primary vehicle for performance.

Notes

¹ Originally the term ‘Gaeltacht’ meant the ‘Irishry’, but today the term is used to denote the Irish/Gaelic-speaking districts of Ireland – see Cairtriona Ó Torna, *Cruthú na Gaeltachta 1893–1922* (Baile Átha Cliath: Cois Life Teoranta, 2005). In all, there are seven Gaeltacht districts in Ireland, most of them on the west coast stretching from Donegal to Kerry (see *Údarás na Gaeltachta* [2013], Enterprise Development, available: <http://www.udaras.ie/en/forbairt-fiontraiochta/> [accessed 06 August 2013]). Collectively, the various Gaeltacht districts, or, ‘Gaeltachtaí’ (plural), make up 6% of the total surface of Ireland – see Eileen Moore Quinn, ‘Entextualizing Famine, Reconstituting Self: Testimonial Narratives from Ireland’, *Anthropology Quarterly*, 74, no. 2 (2001), 72–88 (p. 75).

² I use this somewhat clumsy term to describe the psychological effect industrialisation within a capitalist system has had on the Carraroe community. Capitalism promotes materialism and ‘human relinquishment – the abandonment of things, practices, places and people, and the loss of human interaction and exchange – in lieu of more impersonal and abstract exchanges’ – see Susan H. Motherway, *The Globalisation of Irish Traditional Song Performance* (Surrey, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), p. 175.

³ ‘*Seán-nós*’ is the Irish (Gaelic) for ‘old style, way, or method.’ ‘*Seán-nós* song’ is used to indicate unaccompanied traditional solo singing in the Irish/Gaelic language, and, since 1975, it has been used to describe a form of Irish step-dance that has a particular association with Connemara – *seán-nós* dance, also ‘old style step-dance’.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

⁴ The abbreviation CC&W will be used to refer to Irish-language ‘Connemara, Country and Western’; ‘Irish’ will be used to indicate the Irish Gaelic language.

⁵ All statistics date from 2012.

⁶ NUIG is based in what were formally the local primary and secondary (technical) schools in Carraroe. The unit is now named after the celebrated Irish-language writer and Gaeltacht-rights activist from Connemara, Máirtín Ó Cadhin.

⁷ A subsidiary of RTÉ, RnaG is the major Irish language station. It commenced broadcasting in 1972; the Irish language and Irish traditional music have been central to the stations output – see Fintan Vallely, *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music*, 2nd edn (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), p. 560.

⁸ ‘Telefís na Gaeilge Channel 4’ was established in 1996 and it is Ireland’s national Irish-language television station (see Vallely, 2011, p. 680).

⁹ Established in 1980, Údarás na Gaeltachta is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. It has a governing board of 20 members (17 of whom are democratically elected by the community) and a staff of 96 to implement its development brief (Údarás na Gaeltachta, op. cit., 2013).

¹⁰ Micheál Ó Conghaile, *Conamara agus Árainn 1880–1980: Gnéithe den Stair Shóisialta (Indreabhán) (County na Gaillimhe: Cló Iar Chonnachta, 1998).*

¹¹ See Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performing and Listening* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), for more on ‘musicking’.

¹² Ó Conghaile, pp. 148–169.

¹³ An almost unbroken line of bungalows stretches along the South Connemara coast from Bearna in the east (now an outlying suburb of Galway city) to Carraroe in the southwest. The cartographer and cultural geographer, Tim Robinson, describes the area as a dispersed suburbia. See Tim Robinson, *Connemara: A Little Gaelic Kingdom* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2011), p. 318.

¹⁴ Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), p. 145.

¹⁵ Caitríona Ó Torna, *Cruthú na Gaeltachta 1893–1922* (Baile Átha Cliath: Cois Life, 2005).

¹⁶ Catherine Nash, ‘Embodying the Nation: The West of Ireland Landscape and Irish Identity’, in *Tourism in Ireland: A Critical Analysis*, ed. by Barbara O’Connor and Michael Cronin (Cork: Cork University Press, 1993), pp. 86–112; John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Irish Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1987).

¹⁷ Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 2nd edn (London: Vintage, 1994).

¹⁸ Motherway, pp. 59–81.

¹⁹ Donncha Ó Súilleabháin, *Scéal an Oireachtais 1897–1924* (Baile Átha Cliath: Clóchomhar, 1984), p. 111.

²⁰ Éamonn Costello, ‘*Sean-nós as Vehicle for Cultural Revival*’ (unpublished master’s thesis, University College Cork, 2008).

²¹ An t-Oireachtas, which means ‘assembly’, was established by the Gaelic League in 1897 as a festival of Irish culture. The festival was inspired by Scotland’s Mod and Wales’s Eisteddfod festivals. The Oireachtas is primarily concerned with celebrating and promoting the Irish language.

²² Anthony McCann and Lillis Ó Laoire, “‘Raising One Higher than the Other’: The Hierarchy of Tradition in Representations of Gaelic and English Language Song in Ireland’ in *Global Pop Local Language*, ed. by Harris M. Berger and Michael T. Carroll (Jackson, MS: University of Mississippi Press, 2003), pp. 233–265.

²³ Not all revivalists favour the Connemara style. The Munster styles associated with Waterford and Cork have, in particular, been described as the oldest of the *sean-nós* styles with clear links to the old bardic tradition (see Daniel Corkery, *The Hidden Ireland: A Study of Gaelic Munster in the Eighteenth Century* (London: M.H. Gill and Son, 1924).

²⁴ Nineteenth century Irish cultural nationalists differed on their views on *sean-nós* and traditional music. Progressivists believed traditional music should be used as the building block for an Irish art music, while nativists believed the vernacular music of Ireland, particularly *sean-nós*, was Irish art music (see Costello, 2008).

²⁵ J. M. Synge, *Travelling Ireland, Essays 1898–1908*, ed. by Nicholas Grene (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2009).

²⁶ Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, ‘Amhrán an Ghorta: The Great Famine and Irish Traditional Music’, *New Hibernia Review*, 3, no. 1 (1999), 19–44.

²⁷ R. Nic Dhonncha, official launch of *Bright Star of the West: Joe Heaney, Irish Song Man*, by Sean Williams and Lillis Ó Laoire at The Joe Heaney Commemorative Festival of Traditional Singing and Music, 29 April, Aras Shorcha Ní Ghuirim, Carna (2011).

²⁸ ‘Ar Ancaire’, TG4, documentary film, produced and directed by Seán Ó Cualáin (19 December 2010).

²⁹ Turino, p. 142.

³⁰ Turino, p. 125.

³¹ The term was first used in the 1970s in reference to a highly individualistic and improvisational form of step-dancing performed in the Conamara area. Largely ignored at the time, it has become an essential part of the Oireachtas festival in recent years.

³² Helen Brennan, *The Story of Irish Dance*, 2nd edn (Dingle, Co. Kerry: Brandon, 2004).

³³ Turino, 2008.

³⁴ For example, many concertgoers describe a special state of consciousness, a sense of excitement they get when listening to really loud music, i.e., over 115dB; see Daniel Levitin, *This Is Your Brain on Music: Understanding a Human Obsession* (London: Atlantic Books, 2008), p. 71. It is possible therefore that concert-goers experiencing such heightened states of excitement would feel a sense of connection with fellow concert-goers, a sense of community.

6

A typology for the study of the old and the new asymmetrical ('crooked') tunes in the traditional music of Quebec

JEAN DUVAL

The instrumental music of Quebec shares several traits with other music traditions such as old-time music in both Canada and the USA and traditional music in Great Britain and Ireland. A characteristic strongly associated with the music of Quebec that helps to distinguish it from these other traditions, however, is the frequent performance by many musicians of asymmetrical tunes – so-called 'crooked' tunes – up to the present day. Asymmetrical tunes are played, or were played, in other musics to various extents as previously shown in several NAFCo papers and articles.¹ But, the performance of crooked tunes in Quebec was, and still is, very much alive, forming an essential and continuous part of the traditional music soundscape, probably to a greater degree than in other music traditions. This article will first present a broad picture of asymmetrical tunes in Quebec. Then, with references to the work of other researchers, I will explain the typology that I developed to describe the asymmetrical musical system associated with them. I will also show how this tradition has been brought up to date in the last thirty years through the composition of new tunes, and, in conclusion, how asymmetries are used to create variations and improvisations.

Traditional asymmetrical tunes in Quebec

Symmetry is the norm in North Atlantic dance music, where tunes have an even structure of multiples of eight or sixteen beats in each part, each part being played twice. In Quebec, many tunes are played in this 'straight' way, but may also have asymmetrical versions, and some exist only in crooked versions. Moreover, some old musicians do not have a fixed version of a tune and will vary its 'crookedness' from one iteration of the tune to the next. Many asymmetrical tunes have only one extra beat at some point in the tune, but others diverge more radically from the 'straight' model. Figure 1 shows a tune that clearly illustrates that we are dealing here with a particular musical 'dialect' with its own unspoken syntax. The tune, 'Le Bedeau de l'Enfer' (The verger of hell), was played by Henry Landry on a 1974 recording. In such a tune, bar lines serve only to indicate subsections of a part.

Le bedeau de l'enfer

Henri Landry 1974



Figure 1 An example of a Québécois tune diverging greatly from the straight model: 'Le Bedeau de l'Enfer', as played by fiddler Henri Landry in 1974.

The prevalence of asymmetrical tunes varies depending on period, musician, region of Quebec and performance context. For example, in commercial recordings from the 1920s to the 1940s, more than a third of the tunes exhibit some kind of crookedness. After World War II, asymmetrical tunes became progressively less frequent on commercial recordings, probably under the influence of Canadian and American mass media and the staging of folk dances. Recordings from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s of the most prominent professional performers – such as fiddler Jean Carignan and accordionist Philippe Bruneau – contain very few crooked tunes. However, asymmetrical tunes never totally vanished from the Quebec soundscape, and my analysis of LP recordings of traditional musicians from different regions of Quebec made in the 1970s showed that, on average, 60% of their repertoire comprised crooked tunes. Starting in the 1980s, revivalist groups like *La Bottine Souriante* and *Le Rêve du Diable* often included asymmetrical tunes in their repertoire. Nowadays, most traditional Quebec music bands play some, and often many, crooked tunes, either traditional or of their own composition. For example, the proportion of asymmetrical tunes in the recordings of the band *Le Vent du Nord* has been continuously increasing, going from 10% to 45% of the tunes on their numerous CDs over a ten-year period. The context also has importance. Asymmetrical tunes are more likely to be played in intimate or listening contexts, or in sessions, rather than when providing music for country dancing or playing in a fiddle contest or a 'gala folklorique'. Dueck has also made this observation in the case of Métis fiddle music.²

Previous work on the typology of asymmetrical tunes

Few thorough studies leading to a typology of crooked tunes have been conducted, in Quebec or elsewhere. In Anne Lederman's (1988) report on her extensive study of the

repertoire of Métis fiddlers in Manitoba, she describes the frequent peculiar forms of the Métis tunes, such as an odd number of repetitions of parts, the lengthening of endings and the division of phrases into groups of three, five or seven beats.³ Demonstrating the influence of native music and French-Canadian fiddlers on Métis music, she also put into perspective the importance of what she refers to as ‘asymmetric phrasing’ (crookedness) in the entire Métis repertoire. It occurred in more than half of the 450 tunes she collected. More recently, Christina Smith (2007) wrote an article on her research into the crooked tunes of Newfoundland traditional music.⁴ From the abundant archival material available at Memorial University, she described and named the main types of crookedness she observed, which consisted mostly of extra beats at the beginning (oh), in the middle (median jog) or at the end (jog) of the parts of tunes. Nikos Pappas (2007) also proposed a typology of crooked tunes for the old-time music of Kentucky in a paper presented at the ICTM conference in Vienna, 2007.⁵ He was mostly interested in explaining crookedness in this tradition through syncretism with Afro-American and early European music. However, none of these studies on North American crooked tunes has led to a systematic approach to the topic. More recently, Rockwell (2011) proposed a new way of examining crooked tunes based on his study of the song repertoire of the Carter family from the USA.⁶ He considers crookedness not as an objective characteristic, but as one related to the isochrony, or lack thereof, of the musical layers perceived by musicians. Yet this novel approach, although very inclusive and respectful of oral traditions, does not help achieve a precise nomenclature of the elements of crookedness.

In Quebec, the small amount of work done on asymmetrical tunes prior to the present study has consisted mostly of music transcriptions done for research purposes, or for collections destined for musicians. In her MA thesis on fiddler Louis Boudreault from the Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean region, Lisa Ornstein (1985) made general comments and a few descriptions of the crookedness found in this outstanding performer’s repertoire, underlining the freedom of form in his music and the occasional difficulty of adequately transcribing his tunes.⁷ Quebec City fiddlers and multi-instrumentalists Liette Remon and Guy Bouchard (1996 and 1997) compiled two small collections titled *25 Airs Tordus du Québec* (25 crooked tunes from Quebec).⁸ Their aim was to highlight, with no scholarly intention, the richness of this aspect of Quebec’s music tradition. In the introduction to the first volume, they briefly described certain types of crookedness such as metric alternation. Terms used by Lederman (1988), Smith (2007) and Pappas (2007) to describe the various forms of crookedness are not systematised and are often insufficient to describe the full scope of crookedness that is found in Québécois music. The typology that I present and use here will, I hope, enrich our appreciation and knowledge of this living tradition, and it may also prove useful for examining asymmetry in other music traditions.⁹

Describing asymmetries with a new typology

To understand the ‘language’ of Quebec asymmetrical tunes, I listened to and analysed 342 crooked tunes that are available on a website developed by the Canadian Government named ‘Virtual Gramophone’.¹⁰ These are digitised 78rpm records covering the period from 1920 to 1940. By comparing crooked and straight versions of a tune, I developed a typology

and a terminology appropriate to the description of crookedness in tunes. When there was no straight version of a tune, I inferred the element of asymmetry by deciding what could be deleted or added and still make musical sense of a tune. Everything diverging from the 'square' model of 8 or 16 beats per part (or 12 or 24 beats for triple-meter tunes), where parts are played twice each, that is AABB for a two-part tune, was considered as asymmetrical.

I divided the types of asymmetry into three main categories: morphological, syntactical and 'pulsative'. These correspond to the three hierarchical layers of a tune, namely: the tune with its different parts, the musical strain of a part with its different segments, and the pulsation. The second level in the typology is the process used: lengthening, shortening, a combination of both, permutation, or alternation. In the category of syntactical asymmetries, a third level is considered, namely the position of the asymmetry in a part. The asymmetry can be qualified as: 'caudal',¹¹ when it occurs beyond the final note of an 8 or 16-beat strain; 'final', when it comes at the end of the strain; 'medial', when it is found toward the end of a half-strain; 'initial', when it is at the beginning; or 'intermediary', when it is present anywhere else in a part. An overall view of the typology and a description of each type of asymmetry are presented in the table in Figure 1. A fourth level, not presented in the table, can also be considered for syntactical asymmetries obtained by lengthening. It is useful to describe the way that an added beat can be played, either by holding a note, by repeating it (what is called *monnayage* in French), by playing a motif leading to the rest of the musical phrase, or by otherwise filling in (for example, playing an arpeggio).

Morphological asymmetries deal with the overall arrangement of the parts of a tune. They include:

- a special order of parts when tunes have three or more parts, for example, ABAC rather than ABC;
- trebling, whereby a part is played three times rather than twice; and
- metrical alternation, where a tune alternates between duple and triple meter in its different parts.

Syntactical asymmetries are the most common and the most diverse. They are all the result of a lengthening and/or a shortening of a part, when compared with a straight version of a tune (or a hypothetical square model). Often, there will be an extra beat added at the beginning, middle or at, especially, the end of a part. Tunes in duple meter with 12-beat rather than 8-beat structures are sometimes observed, as is rhythmical imparity, where a part with 16 beats will be divided into phrases of 9+7 beats rather than 8+8 beats. Stuttering, iteration, pause and *aparté*¹² are cases of elongation occurring in places other than at the beginning, middle or end of a part. Pulsative asymmetries are very rare, and are essentially restricted to cases where there is a half-beat jump in a tune, at least in Québécois traditional music.

Frequency of types of asymmetry

Although the typology presented here was developed from an analysis of recordings published on the Virtual Gramophone, it can be used to examine tunes of more recent periods, and even tunes recently composed by Québécois traditional musicians. Figure 2 presents a compilation of the different types of asymmetry observed in the tunes

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Main Category	Process used	Position	Type of asymmetry	Description or example
Morphological	Lengthening		Trebling	Playing a part three times instead of twice
	Permutation		Special order	Playing parts in the order ABACAD instead of ABCD, for example
	Alternation		Metrical alternation	Having part A in duple meter and part B in triple meter, for example
Syntactical	Lengthening	Caudal	Tail	Adding a motif ending on the tonic after ending on the tonic
			Forced resolution	Adding a one-beat motif ending on the tonic after ending on another degree
			Double ending	Adding a long motif ending on the tonic after ending on another degree
		Final	Paragoge	Playing the final note of a strain for a longer duration
		Cadential	Extension on 4	Lengthening the cadential motif for a longer duration on the fourth degree
			Extension on 5	Lengthening the cadential motif for a longer duration on the fifth degree
			Scaling extension	Replacing the cadential motif by a descending scale leading to the final note
		Medial	Paragoge	Lengthening the final note of a half-strain
			Forced resolution	Adding a one-beat motif ending on the tonic after ending on another degree
		Intermediary	Iteration	Immediate repeat of a two- or three-beat motif
			Stuttering	Immediate repeat of a one-beat motif
			Pause	Holding of a note elsewhere than at the beginning, middle or end of a strain
		Initial	Anacrusis	Inserting a long motif only once in a strain
	Adding a motif before the normal beginning of a strain			
	Shortening	Final	Apocope	Shortening the duration of the final note
			Final shortening	Shortening a strain by not playing the final note at all
		Cadential	Cadential shortening	Compressing the cadential notes into a shorter duration motif
		Medial	Apocope	Shortening the duration of the final note of a half-strain
		Intermediary	Intermed. Shortening	Cutting out notes elsewhere than at the beginning, middle or end of a strain
			Amalgram	Compressing notes into a shorter duration motif
Beginning		Initial shortening	Compressing or not playing notes at the beginning of a strain	
Lengthening & Shortening		Rhythmical imparity	Dividing the strain into two unequal parts (e.g. 9+ 7)	
Pulsative	Shortening		Half-beat jump	Cutting out notes so that the regular pulsation is displaced

Figure 2 Typologies of asymmetries and their description.

available on the Virtual Gramophone and in two dozen recent compositions. The types of syntactical asymmetries have been grouped according to their position in a part, on

Main category	Types of asymmetry	Frequency (in percentage of the number of asymmetries)		
		Virtual Gramophone (342 tunes)	12 Compositions 1980-2000	12 Compositions since 2000
Morphological	Trebling	8	0	7
	Special order	4	0	0
	Metrical alternation	3	0	7
Syntactical	Final lengthening	22	40	31
	Medial lengthening	14	10	6
	Initial lengthening	2	0	0
	Stuttering/iteration	9	0	14
	Other lengthening	8	15	0
	Final shortening	16	15	10
	Medial shortening	7	0	0
	Initial shortening	1	0	0
	Rhythmical imparity	2	0	3
	12-beat structure	3	5	17
	All other types	2	15	0

Figure 3 Types of asymmetry and their comparative frequency on the Virtual Gramophone recordings and in tunes composed in the 1980-2000 period and subsequently.

the one hand for ease of comparison between samples, and on the other, because it is sometimes hard to ascribe with precision the type of asymmetry when no straight version of a tune exists for comparison purposes. Since I noted different trends in the compositions of young musicians from year 2000 on, the data was divided into two different periods.

On the Virtual Gramophone recordings, as the third column of Figure 2 shows, the types of asymmetries occurring in tunes are very diverse, with some being more frequent than others. By far the most common type of asymmetry is lengthening at the end of a part. This may be by means of a paragoge (the elongation of the final note itself); a cadential extension (whereby the passage leading to the final note is expanded); or through the addition of a tail, which is a recurring coda. Shortening at the end, especially by means of an apocope that makes the final note of a part shorter, is also quite frequent, as is lengthening in the middle of a part. Morphological asymmetries such as trebling and a special order of the parts represent 11% of the nearly 1,000 occurrences of crookedness found in the 342 tunes of the Virtual Gramophone (since there is often more than one asymmetry in a single tune). ‘Stuttering’ occurs when a group of notes worth a single beat is repeated. ‘Iteration’ is the same idea as stuttering, but with a group of notes equivalent to two beats (or three beats in a triple-meter tune). ‘Shortening’ in the middle happens in 7% of the cases and other types of asymmetries are comparatively more rare.

Having established a portrait of crooked tunes from the past, let us now look at elements of crookedness found in the compositions of various Québécois traditional musicians since 1980. The fourth column of the table in Figure 3 presents the various types of asymmetries found in twelve compositions of the period 1980 to 2000. Most are the product of musicians who are now in their forties and fifties; some of them grew up in the tradition, while others could be termed revivalists. The first observation is that the types of asymmetry are much less diverse than those observed in the recordings of the Virtual Gramophone. Of course, the sample size is much smaller than that taken from the Virtual Gramophone. Globally, the types of asymmetries are of a very simple kind in the compositions of this period. Lengthening at the end still constitutes the main type of crookedness, and its frequency



Figure 4 Example of an asymmetrical tune composed in the 1980s: ‘La Grande Faucheuse’ by fiddler Michel Faubert.

is doubled compared with the proportion found in the past, and cadential extensions are frequently used. A typical composition of this period is the reel titled ‘La Grande Faucheuse’ by fiddler, storyteller and singer Michel Faubert (Figure 4). Boxes in the transcription of this tune indicate how the middle and end of each part are elongated, mostly through cadential extensions.

The last column of Figure 3 shows the elements of crookedness found in a dozen compositions by musicians who are currently in their twenties and thirties. Most are fiddlers in well-known Quebec traditional bands such as *Le Vent du Nord*, *Genticorum*, *De Temps Antan*, and *Les Chauffeurs à Pieds*. The first observation is that types of asymmetries in their tunes are more varied than in the previous group. Although lengthening at the end of part is still the main way of making a tune asymmetrical, they introduce stuttering and iteration. They tend to use very long phrases, often 12, 24 or more beats per section. They also use morphological asymmetries such as trebling. To illustrate the type of crooked tunes these young musicians are composing, Figure 5 presents the ‘Reel des Faux-Billets’ by Antoine Gauthier, fiddler in the band *Les Chauffeurs à Pieds*. Bar lines are deliberately not used in the transcription of the tune. Although it is difficult to ascribe the asymmetry to specific elements in such a tune, boxes indicate segments which are more likely to explain the deviation from a 16-beat part, namely a stuttering and a tail in the A part, and an iteration and an apocope in the B part.

A variety of reasons may explain the differences in the diversity and prevalence of certain types of crookedness between these two generations of composers. Musicians now in their forties and fifties were widely exposed to the straight music that dominated the commercial recordings they heard in their youth. At the time they started, playing tunes deviating even by a single beat was a bold gesture, in certain contexts at least. It could be said that those who liked crooked tunes had to fight to legitimise them and bring them back into mainstream of Québécois traditional music. The more recent composers, on the other hand, have not had to fight for this acceptance. Although they have had little or no contact with older traditional musicians, they have had much easier access to a large amount of

archival recordings such as those on the Virtual Gramophone and also field recordings of various kinds. They are obviously looking for rarer elements of asymmetry in an effort to distinguish themselves or put forward what may be seen as elements more particular to the Québécois musical identity. They adopt large frames in which their creativity has fewer restraints, while still respecting the 'dialect' of crookedness heard in older traditional material.

Reel des faux billets

A=17+19; B=17+18 Antoine Gauthier



Figure 5 Example of an asymmetrical tune composed since 2000: 'Reel des Faux-Billets' by fiddler Antoine Gauthier.

Asymmetrical variation and improvisation

There was a tradition in the past in Quebec of creating asymmetrical variations of certain well-known tunes. Of course, these performances were for listening more than for dancing; this practice is now nearly extinct, and even crooked versions of tunes and tunes existing only in crooked versions are nowadays mostly played always the same way. Two good examples of this old art of variation are the versions of the 'Monymusk' recorded by two well-known musicians from the past, fiddler Isidore Soucy and accordionist Tommy Duchesne. The two versions (both of which can be heard on the Virtual Gramophone) have many parts and they modulate. Soucy's version presents elements of crookedness such as stuttering, tails and cadential extensions, while Duchesne's is much more rhythmic, even with a transformation into triple meter in one of the parts. This art of variation using asymmetry in abundance is not used today. When musicians create variations, they tend to do it using either what I would term the 'Irish way' (by adding ornamentation or slightly changing the melodic contour), or the 'Québécois way' (by playing with rhythmical patterns and arpeggiated motifs); the symmetrical frame of the tune is strictly respected and not malleable as it was for some musicians in the past.

Another lost art is that of improvising crooked variations on a tune, using the basic melodic ideas of a tune as material to create a kind of patchwork suggesting its essence. One of my informants, fiddler Jean Desgagnés from the Saguenay region of Quebec, explained to me how both his father and another well-known fiddler of the past in the region regularly improvised on certain tunes. Here is a summary translation of the comments he made on this topic:

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

My dad used to tell me that a tune like ‘Le Talencourt’ is almost improvisation in itself. ‘Le Talencourt’ was an opportunity to say: ‘Show me what you can do’ . . . ‘Le Talencourt’ was not a dancing piece. Forget it [...] [improvisation on tunes was done] to tease, to challenge, to be able to say afterward: ‘You really screwed that one up’. Then people would start laughing. [My dad would challenge his friend]: ‘Can’t you improvise?’ and all kinds of similar capers [...] My dad and Xavier Dallaire were good at it. It was beautiful to hear them do it.

Unlike Jean Desgagnés, I have never witnessed this traditional way of improvising in recent decades. I have several times witnessed young fiddlers, often highly trained musicians, taking turns at improvising on a standard tune during a session using mostly jazz ideas, departing wildly from the melody although never altering the straight structure of the tune in doing so. This is a far cry from the traditional way, where one fiddler would essentially play with the syntax of a tune. Both traditional variations and improvisation using asymmetries have probably disappeared because of the modern prevalence of group playing rather than solo playing, the hegemony of standard versions of tunes, and the omnipresent harmonic accompaniment provided by guitars and pianos. Or it could be that they have simply fallen out of favour.

In conclusion, it is clear that asymmetrical tunes are still an important part of the Quebec soundscape, not only because crooked tunes or crooked versions of tunes continue to be played, but also because many asymmetrical tunes continue to be composed by musicians of all ages. Overall, recent composers use the same types of asymmetries as those found in older tunes. For young traditional musicians composing in the twenty-first century, crookedness represents an open framework in which they can express their creativity while still sounding traditional. I think that the next step for many Québécois musicians will be to re-appropriate the art of variation and improvisation using elements of the asymmetrical dialect I have described, an art that once was also part of the tradition alongside composition. I hope that the typology and terminology that I have developed to describe asymmetries in tunes through my research will help this particular language at the heart of Québécois music culture to persist and evolve.

Notes

¹ Alan Jabbour, ‘Fiddle Tunes of the Old Frontier’, in *Driving the Bow: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 2*, ed. by Ian Russell and Mary Anne Alburger (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, 2008), pp. 4–13; Eoghan Neff, ‘The Fiddle in a Tune: John Doherty and the Donegal Fiddle Tradition’, in Russell and Alburger, *Driving the Bow*, pp. 74–87; Sarah Quick, ‘Two Models in the World of Métis Fiddling: John Arcand and Andy Dejarlis’, in *Crossing Over: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 3*, ed. by Ian Russell and Anna Kearny Guigné (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, 2010), pp. 114–129; Anne Lederman, ‘Aboriginal Fiddling in the North: The Two Traditions’, in Russell and Guigné, *Crossing Over*, pp. 130–147; Samantha Breslin, ‘Putting Down Roots: Playing Irish and Newfoundland Music in St. John’s’,

DUVAL *A typology for the study of asymmetrical ('crooked') tunes in Quebec*

in *Routes & Roots; Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 4*, ed. by Ian Russell and Chris Goertzen (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, 2012), pp. 157–175.

² Byron Dueck, 'Public and Intimate Sociability in First Nations and Métis Fiddling', *Ethnomusicology*, 51, no. 1 (2007), 30–63.

³ Anne Lederman, 'Old Indian and Metis Fiddling in Manitoba: Origins, Structure, and Questions of Syncretism', *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies*, 7, no. 2 (1988), 205–230.

⁴ Christina Smith, 'Crooked as the Road to Branch: Asymmetry in Newfoundland Dance Music', *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, 22, no. 1 (2007), 1719–1726.

⁵ Nikos Pappas, 'This is one of the most crooked tunes I ever did hear. But once you understand it, then it's alright to play: Crookedness in Oldtime American Fiddle Tunes Repertoires', paper presented at the International Council for Traditional Music conference in Vienna, July 2007.

⁶ Joti Rockwell, 'Time on the Crooked Road: Isochrony, Meter, and Disruption in Old-Time Country and Bluegrass Music', *Ethnomusicology*, 55, no. 1 (2011), 55–76.

⁷ Lisa Ornstein, 'A Life of Music: History and Repertoire of Louis Boudreault, Traditional Fiddler from Chicoutimi, Quebec' (unpublished master's thesis, Université Laval, 1985).

⁸ Liette Remon and Guy Bouchard, *Airs tordus du Québec* (Val-Bélair, QC: Trente sous zéro, 1996); Liette Remon and Guy Bouchard, *Airs tordus du Québec, Volume 2* (Val-Bélair, Québec: Trente sous zéro, 1997).

⁹ In my doctoral research, I used this typology to examine asymmetries in other music traditions as well, namely those of England, France, Ireland, Norway, Scotland, Sweden, and various areas of North America. See Jean Duval, 'Porteurs de pays à l'air libre: Jeu et enjeux des pièces asymétriques dans la musique traditionnelle du Québec' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Montreal, 2012).

¹⁰ 'Virtual Gramophone: Canadian Historical Sound Recordings', *Library and Archives Canada* (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/gramophone).

¹¹ Literally, 'at or near the end'.

¹² Literally, 'side conversation'.

Fiddling with style: recent trends in the approach to the fiddle in Norway

ÅNON EGELAND

My first dedicated involvement with Hardanger fiddle playing began in my late teens. Unlike the majority of my schoolmates with far more mainstream tastes, I quite rapidly found myself in the lucky position where my musical heroes were also my teachers. All were men, well-respected players and traditional stylists, born between 1893 and 1927, and mostly from the Agder region of southern Norway. All shared an archaic approach to the fiddle, in terms of technique as well as style and repertoire. I employed the same technique as them as a matter of course, and never questioned its validity. So, like them, I held the fiddle against my chest, with the heel of my left hand supporting it. I didn't encounter any resistance to this approach until, after a few years of apprenticeship, I made a half-hearted attempt to take part in the competition system of Norway's traditional music scene. I had chosen two of my best tunes and managed to render them in an acceptable fashion. The result was far from disastrous, but the response from the judges was discouraging – especially the written comment, which boldly stated: 'Somewhat toothless. Must hold the fiddle under chin'. Of course, there were probably sound reasons to criticise the performance of my twenty-year-old self, so the judges may well have been right in their evaluation of the music. But even now, nearly four decades later, I am not willing to accept that my fiddle hold was to blame for the poor results. I am still puzzled by the attitude of the judges in this regard. All were players of repute, including the great Kjetil Løndal (1907–1987) whose father and mentor, Svein Løndal (1864–1949), ironically, appeared to have used exactly the same fiddle-hold as myself. So how was it that these adjudicators had come to reject their own background and advocate instead the adoption of a technique influenced by the classical violin?

Two fiddle types, one hold

Two different varieties of the fiddle are used in Norway: the regular fiddle and the Hardanger fiddle (*hardingfele*). The former is physically identical to the violin. Although the earliest known specimens of the latter (the oldest dates back to circa 1651) are roughly the size of a modern 3/4 violin, since the 1860s Hardanger fiddles have been built in more or less the same mould as modern violins. The most notable ways in which they differ from the violin

are the slightly shorter neck (resulting in a resonating string length that is roughly 25mm shorter), the considerably more curved top – the inner edge of the sound holes is on a higher plane than the outer – and the 4–5 sympathetic strings that run underneath the relatively flat bridge and fingerboard. In the paper that follows, I use the term ‘fiddle’ when referring to the violin’s use in a traditional music context and ‘violin’ when referring to its use in a modern art music context.

It is important to bear in mind that despite the differences in appearance, both forms of Norwegian fiddle have historically shared the same basic technical and stylistic approach, and in that way can be considered the same instrument. It is also worth noting that there have always been differences of opinion about the technical approach to the instrument, irrespective of genre and style. Reflecting the view of Norway’s musical elite, or *stadsmusikant*,¹ Lorents Nicolaj Berg states in his tutor book of 1782 that ‘every violinist insists that his manner [of holding the instrument] is the most comfortable: Some hold it under the chin, others on the chin, others against their breast ...’²

The hold that was common among most older players in the early 1970s when I started playing – what I refer to in this paper as the ‘traditional’ hold – can be described as follows: the tail-piece of the instrument is held against the neck, or lower down, against the collar bone or the chest. Most importantly, it is never supported by the chin. The left hand is bent inwards, often with its heel touching the edge of the bottom of the instrument. The Hardanger fiddle is always held with the left hand touching the instrument in this way, providing the support that a modern violinist gets by clamping the fiddle with the chin. In the generation born around the turn of the last century, this left-hand position was still fairly common among regular fiddle players too. Typically, the player will be seated. This is more relaxed, and enables the player to provide the foot percussion essential to the style. The fiddle is held with the peg box tilting slightly forwards and with the top at an angle of 45–60 degrees to the floor. The arms are close to the body, causing the bowing hand to move more vertically than horizontally. A quick investigation outside Norway rapidly reveals that this technical approach has historically been close to universal, and used by fiddlers not only in Norway, but all over the Western world. The sheer number of players who have approached their instruments in this way – and across such a vast area – is astonishing.

Most researchers of violin history agree that for the first century of its existence the violin was primarily used to provide music for dancing and lighter entertainment, performed by the lower strata of the hierarchy of professional musicians.³ The violin made its first recorded appearance on the concert music scene of the social elite only in the late 1620s, and it was not until several decades later that it acquired the prestige it enjoys to this day. It is likely that the traditional fiddle hold – along with several other characteristics of fiddle style and technique – predates the use of the violin in art music, and thus forms part of an alternative approach, rather than being a substandard and distorted version of art music violin technique. Notably, even when the violin was eventually accepted in art music, the same hold was used at least until the end of the eighteenth century, when the size of both orchestras and concert halls spurred a quest for more volume from the violin, eventually leading to changes in the construction of the instrument and the techniques used to play it.



Figure 1 Hardanger fiddle players from Kroken, Drangedal, Telemark County, mid-twentieth century: Johan Oskarsen, Lars Eikhaugen, Anders Sørter, Olav G. Aakre, Gunnar Brødsjø. *Private photo.*

Despite the changes in the art music world, fiddle (as opposed to violin) technique in Norway underwent relatively little change until the 1960s. The majority of fiddlers – players of the regular as well as the Hardanger variety – would still approach their instruments pretty much in the same way as their forebears three centuries earlier. The 1970s, with its astonishing resurgence of interest in traditional music, may have marked the start of a growing polarisation between the two fiddle varieties with regard to the way they are approached, but even in the 1990s a fair number of older players of the regular fiddle still stuck to the traditional technique. In present-day Norway, however, this approach has become rarer and, as I experienced in my youth, there is a growing tendency to reject the traditional fiddle hold, which is somewhat paradoxical considering the cultural conservatism typical of traditional players and audiences. This is certainly not a uniquely Norwegian trend, but one that is happening – or has long since happened – in most fiddling traditions of the Western world. During the quarter of a century in which I have been teaching traditional music on a full-time professional basis, I have seen a notable increase in the number of students with a markedly ‘violinistic’ approach to their instrument – the most visible sign of this being the use of a shoulder rest. Curiously, although it seems to be the rule rather than the exception for regular fiddlers to use this device these days, the number of players who insist on using it on the Hardanger fiddle can be counted on one hand. Typically these exceptions are regular fiddle players or violinists who happen also to play the Hardanger fiddle. But how did this change come about?

The shift

On 15 January, 1849 the internationally acclaimed violin virtuoso Ole Bull (1810–1880) gave a concert in Christiania, now Oslo. He had invited a special guest, Torgeir Augundsson (a.k.a. Myllarguten, 1801–1872), the most prolific Hardanger fiddle player at the time, to perform seven tunes. This was the first time a fiddler had ever performed for the bourgeoisie and the concert therefore marks a shift. Art music, through Ole Bull, endorsed the fiddler and his music; the music of the peasant fiddler suddenly became ‘national’.

No doubt this was important for the self-esteem of the fiddlers, and it was certainly instrumental in spurring ‘stage’ fiddling as an alternative to playing for dances. Touring fiddlers would often include programmatic pieces in the vein of Ole Bull, a genre that by then was already a bit out of fashion in the classical world, with its imitations of cattle calls, warbling birds, cuckoos, etc. It is important to keep in mind that although Ole Bull was highly regarded by fiddlers, both as a spokesman for their art and as a performer, he didn’t influence most of them directly. His indirect impact should not be underestimated, however, and even well into the twentieth century the name of Ole Bull had a special ring for fiddlers.

I believe a direct line can be drawn from the ideals of this era, through the so-called concert fiddlers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, to the 1960s and the years that followed when fiddlers’ associations in many places in Norway started to arrange workshops focusing on ‘proper’ technique. Typically, the workshop teachers were well-known and admired players who came from strong traditional backgrounds, but had subsequently had a thorough classical training, thereby aligning themselves with the dominant culture. The first to tour Norway with this vision of a classical fiddle style was a great admirer of Ole Bull: the iconic Hardanger fiddler and classically trained violinist, Sigbjørn Bernhoft Osa (1910–1990). Although he was instrumental in popularising the Hardanger fiddle, he was typically inclined to a more violinistic technical approach. He viewed the traditional fiddle hold – particularly the variant with the instrument held against the chest – with derision. Later Sven Nyhus (b. 1932), the renowned regular fiddle player, orchestral viola player and collector, and Norway’s first professor of traditional music, made an impact, particularly in the regular fiddle circles of Eastern Norway. Despite showing a greater understanding of the uniqueness of the traditional style than Osa, he still advocated a classically tinged technique; his approach is still used at the Academy of Music in Oslo. Some of his former students have even reportedly encouraged the use of shoulder rests on the Hardanger fiddle.

Although many fiddlers attending the workshops of these instructors may not have changed their own playing habits, the experience certainly led to a shift in their attitudes about what was deemed to be acceptable technique. And since many of them were judges in fiddle competitions, these views gradually gained a foothold throughout the broader fiddling community. Therefore, the impact of the workshops should not be underestimated. For me, the workshops are a classic example of how a dominated culture tries to upgrade its own value by adopting the ways of the dominant culture, or how traditional, rural Norwegian society tries to gain acceptance by adopting the aesthetics of the country’s small urban elite.⁴

Today, other practical issues pose a challenge to the old style of fiddling, such as the development of municipal culture schools over the last three decades or so, where many

regular fiddle players of the younger generation have had their first basic training. Although these schools do, generally speaking, support traditional music and often employ musically non-literate, traditional players, there are unfortunate cases where they are obliged to rationalise by employing just one bowed-instrument teacher, and will typically opt for a ‘neutral’ violin method which, needless to say, will tend to consider the technical needs of budding violinists rather than future fiddlers. It is little wonder, then, that the pupils of these schools acquire habits and attitudes that are hard to change later in life – if, indeed, changing them is an issue at all.

Hardanger fiddle versus regular fiddle today

Interestingly, the Hardanger fiddle wasn’t affected in the same radical way as the regular fiddle. This is largely attributable to cultural legacy of the work of researchers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, who went to great lengths to prove the ‘Norwegianness’ of the Hardanger fiddle, in the most extreme cases claiming that it had nothing whatsoever to do with the European violin. Consequently, modern violin technique was to a certain extent considered irrelevant. It was, moreover, declared the ‘national’ instrument of Norway – even though it is traditionally used only in parts of the south, more precisely in the central, mountainous valleys and along the fjords of central Western Norway. This feeling of ‘otherness’ and the ‘national’ label have, no doubt, prevented the Hardanger fiddle (and its players) from being as exposed to violinistic influences as the regular fiddle. For the reasons stated above, the fiddle-against-the-chest hold has admittedly become rarer, although it is still used by several younger players. The standard these days seems to be to hold the fiddle between the neck and the heel of the left hand. Chin rests have now become the norm on Hardanger fiddles as well, although they serve mostly to protect the varnish against wear, rather than to provide actual support.

‘Otherness’ is harder to claim for regular fiddle players: their instrument is, after all, physically exactly the same as the violin. It is understandable, then, that many find it difficult to reject the teachings of the experts, whether good violin makers or virtuoso violinists. So, although many will nominally embrace older traditional players and their style and repertoire, in reality, they discard many of the technical, stylistic and aesthetic values of their musical heroes and substitute them – possibly unconsciously – with a smoother and more ‘seamless’ violinistic approach. To me this is a huge paradox, bordering on arrogance. That said, there are a few within the regular fiddle community who try to emulate the expressive qualities of the older generations of players. But while many succeed in this – for instance a number of players from the Røros region – it is still not unusual to see some of these young fiddlers using shoulder rests – even though they are, paradoxically, holding the fiddle against their chest. Curiously, while regular fiddlers are tending to embrace what they think of as the latest in technical achievement on their instruments, over in the world of art music something quite different is happening. The Early Music movement assigns central importance to the connection between technique and style, while several high-profile and highly respected modern violin teachers and performers – such as Yehudi Menuhin (1916–1999), Yascha Heifetz (1901–1987), Itzhak Perlman (b. 1945), Nigel Kennedy (b. 1956), and Anne-Sophie Mutter (b. 1963), to mention but a few – do not use shoulder rests. Although

some Hardanger fiddle players have, over recent years, expressed growing interest in the older, considerably smaller Hardanger fiddle models and have experimented with historical bows, it is a huge irony that this connection appears to have escaped most regular fiddle players, who seem unable to see beyond the most visible of the many modern schools of violin playing.



Figure 2 Itinerant dance musician and seasonal worker, Jakob 'Treskar' Eilevsen (c. 1911), Agder region, Norway, playing the regular fiddle. *Private photo.*

So what?

But why is it so important to focus on these technical changes? Aren't they simply part of a natural development, a shift in taste; are they not, in other words, at the heart of what tradition is all about: change? I am well aware that an attempt to revitalise the old ways may, rightly perhaps, be seen as meddling with the tradition. On the other hand, one might argue that the same could be said of the fiddling proponents of modern violin technique and shoulder rests. Moreover, the traditional way of holding the fiddle is, after all, alive and in reasonable health for now, and is therefore a voice that has a right to be heard. There is little doubt that many of the reasons for the current shift in the technical approach to the fiddle

have nothing to do with the music as such. Standard justifications from the proponents of the modern violin-tinged style include the impossibility of playing above the first position using the traditional hold or the ‘fact’ that it is harmful from an ergonomic point of view. Suffice it to say that although the vast majority of traditional fiddle tunes stay firmly within the first position, it is perfectly possible – as demonstrated by many older fiddlers – to play in higher positions using the traditional hold. As for the risk of repetitive stress injuries, generations of both professional and amateur fiddlers throughout the western world have used this hold for 300–400 years without any apparent signs of harm. Moreover, the traditional hold, in which the instrument is held at a greater distance from the ear, is much less damaging to the player’s hearing than any modern violin hold. I like to see the traditional hold as the result of ample accumulated knowledge – acquired in the course of prolonged and strenuous playing sessions – of how to avoid repetitive stress injury.

Above all, I believe the newly-adopted techniques are primarily visual signals of modernity and compliance with ‘learned’ ways. For me, therefore, one important reason for addressing the rapid and dramatic change in fiddle technique lies in revealing the mechanisms and ideas that have led to the adoption of a technical and stylistic approach that cannot be said to benefit the music, certainly not if measured against the aesthetic values of the icons and masters of today’s young players. That paradox alone ought to be ample justification for placing the issue of fiddle technique on the agenda. Ultimately, this paper is simply a contribution to the kind of discourse that has always been a vital part of the music scene, whether traditional or not.

Conclusion

I see this article as a means of encouraging a stronger focus not only on the technique/style issue, but also on the intriguing double standards of the traditional music milieu. My own experience with traditional instruction included topics such as technique that were part of the tacit knowledge conveyed by the master. It was taken for granted that you would absorb not only the style of your master but also his technique. Today, bombarded by vastly more musical impulses than ever before, it is obvious to me that this tacit knowledge needs to be formally articulated. The educational institutions that offer traditional music courses, whether at university level or lower, should be among the first to take up this challenge since they now fulfil the role previously played by older, established fiddlers. They need to question their own aesthetic standards and be extremely aware of the importance of their role – not least their ability to radically change the profile of a music genre.

There is, in fact, scope for much vital research here: the ergonomics of the traditional fiddle hold, its history, and the connection between technique and the musical outcome. A major issue in this context is the link between technique and style – the music aesthetics – Is it possible to do justice to all the elements of a music tradition without adhering to the technique employed by the majority of the iconic players who have set the standards for repertoire and style?

From a traditional music perspective, I would tend to answer in the negative, although admittedly the audible differences between one hold and the other may at times be hard to discern. It is true that, from an art music perspective, a number of modern violin techniques

would be very hard to employ using the traditional hold (such as a constant vibrato). On the other hand, the traditional hold lends itself naturally to a variety of bowing techniques that would be very hard to perform properly using a modern violin hold (for instance, the underlying rhythmic pulsation acquired by a constant increase-decrease of bow pressure). Even if it could be proven that the audible difference between the fiddle holds discussed here is at best very subtle, it is hard to deny that the fiddle hold provides a very potent visual signal of who you are and where you belong. And if the traditional hold works perfectly well for traditional styles, why change it? To put it bluntly: we have the choice between looking – and sounding – like second-class violinists, and standing out as first-class fiddlers.

One last point to make is about attitude. When I embarked on my fiddling career in the early 1970s, using the same technique as my masters was the given and was the obvious means of achieving my goal in music: to recreate the musical expression – the style – that first inspired me to play the fiddle. Ultimately, I think it is crucial to acknowledge traditional music as a self-contained, complete system, as a way of showing respect, loyalty and a dash of humility to the earlier generations of players who made it possible for people to play this music. The odds of becoming a successful performer with a positive attitude like this are probably far better than if players start out by making objections to the core technical, stylistic and aesthetic aspects of the music they want to learn.

I am not claiming that the traditional approach is the only valid way to play this music. I am simply saying that it strikes me as absurd that the traditional music world – with some of the educational institutions at the vanguard – should be ruling out playing techniques that have served its purposes perfectly well for hundreds of years. We should be offering more, not fewer, options to our young players, the future tradition-bearers. We are the stewards of a rare and fragile music species, and owe it to future generations to give them the opportunity to enjoy the same multitude of sounds and expressive possibilities as we do now, with every aspect of their uniqueness. By providing them with the tools of the trade – including the traditional technique as a very obvious starting point – we can ensure that tomorrow's players will be able to do justice to their forebears and fiddle with style.

Notes

¹ Musicians who had been awarded a license to perform for monetary gain by royal decree – a status of privilege and power.

² Author's translation. Lorents Nicolai Berg: 'Den første Prøve for Begyndere udi Instrumental-Kunsten, eller Kort og tydelig underretning om de første Noder at lære ...' (1782).

³ David Dodge Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761 and its Relationship to the Violin and Violin Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Brigitte Geiser, *Studien zur Frühgeschichte der Violine* (Bern/Stuttgart: Haupt, 1974); Peter Holman, *Four and Twenty Fiddlers: The Violin at the English Court, 1540–1690* (London: Music Library Association, 1995); Olav Sæta, 'Om felestiller i feleverket', *Norsk Folkemusikklags skrifter*, 20 (2006), 89ff.

⁴ There are several examples of how the same phenomenon has affected fiddle music, such as the virtual ban by the folk music department of the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation on the foot stomping that is so essential to the traditional fiddle style. This persisted well into the 1970s.

On first hearing: the John Junner collection of Scottish and Irish fiddle music

STUART EYDMANN

John Junner was born in the northwest of Scotland in 1919 and died in Aberdeenshire in 2009. His service in the Royal Air Force during the Second World War was followed by college in Aberdeen, after which he worked all his adult life as a school teacher in rural Scotland; he played fiddle, piano and tin whistle. His father's family can be traced back to the Black Isle, to the north of Inverness, where his great-great grandfather, William Junner, was a merchant at Cromarty. His great-grandfather, Colin Junner, a house painter, married Isabella Kirkness there in 1838. John's grandfather, John William Paterson Junner, a journeyman tailor, married Mary Williamson at Fauldhouse, West Lothian, a rural mining village between Glasgow and Edinburgh in Central Scotland.

Such migration from the Highlands to the rapidly industrialising Lowlands was commonplace in the second half of the nineteenth century as able and displaced people alike sought new opportunities in the developing towns, cities and coalfields. These places also attracted large numbers from Ireland, and so the resulting communities were culturally diverse, with social and musical consequences. The town of Fauldhouse, originally an agricultural settlement, grew following the exploitation of local coal and ironstone reserves and the manufacture of paraffin from oil shale. It had a parish church by 1866 and a Roman Catholic chapel, the first in the county, in 1873; by 1887 the population was around 3,000. The unattractive, industrial character of such 'new desultory and unplanned communities',¹ from Ayrshire in the west to Fife in the east, would appear at first glance to offer little to interest scholars of Scottish music. But, they supported a lively and varied music culture, both informal and organised. It was in these locations, for instance, that the Scottish tradition of button accordion playing was developed by the Wyper Brothers, William Hannah, Jimmy Shand and others.² There were many opportunities for communal music in bands of all types: dance ensembles were in great demand, the pipe bands of the former colliery villages are still known for their excellence, and the brass and silver bands here in Central Belt have given music training and experience to thousands. The hammer dulcimer³ and concertina⁴ flourished too and there were choirs, amateur orchestras, flute bands and songwriters who produced new industrial folk songs.⁵

John Junner's father, Colin Kirkness Junner, trained to be a teacher. He took up a post of assistant teacher at Oldshore, and in 1910 became head teacher at Fanagmore, both places in Sutherland, in the north-west. Just why he moved there might be explained, in part at least, by his family links to the north and the area's great natural beauty. It was there that he married Margaret (Maggie) MacLeod (or McCallum), sewing mistress and daughter of John MacLeod, gamekeeper of Oldshoremore, Kinlochbervie. Margaret was a Gaelic speaker, as were most of the pupils at the school. The couple had two sons, Colin and John William; the latter is the subject of this paper.

Schooled in the Highlands, John followed the parental path and he too became a *dominie* (Scots for 'village schoolmaster')⁶, living in Aberdeen during the 1950s and 1960s before becoming head teacher of the small school at Strathy, a scattered community on the north coast of Sutherland, until 1966. He then served as headmaster of Strachan Primary School in Aberdeenshire until his retirement in 1985. Colin, a Church of Scotland minister, was also settled in Aberdeenshire, at Bucksburn.

Rural northeast Scotland, including Aberdeenshire, is widely recognised as a heartland of traditional music and song.⁷ Here, in the mid to late nineteenth century, a healthy and settled local economy supported a substantial population of reasonably well-remunerated and comfortably-housed agricultural workers, trades people and professionals with a shared interest in instrumental music, as a form of 'rational recreation'.⁸ There was a clear local preference for both the violin and piano; the suitability of the violin for playing both Scottish and classical music encouraged the development of a local tradition in which the fiddle had a central role in the home, the village hall and on the concert stage and competition platform.

During the nineteenth century, the older, less-tutored, country fiddle styles were marginalised by this emergent 'respectable' music of those committed to self-improvement through dedicated practice, musical literacy and a familiarity with the popular classics and internationally-published exercises and tutors; indeed, many players would talk of playing the Scottish 'violin' rather than the 'fiddle'. Musicians aspired to owning quality instruments, repertory was drawn from printed collections and there was a strong emphasis on the creation of new, and often challenging, material within the tradition. Sophisticated technique was articulated with a repertory that embraced classical, Scottish and popular elements to the extent that boundaries were often blurred. There was great emphasis on personal expression that sometimes verged on the sentimental – as in the playing of airs and slow strathspeys with very pronounced vibrato and a strident tone. In dance music, particularly reels and strathspeys, there was an emphasis on standardised bowing and a favouring of exaggerated, dotted rhythms. This development of a regional style was reinforced through formal teaching, competitions and orchestrated fiddle bands and, over time, it crept into fiddle music played for dance also.

The genre had its own leaders and celebrity fiddlers, such as the touring theatre violinist Peter Milne (1824–1908), the fiddle prodigy and subsequently Manchester classically-trained James Scott Skinner (1843–1927), and collector/player John Murdoch Henderson (1902–1970). These musicians worked to modernise the fiddle tradition through their performances, compositions and published settings of older tunes, many of which

were given variations and colourings that drew on contemporary popular classical models.⁹ This new, hybrid fiddle music was facilitated by the Royal household's enthusiasm for and patronage of all things respectably Scottish, including piping, fiddling and dance. Also, its advocates were at pains to associate themselves with the creative and artistic legacy of the master player/composers of the so-called Golden Age of Scottish fiddle in the late eighteenth century while, at the same time, denigrating contemporary 'country' or 'folk' players and their styles. Skinner sought a modern, 'national' school of Scottish violin music, in the manner that developed in Hungary, and would have been delighted if his concerts had achieved the high status enjoyed by those of the professional Hardanger fiddlers of Norway in the same period.¹⁰ Such fiddlers developed a preference for the concert platform rather than the dance hall or house ceilidh, and, given the demand for music for the eclectic programming of the emerging music halls, it became necessary for the fiddle soloist to develop a distinct persona by emphasising national, ethnic or other eccentric characteristics in order to be noticed. Thus, a touring Scottish stage fiddler was required to compete commercially and musically with a range of virtuosi, including classical, Gypsy, Hungarian and Irish fiddlers as well as acrobatic and dancing players; the musical consequences of this were emulation and absorption of elements of others' styles and techniques. With the arrival of the gramophone record and its international dissemination, this became even more acute. Thus it can be seen that there is ample evidence that music was performed for the pleasure of playing and listening well before the revivals of the late twentieth century in Scotland.

To date, I have found little information on the development of John Junner's early interest and involvement in music, although it is likely that it had its foundations in his school years in Alness in the Highlands. However, we do know something of his personal tastes; in a rare interview, he described how he was surprised and disappointed when he participated in Scottish country dancing as a student in Aberdeen in 1947 and found that none of his fellow dancers had any knowledge of, or interest in, the actual tunes they danced to, being more concerned with having correct steps and tempi. He also indicated that he saw himself as a listener rather than a dancer, and a devotee of the fiddle with a distaste for the accordion-led dance band ensembles that had come to permeate the Scottish dance hall and media broadcasts:

The forties, the fifties, after the war. And then we got this Jimmy Shand obsession [...] immediately they all went like sheep. Jimmy Shand [...] to my mind he's got the balance wrong. He loaded it with accordions, two accordions to one fiddle [...] Now they all follow that, like sheep.¹¹

We can deduce from his music collection and know from surviving family members¹² that his interests went beyond the traditional to embrace popular and light classical music and that his general taste was conservative. Yet John was a defender of the centrality of the fiddle in Scottish music, and advocated the rehabilitation of aspects of the Scottish tradition that he felt were being lost in the period immediately after the Second World War. He was a champion of the playing of the James Scott Skinner school as was still practised by many of its first-generation adherents, and he had a deep interest in and admiration for certain living

fiddlers whom he felt merited greater appreciation; these included James F. Dickie who had been a pupil of Skinner and had evolved his own distinct ways with idiosyncratic variations and bowing, as described by Alastair J. Hardie:

If one had to single out the strongest feature of fiddling in the Northeast of Scotland it would have to be its predominant concentration on the rhythmic and associated bowing characteristics of the strathspey. This bias towards the dotted rhythm so strongly permeates the spirit of J. F. Dickie's playing that it intrudes into the strains of more even-rhythmed tunes.¹³

Emmerson, in his 1971 history of Scottish dance music, wrote on Junner and Dickie:

John W. R. Junner, now of Banchory, whose authority and judgement I respect in these matters, found it thrilling to hear Jamie's renderings of his 'specials' even in more recent times, when he was past his best. 'He was in a class by himself', Mr Junner tells me, 'in such grand tunes as "The Dean Brig o' Edinburgh", "Madame Frederick", "Millhills", "The Braes o' Auchtertyre" [...] ' He did not turn his hand to composition, but he had his own variations on tunes, which Mr Junner describes as 'absolutely fascinating'.¹⁴

John was also an associate of Bill Hardie of Aberdeen (1916–1995), whose style was very much rooted in the traditions of the North-East of Scotland, and who provided piano accompaniment for him on many occasions, including a concert tour in Ireland in the 1950s and on his 45rpm extended-play disc for Beltona recorded in 1956.¹⁵ Hardie came from a dynasty of Scottish fiddlers, his great-great-grandfather Peter Hardie, having been taught by the legendary Niel Gow in the eighteenth century. Through his enthusiasm, John Junner came to be regarded as an authority on Scottish fiddle music at a time when there were no ethnomusicologists or trained collectors working in the field. He became the champion of the fiddler Hector MacAndrew (1903–1980), an exceptionally talented and sensitive performer of Scottish fiddle music, but one who Junner felt was overshadowed by the popular taste for Scottish dance band and variety entertainment. For example, in late 1954 or early 1955, MacAndrew turned to John to help him devise his programme for a special BBC Home Service radio broadcast he had been asked to make of the music of eighteenth-century fiddler Niel Gow.¹⁶ John duly provided a list of suggested sets of tunes and sheet music from copies of the published Gow collections, and it was through this exercise that MacAndrew learned (and made popular) 'Niel Gow's Lament for the Death of his Second Wife', which was subsequently included on his first LP recording in 1963.¹⁷

Junner also hosted house sessions with the afore-mentioned fiddlers and with many other musicians from, or who passed through, his home area. He recorded a large number of these events, a consequence of his interest in the latest recording and playback equipment. He also recorded regularly from radio. In addition, he was a hoarder of anything related to music: published music, commercial recordings, instruments, machinery and ephemera, especially material relating to the Scottish fiddle. He collected cylinder recordings and

players, 78 rpm discs and gramophones, and was an early user of the compact cassette recorder for both teaching and the exchange of audio letters and music with friends.

An illustration of his international sharing of information and music with other enthusiasts is found in the *William (Bill) L. and Margaret (Gowan) F. Merson Smith Collection 1957–1976* of recorded material. This archive of Scottish music, mainly on open-reel tape, was compiled by the Scottish-born couple while living in Palo Alto, California. Bill was a mason by trade and also made violins. They prepared and exchanged tapes with people in Scotland and in Canada where Bill had cousins. An examination of their collection catalogue shows much material with a John Junner connection, although the precise contents will only be known through detailed listening and comparison with the Scottish holdings; this collection is now housed by the Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University.¹⁸

John Junner is also known to have exchanged tapes with Tom Anderson in Shetland, and he also corresponded in writing and on tape with music friends in Ireland, particularly the fiddler Sean McGuire (1927–2005). This was, of course, common practice in many modern traditional music contexts during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.¹⁹

It was material – recorded, photographic and manuscript – lent by John Junner that led to the production of the Topic LP, J. Scott Skinner, *The Strathspey King: Classics of Scots Fiddling*,²⁰ a record that did much to rehabilitate and promulgate the Skinner legacy, one of Junner's aims; manuscript material from the Junner Collection relating to Skinner was also included in the more recent Aberdeen University web resource dedicated to that fiddler,²¹ and John's collecting work, too, was recognised by George S. Emmerson in his history of Scottish dance music.²² The BBC Scotland broadcaster Robbie Shepherd, indeed, has credited him with being a major encouragement in his early broadcasting, including generously providing material as required.

On his death, Junner left a substantial archive of personally-made recordings. Although he had attempted to organise it, the collection was, and remains largely uncatalogued. He expressed the wish that the archive be known as 'The John Junner Collection' and that it should stay in the Northeast of Scotland where it might be made available for educational use. Shortly before he died, a report on his collection was prepared by Patrick Cadell (1941–2010), retired Keeper of Records of Scotland, in June 2007. This concluded, among other things, that 'the BBC material may not have survived anywhere else', that 'the Primrosehill and Strathy recordings are almost certainly unique', and that 'as a source of information on the playing styles of Scottish fiddlers in the second half of the twentieth century, these tapes are potentially of the first importance'.²³

In conjunction with Junner's trustees, his cousin Molly Millan and her husband Bill took advice on cataloguing, and worked tirelessly with the collection in late summer and autumn 2009 to itemise and organise the commercially-released material systematically.²⁴ Around 3,500 78s, mostly of Scottish traditional music recorded between 1910 and 1960, were catalogued and placed into conservation storage.²⁵ Their work confirmed that this aspect of Junner's collection is, in itself, of considerable significance, and complements the Bill Dean-Myatt Collections of 5,000 Scottish 78s lodged with the National Library of Scotland²⁶ and the substantial Will Forret Collection of commercial recordings in the School

of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh. Of particular importance are a number of Pathé discs of James Scott Skinner from the early twentieth century. 1,530 commercially-produced cylinder recordings were also catalogued and put into special storage. Almost all of these are of music-hall or light classical music and therefore their interest to the scholar of traditional music is limited. There are, however, recordings among them of Harry Lauder and of James Scott Skinner.

The first steps were also set in train by John Junner's trustees to establish an appropriate, accessible home for the collection in compliance with the collector's wishes. The author of this paper has provided a Statement of Significance²⁷ to build upon Patrick Cadell's report for use in this regard, in liaison with potential funders or acquiring organisations. In early 2012, I also undertook a sampling of forty from the hundreds of compact cassette recordings in the collection. These were found to contain a wide range of material including listening copies dubbed from open-reel recordings, off-air recordings of fiddle music programmes (some of which may be the only surviving copies), personal audio diaries and audio letters from friends in music. In one of these, an Irish voice, most likely the fiddler Sean McGuire, refers to an accompanying letter and talks to John about recent commercial recordings by Irish fiddlers John Vesey and Tommy Peoples. This modest sampling illustrates how even the too-easily-dismissed compact cassette can be an important carrier of invaluable musical data.

But, as Patrick Cadell reported, it is John Junner's open-reel tapes which have the greatest potential significance. From the storage cases of those that are clearly marked (many others are not), it would appear that there are recordings of a number of important fiddlers, including: Bill Hardie, Hector MacAndrew, John Junner, Neil McIntyre, the Orkney Strathspey and Reel Society, Ron Gonella, Scott Skinner (transcripts from 78rpm discs and cylinders), Aberdeen Strathspey and Reel Society, J. F. Dickie, Angus McPherson, Angus Fitchet, Tom Anderson, Robert Christie, Sydney Chalmers, William McPherson, Ian Powrie, Arthur Scott Robertson, and Bert Murray. If this is confirmed by subsequent analysis, transcription and cataloguing, then this supports Cadell's view that the collection may comprise a unique and valuable snapshot of traditional music-making in Scotland during a key period in the history of Scotland's traditional music.

In preparing the Statement of Significance, I recognised and stressed the potential importance of the Irish items the collection also appears to contain, an area that was overlooked, or at least underplayed, by Patrick Cadell and others. Several of the tape boxes are marked with the names of Irish fiddlers and the locations where they were recorded, and this led me to research the background to them. I have already noted that John had acted as accompanist to Bill Hardie on a performance tour in Ireland.²⁸ A concert from this trip was described as 'outstandin' and 'a great success' in an amusing recollection collected by Fintan Vallely from the Antrim fiddler, Cecil Colville.²⁹ That tour was also mentioned in a memoir by Kevin McCann published in *Treoir* magazine in 1993:

In 1953, through the good offices of the late Charles Curry, some Scottish fiddle players were invited and came to Ballymena, County Antrim to play for the Derry and Antrim Fiddle Society. I had the good fortune to meet and hear them and was very

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

favourably impressed indeed by their fine playing and music. The players were: John Junner, Bert Murray and William Hardie, all from the Aberdeen region and gave a great account of themselves and gave all present the ‘low down’ on Scottish music, its history and its status at that time.³⁰

McCann, who was a general practitioner for many years around the Mondeligo, Tooraneena, and Dungarvan areas before moving to Canada in the 1960s, was a founder of his local branch of Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann in the 1950s. He wrote of his lifelong admiration and affection for Scottish fiddle music inherited from his father who came from the Trillick region of south Tyrone near the Fermanagh border and was himself a good fiddle player in the Scottish manner.³¹ In 1954, he invited John Junner and Bert Murray (1913–2003) to accompany him on a fiddle tour of Ireland ‘so that they could get a close look at and hear Irish fiddle players on their home turf’³² and it is worth quoting their itinerary:

We began the Tour in Belfast and spent two days in Jack McGuire’s house in Belfast where the music went on day and night and great music was played by the Scots and the McGuires [...] We next met the Ballymena players who included the late George McCrae, David MacWhinney, the late Alex Kerr, John Rea (xylophone [*sic.*] hammer dulcimer) and the late Sean McLaughlin. Scottish music dominated the sessions with this group, and there was no doubt that Scottish fiddle music is strongest in Co. Antrim. We then travelled to Co. Donegal and spent some time with the late John Doherty who enthralled and intrigued the Scotsmen with his vast collection of Scottish tunes and his great fiddle technique. After visiting Donegal we visited the late Tommy Coen of Salthill and Bean Uí Standúin of Spiddal and ended up in Co. Clare listening to and taping Paddy Canny, P. Joe Hayes and many others. John Junner took hours of recordings of the above named players, and in his house in Strachan, Kincardineshire, he has a pile of spools of tape three feet high of recordings made of Irish fiddlers during their trip.³³

In return, the Scottish musicians hosted Kevin McCann and Sean McGuire on a musical visit to Aberdeen in October 1954 where they ‘had a week’s non-stop music feast of Irish and Scottish music played by Sean, John Junner, Bert Murray, and Bill Hardie’.³⁴ McCann recalled: ‘It was a memorable week indeed and John Junner took Sean McGuire and myself to visit Scott Skinner’s grave which to us was a memorable moment and that trip to Aberdeen so long ago still lives vividly in my mind’.³⁵ Interestingly, it was in 1954 that Bert Murray wrote the now highly popular reel ‘Sean McGuire’s’. This tune, and Scott Skinner’s ‘Spey in Spate’ were subsequently recorded by the Irish fiddler. During subsequent visits to Aberdeen, where he may have had family connections, McCann met the Shetland fiddler Tom Anderson and this led to an invitation to Sean McGuire, fiddler/piano player Josie Keegan and accordionist Joe Burke to visit and play in those islands.³⁶ The success of this trip led to regular playing visits there:

The talented trio of McGuire, Keegan and Burke, made annual trips to Shetland for a decade. They played in Lerwick to capacity, enthusiastic and knowledgeable

audiences. Sean McGuire informed me that Shetlanders were the best audiences he ever played to, and Joe Burke agrees with this.³⁷

Sean McGuire subsequently played at the inaugural Shetland Folk Festival in 1981. McCann's happy recollections of his contact with John Junner, therefore, provides a valuable context for material in the collection and suggests that we might expect to find many Irish gems to complement the Scottish treasures.

Writing in October 2019, ten years after John Junner's death, it can be reported that his audio collection is now in the care of Aberdeenshire Council Museum Service where its long-term wellbeing, development and accessibility will be guaranteed in accordance with his wishes.³⁸ In addition, the National Library of Scotland is currently facilitating the digitisation of the material as part of Scotland's contribution to the British Library's Heritage Lottery funded Unlocking Our Sound Heritage initiative. New Junner material, mainly papers and photographs, that have recently come to light will also be added to the collection. Before long, it is hoped, the detailed study and public enjoyment of this invaluable cultural resource can commence.

Notes

¹ Richard Jaques and Charles McKean, *West Lothian. An Illustrated Architectural Guide* (Edinburgh: Rutland Press, 1994), p. 111.

² Stuart Eydmann, 'As Common as Blackberries: The First Hundred Years of the Accordion in Scotland', *Folk Music Journal*, 7, no. 5 (1999), 595–608.

³ David Kettlewell, (1976) 'The Dulcimer in the British Isles. Scotland', in *Dulcimer Players and Their Instruments*, <http://www.dulcimer.new-renaissance.com> [accessed 20 April 2015].

⁴ Stuart Eydmann, 'The Life and Times of the Concertina: The Adoption and Usage of a Novel Musical Instrument with Particular Reference to Scotland' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, the Open University, 1995).

⁵ Hamish Henderson, 'A Colliery Disaster Ballad', and 'Jock Cameron', in *Alias MacAlias: Writings on Songs, Folk and Literature* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1992), pp. 119–124, 190–192; see also Robin Morton, *Come Day, Go Day, God Send Sunday* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), pp. 66–73.

⁶ From the Latin *domine*, vocative of *dominus*, a master.

⁷ Mary Ann Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983), pp. 72–92.; Paul Anderson, 'Musical Fingerprints of the North-East Scotland Fiddle Style', in *Crossing Over: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic 3*, ed. by Ian Russell and Anna Kearney Guigné (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 2010), pp. 176–183.

⁸ Stuart Eydmann, 'Diversity and Diversification in Scottish Music', in *Oral Literature and Performance Culture*, ed. by John Beech, Owen Hand, Fiona MacDonald, Mark A. Mulhern, and Jeremy Weston (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2007), pp. 193–212.

⁹ Stuart Eydmann, 'Unraveling the Birl: Using Basic Computer Technology to Understand Traditional Fiddle Decorations', in *Play It like It Is: Fiddle and Dance Studies from Around the North Atlantic*, ed. by Ian Russell and Mary Anne Alburger (Aberdeen: University of Aberdeen, 2006), pp. 33–41.

¹⁰ See Hakon Asheim, in this volume.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

- ¹¹ Interview by Peggy Duesenberry (School of Scottish Studies Archive, University of Edinburgh, Junner SA 1989/154).
- ¹² Mrs M. Millan (cousin of John Junner), personal communication.
- ¹³ Alastair J. Hardie [liner notes] *J. F. Dickie's Delights*, LP, Topic Records, 12T279 (1976).
- ¹⁴ George S. Emmerson, *Rantin' Pipe and Tremblin' String: History of Scottish Dance Music* (London: Dent, 1971), p. 106.
- ¹⁵ *John Junner*, 45rpm, EP, Beltona Record Company, SEP-46 (1956).
- ¹⁶ Duesenberry (Junner SA 1989/154). It is possible that a recording of the 1955 programme survives in the Junner Collection.
- ¹⁷ *Scottish Violin Music, Volume 1*, Waverley Records, ZLP 2009 (c.1964). It is interesting to note that the four 78rpm sides recorded by MacAndrew for Parlophone in April 1952 comprise only James Scott Skinner material (Par F-3466).
- ¹⁸ Archives of Appalachia at East Tennessee State University, (500/App Ms 639).
- ¹⁹ The practice of sending tapes of traditional music to friends abroad was common in Scotland during the 1950s and 1960s. The Scottish accordionist Bill Powrie (1931–1980) sent recordings to friends in the USA during the 1950s. These were discovered many years later and released on CD. Players of the Highland bagpipe also sent tapes around the world, particularly recordings of competitions and radio recitals.
- ²⁰ J. Scott Skinner, *The Strathspey King: Classics of Scots Fiddling*, Topic Records 12T280, (1975).
- ²¹ 'Welcome to the Music of James Scott Skinner', in *University of Aberdeen*, <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/scottskinner/introduction.shtml> [accessed 20 April 2015].
- ²² Emmerson, p. 182, gives thanks to Junner for his assistance in the preface, p. vi.
- ²³ Patrick Cadell, *John Junner Collection* (2007), p. 2.
- ²⁴ Molly Millan and Bill Millan, *The John W. R. Junner Collection. Report and Scott Skinner: Inventory of related items in The John Junner Collection* [typescript in possession of Mrs M. Millan].
- ²⁵ Mr W. and Mrs M. Millan, *Inventory of 78 rpm Records in the John Junner Collection*, manuscript in possession of Mrs M. Millan.
- ²⁶ William Dean-Myatt, 'Scottish Vernacular Discography', in *Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland* (2013), <http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-discography> [accessed 20 April 2015].
- ²⁷ Stuart Eydmann, *The John Junner Collection: Statement of Significance* [typescript in possession of Mrs M. Millan].
- ²⁸ 'Fanagmore headmaster's son dies at 89', *Am Bratach*, no. 211 (May 2009), http://www.bratach.co.uk/bratach/archive/May09/may09_junner-fanagmore.html [accessed 20 April 2015].
- ²⁹ Fintan Vallely, *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2008), p. 61.
- ³⁰ Kevin McCann, 'Scottish Fiddle Playing and its Scottish Connections', *Treoir* [Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann], 25, no. 1 (1993), 29.
- ³¹ McCann, p. 27.
- ³² McCann, p. 29.
- ³³ *Ibid.* A set of photographs documenting the Scottish musicians' visit to the McGuire home in Belfast are in the collection of Na Píobairí Uilleann, Dublin (NPUAF0587-591). A full list of Irish players recorded by Junner has not yet been compiled and auditioning of the tapes will not be undertaken until safety copies have been made.
- ³⁴ McCann, p. 29.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.* The article includes a photograph of the party at Skinner's grave.
- ³⁶ In Alastair Clark, *Aly Bain: Fiddler on the Loose*, (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1993), p. 154, there is a photograph of Sean McGuire and Josephine Keegan along with Tom Anderson and

Aly Bain while 'on their first visit to Shetland'. According to a report of the 2005 Shetland Fiddle and Accordion Festival, <http://www.shetlandaccordionandfiddle.com/2005-shetland-accordion-and-fiddle-festival> [accessed 20 April 2015], Josephine Keegan first visited Shetland with McGuire 30 years earlier. This gives a date of around 1975.

³⁷ McCann, p. 29.

³⁸ 'Traditional Scottish music archive is digitally preserved'

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-north-east-orkney-shetland-49410605> [accessed 31 October 2019]. A small number of physical items have already been added to the collection of Banchory Museum, Aberdeenshire. <http://www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk/member/banchory-museum> [accessed 20 April 2015].

Galician fiddle versus tambourine

ALFONSO FRANCO

In Galicia, popular music played on the fiddle was kept alive throughout the centuries by blind fiddlers. The last of these musicians disappeared in the late 1970s, but some audio and video recordings have been made for future generations. Then ‘folk’ music took over, and a new way of interpreting traditional music on the fiddle developed, based on the blind fiddlers’ style, adapting the violin technique in perfect union with the most popular musical instrument in Galicia: the tambourine. In recent years the fiddle – traditionally played only by professional musicians¹ – has, however, grown in popularity among a young public, especially in the south of the region.

Significance of percussion in Galicia

European cultures throughout their development have gradually lost the primeval part of their folklore: percussion. Thus in the northern half of Europe it is difficult to find peoples whose ancient percussion instruments have not yielded to the power of melodic refinement and the charm of western classical harmony. But Galicia, a small region in the northwest of the Iberian Peninsula, has one of the few examples of surviving percussion. This Spanish region, due to the decline it suffered during the twentieth century, and as a result of the forty-year dictatorship of Franco and poor communications with the rest of Spain, has preserved a great part of its indigenous music.

In the 1980s, musicologists Dorothé Schubart and Antón Santamarina were still able to collect, in rural areas of Galicia, hundreds of tunes whose archaic character is evident from, among other things, the lack of tuning. They also collected innumerable dances and rhythms played on percussion instruments, which were used to accompany singing. This collection includes one of the few existing audio samples of a Galician fiddler who was still playing at the time, in spite of his advanced age.² The variety of rhythmic patterns still alive in Galician traditional music is as rich as the number of percussion instruments used to play them: *pandeireta*, *pandeira*, *tarrañolas*, *culleres*, *charrasco*, *bombo*, *tamboril*, *caixa*, *caña*, and *castañolas*, among others.³ This list must also include all those domestic utensils that played the role of percussion instruments when there was an urgent need for a rhythmic pattern to support the dances and *fadeiros*⁴ that, for centuries, were held in every Galician village, despite bans by the authorities and clergy. Thus, bottles, hoes, paprika cans, scythes,

sickles, grindstones, and plates helped prevent the thin thread that links us to the musical heritage of our ancestors from being cut, and made it possible for current generations to enjoy the suffusion of rhythm that is characteristic of Galician folk expression.

The fiddle in Galicia

Most traditional Galician fiddlers were storytellers and they played on the violin exactly the same tunes that they sang. They played focusing on ornamentation and sought to make their melodies fit in with the singing as much as possible. That is why, on many occasions, as can be noted in historical recordings, the fiddlers' playing presents a lack of tuning that can be put down to the fact that they constantly strived to fuse together with their singing. However, we know they were also hired to play at dances and, as it often happens with fiddlers from all over the world, in order to be heard, they had to reinforce the melody by using double stops, thus increasing the resonance of their instrument and defining the rhythmic pattern, which in the end is what dancers need to feel at ease while dancing. Unfortunately, no recording has been found yet of a fiddler playing while people are dancing. The ones we know were made either at the fiddler's home or during a *romería* after lunch, but never in a dancing atmosphere. In some of these recordings, like *Jota de Riotorto* or a very similar *muiñeira*, both interpreted by Florencio dos Vilares – the last blind fiddler of the twentieth century and a key figure to understand the style of these Galician blind storytellers – we can hear the use of double stops reinforcing the strong beats and the appropriate accentuation adopted by the man who has become the icon of Galician fiddlers.

During the late 1970s and the first years of the next decade, following the path initiated by the group of singer-songwriters *Voces Ceibes*, the folk movement emerged in several parts of Galicia. In Lugo, one of the inland provinces, a protest movement that focused mainly on singing came up as a political reaction against the past dictatorship, taking popular songs and melodies as its main sources. Another group, which based its work on instrumental music, was born in the capital, Santiago, and adopted both medievalism and a Celtic revival as traits that would differentiate them from the rest of Spain. Besides these two main trends, the so-called *Portuguese* front developed in the south aiming, as well, at escaping the unifying vision of folklore imposed during the previous regime.

The presence of the fiddle in folk bands was limited and the few players, that there were, used to take the Scottish and Irish styles as their reference model. Among other reasons, this was due to the self-hatred characteristic of that transitional period, a feeling that made us reject part of our own musical tradition at the slightest sign of its sounding like *Spanish*. Although the first work of the band Milladoiro, with Laura Quintillán, includes many pieces where the violin plays an important role, it was not until the late twentieth century that we could listen to a fiddle as a solo instrument in folk music with a clear intention of searching for a distinctive identity in the interpretation of traditional music. The first recordings were *Cantigas Galegas*, Florencio, *o cego dos Vilares* and Quim Farinha's first recordings with Fía na Roca in 1993, where he points out a new way of playing *jotas* and *muiñeiras* on the fiddle.⁵

In 1997, the newly created school of traditional and folk music, born as part of the *Escuela de Artes y Oficios* of Vigo, started to offer fiddle as one of the courses, with Quim

FRANCO *Galician fiddle versus tambourine*

bow, the player lets the hair off the string in the same way, bringing about a quick rebound for the second quaver, which will be shortened as a result.

These main styles of *muiñeira nova* can be reproduced with a ricochet stroke using the upper quarter of the bow.

Figure 2 *Muiñeira nova* with a ricochet stroke.

2a

2b

2c

2d

To reproduce the tambourine thumb or finger *roll*, indicated by a *tremolo* symbol, we will make the bow bounce, moving it back and forth. More or less pressure should be applied with the index finger depending on the desired number of bounces.

Muiñeira Vella

In this type of *muiñeira* the percussion maintains a steady 6/8 rhythm but it sounds 3/8 because there is no difference between the first part of the bar and the second one. At the same time, the singing is in 5/8 time simultaneously, which results in a polyrhythm that is characteristic of this energetic dance. The stress pattern is different here. Using a three-syllable word stressed on the penultimate syllable like ‘together’ (*TA-TA-RA*), we can learn this pattern, which both on the tambourine and with the bow requires great concentration in order to maintain a steady rhythm and avoid switching to the pattern of a *muiñeira nova*.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

These *muiñeiras vellas* are typically played with a clenched fist. The *muiñeira vella* genre, as well as its accompanying dances, is considered to date further back than the *muiñeira nova*.

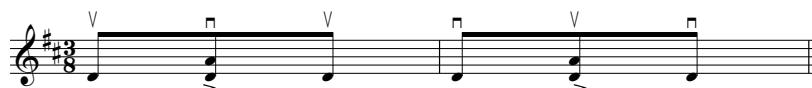


Figure 3 Muiñeira vella.

In order to play this rhythm easily it is advisable to use a *sautillé* in the middle of the bow, making the most of its bouncing but keeping it close to the strings in order to reproduce the accents of the tambourine. The chop is also a good stroke to play this rhythm. In the province of A Coruña, both the *muiñeira vella* and a particular style of *muiñeira nova* (known as *riscada*), are played on the tambourine simultaneously.⁸

Jotas

This is the most widespread dance in Spain, and it adopts different features in every region. It is a ternary rhythm, and we find jotas in both the bagpipe and the tambourine repertoires. There are also subclasses (*foliada*, *maneo*, *chouteira*, and *fandango*) as well as many local varieties, all of which demand different tambourine strokes and dance steps. This rhythm works very well on the fiddle, both when double stops are used to reinforce the rhythmic pattern and when the *tamboril*⁹ and tambourine strokes are imitated. The basic pattern of the jota is shown in Figure 4. ‘X’ Indicates, in tambourine notation, a stroke with a clenched fist; On the fiddle, we reproduce it as a double stop with an off the string staccato:



Figure 4a Jota – basic pattern.



Figure 4b-h Other jota rhythmic patterns.

FRANCO *Galician fiddle versus tambourine*



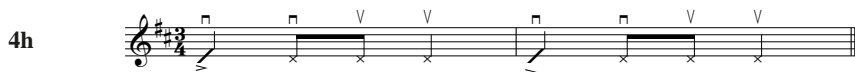
Performing them with the bow: 1/ ricochet



Performing them with the bow: 2/ sautillé



Performing them with the bow: 3/ chop



Pasodoble

This is a cheek-to-cheek dance with a binary 2/4 rhythm. It is very popular and widespread in the whole of Spain. In the Galician variety the melodies are usually in major mode, and they are clearly influenced by songs brought back from Mexico by emigrants. They are an essential part of the bagpipe repertoire. This rhythm is very easy to play, either with a ricochet using the tip of the bow, or with a *sautillé* in the centre. Its simplicity makes it a great rhythm to be practiced in beginner lessons:

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Figure 5a Pasodoble ricochet.



Figure 5b Pasodoble chop.



Rumba

The rumba from Cuba became popular in the 1950s and was adopted by bagpipers faced with the need to include the hits of the moment in their repertoires; there was great rivalry at the time between them and the newly-arrived jazz-band orchestras that in few years displaced bagpipers, reducing them to the lowest status among musicians until the revival of consciousness about folk music in the 1980s.¹⁰ In the bagpipe repertoire the rumba adopted a form very similar to the original, maintaining a 2/4 rhythm with an irregular accent that lends it a Latin groove; this was very innovative at the time.

Figure 6a Rumba pipers' style.



In rural areas, this new rhythm was not found easy to play on the tambourine, so it developed into a regularly-accented 2/4, closer to *pasodoble* than a rumba.

Figure 6b Rumba – tambourine rhythm with accented 2/4.



Pasadoble

Therefore, a rumba is played differently nowadays depending on whether it is performed by singers/tambourine players or by percussionists accompanying bagpipes, who maintain the original accent. Due to this, when accompanying with the bow the *rumbas* interpreted by *pandereteiras*, a *pasodoble* pattern is used.¹¹ With a *sautillé* in the centre of the bow the result is a good Latin groove; the chop for the rumba works also really well.

Teaching method

We all know how long it takes for a beginner fiddler to acquire the necessary technical level to join in a session or to play for other people to dance. Learning to play the fiddle, however, can be relatively easy if the learner has a basic sense of rhythm and hearing; needless to say, the progress will be faster with constant practice. In our school, ETRAD (see Figure 7), as in all schools where the main objective is to allow students to enjoy music within a group no matter what their abilities. In teaching the fiddle we use a method that focuses on rhythm rather than on the melody during the first months. Thus, as soon as the students can hold the bow safely and place the first fingers on the fingerboard, they start practising the basic strokes of the different traditional rhythms, so that even after a few months' learning they can make progress at a pace that is similar to that of the singing and tambourine students. In this way our students can sing and play the violin from the very first months, and when they are required to play and sing more complex melodies at the same time – the way blind fiddlers traditionally used to – they can do it naturally, contrary to what usually happens when a trained violinist who has never sung before tries to do it.



Figure 7 Students at ETRAD.

Thanks to this teaching method our students learn the basic patterns of traditional music from the beginning; this is way before they can play the dances at a speed that allows people to dance. In subsequent stages, once they are able to interpret these melodies skilfully, the incorporation of double stops and the proper stress patterns will be much easier. Having

learned them from the beginning, they are able to introduce those features in order to achieve the Galician traditional music sound. Although at first we only make accompaniments using open strings in the keys of G and D, as soon as learners can use the first two fingers they can already harmonise melodies in C, the most common key for Galician bagpipes. Thus they can participate as an accompanying instrument that harmonises and reinforces the rhythmic pattern. Since the implementation of this system in our school, the number of students who have continued their studies after the first year has increased considerably. Eighty per cent of those who commenced the basic cycle finished their studies, while in previous years only thirty per cent of them did so. This success is due mainly to the fact that even students who are not particularly gifted can enjoy playing the fiddle, and they take part in group music activities using few resources, thus contributing, together with more advanced students, to a more rounded music experience. As well as improving the numbers staying on, the number of people who want to study fiddle has increased by more than 60 per cent, making the fiddle the fourth most popular instrument, after bagpipes, singing and percussion, whereas five years ago it was the least-requested subject in our school.



Figure 8 Idiophonic device ('jingle') attached to the bow.

In 2010, inspired by gypsies from Rajasthan who attach jingles to the bow to accompany the ancient melodies of their ethnic group, we started to work on a similar idea in order to mimic the tambourine. After various prototypes using different forms of jingles, we arrived at a simple device that, attached to the heel of the bow with a clip, allows us to reproduce tambourine strokes with the characteristic sound of the jingles (Figure 8). Thus we can emulate the sound of a tambourine but at a lower volume, which allows us to achieve a more suitable accompaniment for those occasions in which the loudness of the nine pairs of jingles of a typical tambourine would otherwise drown out the melody played by acoustic instruments.

Notes

¹ Blind fiddlers were professionals and played for a living, not solely for amusement.

² Dorothe Schubarth and Antón Santamarina's *Cancioneiro Popular Galego* (La Coruña: Fundación Pedro Barrié de la Maza, 1998), remains one of the most complete collections of Galician traditional music. There is an online version available at <http://cancioneiro.fundacionbarrie.org/> [accessed June 2015].

FRANCO *Galician fiddle versus tambourine*

³ For a detailed description of these and other percussion instruments, see Arias P. Carpintero, *Os Instrumentos Musicais da Tradición Galega* (Ourense, Spain: Difusora de Letras, Artes e Ideas, 2010), or visit <http://www.consellodacultura.org/asg/instrumentos/clasificacion/os-membranofonos/membranofonos-de-percusion/> [accessed June 2015].

⁴ *Fiadeiros* were gatherings that used to take place mainly at peasants' homes in rural areas to spin thread, which developed into social events and became the germ of a rich cultural tradition and folklore.

⁵ A. Franco and S. Pintos, *Cantigas Galegas*, 1992; P. Álvarez, *Florencio, o cego dos Vilares*, Do Fol Edicións, DF-013-CD, 1998.

⁶ Examples of different types of muiñeiras can be found in Schubarth and Santamarina, *Cancioneiro Popular Galego*, as well as in Schubart and Santamarina's collection.

⁷ *Cantareiras* is a term used to refer to female interpreters of traditional songs who accompany their singing playing the tambourine. They are also referred to as *pandereteiras*.

⁸ For an example, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYJjGLR7Wpg> [accessed June 2015].

⁹ A tamboril is a small drum that traditionally accompanies bagpipes.

¹⁰ For more information on rumbas in the Galician traditional repertoire, see Luis Costa, 'Las Rumbas Olvidadas: Transculturalidad y Etnicización en la Música Popular Gallega', *Revista Transcultural de Música*, 8 (2004) at <http://www.sibetrans.com/trans/publicaciones> [accessed June 2015].

¹¹ *Pandereteiras* is another Galician word for *cantareiras*, women who sing traditional tunes while playing the tambourine or pandeireta.

The status of the master fiddler in eighteenth-century Scotland

RONNIE GIBSON

Eighteenth-century Scotland was witness to changes in the reception and function of fiddle music. While dance remained the primary motivation for performance, alternatives were gaining in popularity. In a parallel movement, the emergence of art and folk as categories of music was shaping the way music was heard and understood. This paper will consider the implications of these phenomena by interrogating the categorisation and aestheticisation of fiddle music in eighteenth-century Scotland. In addition, the status of the master fiddler and the development of the instrumental slow air will be assessed as indicators of these phenomena.

I intend to weave two arguments together in this paper: first, that our modern ideas about Scottish fiddle music have shaped the writing of its history; and second, that in the course of the eighteenth century, Scottish fiddle music was increasingly used for purposes other than accompanying dance. To emphasise the first point, I want to examine the definition of 'Scottish fiddle music'. The Scottish aspect is relatively unproblematic as even when the nationality of a composer was not Scottish, there was, and is, a distinctive Scottish idiom of melody. The 'fiddle' aspect is more problematic. James Hunter in 1979 was the first to publish a book in which the title identifies 'fiddle music' expressly. Previously, the term Scottish 'violin music' or 'dance music' was preferable, and in the eighteenth century publications were titled as being for whichever instrument was in vogue at the time. Of course, the focus on publications is only one perspective, with the title of Alburger's *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* offering another perspective which avoids the problem by emphasising fiddlers rather than fiddle music.¹ However, the issue remains valid and reveals a change in the reception of the music between the eighteenth century and now.

The 'music' aspect is also worthy of comment. The exclusive identification of music notation as 'music' is unsatisfactory, especially for a practice which featured, as it still does, literate and non-literate traditions. Indeed, it is for this reason (among others) that the categorisation of Scottish fiddle music is difficult. And it is to categorisation that I now turn. The categories 'folk music' and 'art music' emerged in the course of the eighteenth century

and shaped subsequent ideas about music, but eighteenth-century musicians focused on the function of music rather than its origins:

Back before the folk-art split, a composer such as Oswald could straddle Scottish and international styles without worrying about being a ‘folk composer’ or an ‘art composer’, he was just a composer [...] But by the time the Scottish Fiddler Niel Gow was flourishing, to be a great Scottish musician meant to be a great ‘folk’ musician. Gow and his ilk are today studied in ‘world music’ or ‘folk music’ classes rather than in surveys of ‘Western music’.²

While it is my contention that the ‘folk-art split’ has had more impact on us in the present than it did on Niel Gow and his contemporaries, Gelbart’s survey of the intellectual history behind the categories highlights their historical contingency. Johnson’s definitions of folk music and art music (see Figure 1) also highlight the difficulty of categorising Scottish fiddle music, something that he investigates³ in his book by examining the interplay between the two:

Folk music	Art music
Transmission oral	Transmission notational
No definitive texts	Definitive texts
Composers soon forgotten	Composers recorded
Limits of complexity set by powers of memory	Limits of complexity set by powers of intellect
Monodic	Polyphonic or harmonised
Dependent on amateur performers; few professionals	Dependent on professional performers and composers
Inexpensive, non-commercial	Expensive, uncommercial, requires patronage to survive
An unselfconscious part of the way of life	A selfconscious recreational activity for which a taste must be cultivated; not equally valued by all members of the community
Can fit into all classes and ways of life; flourishes in poor communities with little leisure	Cannot flourish outside an affluent spendthrift community
No formal education needed for its propagation	Formal education necessary for all concerned with it – the more the better
Repertory relatively static	Repertory ever-changing; subject to fashion
Widespread	Localized in main cultural centres

Figure 1 Johnson’s definitions of folk music and art music.⁴

Looking at the aspects Johnson identifies in his definition – transmission, texts, musical complexity and texture, economics, function, social order, training, repertory, and location – it is clear Scottish fiddle music, even as we understand it today, is an ill fit under either heading. The identification of ‘cross-currents’ among these factors is equally inadequate because the historically-contingent categories cannot inform us on the eighteenth-century *reception* of Scottish fiddle music. It is to the functions of Scottish fiddle music in the eighteenth century, and the second of my two arguments, that I now turn.

The alternatives to the performance of Scottish fiddle music as accompaniment to dance include its use as accompaniment for song and, expressly, exclusively for the pleasure of performing or listening, pre-empting the Kantian aesthetic of the century’s close. With the introduction of the violin to Scotland in the late seventeenth century, new expressive opportunities were afforded to the nation’s fiddlers. The tone quality of pre-violin fiddles was suited to a rhythmic rather than lyrical effect, but the violin was more versatile, permitting also a rhythmic drive in addition to a fuller tone quality. A consequence of this was what

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Johnson has labelled the ‘Scots Drawing-Room Style’ – stylised settings and variations of Scottish tunes.

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled 'Slow & Pathetick'. The score is written for piano and is in the key of D major (one sharp) and 6/8 time. It consists of five systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is marked 'Slow & Pathetick' and includes several trills (tr) and a fermata (∞). The second system features a repeat sign and a fermata. The third system contains several trills. The fourth system includes a fermata. The fifth system concludes with a piano (p) dynamic marking. The music is characterized by its slow tempo and expressive, melodic lines.

Figure 2 ‘Niel Gow’s Lament for the Death of his Second Wife’.⁵

Inseparable from this aestheticisation of Scottish fiddle music was the commercialisation of the music that, though focused on London, also effected music-making in Scotland. Growth in the number of amateur music-makers created a market for sheet music which, when combined with the fashion for all things ‘Scotch’, had a big impact on Scottish music. As a result of these changes, three dichotomies emerged as traditions of performance: professional/amateur, urban/rural, and literate/non-literate. Of course, these are far from straightforward, with practices being much more grey than black and white. However, in

light of them, it is helpful to consider the functions of the many collections of music published by Scottish fiddlers in the final quarter of the eighteenth century. Printed collections of tunes were probably little-used in actual performance by professional fiddlers. Rather, they functioned as a fiddler's 'calling card' in the patronage-driven economy of which he was a part. They also served the middle-class music-makers, but would have been too expensive for many itinerant fiddlers who learned their tunes aurally. In highlighting the manuscript *culture* in which these printed publications played a part, I will look at two producers of these publications, master fiddlers William Marshall and Niel Gow.

Marshall was described by Robert Burns as, 'The First [meaning the best] Composer of Strathspeys of the Age'⁶ Marshall's posthumous reception has emphasised his 'classical credentials', with the nurturing of his status as an art composer, in contradiction to Gelbart's claims of fiddlers being 'folk musicians'. In his memoir of Marshall, Joseph MacGregor describes him as 'a distinguished Composer of Scottish Melodies'.⁷ Similarly, the subtitles of Bullock's biography of Marshall, *The Scots Composer*, and J. A. F.'s article in *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 'Violinist and Composer', further support the depiction of Marshall as an art music composer rather than a folk fiddler.⁸ Since he was factor⁹ to the Duke of Gordon, Marshall's portrait was painted in 1817, depicting him in a stately stance with fiddle on knee and a quill on the table beside him¹⁰ as a symbol of his erudition; the portrait depicts nothing identifiably Scottish, but does portray him as a figurehead of the Scottish Enlightenment. The characteristics of his music include the choice of less-familiar keys and the use of positions other than the first on the violin. However, it is misleading not to acknowledge the technical challenges also posed by tunes made by other fiddler-composers. The present-day expectation that Scottish fiddle tunes stay in first position and the keys of G, D, or A major is misrepresentative of a significant part of the repertoire.

A comparison of Marshall with Niel Gow is revealing. Gow more than any other fiddler experienced celebrity status both during his lifetime and after his death. The romanticisation of him after his death – most publicly by Murdoch in *The Fiddle in Scotland* – has resulted in more myth than fact.¹¹ However, certain sources provide an insight into his reception in his lifetime, among them this description by Burns: 'A short, stout-built Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow – an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind open heartedness mixed with unmistrusting simplicity'.¹²

A survey of depictions of Gow in art reveals how popular a figure he was, from the famous portrait by Raeburn to the dance scenes by David Allan (both dating from Gow's lifetime), and other depictions in the years after his death, in the frontispiece to Fraser's *The Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles* and David Wilkie's *Penny Wedding*.¹³

What emerges most prominently, especially in contrast to Marshall, is Gow's links to Highland culture. As Helen Jackson explains, the parish of Little Dunkeld in which Gow was born and lived was divided between Highland and Lowland regions, with the language of Strathbrann where he was born being Gaelic, and the language of Inver where he lived being English.¹⁴ Additional features, like his being depicted by Raeburn in tartan trews and the Highland musical fingerprint in his compositions, provide a clear context for his music,

to which I turn now. ‘Niel Gow’s Lament for the Death of his Second Wife’ is today the most popular of his compositions.

The development of the fiddle lament – typically in AB form with regular phrasing – only really began in the mid-eighteenth century, with the influence of the bagpipe lament in Gaelic culture, and as the logical progression from accompanying song. In addition, with the post-Culloden romance for all things ‘Scotch’, the London-based Scottish music publisher, James Oswald, was provided with a market to exploit. Contained in the second volume of his *Caledonian Pocket Companion* is ‘The Scots Lament’, and in the third volume, ‘The Highland Lamentation’.¹⁵

A survey of Gow’s output shows that he only published three bespoke laments: ‘Niel Gow’s Lamentation for Abercarney’ in the *First Collection* of 1784; ‘Niel Gow’s Lamentation of the Death of his Brother’ in the *Second Collection* of 1788; and ‘Niel Gow’s Lament for the Death of his 2nd Wife’ in the *Fifth Collection* of 1809.¹⁶ The latter was published posthumously by Gow’s son, Nathaniel, whose role in representing his father to the music-buying public is worthy of more research. It is worth noting the variation between repetitions of material in the score. The subtlety belies the sophisticated aesthetic which governed the performance of what it is easy to think of as rather simple tunes. Variation of rhythm, bowing, articulation and ornamentation are suggestive of a rich and nuanced performing practice.

From one perspective, the advent of the master-fiddler and the development of slow fiddle music in Scotland are indicative of an increasing aestheticisation, but the move from foot to ear was driven largely by the growth in the market for music. What today we consider to be ‘traditional Scottish fiddle-music’ was born in this climate. But, the complex relationship between ‘town and country’ and ‘literacy and non-literacy’ defies straightforward explanation. In striving to adopt an eighteenth-century perspective, recognition of the multifaceted practice of Scottish fiddle music at the time is vital to establishing a more holistic interpretation.

Notes

¹ Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983).

² Mathew Gelbart, *The Invention of Folk Music and Art Music: Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 239–240.

³ David Charles Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 111–129.

⁴ Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland*, pp. 14–15.

⁵ Niel Gow, ‘Niel Gow’s Lament for the Death of his 2^d Wife’, in *A Fifth Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, &c. for the Piano Forte, Harp, Violin & Violoncello*, ed. by Nathaniel Gow (Edinburgh, 1809), pp. 2–3.

⁶ Robert Burns, ‘Tune your Fiddles, Etc.’, in *The Complete Works of Robert Burns*, ed. by Allan Cunningham (Boston: Phillips, Sampson and Company, 1855), p. 514.

⁷ Joseph MacGregor, ‘Memoir of William Marshall, Composer’, in *William Marshall, Volume 2nd of a Collection of Scottish Melodies, Reels, Strathspeys, Jigs, Slow Airs &c for the Piano Forte, Violin and Violoncello* (Edinburgh: Alexander Robertson, 1845).

GIBSON *The status of the master-fiddler in eighteenth-century Scotland*

⁸ John M. Bullock, *William Marshall: The Scots Composer* (Inverness: Robert Carruthers, 1933); 'William Marshall: Violinist and Composer', *Scottish Notes and Queries*, 2 (1924), pp. 129–132.

⁹ Employed as an agent.

¹⁰ John Moir, *William Marshall* (National Galleries of Scotland, 1817, 2012), <https://www.nationalgalleries.org/art-and-artists/artists/john-moir> [accessed 4 July 2012].

¹¹ Alexander Murdoch, *The Fiddle in Scotland* (London: Blockley, 1888).

¹² Robert Burns, cited in John Gibson Lockhart, *Life of Robert Burns* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1828), p. 158.

¹³ Henry Raeburn, *Niel Gow* (National Galleries of Scotland, 1787); David Allan, *The Penny Wedding* (National Galleries of Scotland, 1795); Simon Fraser, *The Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland and the Isles* (Edinburgh: Fraser, 1816); David Wilkie, *The Penny Wedding* (The Royal Collection, 1818).

¹⁴ Helen Jackson, *Niel Gow's Inver* (Perth: Perth and Kinross Libraries, 2000), p. 13.

¹⁵ James Oswald, [ed.] 'The Scots Lament', in *The Caledonian Pocket Companion II* (London: Simpson, 1750), p. 19; James Oswald, [ed.] 'The Highland Lamentation', in *The Caledonian Pocket Companion III* (London: Simpson, 1751), p. 24.

¹⁶ 'Niel Gow's Lamentation for Abercarney', in Niel Gow, *A Collection of Strathspey Reels with a Bass for the Violoncello or Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: Corri and Sutherland, 1784), p. 3; 'Niel Gow's Lamentation for the Death of his Brother', in Niel Gow, *A Second Collection of Strathspey Reels with a Bass for the Violoncello or Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: Gow, 1788), p. 18; Niel Gow, 'Niel Gow's Lament for the Death of his 2^d Wife', in *A Fifth Collection of Strathspeys, Reels, &c. for the Piano Forte, Harp, Violin & Violoncello*, ed. by Nathaniel Gow (Edinburgh, 1809).

Archaic fiddling among the Mississippi Choctaw: R. J. Willis and the 'house dance'

CHRIS GOERTZEN

The theme for this volume is right on the money: fiddling throughout the countries bordering the North Atlantic has been shifting for some time towards more melodic, listening-based styles and performances.¹ But the present essay concerns an instructive eddy within that international trend, an adamantly dance-linked fiddle style in which rhythm and sheer sound remain paramount, fiddling employed to accompany the Mississippi Choctaw Indian House Dance. It is the proverbial exception that at least reinforces the rule: this non-listening-based style is barely surviving, with just one fluent fiddler, Choctaw elder R. J. Willis. In this essay, I will explore the origins of the dance and its music, describe the aesthetic complex's current nature and employment, and examine R. J. Willis's repertoire of tunes.

I must begin with some background. The Choctaw were uprooted and partially dispersed during the removal era.² In the early 1830s, most members of the tribe were taken from their homes in and near Mississippi to Oklahoma in the earliest of the several tragic forced displacements collectively called the 'Trail of Tears'. Most of today's Choctaw live in Oklahoma or have further dispersed from that secondary centre. About 10,000 live in Mississippi now, less than a twentieth of the total Choctaw population. A majority of those 10,000 live west of Philadelphia, Mississippi. There is a legal reservation, but not with marked borders. Instead, one may gradually notice a preponderance of Indian faces, and then encounter a core of tribal offices, schools, and two casinos. Pervasive and profound poverty in the area finally loosened up during the last few decades, with the first healthy businesses developing beginning in the late 1960s (this belated growth aided by not imposing federal taxes), and the first casino opening in 1992.

In one consequence of how recent this change has been, modern options for entertainment arrived slowly. The silver lining around the dark cloud of centuries of miserable poverty is that many valuable Choctaw traditions were not sapped by creeping modernisation. About twenty venerable Choctaw social dances were remembered and could be revived when tribal members now in their fifties were kids. Nowadays, all Mississippi Choctaw in majority Choctaw schools learn those dances in school – in fact, in Head Start

– and many keep dancing later. They perform at the annual Choctaw Fair, at the Spring Festival in the schools, and on certain additional ceremonial occasions.

At about the same time that the Choctaw social dances were being revived, white-derived dances done to fiddle in people's houses (more-or-less square dances) were falling out of use. Some Choctaw whom I have interviewed feel that this happened simply because alternative non-Choctaw dances and dance venues burgeoned. Others told me that the tribal government frowned on the bad behaviour occasionally surfacing at the all-night dances. In any case, what was now formally called the 'house dance' did not disappear. Instead, it acquired a small, enduring niche within the officially-sponsored revival of Choctaw social dance: the house dance took its place alongside the duck dance, walk dance, and raccoon dance.



Figure 1 A Choctaw social dance ensemble performing on the tribal dance grounds.

Today's Choctaw mark layers of identity with types of music. Working from the most general layer inward: Country music and classic rock blaring from countless pickup truck radios on the reservation show that these are rural Americans, powwow music says that they are Indians (a handful of plains-style powwows occur on the reservation annually), and their social dances demonstrate that they are Choctaw. Of course, this most intimate of the three layers of culture receives the most financial and administrative support from the tribal government. Between fifteen and twenty different social dance groups perform for about

twenty-five minutes each day every July during the massive Choctaw Fair. Figure 1 shows one social dance ensemble performing on the tribal dance grounds during the 2008 Fair. The dance groups represent neighbourhoods and/or schools; many ensembles are mostly kids (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Many Choctaw social dance ensembles are dominated by children.

A majority of the Mississippi Choctaw social dances performed with any frequency today are what are called animal dances: three are war dances, and a few are specifically social dances.³ Most have a modest, undramatic aesthetic content and a similar quotient of excitement. In each dance, the troupe proceeds at a deliberate pace in lines or circles or in pairs, while a chanter traces a non-lexical melody and taps sticks together; one or several dancers may sing along in unison or in antiphony. These are dances designed for participation rather than for show; they reinforce Choctaw identity and pride, feelings that are deliberately on display for outsiders on public occasions. But the most common dances are those that are lively and crowd-pleasing. Of the animal dances, the ‘snake dance’ is an athletic and humorous hit, with lines of dancers coiling and snapping. And one of the social dances, the one called ‘Stealing Partners’, has become especially common because it is the most entertaining for both dancers and observers, with lots of competitive grabbing of partners from among the dancers and, later in the dance, from the audience. The ‘house dance’ has a contradictory position, although its distinctive character and excitement make it stand out; it is acknowledged by the Choctaw to have been adapted from Euro-American models, and because the music can’t be provided by a group’s chanter, not many troupes attempt it. R. J. Willis fiddles for a club aptly named the Elderly Social Dancers, while other dance

groups that want to perform the 'house dance' carry a boom-box and deploy one of several much-circulated cassette tapes. No one knows how old the 'house dance' is. In 1822, a Euro-American settler and blue-collar polymath named Gideon Lincecum, who then lived with his extended family near Columbus, Mississippi, sought regular contact with the Choctaw to learn more about botanic medicine. He wrote about having arranged a dance to which the local Indians were invited:

During the first year of my residence in the Chahta country I finished a large and very excellent building. When it was completed the white people solicited me, for the novelty of having it in the Chahta nation, to give them a ball in the new house. I did so and invited all three of the chiefs, the old national interpreter, John Pitchlynn, and a good many of the head men. The party was a very full one, well conducted, and it passed off in good style. The mingos [subchiefs] and chiefs had, according to my request, come early and were all seated in their places, dressed in full Choctaw costume, with their broad silver headbands, long series of diminishing crescents hanging on their breasts, armlets and wristbands, all solid silver, and beads ornamented with three white tail feathers of their own big bald eagle. Their moccasins and leggings were of fine dressed deer skins, ornamented with finely cut fringe of the same, and very small white beads sewed on in curious figures. In their native costume and by their modest deportment, they attracted considerable attention from the civil, well-bred participants of the delighted company. Notwithstanding that they were often invited, none of the Chahtas, except for a few of the educated half breeds, participated in the dance. They kept their seats, behaving very orderly, and were doubtless highly amused and deeply interested. To them it was a great performance, or a show, the like of which they had never before witnessed.⁴

Did the Choctaw learn some ancestor(s) of the 'House Dance' through Gideon Lincecum's agency? Lincecum noted that 'a few of the educated halfbreeds' danced. Perhaps those individuals became cultural intermediaries for dance, as they were for other aspects of culture. But whether or not that happened, Lincecum, an avid fiddler, continued to be involved in music interchanges with the Choctaw. Yes, his writing tended to be extravagant in both style and assertiveness, as was then typical, but his memory was impressive, and he was considered a good witness by scientists with whom he corresponded, including Charles Darwin.⁵

Another of Lincecum's florid anecdotes illustrates his having learned a Choctaw dance and melody. In 1835, during an extended trip to the future Texas, he fell among a group of Indians who weren't sure what to do with him. He managed to gain their trust partly by teaching them the Choctaw 'tick dance'. His narration of the dance didn't correspond exactly with today's 'tick dance', but the separate figures he mentioned are all typical of contemporary Choctaw social dance. It demonstrates, however, that he had paid close attention to Choctaw music and dance.⁶ Could the traffic in information have been one way, or did some Choctaw learn Euro-American social dances from him after the ball described above? On another day during that trip to Texas, Lincecum met with two friendly Indians, tribal affiliation unknown. Then, in an initially unconnected encounter, he ran

into some local planters and their house slaves, one of whom was instructed to fetch a fiddle to the picnic that resulted from the serendipitous assembly. Lincecum borrowed the fiddle, and played ‘Washington’s Grand March’, ‘General Harrison’s March’, ‘Hail Columbia’, and, bearing the most interesting connection with the topic at hand, ‘No. 1 in the Beggar Sett’.⁷ ‘Washington’s’ and ‘Columbia’ were both in wide circulation in America during the early nineteenth century, and the less common ‘Harrison’s’ was in print by 1817; such patriotic songs and melodies constituted the first substantial, distinctively-American group of additions to the British tunes copiously reprinted in the young USA.⁸ I haven’t located a ‘Beggar Sett’, but the term ‘Sett’ must refer to a set of cotillions, of figure dances. Thus, we know that Lincecum played fiddle tunes linked to figure dances by 1835. Might he have already known such tunes and associated dances during his interactions with the Choctaw in the early 1820s?

Cotillions are also part of the legacy of fiddler Samuel W. Watkins, born in the Mississippi Territory c. 1794, that is, in the generation right before Lincecum. This early Mississippi musician reached public view quite recently. The featured item in the April 2012 Recent Acquisitions catalogue of J. & J. Lubrano Music Antiquarians was a Mississippi music commonplace book (meaning a manuscript in which an individual – often a teenager learning an instrument – wrote down tunes they intend to learn, probably copying these from published sources s/he did not own). The third page of the catalogue includes this paragraph; the quotes and brackets were present in the catalogue:

Versos of a number of pages consist of a printed Army enlistment form, including one on the verso of the final page of musical notation completed in manuscript with the name ‘Samuel W. Watkins’ born in ‘the Mississippi Territory’ aged ‘nineteen’ years, ‘five’ feet ‘ten’ inches high, of ‘dark’ complexion, ‘dark’ eyes, ‘dark’ hair, and by profession a ‘Schoolmaster’ [stating that he does] hereby acknowledge to have this day voluntarily enlisted as a soldier in the Volunteer Military Corps in the Army of the United States of America ...’ dated March 12, 1813 in manuscript, and another partially completed with the name ‘John Watkins’ born in ‘the Mississippi’ in manuscript.⁹

We know little more about Watkins. His papers hint that he may have been raised in Jefferson County, in the Delta and he was in the ‘Jefferson Troop’ of the U. S. Army during the War of 1812. Also, many individuals surnamed Watkins are buried in that county¹⁰ (though Samuel moved to New Orleans at some point). This evidence places him across the state from the centre of current Choctaw territory during his youth. However, a Watkins genealogy locates many of his probable relatives in the eastern part of the state early in the nineteenth century,¹¹ in the general area where Gideon Lincecum and his family lived. Watkins peppered his manuscript with dates ranging from 1805 through 1813. He includes a ‘President’s March’, ‘Washington’s March’, religious tunes, plenty of popular secular songs, and dance melodies ranging from pan-British-world hits such as ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ and ‘Money Musk’, and a half-dozen cotillions. Thus, there were cotillions – dances with a half-dozen or so figures – being played and danced in Mississippi early in the nineteenth century. I believe that we can infer that when Gideon Lincecum reported playing a cotillion in 1835 in Texas, that timing reflected only the date of the event upon which the anecdote in

question centred; the cotillion was certainly a genre he would have known in the early 1820s, when he was interacting continually and vigorously with the Choctaw. The likely conclusion is that the Choctaw 'house dance' was born during or around the 1820s and it is possible, even likely, that Gideon Lincecum was the first to teach Euro-American figure dances to these Indians. But if he did not do so, something similar happened, for if Lincecum was not a literal or unique channel for such a cultural transfer, his interaction with the Choctaw can symbolise one or several undocumented contacts that brought Euro-American figure dances into Choctaw culture.

Precisely what happened to the Choctaw's new figure dances – or, for that matter, to their Euro-American models or inspirations – in Mississippi during the next few decades remains unknown. But we can presume that Mississippi whites continued to hold fiddle-accompanied dances including something like cotillions in their homes throughout the rest of the nineteenth century, and that their Choctaw neighbours did likewise. Early Hillbilly recordings from Mississippi reveal a vigorous and wildly varied body of fiddle tunes, many associated with fiddler Hoyt Ming. While discussing this odd corner of American fiddling is beyond the scope of this article, I will note that the eccentricity of version after version of tunes and the loose linkage of titles and tunes seem indicative of an antiquated practice that is at some distance from music literacy and from national and even regional currents.

The next body of information concerning Mississippi fiddling – in fact the first substantial body of information on this topic – surfaced as a result of WPA activity in Mississippi in the late 1930s. Folklorist Herbert Halpert drove the 'soundwagon' (an old U. S. Army ambulance fitted out with recording equipment) around eastern Mississippi in the summer of 1939, documenting community-respected fiddlers who had been identified during years of careful work by school teachers and other helpers. Some of the fiddlers were old; all were old-fashioned. Documenting them produced more representative evidence than had the early Hillbilly recordings, and reached back in time to at least the beginning of the twentieth century. A nice sample of these recordings finally became publicly available in 1985, in a state-produced album named for one of the tunes, *Great Big Yam Potatoes*.¹² The collective style of those long-departed fiddlers actually matches rather well with the contemporary playing of R. J. Willis. Folklorist Tom Rankin, the main voice in co-authored notes for the album, meshed documentation from the 1939 trip with fresh research in order to produce helpful conclusions about dances in white Mississippians' homes:

The dances were directed by a caller, and although they used many of the same figures, they were not the square dances of today. A dance usually included as many couples as could fit in a circle in a room, and if more were in attendance, some would sit while others danced. Taking turns, each couple went around the circle counter-clockwise, and danced the same figure with each other couple. Sometimes a chorus was danced by the entire circle at the end of each couple's round. Because a set could be large, each dance might last as long as twenty minutes, and the fiddler and his accompanist would play the same tune until the dance ended.¹³

Such dances from the early twentieth century seem much like the longer-surviving Choctaw 'house dance'. Anthropologist James H. Howard visited the Choctaw community of Bogue

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Chitto for ‘a few days’ in 1965, and attended the Choctaw Fair in 1974. He noted that on one occasion, the Bogue Chitto dance troupe performed:

Three sets of what are called ‘house dances’, the Choctaw version of the French quadrille or the Anglo-American square dance. These were accompanied by a violin. [Prentiss] Jackson [chanter for the group] as ‘caller’ for the house dances, did not actually shout or call the names of the various figures, seven to a set, but merely whooped ‘Weeheeaa!’ to signal the change from one to another. The dancers, through long familiarity, knew exactly which figure in the sequence to perform next in each set, each of which was different, and no dancer showed the slightest hesitation in his or her movements.¹⁴



Figure 3 R. J. Willis playing for the ‘House Dance’ at the tribal Dance Grounds.

My interviewing of older Mississippi Choctaw suggests that ‘three sets’ sounds about right. For instance, in a 2010 interview Mrs Thallis Lewis, a noted authority on Choctaw social dance, remembered the general house dance performing situation during her youth also including a ‘buffalo dance’, and a ‘sixteen hats dance’. But when a ‘house dance’ is announced today, knowledgeable audiences expect one particular dance. The steps include an entering promenade, followed by the men and women circling in opposite directions, then dancing in place, then swinging with a new partner, then yelling, plus repetitions of the dancing in place, swing, and yell until original partners are reunited. While most social dances done in big public settings have the music amplified by the chanter wearing a cordless microphone

(as in Figure 2), the fiddle and guitar producing the music for the ‘house dance’, when it is done outdoors, need a microphone or two on stands – a small logistical challenge (see Figure 3).

Whether the fiddle and guitar are amplified or not, the sound is dominated by roughly-strummed G and D chords (since the instruments are tuned about a major third low, these chords sound as E^b and B^b, but with the guitarist employing the G and D fingerings). The fiddle peeks through the texture in a barely-audible pulsation of higher- and lower-pitched gestures, but it has really been reduced to a visual symbol. The blast of sound is what matters. And with that we have the broadest lesson of this essay: the minimally-melodic music for the ‘house dance’ is never intended for passive listening and is not performed independent of the rare dance it accompanies. Viewed in the context of the thriving world of American fiddling, this is a shrunken tradition, surviving only due to its having been moved to and protected within a tightly-circumscribed niche in the officially-supported environment of Choctaw social dance.

The ‘house dance’ fiddle is at most only faintly heard, and its rhythms are only dubiously coordinated with that of the strummed guitar, the pace of which, in turn, may or may not be heeded by the dancers. Thus, only R. J. Willis is in a position to testify that multiple distinct fiddle tunes survive. He learned fiddling from his father with whom he used to play for dances that lasted all night, twenty-five tunes of the repertoire of which he still recalls. One afternoon during June 2011, we got together and recorded. He remembered as many tunes as he could away from the context of the dance: twenty-one that day. He has forgotten the tunes’ names. Getting melodies from him is a matter of getting his ‘fiddle motor’ going so that he can churn out tunes as if at one of those literal house dances of long ago. He plays in two tunings, one like standard tuning – all fifths (but with the fiddle tuned low) – and the other proportioned like the common AEAE. Surprisingly, to change tunings, he lowers the top two strings by another whole step, so that the guitarist need never venture beyond the G and D chord formations. R. J.’s repertoire is split between the tunings, each of which is home to one specific tight-knit clan of tunes plus a few sports. The AEAE tunes include one shaped like the South-Eastern standard ‘Sail Away Ladies’ plus ones similar to that, a cognate of the South-Eastern ‘Sally Goodin’, and, surprisingly, Bob Wills’ ‘Take Me Back to Tulsa’.¹⁵ The main group among those that he plays in regular tuning also centres on a tune close to the old, G major ‘Sally Goodin’ (that is, the South-Eastern frolic tune, not the fancy Texas version in A). I give a transcription of this tune that I will call ‘Sally Goodin’ for convenience in Figure 4.

Performances of given tunes are three or four minutes long, with little or no variation once R. J. settles into that tune. Reinforcing this lack of variation within a performance, the contents of the various tunes are extraordinarily similar. This high redundancy quotient is striking even in the context of South-Eastern dance-oriented fiddling, indeed, even more extreme than in the old tunes in old styles collected in *Great Big Yam Potatoes*. There is lots of antecedent/consequent action, lots of overlap in the contents of measures of a given tune – indeed, lots of overlap between tunes. After all, everything he plays is in G major, and the formula of high strain vs. low strain vs. (sometimes) in-between strain produces similar melodic shapes within the tunes’ near-identical tessituras. In fact, the tune that R. J. played

On gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

right after ‘Sally Goodin’ that afternoon was so similar that he eased back into the first tune unconsciously, then shook his head ruefully (see Figure 4b; this second tune might be a cognate of the uncommon ‘Barlow Knife’¹⁶).

Figure 4a: ("Sally Goodin"?), this section played second This section played first



Figure 4b: ("Barlow Knife"?), first Second, perhaps a mistake, but takes over Third



Figure 4c. Played second; varied a bit Third First



ends on g second time ends on g second time

Figure 4d. Played first; varied slightly Second, seldom repeated immediately



Figure 4e.



Figure 4 The first five tunes that R. J. Willis played in standard tuning during the interview in 2011.

Next, I invite the reader to compare the transcription of the apparently fragile second tune with that of the third tune, given in Figure 4c. The fourth and fifth tunes R. J. played in lowered standard tuning loosen the group’s collective identity up somewhat, but similarities with the neighbouring melodies remain obvious (Figures 4d and 4e). In the end, the most compelling aspect of Willis’ repertoire is how alike the tunes sound in performance, even when different ancestors seem plausible.

The ‘novelty quotient’ (how different a tune must be to have a stable separate identity, to be a distinctive member of an individual fiddler’s repertoire) is smaller than is normal in the American South – or in any other fiddle repertoire with which I am acquainted. Why? Could this be evidence of repertorial decay, of one elderly fiddler’s fading acuity? I think not. That R. J. plays ‘Take Me Back to Tulsa’ – a much younger tune than the other recognisable ones in his repertoire – in a lucid replication of the conventional shape of that melody, suggests that he is choosing pitches purposefully and precisely. He learned most of his repertoire from his father; I have seen no evidence that he did not learn his tunes in or near the shapes in which he plays them fluently today.

Might there be an alternative explanation for these performances' mutual resemblances? Interestingly, many of the sung melodies for Choctaw social dances are just about this similar to each other.¹⁷ This suggests an intriguing possibility – that these borrowed dance tunes have been reshaped, or rather restyled in an Indian aesthetic. If that is so, then these originally Euro-American melodies were not simply adopted, but rather assimilated. In any case, if, in a performance of a 'house dance', a miracle occurred, and there were two microphones balanced so that audiences could hear the melodies clearly, the results would still offer slim rewards to ears pampered by North Atlantic concert-oriented fiddling. This style remains unapologetically dance-linked and is now just as aesthetically compact as is the 'house dance's' function. How much longer will this last fluent 'house dance' fiddler continue to play?

When I attended the 2008 Choctaw Fair, I overheard emcees agree that it was fitting that R. J. Willis would 'retire' on his 75th birthday (see Figure 5). During a pause between dance groups' performances, I asked what such a retirement would entail, and was informed that R. J. was relinquishing just one of his public music activities. A highlight of each annual Choctaw Fair is the World Series of Stickball (a form of lacrosse, and the most important specifically Choctaw sport). During a game, drummers race along the sidelines to play loudly for a member of their team who has the ball; this is a putatively magical encouragement. R. J. had long been one of those drummers, and this activity was all that he was giving up. And I am happy to report that an apprentice fiddler has finally surfaced, a Choctaw college student violinist who visits Willis when he can and also has copies of my video recordings of Willis. The fiddled 'house dance', while destined to remain a minor presence in the repertoire of Choctaw Social Dance, is in little danger of dying out. But no one should ever just *listen* to the music of the 'House dance' – the style was never designed for that.



Figure 5 R. J. Willis being presented with a birthday cake at the Choctaw Fair.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Notes

¹ I certainly believe that this sea change has become central in the cultivation of most North Atlantic fiddle styles. See Chris Goertzen, 'The Transformation of American Contest Fiddling', *The Journal of Musicology*, 6, no. 1 (1988), 107–129.

² For information about the Choctaw people that is endorsed by the tribe, see their website, <http://www.choctaw.org/> [accessed June 2015]. My general remarks on the tribe and on their social dances issue either from that website or from personal observation.

³ The best published discussion of the figures employed in the different Choctaw social dances remains James H. Howard, and Victoria Lindsay Levine, *Choctaw Music and Dance* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990), even though this this book focuses on the Oklahoma Choctaw.

⁴ See Jerry Bryan Lincecum and Edward Hake Phillips, eds, *Adventures of a Frontier Naturalist: The Life and Times of Dr Gideon Lincecum* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1994), pp. 89–90.

⁵ Lincecum and Phillips, pp. 38–39.

⁶ Lincecum and Phillips, pp. 221–22.

⁷ Lincecum and Phillips, pp. 173–80.

⁸ See the appropriate entries in Robert M. Keller, Raoul F. Camus, Kate Van Winkle Keller and Susan Cifaldi, *Early American Secular Music and Its European Sources 1589–1839: An Index* (Annapolis, MD: The Colonial Music Institute, 2002). This was consulted in its incarnation as a website: <https://www.cdss.org/elibrary/Easmes/index.html> [accessed June 2015].

⁹ Samuel W. Watkins, *Untitled Music Manuscript Commonplace Book*, plus miscellaneous papers (as of this writing, newly purchased by and not yet cataloged at the library of the University of Colorado).

¹⁰ Ann Beckerson Brown, *Jefferson County, Mississippi: Cemeteries, etc., volume I* (Shreveport, LA: J & W Enterprises, for Anebec & Co., 1995).

¹¹ William B. Watkins, 'The Watkins Family of North Carolina, Particularly Enumerating Those Descendants of Levin Watkins of Duplin County, N. C. Who Emigrated to Alabama and Mississippi Early in the Nineteenth Century' (Charleston, SC: Bibliolife, printed on demand, 2012 [1923]).

¹² *Great Big Yam Potatoes*, AH 002, 33rpm LP, Mississippi Department of Archives and History, 1985.

¹³ Tom Rankin, notes to *Great Big Yam Potatoes*, LP.

¹⁴ Howard and Levine, p. 18. The fiddler for this and similar occasions was most likely Bogue Chitto's own Wagonner Amos. Amos lamented that Choctaw Social Dance had been largely supplanted as popular weekend entertainment by television and movies: 'So many things have changed. Only time we have our social dances is go out at some schools and performing, or Choctaw Fair. Stickball game, you see that. But that's the only time. The rest of 'em, when the fair is over, they done forgot about it. Then the next year time, will be month of time, and here they're trying practicing dancing or stickball. But at least we got culture, a little. Some other state, I don't think they have their culture.' Billy Amos, 'Electricity, Plumbing, and Social Dancing', in Tom Mould, *Choctaw Tales* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004), p. 167. Amos is the performer on some of the tapes used for the 'House Dance' today in the absence of a live fiddler. His son is a chanter, but not a fiddler (Mould, p. 4).

¹⁵ Written by Bob Wills and Tommy Duncan in 1940; first recorded in 1941 by Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys (OKeh 6101). There are dozens of commercial versions, and many or most American fiddlers know the tune.

¹⁶ Immediately after I presented the paper, that is the short form of this essay, Gregory Hansen suggested this possibility, and Alan Jabbour – who plays 'Barlow Knife' – tentatively agreed. Several versions of 'Barlow Knife' are available on YouTube, as are versions of all of the tunes mentioned in the essay (to hear the version of 'Sally Goodin' in the key of G major that I believe R. J. Willis is at

GOERTZEN *Archaic fiddling among the Mississippi Choctaw*

least partially emulating, search 'Sally Goodin G'). I also thank fiddle tune authority Paul F. Wells and contemporary Mississippi fiddler Bill Rogers for listening to R. J. Willis tunes and helping me to identify them.

¹⁷ See Victoria Lindsay Levine's transcriptions in Howard and Levine, pp. 84–134.

12

Joe Holmes: the singing North Antrim fiddler

LEN GRAHAM



Figure 1 Joe Holmes at Antrim and Derry Fiddlers' Night in Smyth's Hall, Carnlough, County Antrim, c. 1972. *Photo courtesy of Billy McKee.*

Oh, my love Nell is a charming girl,
From the county Down came she,
But I weeped and I wailed,
When the big ship sailed,
For the shores of Amerikay

'My Love Nell' (polka)

GRAHAM *Joe Holmes: the Singing North Antrim Fiddler*

This fragment of a song and polka was first heard by me in the early 1960s from Joe Holmes of Killyrammer, County Antrim who had learnt the tune and the few words from his brother Harry; the same brother had also given the twelve year old Joe his first fiddle in 1918 on his return from the First World War. I was delighted recently to come across a published version of the song in the archives of the Library of Congress in Washington DC.¹ The song sheet states that the song was written and sung by William Carleton and performed in Tony Pastor's Opera-House, which opened in the Bowery district of New York City in 1865 and the William Carleton here would not seem to be the County Tyrone novelist (1794-1869). Today we usually associate polkas in Ireland with County Kerry, but this dance of eastern European origin arrived in Ireland in the early nineteenth century and was popular throughout Ireland, Europe and North America.



Figure 2 'Harry Holmes's Mazurka No.1'.

Joe Holmes was born in 1906 (see Figure 1); his grandfather as well as his older brother Harry played the fiddle.² Joe's mother Jane Getty was a singer from whom Joe inherited many songs, and she also lilted dance tunes that sometimes had words. Their home was a popular céilí-house frequented by local musicians and singers from the locality and beyond. Joe told me that dancing was a regular feature in his home, and that on bigger



Figure 3 'Harry Holmes's Mazurka No. 2'.

occasions the dance or ball would be held in a local barn. One of the neighbouring farmers had a large barn with a wooden loft above, which was popular as the wooden floor acted

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

as percussion for the dancers. When the grain, potato and flax (lint-pulling) harvests were saved, these were some of the occasions for which the bigger venue of a barn was required. In Joe's time this sort of céilí-ing with song, story and dance was common in many houses in County Antrim and other parts of Ulster, irrespective of religious affiliation and social background. Other dances Joe played for included, jigs, hornpipes, schottisches, quadrilles, four- and eight-hand reels, lancers, waltzes, and the mazurka, that latter of which I have fond memories of Joe's sister Nancy and my mother dancing in Joe's kitchen in the late 1960s. The two mazurkas that Joe learned from his brother Harry he called 'Harry's Mazurkas' (see Figures 2 & 3). With the demise of the house and barn-dances after the Second World War, Joe acquired a 125cc BSA motorcycle, and with the fiddle strapped to his back he travelled to play fiddle in Molloy's Hall in Armoy. In the 1950s he became a member of the Counties Antrim and Derry Country Fiddlers' Association, and it was at one of these gatherings in Dunminning, near Ballymena that I first met Joe in 1963; founder members included Willie Hope, Mickey McIlhatton, and Alex Kerr. I recall Alex Kerr saying, 'Traditional music knows no border, nor no creed'.

Figure 4 'The Parting Glass'.

A musical score for the song 'The Parting Glass' in 4/4 time. The score consists of four staves of music with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: A man may drink and not be drunk, a man may fight and not be slain, a man may court a pretty girl, and perhaps be welcome back again, but since it has so ordered been, be a time to rise and a time to fall, come fill to me the parting glass, good night and joy be with you all.

Figure 5 'The Peacock's Feather'.

A musical score for the Schottische 'The Peacock's Feather' in 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'Schottische'. The second staff includes first and second endings, both marked with a '3' indicating a triplet. The third staff concludes the piece with a final triplet marked with a '3'.

The last song that Joe Holmes and I sang together was a North Antrim version of the song 'The Parting Glass', which was in the Guild Hall in Derry a few nights before he died in January 1978 (see Figure 4). The song/tune speeded up becomes the schottische, 'The

GRAHAM *Joe Holmes: the Singing North Antrim Fiddler*

Peacock's Feather', which Joe taught to the Keane Family of Caherlistrane, County Galway and they in turn passed it on to fiddler, Frankie Gavin, who popularised it with his recording of the 1970s (see Figure 5).

Notes

¹ 'My Love Nell', polka and song, is in the Library of Congress, ref: as202560, <https://www.loc.gov/item/amss.as202560/> [accessed June 2015]; see also Bodleian Libraries Broadside Ballads Online, 2806 b.11 (178), <http://ballads.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/view/sheet/25653> [accessed June 2015].

² See Len Graham, *Joe Holmes – Here I am Amongst You: Songs, Music and Traditions of an Ulsterman* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2010).

Truth, beauty, and authenticity in folk music

INGRID HAMBERG

The meeting between dance and music is a meeting of people: a social event. In addition to the direct act of dancing, there are countless other forms of connection at a social dance. The fiddler provides both a foreground and a background in this tapestry, both masking and organizing chaos in the gathering. While the specifics of a tradition's music and dance vary over time, I argue that there are certain meaningful constants, embodied by the community, that bind the music to the dance, which cannot be replaced by recorded music. This article is largely based on my experiences and observations over some twenty-five years, primarily in Seattle, WA, USA, but also in Rauland, Norway. I have experienced the folk dance and music community both as an integral member and leader, and as a guest. I have been an insider and an outsider, a dancer, a musician, a student and a teacher. Here, I focus on this community and the individuals that compose it. I discuss some of the players and sites of these interactions – and their interdependences. I suggest that folk dance and music communities need not seek to fit into the aesthetics of other genres, but should engage in a discussion defining folk-aesthetics. I argue that a determination of truth, beauty, and authenticity can only be made from within the community that is producing a given folk expression.

The community

A modern folk dance and music community can be defined as a group of individuals who have chosen to be involved in the activities associated with playing traditional music and dancing. For some born into the community they are interested because it is what they know; they may choose to not seek out another community, or they may choose to return to their folk dance and music community. Others make a definite choice to take part in a community in which they have no family history or have had no previous personal connection. Regardless of the method of entry, however, all members choose to take part by choice despite, or in tandem, with countless other opportunities. Within the community the individuals find themselves filling many different roles, primary among which are the defining roles of musician and dancer. In addition, there are those who take on administrative and logistical roles, such as documentation, recruitment, and education. The duties of each are clear, and though one individual may function in multiple roles, it is nevertheless important that someone is

doing these jobs. The community also has its elders who may or may not be willing or able to dance or play anymore, but who actively participate by watching, listening to, approving (or not) what they see and hear, and articulating the history of the group. I will focus on the dancers and musicians because they have the primary function in these communities.

The musicians' role is to provide the music for dancing. They must be able to predict what kind of dance tunes will be appealing for the dancers, be capable of playing these tunes, and be flexible enough to choose other tunes on demand or when they notice waning interest from the dancers. Musicians put hours and years of training into learning to play their instrument and developing repertoire, but just as important is the ability to communicate with the others present at the event. Their music must be precise in rhythm and tempo; it should drive and inspire the dancers to move. In the USA, it is common for musicians to post dance lists or 'call' the types of dances, since they are catering to an audience with an appetite for variety. The lists make it clear what kind of music is being played so the dancers know what to expect. As the focal point of the action, the musicians guide not only the dancing, but also are the source of all general announcements (regarding upcoming events, important information, etc.) during the evening. A good musician is an excellent artist, has an understanding of what the dancers need and is alert to what is happening all around.

The role of the dancer is to dance to the music provided by the musician. The dancers carry in their bodies the other half of this picture, which is unfinished until both musicians and dancers are working together. An experienced dancer is flexible to different musicians' styles, but also has preferences that they express while dancing (or through choosing not to dance). They listen to the music and dance according to their own physical abilities and limitations, telling the musician if the tempo or rhythm are right or wrong either verbally or through their presence on or absence from the dance floor. As this is a social event, the dancers are very often found doing something other than dancing, such as standing or sitting talking with the other dancers and attendees, listening with half an ear so as not to miss the start of the next set or tune. When dancing they may also be talking to their partner, and yet somehow, they are still listening to the music, dancing, along with all the other couples on the floor, to the music provided by the musician. This ability to seemingly not pay attention and yet be in synch is also the result of years of practice – both listening to the music and dancing the steps.

Unlike a traditional society, where everyone takes part in the same rituals, celebrations, and daily life, the modern folk music and dance community is comprised of individuals who choose to dedicate more or less significant portions of their life to this particular sub-culture. The people they interact with on a daily basis at work, school, even at home are more likely than not to be uninvolved in the folk music and dance community. The community gives them something that they do not get from the mainstream society, such as friends with similar interests, a connection to the past, a feeling of security, or an opportunity to excel at a particular skill. I suggest that these communities provide the same framework for social interaction as a traditional community by filling in the gaps and absences (that is, a sense of isolation or rootlessness) that modern individuals may experience in the course of a typical urban life.

Individuals make the society

The ritual of social folk dancing in the modern world has a prescribed set of actions that are followed by participants during an event. These vary from one subset of the community to another, but they share general characteristics that bind them together. The actions of individuals, and of music organisations, contribute to the development and evolution of the cultural expressions of the community. Before a social event can take place the organisation must have a location, which, in the case of regularly scheduled events, will be somewhere that is suitable for the activity, is affordable, and encourages people to come back time after time. The organisation might consider how the floor works for dancing, if it is possible to amplify the musicians, whether the room is well ventilated, the availability of kitchen facilities, if it is in a safe neighbourhood, and if there is parking available or convenient public transport. Depending on the goals of each community, these – and other – considerations are prioritised differently. Before each event, designated members of the community perform a number of logistical tasks. Someone makes sure that there are fiddlers available, takes care of advertising, and provides a cash box and cashier. Someone checks that the building or room will be unlocked, heated/cooled properly, cleared for dancing and ready for playing. If food is a part of the standard routine, then snacks are arranged or a meal is prepared; community members are called on to take part in everything from making the food to cleaning afterward.

As the community arrives at the hall for the event, they make a symbolic break with the outside world by changing shoes and preparing to dance or play. They greet one another and pay any entrance fees. They open instrument cases and tune their instruments. They set aside their daily lives and enter a world of folk music and dance. The musicians begin to play and the dancers begin to dance. Simultaneously, people stand or sit and catch up on the latest news. Some dancers chat while they move to the music; others lose themselves entirely in the sounds of the music and the movements shared with their partner. The individuals in the community dance, play, and interact according to specific unwritten rules that govern their actions and allow them to enter a sort of creative trance. These rules or expectations grow from the core of the community and its members' assumptions about how certain tunes should be played and which dances danced. Outsiders to the community, even those from similar communities in other places, will likely have different expectations; these differences define the borders between groups that otherwise seem similar to the outside observer.

Music and dance: parts of a whole

I look at folk music and folk dance as complementary parts of a whole. Both are equally important in the determination of the characteristics of the other. The music and dance develop simultaneously in response to new impulses and changing circumstances in the community. Historically, smoother floors and bigger rooms allowed for dancers to move around the floor, creating a demand for louder instruments or more fiddles. An ageing population remembers that a certain dance was always done slower, allowing them to enjoy it for longer; a young fiddler wants to play faster or slower and the dancers accommodate her. In an attempt to separate one group from another, small differences in playing style and

dance are underscored and enlarged. In all of these examples the fiddlers and dancers are constantly adapting to one another. It is this synergistic interplay that makes them feel like they belong to a community and gives the members of the community control over their outward expression.

Separating music and dance from one another gives each the freedom to develop separately, resulting in music that is great for a listening audience or for specialist dancers, but often not suitable for social dancing. This separation is also a reaction to a modern change in taste; people who want to take part in the folk dance and music community as observers are able to listen to concerts and watch dance performances, while the musicians and dancers have arguably greater artistic freedom. I believe all of these types of expression and experience can be beautiful, authentic experiences, but that they are different types of experience. Playing folk music for a concert audience is not the same as playing for dancers, just as performing folk dances on a stage is not the same as dancing them socially. Playing a concert, regardless of the size of the audience, allows the musician much greater flexibility. They are free to choose tunes defined as 'listening tunes' (that can't be danced to), or they may alter the tempo and rhythm of dance tunes in ways that highlight their personal virtuosity, but clashes with the dancers' abilities. Such musicians can arrange the tunes however they feel in the concert setting. Dance musicians, as such, are also quite free, but whatever they play must be danceable. In Nordic folk dance, 'danceable' implies that there will be no major variations in tempo and there is an adherence to the rhythm of the dance. Tunes can be 'arranged', but only so long as the dancers are able to identify with the underlying dance groove.

Stage performances of folk dance vary from more or less rehearsed presentations of specific dances to highly technical choreographed theatrical representations. This is in contrast to the social dancing at various skills levels as described above. In a social-dance setting, the degree to which each dancer is listening to the music varies, but they will all be very responsive to sudden, disruptive changes. For example, unexpected changes in tempo or time signature (from a polka to a polska without pause) will get the dancers' attention as they are jostled out of their groove; jumps in volume and key changes mid-tune may interest the dancers and cause them to listen more closely, but will not disturb the overall flow of the dance. This is because in a given situation they know what to expect from the musicians, and while musical finesse is appreciated, the most important skill from the point of view of the dancing public, is the ability to provide a solid foundation for the dance. Social dancers are dancing for the sheer joy of dancing, and perhaps also for the exercise the movement provides, and for the social contact.

Stage-performing dancers are communicating, too, with the audience. What they choose to communicate in their performance dictates how they will stage and choreograph the dance. The dancers rehearse and communicate directly with the musicians to explain exactly what they want or need in the music. They may even have music composed for a specific performance. The social dancer, on the other hand, relies on their knowledge of the concepts of the music and dance to physically interpret whatever the musician plays.

For me, the difference between these examples lies in the audience. In the case of a staged performance, the dancers have an indirect contact with the audience. Whereas at a

social dance, when the audience consists of the other participating community members, the dancers are touching each other as they dance, adapting to the music, the movements of their partner, and other couples on the floor. It is this community and contact that keeps the changes slow and consensus-based. For the dances on stage to be considered folk dance, they must be accepted by the folk dance community, something that can be confirmed in that community's discourse. When the community accepts the dancers on stage as members of the community they also welcome any new variations in the dance as a legitimate part of its repertoire. In this way, the performing dancers are able to assert a great influence over the otherwise slowly-evolving folk-dance community.

Truth

As it relates to the world of folk music and dance, this word is often used interchangeably with 'authenticity', and 'true' is also used synonymously with 'right' or 'correct'. The truth is presented as an objective fact and is often referred to in order to claim legitimacy for a certain way of performing. In Scandinavian folk music, claims of historical truth are conflated with authenticity to raise the status of a performance or performer. Without a time machine, there is little that we can do to find out exactly how things sounded or looked in the past. Even with the earliest of recordings, we are usually left with an incomplete picture that lacks context and insight into the minds of those recorded. The best we can do is imitate and reconstruct them as far as possible and, based on our own experience, draw conclusions about how and why they did things the way we perceive them.

When we learn directly from a master fiddler or dancer we are getting direct input from an accepted member of the community that shapes how we continue playing or dancing. Watching dances on a film or learning tunes from a recording is a useful and valuable tool, but it cannot compare to playing for dancers who will stop and correct the playing tempo, or to working out how to fit a certain rhythm to the moves of the dance in response to the movements of a partner's body. In this way, individual experiences are shared from dancer to dancer to musician and back to the dancers, equalising in a fleeting collective truth. Separating the music and the dance takes away the possibility for this type of collective truth, even though it does create new opportunities. When we dance to recorded music, it is the recording that represents the truth in its unwavering repetition. How we then move to that recorded music is determined by its rigidity or flexibility, and either frees our movements as compensation or fixes them into a pattern to match the recording. Dancers or musicians on stage are free to communicate directly with the audience, representing their version of the truth.

Beauty

This is a concept that refers to pleasurable experience. For some, beauty is viewed purely as form, while others, in evaluating beauty, take into account the artist's pleasure in creating the art (or music or dance). Folk music and dance derive their sense of beauty from the interest the individuals of a community have in these expressions. In the past the aesthetic beauty was linked to ethical goodness; but music that tells a morally good story is not necessarily what a modern listener would consider aesthetically beautiful. Folk music, on the other

hand, when played in the older style was considered beautiful if it helped the listeners to have a good experience or reminded them of an epic story.¹ Today, the folk dance and music that is practiced and preserved is that which a modern folk dance and music community considers beautiful and pleasing. In our modern society where these communities are made up of individuals from different backgrounds, we have to consider the effect of both personal tastes and exposure to many other musics.

Prior to the arrival of tempered-scale instruments, records, and radio in rural Norway, traditional musicians, dancers, and listeners had minimal outside reference to determine what 'should be' considered beautiful. While they clearly had contact with the rest of the world, they had their own understanding of how ideally to form the intervals on their most common instruments (fiddle and voice). While there are several theories about how Norwegians in the eighteenth century came to this understanding of tonality,² it is clear that they found it to be beautiful (or they would have played in some other way). Ethnologists and music researchers during Norway's national romantic period assumed that rural musicians played 'out of tune' because they didn't know any better or lacked technique. But it is now widely accepted that these were often very talented musicians who were quite conscious of creating music they experienced as 'right'. This is because they found this music good and beautiful the way they played it. Today, folk music students have grown up on and internalised the tempered scale, and do not generally find the untempered intervals used in the past pleasing. So-called folk-music-theory is taught in relation to the chromatic pitches (the neutral third, a fluctuating seventh, etc.). From personal experience, I find that it can be difficult and confusing for students to try to reproduce the older scales that they do not understand and may not find pleasing. To understand such complex tonal nuances they must be internalised through listening, and studied both practically (by playing or singing) and empirically (by looking at the differences in frequencies using modern technology). Through an internalisation of this tonality, they may come to appreciate it and even find it beautiful. Alternatively, the argument can be made that today's folk music and dance community find the tunes played on a tempered scale beautiful, and therefore have no reason to study the older tonality.

The question of beauty is also relevant for the dancers. Why a given dance has taken the form it has depends on the community's interpretation of moving to the music in a way that is collectively pleasing. The kinds of movements depend on the dancer's age, motives, and familiarity with the dance and of course the music. A young man showing off will often use bigger, more powerful movements, even when the music is relatively laid-back. An older woman may seem more spritely when dancing to up-beat tunes and is light on her feet, even though she is exerting little energy. The critical factor in both of these examples is the pleasing effect (for the dancers, the musicians, and anyone watching) of the human body moving in time to the music and not the specific moves each dancer is making. However, a folk dance community imposes rules on these movements based on their tradition, and it is most beautiful when all movements are similar or symmetrical and everyone is dancing together. In recent years, Scandinavian folk dancers have moved to the stage. They have taken with them elements of traditional dances and music. The dancers choreograph dances and scenes. They tell stories with their dances in a way that is modern and theatrical. This

is a new ideal, much as concert performing was new for folk musicians in the national romantic period. Still, their goal is to produce dances that will give pleasure to the audience and be perceived as beautiful.

Authenticity [weisethaunet]: ‘real’ versus ‘true’

Authenticity poses a problem because it is in great demand, and there are many different interpretations of the word. The designation ‘authentic’ can be used to indicate historic authenticity (older is better), organic or embodied (collective) authenticity, and personal (individual) authenticity.³ Allan Moore suggests that in any performance there is a possibility for first, second, and third person authenticity depending on who is perceiving the performance and how it gives or represents a real experience.⁴ How can we know if folk music and/or dance are authentic and what kind of authenticity we are dealing with? Stan Godlovitch offers a solution to what is often a complicated problem. By viewing all action as the individual’s performance of their identity and authenticity as the experience of this performance, he suggests that authenticity is not only possible but also achievable.⁵ Returning to our folk dance and music communities, the question of authenticity then becomes a question of who is performing and what actions are being defined as authentic. Here I suggest that the answer varies. Authenticity is a desired feature in a performance for the audience, just as it is a desired feature for the performer and the social musician/dancer. That is, authenticity is defined in relation to the individual or group having the experience, as only they can know if they felt something in the moment of experience. Regardless of what they play, the musicians and dancers on stage are usually having a meaningful experience that they are sharing with the audience (which is also having an authentic experience). Social dancers’ and musicians’ experiences, while different from those in the first group, are equally real and meaningful.

For the folk dance and music community to recognise authenticity, the individuals must collectively agree that a given experience or type of performance is authentic. Simply, it is the community that decides what is folk music and what is folk dance. However, a community is built of individuals and their consensus on what is and is not folk music or dance is near impossible to reach. It is in this spoken and unspoken negotiation regarding what is and is not authentic, that the evolution of the tradition occurs, slowly and with the approval of the community. Those who break the rules are either excluded, verifying the rules, or included, expanding the rules. Norwegian art historian, Harry Fett, divides folk art into three groups or types – the archaic, the style-connecting, and the style-breaking.⁶ I suggest that these three categories can be similarly applied to folk music and dance.

Folk music students ask themselves constantly ‘what is folk music?’ and ‘is this folk music?’ This is their way of engaging in the authenticity discourse; some typical examples will illustrate this point; it is easy to begin with mostly-contemporary groups of young musicians. Valkyrien Allstars is a band made up of three Hardanger fiddle players accompanied by bass and drums. While they define themselves as ‘renewing folk music’, the folk music community is generally uncertain about whether or not what they play actually is folk music. They are very clearly breaking rules and it remains to be seen if their music is considered ‘style connecting’ or ‘style breaking’ in the future. The five-member band

Sver is considered to be one of the greatest contemporary folk groups in Scandinavia, implying that they have successfully stretched the boundaries of the authentic definition of folk music. Nils Økland is a well-respected Hardanger fiddle player within the folk music community; however, his compositions are generally classified as ‘contemporary classical’, not ‘folk’ – whether playing traditional tunes or his own contemporary compositions, Økland’s expressions are, however, authentic for him and have the potential to be accepted as authentic by the folk music community. There are numerous examples of the ‘archaic’ group which is represented by solo fiddlers and singers, and by community social dancing to live music, each of which differs from place to place.

In a social setting, the question of authenticity usually relates to how we perform the music and dances. Some aim to copy their instructors exactly, to embody a historical authenticity. Others internalise the music and the dances and express them as their own creative expressions. This is the kind of experienced authenticity that I am promoting. As I see it, authenticity comes from the feeling of understanding both the music and the dance and playing or dancing to the best of your ability. I recently took a dance workshop where the instructor, Olav Sem, told us to watch each dance carefully because ‘you’ll never see it again’. This was interpreted as somewhat morbid by the other participants when directed at the dance of an old man dancing with his good friend; one of them hunched over and barely able to stand upright, the other a rather large fellow. But when they began to dance they were both elegant and joyful, clearly having an authentic and beautiful experience that was also accepted by the community that paused in their dancing to watch.⁷

Conclusion

I have discussed the idea that folk music and dance are two equal parts of a whole that, when separated in modern times, give way to three things: a) the original whole, b) the music, and c) the dance. Each of these allow for artistic expression and can be considered a part of the folk music and dance community, if they are embraced and approved by that community. The community defines their truth based on their collective taste and experience. I suggest that any discussion of truth, beauty, or authenticity as it relates to folk dance and music must come from within the experience of the community. Applying external aesthetical principles implies that folk music and dance are objects that can be analysed out of context – as pure objects; I submit that the only relevant analysis must come from within the community and that the aesthetic values of a folk music and dance community are subject to the values and experiences of its individual members. Folk music and dance are essentially expressive interactions between people. Focusing only on the external properties and comparing them to other forms of expression is useful only if the primary goal is to draw boundaries. Music and dance bring people together as I think the study of music and dance should also do.

Notes

¹ Vidar Lande, *LiesØtøltradisjonen i Setesdal: musikkrepertoaret etter Tomas og Gunnar Larson Liestøl* (Rauland: Høgskolen i Telemark, Institutt for folkekultur, 1 plate [CD] i lomme, 2007).

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

- ² Reidar Sevåg, 'Toneartspørsmålet i Norsk Folkemusikk', in *Fanitullen: innføring i Norsk og Samisk Folkemusikk*, ed. by Bjørn Aksdal and Sven Nyhus (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1993).
- ³ Margunn Bjørnholt, 'Kilder til begjær, inderlighet til besvær? Om tradisjon, fornyelse og faglig refleksjon i folkedansen', *Musikk og tradisjon* (2011), p. 25.
- ⁴ Allan Moore, 'Authenticity as Authentication', *Popular Music*, 21, no. 2 (2002), 209–223.
- ⁵ Stan Godlovitch, 'Performance Authenticity: Possible, Practical, Virtuous', in *Performance and Authenticity in the Arts*, ed. by Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 22.
- ⁶ Mikkel B. Tin, 'Abstraksjon i folkekunsten', *Kunst og kultur*. 86, no. 4 (2003), 240–258.
- ⁷ Springdans NW, *Springdans* (Seattle, WA: Skandia Folkdance Society, 2012).

Performing authenticity in old-time fiddling

GREGORY HANSEN

It is the middle of the summer in 1988, and I'm in Jacksonville, Florida doing fieldwork for the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs. For the past year, I've been working with this state agency to coordinate the Duval County Folk Arts in Education Program. The summer has opened up opportunities for fieldwork in this sprawling urban metropolis of nearly 1,000,000 people, located in the region known as 'The First Coast'. My fieldwork results will provide new resources for my work as a folklorist in residence within the county's school system, and I'm documenting traditional activities and folk artists and musicians to bring them into the schools for sessions that enhance the Florida Studies unit of the fourth-grade social studies curriculum.¹ I'm attending a weekly jam session of the Northeast Florida Bluegrass Association, and I'm impressed with the high level of musicianship and the friendliness of the kitchen pickers.

I make my rounds and meet an excellent banjo player, whose broad grin emerges under his bushy moustache. He explains that he'd enjoy coming into the classroom to teach students about banjo playing. We set up an interview, and within a week, I've recorded a session with Jack Piccalo. As we wind down from the interview, Jack modestly pauses and explains that he'd like to help but since he's not really from Florida, he thinks that there might be a better person to involve in the program. He explains that I really need to talk with his friend Richard Seaman and that he'll arrange the introduction.

That's how it started. Jack knew that I'd be interested in Richard not only because the fiddler was still playing old-time – rather than bluegrass – tunes from a Florida community but also because he was known for telling stories from Florida's tall tale tradition. I had read about house parties and fiddling of the early twentieth century, and I had read versions of traditional folktales collected from the Deep South and Florida. The opportunity to meet someone who has lived these experiences and was an active bearer of tradition was exciting. In the decade and a half that I knew Richard Seaman, I came to realise that if he had not existed, I couldn't have invited him as a stellar contributor to our public-sector folklore programming in Florida.

Staff folklorists, and our advisory board, understood and appreciated what Richard Seaman could contribute to the Bureau of Florida Folklife Programs' projects. We opened up stage time for him at the annual folk festival, and he also became a star performer in

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

the Folklife in Education Programs that I coordinated. Later on, he was honoured with the Florida Folk Heritage Award from the Florida Department of State for his contributions as a fiddle player and storyteller. Over the Memorial Day weekend of 1994, I was helping with the Florida Folk Festival, and I reserved time to hear Richard and Jack play at the Stephen Foster Memorial State Park. I had served as a fieldworker, program coordinator, festival presenter, cultural interpreter, and even as a back-up guitar player for projects that involved Richard and Jack. As I headed down the hill under the grove of oaks on the banks of the Suwannee River, I finally felt that I could play another role. I was now a member of the audience who could watch his performance. As I left the lens cap on my camera and realised that I did not have to worry about recording, stage managing, or placing microphones that afternoon, I was able to listen to the emcee's introduction, Richard's stage patter, and enjoy the whole performance. I realised how Richard Seaman had developed an engaging way of presenting himself on stage. My epiphany was that his self-presentation cast himself as an interpreter of his own tradition. Using cues that Jack and I had provided, as well as his own experience playing with his country band the South Land Trail Riders, Richard had developed his stage patter and stories to frame his performances as highly contextualised representations of a fiddle tradition that was vibrant in rural central Florida during the 1910s and 1920s. He had crafted a presentation of old-time tunes that created a performance of authenticity.



Figure 1 Richard Seaman at his home in Jacksonville, August 1998 *Photo by Gregory Hansen, courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.*

Folklorists who create festivals have noted the effects on artists who perform their music in new contexts. Joe Wilson and Lee Udall delineate a continuum of levels of awareness of folk artists who may be involved in staging traditional culture.² They write

that performing in a folk festival setting can be a novel experience for folk musicians, and that the experience of performing in events affects their awareness of themselves as traditional artists. Most performers negotiate an understanding of what their involvement represents in relation to the interests of the festival organisers and the expectations of the audience. In the cultural critique of public representations of folklife, writers ask that public folklorists consider how their mediation of culture may alter the participant's own sense of self in relation to the significance of the tradition that is showcased on stage.³ In Seaman's presentations, he used his accounts of memories, personal experience narratives, tall tales, and jokes to create a context for his tunes, seeking to create vivid images of rural life that would provide listeners with a sense of what it was like to hear the old-time fiddle tunes in their original context at a Florida frolic.

I had finished a master's degree in folklore before I took the job in Florida in 1987. When I returned to the academy seven years later, I discovered that many of the concepts that were so vital to public folklorists' sense of cultural representation had been critiqued, problematised, and were about to be deconstructed. It went further than the idea that 'folk' was an anachronistic term. The appeal of Richard's performance resonated with my ideas about old-time fiddling, revivalist, tradition, and representation. What seemed like abstract, but relatively stable concepts, however, suddenly became much more complex with the new scholarship I was to read. Although it's important to look at our assumptions when using academic constructs, I'm not comfortable with all of the consequences of the intense cultural critique of keywords in the study of expressive culture. Problematising terms, such as authenticity, tends to leave important ideas open to further critique and vulnerable to air quotes.

I now realise that blending elements of Seaman's own vernacular theory of folklore with the discourse of the academic theorist provides us with a more useful way to understand the significance of placing old-time tunes in new contexts. As expressed by Richard Seaman, his fiddle tunes – and their related cultural complex – shows that old-time fiddling is a dynamic form of music. The tunes are expressions of a system of creativity that allows musicians to blend older styles and techniques with contemporary artistic resources. The rich and vibrant quality of this system provides new ways to think about authenticity when crafting new performances of the older traditions of fiddling.

Richard's tunes and tales allowed him to create something new from something old. The idea of old-time now can be seen as a dynamic resource rather than a static repository of anachronistic lore. When Richard drew from his historical and cultural resources to craft an eloquent presentation of his music, he was using a system of creativity that allowed him to make new presentations in new setting in a way that was comfortable and natural to a skilled performer. His performances weren't highly contrived, restaged presentations that distorted the natural context of Florida fiddling. Rather, his performances in schools and folklife festivals can be seen as authentic representations of a vibrant tradition. Playing tunes and telling stories in front of an audience isn't an unusual or out-of-context activity. Rather, he developed his presentations by creatively drawing from a storehouse of artistic resources to craft a representation of his music that contemporary audiences could experience for themselves. The central challenge, as he understood it, was to present fiddle tunes in a

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

way that allowed his listeners to understand how they were integral to life in his home community of Kissimmee Park, ‘way back yonder’ around in the early 1900s. Whereas the listeners in his home community understood the context for the house parties because they experienced it and danced at the frolics, the audience at a folk festival almost 100 years later was composed primarily of residents of an urbanised Florida who had never attended square dances held in a neighbour’s home. His first neighbours understood the daily routine of living in a rural community. The audience at a folk festival needed a vivid understanding of why a Saturday night dance provided welcome relief from the hard work of farming and ranching.



Figure 2 Jack Piccalo and Richard Seaman performing at the Florida Folk Festival, White Springs, May 1993 *Photo by Peter Gallagher, courtesy of State Archives of Florida, Florida Memory.*

Creating an understanding of the music within its context became the central theme in Richard Seaman’s presentations. In his home community, he thought of himself mainly as a musician who brought the music to a frolic, noting that the term musician was used rather loosely to describe anyone who could ‘play but one tune’.⁴ In the new contexts of public folklore programmes, his sense of self expanded, and he came also to see himself as a historian. His task required him to play his tunes and tell his tales in front of an audience. But at the close of the twentieth century, he also recognised that his presentations had to be about the music – rather than simply performances of the music. His self-concept as a musician

changed as a result of his involvement in public folklore programs. He accomplished it elegantly by using an important component of the old-time fiddling tradition. Namely, he had an ample supply of ‘fiddle-lore’.⁵

Richard’s fiddle-lore was an integral element of his stage performances. He used tall tales, personal experience narratives, folk beliefs, and traditional concepts about fiddling to contextualise his tunes. To initiate his performances, he would pick up on the contextual clues offered by many emcees by explaining where he was from and how he learned the tunes in rural Osceola County. At his performance on the amphitheatre stage of the Florida Folk Festival, he explained,

We’re going to try to play a few old-time fiddle tunes that was popular way back in the first of the century. Maybe some of you’ve heard them and some of them you haven’t. But the old fiddle tunes was played many years ago in our part of the country, where we would go to a square dance and get out there and dance all night long.⁶

The tradition of dancing and holding house parties, here, constitute the relevant fiddle-lore that provides a context for his music tradition. A major element of his fiddle-lore included more than thirty tall tales that he used in performance. He learned the stories within the state’s oral tradition, and most of the stories spun around humorous, even surreal exaggerations, of the commonplace knowledge of farming, gardening, hunting, and fishing. He used the stories to ‘paint a picture [in the] mind of what it used to be like in 1910 and ’12, way back yonder’.⁷ Frequently, he would blur the line between history and fantasy when illustrating these tableaux:

I started my playing down below Kissimmee, many years ago. And, of course, there’s nothing spectacular to be raised on a farm. We had something to eat, and we had a lot of freedom. And on the farm, my sister had a place down there that was the richest place in the state of Florida. We had to plant corn on the run. The soil was so rich that that kernel of corn would sprout and run up your britches leg before you’d get out of there.⁸

Understanding why terms like ‘old-time fiddling’, ‘revivalist’, ‘tradition’, and ‘representation’ are useful for understanding his fiddling became more complicated the more I worked with Richard Seaman. One major challenge was to understand, and perhaps reconceptualise, why ‘authenticity’ is relevant for understanding his fiddling. The term has been problematised from a number of angles. Deconstructionists noted its contrived and socially constructed nature early on, and they critiqued how the term can be a seemingly arbitrary marker of cultural expression.⁹ Other writers followed suit. They explored the highly value-laden elements inherent in the idea of authenticity, critiquing how it has been used to privilege one form of cultural expression over another, exclude some artists from serious scholarly consideration, assert a romanticised view of history, and even foment jingoist ideologies.¹⁰ When scholars deconstruct the term only to discard it, however, they obscure important ideas that come into play when we consider why the term is important within communities. I’m not comfortable with erasing the distinction between the authentic and the fake.¹¹ If we

examine Richard Seaman's fiddling in relation to three related spheres, authenticity becomes a useful construct. What's at stake when we describe his tunes and tales as authentic? Is his performance of old-time tunes in new contexts authentic? How does his own engagement with music connect to authenticity on a personal level?

When discussing authenticity, it's important to begin with a somewhat obvious assertion. Namely, 'authentic' is an adjective. In the abstract theorising that comes from making generalisations, it's too easy to forget that discourse about 'the authentic' needs to be connected to specific aspects of cultural expression. The big question is what's at stake when we consider authenticity in relation to Richard Seaman's old-time fiddling. We know that 'old-time' is a highly contrived term that comes from unique historical circumstances. Fiddlers wouldn't have labelled their music 'old-time' until the early part of the twentieth century because the term was invented primarily as a marketing device. Over the century, however, the term has acquired a depth of meaning. The term has been adopted by fiddlers such as Richard. It's contrived, but so are all definitions. Terms acquire meaning and become part of a lexicon when they acquire rich symbolic resonance within a speech community. Authenticity matters in old-time fiddling because it describes important components of a tradition's significance.

In *The Spirit of Folk Art*, Henry Glassie writes that questions about discussions of authenticity in folklore should include consideration of two related aspects. Authenticity includes ways that an individual form of artistic expression connects to wider patterns of tradition that have continuity over time.¹² These criteria are the ideas crystallised in Dan Ben-Amos's seven strands of tradition,¹³ and it's clear that Richard's tunes and tales are consistent with forms of folk expression rooted specifically in Florida's history and diffused across North America largely from European influences and sources. In the most conservative formulations, his tunes are authentic traditions.¹⁴ Glassie's discussion of authenticity in folklore also follows the folkloristic interest in social and cultural patterns. Authenticity connects an individual's tradition to particular cultural styles of creativity. Although there are individual aesthetic criteria within any fiddling tradition, Richard's style is characteristic of a distinctive old-time style. His predominant use of short-bow, heavily rhythmic shuffles, strong use of double-stops, and a range of techniques are all elements of vital musical tradition. The old-time tradition centres around the hoedowns played for squared dances, and fiddlers sharing his style would also recognise his waltzes as old-time.

The critiques of authenticity, however, become more useful when we consider authenticity in relation to the social contexts for the music. Is playing at festivals and public folklore events an authentic context for old-time fiddling? Curiously, some of the writers who have critiqued the contrivances inherent in the idea of 'authentic tradition' have also remarked on the contrived nature of folklife programming that stages tradition to a wider public.¹⁵ Although the social context of a house party is different from the ambiance that surrounds a folk festival stage, it's equally problematic to privilege one sphere as a 'natural context' and the other as 'artificial' without considering the venue in relation to a deeper understanding of the art form that is spotlighted on a stage. Old-time fiddling is a good case in point. Chris Goertzen in his comprehensive study of fiddle contests clearly demonstrates that house parties are not the only contexts for old-time fiddling. Fiddle contests are not recent

inventions, and Goertzen notes that the early context for fiddling also included contests and exhibitions.¹⁶ The history of American fiddle contests stretches to at least the 1736 competition held in Hanover County, Virginia, and old-time fiddling includes much more than simply playing dance music.¹⁷ Richard recalls attending and performing at contests throughout his career, and he even competed in the Florida State Fiddlers' Contest at the Florida Folk Festival when he was in his 90s. Richard's performances at folk festivals can be seen as authentic representations of a tradition not only because he played traditional tunes at these events, but also because he derived his techniques for self-presentation from an array of traditional resources that comprise the storehouse of techniques used by fiddlers in similar events. His telling of tall tales, for example, is complicit with an older tradition of featuring a liar's contest along with a fiddling competition.¹⁸

There is value to interrogating ideas about authenticity. The idea of a pure stream of oral/aural tradition is problematic.¹⁹ The old-time tunes in any fiddler's repertoire do not spring forth from a communal wellspring of tradition as many old-time tunes have their origins in sheet music, minstrel shows and Vaudeville, and in formal musical composition. As scholarship on revivalism has demonstrated, the introduction of new media doesn't pollute a tradition, and most fiddlers continue to learn new tunes from recordings.²⁰

The mediation between individual musical expression and audience expectations brings us to one final element of authenticity. Authenticity also is resonant with deeply personal ideas about creative expression. The highly subjective qualities of authenticity in this realm resist generalisation. Highly skilled revivalists can master old-time string band music, and their virtuoso playing will be recognised by the old masters, in turn, as authentic.²¹ All fiddlers work to bridge their own individual aesthetic with the wider community aesthetics within which they learn their instruments. For Richard Seaman, a good fiddler in his home community was one who satisfied his own creativity aspirations by learning enough tunes to be recognised as a musician.²² Fiddling is authentic if it displays the aesthetic values that satisfy the fiddler's own tastes and meet the needs and expectations of dancers.²³ Developing his own sense of musicality in relation to wider aesthetic values within the community, Richard internalised his own sense of connecting authenticity with musical skill.

Decades after we first met, I was driving through Jacksonville a few years after he had died just one month short of his 98th birthday. I drove past his modest home in the Murray Hill section of Avondale. Reflecting on the stories he told about house parties and the jam sessions he held in his home, I began to connect Jack Piccalo's views about Richard's music history to my own involvement in his story. Richard, Jack, and I all divided this history into two main eras. The first was the old-time context that Richard referenced by talking about the dances held 'back home'. In Richard's imagery, the music was rooted in community life. The dances were held once or twice a month, and neighbours understood the frolics through direct experience and involvement. I recalled how the rich stories of his first-hand accounts of the house parties vividly brought to life what I had only read about in books and articles. This era contrasted with the big change in his life, which Richard characterised as 'after moving to Jacksonville'. During the eight decades that he lived in the city, it grew from less than 30,000 people into a sprawling metropolis. By the twenty-first

century, old-time frolics had faded away, even in people's memories, and house parties had been transformed into a few bluegrass jam sessions. The music was now much more rooted in mass media, and most Floridians connected fiddling to snippets of pop songs such as 'The Devil Went Down to Georgia'. In the New World, music was always available at the touch of the dial, as Richard reminded me, and it was far different from the community where music was literally home-made. I understood why Richard used his music, his stories, and his recollections to explain his own experiences to the new generation. I drove past the house, slowed down but didn't stop, and began to understand how his own ideas of authenticity could connect music experiences in both of the eras he experienced.

Notes

- ¹ Gregory Hansen, *A Florida Fiddler: The Life and Times of Richard Seaman* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2007), p. 150.
- ² Joe Wilson and Lee Udall, *Folk Festivals: A Handbook for Organisation and Management* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), pp. 20–22.
- ³ Richard Bauman, *Story, Performance, and Event: Contextual Studies of Oral Narrative*, Cambridge Studies in Oral and Literate Culture, vol. 10 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 106; Richard Bauman, Inta Carpenter, and Patricia Sawin, *Reflections on the Folklife Festival: An Ethnography of Participant Experience* (Bloomington: Indiana University, Folklore Institute, 1992); Richard Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture of Quebec* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988); Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 216.
- ⁴ Hansen, p. 26.
- ⁵ Louie W. Atteberry, 'The Fiddle Tune: An American Artifact', in *Readings in American Folklore*, ed. by Jan Harold Brunvand (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), pp. 324–333.
- ⁶ Hansen, p. 183.
- ⁷ Hansen, p. 189.
- ⁸ Hansen, p. 11.
- ⁹ Handler, 1988.
- ¹⁰ Abrahams, Roger, 'Powerful Promises of Regeneration or Living Well with History', in *Conserving Culture: A New Discourse on Heritage*, ed. by Mary Hufford (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press [A Publication of the American Folklore Society], 1994), p. 81; Regina Bendix, *In Search of Authenticity: The Formation of Folklore Studies* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997).
- ¹¹ Bendix, 1997.
- ¹² Henry Glassie, *The Spirit of Folk Art: The Girard Collection at the Museum of International Folk Art* (New York: Harry N. Abrams [for the Museum of International Folk Art, Santa Fe], 1989), p. 31.
- ¹³ Dan Ben-Amos, 'The Seven Strands of Tradition: Varieties in Its Meaning in American Folklore Studies', *Journal of Folklore Research*, 21, no. 2/3, (1984), 97–131.
- ¹⁴ Gregory Hansen, 'The Relevance of "Authentic Tradition" in Studying an Oldtime Fiddler from Florida', *Southern Folklore*, 53, no. 2 (1996), 67–89.
- ¹⁵ Bauman, 1986, p. 78; Handler, 1988; Richard Price and Sally Price, *On the Mall: Presenting Maroon Tradition-Bearers at the 1992 Festival of American Folklife* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).

HANSEN *Performing authenticity in old-time fiddling*

¹⁶ Chris Goertzen, *Southern Fiddlers and Fiddle Contests*, American Made Music Series (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2008), p. 7.

¹⁷ Bill C. Malone and David Stricklin, *Southern Music/American Music*, revd edn (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2003), p. 11.

¹⁸ Goertzen, p. 27.

¹⁹ Abrahams, p. 78.

²⁰ Neil Rosenberg, ed., *Transforming Tradition: Folk Music Revivals Examined* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

²¹ Alan Jabbour, 'Fiddle Tunes of the Old Frontier', in *Driving the Bow: Fiddle and Dance Studies From Around the North Atlantic 2*, ed. by Ian Russell and Mary Anne Alburger (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, 2008), p. 7.

²² Hansen, p. 163.

²³ The idea of authenticity as a mode of performance is connected to Dell Hymes's configuration of 'tradition' as a way of performing. His essay 'Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth' provides this important configuration of a strand of tradition. See Dell Hymes, 'Folklore's Nature and the Sun's Myth', *Journal of American Folklore*, 88, no. 350 (1975), 345–369.

More than buzzing bluebottles: new contexts for céilí bands in Ireland

DAITHÍ KEARNEY

Though Irish traditional music is often referred to as a solo tradition, throughout the twentieth century various forms of ensemble playing emerged and developed. Affected by changing social contexts, audience preferences and even government legislation, the céilí band has become one of the most recognisable ensemble styles in Irish traditional music. Usually comprising of various melodic permutations of accordion, fiddle, flute, uilleann pipes, concertina and banjo, the sound is defined by the performance of these in unison with rhythmic and harmonic accompaniment on piano and drums.

Since its development in the twentieth century, the form and sound of the céilí band has arguably altered little but the contexts for performance, attitudes to and perceptions of céilí bands have changed greatly. An important factor in the study of céilí bands today is the development of an understanding as to how and why céilí bands are formed and how this has changed over time, giving particular consideration in this paper to the role of competition. The study of céilí bands may be related to other aspects of the study of Irish traditional music including changes in the processes of transmission, the connection to place and perceived revivals in Irish traditional music.

In developing studies of céilí bands I returned to a critique of céilí bands by Seán Ó Riada, one of the most influential figures in Irish traditional music, whose words inspire the title of this paper.¹ Ó Riada's critique is countered by Barry Taylor's work on the history of céilí bands in Ireland and abroad, though with a particular focus on County Clare.² I also returned to many of the articles published following the Crossroads Conference in 1996³ where, despite the breadth of papers covered, none focused on céilí bands. The 2011 television series *Stair na mBannaí Céilí* did examine both historical and contemporary contexts but in a manner and structure of a television documentary, highlighting the need for further examination.⁴ Aspects of the development of Irish traditional music explored by Sommers-Smith are also useful paradigms for this study.⁵

This paper considers céilí bands in the present, specifically those which have won the All Ireland céilí band competition held at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann (referred to widely as 'the Fleadh') in the years: 2007 (the Allow Céilí Band, County Cork); 2008 (the Innisfree,

County Sligo); 2009 (the Dartry, County Sligo); 2010 (the Teampall An Ghleanntáin, County Limerick); 2011 (the Shannonvale, County Kerry). It is important to state that these competitions do not provide space for dancers and the bands instead perform for a listening audience.

Spaces and contexts

Contexts and spaces for performance are central to understanding the emergence and development of céilí bands. Associated with the development of dance halls and the need to create a bigger sound for larger spaces and audiences, the popularity of the performance style was arguably affected by the developing popularity of the pub 'session' (performers playing together, casually, primarily for their own satisfaction) in the middle of the twentieth century. In the same period that sessions became the main performance occasion for Irish traditional music, competitions administered by Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann (CCÉ) stimulated a new band-performance context which also did not have to be associated with dancing. Céilí bands are considered by some as the epitome of the connection between Irish traditional music and dance, yet many céilí bands do not perform for dancing but rather are formed and exist solely for the purposes of competition. Competitions create standards, boundaries and limitations on the sound, structure and presentation of a band that can further remove it from the dance orientated context in which the genre developed. Many of the bands which provide music for the céilí dance scene are not well known outside of that scene and do not take part in competition.⁶

The set dance revival also provided opportunities for céilí bands to perform, particularly at large céilís at festivals including The Gathering and Scoil Samhradh Willie Clancy⁷ (SSWC). The revival of interest in set dancing may also be linked to competition, specifically the Gaelic Athletic Association's (GAA)⁸ Scór competition from 1971 on, and CCÉ dance competitions introduced in 1978.⁹ According to Meehan:

The criteria for competition dancing also has an effect on set dancing practice. The smooth relaxed country dancers could not compete with the precision of the competition style. In order to compete, dancers often changed the way they danced and in some instances, they changed their set.¹⁰

Meehan also notes the initiation of set dancing classes by Joe O'Donovan at SSWC in 1982 and the subsequent role of set dance collectors who bring rural traditions to the cities.¹¹ Changes in dance are reflected in the changes in the music. As well as changes in sound (or not, as the case may be), the relationship of a band to a local place, region, community or CCÉ branch has also changed, based on networks of mobility and changing contexts for session playing, moulded in part by economic motivation. Irish traditional musicians are more likely now to play with musicians beyond their locality, yet the bands discussed in this paper indicate a close network of musicians, including a number of siblings, many of whom have learned together growing up not only in a local context but at various summer schools including SSWC and Scoil Éigse.

The decision to select groups based on success at the Fleadh for the purposes of this paper does not seek to exclude the various other céilí bands which perform for dancing.

Rather, I focus on the Fleadh as a forum for assessing standards and merit, as it constructs a narrow set of parameters that impact more widely upon attitudes, aesthetics and opportunities in Irish traditional music. It also focuses specifically on the non-dancing aspect céilí bands.

Competition and selection

Since attitudes to competitions and CCÉ vary widely, consideration is required of the role of the Fleadh in Irish traditional music and the impact of competition on the aesthetics of Irish traditional music performance. Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann is the single biggest event organised by CCÉ, and is the pinnacle of its annual network of forty-five smaller, regional fleadh (*fleadhanna cheoil*) organised in Ireland, Britain, USA, Canada, and Australia. A festival of music, it is a competitive forum for young musicians involving ‘up to 7,000 qualifiers who have emerged from over 25,000 competitors at County and Provincial level’.¹² The early fleadhanna were, in the minds of some, critical to the survival of Irish traditional music, but the introduction of a competitive element to traditional music by CCÉ was not without debate; this element places certain pressures of requirement and conformity upon competitors, who are required to present a particular set of tunes in a manner that conforms to the (prescribed) expectation of the adjudicators, reflected in the papers in this volume by Goertzen, who examines the impact of competitions on American fiddle playing,¹³ and by Nixon, who also notes the effect of the *fèis* movement on fiddle styles in Scotland.¹⁴ In relation to céilí bands, competitions also led to the development of new céilí bands that challenged the pre-eminence of bands such as the Kilfenora and Tulla, while simultaneously adding to the reputations of those bands. The importance of place in Irish traditional music is, in my opinion, an important aspect of the discourse on the tradition. Taylor notes how the *fleadhanna cheoil* instilled a sense of pride and created:

A feeling of camaraderie among musicians who met to compete at these gatherings throughout the country. They met and competed not only as individuals, but céilí bands sprang up throughout the country to cater for the reawakening demand for the music. These new groups challenged established céilí bands ...¹⁵

The céilí band results from the Fleadh can indicate trends in the tastes of competitors, adjudicators and audiences (see the table in Figure 1). Particular tunes, styles and approaches to playing go through cycles of popularity and though the results may sometimes generate debate, it is interesting to consider the results of the past eight years of the céilí band competition. Many of the bands examined in this paper have a track record of competing and have been awarded third or second place before winning the ultimate prize.

The competition usually takes place on the final Sunday night as the Fleadh’s concluding competition. It invariably takes place in the biggest available venue, often a temporary structure; demand for these is very high and the venue is invariably full to capacity. The bands must perform in a preselected order – there is a belief amongst many that performing towards the end of the competition holds an advantage.

According to *Fleadh Rules*, a Céilí Band shall consist of not less than five and not more than ten members. Senior bands are required to perform two reels in succession, two jigs in succession and a maximum of two tunes played in succession from each of two other

classes chosen from: air (slow or lively), reel, polka, hornpipe, march, jig (double, single, slip), slide, set dance, mazurka, planxty, fling, barn dance, schottische, and clan march. Despite this list, most bands perform a march and hornpipe in competition. Bands wear particular uniforms, typically a black trousers or skirt, shirt or blouse, waistcoat and necktie, cravat or scarf. A piano is provided, but each band uses its own drum-kit. Most bands sit in two rows with fiddles and flutes, and perhaps banjo, to the front, with reed instruments such as accordion, concertina or uilleann pipes behind; the drums are usually located at the back with the piano to one side. Drums and piano indicate the start and finish of sets of tunes, but otherwise the performance is unison. Tune choices are considered important, as are the variations that each band uses. A scoring system has been developed in recent years to create a sense of transparency about the adjudication system and limit the influence of individuals. Rule 34(i) states:

In Senior Céilí Band Competitions at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann a minimum of four adjudicators will officiate. Seated apart, they shall mark their adjudication sheet separately and the results will be calculated in the recognised points system: 11. 7. 5. 4. 3. 2. 1. These results will be displayed in the venue.¹⁶

By sitting separately, the adjudicators may not influence each other but they may be influenced by the nature of the audience responses. Anecdotal evidence suggests that audience reaction has become more pronounced in recent years and is viewed as viable in influencing the judging. Bands are expected to come from specific counties,¹⁷ and in relation to such 'residency', Rule 17 states:

Competitions shall be confined to: Residents of the County or Region in which the Fleadh is being held. In the case of Céilí Bands, Marching Bands and Grúpaí Ceoil, it is recommended as far as possible, that these also be residents of the County or Region. Competitors shall be deemed to be residents of the County or Region only if ordinarily resident in that County/Region for a period of not less than the previous six months prior to the date of the qualifying Fleadh.¹⁸

Thus, many of the musicians in the bands being studied do indeed tend to come from a relatively narrow geographical area, though this may not always be the case.

Céilí bands

1. The Allow Céilí Band

The County Cork *Allow Céilí Band* was the first from its county to win the Fleadh competition at Tullamore in 2007. The band, named after the Allow (pronounced 'ah-low') river which flows through Freemount in north Cork, was formed in 2003, but some of its members had played together earlier in Junior (up to age 18) groups. The Allow has a 'local' feel in that among its ten members in Tullamore were three sisters (Maeve, Eimear and Clodagh Buckley on fiddle, concertina and piano respectively). With them were Geraldine O'Callaghan and Áine O'Connell on fiddles, Adrian McAuliffe on banjo, John Carroll on the button accordion, Gerry Noonan, and William Pierce on flutes, and Pat Mulcahy on drums.

Figure 1 Results of the Senior Céilí Band Competition at Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, 2004–2011

Year/Place	2004	2005	2006	2007
1 st	Naomh Padhraic CCÉ, Trim, Co. Meath	Naomh Pádraig, Co. Meath	Naomh Pádraig, Co. Meath	Allow Céilí Band, Co. Cork
2 nd	Turloughmore Céilí Band, Co. Clare	Turloughmore Céilí Band, Co. Clare	Allow Céilí Band, Co. Cork	Innisfree Céilí Band, Co. Sligo
3 rd	Innisfree Céilí Band, Co. Sligo	Allow Céilí Band, Co. Cork	Innisfree Céilí Band, Co. Sligo	The Tribes Céilí Band, Co. Galway
Year/Place	2008	2009	2010	2011
1 st	Innisfree Céilí Band, Co. Sligo	Dartry Céilí Band, Co. Sligo	Teampail an Ghleannntáin, Co. Limerick	Shannonvale Céilí Band, Co. Kerry
2 nd	Dartry Céilí Band, Co. Sligo	Shannon Vale Céilí Band, Co. Kerry	Ceoltoirí na Mainistreach, Co. Clare	Awbeg Céilí Band, Co. Cork
3 rd	Ceoltoirí na Mainistreach, Co. Clare	Triogue Céilí Band, Co. Laois	Triogue Céilí Band, Co. Laois	Triogue Céilí Band, Co. Laois

Most of the band learned their music in Freemount, notably from one man, Con Herbert, who was considered by all as the band leader. Part of the success of the Allow has been attributed to their willingness to play for céilís, which requires them to respond the needs of dancers. The different aesthetics required to play for active dancers as opposed to passive listeners, highlighted by changes in the 1960s associated primarily with Seán Ó Riada, shape the sound of the band. Another aspect of the Allow's sound is its inclusion of polkas, slides and repertoire from the Sliabh Luachra region. This emphasises the local spirit of the band, as they continued for a time to perform for céilís in North Cork.

2. *The Innisfree Céilí Band*

Winners in 2008, this band represented the Fred Finn branch of CCÉ in Sligo. They were the first band from North Connacht to win the Fleadh competition; their name evokes literary images of Sligo (from the poetry of William Butler Yeats). Band leader Oisín MacDiarmada is from the generation of the band's members and an integral performer. Their sound is shaped by the regional preference of North Connacht, a repertoire of mostly jigs and reels played on flutes and fiddles; the band also has piano, drums, and button accordion. The Innisfree has its own website and plays for both céilís and concerts; it released the album *Music of North Connacht* following the 2008 win.¹⁹ As with the Allow, kinship networks are important. Three are members of the MacDiarmada family: fiddle-players Cormac and Oisín and flute player Máire. The others are from Leitrim (Damian O'Brien, David Sheridan, and Oliver Loughlin), Roscommon (Finbar McGreevy), Sligo (Damien Stenson, Charles O'Connor, and Daragh Kelly) and Laois (accordion player Paul Finn); the latter, along with Stenson and Oisín MacDiarmada, is also a member of the group Téada. While the membership extends into surrounding counties, it nevertheless reflects the wider understanding of 'North Connacht' beyond the South Sligo heartland, which is typically associated with renowned early-1900s fiddler Michael Coleman.

3. *The Dartry Céilí Band*

Another Sligo ensemble, this band won in 2009. Formed in 2007, landscape inspires the name – the Dartry Mountains of North Sligo; members are also drawn from neighbouring counties Mayo and Roscommon, and family networks are important too: Noelle Carroll (flute), her brother Seán (accordion), Michael Rooney (harp, from County Monaghan originally), his wife June McCormack (flute, from Ballintogher, County Sligo), Sligo musicians Kevin Brehony (piano), Philip Duffy (fiddle), Declan Folan (drums), and Cian Kerins (flute); Mayo fiddle player John Kilkenny and Roscommon fiddle player Mossie Martin. Like the Innisfree, the Dartry followed their Fleadh success with the release of an album *The Killavil Post*.

4. *The Templeglantine Céilí Band*

This is based in the County Limerick Templeglantine branch of CCÉ which was founded in 1971. The band reflects the coming together of a rural community. Band members are Eibhlín Healy, Patricia Wright, and Bríd Ní Mhurchú (fiddles), Siobhán Ní Chonaráin and Jackie Healy (flutes), Willie Larkin (accordion), John Larkin (banjo), Mairéad Corrigan (concertina), Aileen Dillane (piano), and Pat Buckley (drums). There is a mix of generations,

and the success of the band results from a high standard of teaching in the past fifteen years. The repertoire is distinctive for including slides, part of their West Limerick regional identity. Many of the band are involved in teaching music locally, as well as performing in local seasonal shows.²⁰ Piano player Aileen Dillane is a lecturer in Ethnomusicology at University of Limerick.

5. The Shannon Vale Céilí Band

This was started by Ballyduff, County Kerry accordion player Danny O'Mahony in 2009, its name taken from an earlier Shannon Vale band formed in the same area by fiddle-player Mick Sweeney in 1959. The band today has Sheila Garry, Colm Kissane, and Geraldine O'Callaghan (fiddles), Marianne Browne and Joe O'Sullivan (flutes), Alan Egan (concertina), Danny O'Mahony (accordion), Patsy Broderick (piano), and brothers Michael and John Collins (banjo and drums). Though a relatively new band, like the others there is a breadth and depth of experience: O'Mahony and Egan are former All-Ireland champions, O'Sullivan is from a well-known Sliabh Luachra music family in Gneeveguilla, and Broderick has played and recorded with a number of groups including Galway-based band Arcady. Garry previously played with the Kilfenora while O'Callaghan was a member of the winning 2007 Allow Céilí Band and played in nine consecutive All-Ireland competitions. Nominally from North Kerry, the band draws on its County Clare and Sliabh Luachra hinterlands.

Geographical contexts for céilí bands

The Fleadh is just one context for céilí bands, but other social, music, and geographical factors shape them too. Some of the bands highlighted here have members who grew up playing together; in some instances, this is very obvious, with members drawn from a small geographical area and of a similar age. But most bands also include musicians from farther away, this a result of friendship and even marriage. The inclusion of musicians from beyond the immediate geographical area with which the band is associated is neither remarkable nor new, for the best-known céilí bands of the twentieth century were similar. Bands such as the Tulla and Kilfenora helped develop the association of céilí bands and place – in their case County Clare. It is interesting to note that despite the strong sense of tradition associated with North Connacht and Sligo in particular, the Innisfree and Dartry were the first bands from North Connacht to win the All-Ireland title, possibly signifying a different sense of tradition associated with céilí bands. In Munster, the Allow were the first céilí band from County Cork, Templeglantine the first from County Limerick and the Shannon Vale only the second from County Kerry to win the title. All four of these bands have been associated to varying degrees with the regional traditions of Sliabh Luachra that is inextricably linked with set dancing. The recent success of these bands contrasts with the thirteen titles secured by Clare bands to date while lesser known regions such as County Louth can lay claim to eight titles secured by the Siamsa (1967–1969; 1989–1990) and Táin (1998–2000) Céilí Bands, both of whom recorded the prestigious honour of winning three titles in a row.

While céilí bands were developed to play all night for dancers in large halls, the competition at the Fleadh is different. But the bands may play a repertoire which has relevance to their locales. Such is the case with the Templeglantine which plays slides or polkas in

competition as a reflection of their regional repertoires and identities and the demands of dancers at local céilís. Amongst bands of previous generations, performances in England and America were not uncommon and are amongst the first examples of semi-professional touring by groups in Irish traditional music. Following success at the Fleadh, bands have gone on to perform, facilitate workshops, and adjudicate at Fleadhanna in America, elevating the status of the musicians who are part of the bands. Today opportunities for céilí bands to tour extend to more exotic locations also with events being held in places as diverse as Dubai and Ibiza, although the audiences remain primarily Irish.

Whereas many of the performance opportunities for céilí bands relate to events involving dancing, the genre has developed a strong appeal amongst listening audiences, epitomised by the non-dancing context of the Fleadh competitions. Many céilí bands have recorded, and it is quite common for bands which win the All-Ireland to record a follow-up CD – such as *The Bridge* in 1999, *The Táin* in 2000, and *The Ennis* in 2003. The range of céilí band CDs emphasises that there is a taste and a market for them as a listening genre.

Members profiles: attracting an audience

The profiles of many of the All Ireland-winning band members as recording artists and semi-professional musicians in their own right contrasts with the amateur community status normally associated with CCÉ and the Fleadh. The Allow's banjo player Adrian McAuliffe, for instance, has an album that also features Templeglantine pianist Aileen Dillane.²¹ A number of members of the Innisfree have successful recordings, notably Oisín MacDiarmada and other members of his professional band *Téada*²² – Damien Stenson and Paul Finn – and flute player Dave Sheridan.²³ Michael Rooney and June McCormack from the Dartry have successful profiles and albums,²⁴ the Shannon Vale's Danny O'Mahony has a solo album,²⁵ while the band's Patsy Broderick recorded with the Galway based group Arcady. The involvement of musicians such as these who have developed a professional profile as artists in céilí bands is a positive reflection on the bands and the competitions.

Conclusion

While the sound and styles of presentation created by the bands considered here differ, the contexts in which they developed are somewhat similar. Many successful bands, though judged in a context that does not allow for dancing, do also perform for céilís outside of competition, and so develop their sound, repertoire and style in conjunction with dance. Despite the apparent disconnect from place, there remains a celebration of local place – in that bands are named after towns, parishes, and landscape features; kinship and local networks – though notably wider than in previous generations – remain important. Figureheads or band leaders are integral to the development and profile of bands. While the Kilfenora honours past figures such as John Lynch and Kitty Linnane, and the Tulla remembers Paddy Canny and P. J. Hayes, today's bands look to new faces.

The continuing presence of céilí bands in the soundscape of Irish traditional music highlights the existence of an audience which wants to listen – as well as dance. The participation of high-profile musicians in such bands signifies a prestige attached to this form of music-making. The continuing relevance of place and the concept of representing a

parish or region adds to the layers of meanings that define these ensembles in contemporary society. The céilí band sound is still distinctive, and is still sought after, but there are multiple motives driving this collective-music-making today that go well beyond traditional ideas

Notes

¹ Seán Ó Riada presented a radio series entitled *Our Musical Heritage* on Irish National radio, Radio Éireann, 7th July to 13th October, 1962. This was published as a book in 1982. See Seán Ó Riada, *Our Musical Heritage*, ed. by Thomas Kinsella and Tomás Ó Canainn (Mountrath, Portlaoise, Ireland: The Dolmen Press, 1982).

² Barry Taylor, 'A Problem for the Public – Seán Ó Riada and Irish Traditional Music', in *Essays in Honour of Tom Munnely* (Miltown Malbay: The Old Kilfarboy Society, 2007), pp. 331–360.

³ A conference series begun in 1996 (discussing *Tradition and Innovation*), and continued in 2003 (*Traditional Music and Education*); both events have published papers; see Fintan Vallely, Hammy Hamilton, Eithne Vallely, Liz Doherty, eds, *Crosbhealach an Cheoil – The Crossroads Conference 1996* (Dublin: Whinstone, 1999); Fintan Vallely, Liz Doherty, Therese Smith, Paul McGettrick, Eithne Vallely, Desi Wilkinson, Colette Moloney, eds, *Crosbhealach an Cheoil – The Crossroads Conference 2003* (Dublin: Whinstone, 2012).

⁴ *Stair na mBannaí Céilí* tracked the fortunes of two bands in competition, Ceoltóirí na Mainstreach from Co. Clare and The Knockmore Céilí Band from Co. Fermanagh (Sonas Productions, 2011).

⁵ Sally K. Sommers Smith, 'Traditional Music / Ceol Traidisiúnta: Irish Traditional Music in a Modern World', *New Hibernia Review / Iris Éireannach Nua*, 5, no. 2. (2001), 111–125.

⁶ Bill Lynch, 'Set Dancing', *Dance Notes*, Issue 3 (2012), <http://www.danceresearchforumireland.org/Wordpress/publications/dance-notes/> [accessed 20 June 2012], pp. 5–7.

⁷ The longest-running summer school of traditional music in Ireland, it is independent of CCÉ; see Muiris Ó Rócháin, 'Willie Clancy Summer School', in *Companion to Irish Traditional Music [CITM]*, 2nd edn, ed. by Fintan Vallely (Cork: Cork University Press, 2011), pp. 754–756.

⁸ The largest sporting organisation in Ireland, it runs Gaelic games (football, hurling and hand-ball) and many of its c. 2,500 clubs are involved also in set dancing; see CITM 2011, p. 291.

⁹ Larry Lynch, *Set Dancing in Ireland: History and Evolution* (Miltown Malbay, Co. Clare: Séadna Publications in association with *Dal gCais*, 1989), p. 3.

¹⁰ <http://www.odonovandance.com/history.htm> [accessed 20 June 2012].

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann [CCÉ], *An Ród Seo Romhainn / Development Programme for the Irish Traditional Arts* (2001), http://comhaltas.ie/images/press_room/DevelopmentProgramme_1.pdf, p. 11.

¹³ Chris Goertzen, 'Balancing Local and National Approaches at American Fiddle Contests', *American Music*, 14, no. 3 (1996), 352–381; Chris Goertzen, 'The Transformation of American Contest Fiddling', *Journal of Musicology*, 6, no. 1 (1988), 107–129.

¹⁴ Emma Nixon, 'The Transmission of Style in Scottish Fiddling', in *Routes and Roots: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 4*, ed. by Ian Russell and Chris Goertzen (Aberdeen: The Elphinstone Institute, 2012), pp. 112–120.

¹⁵ Taylor, p. 355.

¹⁶ CCÉ, 'Rialacha Fleadhanna Ceoil 2010' (2010), http://leinsterfleadh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/Rialacha_Fleadhanna_Ceoil_Web_2010.pdf [accessed June 2015].

KEARNEY *New contexts for céilí bands in Ireland*

- ¹⁷ Daithí Kearney, 'Changing Contexts for Céilí Bands in Ireland', unpublished paper presented at the British Forum for Ethnomusicology Annual Conference (Durham University, 30 March 2012).
- ¹⁸ CCÉ (2010) [accessed 20 June 2012].
- ¹⁹ Innisfree Céilí Band, *Music of North Connacht*, Claddagh Records, CPCD001, 2008.
- ²⁰ CCÉ (2001).
- ²¹ Adrian McAuliffe and Cathal Flood, *Between the Strings*, Own Label, AMCF01, 2011.
- ²² Téada, *Ceol & Cuimhne (Music & Memory)*, Gael Linn/Compass Records, CEFCD195, 2010.
- ²³ Dave Sheridan, *Sheridan's Guesthouse*, Own Label, SHERCD01, 2006.
- ²⁴ Michael Rooney and June McCormack, *Draoicht*, Own Label, Doorla003, 2006; *Land's End*, Own Label, DOORLA004, 2004.
- ²⁵ Danny O'Mahony, *In Retrospect*, Own Label, DOMCD001, 2011.

Traditional style: the student singer and the folk industry

SANDRA KERR

For Brendan Breathnach, traditional Irish music was ‘essentially the art of solo performance – a gift – to which the musician or singer devotes an apprenticeship of learning’.¹ The term ‘apprenticeship’ is apt. It implies working closely with those who are older and more experienced, understanding the tools of the trade and making and using them in accordance with your craft. Tony Mac Mahon, in his presentation to the Crossroads Conference in Dublin in 1996, making reference to Breathnach’s definition, added, ‘it involves the search for the local footprints of those who have gone before, and it involves a care of not trampling on them when found’.² That search for ‘local footprints’ takes us on a path of exploration of the elements that gave the work of great singers of the past – such as Joe Heaney, Elizabeth Cronin, Jeannie Robertson, Belle Stewart, Harry Cox, or Sam Lerner – the stamp of ‘authenticity’ and ‘integrity’, elements which are, of course, sometimes hard to define. Why, for instance would we apply the term ‘traditional’ to the singing of two such startlingly different performances as, say, Bess Cronin of County Cork singing ‘Seoithín Seó’ (see Figure 1), and Sam Lerner with his ‘Butter and Cheese and All’?

Yet, traditional they both undoubtedly are, the authenticity rooted perhaps in the functionality of the pieces: ‘Seoithín Seó’ is a lullaby, clearly, from the soothing text and melismatic quality of the melody, and the intimacy of the singing, and Sam’s song is a piece designed to promote great belly laughs at the discomfiture of the young lover, hidden up a chimney, with the fire lighted below melting his ‘butter and cheese, and all’. Functional, yes, but also skilfully sung – with Cronin’s delicate handling of the tune, her use of glottal stops and mordents, and Lerner’s warm, inclusive way with a song, which someone once described to me as ‘sung through his smile’; his clear identification with the narrative brings to mind the words spoken to Cecil Sharp by Carrie Grover from Maine from whom he took down the ballad ‘Henry Martin’ (also in Sam’s repertoire). She said: ‘when I sing these songs, it seems like I’m the feller it’s all happening to’. That sense of identification with the characters and the trials they encounter in folk songs is perhaps another defining element of traditional singing: ‘Live, live the song’, said Joe Heaney of Connemara, master of the sean-

nós, ‘like drawing a picture’.³ For a young singer, this can be a more challenging aspect of the craft, since to ‘live a song’ you need to have lived yourself.



Figure 1 Jean Ritchie talking with Elizabeth Cronin (1879–1956).
Ritchie Pickow Archive, p105002, NUI Galway Archives.

Students who enrol on the BA in Folk and Traditional Music at Newcastle University, do their best, as all students do, to pack as much living into their four years there as they can. On this course, voice is second only to the fiddle as a popular first instrument, and initially the greater part of our student singers’ studies is concerned with technique and vocal skills. Listening to ‘those who have gone before’, analysing, imitating and internalising gives them a solid foundation and appreciation of the expertise involved in the craft they’re apprenticed to; they do not listen to lyric song alone, however, but also to vocalisation, among the exemplars of which is lilter Paddy Breen of Kilmihil, County Clare which gives them a deeper understanding of breath control, rhythmic sense and intonation. Joe Heaney, who came to the teaching of his art at university level later in life, had immensely practical, careful advice, beginning with:

First of all you’ve got to learn the song and develop your own style [...] you’ve got to walk before you run. The main thing is to learn the song and what the song is all about.⁴

But *which* songs? An examination of the repertoire of say, Jeannie Robertson of Aberdeenshire (see Figure 2), will show what breadth and range of material she could call upon; she is said to have known more than 140 songs⁵ of a variety of types: lyrical 36%; narrative (ballads) 28%; children’s songs 20%; music-hall/American/drawing room 10%; bawdy song 6%. An object lesson in what the song is all about is given when we consider the centrality of the ballad, ‘Son Davit’, to Jeannie’s repertoire, and its symbolic transformation, resulting from

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

the loss of her only son, Jamie ('Jeemsie') who died at the age of eight from meningitis; the song came to embody Jeannie's whole life, taking on the status of a lament for the child from whose death she never recovered.

Her final performances of 'Son Davit' after 1960 reveal a lyric outpouring. Plot no longer had narrative significance, and style was a vehicle for pure emotion. Distilling the life experience of a masterfully 'musical' singer, her delivery had an unforgettable effect on her listeners.⁶



Figure 2 Jeannie Robertson (1908–1975). *Photo by Ian Whitaker, Archives of the School of Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh.*

It would be absurd – if not harsh in the extreme – to wish tragedy in the lives of young singers in order that they may better understand and perform the 'big ballads' as Jeannie came to call them. There are other methods: for instance the theories of Stanislavsky (the application of 'the idea of "if" to a role', the concept of 'emotion memory') resonate remarkably with the feelings of empathy expressed by traditional singers referred to earlier in this paper.⁷ These techniques, borrowed from the training of actors, are not unknown to our students, who are introduced to them in an attempt to help them get to the heart of that 'pure emotion'. It's an aspect of traditional singing embodied in what another Scots singer from a respected and revered traveller family, Belle Stewart, referred to as 'the coinyach'.⁸ It's a term that's hard to define, believed to have come from a Gaelic word meaning 'elegance

of melody'. But for the Stewarts of Blairgowrie it meant authenticity, sincerity, conviction: qualities which Belle had, as also did her daughter Sheila in abundance (see Figure 3).



Figure 3 Sheila Stewart (1935–2014). *Topic Records*.

But what is the price of this abundance? Singers on the Newcastle course listen avidly to recordings of the old singers, getting quickly, as one student put it ‘to the soul of the music. They grow in confidence, understanding – as another student singer says – ‘that it’s okay to sing in my own voice’. They lilt and diddle for articulation and vocal attack, and to understand the functional nature of the repertoire. They tackle Northumbrian songs with their octave leaps and tripling arpeggios to develop a sense of pitch and extend their vocal range. They learn lyrical Irish laments to understand space, pace and phrasing, and the use of ornamentation. They begin to build a repertoire which reflects the diversity of the folk canon as well as their personal relationship with the songs and their own cultural identity. How relevant is all this *industry* to the Folk Industry? An April 2012 web article gave some surprising information:

Folk is thriving. Radio Joint Audience Research figures show that Mike Harding’s weekly folk show attracts an audience of 890,000. Performances from the likes of Don McLean and The Dubliners resulted in 710,000 people watching the show on the Red Button (digital TV) and online via the Radio 2 website.⁹

Sales of folk recordings were said to have increased by 20% during 2011, and sold the highest amount in a century, accounting for 1.6% of all album sales in that year. The sales of individual albums are quite remarkable:

Acts such as Mumford & Sons (Island), Johnny Flynn (Transgressive) and Laura Marling (EMI) whose last album *A Creature I Don’t Know* sold 75,000 copies in 2011 according to Official Chart Company figures, are leading a revival which draws on and feeds back to the more ‘traditional’ acts.¹⁰

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Are we – inadvertently perhaps – preparing our young singers as ‘traditional acts’ to be taken up and packaged ready for commodification by the Folk Industry? What our student singers choose to do with the gifts they receive in learning ‘the art of solo performance’ is, of course, almost entirely their own affair, and certainly our pedagogy is concerned not at all with fashion and what the folk flavour of the month may be. Our students, anyway, know far more about the ‘folk scene’ than their tutors, some of whom (like me) still think we are part of a ‘folk movement’. Certainly the technical skills they learn would enhance and enrich any professional performance; confidence in and understanding of the material will add gravitas; identification with subject matter and character can deepen passion and sharpen communication, whilst authenticity ensures integrity. All this can proceed from engagement with the lives, the songs and the singing of the likes of those whose voices are cited here, and whom our students hear in the course of their studies. Ewan MacColl, my own tutor and guide when I was a young singer, would agree. Discussing the songs and style of those who are amongst the most authentic and expert of our traditional singers, in his work ‘Travellers’ Songs of England and Scotland’ he advises, succinctly: ‘In his [sic] delivery, the singer is saying: “This is me. This is us. This is our history and our heritage. So listen.”’¹¹

Notes

¹ Tony Mac Mahon, ‘The Beat of a Big Heart’, *Journal of Music*, 1 August 2009, <http://journalofmusic.com/focus/beat-big-heart> [accessed June 2015].

² Tony Mac Mahon, ‘Music of the Powerful and Majestic Past’, in *Crosbhealach an Cheoil – The Crossroads Conference 1996*, ed. by Fintan Vallely, Hammy Hamilton, Eithne Vallely, Liz Doherty (Dublin: Whinstone, 1999). See <https://tonymacmahon.wordpress.com/the-language-of-passion-a-paper-by-tony-mac-mahon/> [accessed June 2015].

³ Steve Coleman, ‘Joe Heaney and Style in *Sean-nós* Singing’, in *Blas: The Local Accent in Irish Traditional Music*, ed. by Thérèse Smith and Micheál Ó Súilleabháin (Limerick: Irish World Music Centre, University of Limerick, 1997), pp. 31–52 (p. 35).

⁴ Coleman, p. 34.

⁵ James Porter and Herschel Gower, *Jeannie Robertson: Emergent Singer, Transformative Voice*; Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press; East Linton: Tuckwell, 1995), pp. 282–286.

⁶ Porter and Gower, p. 275.

⁷ There are several concise guides to Stanislavski’s methods. See for example, <https://www.bbc.com/education/guides/zxn4mp3/revision/6> [accessed June 2018].

⁸ A closely related term, ‘the maysie’ was used by Stanley Robertson, the nephew of Jeannie Robertson. See Mairi McFadyen, ‘*Presencing* Imagined Worlds – Understanding the Maysie: A Contemporary Ethnomusicological Enquiry into the Embodied Ballad Singing Experience’ (University of Edinburgh: unpublished PhD dissertation, 2012).

⁹ Hazel Davis, *Billboard.biz*; [accessed April 2012 – this web page has been taken down].

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Ewan MacColl and Peggy Seeger, *Travellers’ Songs from England and Scotland* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), p. 22; reprinted edn (Routledge, 2016).

‘Listen how the fiddle cries and laughs’: traditional Lithuanian fiddling in Soviet-era Siberia

GAILA KIRDIENĖ

This article is based on the paper presented at NAFCo conference in 2012, which was the first presentation given abroad of Lithuanian music-making in forced exile in Soviet-Era Siberia. The aim of this article is to highlight the role and significance of Lithuanian traditional fiddle, fiddlers, fiddle makers, and fiddling in political imprisonment and/or deportation taking into account updated material and scientific knowledge.

Imprisonment and/or deportation to the Soviet Union’s remote places (broadly called Siberia) and other victimisations, or even genocide against guiltless people persecuted by the Soviet Union’s authoritarian Stalinist regime has been noted as one of the supreme crimes against humanity. It touched all countries and nations that belonged to or fell under the regime.¹ Over 280 thousand Lithuanians, among them 39 thousand children, out of a population of 3 million, were exiled to Siberia or imprisoned in camps in 1939–1953. Some 23,000–26,000 Lithuanians were exiled or imprisoned from 1939 to 1941.

During the Soviet times it was not possible to talk about the political prisoners² and deportees’ cultural and musical life. Neither were the ex-deportees willing to take a risk and openly share their experience. The situation in Lithuania changed significantly at the end of the 1980s. A lot of materials and memorials by the former deportees, among them musicians, have been published. Many of them wrote about music making and its relevance to them. Other important sources I have consulted for the investigations are hand-written and published documents, some digitized, from the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania: the registers and databases of all deportees, their incriminatory cases worked up by the Committee for State Security of Soviet Union (Rus. *NKVD*, *KGB*), and especially unique historical documents – contemporary letters, diaries and photographs written and taken by the deportees in Siberia.

In 2010 I started publishing articles on instrumental music making by Lithuanians in Siberia.³ In 2013–2014 three more of them were published: the first was devoted to the professional violinists, folk and amateur fiddlers and their musical activities in Siberian forced exile and forced labour (also called concentration) camps (2013); the second dedicated to the significance of instrumental music making (2013); and the fourth considered ethnic

musical-cultural relationships among Lithuanians and other native or exiled nations in Siberia (2014).⁴ In 2013 I published a scientific study in a book with the musicologist Jūratė Vyliūtė.⁵

Many musicians of several ranks, and even their whole families and kinships, were exiled to Siberia or imprisoned there by the Soviet Union government between 1939 and 1953 or later. In 1987 I met my first interviewees, folk musicians and fiddlers, who had survived one (and some of them, even two) forced exiles to Siberia, and I have been meeting new interviewees up until the present time. Although most of them were still children or very young people at the moment of their detention (some of them were taken directly from a gymnasium or studying at a university),⁶ they informed me about their parents and other musicians of older generations in Siberia. In addition I have been compiling a list of Lithuanian instrumentalists who suffered similarly, a compilation which by 2018 had registered nearly 400 musicians. Nearly a quarter of them (95) – mainly men, only four women – played fiddle, violin or cello, a bowed bass or double-bass. Most of these (70) were folk or amateur musicians (mainly documented by myself); of the fifteen professional musicians, some went on to become violinists/cellists and educators; five became teachers; three became organists and two became Catholic priests. Various types of older and newer accordions, likewise brass instruments, and a guitar or mandolin were very popular among Lithuanians in Siberia, too. Sometimes a Lithuanian zither *kanklės* or hammered dulcimer were brought to Siberia and played there. According to Lithuanian tradition, many of the musicians were multi-instrumentalists. Since teachers and organists able to perform traditional repertoires, are usually regarded as traditional musicians in Lithuania, one can state that approximately 13% of all documented Lithuanian traditional fiddlers had to suffer forced exile in Siberia.⁷ These statistics attest how much Lithuanian traditional fiddling has been affected by Soviet occupation and the communist regime.

In the middle of the twentieth century, fiddles and other bowed string instruments were mastered and/or played by Lithuanians throughout almost all places of forced exile or imprisonment in Soviet Siberia: from the Urals to the Far East and from the Arctic Ocean to Altay and Kazakhstan.

Fiddling at forced labour camps

It is important to distinguish between official amateur art activities and non-formal, traditional (or amateur) music making. Since the 1920s, official bands and orchestras together with singing, theatrical performances and film shows, as part of cultural re-education of the masses, including prisoners (though at first political prisoners were regarded as impossible to improve), was regarded by the Soviet authorities as one of the most powerful ideological tools.⁸

With rare exceptions, we have no data on music making by Lithuanians imprisoned in camps in 1941. Most of them – military, officers, teachers, and other intelligentsia, often able to play a musical instrument such as a fiddle – were either shot or perished from starvation, frost or exhaustion.⁹

Informal instrumental music making was hardly possible in the camps, however sometimes prisoners managed to find time, energy and a place to play for themselves or their

fellows (also called brothers) in fate. In the 1950s in a Karaganda camp a small band was founded by a West Lithuanian (Samogitian) master folk fiddler Povilas Grigalis (1901–1987), who in 1947 was imprisoned in Perm, and in 1950 moved to Kazakhstan. An imprisoned Lithuanian priest used to ask this band to perform religious hymns at secretly celebrated Masses.¹⁰

However, participating at official amateur art activities was also relevant for the political prisoners for many existential and psychological benefits, primarily for allowing them to feel human. Lithuanian fiddlers and violinists, likewise musicians of other nationalities, in camps played in various bands and orchestras (except brass bands), usually with musicians of other nations. Some traditional fiddlers reported that they were taught by professional violinists of Lithuanian or other nationalities in concentration camps: for instance, Jonas Krištaponis, who in 1947 was imprisoned for ten years in Vorkuta, Komi, was taught by a former Kapellmeister of Kaunas Radio, a multi-instrumentalist named Salemonas Kazla(s), born in 1920, who from 1950 was imprisoned for fifteen years in Vorkuta.¹¹

East Lithuanian folk fiddler Boleslovas Ankėnas (1919–2006) in 1946 was imprisoned in the Ivdel camp of Sverdlovsk district, which was reserved for political and serious-crime prisoners. Like many other documented musicians, he stressed how exhausted he was: ‘My body weight dropped from 90 kg to only 40 kg’.¹² Later he was brought to the Inta camp in Komi Republic and had to work as a collier in a mine. Nobody with this kind of job was able to play music, as it was too exhausting. Only thanks to his high blood pressure Ankėnas was allowed to work above ground and therefore he could play in a mixed orchestra which was led by a former organist and consisted of three fiddles, five mandolins, a clarinet, and a saxophone.¹³



Figure 1 Mixed orchestra of the Spask camp’s political prisoners, Karaganda district, 1955.

Photograph LGGRTC GAM TF 574.

In 1954–1955, a mixed orchestra performed in the Spask camp of Karaganda district (see Figure 1). A talented young Lithuanian man, Vytautas Kiela (born in Marijampolė

district and sentenced to ten years in a camp in 1948, but died in 1955), played a double-bass there and sang bass solos. He had been taught by a professional Lithuanian musician Vladas Korsakas. A whole bundle of his heartfelt letters has been preserved from 1954–1955. They are written in an expressive style (at first in Russian, then, when it was allowed, in Lithuanian), to his relatives, mainly to his sister Aušra, nicknamed Aušrelė, and his beloved girlfriend. These letters provide a multi-faceted insight into the role of music making in political prisoners' lives.

'Dear Aušrelė, [...] I also give concerts [...]. In our orchestra it is not so easy to play. We don't move without written music' (15 November 1954).¹⁴

'Our amateur circle has been joined with that of the women. Just don't think that we all are already together. Oh no! Not really! But they come to our camp for the rehearsals. And damned jailers, oh-oh! [...]. They think that we are not human beings. The devil knows who we are. But so thinking they err [...]. Last Sunday we presented the first concert in the women's camp, which is next to ours. The audience applauded damned superbly. Every number was asked to be repeated. Afterwards there was lunch' (27 July 1955).¹⁵



Figure 2 A women's band in the Abez camp, Komi Republic, 1955.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM MDI402.

In the female camps there were also bands with fiddlers (see Figure 2).¹⁶

There was a lack of musical instruments for amateur art activities in the camps. Some musicians asked for them to be sent from home or made them themselves, despite all the hardship they bore. It also was possible to buy a fiddle for food and cigarettes.

Lithuanian fiddle makers in the camps

We know of five Lithuanian folk masters who made fiddles and played in camps in Siberia. East Lithuanian folk fiddler and master, Jonas Danilevičius (1921–2007), along with his parents and other family members, was brought to a camp in the Tomsk region of Parabijsk district, in 1941. He fashioned a fiddle there in the workshops. Danilevičius' 'fellows in

fate' appreciated his fiddling very much. His father, a former organist, died in a camp, but in 1946 other family members were released and allowed to return home because 'no guilt was found'.¹⁷

Central Lithuanian (Aukštaitian) folk musician and master Vladas Žeromskis (1906–1995), who in 1945–1946 was imprisoned in a camp in Primorsk region at Amur River, fashioned two out of his fifteen fiddles and a guitar there. He wrote that he made the first of his fiddles at an especially difficult moment, and the fiddle helped him to live through that whole severe period. According to the 'principles of the socialistic race' or competition, the wardens encouraged fiddle-making by the prisoners with the slogan, 'We make fiddles before deadlines' [Rus. '*Sdielajiem skripku ran'she sroka*']. When Žeromskis boasted of being able to make fiddles, he was allowed to work. At first all he had to use was wood and other suitable materials that he found on the scrapheap. Later he was allowed to go to the workshops and was given some additional food to be able to work there:

In half a month my fiddle was completed [...]. Everyone has got interested in my playing. True, I was still a poor fiddler, though knew some polkas, waltzes, foxtrots, and a lot of Lithuanian folk [songs] tunes. My fiddle also differed from a real [violin] – no paintwork, made from eye, many of its parts were not proportional. But still I played [...]. When I brought my fiddle into the barrack first day, a crowd of people surrounded me. All asked to play. Most of the Russians had never seen, nor heard a fiddle, they kept asking, if it's possible on this *skripka* [Rus. fiddle] to perform Russian tunes.¹⁸

The guard and officers used to ask him to play at their parties beyond the camp zone, liking his Lithuanian music and dancing to it, but he also had to learn some Russian dances; sometimes he was given food in return for the playing. On the way to Lithuania he sold one fiddle for 80 roubles to buy food.¹⁹ Another fiddle which he had brought home was later lost.

In the 1950s in one of the Karaganda camps, Grigalis fashioned a fiddle, starting with an old fiddle-neck he found.²⁰ In 1947 Samogitian folk musician and master Julijonas Butkus (1920–2002) was imprisoned in Karelia (see Figure 3). In the 1950s he carved two of his six fiddles in camps. Instead of maple, which does not grow there, he used birch for the fiddle-back. He also said that cedar, growing inside the Arctic Circle, might serve instead of fir for a fiddle sound-board. In 1956 he returned home to his wife and children. He preserved one of his 'camp carved' fiddles and intended to re-master it.²¹

In 1991, a fiddle was given to the Lithuanian National Museum by the Ukrainian folk fiddler Stepan Kuriliak (see Figure 4). It was made in 1957 in Dubravlag concentration camp in Mordovia by the Lithuanian master fiddler Adolfas Genys (1907–1963). He was imprisoned in 1949 (in the same year his wife was also exiled), and in 1963 he was released and returned to West-Lithuania (Samogitia). This fiddle was probably not the first instrument he had crafted as it is made very skilfully and lovingly, with a handsome design on the back. According to a Ukrainian journalist who published Kuriliak's story, 'a fiddle born in the hands of a master in a Bolshevik concentration camp is a living memory of the fates of guiltless captives, many of whom were gone or killed'.²²



Figure 3 Julijonas Butkus playing the fiddle he carved in a camp in 1952.
The photograph was taken at home in Kartena, 1980.

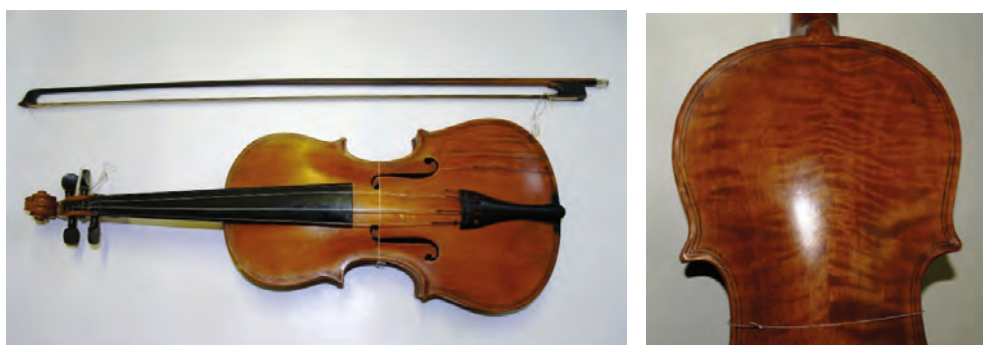


Figure 4 Violin and bow by Adolfas Genys crafted in Dubrovlag, 1957.
Photographed by Arvydas Kirda, 2011.

In camps and in places of exile Lithuanians also made larger bowed instruments, even double-basses. In 1954, Kiela wrote to his sister that with a friends' assistance he mastered 'a real bowed double-bass. Nobody would say that it wasn't made in a factory; just the strings aren't very good' (see Figure 1).²³ Thus, it was quite common for Lithuanians, especially Samogitians, to master fiddles and bowed-string basses in forced labour camps in Siberia, though they had to adjust to the poor conditions of imprisonment and scarce available materials, as well as to the local, Arctic wood. Their fiddles and fiddling were relevant not only to themselves, they were also highly-appreciated by their fellows in fate.

Lithuanian fiddlers and their musical activities in Siberia

For a long time it was prohibited for deportees not only to make any music and celebrate their traditional year with family feasts, but even to gather together. Those, who celebrated traditional feasts even after their work or were heard singing partisan or politically-flavoured songs, or lyrical patriotic songs, could be sentenced to fifteen years' imprisonment in camps – even when they had already been deported to Siberia. Ex-deportees were aware that songs were prohibited, but dance and instrumental music was not, as they had no lyrics (but the

lyrics of a song could be implied in the tune); and so they were safer for their spiritual resistance.²⁴

Since the first mass deportations in 1941, Lithuanians flocked to celebrate their feasts, knowing that the next day they could be punished.²⁵ Some deportees took their fiddles, and other instruments, except stringed basses, from home. On the coast of the Laptev Sea of the Arctic Ocean (the islands in the mouth of Lena and Jana Rivers), approximately two thousand of the Lithuanian deportees, mainly women with children and old men, were brought from the Altay Region in 1942. They were completely ill-equipped and ill-prepared, such that many died from hunger and the intense frost. Despite these unbearable hardships there were those who managed to survive the first winter and who, with great enthusiasm, continued their cultural and musical traditions. Many young people were willing to play a musical instrument, and the playing of skilled musicians ‘was a true light in the darkness’ for the community.²⁶

Four Lithuanian male fiddlers and one Lithuanian Jewish girl fiddler²⁷ from this place of exile have been documented. The teacher Antanas Vaitkevičius (born in 1907), who was exiled together with his family in 1941, stated that mathematics and his ability to play musical instruments were his ‘secret weapons’.²⁸ He was one of the first who started playing a ‘not of first youth *bayan*’ (type of accordion) for dancing in the newly-built Bykov club in 1943. He was joined by a cornet player, A. Černeckis, a professional violinist, Algis Stašenis, who, after his return to Lithuania, played at Kaunas Music Theatre, and soon after by a guitarist, and they enjoyed playing in ‘some’ orchestra.²⁹ Stašenis was also very active in organising concerts and theatrical performances. A former deportee wrote that he ‘made them “cry” with the fiddle, playing “Dear Lithuania”’ [Lith. *Lietuva brangi*, a patriotic song, regarded as a second national anthem].³⁰ Even bigots had to acknowledge that Lithuanians in deed and not in name are ‘people of culture’.³¹ One of the most active youth leaders in Bykov, Šukaitis, loved to direct shows, in which he played fiddle and accordion.³²

Fiddlers and other musicians played for youth who danced in order not to die from frostbite. In 1944 one of the deportees wrote in her letter from Tit Ary to Lithuania:

Polar nights and hard storms will be coming [...]. We store ice to build the windows and to make water, as well as some firewood and fish [...]. There are some young people able to play. A Samogitian, Balys [Boleslovas, born in 1921], has a fiddle, Jurgaitis Bronius a harmonica, someone a guitar or balalaika. At the Advent or Lent seasons, we played various games, and danced to keep warm, because firewood was lacking and storms could last [two weeks] long.³³

After World War II

Many Lithuanian fiddlers were exiled after World War II and later. In some cases, especially if in a larger Lithuanian colony, fiddlers could continue their music-making traditions, including sets of their music and repertoire. Famous Samogitian folk musicians, brothers Domininkas (1904–1985) and Jonas (born in 1909) Lileikiai, along with their families, were exiled to Gelot, in the Bratsk district of Irkutsk region in 1951, taking with them two fiddles and a guitar. Together with other Lithuanians they played at Easter and Christmas, and for weddings and other parties.³⁴

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

In 1948 approximately 300 families from South Samogitia were exiled to Central'nyj Chazan, Zima district, Irkutsk region. In the 1950s, up to eight musicians would gather in a mixed string and modern accordion band for special occasions (see Figure 5). They had a folk double-bass, too. Four fiddlers have been documented there: a multi-instrumentalist Jonas Tverijonas (1906–1976), who was also a leader of the Lithuanian brass band there, Juozas Jazdauskas (born in 1922), Stasys Petkus (born in 1930), and Steponas Sadauskas (born in 1938).



Figure 5 Lithuanian musicians at Whit Sunday in Centralnyj Chazan, 1955 or 1956.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM 2105.

In 1953–1958 in Solovyov, Nizhneudinsk, Irkutsk region, deportees from South-West Lithuania (Sudovia) played in a string band consisting of two fiddles, a guitar and a drum (see Figure 6). Fiddler Sigitas Pételis (born in 1928) related that in Lithuania he used to play



Figure 6 A Lithuanian band in Solovyov, 1954: Sigitas Pételis (fiddle), Gedas Simniškis (fiddle), Jurgis Juozapavičius (guitar), the name of the drum player is not known.
Photograph LGGRTC GAM MD 1296.

bass in his older brother's (1925–2009) string band and later started playing fiddle. However, in 1946, his brother was imprisoned in Norilsk camps, and, in 1948, he was exiled along with his parents. At first 'neither music, nor fiddles were our concern – there was a famine. [...] There were about forty young Lithuanians, who all wanted to dance [...]. In Siberia I learned to play fiddle better'. Twice they were called on to perform at weddings.³⁵

Fiddlers who were exiled to multi-national settlements had to learn Russian songs and dances. One of the most talented Sudovian fiddlers, Pijus Vaškevičius (1900–1993), along with his pregnant wife and six children, was exiled to the Tomsk region from 1951 to 1956. His daughter said that he worked as a smith there and was always asked to play during holidays at the *kolkhoz* (a form of collective farm). At first he played only Lithuanian songs and dances, but the Russians could not understand them and they used to ask him to learn Russian ones. They appreciated his fiddling very much. After their release, the chair of the *kolkhoz* did not allow the family to go, thus they had to escape by crossing the Ob River by boat during a storm with high waves; the fiddle travelled with them.³⁶

There is lots of evidence of how the Soviet occupation and post-World War II oppressions, like forced exile, destroyed Lithuanian families' music-making traditions. For instance, the family of the famous Samogitian folk master, Albertas Martinaitis (born in 1953 in Ukar village, Nizhneudinsk district of Irkutsk region, now living in Šiauliai), bore the hardships of forced exile. His maternal grandfather Kazimieras Eitmantis (1881–1956) played fiddle, and his brothers – and later on, the sons – played fiddles or other instruments. In 1946 his son – the bass player Stanislovas (1913–1970) – was the first from the family to be brought to a concentration camp. In 1948 Kazimieras and his wife were exiled to the settlement of Zima in the Irkutsk region.

For Lithuanians, who are mainly settled farmers, deportation (a sudden separation from their home and land) was always a deep shock. For Kazimieras, his fiddle, which he loved profoundly, provided solace and a sense of spiritual well-being. He took the fiddle into his hands and sat waiting until he and his family were taken away into exile. From 1949 to 1956 his son, the fiddler Petras (1929–2004), worked in a coal mine in Karaganda, and in 1949 his daughter Ona and her husband (who would become Albertas's parents), were exiled to the Nizhneudinsk district of the Irkutsk region where she found her father (her mother was already dead), and took him in. Whilst the parents worked at the *kolkhoz*, the grandfather looked after the children and used to play them the fiddle. While putting them to bed and telling them fairy-tales, he would play his fiddle and say: 'Children, listen, how the fiddle cries and laughs.'³⁷ This has left an indelible impression on the children. He also played during feasts, but only at home, behind closed doors and windows.

In 1956 Kazimieras, already very ill, took his fiddle and set out on the journey home – as he wanted to die in his homeland – but sadly he died on the way. In 1997, Martinaitis carved a tombstone in the likeness of his grandfather and in 2004 made a fiddle to commemorate all his family members, weather-beaten in forced exile.³⁸

The fiddle and musical education

The fiddle was one of the main instruments for musical education of children and youths in exiled Lithuanian families and communities. On 14 June 1941, a teacher, Liudas Baltutis

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

(1897–1954) was exiled together with his family, wife and three children, to Tenga in Altay. This was considered ‘lucky’, for usually the men were sent separately to the concentration camps. Liudas’s brother Leonas – who had played a clarinet from his youth – was also exiled. Since Liudas was a multi-instrumentalist, from 1942–1947 he taught and led a Lithuanian children’s string band which had mandolins, seven-string guitar, balalaika, dombra baritone, folk bass, and a small drum. They repaired the instruments themselves from the scrap materials found in the *sovkhos* storage; a fiddle and a button accordion joined them. Another teacher, Bronius Tėvelis, played accordion; and his son played a children’s fiddle that had been brought from Lithuania. In 1947 the Baltutis family escaped to Lithuania, but in 1948 was exiled for the second time – to the Kemerov region, Kiseliovsk city. Again, Baltutis formed a band there, consisting of a fiddle, a button accordion, and a guitar. His son, Romualdas, already played fiddle, too. He was asked at school to lead an orchestra of various stringed instruments in which he alone played a fiddle. The orchestra performed Ukrainian and Russian pieces by ear. Only Romualdas could read musical notation.³⁹

Such friction-string orchestras, including balalaikas and domras, besides guitars and mandolins, are not typical of Lithuanian traditions, but they are for Russian stylized ‘folk orchestras’ (in Siberia called Russian *shumovoj*, meaning ‘noise orchestra’). These were very popular in the Soviet Siberian education and culture system.⁴⁰

Only one other Lithuanian has been documented as leading such an orchestra in forced exile: in Tulun city of Irkutsk district. In 1951, a folk fiddler, Juozas Liuberskis (1903–1984), formed a *barracks orchestra* from members of his family (wife, daughter and son), and other children of the Lithuanian community who lived in the barracks (see Figure 7).⁴¹ This orchestra had no balalaikas or domras, since they were regarded as Russian instruments.

Thus, if Lithuanians formed or lead a friction-string orchestra in Siberia, they usually included a fiddle in it – orchestras of friction-string and bowed string instruments (one to four fiddles) were very popular in the pre-war period in Lithuania. Lithuanians rarely played balalaikas and still rarer *domras* in their non-formal music ensembles in Siberia.



Figure 7 Fiddler Juozas Liuberskis with his family’s and other Lithuanian children’s orchestra in Tulun city, 1951. Photograph LGGRTC GAM MD3091.

In some cases young musicians learned to play the fiddle without anybody's help. In 1948 Rimgaudas Vitkus (born in 1933), took his father's fiddle and started playing in Talyany, Usol, a district of Irkutsk region, where he was exiled together with his mother and brothers. Their father, Juozas Vitkus-Kazimieraitis (1901–1946), was a folk fiddler and military officer of Independent Lithuania, later a partisan.

About 900 Lithuanians were there [...] [though young Lithuanians including myself mainly played accordions for dances], I played traditional songs on the fiddle: 'Lietuva brangi' and a religious hymn 'Kad širdį tau skausmas kaip peiliais suspaus' [When pain spears your heart like knives]. [...] I also used to take the fiddle into the taiga [forest], and play after work in the barracks – other Lithuanians asked me to play very much.⁴²

Thus, traditional Lithuanian fiddlers of older and younger generations continued fiddling traditions in many places of forced exile in Siberia. They played solo or led ensembles and even orchestras on various non-formal occasions: for community performances, dance-evenings, calendar feasts, and, usually only after 1953 (the year of Stalin's death, when the regime got more lenient), for weddings.

Conclusion

The fiddle, likewise a much rarer musical instrument, the Lithuanian zither *kanklės*, became a symbol of Lithuanness, distinguishing Lithuanians and their bands and orchestras in the middle of the twentieth century in Soviet-era Siberia. It also had multi-faceted psychological, communicative functions and symbolic meanings, significant to the political prisoners and deportees.

During traditional customs, fiddle music played one of the greatest roles in representing and maintaining Lithuanian national and cultural identity, which was much more important in forced exile than at home. Traditional fiddling was of great relevance to the deportees' and political prisoners' states of mind, their spiritual resistance, if not their physical survival.

Lithuanian traditional fiddle repertoire was very broad in Siberia: it comprised not only dances, marches, and songs, but also anthems, religious hymns, and musical fairy-tales for children. Not only was the sound and music of the fiddle expected to be able to express and discharge sadness and other negative emotions, to afford compassion and quieten, but also to exhilarate, suffering people, and awaken their tenacity and vitality.

Generally fiddlers were enlightened individuals and spiritual leaders in Lithuanian communities. Besides other works and activities, they used to teach traditional fiddling to the children and young people of their community, hence, striving to develop their abilities and to guarantee the continuation of their traditions.

Unquestionably many talented Lithuanian fiddlers and their families were lost to Siberia, not solely to exile, but also because of the prohibition of ex-deportees from living in their native places, and, for political prisoners, in their native countries. This has proved to be one of the principal factors in the demise of Lithuanian traditional music culture and folk fiddling traditions in the latter part of the twentieth century. Nevertheless those musicians

who did return from deportation participated very actively in their homeland's musical and cultural life and left valuable imprints: their music is now being listened to, recorded, and published.

Notes

¹ Stéphane Courtois, 'Komunizmo nusikaltimai' [Crimes of Communism], in Stéphane Courtois, Nicolas Werth, Jean-Louis Panné, Andrzej Paczkowski, Karel Bartosek, Jean-Louis Margolin, *Juodoji komunizmo knyga: nusikaltimai, teroras, represijos* (Vilnius: Vaga, 2000), pp. 11–17. Translation into Lithuanian from *Le livre noir du communisme: crimes, terreur, répression* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997).

² In the Soviet era political prisoners were designated as 'dangerous elements' or 'the biggest enemies of the folk'.

³ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Sovietinę tremtį ir lagerius patyrę lietuvių liaudies muzikantai ir jų muzikavimas' [The Lithuanian Folk Musicians Who Survived in Soviet Exile and Camps and their Music Making], in *Nepriklausomybės dvidešimtmetis: kultūros lūžiai, pokyčiai ir pamokos, tapatybės problema. Konferencijos, įvykiosios*, 2010 m. balandžio 14 d. pranešimai ir moksliniai straipsniai (Vilnius: Lietuvos muzikos ir teatro akademija, 2010), pp. 106–131.

⁴ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Lithuanian Fiddle and Fiddling in Forced Exile', in *Mūzikas zinātne šodien: pastāvīgais un mainīgais* [Musical Science Today: Stability and Changes], 5 (Daugavpils universitāte, Akadēmiskais apgāds "Saulē"), pp. 93–107; 'Significance of Instrumental Music Making in Forced Exile: A Case Study of Lithuanians', in *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis III (New Series)*, edited by Gisa Jahnichen (Verlagshaus Monsenstein und Vannerdat OHG Munster), pp. 167–196; 'Sovietmečiu į Sibirą ištremtų ar įkalintų lietuvių santykiai su kitomis tautomis: tradicinio muzikavimo tyrimų duomenys [Relationships among Lithuanians and Other Nations Exiled to or Imprisoned in Siberia: Data of Traditional Music Making]', in *Tradicija ir dabartis: Mokslo darbai* [Tradition and Present. Scientific Works], 9 (Klaipėda: Klaipėdos universiteto leidykla, 2014), pp. 89–111. Internet access: <http://journals.ku.lt/index.php/TD/article/view/996/1108> [accessed 14 June 2018].

⁵ Gaila Kirdienė, 'Lietuvos muzikantai ir instrumentinis muzikavimas sovietinėje tremtyje ir lageriuose' [Lithuanian Musicians and Instrumental Music Making in Soviet Forced Exile and Camps], in Jūratė Vyliūtė, Gaila Kirdienė, *Lietuviai ir muzika Sibire* [Lithuanians and Music in Siberia] (Vilnius: Lietuvos kompozitorių sąjunga, 2013), pp. 431–630, 641–644, 654–694.

⁶ Some of my interviewees were imprisoned in the camps despite their young age (under eighteen years); and some were born in Siberia.

⁷ Gaila Kirdienė, *Smuikas ir smuikavimas lietuvių etninėje kultūroje* [Fiddle and Fiddling in Lithuanian Ethnic Culture] (Vilnius: Kronta, 2000), pp. 207–245 (list of 645 traditional fiddlers); investigations of music making by Lithuanians in Siberia provided 55 names of traditional fiddlers, not previously documented.

⁸ Inna Klause, *Der Klang des Gulag: Musik und Musiker in den sowjetischen Zwangsarbeitslagern der 1920-er bis 1950-er Jahre* [Sound of the Gulag: Music and Musicians in Soviet Forced Labour Camps] (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014).

⁹ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 451–458.

¹⁰ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 507.

¹¹ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 494.

¹² Boleslovas Ankenas, 'Mano gyvenimo vingiai' [Turning Points of my Life], in *Mažoji Reškutėnų kronika* [A Little Reškutėnai Village Chronicle], part 2, compiled by Viktorija Lapėnienė (Reškutėnai, 2010), pp. 31–34.

- ¹³ Kirdienė (2010), pp. 114–116, 120–121.
- ¹⁴ Manuscript Archive of Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania (Vilnius; hereafter GGRTC) 10433.
- ¹⁵ GGRTC, 10421.
- ¹⁶ Kirdienė (2013a), p. 102.
- ¹⁷ Documented by Kirdienė in 1996, comp. Kirdienė (2010), pp. 93–94.
- ¹⁸ Vladas Žeromskis, ‘Apie kalinimą’ [On Imprisonment], in *Vadinkite mane sėjėju. Vladas Žeromskio poezija, atsiminimai, rinkta tautosaka, atsiminimai apie Vladą Žeromskį* [Call me a Sower: Poetry, Memorials, Folklore, Collected by Him, and Recollection about Him]. Compiled by Birutė Panumienė (Baisogala, 2014), pp. 240–242.
- ¹⁹ Kirdienė (2013c), p. 465.
- ²⁰ Documented by Kirdienė in 2000, comp. Kirdienė (2013c), p. 507.
- ²¹ Documented in 1987, comp. Kirdienė (2013c), p. 462.
- ²² *Ква*, no. 4, November (Kiev, 1991), pp. 2–3.
- ²³ LGGRTC 10433.
- ²⁴ Kirdienė (2013b), p. 181.
- ²⁵ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 439–442, 472, 642.
- ²⁶ Vytautas Akelaitis, ‘Mokytojai ir mokiniai’ [Teachers and Pupils], in *Amžino įšalo žemėje* [In the World of Perpetual Ice]. Compiled by Aldona Žemaitytė (Vilnius: Vyturys, 1989), p. 191.
- ²⁷ Ita Milc, born in 1936, lived in Kybartai, Vilkaviškis district. In 1941 together with parents exiled to Altay, in 1942 ferried to Bykov. In 1950 she moved to Yakutsk city, was released in 1958 and in 1961 returned to Lithuania, lived in Vilnius.
- ²⁸ Antanas Vaitkevičius, ‘Slaptieji ginklai’ [Secret Weapons]. *Leiskit į Tėvynę* [Let us go to the Homeland]. Memorials collected and edited by Kęstutis Pukelis. (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 113.
- ²⁹ Vaitkevičius (1989), p. 105; Ona Sirutienė, comp. ‘1941 m. birželio 14-osios žaizdos’ [Wounds of the 14th of June 1941]. *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 36.
- ³⁰ Sirutienė (1989), p. 36.
- ³¹ Leonas Bojarskas, ‘Sekmadienio reportažai nuo Laptevų jūros’ [Sunday Reporting from the Laptev Sea], in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 230.
- ³² Olga Merkienė, ‘Pasaulis – ne be dorų žmonių’ [The World Isn’t without Honest People], in *Leiskit į Tėvynę* (Kaunas: Šviesa, 1989), p. 295.
- ³³ LGGRTC ApS KĖ-1005, pp. 14–15. No trees, but only grass grew on these islands, therefore deportees had to gather beached firewood. Fishing was their main duty, however, they were not permitted to take a fish to eat.
- ³⁴ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 550–551.
- ³⁵ Kirdienė (2013c), pp. 541–547.
- ³⁶ Documented by Kirdienė in 2012, comp. Kirdienė (2013 a), p. 99.
- ³⁷ Comp. Kirdienė (2010), pp. 108–109.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Romualdas Baltutis, *Septyniolika metų be tėvynės (1941–1958)* [Seventeen Years without Fatherland], Šiauliai: Saulės delta, 2001; Kirdienė (2013 c), pp. 483–492.
- ⁴⁰ Comp. Kirdienė (2013a), p.100.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Documented by Kirdienė in 2018.

Arranging traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle tunes

RAGNHILD KNUDSEN



Figure 1 Glima – Ragnhild Knudsen, Torunn R. Rue, Helene Waage. *Photo by Anders K. Rue.*

In this paper I will present some aspects of arranging traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle dance tunes for other instruments, as exemplified by my arrangements for the Glima string trio, a folk music group formed of three musicians living in Telemark, who play Hardanger fiddle tunes on our instruments: Hardanger fiddle, viola and cello. For the past fourteen years we have been working with this music and giving concerts in the local community as well as elsewhere in Norway and abroad. This has raised such questions as: will the tunes, when arranged for our trio, still be understood to be the same music as the original Hardanger fiddle pieces? What parameters will they be judged on? What are the requisites for them to be accepted as traditional dance music?

The trio

All three members have long been involved with the traditional music of Norway, performing on our instruments and also engaging in the local folk music environment in several ways.

I myself work with folk/traditional music education in Rauland, at Telemark University College [since 2018, the Institute for Traditional Art and Folk Music in Rauland, part of the University of South-Eastern Norway], and also teach Hardanger fiddle and violin in the municipal music school in Seljord, a small town in rural Telemark. I trained as a violin teacher at the conservatory in Bergen, and I also have a master's degree in musicology from the University of Oslo, in the thesis for which I compared violin teaching with Hardanger fiddle teaching. I have been playing the Hardanger fiddle myself since 1992, although in the Glima trio, set up in 1999, I mostly play the viola. We play Hardanger fiddle tunes arranged mostly by me. Our cellist is also a traditional singer, and our Hardanger fiddle player has performed traditional music since she was young. In fact, she is often called upon to be a judge at various competitions for traditional Hardanger fiddle playing. The repertoire is based on tunes that we have picked up from our various activities, and either I or the other fiddle player are often familiar with them through having played them on Hardanger fiddle. Typically, we arrange, learn and try out the different parts orally, without writing the arrangements down.

The tradition

Traditional Hardanger fiddle music in Norway is a widespread and still a living solo tradition, in which person-to-person teaching without written music is perceived as the traditionally correct way of teaching and learning the tunes (although many tunes are also written down). During the 1900s it became popular to play in fiddlers' groups known as *spelemannslag*, and by the 1970s these were well organised throughout the country. In such groups the tradition is to play the tunes in unison, without accompaniment. Both groups and soloists compete in the annual national competition for national traditional music (*Landskapleiken*).

The tunes

One of the characteristics of the Hardanger fiddle dance-tunes played today is the use of two-string playing and double stops. Traditionally played without accompaniment, the dance tunes are perceived as musically complete in their own right. A common feature of the tunes is what one might call their 'small motif structure', whereby small motifs are repeated and varied as the player wishes. Variations can relate not only to how the ornaments are made, but also to which other notes are chosen to accompany the melody – whether open strings or double stops. Moreover, different bowing can be chosen to vary the phrasing of the melody, and the structure or form itself can vary – for example how many times, and in what order, the small motifs are played.¹ These structural variations must be kept within a certain framework in order for the piece to be heard as the same tune. As the tunes also exist in many versions, one might say that the improvisation occurs at the micro level. Variations in structure and in the decoration of the melody are the parameters where you can find both differences between the players' personal style, as well as differences within the playing of a single performer.

Approaches to arranging

When these tunes are arranged, there are several choices to be made. One can, variously:

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

- let the Hardanger fiddle play as if it was a solo instrument, and surround it with accompaniment;
- let the other instruments take over some of the motifs from the original tune;
- let the Hardanger fiddle play other (composed) parts;
- adopt a mixture of all three approaches.

One can also divide the tune into sections and mix them in new ways – although in this paper, I have opted to focus on arranging in ways that leave the melody line recognisable. Both what you choose to add and how the added elements are played will make a great difference, and your choices in this respect will emphasise different aspects of the music. If, for instance, you add a rhythmic pattern on the cello, this can underline the rhythmic aspect of the original tune. But if, on the other hand, you add long notes on the cello, this can make the Hardanger fiddle stand out in a different way while also highlighting the rhythms of the traditional tune through the contrast that is created. Several important parameters can change when this music is arranged for trio.

Form

It can be difficult to change the form intuitively during a performance in a trio; we have to have a fixed form/structure, or at least have reached a clear agreement about the possibility of variations. Individual improvisation at the level of form is difficult in a trio setting.

Notes and harmonies

One might argue that these tunes are not made for harmonising via the addition of chords; if we add chords, or notes that do not occur in the original tune, this can push it into a different kind of tonal landscape. It is important to be aware of this when choosing additional notes. One way to go about arranging traditional music is to use a modal rather than a harmonic approach (Sven Ahlbäck);² for instance, the Hardanger fiddle player and composer Eivind Groven did not use any notes in his arrangements of traditional fiddle tunes other than those that he found in the melodic material.

Sound or timbre

The instruments you add will alter the overall sound and also make the Hardanger fiddle sound different. It will not sound the same way alone as it does when the other instruments are heard at the same time; the spectrum of sounds will alter the way the instruments are heard, just as the addition of a different colour in a painting will change the viewer's impression of the colour beside it. Moreover, the cello and viola have different connotations for the listener: they may evoke ideas from another music landscape and experiences with other musical cultures in the listener's mind and change their perception of the music.

Intonation

'Old tonality' – or non-tempered intervals – is still used by some Hardanger fiddle players. This can be difficult to adapt both for the musicians and for listeners who are not accustomed to this tonality. It is not impossible to use it in the trio setting, but demands some work and careful thinking about how it will be received when used on different instruments, and

especially in harmonies. Which notes/intervals are expected – or accepted – when a tune is played on a cello? This can be different from what is acceptable when the same tune is played on a Hardanger fiddle or is sung. Sometimes when quarter notes or micro tonality have been used on the cello we have had reactions such as: ‘She was suddenly really out of tune’ although when they are used in singing or on the fiddle, they pass as part of the style. This has to do with the listeners’ expectations and experiences with the genre in question – and also their degree of openness to surprises.

Rhythm

On the whole, this is not as flexible or open to small nuances as when performed by a solo fiddler, since three people have to agree on it. Details in the groove may also be experienced differently when played with a different sound. When the instrumentation is changed, the way the instruments respond – according to the differing size of their bows and resonance boxes, as well as the differing structure of their strings – leads to changes in the length of the notes and the friction in the attack; this can alter the groove.

The visual aspect

A trio looks different to a solo fiddler, and observation of the movements and the communication between the players will influence the overall listening experience. What you see as the sounds that are being produced affects your perception of what you hear.

Insider versus outsider perception

Will the music still be understood as a dance tune by the local folk/traditional musicians and dancers? Our experience is that some people who are very much ‘insiders’ tend to comment on the way the tune can be danced to: they may perceive it as too slow or too heavy, or, comparing it to the version they know, may say that the ornamentation or the version itself are not correct. Comments tend to relate to the ‘groove’ in the music, and this is experienced differently when the beats are played on a cello or viola. The core response here is often: ‘It’s not what I’m used to hearing’, and the opinions expressed about the much-loved music when played on other instruments show that the melodies and rhythms played are far from the only things that matter. Interestingly, such attitudes are also common when people compare different solo players on the Hardanger fiddle: there, too, debate arises about how the tune should be played. This raises the question of what the tune ‘is’: can you separate it from the instrument it is played on, or the player who performs it? What must be present for it to be accepted as the same tune? What does it mean to be ‘true to the tune’ – or to the style? What defines the style: instrument, form, playing style or context? And what if we believe that one of the criteria of defining it as folk/traditional music is that it is constantly changing? How slowly must things change to still be accepted as part of the tradition? What changes are accepted and by whom? These questions also reflect the conflict often seen in traditional music. What must remain the same if it is to be accepted as forming part of a given tradition, and what can be altered, if change is part of what defines it as traditional music?

In their article ‘Musikk, identitet og musikkformidling’ (Music, identity and music presentation) Even Ruud and Tellef Kvifte discuss topics related to how people can hear

the same music differently: ‘It is impossible for us to hear the music “as it actually is”. The sounds or the music we hear will always be experienced in some context’.³

How will people who are unused to Hardanger fiddle music hear our trio’s performance? We have got comments which suggest that the music can be ‘opened up’ for the listeners: the rhythm is more clearly indicated and the music can be easier to understand than in its solo form. Arranged for a trio, it becomes more similar to the music with which they are familiar. We once heard the following comment when performing with Glima: ‘It is so nice with the cello underneath; the music becomes “grounded” for me. The solo Hardanger fiddle music is so thin and high’. Another time, when I played some solo Hardanger fiddle tunes for a friend who has played in a professional symphony orchestra for twenty years, he complained: ‘The music has no handles, I can’t grab it!’ The new instruments in themselves give new associations or connotations. What is heard as the melody – or as fore, or background – can change. Our experience has clearly shown us that using instruments other than the Hardanger fiddle can make the music more accessible to those unused to it, by making it more recognisable: they find ‘hooks’ to hang their listening on, so to speak. The arrangement can become the ‘handles’ my friend was looking for.

Conclusion

Whether or not it can be heard as the same music will depend on who is listening, what are seen as the markers of the style, as well as what criteria are used to measure sameness. As I have noted, what seems central in the music can vary because it can be heard in so many ways. In Norway today there are several groups that arrange fiddle tunes, but at the same time the focus on solo playing persists, and you can find the same people doing both: good solo players in the traditional style also play in groups. So even though people do play in groups, many players – including young performers – cultivate the traditional solo playing style. These two trends are both active and run parallel in Norway. Some things are lost when a tune is transferred from a solo to a group setting, but new things are also gained; and it is my belief that this music has many qualities that can only be shown – or may even only exist – when other instruments are introduced. A totally new expression can appear when the melody ‘made for’ – or most usually heard on – the Hardanger fiddle is played in a trio, or solo on the cello or viola. Likewise, the sound register of the Hardanger fiddle can be experienced in a new and different way when it is surrounded by – or heard alongside – other instruments. The sounds can stand in contrast to that of the Hardanger fiddle, or may underline sounds that are heard differently when the instrument is played solo. Different aspects of the music come in focus, and the experience changes. The way in which music is heard will always depend on the listeners’ preconceptions and previous experience. The tunes cannot be totally separated from the instrument on which they are performed; the sound is part of the tune. We don’t hear music as notes with different frequencies in isolation from the actual timbre or colour of the sound; these two aspects are intimately linked.

In this paper I have discussed some aspects of arranging traditional Hardanger fiddle tunes for a string trio. Arranging music that you know for ‘new’ instruments, using it and experimenting with it is a sign of interest in the music. I will end by quoting a

KNUDSEN *Arranging traditional Norwegian Hardanger fiddle tunes*

Norwegian composer who, among other things, has arranged avant-garde rock music songs for symphony orchestras. When asked about the give and take in this process he said:

Arrangement adds a dimension, and I think it is important to be aware of which dimension. To take a song to a place where it has never been before can also be to take the song seriously.⁴

Notes

¹ Tellef Kvifte, *Om variabilitet i fremføring av hardingfeleslåtter og paradigmer i folkemusikkforskningen* (Oslo: Universitetet I Oslo, Institutt for musikk og teater, 1994).

² Sven Ahlbäck, *Melody beyond Notes: A Study of Melody Cognition* (doctoral thesis, University of Gothenburg, 2004).

³ Even Ruud og Tellef Kvifte, *Musikk, identitet og musikkformidling* (Oslo: Institutt for musikkvitenskap, 1987).

⁴ Jon Øyvind Næss, interview, 2012.

New directions in contemporary fiddle playing in Norway

GJERMUND KOLLTVEIT

A story from the nineteenth century tells about a Hardanger fiddle player who was on the way home after visiting a fellow fiddler on the other side of the mountain, when he suddenly realised that he had forgotten one of the tunes he had learned; in the middle of the mountains, he decided to walk back some fifty kilometres in order to learn and memorise it again. This was more than a century and a half ago, a situation so paradigmatically different to what prevails today as regards mobility and communication: now there is no need to walk at all, and a great variety of tunes and styles is available instantly.

This article discusses some new developments in Norwegian fiddle playing during the last twenty-five years or so. It asks: which trends and developments in fiddle playing in this period are most significant, and how can we understand them? I am interested in style, and the *sound* of music, as well as the structural conditions underlying the choices musicians make. My analysis is based on loose and unsystematic observations, partly as a participant, but mostly as an outsider to the central Norwegian fiddle communities. The new, modern developments of revived folk music might be approached from two directions, either from the organisational and structural framework around the musicians, or from an aesthetic perspective closer to the musicians and their music-making. I will discuss some characteristics of developments from both these directions, using the career and music of the fiddle player Ragnhild Furebotten (b. 1979) from Saltdal in northern Norway, as an example. She is an exemplar of the new, modern or post-modern kind of fiddlers in Norway.

The 'organisational' perspective

Furebotten plays the standard fiddle in the manner of the tradition in her home place. She has a solo as well as a band career, and her name is closely associated with the popular group Hekla Stålstrenga, which started as a duo with guitarist Tore Bruvoll with whom she recorded the album *Hekla Stålstrenga* in 2008; the band has two albums: *Makramé* (2011) and *Dyrandé* (2013). Prior to this, Furebotten was a member of Majorstuen, a group started at the Norwegian Academy of Music in Oslo. So, this introduces the organisational and structural level, the first significant driving force which is *education*. In Norwegian higher education

at the present time there are folk music programmes in Rauland, Voss and Oslo. In Rauland, the Telemark University College, Department of Folk Culture offers bachelor, masters and PhD degree programmes with a combination of theory and practice, with most weight on the practical. At Voss, the Ole Bull Academy offers a performance Bachelor programme and a masters programme in Nordic Folk Music, in cooperation with the Fyn Conservatory of Music in Odense (Denmark), the Music Academy (Stockholm) and the Sibelius Academy (Helsinki). In Oslo, the folk music programme at the Norwegian Academy of Music offers Bachelor and Masters programmes in performing folk music. Ragnhild Furebotten received her performance education from Rauland (1998–2000) and Oslo (2000–2004).



Figure 1 Ragnhild Furebotten.

A consequence of education is *professionalisation*. Apart from the Hardanger fiddle players in the concert era from the late nineteenth century and onwards,¹ professional folk musicians are a new phenomenon, as more musicians make a living from their music today than was the case years ago. On the other hand, we should not exaggerate the influence of professionalisation, since for most folk musicians, it is not easy to make a living solely from music. Several performers therefore combine their performance activities with other related occupations, such as teaching and administrative work. Furebotten, however, has made a living totally from her music since she completed her studies in 2004. As a freelance musician, she works with different projects, and she has also a position as a regional musician at the institution Culture in Troms. That she has managed to make a living from her music is probably due mainly to her versatility, and the facts that she is an excellent player, makes good compositions, and represents something fresh and new on the Norwegian music scene. One new arena in Norway that has become a good opportunity for professional folk musicians is the Norwegian Hub for Traditional Music and Dance (*Riksscenen*), opened in

2010, supported by the Norwegian State as part of new thinking which puts folk music on par with other music and art forms.²

The great number of festivals and their significance today has been described as a process of *festivalisation*.³ The large and well-established folk music festivals in Førde and Bø in Telemark, which both started in 1990, now must compete with a number of other and smaller festivals, including the Folk Music Days in Ål, Riddu Riddu in Målselv, Hilmarfestivalen in Steinkjer, and the North Sea Festival in Farsund. Additionally there are several non-folk music festivals and local re-enactment plays where folk music and folk musicians are included.

Ragnhild Furebotten and Hekla Stålstrenga have played at a number of festivals in recent years, at some of which they have been headline acts. For Furebotten, festivals are an important arena: for work, to reach larger and wider audiences, and (for performers and audiences alike) to articulate their music and cultural standpoints; thus these events have become identity markers in the changing world. Today, folk musicians have to relate to a *market*. Folk music is no longer a counter-cultural force connected to nationalism, rural areas, and to the Norwegian language movement, but has become a music genre equal to other music genres. Folk musicians are now a part of the music industry, and fiddle players prefer to be referred to as ‘artists’ rather than ‘fiddlers’. A part of this change is that folk musicians (like those in other genres) build and manage their own image and promote or ‘stage’ themselves, in order to be visible. Norwegian folk music has also got its own industry convention, Folkelarm, which is now also a small, annual festival at which the Norwegian Folk Music Awards have been presented ever since the first Folkelarm in 2005.

An unavoidable category in marketing is the label ‘world music’. This started as a category for cataloguing music albums, but by now it is sometimes seen to stand for the mixture of local styles in a ‘global fusion’ or ‘world beat’;⁴ in this sense there is sometimes an ideology of ‘global romanticism’ associated with it.⁵ The influence of ‘world music’ in this sense can be seen in Norway, but it has not made any significant impact on the style of Norwegian folk music played on fiddle. Therefore it is still possible to relate to the concept of ‘world music’ solely as a tool – as a means to sell music and reach new audiences without subscribing to any ideology.

The Norwegian state plays a direct role too, through the organisation Music Norway, encouraging and facilitating the export of Norwegian music, including Norwegian folk music; for many artists this gives a chance of reaching audiences and markets abroad. Ragnhild Furebotten is among the folk musicians who have managed to find a place in this new folk music market. She has played several times at Folkelarm, and given concerts internationally for many years.

New *media*, especially the internet, have changed communications significantly. For folk musicians this gives them the opportunity to learn new tunes and songs and for reaching audiences in ways that were previously not possible. Interactive media like Facebook, YouTube and Myspace have also made it possible for musicians to communicate with fellow musicians and audiences, and to manage their own careers.⁶ Hekla Stålstrenga, with their base in folk music from Northern Norway, is a good example of this marketing trend. When

they issued their first album as a band in 2011, they set up a poll on Facebook for the album name, resulting in its current title *Makramé*.

Such trends make a more equal and symmetrical relation between performers and audiences, leading to a greater democratisation. Yet traditional channels like the radio still play an important role. This is indeed the case with Hekla Stålstrenga, which have had several of their tunes 'A-listed' on Norwegian broadcasting's largest radio channel. In the beginning it was unusual to hear a folk music band in mainstream radio, but now – after just a few years – it has become natural to hear the sound of Hekla Stålstrenga along with other established mainstream, popular artists.

Finally, the new developments on the folk music and fiddle scene can be seen against a backdrop of *mobility*. This is not new, of course, but the extent has reached a new level. We now travel more than ever – in work, culture and tourism – and societies become increasingly multi-cultural as people move and migrate more and more. This globalisation is also connected to faster *communication media*. Yet the folk music scene of Norway is not fundamentally changed by increased mobility and globalisation however, for, as several authors have pointed out, globalisation does not necessarily make the world more homogenous.⁷ Local expressions still live on and flourish, often due to new media like the Internet. In the case of Hekla Stålstrenga, they represent a local style and way of expression from northern Norway. Along with other artists from this part of the country they are 'popular', as a counter culture to the South, which conventionally represents the leading geographical and cultural centre.⁸ Neither has immigration led to any visible changes in the folk music or fiddle styles of Norway. Most of the non-European immigrant communities live their own music lives, though we have several examples of collaborative projects between Norwegian and immigrant musicians. What has influenced Norwegian style more, is Irish and 'Celtic' music from the West, and Swedish music from the East. In both cases this is due to travelling and communication by musicians and audiences alike. In the case of Ragnhild Furebotten and her bands, nothing directly connects them and their recorded music to Swedish or Irish influence, but Furebotten has toured Ireland with her guitarist Tore Bruvoll, who, like many other Norwegian musicians knows and plays Irish traditional music.

The organisational and structural tendencies always interact with the music and the musicians, of course, and sometimes it is difficult to separate these levels. Nevertheless, I will now look at some real and potential trends from a perspective closer to the sounding music.

The 'aesthetic' perspective

Firstly, is *virtuosity* relevant to descriptions of new fiddle music in Norway? Although several of the educated and professional players have reached high artistic and technical levels, virtuosity is not the most striking feature of Norwegian fiddling. Some individual musicians and groups are exceptions (such as the Norwegian-Finnish band Frigg), but the overall impression is that traditional musical dialects remain strong, even for musicians of great virtuosity. Ragnhild Furebotten is regarded as being among the latter, one of the best fiddle players in Norway. Some of her tunes are not only impressively fast, but are technically

and rhythmically solid too. One of the features of her style is the use of extremely fast trills, which, along with other ornaments and embellishments are performed with stylistic integrity, without sounding ‘external’ or ‘classical’ and disturbing the interpretation; musicianship dominates virtuosity, an aesthetic which is well received by audiences.

Perfection is related to virtuosity, but is not the same. This is also something that often follows professionalisation, and my impression is that there is a clear tendency to perfection among the new generation of fiddle performers. Because of the impact of the long-established competitions (*kappleiks*), we might argue that ‘perfect’ playing has been an ideal for a long time, and therefore is nothing new. But the focus on recordings does now make perfection more relevant than before, so that when musicians record and produce studio albums, only the best and most professional results are accepted. In this respect Ragnhild Furebotten is no exception. Her albums and those of Hekla Stålstrenga are professionally produced, and the musicians themselves meet high standards. Live music is another story, of course, as Hekla Stålstrenga is well known for their live performances, with a high level of spontaneity; in this case, the same kind of perfection is not sought.

Some fiddlers play with a notably *polished sound*, closer to classical ideals. However, this is an individual thing, and it is, perhaps, only a tendency, and only in some areas of local tradition, such as Gudbrandsdal; it is also related to other classical traits such as position playing and the fiddle hold (see Egeland in this volume). In contrast, the music of northern Norway is characterised by a roughness, in expression and sound, a style first made known by Susanne Lundeng (b. 1969); when she first participated in competitions (*kappleiks*) in the late 1980s, her rough and vivid style became a fresh contribution to the Norwegian folk music scene.

Furebotten has something of the same energy and force in her playing, although she does not play as vigorously as Lundeng. She also can play subtly, with a controlled timbre and tone formation. Moreover, the singer in Hekla Stålstrenga, Anne Nymo Trulsen, has a slightly throaty voice which has become a hallmark feature of the band. However, their overall expression could still be described as polished, since their albums are well-produced and ‘clean’ (as described earlier). Both polished sound and perfection might be understood in various ways, according to the underlying musical ideals. If Ragnhild Furebotten plays with a rough tone quality, it is still different to some of the music ideals of the 1970s. One example is the folk rock band Vømmøl Spellmannslag (Vømmøl fiddlers), which was incredibly popular, belonging to the Green and political Left movement of the 1970s. They did indeed not pretend to play authentic or traditional music, but folk music was important to their image, and also to their sound, which was rough and unrefined, definitely not in any sense polished. Their ideal was ‘imperfect amateur musicking’: simple arrangements without counter parts and other elements which have become standard today. The style and sound Vømmøl represents is a threatened species today, however. Most folk musicians do still typically play for the personal pleasure of it, and so there are still amateurs around. But in recordings, the kind of rough, lively, spontaneous and collective playing like the style of the 1970s is rarely heard nowadays.

Group playing was not a major feature of folk musics in Scandinavia, and apart from the traditional *spellemannslag*, where a large group of fiddlers play in unison, in Norwegian

folk music solo-playing traditionally dominated. Today, however, modern ‘group’ playing has grown hugely over the last 35 years, a new phenomenon. The roots of this shift are in the late 1970s and early 1980s, when Scandinavian groups such as *Slinkombas*, *Filarfolket* and *Groupa* started. The latter two were Swedish, and unquestionably had national influence on Norway into the early years of the twenty-first century. Interestingly, the introduction of group playing did not necessarily mean the loss of traditional expressions in the music. Despite some use of non-Scandinavian instruments and rhythmical patterns, these early groups insisted on keeping traditional and also archaic elements such as old tonality in their music. Still, the main tendency among most groups is to stick to traditional styles. Playing in groups does not necessarily mean loss of tradition. Contemporary folk musicians manage group playing in many formats: they know how to arrange their music, and know how they want it performed.⁹ But since the musicians playing in ensembles are usually also solo performers, there seems little need to worry about the future of the solo traditions in Norwegian folk music. Indeed, the most popular categories at the Norwegian Traditional Music and Dance Competition (*Landskappleiken*) are still those for solo playing. Ragnhild Furebotten has played in many formats, from duo to larger bands like Majorstuen and Hekla Stålstrenga; symptomatically therefore, her ‘solo’ album *Never on a Sunday* (2011) was not a typical solo project, but a challenging group-playing one. Furebotten is part of other projects too, a versatility which is typical of the new generation of Norwegian folk fiddlers.

Composing is another tendency among modern folk musicians. The background to this is not only artistic, but has also to do with money. It is not easy to make a decent living from folk music performance, as when a purely traditional tune is played in a public performance or is broadcasted, it will not earn any copyright money through the Norwegian Performing Rights Society (TONO). For arranging, some money is awarded even when the piece is unpublished as written music. But actual composed tunes give the highest score and generate most money in this system. Professional folk musicians adjust to this, though some are more concerned about it and compose more than others. Over a period of perhaps ten to fifteen years, we have seen an increase in the output of composed folk music. The band Majorstuen (with which Ragnhild Furebotten played in the 1990s) plays much more composed music on their second album than on their first. Furebotten herself has composed a lot of tunes, and we should, indeed, be careful to appreciate the creativity in such composition despite the issues of money and business. Furebotten’s tunes are well constructed, and sometimes she has produced real pearls, such as the Christmas song ‘Juledrøm’ [‘Christmas Dream’] (composed with Jorun Marie Kvernberg) and the slow waltz ‘Hjertebank’ [‘Heartbeat’].

That folk musicians today orient in various directions results in a *diversity of style*. Some fiddlers are able to play different styles, for instance Norwegian traditional, Irish and bluegrass, but they rarely mix them. Others are not afraid of blending styles and adding exotic elements to their folk music. This is, of course, very individual, according to the profile of the musician or group; it is in fact the individual blend and innovation that creates the profile and identity of a band.

Small changes and developments in musical expressions belongs to what might be described as border negotiations. What is considered to be ‘Norwegian folk music’ today

is not the same as it was in the late 1980s. While people negotiate the border, it moves – slightly and slowly – as traditional music takes in elements from singer-songwriters, rock, improvisation and other styles and genres. The process goes so slowly that the new expressions are not considered to be hybrid. Considering this, and the fact that Ragnhild Furebotten is deeply rooted in the traditional style of playing, I do not characterise her as an ‘experimental’ musician, but she is still open-minded and her musicking is developing. Her band Hekla Stålstrenga seems to have found its music identity, and it will probably not see the point in experimenting too much. If there has been a movement in its career, it must be towards the more *smooth* sound of mainstream popular music, which is not really fusion or hybridity. At the same time, in some tunes, Furebotten does move away from her native music landscape. For instance, the tune ‘Franz Kafka’ (on Hekla Stålstrenga’s 2011 album *Makramé*) gives an impression of Balkan music with a virtuoso touch to it. At the same time, it hints towards *Americana*, since it is played with banjo (the increasing use of which, in Norwegian folk, is also interesting). Her solo *Never on a Sunday* is a cross-over project where her traditional fiddle meets a big band with six musicians, unconventional arrangements, and a playful interaction between the fiddle and the band; it is quite innovative and unconventional, with touches of jazz, *avant garde* and even classical elements.

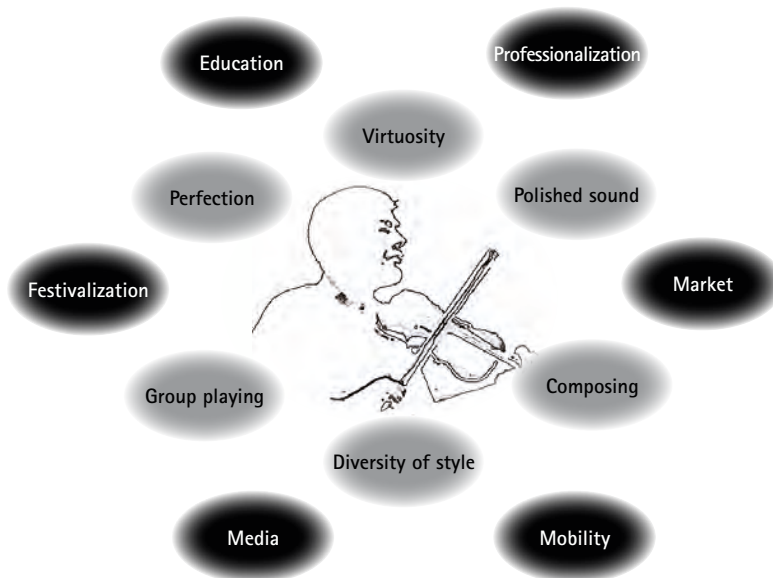


Figure 2 Tendencies and developments surrounding contemporary fiddle playing, from an organisational and structural level (outer circle), and from a level closer to the music and musicians (inner circle). *Illustration by Ann-Turi Ford.*

The trends and developments discussed here are not meant to be a complete picture of reality: they are offered as tools for reflection and analysis. The problem with discussions on broad categories is that the limited words may be too simple to put across the enormity of what goes on: in reality, there are many contradictions. The conclusion

is, however, that modern fiddlers do *tend* to move away from tradition and may not be concerned with preserving and transmitting styles and ideas from the previous generation of fiddlers. But at the same time, many of the new ‘educated’ fiddlers are trained to preserve and cherish traditional playing, and indeed – at some educational institutions, for instance the Ole Bull Academy – the students have to visit traditional players, where they learn according to the master-apprentice model. There is, too, great diversity among the fiddlers – according to which institution they are educated at, where they live and work, which kind of arenas they work in, their individuality, personal choice and much more. And, finally, it is important to remark that the amateur-based folk music movement which cherishes solo playing and *spellemannslag* alike continues to flourish, and is now partly integrated with the professionalised ‘great tradition’. This is another reason not to worry that education, professionalisation, adjustment to markets, and other developments will move Norwegian fiddling away from its heritage.

Notes

¹ Håkon Asheim, *Fra bruksmusikk til ‘lydarspel’: Konsertradisjonen i hardingfelemusikken med hovedvekt på Valdres-spelemannen Olav Moe (1872–1967)*, (thesis, ‘Utrykt hovedoppgave i musikk’, University of Oslo, 1995).

² Odd-Are Berkaak, ‘Riksscene for folkemusikk og folkedans’, *En utredning på oppdrag fra Norsk folkemusikk og danselag* (Oslo: NFD, 2004).

³ Dan Lundberg, Krister Malm, and Owe Ronström, *Music, Media, Multiculture: Changing Musicscapes* (Stockholm: Svenskt visarkiv, 2003).

⁴ Steven Feld, ‘A Sweet Lullaby for World Music’, *Public Culture*, 12, no. 1 (2000), 145–171.

⁵ Tellef Kvifte, ‘Hunting for Gold at the End of the Rainbow: Identity and Global Romanticism – On the Roots of Ethnic Music’, *Popular Musicology Online*, 2001, <http://www.popular-musicology-online.com/issues/04/kvifte.html> [accessed June 2015].

⁶ Mats Johansson, ‘Nordisk folkmusik som stilkonsept’, *Norsk Folkemusikklags skrift*, 23 (2009), 34–65.

⁷ Mark Slobin, *Subcultural Sounds: Micromusic of the West* (Hanover: Wesleyan University Press, 2000); Lundberg, Malm, and Ronström, 2003; Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Globalisation: The Key Concepts* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).

⁸ Ove Larsen, ‘Nordområdenes musikk – om folkemusikkens rolle og stilling sett fra nord’, *Musikk og tradisjon*, 25 (2011), 120–147.

⁹ Tellef Kvifte, ‘Folkemusikk, samspill og forandring. Mellom tradisjon og fornying’, *Musikk og tradisjon*, 24 (2010), 32–40.

The Donegal ‘Highland’ tunes: origins and movement of a dance-driven genre

CAOIMHÍN MAC AOIDH

Origins of the strathspey

Around 1745 James Oswald published two of his compositions each entitled ‘A New Strathspey Reel’.¹ These comprise the first known occurrences of the word *strathspey* to indicate a music-form as a rhythmic variant of the reel. Shortly after, the earliest violin tutor for Scot’s fiddling was published in Perth by James Gillespie and included a limited number of ‘strathspeys’ and ‘strathspey reels’.² Over time the strathspey effectively became the archetypal Scottish traditional form. Its development has been such that it is not only ubiquitous in Scotland, but it was taken by Scots emigrants to Nova Scotia, and Cape Breton in particular, where it remains today a strong element of the local repertoire. All significant Scottish players post-dating Oswald incorporated the strathspey in their repertoires, with many adding new strathspey compositions. Fiddlers’ bowing patterns emphasise the characteristic dotted rhythm, particularly in the ‘Scots snap’ and the ‘driven bow’.³ It is generally accepted that these techniques were initially perfected by Neil Gow (1727–1807). Such has become the popularity of the strathspey that the prolific composer James Scott Skinner (1843–1927) self-styled himself ‘The Strathspey King’.

The strathspey in Ireland

The dispersal of the strathspey in Ireland has not been systematically analysed to date, but there is a received wisdom which has general acceptance. This holds that the strathspey was devised in the mid-1700s in Scotland, travelled to Ireland through returning migrant labourers and only slowly found some favour in northern counties, not spreading south of County Sligo.⁴ This notion of the strathspey having a slow and highly-restricted geographical evolution in Ireland must now be challenged on the basis of the Goodman Manuscripts which contain tunes which were transcribed mostly from pipers in counties Kerry and Cork. It isn’t known when Goodman began to transcribe the material, but since he did begin committing the work to manuscript volumes on 2 May 1861, it seems clear that the actual collecting work was begun prior to that date.⁵ Among Goodman’s tunes, ‘Fr. Murphy’s Quick Step’ (no. 199) demonstrates all the hallmarks of the strathspey, and another (no. 429) is titled ‘Strathspey’.

The former tune is clearly the well-known strathspey 'The Banks of Inverness' or 'The Kilt is my Delight' or, as it is played in Ireland in a reel setting, 'The Kerryman's Daughter'; there is no mistaking his assignment of the second tune. This inclusion in the repertoire of pipers in the far southwest of Ireland suggests that the dispersal of the strathspey from its origins in the Spey Valley of Scotland was more widespread and more rapid perhaps than previously thought. It is worth noting too that the uilleann piper O'Farrell, publishing in London between 1805 and 1810, also includes a number of strathspeys in his work.⁶

The strathspey in Donegal

The dominant medium for the transmission of strathspeys into Donegal would have been seasonal workers, a form of labour migration which did not come to an effective end until as recently as the 1960s. These 'tattie hoking squads' (as they are dubbed), typically male for potato harvesting and female for fish gutting, 'hired' themselves in Scotland for periods of up to six months. Living in 'bothies', squads often had among them at least one member who could provide music for entertainment in the evenings. Accounts of bothy life documenting the assimilation of local Scottish tunes are provided in the autobiographical works of Róise Rua Nic Grianna⁷ and Patrick MacGill.⁸ The memories of the Campbell brothers, Jimmy and Vincent, who worked in construction squads in the Highlands hydroelectric schemes as recently as the mid to late 1950s also confirm such social circumstances.⁹ Some Donegal fiddlers adopted a more proactive approach to learning tunes while in Scotland. Francie Dearn Ó Beirn recounted to me how he came to learn the strathspey 'Agnes Campbell'.¹⁰ One time he had a few hours to pass in Glasgow while awaiting the sailing home, he came upon a Scottish fiddler playing the tune in the street. Keen to learn it, but not wishing to draw attention, he stood in the recess of a doorway until he had it memorised. When he brought the untitled tune home, it became a favourite of his neighbour, Agnes Campbell, and was thus titled after her, but the tune is actually James Scott Skinner's 'Forbes Morrison'. The specific date of arrival of strathspeys in Donegal, where they are most popular in the Irish context, is uncertain, but it is likely that they were being performed there by 1800. Despite the fact that Donegal fiddlers would compose highlands, as well as tunes in other rhythms, with the exception of Tommy Peoples and Séamus Gibson, strathspey composition has not been a feature of the Donegal tradition.

The emergence of the 'highland' in Donegal

This tune type is inexorably tied to the strathspey. Though clearly most popular and abundant in County Donegal, highlands are often erroneously associated exclusively with that county, but in a regional context they actually have been more popular in Ulster. But it is also worth noting that there are highlands in the southern and western parts of Ireland which are all derived from the most common Scottish melodies. By way of example, the collection of tunes by P. J. Giblin published in 1928, documenting some of the repertoire of north Connacht musicians, includes two tunes of interest, namely the 'Scotch Strathspey', 'Stirling Castle', 'Scotch Fling' and the 'Orange and Blue'.¹¹ When, how and even why Donegal musicians first began to create highlands remains unclear. The form appears to have been around now for possibly a century and a half, and folk memory loses much specific detail over such a

time span. Also, the Irish tradition, viewed alongside the Scottish tradition, does not have a comparably-strong base of literary documentation. Little analytical writing is available to confirm the introduction and development of the highland either, but some evidence allows the evolution of the tune type to be established. The vast majority of the highland repertoire in Donegal derives from Scottish strathspeys. In the absence of any pre-existing rhythmic group, or proto-highland, which failed to be passed along to the present, it is reasonable to assume that the Donegal highlands must post-date the mid-1700s at the earliest, given the emergence of the strathspey at that time. In short, a process of transmission has occurred whereby Scottish strathspey melodies were assimilated by Donegal musicians and subsequently adapted into highlands. Further clues to the dating of the highland tradition in Ireland are also deductible from the fact that many of the composers of source strathspeys are known, as are the original dates of publication of many of the more-popular strathspeys which gave rise to highlands.

Complications of terminology

Confusion has existed between the use of terms applied to the highland. The Sligo fiddlers documented in America in the first half of the twentieth century recorded what are considered to be highlands, but under the title ‘flings’.¹² This was also the case with the Irish-Midlands fiddler Packie Dolan.¹³ The manuscripts of the Sliabh Luachra fiddle master Pádraig O’Keeffe contain a limited number of flings too,¹⁴ and the County Antrim fiddler Pat O’Hare consistently called recognisable highlands in his repertoire ‘highland schottisches’.¹⁵ James O’Neill, the transcriber in the O’Neill’s collection projects, composed many tunes, among them (in his sole, surviving manuscript book) a ‘Fling’ (31 March 1900).¹⁶ This shows a distinct, dotted rhythm and could be played either as a strathspey or a highland. In short, highlands have been variously called ‘highlands’, ‘flings’, ‘highland flings’ and ‘highland schottisches’. Indeed, the word ‘schottische’ is sometimes suffixed to highlands by some Irish traditional musicians.

As there is no contemporary corroborative evidence for the local etymology of the term, we are dependent on reasonable theories of explanation regarding the origin of the highland. The most reasonable theory proposed is that held by the late fiddler and scholar, Danny O’Donnell. He believed that the term ‘highland’ originated to distinguish the dance-form known today as a ‘highland’ from a ‘barn dance’, which was alternatively known in parts of Donegal as a ‘german’. The latter is of course associated with the German form ‘schottische’ which had developed in Bohemia by the early 1800s taking its title from the German word for ‘Scottish’.¹⁷ The tune-type was intended to mimic, evoke or to have similarities to Scottish dance rhythms, and several compositions subtitled ‘German Schottische’ quickly appeared, and by the mid-1800s the form had attained a firm popularity in dance-halls across Europe; by the end of that century it had spread to North America, Australia and New Zealand. It was introduced into England in 1848 where it became known as the ‘German polka’.¹⁸

Musicians from a variety of countries began composing schottisches, and composers in Scotland often subtitled their pieces ‘Highland Schottische’, most likely as a mark of national pride and authenticity, and to distinguish the tunes’ provenances from the

otherwise-established 'German Schottische'. Today, such a tune-form is commonly in 4/4 time as is the case with the strathspey. According to Danny O'Donnell, printed scores of both German Schottisches and Highland Schottisches began arriving in the later decades of the 1800s.¹⁹ Local fiddlers, anxious to learn the tunes from those who could read them, correctly concluded that the 'German Schottische' in fact rhythmically equated with what, by then, had been well-established in the Irish tradition as a 'barn dance'. As such, they applied the title 'german' to a barn dance, a usage which still remains in some parts of Donegal. Alternatively, Donegal fiddlers of the late 1800s concluded that the 'Highland Schottische' tunes must therefore equate with a 'highland'. Thus, establishment of the labels for both the 'highland' and the 'barn dance' arose from the attempts to distinguish various forms of the schottische. There is some firm supporting evidence for this interpretation of terminology and dance metres as put forward by Danny O'Donnell. This can be found in the titling of tunes of differing rhythms, and in the dancing tutor-book by James Scott Skinner.²⁰ Also, writing in 1931, Grace Orpen outlined the figures (choreography) for the couple dance which is performed in Donegal for both a highland and a barn dance.²¹ In summary therefore, it is most likely that in Donegal the term 'highland' emerged from the usage of 'Highland Schottische' as applied to adapted strathspeys, and to a much lesser extent, adapted reels and new 4/4 compositions. Likewise, the term 'german' derived from 'German Schottische' as applied to barn dances; the term 'schottische' is not used with any frequency in Donegal at all.

The influences of dancing on the highland as a tune

Having become established as a popular dance rhythm, the highland tune-form was developed by Donegal musicians in four principal ways:

- primarily through the adaptation of strathspeys into highlands;
- by composing new highland melodies;
- by using existing reels as the basis for new highlands;
- through adapting existing song airs.

The adaptation of strathspeys into highlands demonstrates some curious inconsistencies. Some popular strathspeys, such as 'The Ewie wi the Crookit Horn' were converted into highlands, while others, such as 'Stirling Castle', were not. And, an indication that the Donegal fiddlers' instinct to convert strathspeys into highlands has continued to recent times is seen in some of the relatively-recent strathspey compositions of James Scott Skinner being adapted into highlands. While it is popularly believed amongst practitioners that a great deal of the Donegal highlands were composed locally, there is little evidence to support this. Relative to the overall repertoire, only a few highlands are known to have been or suspected of having been, composed locally. Folklore held that it was commonplace for reels which were deemed to be not sufficiently satisfactory for playing would be tested for use as a highland, a view articulated by Packie Manus Byrne: 'Highlands were, and they still are, failed reels, and they're hellish nice tunes'.²² While the highland versions of 'Sportin' Paddy', 'Lord McDonald's', 'The Wheels of the World', 'Drowsy Maggie', and 'The High

Road to Linton’ are each examples of conversions from reels, there is little evidence of this practice having been widespread. Two examples of the adaptation of song airs to highlands are ‘A Stór a Stór a Ghrá’, and ‘A Shéamuis Bhig a’ bhFuil Ocras Ort?’. However, these are exceptions, for the bulk of the Donegal highland repertoire derives from Scottish strathspey melodies.

Influences from dance tradition

A critical factor which must be taken into account when considering the development of the highland over decades is its fundamental co-relationship with dancing. The rhythmic form and the dance were interdependent until the relatively-recent onset of the decline in traditional social dancing. Historically, a musician had to take into account the speed and rhythm of the dancers’ performance, and, once established, it was only natural that local dances continued to evolve. In Donegal, three overall types of dancing highlands emerged, with some local variations in steps being devised. The most common type was a couple dance referred to in the Irish language as the ‘Highland Beag’ (a little highland), sometimes known as the ‘Closed Highland’.²³ A minor variant on this dance contained additional steps and was known as the ‘Highland Garbh’ (a rough highland), sometimes known as the ‘Open Highland’.²⁴ Another, the ‘Highland Gaelach’ (Irish highland) differed significantly in that it was performed by a male flanked on either side by a female²⁵ and danced to the tune ‘The Devil in the Kitchen’.

It is highly likely that the method of adapting strathspeys into highlands is tied to the fundamental differences in the two dances. The strathspey is generally a solo dance performed in a confined space and requiring specific footwork to articulate the characteristic, heavily dotted rhythm. The highland, however, is danced by a couple, and in the typical Donegal dance setting of the central area of houses, typically known as ‘the kitchen’. In this slightly more-spacious setting highlands were danced in a freer form, resulting in a more flowing rhythm, requiring wider, more fluid movement with less concentration on detailed footwork. It is not surprising therefore that the strong dotted characteristic rhythm of the strathspey became smoothed, though not eliminated, in the playing of highlands.

Highland tempo

Tempo is also a primary difference between the two rhythms, as highlands are played faster than strathspeys. Packie Manus Byrne, like other Donegal musicians, maintained that:

The reels were slowed down to fit the dance, and that’s when the dance became highlands. A highland is quicker than a strathspey – in between a strathspey and a reel.²⁶

When the performances of highlands by Donegal musicians who routinely played for house-dancing are examined, the typical tempo lies in a range of 160–180 crochets per minute, compared to strathspeys which, are commonly performed around 126–138 crochets per minute.²⁷ In 1851 John Thomas Surennes²⁸ noted the strathspey tempo as 94 minims per minute while James S. Kerr indicates a range of 96 minims and 120 per minute for

strathspeys and reels respectively.²⁹ Jean Duval and Stephen Jones indicate a tempo of 83–90 minims per minute of highlands as performed by Packie Manus Byrne,³⁰ and Pete Cooper indicates a tempo of 88 minims per minute for highlands.³¹ Breathnach is of the opinion that hornpipes should be played at a tempo of approximately 180 crochets per minute and reels around 224.³² In this case, highlands are generally played slower than hornpipes with the remnant dotted rhythm and strings of triplets characteristic of the strathspey adding to the distinction. The tempo of highlands is not a definitive or conclusive matter, however. Since highlands originated for dance accompaniment, their speed was originally directly controlled by the dancers' tempo choice and ability to dance to the tune. Yet, even with this controlling mechanism, the tempo of playing highlands varied between groups of dancers both within and between localities. Dancers in some localities preferred to dance to a relatively faster highland tempo while others liked them played slower.

To complicate the matter, as noted above, there were at least three different versions of the highland dance. In general the Irish highland required the tune to be played slightly slower, given the more complex movements.³³ With the gradual decline in traditional dancing over the past five decades, all forms of Donegal dance music have been changing from music for dancers to music for listeners. The break in the linkage with dance timing has resulted in players of highlands being able to perform them at speeds no longer related to dancing, something which has typically resulted in musicians playing them faster than they were performed historically – for the purposes of a heightened listening impact. A survey of the tempo values for all of the tunes in my Highland collection *From Dunkeld to Dunkineely* shows tempo extremes ranging from 140 to 228 crochets per minute. Danny O'Donnell intentionally played highlands at the dancer tempo which he played at house dances in his youth. This was typically around 145 crochets per minute.

Possible influence of the McGettigan recordings

One possible exception which contradicts the idea that highlands were historically played more slowly than they are today is the tempo of those recorded during the late 1920s and 1930s by bands led by Carrigart native, John McGettigan (1882–1965). These were played briskly, from 184 to 214 crochets per minute, a tempo faster than that typically played today, and particularly in contrast to the 145 cpm tempo of Danny O'Donnell; this speedier approach is also reflected in Hugh Gillespie's 1938 recording of 'The Finnea Lassies' and 'Gurren's Castle' (190 cpm). It is impossible to determine whether these performances reflect the highland dance tempo of the early 1900s as known to McGettigan and Gillespie in their youth in Donegal, or were they simply performances accelerated for listening impact. Another significant aspect of the McGettigan highlands recordings is the recent evidence indicating that they served as the source for some of the subsequent Coleman and Killoran recordings.³⁴

Melodic and rhythmic adjustments

In addition to tempo adjustments, some melodic changes also occurred in transforming strathspeys into highlands. The wider melodic intervals of strathspeys are sometimes compressed, and clusters of triplets, commonly descending at the end of tunes towards the

final tonic resolution in strathspeys, are sometimes simplified by changing the triplets to pairs of quavers corresponding to the first and last notes of the triplet group. Older Donegal players often referred to the need to put a ‘skip’ in the playing of a highland’s rhythm to perform it properly for dancers. In this case, where a sequence of triplets occurs in a strathspey the first triplet is substituted with a two-note interval, while the second triplet is retained to provide the ‘skip’ and then the sequence reverts without triplets. Another example of a device for injecting a skip into the rhythm of a highland can be found in John Doherty’s playing of ‘The Brown Sailed Boat’ (Peter Bailie). In this instance the Scottish snap combination of a semi-quaver and a dotted quaver on the first and third beat of the bar, immediately followed on the second and fourth beats by a pair of quavers, produces a marked skipping effect in the rhythm of the tune.

Scottish strathspeys commonly employ a string of four staccato semiquavers to enhance the melody. In changing strathspeys to highlands, Donegal musicians almost always substitute a triplet for the four semiquavers making the melody less angular and more fluid. Untypical of the Irish tradition in general, however, when playing highlands, Donegal fiddlers were quite happy to absorb some of the technical features of the Scottish tradition. In this case, they included playing in flat keys and in positions above the first – which are otherwise generally uncommon in other Irish regions.³⁵

Recent changes

Since the 1970s, three developments have affected the playing of highlands and strathspeys as well as the relative popularity of highland tunes within the overall Donegal and Irish repertoires. The first is the impact of commercially-recorded Donegal music, wherein recordings by John Doherty and others who played highlands have certainly changed the relative popularity of these tunes. The second factor, which also has clear links to commercial recordings, is the emergence of Donegal-repertoire-centred bands, a context in which there has been a degree of loss of older, rhythmic elements of the highland as a result of the dynamic ambitions of bands. Third is the fact that the Donegal tradition is a live, evolving one with continuous and new influences and ongoing, consequent changes. Low-cost air fares and land-travel costs have meant that the old connections with Scotland, which in the past were typically based on extended labouring periods, now offer the possibility of regular attendance at short-duration music events. So routine is the connection between Donegal and Scotland today that the communities in both places are served by a daily bus and ferry service between Letterkenny and Glasgow – ‘the bus’ – making it as easy to get to Glasgow as it is to Dublin. Over the first decade of the twenty-first century, Donegal and Scottish musicians are more routinely meeting and playing together, resulting in an enhanced tune-transfer between Irish and Scottish players.

While highlands were played throughout Donegal, they were neither uniformly popular nor significant in local repertoires across the county. Evidence indicates that the area of greatest popularity and with abundance of repertoire was in the southwest of the county centred around the villages of Kilcar, Teelin, Carrick and Glencolmcille. Another stronghold of highlands was in central Donegal taking in the Croaghs and the villages of Glenties and Ardara, extending southwards to the villages of Dunkineely, Mountcharles

and eastwards into Laghey, Pettigo and their rural hinterlands. One well-informed witness to the importance of highlands and their more complex melodic development in the local repertoire of southwest Donegal, the late Danny O'Donnell, a native of the Rosses in northwest Donegal, described how the highlands of his native area were played rhythmically, but in a melodically-simple manner, or with little divergence from the very basic melody line of the tune.⁴² He also recounted that the local repertoire had only a small number of the commonly-known highlands such as 'The Moneymusk' and 'The Braes of Mar'. During his late middle-age years he came to live in South West Donegal close to fiddlers Francie Dearg and Mickey Ban Uí Beirn, routinely socialising with them. In playing together he was astounded at the melodic complexity of their tunes, as well as the great abundance of highlands there compared to in his home place. This led him to dub the South West Donegal peninsula 'The Highland Factory'.

Conclusion

The emergence of the strathspey in the mid-1700s eventually led to melodies of that type being adapted to a rhythmically-freer, melodically simpler and slightly faster form of the highland. Though the highland is most prominent in County Donegal, it has been erroneously assumed to be a tune-type specifically of that county. It has also been confused, through complicated use of terminology, with the barn dance or german. And though it is has been shaped by the requirements of dancers over many decades, it is now largely a variable form of 'listening music'.

Notes

¹ James Oswald, *The Caledonian Pocket Companion*, in twelve parts (London, 1743–1759).

² James Gillespie, *A Collection of the Best and Most Favourite Tunes for the Violin in Four Parts – Also an Introduction and Directions for Playing the Violin* (Perth, 1768).

³ See James Scott Skinner, *A Guide to Bowing Strathspeys, Reels Pastoral Melodies, Hornpipes etc.* (Edinburgh: Bayley and Ferguson, 1900; 1984 reprint); William C. Honeyman, *Strathspey Players Past and Present* (Edinburgh: The Hardie Press, 1984; reprint of 1922 edition), pp. 41–51; William C. Honeyman, *Strathspey, Reel and Hornpipe Tutor* (Dundee: Honeyman Music, 1898; James Hunter, *The Fiddle Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: W. R. Chambers, 1979) [descriptions of traditional Scottish bowing techniques].

⁴ This boundary has derived on the basis of the incorporation of strathspeys in the recordings of Michael Coleman, Paddy Killoran, and James Morrison.

⁵ Hugh Shields (ed.), *Tunes of the Munster Pipers, Irish Traditional Music from the James Goodman Manuscripts* (Dublin: Irish Traditional Music Archive, 1998).

⁶ *O'Farrell's Pocket Companion for the Irish or Union Pipes* (Dublin: 1805–1810). Vol. 3 (1808) of this collection series contains 'Sir Charles Douglas's Strathspey', Vol. 4 (1810) has 'Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey' as well as 'Lord Moira's Welcome to Scotland' (aka 'The Duke of Gordon's Birthday'). Other tunes, such as the latter, which are not indicated as strathspeys by title – but are considered to be strathspeys – also occur throughout the collection.

⁷ Nic Ghríanna, *Róise Rua, Róise Rua; Pádraig Ua Cnáimhsí* (eag.) (Baile Átha Cliath: Sarseail Ó Marcaigh, 1985).

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

- ⁸ Patrick MacGill, *Children of the Dead End* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1914); repr. *The Rat Pit* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1915).
- ⁹ Personal comment, Jimmy and Vincent Campbell. See also *Hydro Days* by Pelicula Films, a documentary for BBC Scotland on life in the hydro dam bothies which features the recollections of Jimmy and Vincent Campbell.
- ¹⁰ Personal comment, Francie Dearg Ó Beirn.
- ¹¹ P. J. Giblin, *Collection of Traditional Irish dance Music edited and bowed scientifically for the violin: also 26 original compositions including 14 marches 9 new songs and an Irish saunter arranged for piano or violin*, 3rd edn reprint (Dublin: CRC, 2005).
- ¹² Michael Coleman, James Morrison and Paddy Killoran all recorded tunes that are considered today as highlands. In doing so they variously labelled them ‘flings’, ‘schottisches’ and ‘highland flings’.
- ¹³ Packie Dolan of Ahghadowry, Ballinacucuk, County Longford recorded ‘The Keel Row’ and ‘Love Will You Marry Me’ under the title ‘Lasses of Donnybrook’ in May 1928 and listed them as Highland Flings. Playing in duet with Michael Coleman he recorded ‘Sterling Castle’ and ‘Lady Mary Ramsey’ in March 1927 under the title ‘Miss Ramsey’ where they were listed as ‘Highland Fling’. In contrast, in January, 1929 he recorded ‘The Killarney Wonder’ set listing the tunes as a Schottische.
- ¹⁴ Two tunes simply entitled Flings appear in the collection of over 1,000 transcriptions made by Pádraig O’Keeffe in the manuscript collection in the possession of the author.
- ¹⁵ Private recording c. 1978 made by the author.
- ¹⁶ A copy from the private MSS of James O’Neill, courtesy of Jim McGuire, Chicago.
- ¹⁷ Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne, eds, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 35.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁹ Personal comment, Danny O’Donnell.
- ²⁰ James Scott Skinner, *The Elgin Collection* (London: Cramer, 1884).
- ²¹ Grace Orpen, *Dances of Donegal* (London: D. M. Wilkie, 1931).
- ²² Packie Manus Byrne, *A Dossan of Heather*, comp. and ed. by Jean Duval and Stephen Jones (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay, 2000).
- ²³ Personal comment, Cítí Bean Uí Mhaonaigh. See also Cairdeas na bhFidléirí’s DVD *Damhsaí Cúplaí Thír Chonaill: The Couple Dance of Donegal*, CNFDVD001, 2007.
- ²⁴ Personal comment, Cítí Bean Uí Mhaonaigh.
- ²⁵ Personal comment, Vincent Campbell.
- ²⁶ Byrne, Packie Manus (compiled and edited by Jean Duval and Stephen Jones) op. cit.
- ²⁷ Alastair J. Hardie, *The Caledonian Companion* (London: EMI Music, 1981).
- ²⁸ John Thomas Surenes, *The Dance Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Wood, 1851).
- ²⁹ James Kerr, *Kerr’s Collection of Merry Melodies (in four parts)* (Glasgow: Kerr, c. 1905).
- ³⁰ Duval and Jones in Byrne.
- ³¹ Peter Cooper, *Mel Bay’s Complete Irish Fiddle Player* (Pacific, MO: Mel Bay, 1995).
- ³² Breandán Breathnach, *Ceol Rince na hÉireann*, Vol. 1 (Baile Átha Cliath: Oifig an tSoláthair, 1963).
- ³³ Personal comment, Vincent Campbell.
- ³⁴ Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, *From Dunkeld to Dunkineely: The Highlands and Strathspeys of Donegal* (Béal Átha Seanaigh: CEO Teo, 2012).
- ³⁵ Caoimhín Mac Aoidh, *Between the Jigs and the Reels: The Donegal Fiddle Tradition* (Manorhamilton: Drumlin Publications, 1994).

A favourite Scotch measure: the relationship between a group of Scottish solo dances and the tune ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’

MATS MELIN

Certain Scottish melodies seem to have inspired the dancing masters of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Scotland to devise a diverse set of dances designed to be performed to particular tunes. ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’, a 4/4 Scotch measure, has inspired a number of soft- and hard-shoe solo dances taking their names from the tune, as well as a Scottish country dance. This article focuses on how the creative processes of various dance teachers have left us with three or four dances with varied movement segmentation patterns, and several versions of these dances in relation to versions of the same tune. My aim is to illustrate the diversity of choreographic ideas and motifs in relation to a single tune, but also to examine whether we are dealing with discrete dances from different sources, or rather, similar versions of a smaller, shared repertoire of nineteenth-century dances.

The melody

‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ appears today under many alternative titles in a plethora of music publications. In Scots it appears as ‘Da Flooers o’ Edinburgh’, and in pseudo Gaelic as ‘Blata Duin-Eudain’. James Oswald is said to have composed it, according to eighteenth-century Scottish fiddler Niel Gow among others, sometime around 1740 in Lowland Scotland – even though Oswald does not claim it himself. Oswald was a Scottish musician, composer, arranger, cellist, music publisher, and dancing master born in Crail, Fife, in 1710. He died in Knebworth, Hertfordshire in 1769, having moved to London from Edinburgh in 1741.¹ Written music for the tune first appears in print in 1742 in London in Oswald’s *Curious Collection of Scots Tunes (II)* as a ‘crude’ song under the title ‘My love’s bonny when She Smiles on me’.² It appears again in another collection by Oswald in 1750 with the words ‘Love was once a Bonny Lad’, and Oswald himself republished it in 1751 in his volume *Caledonian Pocket Companion* under the title ‘The Flower of Edinburgh’ (see Figure 1).³ The tune should be classified as a ‘Scotch Measure’ but it is commonly played as a 2/4 or 4/4 reel. It seems to have been played normally in an AABB (= 32 bars of music) tune motif

sequence, which suits all of the soft-shoe versions and the country dance, while this structure only fits some of the hard-shoe arrangements. At least one of the hard-shoe arrangements, known as ‘Dannsa nan Flurs’ collected in Cape Breton Island, Canada, in 1957 by Frank Rhodes, was danced to the less common structure of ABAB (= 32 bars of music).

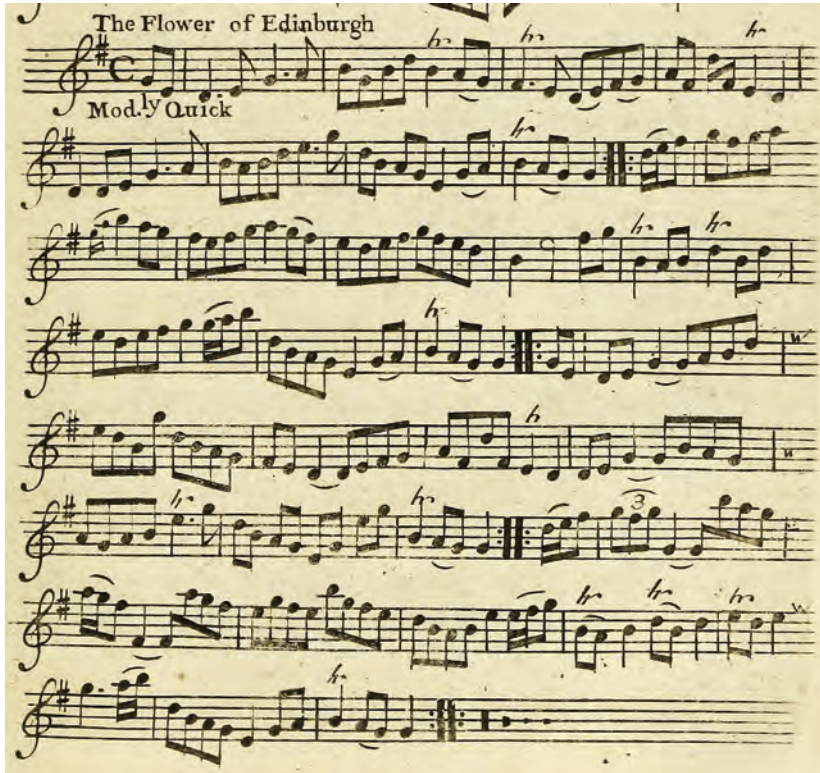


Figure 1 Oswald’s *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, 1751, volume 3, page 19.

The Scottish solo dance tradition

Researchers Emmerson (1972) and the Fletts (1996) have described the Scottish solo dance tradition in great detail, but it is useful here to single out some facts. The term ‘high dance’ appears in many dancing master repertoires in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Many music collections reflect this, with tune titles such as ‘Miss –’s High Dance’ or ‘Mr –’s High Dance’ as dedications to their patrons, especially for the children of the gentry, and for favourite pupils. Other dance name terms in use were ‘Pas Seul’ as in the dance ‘A Pas Seul for Miss Jane Forbes’, or simply naming the type of dance after a person such as in ‘Gayton’s Hornpipe’.⁴ Very few of these dances or step arrangements seem to have survived into present day and it is quite likely that most were only made for specific people or families. Another group of solo dances are those like the Highland fling which do not necessarily have a specific tune linked with them. These dances seem, rather, to have groups of suitable strathspeys, reels, or hornpipes associated with them.

In the cases where tunes and dance names correlate, the list includes dances such as 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' (2/4 or 4/4 Scotch measure), 'Highland Laddie' (2/4 or 4/4 reel), 'Over the Water to Charlie' (6/8 jig), 'Gorm' (4/4 strathspey), 'Blue Bonnets' (6/8 jig), 'The Lads wi' the Kilt' (Gillean an Fheilidh, 6/8 jig), 'Over the Hills and Far Away' (4/4 reel or hornpipe), 'Calum Brougach' ('Calum Crubach' or 'Miss Drummond of Perth', 4/4 strathspey), and 'Dusty Miller' (3/2, 3/4, or 6/4 hornpipe) to name but a few. They all exist in various versions, with each version distinct in its appearance in relation to its geographical occurrence or in its character displaying a particular dancing master's trademark movements. A number of 'new' dances have been devised to particular tunes too since the 1950s, particularly within the framework of the Scottish Highland and Country Dance organisations.

These dances have survived to this day through a combination of oral tradition and that same oral tradition being written up and published, notably by the Fletts and Rhodes in the 1950s and 1960s.⁵ It further survives through a few historical notebook entries, for example the 1841 Hill manuscript,⁶ and through a number of dancing masters' published ballroom guides. More recently, many similar versions of these dances have been recorded and published in dance examination instruction manuals belonging to the BATD, ISTD, SDTA, UKAPTD organisations, and by the New Zealand Academy of Highland and National Dancing. Since the 1960s a number of publications by Scottish dance teachers and dancing groups have also featured versions of these dances, notably the RSCDS publication *The St Andrew's Collection of Step Dances*, volume 1 (2009) and volume 2 (2010).⁷

Before the advent of national dance organisations (or similar) and the standardisation of dance vocabulary, each dancing master described these dances using his own terminology. This inevitably results in differences of interpretation of written material, as vocabulary used to describe the versions of the dances is thus not consistent from version to version. The formerly-prevalent tradition of handing down the dance orally has come to take second place to written instructions as primary sources. A contrast to this process can be seen in the Irish solo set dance tradition in which, for example, arrangements of the dance 'The Blackbird' (dance- and tune-name is the same) are passed on orally within modern dance organisations, dance schools, and by individual dance teachers, or as remembered as danced in certain areas by particular dancers. Few of these dances have been researched and notated in detail with the exception of Foley's research on North Kerry solo step dances (2012, 2013), where a version of 'The Blackbird' can be found.⁸ The Irish tradition's competition circuit allows for a certain amount of creativity within the oral transmission of these solo set dances, so at any given time a number of versions of a dance devised for a single tune are in use. Few of these named Scottish dances have versions performed in hard-shoe, as solo percussive step dances, but 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' is one of the few that exists in many versions, and as both a hard-shoe and a soft-shoe solo dance, and as a social country dance.

'The Flowers of Edinburgh': soft-shoe versions

It has not been possible to establish with certainty an originator for any of the soft- or hard shoe versions of 'The Flowers of Edinburgh'. We can only establish that they existed in both eastern and western Scotland from the mid-nineteenth century. Looking at the

available notations in chronological order, it seems that the current soft shoe version danced in Scotland are variants of arrangements of six 16-bar-long soft-shoe steps initially danced to the tune ‘Highland Laddie’, another well-known Scotch measure in 2/4 or 4/4 from the early twentieth century.

The earliest of these arrangements of 6 steps appears in 1929 in dance teacher G. Douglas Taylor’s book *Some Traditional Scottish Dances* and is given as ‘Highland Laddie’.⁹ Taylor does not give us his source for his notation. Keeping in mind that a version of ‘Highland Laddie’ devised by Dundee dancing master David Anderson was re-arranged into the double jig time (6/8) by Highland dance teacher Jack McConachie (1906-1966) in 1952 and renamed as ‘Bonnie Dundee’.¹⁰ It is quite possible that some dance arrangements over time have become associated with different tunes in this manner. Indeed, dance teacher Colin Robertson suggests that Jack McConachie, with so many versions of ‘Highland Laddie’ existing from different sources, decided to find suitable alternative tunes for some of them and changed the name in order to separate and preserve the versions of the same ‘title’ dance – hence ‘Bonnie Dundee’ and ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’.¹¹

Thus, most soft-shoe dances labelled ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ seem to be versions of the Taylor’s dance. In the 1972 posthumously published description of ‘Flowers of Edinburgh’ by Jack McConachie it is labelled as being a Hebridean dance. This is not quite accurate as the version known today in the Hebrides was introduced by Fearchar MacNeil in the 1980s and was taken from McConachie’s publication. In fact, it seems that all subsequent versions found relate back to McConachie, as in the case of the late Aberdeen dance teacher Robert ‘Bobby’ Watson’s version.¹² In the same manner, London-based dance teacher Colin Robertson published a version very similar to McConachie’s in the 1970s. The late Dundee dance teacher Charlie Mill’s version from 1986 is another similar example. The UKAPTD published a similar version in the early 1990s, while Janet T. MacLachlan from Canada compiled two very similar versions in the late 1980s. I myself learnt two versions from Katie Ann MacKinnon and Fearchar MacNeil in the Isle of Barra in 1989. These latter versions were referred to as ‘Lusan Dhun Èideann’ in Gaelic at the time.

In researcher Tom Flett’s archives, which are privately held, there are mentioned a ‘Flowers of Edinburgh’. Flett’s sources indicate that these steps originated with the Greenock-born dancing master Ewen MacLachlan (c. 1799–1879) who taught in South Uist and Barra from around 1840s to the 1860s. D. G. MacLennan (1952) mentions that Ewen MacLachlan taught a version of ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’, but he does not describe it. The vague fragments of descriptions given of the dance indicate a hard shoe dance incorporating difficult shuffling movements. The Fletts only found a few steps and refer to it as a beating-dance similar to the style and versions of dances taught on the mainland by Mr Adamson of Fife and Mr Anderson of Dundee.¹³ Going through the Flett archive notebook manuscript we find, for example, an entry indicating that one South Uist source, John MacLeod, never learnt the ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ from another local dancer, Archie MacPherson, as he found it too difficult because it contained a double treble done simultaneously with both feet and a step in which the dancer drops on one knee.¹⁴ A similar movement is described in ‘The Trumpet Hornpipe’ found in the Hill manuscript of 1941.¹⁵ John MacLeod did, however,

know another hard-shoe dance, 'The First of August' ('Latha Lunasdail'), which has been described fully by both the Fletts (1996) and by Metherell (1982).

The Fletts also found indications that the hard-shoe dance arrangement was known under other names in the Hebrides. They found fragments of steps of 'Carraig Fhearghais' ('Maillie' or 'Màili a Chrandonn'), and from what their sources told them it suggests that this was the same dance as 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', but performed to a different tune. I have not been able to trace either tune or any song related to these names that could be danced to. It is worth noting that 'Carraig Fhearghais' included a step where the dancer drops on one knee, a movement that was mentioned earlier. According to South Uist source Donald Walker, this solo dance had complicated arm movements, when he recalled Donald 'Roidean' MacDonald performing it. Dr MacLean, the island doctor in 1955, who guided Frank Rhodes in his research, said that 'Màili a Chrandonn' ('Mary of the Brown Mast' [tree]) was the song sung to the tune 'Fheargais'. Dr MacLean had a tape recording of this tune at the time, which he played to Rhodes. Dr MacLean related that the song was in praise of a rock, Carraig Fhearghais, which a lost man remembers and thus enables him to get back on his path for home. Slightly different is the tale from Mrs Monk of Benbecula, then around 70 (28 April 1955), who told Rhodes that the song was composed in praise of a girl, Mary, with a round face and brown hair, who put up the composer of the song for a night when he was lost, and set him on his way again the next day. Mrs Monk had not heard of a dance called 'Carraig Fheargais'. I refer to Flett for further general information on these Hebridean dances.¹⁶ It is conceivable that 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Carraig Fheargais', and 'The First of August' are all arrangements of a collection of steps known by and/or devised by Ewen MacLachlan that he set to different music.

That the soft-shoe dance descriptions are versions of the same dance becomes even clearer if one makes aspects of a basic structural analysis. The soft-shoe dance consists of movement motifs that are common in all other reel and strathspey dances in the Scottish solo dance tradition. Named motifs such as 'shake-shake-down', 'high cuts', 'shake', 'Fling turn', and 'back step' are all commonly understood as used in written Scottish dance descriptions since the 1950s at least. Structurally the soft-shoe versions have in common an 8-bar long 'step', which is danced off the right foot and repeated off the left foot giving a 16-bar, or one music part repeated. In Scotland the tune is generally played AABB so each step in full would fit an AA or BB part of the tune. A full dance, as six steps is a common length, would musically be AABB AABB AABB (96 bars). It is furthermore common today to have a short 4-bar introduction played which is generally bars 5-8 of the A-part, to allow for a bow to be performed by the dancer. When I asked Fearchar McNeil about this in 1989 he said that when he was young, there was no formal introduction. The music started and you simply got going on the dance was his recollection.¹⁷

All soft-shoe versions have a 2-bar finishing motif acting as an A or B part finisher for each 8-bar part of the music and which stays the same throughout the dance on bars 7-8 of each repeat. The first 6-bars of each step consist of three 2-bar long phrases. The three repeat patterns for the 11 versions (1929–present) known to me are in Figure 2.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

The style in which these dances are performed today commonly conforms to the preferred modern day, light and technical Scottish Highland dance aesthetics. The descriptions accessible are all using the foot and arm positions and step terminology as

8 bars = Phrase 1 (2 bars) / Phrase 2 (2 bars) / Phrase 1 (2 bars – Same or Mirrored) / Finishing Motif	(Steps 1, 4 and 5)
8 bars = Phrase 1 RF (2 bars) / Phrase 1 LF (2 bars) / Phrase 1 RF (2 bars) / Finishing Motif	(Step 2)
8 bars = Phrase 1 (2 bars) / Phrase 2 (2 bars) / Phrase 3 (2 bars) / Finishing Motif	(Steps 3 and 6)

Figure 2 The Three Repeat Patterns Used in the Soft-Shoe Versions.

developed by modern day medal and competition organisations. An older mnemonically described version, such as the one notated by Taylor (1929) is slightly more open to the readers' interpretation. Flett and Rhodes's descriptions are very clear, as their published works (1985, 1996) contain detailed movement vocabulary descriptions.

Pivot Left / Pivot Right – To the Left

Bars	
7	Spring on to LF, extending RF to 4th Intermediate Aerial Position (5 and); Hop LF, executing a shake action with RF in 4th Intermediate Aerial Position (a 6)
8	Bringing RF to 3rd Crossed Position, Pivot to Left on the balls of both feet, finishing with LF slightly forward of 5th Position (7 8).

Figure 3 An example of how the finish motif for bars 7-8 of each A or B part is described using standardised Highland dance notation vocabulary.

Hard-shoe versions

Another branch of 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' dances which can be interpreted as hard-shoe step dances come to us primarily through interpretations of Frederick Hill's notebook entry from 1841 and Dancie (dance master) John Reid of Newtyle's notebook description from 1935. The notebook titled *Frederick Hill's Book of Quadrilles & Country dance &c &c* [sic], *March 22nd, 1841* provides us with a number of written descriptions of solo High Dances. Of the fourteen solo or 'high dances' as they are labelled in Hill's notebook, five have the characteristics of the nineteenth-century hornpipe tradition, all employing trebling movements, but also including elements currently associated with Highland Games dancing.

The five dances are 'College Hornpipe', 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', 'Trumpet Hornpipe', 'King of Sweden', and 'Earl of Erroll', all in 4/4 time. Two dances, 'Dusty Miller' and 'Wilt thou go to the Barricks [Berwick] Johnnie', are triple time hornpipes written in 3/2 time (sometimes written as 6/4). Frederick Hill appears to have lived in Clatt, near Alford, Aberdeenshire, in the 1841 Scottish census where he is listed as a tailor. He died in Alford in 1903. Hill was clearly a student of several of the local mid-nineteenth-century northeast dancing masters who were active at the time. Their names, [John] Allan, 'Huat' (most likely William Howat of Turriff), [Adam] Myren and [John] Taylor, are given as sources for many of the dances.¹⁸ The Angus fiddler and dancing teacher Dancie John Reid of Newtyle's own notebook from 1935¹⁹ describes what he labels as two hornpipes – 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', and 'Jacky Tar Hornpipe'. Dancie Reid was primarily a pupil of Dancie James Neill of Forfar, but it is likely he took classes from dancing master David Anderson in Dundee as well²⁰ and Reid's notebook indicates this too. Both Neill and Anderson taught trebling (or 'treepling') steps, so the northeast and east of Scotland usage of these percussive types of steps is clear in the nineteenth and early twentieth century.

We also know from MacTaggart²¹ that a hard-shoe version of 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' was in use in Kirkcudbright and Galloway in the early 1820s alongside other trebling dances such as 'The Sweden March' ('King of Sweden's March'). Other similar versions can be found in the Fletts' 1950s research (including notes that it was taught by North-East Scottish dance teacher Betty Jessiman in the 1950s). Colin Robertson's 1982 description, based on notes taken at the RSCDS annual Summer School at St Andrews sometime in the 1970s, also conforms to a similar original version, as do two versions found in Canada as described in the late 1980s by Janet T. MacLachlan (one of which is set to the tune the 'White Cockade' and the other as taught by Betty Jessiman). The New Zealand Academy of Highland and National Dancing includes one version in the *Senior Gold Medal Test* booklet from 1991. In 2010, RSCDS published eight steps and three variations on these in their booklet *The St Andrews Collection of Step Dances*, volume 2. All these versions have a common structure regardless of aesthetic style of the dance. The aesthetic preference is up to interpretation, but Reid (1935) seems to suggest that it is a percussive step dance in the hornpipe tradition, while the 1841 Hill manuscript has been interpreted as both a soft- and a hard-shoe dance. We do not know the originator for this particular set of dances, but as the Hill manuscript originated from the teaching of dancing masters based in Aberdeenshire in the North East, and with Dancie John Reid being based in the Angus district of eastern Scotland, a North East source is suggested for this dance. We do not have enough data in the Flett archive to distinguish the form and style of the hard-shoe dance as faintly remembered in the Western Isles in the 1950s.

The step structure follows the same repeat pattern as the soft-shoe dance. An 8-bar step danced off the right and left foot (AA or BB). Commonly six steps are danced from the eight steps known to us, so a 96-bar sequence with the music played AABB AABB AABB is the format here as well. It is quite possible that in the nineteenth and early twentieth century all eight steps were danced for performance. We do not have any details if a specific version of the tune was ever used for the dance, but perhaps we can surmise that any local version of this well-known tune was played. Structurally the hard-shoe dance differs from

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

the soft-shoes versions as illustrated below with the finishing phrase being 4-bars long and two unique phrase patterns making up the first half of the steps:

8 bars = 4-bar Phrase / Finishing Phrase

8 bars = 2-bar Phrase RF / 2-bar Phrase LF / Finishing Phrase

Break RF	
Bars	
5 – 6	Making a complete turn to the right on the spot, dance a Double Treble with RF. Count: and a 1 and a 2 and a 3 and a 4
7	Facing the front, dance a Single Treble with LF, finishing with RF in 4 th Intermediate Aerial Position. Count: and a 5 and a 6
8	Assemble with RF in 5 th Position (7); Jump, on to the balls of both feet in 2 nd Position (and); Jump, LF in 5 th Position (8).

Figure 4 The finishing phrase, called a Break RF or LF, as described by Colin Robertson in 1982.

All the Scottish soft-shoe versions have six or seven steps described, while the hard-shoe versions have eight steps. For both the hard and soft-shoe versions of this dance, the order of the steps performed is set in the written descriptions. There is no indication about whether a dancer could or would be encouraged to improvise and make up their own order as they pleased when performing. Some indications from sources in the Hebrides²² do however suggest that this was the case with some of the dances. The late Barra native dancer and teacher Fearchar Mac Neil told me in 1989, when I visited him in Castlebay, Isle of Barra, that as long as you started with the ‘lead round step’ the order of the following steps did not matter as much. As long as you danced the tune you were all right.²³

Perhaps the most characteristic features of the hard-shoe versions are the combinations of 1-bar or 2-bar Treble motifs, labelled ‘Single Treble’ and ‘Double Treble’ respectively. The feature prominently in the 4-bar finish phrase and in a number of the first half step segments of the described eight steps. From the descriptions we have, the style of performing these percussive treble movements is very much like the ‘treepling’ described by the Fletts (1985 and 1996) and by Dundee dancing master David Anderson (1897). This particular dance is an interesting hybrid between percussive footwork and some movements commonly associated soft-shoe Highland Dances. Perhaps this dance represents some kind of combination between one hard and soft-shoe dancing? The way a dancer decides to perform the movements will render the whole performance more or less percussive in nature, while the choice of dancing in hard- or soft-soled shoes also will have an effect on its aesthetic look and feel.

Cape Breton 'Dannsa nan Flurs'

Of all the versions of the 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' the one surviving in Cape Breton Island, Canada, and noted down by Frank Rhodes in 1957 and by myself 50 years later in 2007 is perhaps the most interesting from a structural and music relation point of view. Known as either 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' or 'Dannsa nan Flurs', the dance is described by Rhodes in the Fletts' 1996 book *Traditional Step-Dancing in Scotland*. Frank Rhodes visited John Gillis, in Gillisdale, South West Margaree, twice and learnt that his grandfather had come from Morar in west-coast Scotland, and had been 'taught dancing as a child in Cape Breton Island by an itinerant tailor from Scotland, Donald Beaton'.²⁴ John's daughter, Margaret, danced a number of solo dances for Rhodes during his two visits, including 'The Flowers of Edinburgh', of which she could remember ten out of an original twelve steps. In fact, all the dances in the family repertoire had twelve steps, including 'The Fling', 'The Swords', 'Princess Royal', and 'Tulloch Gorm'.

What is significant about this version is that in 1957 it was danced in an ABAB fashion with recurring 'Reel', a circle or lead round danced for 6 bars to the A part ending with a 2-bar finishing motif, which stays the same throughout all A parts played for the dance. Ten (or twelve) unique 'steps' were danced in succession to each B part of the tune with the same finishing motif. The B part 'steps' reflect the character of second part of 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' tune to perfection. If you take the music away when the B part step is danced you can clearly make out the tune. Each step is uniquely constructed but all carry the tune. Thus we find a structure where the movements of the A part are more generically constructed in relation to the melody with only the motif of the last two bars reflecting melody structure, while the whole stepping in the B part reflects the rhythmic structure of the melody in full. The structure thus was a circle clockwise which Rhodes called the Reel ending with the finishing motif followed by a step off one foot during the B part.

A part – 8-bars – 'Reel' phrase (6 bars) / Finishing motif (2 bars)
B part – 8 bars – Characteristic phrase (6 bars) / Finishing motif (2 bars)

Figure 5 Structure of 'Dannsa nan Flurs'.

When I met Margaret Gillis in her family home in Gillisdale in 2007 and asked her about the dance, she demonstrated parts of the dance to me. What was significant was that her style and aesthetic of dancing reflected all that Frank Rhodes described in 1957, but the structure of the dance had changed. It was now twice as long. In the fifty years between the two visits the dance had changed from being danced ABAB to AABB. The A-part circle was now danced to the right (counter-clockwise) and repeated to the left (clockwise) (AA). Then the step was danced off the right and left feet (BB). I queried this change, but Margaret said that as far as she could remember she had always danced it this way. Asking Dr Rhodes in 2011 about the same he reiterated his memory that all the dances he found remembered had the ABAB structure, and 'The Flowers of Edinburgh' was no exception.

We can only speculate that perhaps the general playing of the tune has over the years changed from predominantly being played ABAB to being played AABB? Perhaps when the frequency of the dance being danced in the community declined the older way of playing the

tune was no longer strictly adhered to? When I met Margaret she indicated that it had been at least twenty years since she had danced the dance. She also said that when she used to dance it, she performed with her late sister and that they used to mirror the dance movements when dancing on stage. This could be another reason why the movements were doubled up at some point. When she showed me the steps there was certainly no hesitation in her doubling up the ‘steps’ in an AABB fashion. As Margaret showed no apparent concern that there had been a change to the structure so perhaps it can be seen as an acceptance of natural change in the performing of the music and dance traditions. As Margaret’s father was present when Rhodes notated these steps in 1957 one would have thought he would have said something if the pattern danced was not as he felt it should be done? There is nobody, to my knowledge, that performs ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ in Cape Breton today.

The current use of the dance today

Within the global Scottish Highland and country dancing community today, versions of both the soft- and hard-shoe ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ are still in use to some extent. Only a handful of people, to my knowledge, are trying to keep versions, based on Rhodes notation, of ‘Dannsa nan Flurs’ alive. My aim above has been to highlight that some Scotch measure tunes, in this case ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ have attracted the attention of dance devisers since the early nineteenth century. It is certainly so in the case of the hard-shoe version/s of the dance. In the case of the soft-shoe version it looks likely, however, judging by the above analysis, that the dance started out as a version of ‘Highland Laddie’ (see Flett and Taylor’s descriptions) and that Jack McConachie was the originator on this particular combination of steps being danced to and renamed as ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ in the 1950s. All current versions seem to hail back to more or less the same ‘Highland Laddie’ arrangement that was known both in the Western Isles and on mainland Scotland. The hard-shoe versions are slightly more diverse with historically both east coast and west coast versions in use. Furthermore a west Highland version was taken to Cape Breton Island in Canada.

One final thought. How well do the melodic characteristics of the tune ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’ reflect the movements applied to it? In the case of hard-shoe, percussive versions many foot movements reflect an actual note in the melody line. This is certainly the case in the Cape Breton version as indicated earlier, and is also reflected in the second half of each step in the east coast Scottish versions. In the soft-shoe versions this relationship is not as strong. The arrangement of steps seems to fit equally well to ‘The Highland Laddie’ as it does to ‘The Flowers of Edinburgh’. This may be because most of the movements in the soft-shoe versions occur on the main beats in the music, rather than using many or most the intermediary beats as in the hard-shoe versions. This, perhaps, gives us an indication that hard-shoe dances in the Scottish tradition depend on a rhythmic reflection of the melody line of an associated tune, as do similar percussive dances in the English and Irish dance traditions, compared to those versions of a soft-shoe nature. I speculate that there are a number of dances, such as ‘Seann Triubhas’ (4/4) and ‘Over the Water to Charlie’ (6/8) that may well have started out as hard-shoe dances, but over time morphed in to soft-shoe versions and could well, if compared to their original associated tunes, show signs of a close melody line and movement relationship.

MELIN *Scottish solo dances and the tune 'The Flowers of Edinburgh'*

Notes

- ¹ David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972; 2nd rev. edn, Edinburgh: Mercat, 2003), pp. 61–62; D. Johnson and Heather Melvill, 'Oswald, James', in *Grove Music Online* [accessed 15 April 2012].
- ² Mary Anne Alburger, *Scottish Fiddlers and their Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1983).
- ³ George S. Emmerson, *Scotland through her Country Dances*, revd 2nd edn (Oakville, London, Ontario: Galt House, 1981).
- ⁴ Joan F. Flett and Thomas Muirhead Flett, *Traditional Step-Dancing in Lakeland* (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 1993); J. F. Flett and T. M. Flett, *Traditional Step-Dancing in Scotland*, with an appendix, *Step-Dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia*, by F. Rhodes (Edinburgh: Scottish Cultural Press, 1996).
- ⁵ J. F. Flett and T. M. Flett, *Traditional Dancing in Scotland*, with an appendix, *Dancing in Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia*, by F. Rhodes (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1985); Flett and Flett, 1996.
- ⁶ A. MacFadyen and A. MacPherson (eds), *Frederick Hill's Book of Quadrilles & Country Dances &c &c* [sic], *March 22nd, 1841: A reproduction of the original manuscript* (Stirling: Hill Manuscript Group, 2009).
- ⁷ The acronyms represent the following organisations: British Association of Teachers of Dance (BATD), Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing (ISTD), Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA), United Kingdom Alliance of Professional Teachers of Dancing (UKAPTD), Royal Scottish Country Dance Society (RSCDS).
- ⁸ Catherine E. Foley, *Irish Traditional Step Dancing in North Kerry: A Contextual and Structural Analysis* (Killarney: North Kerry Literary Trust, 2012); Catherine E. Foley, *Step Dancing in Ireland* (London: Ashgate, 2013).
- ⁹ George Douglas Taylor, *Some Traditional Scottish Dances* (London: Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing, 1929).
- ¹⁰ Jack McConachie, *Bonnie Dundee* (London: Caber Feidh Publications, 1976).
- ¹¹ Colin Robertson, *Hard Shoe Step Dancing in Scotland and the Flowers of Edinburgh* (Reading: Scottish National Dance Company, 1982), pp. 4–5.
- ¹² Mats Melin, personal research archive, Limerick, 2015.
- ¹³ Thomas Muirhead Flett, archive of research papers, privately held, accessed 2015.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁵ MacFadyen and MacPherson.
- ¹⁶ Flett and Flett, 1996, pp. 64–65.
- ¹⁷ Melin, 2015.
- ¹⁸ MacFadyen and MacPherson.
- ¹⁹ John Reid, 'Solo Dances / John Reid', Newtyle, 1935, privately held MS, Limerick, Melin Archive.
- ²⁰ Flett and Flett, 1985.
- ²¹ John MacTaggart, *The Scottish Gallovidian Encyclopedia* (Glasgow, 1824).
- ²² Flett archive; F. Rhodes, *Step Dancing in Cape Breton Island*, in Flett and Flett, 1996, pp. 185–211.
- ²³ Melin, 2015.
- ²⁴ Rhodes, 1996.

‘Fiddle icons confidential’: the making of a portrait

NICOLE MURRAY

In Australia in 2012 I created a series of portraits of influential traditional fiddle players, entitled Fiddle Icons, which was shown in Derry City as part of the 2012 NAFCo, the first significant exhibition for this growing collection. The seven works in oils and six sepia sketches were the beginning of an ongoing project, in which stills from video interviews provide the inception of portraiture. The work is documented in a blog, which includes interview transcriptions and images.¹ A book of portraits and interview transcriptions is planned, in order to create an insight into the fiddle landscape in which we are currently living. This paper discusses the inspiration for the project, the process developed for interviewing the subjects and producing the work, the symbolic language used to express their achievements and personalities, the art theory underpinning the work, and future plans for the collection.



Figure 1 The portrait series shown at NAFCo, 2012.

Inspiration for the project

In October 2011, I attended Boxwood, a fiddle and flute camp run by Canadian flautist Chris Norman, in New Zealand. Scottish fiddler Alasdair Fraser and American cellist Natalie Haas were teaching, and an idea for a series of portraits began to clarify. Within moments of meeting Alasdair, I asked to interview him on video to become the subject of a portrait, and the project had begun. *Fiddle Icons* explores the psychological phenomena associated with fame or renown within a community. It observes the response of audiences and music fans to performers whom they admire. Contemporary performers are commonly treated as deities by their fans, behaviour which I have observed and experienced in my own music-touring career. A deep-seated instinct prompts us to deify people who enrich our lives in ways that are mysterious to us; we hold them up as icons in their field. A portraiture project provided the opportunity to paint about this concept, as well as being a fine excuse to meet and interview interesting players, resulting in a cohesive body of work which would continue to grow, and which I could make available to exhibit round the world.

The underpinning concept, which inspires the style of the work and the choice of subjects, is that human society requires a sense of the divine. Even in societies with secular ideas, a great deal of effort goes into seeking and connecting with spirituality:

Man [sic] positively needs general ideas and convictions that will give a meaning to his life and enable him to find a place for himself in the universe. He can stand the most incredible hardships when he is convinced that they make sense; he is crushed when, on top of all his misfortunes, he has to admit that he is taking part in a 'tale told by an idiot'. It is the role of religious symbols to give a meaning to the life of a man [sic].²

In secular society, the understanding of the source of the divine has changed, and there is a move to worship the fount of creative brilliance which is seen manifested in our artists. The *Fiddle Icons* use ancient representations of divine art to inform a modern view of portraiture, and comment on the artist/musician's role. While the stylistic approach is appropriated and represents the subjects as quasi-religious icons, the resulting pastiches are not entirely ironic, engaging as they do with a range of literal and psychological symbols to tell the portrait subject's story. The *Fiddle Icons* portraits refer visually to the religious art of the Byzantine Empire (c. 550–1450),³ appropriating some of its conventions and methods.

The icon imagery is combined with psychological symbolism, referencing the ideas of Carl Jung; the symbolic meaning of the works is further informed by sacred and secular themes of art history. The circle is a strong linking device in the collection of works, used as a halo in each piece. The circle may symbolise the psyche, the self and ultimate wholeness (Jung's view) or enlightenment and human perfection (the Zen Buddhist view).⁴ The halo itself is a device of Byzantine art, which, when appropriated to the contemporary art setting, affords multiple symbolic readings. From the Symbolists (1885–1910) is borrowed the idea that art should represent absolute truths that can only be described indirectly.⁵ This concept of tacit, or intuitive, unarticulated knowledge⁶ applies to the viewing of the artworks, where the more contact with the players depicted, their musical style, and art history a viewer

has, the more layers of meaning they may read into the work. It is also strongly associated with the learning of traditional styles of music. The portraits are realistic, but the choices made about colour, background, use of objects, composition, and even style of moulding on the edge, are all symbolic and work together to express that person's story, history and personality.

The portrait subjects

The first seven portraits in the collection, completed for the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention 2012, are of noted players from across the world. They are: Emma Nixon (Australia), Nancy Kerr (UK), Natalie Haas (USA), Alasdair Fraser (Scotland/USA), Martin Hayes (Ireland/USA), Dougie Maclean (Scotland), and Ado Barker (Australia). Fraser and Haas were interviewed in New Zealand in 2011; Nixon in Brisbane, in 2012; Maclean at Woodford Folk Festival in Queensland, 2011; Barker in Melbourne, 2012. Two of the subjects I had to approach differently due to distance constraints: I contacted Nancy Kerr in England, asked her to be part of the project and to make a short video, and I later interviewed her as well. Martin Hayes was the only subject I couldn't personally interview within the time constraint, but it was important to represent him at NAFCo since he was performing there and is prominent in Irish fiddling. For his portrait, an interview which was conducted in St Mary's Church in Feakle, County Clare, during the Traditional Music Festival in 2011, was downloaded from YouTube.⁷ While interviewing these subjects, the chance arose to interview a number of other subjects in the same locations. The original plan was to create ten major works for NAFCo. However, the time needed for experimenting with suitable substrates was extensive, and the portraits took approximately fifty hours each. Seven full portraits were achieved in two months.

As a way of representing more fiddlers in the interim while working on their full portraits, a series of watercolour sketches was created. The subjects for these are Andrew Clermont (Australia), Brittany Haas (USA), Catherine Fraser (Australia), Pria Schwall-Kearney (Australia), Richard Wood (Prince Edward Island, Canada), and Chris Duncan (Australia). There are currently fifteen interviews awaiting interpretation into oil paintings; these are with:

Al Parrish, Dwayne Cote, and Richard Wood (Canada); Brittany Haas (USA); Andrew Clermont, Catherine Fraser, Chris Duncan, Danny Holmes, Dave O'Neill, Holly Downes and Pria Schwall-Kearney (Australia); Vicki Swan, Tom McConville and Catriona Macdonald (UK); Liz Doherty (Ireland). Three of these subjects were interviewed at NAFCo 2012.

Development of the process

The working method which was developed involves interviewing the subject on video; parsing the video frame by frame and choosing stills for reference; researching the subject to reveal more of their story with imagery; composing the portrait using pencil sketching and Photoshop; and painting it using oils and gold leaf. The second method for creating interim sketches was subsequently developed, using line drawing, watercolour wash and photography, combined in Photoshop. The opportunity to paint the portraits from life is

generally not available, because most of the subjects lack the time to sit for me. They are busy musicians, and the interviews were conducted when they were working at festivals, workshops or concerts. Working from video is as close to working from life as can be achieved, and gives an expressive sense of the person. Each interview takes about fifteen minutes. The videos are solely intended to capture a broad range of expressions and attitudes in the subject, to look at their instrument, hear their commentary, and build up an impression of the person.

The process involves very few questions, the choice of which was 'tested' on Emma Nixon, and the first ('What gives you joy in your music?') was chosen because it brought out such a positive response in her. Musicians can be plagued by feelings of self-doubt or a sense that they haven't achieved their potential yet, and pursuing questioning about future plans or achievements can cause them to retreat. But asking about joy generally allows everyone to connect with what motivates them to continue their musical journey, and brings out their passion. My second question is: 'Could you tell me about your instrument?' Some players have very intriguing stories, and everyone has an interesting reason for having the instrument they play, so from these two questions, extra depth can be added to the portrait, or at the very least, can inform the viewer more broadly about the subject. One aim of the Fiddle Icons project is to create an insight into the early twenty-first century fiddle world. By holding up one artform as a mirror to another, by reflecting visually and verbally on the essentially ephemeral art of the musician, the works reinforce the cultural importance of these practitioners and their music as tradition bearers.

Description of the process

1. Identify desirable subjects to paint, using practical guidelines: Who should not be left out? Who will be available to see and interview? Who is going to NAFCo, which will make them more relevant to this show?
2. Conduct interviews on video. This process involved developing an interview procedure, which is still under improvement. The challenge is to consider compositional ideas while staying engaged with the conversation as it happens.
3. Examine the video, usually with the sound off, to identify characteristic poses and body language which express the subject well. Take a screen shot of every possible still. This step is best done quickly. Dwelling on the detail isn't very productive, because instinct is a good guide here.
4. Prepare the surface: this took a great deal of experimentation with board thicknesses, mouldings and surface preparation. Information from Kentish icon painter, Peter Murphy,⁸ helped to decide on the substrate and surface preparation. Icons are traditionally painted on solid wooden panels, but he recommended reliably flat, easily acquired plywood, to which were attached wooden mouldings. The aim was to achieve panels of approximately the same weight, which didn't warp. Initial plans to follow Peter Murphy's preparation

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

procedure faithfully – which involved covering the board and moulding with a layer of calico, attached with gelatine glue – proved unpredictable. The calico was either completely secure, or towards the end of the drying time would suddenly, dramatically bubble off the board surface. The surface preparation was eating severely into the available painting time, so good quality primer was used, followed by ten coats of traditional gesso, made with whiting and gelatine. This dried for a full day, and was sanded perfectly smooth.

5. Use graphic design techniques to start the painting: Photoshop was used to create a ‘cartoon’ or line drawing from the main reference picture, to transfer to the gesso surface. Gold leaf was then applied, and the portrait and background were painted in oils.



Figure 2 Pria Schwall-Kearney layers.

For the watercolour sketches, a line drawing and a watercolour layer were created by hand, scanned, and digitally combined with a photographic element derived from a screen-shot from the interview video. The illustration shows the proportion of each layer used to make up the finished artwork. The watercolour sketches were completed while on tour in the UK over two months. The technique is portable and has clearly-defined steps, so it is possible to achieve results in small bursts of activity.

Case study: Nancy Kerr

Nancy is one of the finest musicians of her generation, a multi-instrumentalist who plays in several traditional styles and is well-known for her songwriting and complex *fiddlesinging* (accompanying her own singing on the fiddle). I was very clear from the start that she needed to be represented. As our schedules would not coincide until after the paintings for NAFCo needed to be finished, I asked if she would be part of the project and if she could have herself filmed in advance at home. I specified that I would like her to sit near a window to create a side-cast of light, with her children to be in the shot. From this film and two others I selected screen-shots and developed a triptych. In symbolic terms, I have represented her as the Madonna of the Fiddle, referencing Leonardo da Vinci’s Madonna of the Rocks,⁹ with the triangular composition in which Nancy is singing with her son Hamish,

but still including baby Harry in her attention. The image spills out of the frame with leaves and growth, representing fecundity, the living tradition, and of course the picture literally depicts the passing on of tradition from one generation to the next. The sky could be dawn or dusk, it is simply the peaceful calm of golden light, and is based on a Claude Lorraine pastoral painting. Nancy's dress is the night sky of the southern hemisphere, a reference to her Australian husband, so the whole painting addresses the timeless turn of day and night, and the balance of dark and light, which is also the name of one of their albums: *Between the Dark and the Light*.

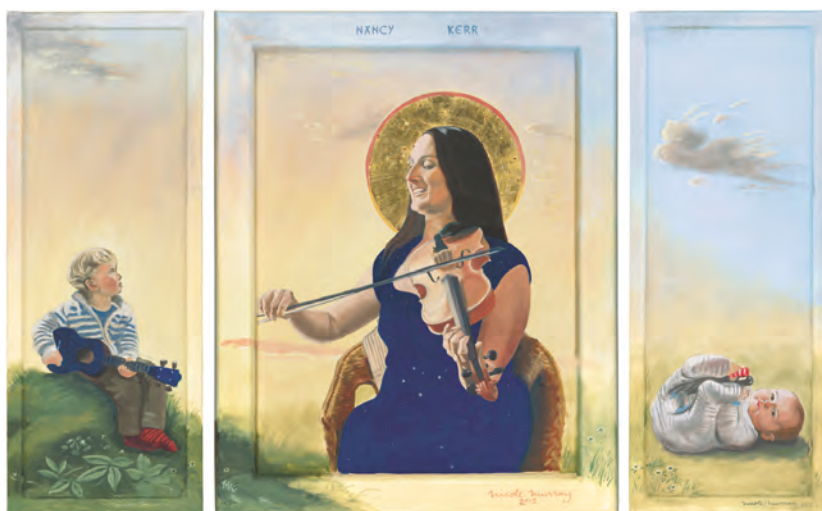


Figure 3 Nancy Kerr.

Future plans

I chose to paint some quite well-known traditional musicians initially, as a way of raising awareness of the project, and perhaps, by selling prints of the work, to allow it to fund itself. I intend to continue to paint well-known players, because they are worth acknowledging. The work will continue until they can be shown in subsets of paintings linked by geography or genre such as 'Fiddles and Feet', 'Women of the Fiddle', 'Fiddles of the World'. Undoubtedly the project needs to pay for itself so I can begin work on another valuable aspect, portraits of players who are not famous, but who are a significant musical link in their community. Such artistes are often old, and have taught whole generations of younger players, or are real characters with a fascinating story. Representing them will give the Fiddle Icons extra storytelling depth. So far I have only worked with living subjects, but some of the most iconic figures of the fiddle, who have directly influenced our current players, have now died. It is possible that I could still paint an authentic portrait and represent them symbolically if there is film footage of them, and people to interview who knew them. Tom Anderson is the one who comes first to mind.

Strategies

As the collection of portraits grows, it will be made available to arts festivals and galleries, which can host the painting show in combination with live fiddle music. The works are more fully realised when accompanied by fiddle, and the exhibition space would ideally be used to host chamber concerts for traditional music.

Archival-quality prints of the works are being sold online and at the shows. *Fiddle Icons* showed in Derry, Townsville, and Brisbane in 2012 and as mentioned above a book is planned. The very fact of painting them, in some way, makes icons out of the people I choose to paint. Such a formalised representation of a performer has the effect of validation in the eyes of outside observers, and every artform reinforces and validates every other artform when it reports on it. In physics it's known as 'the observer effect', and refers to changes that the act of observation makes on the phenomenon being observed. This effect is unavoidable. In essence, the Fiddle Icons are creating an archive of this moment in time, in the world of traditional fiddling.

Notes

¹ <http://fiddleicons.blogspot.com> [accessed June 2015].

² Carl Jung, 'Approaching the Unconscious', in *Man and his Symbols*, ed. by Carl Jung (Garden City NY: Doubleday, 1964; paperback edn, Picador, 1978), p. 76.

³ John Lowden, *Early Christian and Byzantine Art* (London: Phaidon Press, 1998), p. 12.

⁴ Jung, *Man and his Symbols*, p. 268.

⁵ [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_\(arts\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Symbolism_(arts)) [accessed June 2015].

⁶ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tacit_knowledge [accessed June 2015].

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oyn3N2lilOc> [accessed June 2015], posted by Aveire Media, Mountshannon, Co. Clare, 6 August 2011.

⁸ <http://www.petermurphyicons.co.uk> [accessed June 2015].

⁹ I have referred to a variety of digital representations of 'The Madonna of the Rocks' by using a Google images search to amass a gallery page.

'Bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin': dance, music, and community in Árann

DEIRDRE NÍCHONGHAILE



Figure 1 Dancing in Garraí Joe Watty, Cill Rónáin, Árann, 1950s. *Courtesy of Mary Conneely.*

For many people, Aran is, as Tim Robinson observes, ‘Ireland to the power of two’.¹ It is for this particular reason that the islands are often assumed to have sustained over time a rich music tradition. In song, they certainly have, but in instrumental music, not so much, largely for two related reasons: access to instruments; and the nature of music transmission. Access to instruments came much later to Aran than to other parts of Ireland because of its island location and shortage of local materials such as timber and metal; but primarily it was because of poverty, particularly in the nineteenth century, a period defined by recurrent famine and population decline.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

The historical dearth of instruments might well explain the second factor, music transmission in Aran, which, until very recently, relied more on osmosis and individual exploration than on one-to-one instruction. In such a milieu, it comes as no surprise to find that Aran hosted travelling pipers, and that lilting, whistling and smaller instruments – including the paper-covered comb and the Jew’s harp – were common and, indeed, valued; around a century ago, for instance, a blacksmith in Mainistir, Árainn, fashioned a silver tongue for a Jew’s harp. However, the dependence on these smaller instruments and on visiting pipers point to one important and seemingly paradoxical fact: of all the traditional performing arts practised in Aran, including music, song, storytelling and *agallaimh beirte* (poetic dialogues),² dance is a particular favourite. In the past, it played a pivotal role in traditional music because it dictated where, when and how islanders made music. Where music occurred, it was soon accompanied and led by dancing, whether in the kitchen, on the slip or pier, or on the numerous slabs of rock in the karst limestone landscape, at the handball alley or, even today, in the pub.³ In these places, Treasa Ní Mhiolláin told me, ‘bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin’ – ‘we used to be dancing until morning’.⁴ The evidence from Aran suggests that, in places where instruments were scarce or where the transmission of music was less prescribed, more casual and chaotic perhaps, the desire to dance was crucial to sustaining a local music tradition, especially if that tradition was comparatively limited. Evidence from communities that faced similar challenges – the Blasket Islands and Tory Island, for instance – corroborates this conclusion.⁵

Many other commentators have borne witness, as Treasa did, to the local obsession with dance – among them Liam O’Flaherty,⁶ John Millington Synge,⁷ Úna Ní Fhaircheallaigh,⁸ Thomas Mason,⁹ and Muiris Mac Conghail (1988) – but one visitor of the 1950s, Pierre Travassac, acknowledged its significance to Aran in a unique way. He went so far as to define and map Aran in terms of dance:

On aime beaucoup danser en Irlande, et peut-être davantage encore à Aran. On y danse en tout lieu et à toute occasion, dans le ‘salon’ ou même tout bonnement dans la cuisine de la petite ‘guest house’ de Kilmurvey, au son du plus moderne électrophone, aussi bien que dehors, au clair de lune et aux accents de l’accordéon, sur la grande dalle de pierre qu’on trouve au tournant du chemin, en haut du village. Que par hasard un musicien vienne au ‘pub’ où l’été les touristes résidents ont coutume de se rendre après dîner, en haut de la côte Cowrugh [Corrúch] sur la route de Kilronan, et aussitôt commencera la ‘ceilidhe’. Et tout cela, c’est Aran.¹⁰

Translation:

In Ireland people really love to dance, and perhaps even more so in Aran. They dance everywhere and at every opportunity, in the living room, or even quite simply in the kitchen of the little ‘guest house’ in Kilmurvey, with its modern electrophone. They dance by moonlight, to the accents of an accordion, on the big flagstone by the turn in the road at the top of the village. When a musician happens to stray into a pub where summer residents congregate after dinner, at the top of the Cowrugh [Corrúch] coast on the Kilronan road, the ceilidhe will begin right away [...] And all of that, that’s Aran.¹¹

I would like to consider here the essence of Aran as Travassac saw it and, indeed, as many islanders see it (as having a particular symbiosis of music and dance) in order to identify clearly its aesthetic basis, its potential and its impact. I will chart its history and its present, I will surmise as to its future, and I will assess the significance of that symbiosis in Aran and beyond. I should say that, although much of what I say applies to all three Aran Islands, I am speaking about the largest of them, Árann, or Inismór as it is also called, which has a small community of a little over 800 permanent residents as well as a sizeable population of migrant islanders like myself. For want of space and enough supporting evidence (because this research is still in its infancy), I do not include Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr.

Aesthetics and history of symbiosis

What exactly is the nature of the symbiosis of music and dance in Árann? The style of music played there is characterised largely by individualism and idiosyncrasy, resulting from the informal music transmission that I have described. Nonetheless, when the musicians of Árann play together, individual musical styles unite to express one common aesthetic belief: that traditional music is essentially enmeshed with traditional dance. Dance embodies the spirit and life of local music through movement and energy and through involving people physically in a tangible, as well as a sensory, tactile and emotional experience. So strong is this aesthetic connection between traditional music and dance in Árann that islanders commonly regard accompanying dance as the highlight of instrumental music-making. They recall successful musical events as dance events and they regard musicians who can play well for dancers as successful musicians. When they want to express their appreciation of good music, they dance. This understanding was demonstrated to me forcibly in the summer of 2009 when, at her niece's wedding, Delia Bheairtle Sheáin Uí Chonghaile complained to me that the dance-worthy music that we musicians were playing during the buffet was going to waste because the bride and groom had yet to perform their 'first dance'. Agitated, Delia requested that I do something about it, which I did, and once the guests were enabled to observe the modern wedding custom of the 'first dance' (to some pop ballad or other), the marquee floor overflowed with dancing by one and all, well into the night.

Musicians too are driven by the local desire to dance, as I discovered when I asked Paddy Mullen (1946–2016) to describe the style of music that he and his bandmates from Ceoltóirí Árann play. His response was phrased and framed in terms of local dance:

An chaoi a fheiceann's muinn é nuair atá muinn ag casadh do ghrúpaí, nó go mór mór lads, nó cailíní agus lads as Árann, Tí Chreig nó Tí Fitz nó pheibí cén áit, mara gcuirfidh muinne an sórt brí seo isteach ann – ní tharlóidh tada, ní ghabhfaidh siad ag damhsa. So, sé'n chaoi atá linn, ní dheireann muinn leob a ghul a' damhsa ach tarraingíonn an ceol amach iad. Agus mara gcasadh tú iad le brí agus, agus fuinneamh [...] titfidh siad ina gcodladh, titfidh muinne inár gcodladh freisin! So ní tharlóidh tada, beidh tú 'rith leat ach ní shin é muinne, 'dтуigeann tú? [...] má tá an ceol sách maith le h'iad a tharraingt amach [ag damhsa], tá sé ag déanamh ceart, tá sé ag déanamh sách maith. [...] Mara bhfuil, tá sé chomh maith dhuit fanacht sa mbaile. Sin é an chaoi atá linn.¹²

Translation:

The way we see it, when we're playing for groups, or especially for lads, or girls and lads from Aran, in Tí Chreig or Tí Fitz [both pubs] or wherever, if we don't put this sort of life into it – nothing will happen, they won't dance. So, the way we are, we don't tell them to go dancing but the music draws them out. And if you don't play it with life and, and energy [...] they'll fall asleep, we'll fall asleep too! So nothing will happen, you'll be running along, but that isn't us, you understand? [...] if the music is good enough to draw them out [dancing], it is doing alright, it is doing well enough. [...] If it isn't, you may as well stay at home. That's the way we are.

Paddy's aesthetic understanding of how best to play traditional music in a communal setting and Delia's insistence that dance should accompany music illustrate a tacit appreciation of the power of dance to consolidate the experience of sharing music and to transform that experience for musician and listener alike. Islanders understand the potential of music and dance to enable them to express themselves and their sense of community, individually and collectively, at the same time. They understand that music and dance enable them to celebrate life and being alive by keeping them from sitting or sleeping through it or shying away from it. Together, Delia's and Paddy's testimonies demonstrate how islanders cultivate and capitalise on the symbiotic relationship between music and dance.

Origin of aesthetic

The aesthetic principles upon which this music-dance symbiosis is founded emerged, I believe, from the traditional performance milieu that existed in Aran from the beginning of the nineteenth century at the very latest up until the 1960s. During that time, musicians and singers performed at communal gatherings in local homes and out-of-doors and, on occasion, in the neighbouring islands and on the mainland at parties, dances, festivals and pilgrimages.¹³ Some of these events were spontaneous occurrences whereas others were more organised.¹⁴ This pattern remained stable over generations because its essentially integrated and inclusive nature cultivated a regenerative aesthetic of communal performance in which oral transmission could flourish. The home in particular encouraged inter-generational and inter-communal transmission of music, song and dance in an inclusive environment. The significance of the element of transmission or 'education' within this milieu was highlighted by Peadar Ó Concheanainn (1878–1957) of Baile an Lisín, Inis Meáin; he called the *airneán* (night-visit) a 'university'.¹⁵

I have signalled the 1960s as the period when the traditional performance milieu came to an end, as the Public Dance Halls Act of 1935 did not impact on music in Aran as negatively or as dramatically as it did in other parts of Ireland.¹⁶ Dancing, music-making and singing in homes and at outdoor gatherings continued for longer in Árainn than elsewhere, alongside the céilithe in the old schoolhouse and in the dance hall. The introduction of the dance-hall in the 1940s marked a decisive shift away from traditional venues for communal music-making and the undoing of the longstanding stable traditional musical milieu that I have described.

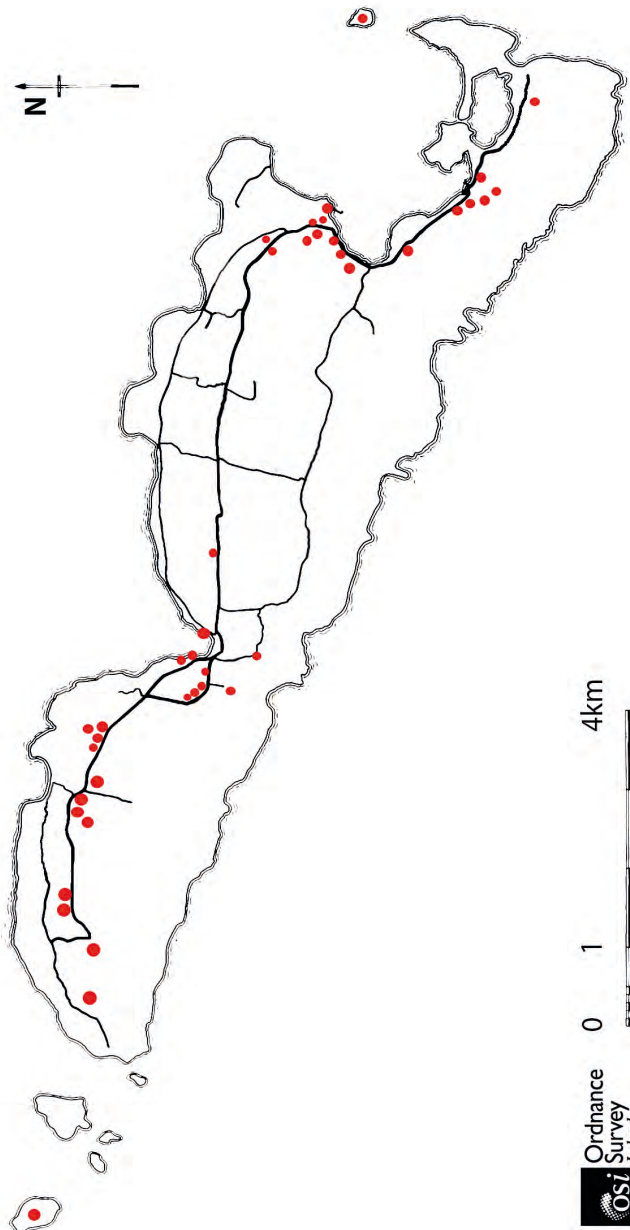


Figure 2 Dance sites in Árann, c. 1800–2000.

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This map is a work-in-progress awaiting data on the mid-section of the island.

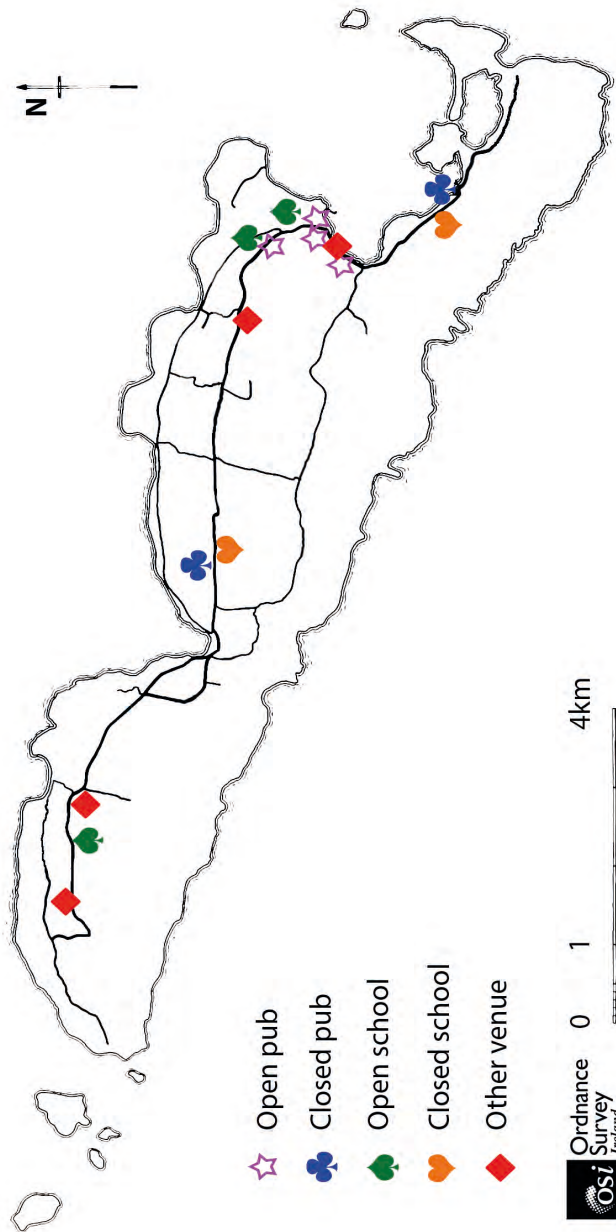


Figure 3 Dance sites in Árainn, 2001-2012.

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Census Returns for the Aran Islands 1861-2011

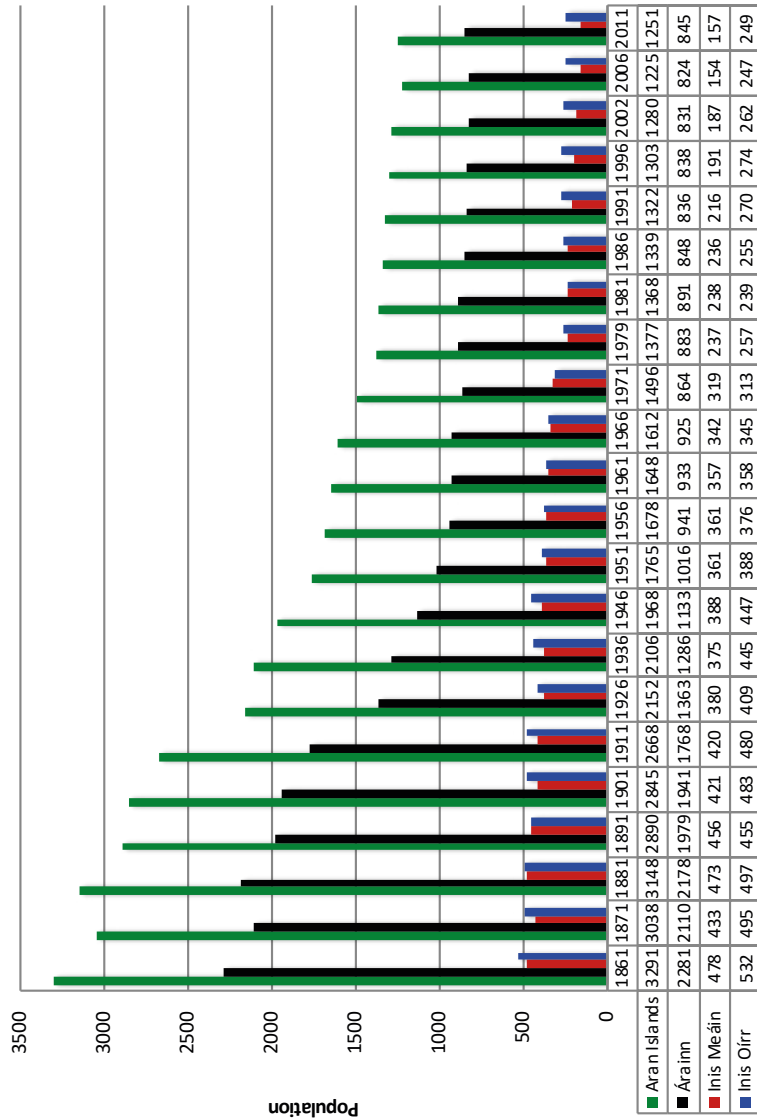


Figure 4 Census returns for the Aran Islands, 1841-2011.

In the 1960s, some women in Aran started going to the pub, a development that coincided with, and also contributed to, the decline of house-visiting, with a dramatic effect on the traditional performance milieu. The pub became institutionalised as the primary venue for communal socialising and, consequently, for communal music-making. The impact of this change of venue I consider here in terms of space, time and critical mass. In relation to space (and where Travassac used prose to map Aran in terms of dance, I have used maps), we see (see Figure 2) how, in the traditional performance milieu, people danced ‘everywhere’, as Travassac observed: in villages, at ball alleys, piers and road intersections. This map also suggests the community had a critical mass of population who were capable of supporting and sustaining all this dancing, and that it had time, or made time, for dancing. There was passionate interest in dance, demonstrated by the fact that islanders rowed in currachs to the westernmost island of the archipelago, Oileán Iarthach – a challenging place to land, one that demands fine weather conditions – to dance in the lighthouse there. The combination of the wooden floor high up in the tower and the cylindrical resonating space below offered a uniquely appealing kinaesthetic and acoustic experience as they danced.

The second map (see Figure 3), showing contemporary dance sites, demonstrates graphically a huge contraction in the number of dance venues in the last thirty to forty years. In this contraction, we can also read the sharp decline that has occurred in the frequency of local dance events. In essence, the progression we see in these two maps charts the atrophy the community has experienced in the last few decades as a result of emigration, through which the population of Árainn declined by two thirds since the mid-1800s (see Figure 4), and, more recently, the community becoming the most mobile it has ever been. There are now fewer dance spaces, fewer islanders to sustain local dancing on a regular basis, and those who migrate to and from the island do not have the time to participate in as many community activities as they might wish. As the frequency of dance events declines, there is also less room for spontaneity, a quality islanders have prized in their communal entertainments.

Effect of contextual change on aesthetic

These maps indicate the extent to which the previously interdependent and enmeshed music and dance practices of the island have been displaced by pub culture, by the formalisation of dance venues, by television in private homes, and by population decline. In so doing, they help to give some sense of the impact of these changes on the music-dance symbiosis, an impact that is felt most keenly by young people. The formalisation of music classes, for instance, means that young musicians typically do not learn as their ancestors did about what tunes go with what dances. For example, they will learn how to play ‘The Stack of Barley’, but it could be some time later before they learn the corresponding dance and to play the parts singly when playing for dancers. They may be taught about local music-dance aesthetics but, as the frequency of music and dance events contracts, they rarely get to put the theory into practice themselves, a task that is, of course, essential to the learning process. So, young musicians are not learning first-hand how their music can serve local dance and, thereupon, their own community. Only on rare occasions do they get to learn from first-hand observation and experience how to instigate music and/or dance, how to

lead and how to yield, what repertoire is most appropriate to the situation, and how to enact spontaneity, that element that is so prized in local communal entertainment.

Such developments speak to a destabilisation of traditional music and dance practices in Árann. Indeed, the trends in local demographics and in local dancing combine to suggest the same. Yet, through all of the sea-changes that local musical practices have incurred, people have remained loyal to their music-dance aesthetic. Despite the relative infrequency of opportunities to express that aesthetic, it is managing, nonetheless, to survive the new milieu, thanks to the islanders' lasting desire to dance. Clearly, the appeal and the longevity of this aesthetic has been a key factor in the perpetuation of the music-dance symbiosis in Árann.

Nevertheless, islanders understand that aesthetic values need to be expressed if they are to be understood, appreciated, valued, practised and sustained. The infrequency of opportunities to express that aesthetic worries some of them. Their fear is that it will precipitate a complete destabilisation of traditional music and dance practices and, in turn, of island life in general. In response, they have taken a more proactive approach to encouraging the practice of music and dance in Árann. I give you here two recent examples. Primary schoolteacher Catherine Buckley Uí Chonghaile instigated a weekly hour-long session of music, song, and dance from October to Easter in the old schoolhouse in Fearann a' Choirce. Its purpose is to enable schoolchildren at primary and secondary level to experience a communal music-making event beyond the classroom. Though she hoped all ages would attend, the session is frequented mostly by primary-level children and by a handful of parents



Figure 5 Dancing on An Leic, Inis Oírr, 1960/70s, to the accordion music of Ruairí Sheáin Ó Conghaile. *Heinrich Becker Collection, James Hardiman Library, NUI Galway.*

and relatives. In addition, the principal of the local technical school, Michael Gill, taught the Aran set to some of his teenage pupils. Dancing to the music of their talented peers, the

Ó hIarnáin brothers, they then demonstrated the set for tourist groups staying in the local hotel.

At the root of these islanders' apprehension for local music and dance practices lies their very real and most urgent concerns – unemployment, depopulation, and the unsettling sense of transience that comes from migration and emigration – factors that threaten the future of their community. As the community seems to be always approaching the brink of dissolution, balancing precariously on a precipice and wondering where the tipping point lies, some might think that dance – in essence, a leisure activity in which people are 'at play', escaping for a moment their everyday woes – is irrelevant to the daily 'work' of trying to stem the tide. But, as we have seen, some islanders still believe, as their ancestors did, in the special power of dance to bring people together. They believe that dance is essential to life. That creed lives on in the music-dance aesthetic of Árainn and reveals itself each time the community makes music and dances together. Those who organise and participate in dance events clearly believe that dance will help the community to stand its ground. Nevertheless, as long as the population continues to decline, efforts to perpetuate local music and dance traditions will be haunted by the fear of the death of the island, the fear that lies behind Treasa Ní Mhiolláin's use of the past habitual in her observation '*bhíodh muid ag damhsa go maidin*' ['we used to be dancing until morning']. Into the uncertain future, islanders will cling stubbornly, like barnacles to a rocky shore, to the hope that they can maintain a resident community. While they do, it seems more than likely that they will be dancing, as often as they can.

Notes

¹ Tim Robinson, (ed.), 'Place/Person/Book: Synge's The Aran Islands', in *The Aran Islands*, J. M. Synge (1907; London: Penguin Books, 1992), pp. vii–liii.

² See S. Ó Mórónáigh, *Agallamh na hÉigse Cíoradh agus Cnuasach* (Camus: An Comhlachas Náisiúnta Drámaíochta, 2001).

³ On 22 August 2008, Mícheál Tom Burke Ó Conghaile showed me a *creig*, an area of karst limestone slabs, to the south of the village of Cill Mhuirbhígh where dancing took place on moonlit nights long ago. The pale rocks were suitably smooth, level and large, and they reflected the light of the moon. The traditional approach to this area – a *strapa*, from the base of a low cliff beside the village well, up to the *creig* – is now concealed by overgrowing bushes, thus illustrating how the practice of dancing there has died out. The *creig* can now be accessed more easily by walking a more circuitous route along the gravel path to Dún Aonghusa and then leaving the path to climb over a stone wall.

⁴ Treasa Ní Mhiolláin, interview, 27 August 2001.

⁵ Aoife Granville, '*Ceol gan Ceol: The Field Recordings of Blasket Island Musicians by Aodh Ó Tuama, University College Cork, 1977–1978*' (unpublished paper presented at ICTM Ireland conference, University College Dublin, 28 February 2009; Lillis Ó Laoire, *On a Rock in the Middle of the Ocean: Songs and Singers in Tory Island*, Europea: Ethnomusicologies and Modernities, no. 4 (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005; Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnachta, in association with Scarecrow Press, 2007).

⁶ Liam O'Flaherty, *Thy Neighbour's Wife* (1st edn, 1924; Dublin: Wolfhound, 1992).

⁷ Synge, *The Aran Islands* (1907).

⁸ Úna Ní Fhaircheallaigh, *Smuainte ar Árainn* (Baile Átha Cliath: Conradh na Gaeilge, 1902).

NÍ CHONGHAILE *Dance, music, and community in Árann*

⁹ Thomas H. Mason, *The Islands of Ireland* (Dublin: Mercier Press, 1936).

¹⁰ Pierre Travassac, *Les Îles Aran: Scènes et paysages d'Irlande* (Paris: Imprimerie Centrale de Paris, 1960).

¹¹ Translation by Olof Gill.

¹² Paddy Mullen, interview, 1 September 2001.

¹³ In his youth, Tomás Bhaba Pheige Ó Miolláin rowed to Conamara where he attended parties (conversation, 16 February 2008). Doolin musician Micho Russell (1915–1994) recalled ‘seeing the half-set of Inis Thiar being danced at Ballahaline on Doolin quay on Sunday afternoons during the late 1940s, the islanders having made the nine mile ‘currach’ journey from the quay of Inis Thiar, which generally took half an hour’s rowing by four good oarsmen’, see Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, ‘Micho Russell of Dunagore’, in *Traditional Irish Music from County Clare*, by Micho Russell, Celtic Music CMCD077, 1997. The distance is closer to six nautical miles but Micho may have felt his occasional journeys to Inis Oírr with his brothers Packie and Gussie Russell were longer than they actually were because he suffered, it is said, from sea sickness. Máire MacNeill describes how islanders incorporated music-making into an annual pilgrimage to Dabhach Bhríde in Co. Clare: ‘While new-world ways bring people to the Patron at Lehinch [*sic*] by train and omnibus, some pilgrims make the journey exactly as their ancestors might have made it a thousand or two thousand years ago. From Inisheer, the nearest of the Isles of Aran, the islanders row across in their currachs to the little fishing hamlet of Doolin at a break in the cliffs. They leave the currachs drawn up on the beach and walk five miles over the cliffs to the holy well. Arrived there, they make the rounds and then stay about the well in vigil, singing through the night. The Clare people gather there too and, no doubt, in times past contributed their part to the night of song, but all modern accounts agree that it is the islanders’ singing which makes the night memorable. Sometimes a group of the young people start a dance, and nearby taverns keep open house all night. In bygone days the peopled slope was fitfully lit by candles, and tradition fondly asserts that, however wild the night, the candles were unquenchable’, Máire MacNeill, *The Festival of Lughnasa: A Study of the Survival of the Celtic Festival of the Beginning of the Harvest* (Baile Átha Cliath: Comhairle Béalóideas Éireann, 1962; 1982), p. 278.

¹⁴ Tom O’Flaherty, *Aranmen All* (Dublin: Three Candles, London H. Hamilton, 1934; Daingean Uí Chúis, Co. Kerry: Brandon Press, 1991), pp. 131–140; Mason, *Islands of Ireland*, pp. 83–86; Donal Ó Flannagáin, *Ó Thra Anoir* (Cathair na Mart, Co. Mhaigh Eo: Foilsíúcháin Náisiúnta Teo, 1985), pp. 62–63, 121, 212.

¹⁵ Peadar Ó Concheanainn was particularly given to ‘airneáin’, despite his mother’s remonstrations, which seem reasonable on an island where fuel is precious: ‘Nach iomaí casaoid agus éirí shlí a d’fhaighinn ó mo mháthair faoin oiread tóir a bheith agam ar chuarta. “Amuigh go meán oíche duit,” a deireadh sí, “suas ón tine sínte ar theallaí fuara, ag coinneáil mhuintir an tí sin ó chodladh ag dó tine agus solais leatsa agus le do leithéid nach bhfuil barainn a leasa faoi.” Go deimhin ní uair ná dhó a léadh an soiscéal sin dom, ach na scórtha babhtaí; ach cén leas dí a bheith ar siúl ná a bheith á léamh dom – ní raibh aon aird agam ar a glór. Nach ag cur a cainte ar sraith a bhí sí nuair a bhíodh sí ag cur comhairle orm fanacht ó na cuarta agus ón gcomhluadar. Is minic nach bhfanainn le mo leathdhóthain a ithe le méid an deabhaidh agus an fhoinn a bhíodh orm éalú liom nuair a d’fhaighinn an fhaill. Is minic a bhíodh mo chaipín istigh faoi mo chóta agam sa gcaoi nach dtóigfí aon suntas dom dá dtéinn amach an doras. Ach nuair a d’fhaighinnse tairseach an dorais agus tóin na binne glanta, ba gearr orm píosa bóthair a shiúl, agus níorbh fhada go mbínn idir chlár agus chuinneog istigh i dtigh Choilm Mhic Thualáin.’ Translation: ‘Many were the complaints and waylaying from my mother about my great fondness for visiting. “You’re out until midnight,” she would say, “up from the fire stretched on cold hearths, keeping the people of the house from sleep, burning fire and light for you and the likes of you who haven’t a sprout of sense.” Indeed it was not once or twice that that

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

*gospel was read to me, but scores of times, but what use was it to her to be carrying on or reading it to me – I didn't heed her voice. Wasn't she wasting her breath when she was advising me to stay away from visits and company. I often did not wait to eat half enough with the amount of rushing and desire I had to escape when I got the chance. I would often have my cap under my coat so that no one would pay attention if I went out the door. But once I had cleared the threshold and the corner of the gable, it took no time for me to walk some distance and it would not be long till I'd be ensconced in Colm Mhic Thualáin's house'. (Translation by Fionnghuala Ní Choncheanainn), see Peadar Ó Concheanainn, *Inis Meáin Seanchas agus Scéalta* (1st edn 1931; Baile Átha Cliath: An Gúm, 1993), pp. 37–39.*

¹⁶ For the impact of this in Co. Clare as recalled by Junior Crehan, 8 July 1976, see Barry Taylor, 'Junior Crehan of Ballymackea Beg: Profile of a West Clare Fiddle Player', in *Musical Traditions*, no. 10, MT048 (Spring 1992), <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/crehan.htm> [accessed 18 October 2015]. Dara Mullen (b. 1926) of Cill Rónáin recalls how Fr Tomás Ó Cillín, who served as parish priest from 1935 to 1948, tried but failed to prevent some dances in houses and out-of-doors: 'Bhíodh an sagart ag cur in aghaidh na damhnsaí *alright* ar an *slip*, agus bhíodar ar an *slip* blianta fada, bhíodar ann romhamsa, ach bhí, tá's a'm go raibh, tháinig, dream 'An Réalt', má chuala tú caint ariamh orthab, tháinig bhí damhnsaí thíos acub ann bhí, bhí do sheanathair [Seán Ó Concheanainn] ann beannacht Dé lena anam, ach ní raibh sé pósta an t-am sin. Agus do sheanmháthair freisin. Ach chuir an sagart an, sairsint anuas – Sairsint Maude – len' é a stopadh. Bhí an-sáraíocht ann. Bhuel sé do sheanathair a bhí ag sáraíocht leis ach, stop siad! Stop'dar *alright* ach dúirt siad, ní raibh aon chead aige é a dhéanamh tá mé a' ceapadh ní raibh, dúirt an sairsint leis, nach – "níl mise do do stopadh," a deir sé "ach sé'n sagart a chur anuas mé." Ach thug, é fhéin agus fear eile níl's a'm cé an fear eile a bhí ann ba strainséara dhomsa é, chuaigh an *crowd* a'ainn soir ansin ag, ag a' *dance hall* ar an mbóthar ansin ar a' *gcrossbhóthar*. Ní fhéadfaí damhnsa a stopadh an t-am sin ar an *gcrossbhóthar* agus ní raibh aon charrannaí ann, sin é'n áit ar chríochnaigh an damhnsa, chríochnaigh sé ann tuairim is trí a chlog ar maidin.' Translation: 'The priest used to oppose the dances *alright* on the *slip*, and they were on the *slip* for many years. They were there before me, but . . . the group 'An Réalt' . . . they had dances down there. Your grandfather [Seán Ó Concheanainn] was there, God bless his soul, but he was not married at the time. And your grandmother too. But the priest sent the sergeant down – Sergeant Maude – to stop it. There was a great argument. Well, it was your grandfather who was arguing with him. But they stopped! They stopped *alright* but they said he had no permission to do it I think [...] The sergeant said to him that – "I'm not stopping you," he said "but it was the priest who sent me down." [...] the crowd of us went east then to, to the dance hall on the road there at the crossroads. One could not stop a dance that time at a crossroads and there were no cars there. That is where the dance ended. It ended there around three o'clock in the morning.' (Interview, 1 September 2001).

Scottish fiddle music in Australia in the twentieth century

EMMA NIXON

This paper is an outcome of research undertaken for the 2012 National Folk Fellowship at the National Library of Australia, Canberra. It reports on an examination of the repertoire, performance practice, and players of Scottish fiddle music in Australia from the late nineteenth century to the present, drawing on three music manuscript collections and two oral history collections from the National Library of Australia as well as a survey of contemporary Australian Scottish fiddlers. Analysis of these collections highlights the historic and social contexts of Scottish fiddle music and Scottish-style fiddling in Australia during the twentieth century. The cultural relevance of Scottish music in Australia and the roles of dance and concert performance in repertoire choices will also be discussed.

Manuscript and oral history collections at the National Library of Australia were examined. A range of both complementary and contrasting evidence of Scottish fiddle music in Australia was found between and within the two types of collections, in which the music dates from the late-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century. It includes published collections of dance music (mostly in piano scores), published collections of fiddle music, and unpublished manuscripts, predominantly from Britain. The oral-history collections include recorded interviews and playing by Australian fiddlers who had Scottish material in their repertoire. Both manuscript and oral history collections were analysed for repertoire and performance practices as well as for musical and social contexts.

The three manuscript collections examined date mostly to the first half of the twentieth century: *The Ellis Dance Music Collection*¹ (nine boxes of albums of mostly piano arrangements and some violin scores); the *Fitzmaurice Collection of Piano Marches* (27 boxes of individually catalogued albums of piano music from 1900 -1920 including 'marches, dance band, popular and light music');² and *The Baillie Manuscript Collection of Scottish Fiddle Music*³ (29 folios of handwritten manuscripts of mostly Scottish dance and performance fiddle music). A number of other Australian music publications, some editions of which were in the Ellis or Fitzmaurice collections, and miscellaneous fiddle books were also explored. Piano music was included as it showed popular repertoire of the times, and was reflected in the fiddle publications. The albums and folios were searched

for Scottish tunes, which were sometimes identified as ‘Scotch’ or ‘Scottish’, appearing in rather explicitly named dances such as ‘Edinburgh Quadrille’, or were not identified as Scottish and appeared alongside tunes of other origins. A database was created of the Scottish tunes appearing in all these albums referencing the album they came from, with publication details where available, the dance set or performance medley they were in, and arrangement notes such as key of the tune and accompaniment style. This information has been used to further analyse the collections and to select material for the recording and accompanying tune-book produced to illustrate the project.

The Ellis and Fitzmaurice collections consist mostly of albums of dance music. Although much of the music is piano score, there are parts for other instruments in some of the publications. Most of the material was published in Britain with exceptions being editions of *Nicholson’s Australian Musical Magazine*⁴ and *Allan’s Australian Music Books*.⁵ Generally the music is arranged into dance sets. In publications prior to World War I the dances are predominantly quadrilles, lancers and schottisches, reflecting popular dance and music choices in Britain at the time. Some of the books specifically feature Scottish music (*The Gem Series 109*),⁶ whereas others include dance sets comprising of Scottish tunes. Interestingly, much of the Scottish music is identified as such in these collections, with relatively few examples of these tunes appearing randomly in sets with English and Irish tunes. Many of the tunes appear in multiple publications in similar settings. Generally the arrangements are simple tunes with piano bass ‘oomcha’ type accompaniment and include very few performance indications for such as ornamentation.

By the mid-1920s there was a shift in the music and dance content of the albums to material which was popular in America, based on popular American songs, although a small number of British dances can be seen to have persisted for a time. This shift not only reflects a change of taste (possibly due to a more outward looking approach in Britain), but also the Australian tendency to look to fresh trends from the Northern hemisphere that has been a feature throughout European settlement of Australia. The presentation of the material in sets within dance music albums indicates that these publications were intended as practical aides in the preparation and performance of social dances by either a single musician or a band. It also targets a music-literate market – musicians who were able to read piano-scores and who were cognizant of music protocol for the represented dances.

A number of other publications at the National Library of Australia were used in this study including *The Athole Collection of Scottish Dance Music*⁷ first published in 1884 and today used as a source of old tunes for fiddlers in both performance and dance contexts; *The Scottish Violinist*,⁸ a collection of fiddle tunes composed or arranged by James Scott Skinner; a reprint of the 1783 edition of *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs*⁹ containing fiddle arrangements of highland songs and piping tunes; and *Scottish Country Dance Music from Australia*,¹⁰ an album of contemporary tunes in Scottish dance genres. With the exception of the Skinner book, these collections contain minimal stylistic or performance indications; they tend to show occasional ornamentation such as grace notes and trill signs, but very little in the way of bowing.¹¹ The Skinner book uses a wide range of performance practice instructions such as ornaments (including grace notes and turns), and has specific bowing-direction, including particularly Scottish strokes such as the up-

driven bow, all reflective of Skinner's ornate, highly-technical style. *The Baillie Collection* is notably different from the others in that it is recently-acquired (2011), donated by Robert Baillie whose father, Robert 'Ballantyn' Baillie, was a professional musician who emigrated from Scotland to Australia in the early twentieth century, and was from a line of respected fiddlers leading back to Peter 'Pate' Baillie (1774 – c. 1841). The collection predominantly consists of handwritten manuscripts by Robert Baillie (grandfather of the donor), original melodies and arrangements of popular, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century tunes. It contains a great deal of hand-copied Scott Skinner material and a letter from Robert Baillie Senior to his son describing elements of Skinner's playing style, focusing particularly on bowing. This is notable for the performance and stylistic indicators in most of the material, for bowings, fingerings, dynamics and tempo, indicating a repertoire intended for virtuosic performance rather than for dance accompaniment.



Figure 1 A segment of 'Duet on Scottish Airs' from Folder 16 of the Baillie collection; it demonstrates the use of tempo changes (first, second and fourth lines), double stops (second and fourth lines) and fingered harmonics (third and fourth lines).

Two oral-history collections of the National Library of Australia¹² were investigated for this study: the Emily Lyle collection¹³ and the Meredith collection.¹⁴ Examination of these was limited to listening to recordings of fiddlers rather than of other instrumentalists or singers, although a number of the fiddlers also played other instruments and/or sang. Unlike the manuscripts, the Scottish music in the oral history collections was often not identified by interviewees as Scottish except in the Emily Lyle collection¹⁵ which was a project specifically looking at Scottish heritage in Australia. Although a number of fiddlers in these collections mentioned concert performances, or were recorded in a performance settings, most were playing with family and friends and/or for community dances. Popular tunes were passed orally/aurally between players, and relatively few of these relied on or were able to read printed music. Fiddlers often did not know the origins of the tunes they played, and were rarely concerned about 'matching' tunes from the same place in sets. One influential fiddler from Canberra, Bob MacInnes, who was interviewed by Lyle,¹⁶ regularly played for dances, but unusually and uniquely he had made a decision to learn Scottish repertoire and had sourced a number of tune books in order to achieve this. For most players, the context of the music was important. Generally, the music played in the oral history

collections was traditional dance music to be used in a social dance context, and for most, the music was inextricably linked to the dance.

To learn more about the contemporary state of Scottish fiddling in Australia, Chris Stone and I prepared a short questionnaire which was distributed through email and Facebook¹⁷ and had twenty-four responses. Although it was initially sent to particular people identified as players of Scottish fiddle, the scope was broadened to include anyone who self-identified as a Scottish fiddler. Subjects were asked to list their Scottish fiddle activities or mode of expression such as performing, recording, teaching, composing, and arranging; influences such as teachers and recordings; source materials used, such as tune books and recordings, and access to these; and awareness of the resources of the National Library. The data suggests that the primary influences on players in the last fifteen years have included recordings of Alasdair Fraser, a Scottish fiddler living in California. They were also heavily influenced by American music styles, by ‘pilgrimages’ to the summer schools of Alasdair Fraser in Scotland and America, and, within Australia, the performances and teaching of Chris Duncan. The rise of fiddle clubs in Australia over the last twenty years was also indicated as having an important impact on the promotion of Scottish fiddling.¹⁸ Half of the respondents belonged to an Australian fiddle club where they learnt tunes and techniques and performed. Individual fiddle club leaders were named by a quarter of respondents as having been central to their introduction to Scottish fiddling and over half named fiddle club tutors as important teachers or influences. Workshops and face to face learning experiences were significant learning situations. While half of the respondents acknowledged the use of written tune sources for repertoire, all except one listed multiple audio sources, particularly CDs, as stylistic references. Generally, the respondents were more likely to learn from particular individuals rather than books, and tended not to use material from the National Library.

Migrants often celebrate the culture of their place of origin through dance and music. However, a divide has developed (and not just in Australia) between the dance and the music. Many Scottish fiddle players in Australia have not played for, or even danced, Scottish dances. This separation of music from the dance must have an impact on the music in terms of performance practice indicators such as tempo and style as well as in repertoire choices.

Changes in society have impacted on recreation activities. We live in a culture where many people view entertainment as a passive experience rather than as an active participatory one. In many music genres this is demonstrated by a culture of star devotion and glorification. This impacts on the music itself, pushing boundaries of technical proficiency and genre. Today in Australia, there are still Scottish dance classes, balls, and dance socials, Burn’s Nights, pipe bands and performance-driven fiddle clubs as well as solo fiddlers and bands who focus on Scottish music and perform at the numerous festivals. Although not all participants have Scottish ancestry, these events and groups develop communities which recognise and participate in a Scottish cultural heritage. By utilising the various sources of Scottish musical material in the National Library as well as the knowledge and skills of the current leaders of Scottish fiddling both locally and globally, Australians are developing their own voice in the Scottish fiddle idiom.

Appendix

Australian-Scottish Fiddle Questionnaire, 2012 (Emma Nixon and Chris Stone):

1. Do you consider yourself part of the contemporary Scottish fiddle music scene in Australia? Do you perform, record, teach, compose or arrange Scottish fiddle?
2. Who introduced you to Scottish fiddle?
3. Who have your teachers been and/or who have you emulated?
4. What written works (tune books/technique books) have influenced your playing and repertoire?
5. What albums (CD, cassette, record, MP3, etc) and/or videos have influenced your playing?
6. How did you acquire these resources, and who recommended them?
7. Do you feel that you belong to an Australian/Scottish fiddle tradition? If so, please briefly explain why or how.
8. Are you aware of any Scottish fiddle related music (audio, tune books, technique books, etc.) held in the National Archives? If so, have you been significantly influenced directly by any of these?
9. Are you aware of anyone else in the Scottish fiddle scene being directly influenced by holdings in the National Archives?
10. Is there anything else you would like to tell us that relates to your involvement in contemporary Scottish fiddle music, particularly in relation to holdings in the National Archives?

Notes

¹ Peter Ellis, *Ellis Dance Music Collection* (c. 1850-1980), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2970445> [accessed June 2015].

² Cyril Fitzmaurice, *Fitzmaurice Collection of Piano Marches* (c. 1890; 1960), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn1497560> [accessed June 2015].

³ Robert Baillie and Peter Baillie, *Baillie Manuscript Collection of Scottish Fiddle Music* (1830, 1936), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn5383082> [accessed June 2015].

⁴ W. E. Smith, 'Album of Country Dances', in *Nicholson's Australian musical magazine*, no. 42 (Sydney: Nicholson, 1899), <https://www.slv.vic.gov.au/search-discover/explore-collections-format/music-scores-sheet-music> [accessed June 2015].

⁵ *Allan's Australian Music Books*, no. 37 (Melbourne: Allan's, c. 1897), <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Search/Home> [accessed June 2018].

⁶ See Cyril Fitzmaurice, (c. 1890, 1960).

⁷ James Stewart-Robertson, *The Athole Collection of the Dance Music of Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1961; reprint from the original plates published in 1884).

⁸ James Scott Skinner, *The Scottish Violinist* (London: Bayley & Ferguson, [1883]; Melbourne: E. W. Cole, 1908).

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

⁹ Patrick McDonald, *A Collection of Highland Vocal Airs* (Norwood, PA: Norwood Editions, 1973; reprint of 1784 edition, Edinburgh).

¹⁰ Willie Pollock and Malcolm Fitzmaurice, *Scottish Country Dance Music from Australia* (Mitchum [Vic.]: C. Pollock, 1993).

¹¹ For a discussion of ornaments commonly used in Scottish fiddling see Emma Nixon, 'The Transmission of Style in Scottish Fiddling', in *Routes & Roots: Fiddle and Dance Studies from around the North Atlantic 4*, ed. by Ian Russell and Chris Goertzen (Aberdeen: Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, 2012), pp. 112–120.

¹² Chris Stone has also studied oral history collections at the National Library of Australia, including the O'Connor collection; his findings were not available at the time of writing.

¹³ Emily B. Lyle, University of Edinburgh, School of Scottish Studies, *Scottish Oral Tradition in Australia [sound recording]: The Emily Lyle Collection*, (1976), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn620288> [accessed June 2015].

¹⁴ John Meredith, *John Meredith Folklore Collection* [sound recording] (National Library of Australia, 1953), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn2687559> [accessed June 2015].

¹⁵ In October, 1976 Emily Lyle came to Canberra as a Visiting Fellow at the Humanities Research Centre at the Australian National University researching Scottish oral literature in Australia. She travelled throughout Victoria, New South Wales and Tasmania to interview Scottish immigrants and their families.

¹⁶ Emily Lyle, interviews with Bob MacInnes, Flora Monger and Flora Tucker, in *Scottish Oral Tradition in Australia* [sound recording]: *The Emily Lyle Collection* (1976), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.cat-vn4225644> [accessed June 2015].

¹⁷ See Appendix.

¹⁸ Ruth Wise, *Scottish Fiddling in Australia* (unpublished Graduate Diploma of Arts [Advanced] thesis, University of Western Australia, 2012), pp. 58-60.

The fiddle as a symbolic creative therapeutic tool in music therapy

JOSIE NUGENT

Music is a powerful connecting tool. It can serve both as an auditory and emotional stimulus and connect to our innermost self.¹ It is also motoric and we involuntarily let our muscles interact with many elements of music such as its rhythm, timbre, pitch, melodies, and harmonies.² Its use as a healing force dates back to ancient times and most cultures have myths and narratives on the healing power of music.³ While music has been used in this way throughout history, the concept of music therapy evolved and gained professional recognition around the time of World War I⁴ when it was used to deal with trauma in healing war veterans. While this is documented as having been helpful and supportive, those giving the therapy lacked training in therapeutic assessment procedures and also were limited in medical and psychological knowledge of their clients. But such historical events set the scene for the establishment of training courses in music therapy for musicians who wished to put their skills into therapeutic use both in the USA and UK.⁵

Music therapy

This is a psychological interactive musical intervention using music, sounds, and voice as interactive communication tools between the therapist and client. The goal of a music intervention is primarily to enhance the client's social, emotional, physical and mental well-being.⁶ This can be achieved in many ways using activities such as music improvisation, singing, creating music together, dancing to music, recalling familiar songs or tunes, song-writing and creating music to express feeling states and work through emotional states of being. During the intervention the therapist acts as a facilitator to establish a safe and secure relationship between them and the client (which is central to the therapeutic process). This growing therapeutic relationship gives the client freedom to self-express and the therapist interacts to create a shared music experience leading to the pursuit of therapeutic goals. The intervention can therefore enable the client to express and work through their feeling states and consequently gain a greater understanding of their behavioural states and their mental well-being. The sessions can also be used in more functional ways to help a client develop

gross and fine mobility skills, for example, clients affected by strokes and children with reduced fine mobility skills.

The Fiddle as a therapeutic tool

The fiddle or violin is a stringed instrument that evolved from the *viola da braccio* in the 1600s, whose Latin name is ‘Vitula’ the name of a Roman Goddess. The Romans in Germany called it a ‘fidula’, then ‘fiedel’ while in Italy it became known as the little viol, hence ‘violino’.⁷ As both names are interchangeable, this paper will address the instrument as a ‘fiddle’. It has many of the qualities of the human voice, and has been used as a connecting tool between people to aid relaxation and calmness.⁸ It is a live, expressive instrument where a wide range of sound effects can be expressed, as on it the player controls the formation and execution of a note, its timbre, duration, and dynamic. Finger-plucking can aid the development of fine-mobility skills, the bow stroke has very soothing qualities which can help a client to find a more peaceful sense of self. The fiddle can be used as both a melody and accompaniment instrument, it is portable and small, with a unique shape which makes it an ideal convenient, creative tool of expression in music therapy settings. In discussing how the fiddle is ‘applied’, I will deal with two client groups where it can be used in music therapy as an intermediate, interactive tool of engagement to enhance a client’s communication, social-interactive and mobility skills:

1. Its role as a social-interactive, symbolic and creative tool in music therapy interventions for children with special needs, and
2. Its role as an intermediate tool of communication with adults who have acquired neurological disorders, such as strokes and dementia.

1. Children with special needs

Children are innately social and we cannot underestimate the creativity that exists and that is constantly developing in a child’s mind once stimulated to do so in social settings. Social interactions give children the opportunity for imaginative thinking and in doing so they learn and create alternative ways to socially interact and communicate with others. Early influential thinkers, such as the education psychologist, John Dewey (1859–1952), saw children as innately social beings who actively learned in both adult-child and child-child environments.⁹ Educational psychologists such as Piaget, Erikson, and Vygotsky all agree that the child uses play for self-teaching.¹⁰ *Aistear*, is an early childhood curriculum framework created by the Irish Department of Education to support the learning and development of children from just after birth to up to six years of age. It is structured around the themes of well-being, identity and belonging, communicating, and exploring and thinking. It uses different kinds of play to support a child’s early learning and development across the above mentioned themes.¹¹ Similarly, music therapists use play to inspire a child with special needs to be their creative, expressive self during a music therapy session. The goals of a music therapy intervention centre on the social, emotional, physical and mental

well-being of the child and the importance of self-expression to discover the self. This is echoed in the words of the psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott:

It is in playing and only in playing, that the individual child or adult is able to be creative and to use the whole personality, and it is only in being creative that the individual discovers the self.¹²

Findings

The music therapist adopts collaborative interactive strategies. Musical objects are used as interactive tools, one of which is the fiddle, which I have found incredibly useful as an intermediate tool of engagement in my sessions with young children. Many non-verbal children are fascinated with the resonance produced through the body of a fiddle from plucking its strings. This fascination helps them to develop engagement skills, in some cases opening up an additional door where the child wants to share this level of engagement with the therapist, leading to developments in their social interactive skills. Active involvement in rhythmical string plucking can enhance fine mobility skills, and can be further developed into a turn-taking activity which introduces new cognitive ideas to the child. Children with reduced cognitive abilities (such as those born with global developmental delay), sometimes see the fiddle as a symbolic tool that they can use in interactive play. One such child interacted by using it as a see-saw, a form of play which brought her great joy and gave her a means to develop her social interactive skills. Another such child engaged with the fiddle as a revolving wheel above his head and his body came to life showing many facial gestures of wonder and amazement as the therapist moved it in circular motion above his head. For a number of children who could not voice what they wanted to express, the soothing qualities of the sound produced when they or the therapist bowed the instrument appeared to bring a sense of calm and peace of mind. The fiddle, therefore has many dimensions to its use as an interactive tool of engagement, and can be used to enhance children's social interactive and mobility skills as well as further developing their creative imagination, stimulating opportunities for social interactive play.

2. Adults with acquired brain injuries

My work with adults with acquired neurological disorders centres around patients with strokes, hypoxic brain injuries and dementia. Especially when dealing with clients with a diagnosis of dementia, I have found the tone and timbre of the octave fiddle (pitched an octave below the fiddle) much more appealing to these clients than the tone and timbre of the standard instrument. Dementia is a neurological progressive disorder that is characterised by a decline in cognitive function that results in short- and long-term memory changes, impairment of abstract thinking and judgment, disorders of language (aphasia) and personality change.¹³ There are many medical conditions that can lead to dementia, with the Alzheimer's type being best-known. Research has shown that the areas of the brain that respond to music are the last to deteriorate in dementia, suggesting a role for musical communication with dementia patients.¹⁴ The potential of music therapy to aid the well-being of clients at various stages of dementia has been well documented¹⁵ and this section

will illustrate how the octave fiddle can be used as a melody or accompanying instrument to enhance a client's well-being.

Findings

With patients at the more advanced stages of dementia the octave fiddle can be used as a social interactive tool to boost alertness and interactiveness. Because of its size and portability it can be played in close proximity to a patient. This can stimulate a patient into a more immediate state of alertness, enabling them to communicate vocally and/or by use of facial gestures. This instrument is also ideal to encourage dancing and/or movement, an activity known to greatly enhance the well-being of such patients.¹⁶ For example, dementia patients who had been Irish step dancers in their youth immediately engaged by dancing in their chairs when some of the once-common, never-forgotten dance-tunes were played to them. Some also would lilt to specific set-dance tunes such as 'St Patrick's Day' and 'King of the Fairies'. These patients also enjoyed dancing to waltz-like melodies from old films such as 'The Tennessee Waltz' and 'After the Ball' and/or reminiscing about the dance-hall days of their youth. The octave fiddle can also be used as a melody and/or accompanying tool to assist song-memory recall. This client group became uplifted and enlivened when engaged in group settings to recall songs of local interest, of emigration, love and Irish ballads. Ballads with stimulating repetitive choruses such as 'Will you go Lassie Go' and 'The Wild Rover' especially appeal to this client group as the repetition in the song choruses assists memory recall. Regular weekly engagement in group singing appeared to improve their awareness of self and others and to enrich and brighten their mood and spirit.

Conclusion

This paper has outlined pathways for the use of the fiddle in music therapy, based on my personal experience as a fiddle player and music therapist. The expressiveness and physical qualities of the fiddle opens avenues for its use in therapeutic settings as described. The octave fiddle has a timbre particularly suited for working with adults, and I have suggested possible uses for it with adults with acquired brain injuries. I would like to acknowledge the many shared interactions I have had with clients while training to become a music therapist and in post-qualification experience.

Notes

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³ Tony Wigram, I. N. Pedersen, and Ole Lars Bonde, 'Introduction to Music Therapy', in *A Comprehensive Guide to Music Therapy* (London: Jessica Kingsley, 2002), pp. 17–43.

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Off the record: Irish traditional musicians and the music industry

LEAH O'BRIEN BERNINI

The music industry, the institutionalisation of the production of music commodities for profit, is a largely-unexamined nexus of dynamic, coded, and ritualised performance interaction. Within it, artists, producers, musicians, and audio engineers – sometimes with conflicting agendas – must constantly negotiate a delicate, often skewed balance of power. Professional musicians and singers continuously traverse the delicate ‘balance between commerce and art [...] between the urge to create and the opportunity to profit from that creation’.¹ Professional artists originating from traditional-music communities face additional challenges as they transform communal traditional music, which had typically been for dance accompaniment, into a stand-alone, presentational commodity. These artists often have to reconcile conflicting desires such as a sense of responsibility to ‘the tradition’ with the decision to commercially exploit that tradition to earn a living. Such negotiation can significantly influence artists’ creative processes, business decisions, and perceptions of self. In examining how traditional music interacts with the global commercial system, my research focuses on the intersection of traditional music and capitalism as experienced by prominent Irish traditional artists, music industry personnel, and employees of the largest contemporary Irish/Celtic record label, Compass Records.

I use participant-observation and personal interviews to add essential, hitherto-missing voices – those of the artists and the industry personnel – to the current ethnomusicological understanding of the music industry. Long-term, ethnographic and ideographic studies of record labels and the commercial recording studio presently are but a small (albeit growing) sub-genre of ethnomusicology. The upsurge in student engagement with ethnographic popular music studies since 2007 is now bringing ethnomusicology into the world of commercial music, something that can be seen when reviewing trends in conference-paper topics and MA and PhD projects.²

Yet two issues still distinguish ‘ethnomusicology’ from ‘popular music studies’: the use of ethnography and of music analysis. But a few ethnomusicologists have pioneered conceptual frameworks for music-industry ethnomusicology in order to bridge ethnomusicology over to popular music studies. When fieldwork methods are tailored to

fit the commercial context, I have found that the music industry can provide meaningful, evocative, and substantial context for ethnomusicological analysis. Two people pioneering such conceptual frameworks are Timothy Taylor (UCLA) and David Pruett (UMass Boston); my own PhD work explores this too – the commodification of music experience.

The issues

Excluding some outstanding exceptions, too many extant ethnomusicological studies of popular music and the music industry have been deficient in varying ways, such as primary-source ethnographic content, music analysis, or in-depth theorisation. In the commercial music industry, multiple agendas of the artist's label, producer, and audio engineers may ultimately obscure the artist's creative intentions. Therefore it is problematic to attempt to derive artists' intentions and meaning from recorded commercial music or other published media. As Taylor explains, previous music-industry studies were typically structured around unacknowledged biases, thus lacking reflexivity and historicisation, and so they tended to ignore the capitalist process with which commercial music is inextricably linked.³ Such studies depicted an irreconcilable dichotomy between the interests of musicians and those of the music industry, risking misleading readers, dehumanising participants, and devaluing the field of ethnomusicology. Despite shortcomings, however, these earlier studies did indicate the broad range of challenges that the music industry posed for musicians, their creative processes, and their music products, and thus helped inspire later ethnographic popular-music studies.

In my ethnographic study of Irish traditional musicians in the music industry, I have followed the examples of Taylor and Pruett in constructing a conceptual framework wedding ethnomusicology and popular music studies to social theory. I have found the works of certain theorists more helpful than others, among them Bourdieu, Adorno, Marx, Hall, Erlmann, Frith, and Appadurai. I was introduced to the business side of commercial Irish traditional music while working at the Nashville-based music label Compass Records Group, the largest Irish and Celtic music label. My initial research set out to explore where and how traditional music and musicians fitted into the global commercial system based on the experiences of numerous prominent Irish traditional artists and music-industry personnel. That research is based upon open-interview discussions with forty-five industry and artist participants, some of whom are the most successful people in the business.

Findings

Through this work I have come to a few preliminary conclusions that have been contextualised by my personal experiences in several Irish traditional music communities: Compass Records, the Irish World Academy, Belmont University Schools of Music and Music Business, and the Nashville music industry. Firstly, it would seem that professional artists view themselves along a continuum of perceived control: from believing in their near-complete autonomy to believing they have relinquished their freedom and control entirely. Where, why, and when artists perceive their place along this continuum affects their personal and professional lives.⁴ Secondly, it seems that artists who embrace marketing are generally more savvy about the business of music.⁵ They may be more likely to expand outside

their immediate social circles than artists who choose to not actively market themselves.⁶ However, artists who assign a disproportionate amount of effort to their business at the expense of music integrity, with the intention of achieving a mainstream appeal, seem less-popular within the traditional communities while appearing significantly more successful (in monetary and popularity terms) among mainstream audiences.⁷ Thirdly, throughout this research integrity in music creation and performance is a reoccurring theme. Many of the most popular and respected traditional-music commercial artists say they value integrity in performance, and view Irish traditional music as primarily a vehicle for communication and emotional expression.

Artists' emphasis on 'integrity' can be distinguished from 'authenticity'. Authenticity, or 'the authentic', in performance (and even in academic discourse) is a highly-contested concept. To these artists, 'authenticity' is not interchangeable with 'integrity'. Rather, in commodified performance it seems to refer to an external judgment of the product or music-outcome using subjective criteria. 'Integrity' seems to refer to the artist creating with a pure intention. In music performance (and the translation of integrity into commodified form) 'integrity' is both a personal aim of such musicians and a marker for judging the work of their peers – judging the way the product was created (integrity) rather than judging the product (authenticity). Finally, artists who are both commercially successful and respected within their community often possess four qualities; they:

1. maintain integrity in their performance and translate it into commoditised performance;
2. embrace marketing;
3. are virtuosos in their field;
4. incorporate external ideas from outside of a conservative understanding of 'tradition'.

Martin Hayes is one such traditional musician who is respected both inside and outside his music community. According to him:

My business plan is really to play very well, and if that doesn't work – to improve and develop [...] also to take every concert very seriously, and actually endeavour to communicate and express to the audience that I play for. And to find a musical experience for myself, share that musical experience, and basically trust life after that.⁸

With regard to 'going commercial', one esteemed fiddle player and teacher in the Irish tradition expressed strong beliefs about integrity in performance:

I've seen a great band [that] signed to a major label, and there was a lot of money involved, and they started to compromise straight away. And I think at that level, particularly because it's a folk music, and it's the voice of the people, I think you have a massive responsibility not to sell out [...] I find everything is disturbed by money, to be honest, so it's how far you're willing to compromise yourself for a concept [...] I have seen musicians who go on stages and it's frightening how far they are willing to go [...] We do talk about musical prostitution [...] But [the music industry is] [...] aware that the market knows fuck-all about Irish music, because if they did, they wouldn't buy it [...] To get to the root [of trad], it's like being a person. It's like [the] level of how good a person do you want to be? And when I say 'good', I don't mean 'well-behaved'.

I mean, as 'a thing' – how far do you want to explore what you are or [what] your possibilities are, and are you willing to put the effort in to do that? That's trad to me.⁹

Conclusion

These examples point toward generalisations that require further exploration. Further research could help illuminate what attracts audiences to Irish and other traditional musics and what motivates those artists to commoditise their music. Much seems to depend on what the artist wants out of their business, what they are willing to put in, what they are willing to give, and what (or if) they are willing to sacrifice to achieve their goals. Examining how professional Irish traditional musicians experience and interact with the music industry helps reveal how professional musicians negotiate the intersection of commerce and art, the commodification of music experience. It also shows that the interaction between musicians and the hegemony of the music industry has much to offer future investigations in areas such as identity, the performativity of self, negotiation of public image, perceptions of agency, the creative process, hegemony/resistance, and commodification/commercialisation. Such work on and within the music industry offers fruitful possibilities for an engaged and applied ethnomusicology. As consumers and stewards of music, I believe we require a deeper, more nuanced understanding of how commodification affects musicians and their music, and we should use our skills and knowledge to help artists navigate the industry.

Notes

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³ Stephanie Taylor, personal interview, 8 June 2011.

⁴ Tommy Peoples, personal interview, 2011; Martin Hayes, person interview, 30 March 2011; Taylor (2011).

⁵ Hayes (2011); Dónal Lunny, personal interview, 30 June 2011; Peoples (2011); Gary West, personal interview, 8 June 2011; Helene Dunbar, personal interview, 4 June 2011.

⁶ West (2011); Dunbar (2011); Taylor (2011); Michael Londra, Skype interview, 29 June 2011; Hayes (2011).

⁷ Londra (2011); John Spillane, personal interview, 15 March 2011; West (2011); Peoples (2011).

⁸ Hayes (2011).

⁹ Anon [name withheld by request], personal interview, 24 February 2011.

Change and stability in Irish-American- Newfoundland fiddle tunes

EVELYN OSBORNE

The fiddle music in Newfoundland and Labrador is a confluence of music from Scotland, Britain, Ireland and France, with a wide variety of influences from Canada and the United States. This article considers the impact of one Irish-American vaudeville group from New York on the instrumental music of Newfoundland and Labrador – the McNulty Family, which was part of the thriving New York Irish scene from the 1920s until the 1960s. From 1944 until 1974, their music had a significant presence on the airwaves of Newfoundland through a radio show sponsored by a local clothing store. At this time, the Newfoundland traditional music recording industry was only just emerging and the McNulty's popularity was part of the development of the Irish-Newfoundland music sound and recording repertoire. This study is based on newspaper, discography, archival and ethnographic research in both New York and Newfoundland.¹ It investigates the McNultys' influence on the repertoire of Newfoundland traditional recording artists from the 1950s to today in general, and, related to this, it compares stability and change in two instrumental tunes performed by the group.

The McNulty family

The band was comprised of mother Ann (1887–1970), daughter Eileen (1915–1989), and son Peter (1917–1960). Ann McNulty was born Ann Burke in Kiltieven, Roscommon, Ireland, in 1887. In 1910, at the age of 23 she emigrated to the United States where she married John McNulty (1887–1928), who died in 1928, leaving her with two young children. Resourceful and talented, Ann formed a family band which by the early 1930s had its own radio show, *The Irish Showboat*, and over the years between 1935 and 1951 a stage-show of the same name which sold out fifty-five times at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM) Opera Hall.² Between 1936 and the late 1950s they recorded 155 titles on Decca, Standard, and Copley with re-issues on Colonial and Coral.³ Their music ranged from Irish songs which Ann recalled from childhood, through songs learned from older singers in New York, to Irish-American songs, vaudeville tunes, their own compositions, and instrumental music. In their stage shows the McNultys not only sang and danced but performed short skits. Their

recordings focused on music, and these records were exported widely, including to Ireland and Newfoundland.⁴

The group's career was centred on the New York City area, and in the summers they went to Rockaway Beach and the Catskills. There were infrequent tours to Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Isle.⁵ All three members danced. Ann 'Ma' McNulty played diatonic button accordion, daughter Eileen McNulty-Grogan sang and son Peter McNulty played fiddle; in 1953 the group toured Newfoundland for two months. Eileen returned to St. John's in 1975 to appear on Ryan's Fancy local CBC television show. Interestingly, when producer Jack Kellum was seeking Eileen for the show he was told that the McNultys were Newfoundlanders.⁶ During her visit she was interviewed by folklorist Pat Byrne in which she explained that when they started performing on stage 'everything was rather relaxed'.⁷ Gradually, her mother's philosophy on performing became quite formal. Ann sought to distinguish herself from the 'party type' or stereotyped stage Irish performer by wearing evening gowns and formal wear. As a group, however, they crossed boundaries, and Mick Maloney has categorised them as a hybrid group which dabbled in instrumental music, characterisations of Irishness on stage as well as performing nineteenth century, Anglo-Irish songs.⁸ The McNultys had a long and successful career and were among the last Irish vaudevillians.

The traditional music recording industry in Newfoundland

Leach deemed Newfoundland an 'ideal folk region',⁹ and Karpeles came to the island seeking the 'singing village'.¹⁰ Newfoundlanders have always had eclectic tastes in musics, including traditional music based in folksong and fiddle-music brought by fishermen and settlers from England, Scotland, Ireland, and France. Being an island on the east coast of North America has meant that various cultural and labour flows affected the overall repertoire. Music historian, Paul Woodford has charted the history of printed music on the island and details the plethora of string orchestras, brass bands, operas, and popular music which came there during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹¹ One example of the variety of musics available is evident in the following advertisement for J. F. Chisholm in the 6 February 1864 edition of *The Daybook*, a St. John's daily newspaper:

Moore's Irish Melodies; Handle's [sic] Sacred Oratorio; The Messiah by Vincent Novello; The Golden Harp: Hymns Tunes and Choruses for Sabbath [sic] Schools; Melodian without a Master; and The Hibernia Collection 200 Irish Jiggs, Reels, Hornpipes, Songs, Dances Etcetera For the Violin, Flute, Cornet, Clarionett [sic].¹²

Broadsides from Tin Pan Alley were also popular, and local balladeer Johnny Burke (1851–1930) published several such sheets out of New York.¹³ In the 1920s and 1930s folksong collectors Elizabeth Greenleaf and Maud Karpeles both noted the Newfoundlanders' penchant for singing popular music and jazz that they learnt from radio and recordings.¹⁴ It is important to keep in mind that Irish music came to Newfoundland not only from immigrants but also through Irish-American broadsides, tune books, recordings, and musical exchanges with travelling workers.

The recording of folksong and traditional music in Newfoundland and Labrador didn't commence until the middle of the twentieth century. Taft states that the first traditional music recording directed to a Newfoundland audience was Arthur Scammell's 1943 *Squid Jigging Ground*, a private recording made through RCA in Montreal with financial backing of Gerald S. Doyle; Scammell estimated that he sold approximately fifteen to twenty thousand copies of this.¹⁵ Folksong releases have always been popular in Newfoundland; however, the recording market for instrumental music has been variable, with tunes usually occupying only a few tracks on a song-based album. In the mid-1950s a local recording industry started in earnest with the release of the first albums of folksongs and instrumental tunes by folksinger Omar Blondahl (1923–1993) and accordionist Wilf Doyle (1925–2012), in 1955 and 1956 respectively.¹⁶ Doyle's was the first accordion album (in 1956), followed by another in 1958.¹⁷ Blondahl asked him to join in accompaniment on a few songs, and it was this combining of guitar, accordion, and folksongs which Rosenberg credits with starting the 'sound' which was picked up by accordionist Harry Hibbs in the 1960s and became another identifiable Newfoundland feature.¹⁸

The accordion

Accordions are probably the most prominent instruments for playing dance music in the province, symbolised most dramatically by a 2005 Guinness Book of Records recognition for the 'Largest Accordion Ensemble' with 989 official participants,¹⁹ an event nicknamed locally 'the accordion revolution'. Despite the accordion's popularity, and its displacement of the fiddle as the historical solo dance instrument, the emic term 'fiddler' is still used to refer to a dance musician regardless of the type of instrument.²⁰ Accordions first became available in Newfoundland in late 1844 or early 1845 and lessons were being offered by 1850.²¹ The melodeon (single-row button accordion) was played on the island until recently, the Hohner brand being the most popular, possibly due to the particular 'Hohner sound', but maybe a consequence of availability. The piano accordion has never become very popular in Newfoundland, suggesting that the early accordions too were also of the button type. That is the same general type of diatonic accordion which was used by Ma McNulty who played what Graeme Smith refers to as the 'old' or 'pre-war melodeon' style of Irish.²² This is in opposition to the 'new' chromatic button accordion which was adopted in Ireland in the mid-twentieth century²³ and has only started being used in Newfoundland in the early twenty-first century starting with musicians who have travelled to Ireland.²⁴ The so-called 'old' style of melodeon playing has stayed popular with Newfoundlanders.

Identification of the McNultys with Newfoundland

The McNulty Family became extremely popular in Newfoundland largely due to a businessman named J. M. Devine. In 1921, Devine moved to New York but by 1932, he had moved back to St. John's where he opened a clothing store.²⁵ Beginning around 1944 he sponsored a radio show which continued for thirty years and featured McNulty Family music. In a 1950 letter to Ann McNulty, Devine impressed upon her how popular her group was with Newfoundlanders, stating that 'dealers [...] are besieged with orders for McNulty records' due to his radio shows. The McNultys did make quite an impression on

Newfoundlanders, in great part due to their presence on radio but also because in 1950 they recorded Devine's poem 'When I Mowed Pat Murphy's Meadow' as a song. Through personal letters we know that Ann was 'delighted' with the poem, calling it a 'typical McNulty number'.²⁶ The McNultys also recorded another Newfoundland song 'The Star of Logy Bay' which they learned during their tour.²⁷ In 1953, the group toured Newfoundland for two months, a tour which brought them all over the island and ultimately onto Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. While their wider audiences may not have known these songs were from Newfoundland, Newfoundlanders did know, and that fact contributed to their sense of familiarity with the group, including their sense that, perhaps, the McNultys were actually Newfoundlanders.

The McNultys and the Newfoundland recorded repertoire

The McNulty Family had a major influence on the general recording repertoire of Newfoundland and Labradorians. Although the focus here is on instrumental tunes, I did complete an analysis of the presence of the McNulty Family's general repertoire in Newfoundland recordings; Ted McGraw covered the same ground with his personal record collection.²⁸ I have extended his work by utilising the Discography of Newfoundland which holds several thousand entries.²⁹ I focused on the recordings available from the Big 6 which were advertised a few days before the McNultys opened their first show in St. John's in April, 1953;³⁰ there were a hundred titles in the advertisement. Through a discography search in 2010, I found that fifty have been re-recorded 298 times by over 84 different Newfoundland musicians. Considering that at the time of research there were fewer than three thousand entries in the discography from all musical genres, this represents a significant percentage of all indexed repertoire. Out of the remaining 55 songs in the McNulty repertoire only twelve were re-recorded, these including the local song 'The Star of Logy Bay' and a localised Irish tune 'Mussels in the Corner'. It is clear that the recordings available at the Big 6 made a large impact on the subsequent recording repertoire of Newfoundland musicians. In comparison, according to the holdings of the Memorial University of Newfoundland Folklore and Language Archive (MUNFLA), very few of the McNulty selections were found in oral tradition. In October 2011, almost 58 years after the McNulty tour, local Newfoundland band Shanneyganock released a McNulty tribute album and commented how ubiquitous their repertoire has become in the province.³¹ The following sections will discuss and analyse two different instrumental tunes recorded by the McNultys, 'Mussels in the Corner' and 'Rollicking Skipper B'.

The influence of the McNulty family's tunes

The McNulty Family recorded only twelve sets of instrumental tunes during their career; despite the small number, many of them became a part of the Newfoundland repertoire as Ann's accordion playing was well-appreciated on the Island. The earliest tune recorded by the McNultys was 'The Rollicking Skipper' (27 May 1937), followed by 'Slipping the Jig' in August of the same year; more tunes were recorded in 1941 and 1942. With the onset of World War II the group stopped recording until December 1947 when they recorded two more tune sets. In 1950 they recorded 'The Stack of Wheat' also known as 'Ann Carawath',

and ‘Fair Roscommon Polka’ with Copley sometime after 1952, the latter being the only tune they may have recorded after their trip to Newfoundland. On the list of McNulty records from the Big 6 on 24 April 1953, there are four tunes listed which I have not found in the discographies: ‘Miss McLoud’s [*sic*] Reel’ / ‘Philip O’Beirne’s Delight’, and ‘Tell Her I Am’ / ‘Richard Brennan’s Favourite’.³² Of the total of sixteen tracks, representing twenty-six tunes, including ‘Haste to the Wedding’ and ‘The Half Door’ I am aware of at least seventeen Newfoundland variants. It is hard to say if all of these were learnt directly from the McNulty records as they are such well-known tunes. According to McGraw the McNultys learnt ‘Haste to the Wedding’ word for word from a 1915 Irish school songster.³³ While ‘Haste to the Wedding’ is a song on the McNulty recordings, it is commonly played as a tune in Newfoundland and appears in many instrumental collections dating back to at least 1767.³⁴ In Taft’s 1975 *Discography of Newfoundland and Labrador 1904–1972* there are ten instances of ‘Haste to the Wedding’ recorded by Newfoundland performers, mainly fiddlers and accordionists.³⁵

The McNulty set, ‘Garryowen’ / ‘Three Little Drummers’, is an interesting case, as the second tune is known in Newfoundland as ‘The Shimmey’ with a slight variation in the high strain. ‘Garryowen’ is also a common tune, but neither is recorded often; ‘Garryowen’ has been noted in Kelly Russell’s tune books.³⁶ Several recent Newfoundland recordings of ‘Garryowen’ are actually of an Irish republican song called ‘Sean South of Garryowen’ made popular by the Wolfe Tones rather than the instrumental tune. The ‘Shimmy’ has only been recorded twice but is known by many instrumentalists. ‘Chasing the Chicken’ and ‘Maid on the Green’ are also tunes known in Newfoundland under other names; the first is clearly ‘Geese in the Bog’ which has been recorded at least ten times and is very commonly played. ‘Maid on the Green’ could be a variant of ‘Auntie Mary’ also known as ‘Chasing Charlie’ or ‘Cock of the North’; ‘Stack of Barley’ is a common tune known as ‘Stack of Wheat’, ‘Kielrow’ was noted in Kelly Russell’s second collection as part of Allan Hillier’s repertoire, and Hillier of Griquet, GNP, also knew ‘Rollicking Skipper B’, ‘Stack of Barley’, ‘Mussels in the Corner’, and ‘Haste to the Wedding’.³⁷ All of these tunes are common in the transnational instrumental repertoire, but it is possible that Hillier learnt them from McNulty Family recordings or radio.

The ‘Fair Roscommon Polka’ is the only instrumental tune which could have been recorded after their tour in Newfoundland (see Figure 1, tune 1). It is a variant of the polka known locally in Newfoundland as ‘Paddy’s Jig’, and though not an exact copy, it is conceivable Ann may have learned this from Wilf Doyle or another musician. It is also possible that it passed into Newfoundland playing from their recordings later or that the two were independent of each other. I present here two versions, the McNulty version from the 1950s and the ‘Snotty Var’ version from 1997. Snotty Var was a collection of musicians in St. John’s who attended sessions and were active in the traditional music scene in the late 1990s. This version is representative of what is played in St. John’s in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The high part, or second strain, has almost identical intervallic outlines. The primary difference between the two variants is the penultimate measure’s approach to the cadence. In the first turn, they are also quite close except for sixteenth-note-runs in bars 2 and 6 in the McNulty score. The McNultys play this piece at approximately

125 beats per minute (bpm) while Snotty Var plays it considerably faster at about 160bpm. I include this example here to show that although the McNultys had a big influence on Newfoundland musicians in general, Newfoundland fiddlers may have also influenced their repertoire.

The figure displays a musical score for two tunes: 'Fair Roscommon Polka' and 'Paddy's Jig'. It is presented in two systems, each with two staves. The top staff of each system is for the McNulty Family (mid-1950s) and the bottom staff is for Snotty Var (1997). Both are in 2/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The first system covers measures 1 through 5. The second system starts at measure 6 and ends at measure 11. The McNulty version features a more complex, melodic line with many sixteenth notes, while the Snotty Var version is simpler, often using eighth notes and quarter notes. Measure numbers 6 and 11 are indicated at the start of their respective systems.

Figure 1 'Fair Roscommon Polka' / 'Paddy's Jig'

'Rollicking Skipper B'

This was recorded by the McNultys on 27 May 1937 with Decca Records in New York City. It was included in the Big 6's 1953 stock list of available recordings in Newfoundland and Labrador. It has since been re-recorded in Newfoundland at least thirteen times by as many different artists and is a common tune played by fiddlers, but it wasn't recorded by a Newfoundland musician until 1956. Accordionist Wilf Doyle (1925–2012) recorded it on his first album as a dance tune. The tune, however, was misnamed as 'Slipping the Jig' which was also recorded by the McNulty Family. The following section examines, 'Rollicking Skipper B' as recorded by the McNultys and compares it with various Newfoundland recordings up to the early twenty-first century. I selected four of these versions to examine in this article. They are recordings from the McNulty Family (2001), Wilf Doyle (1956), Newfoundland rock band Rawlins Cross (*Celtic Instrumentals*, 1997), and folk band Shanneyganock (2004).³⁸ The McNulty recording includes two different tunes with an unusual set structure proceeding from 'Rollicking Skipper' to another tune called 'Ships in Full Sail' and back to 'Rollicking Skipper'. This structure was not upheld in Newfoundland recordings with the exception of Frank Maher's 2005 version.³⁹ Maher's adherence is not as unexpected as one might think with a difference of sixty-eight years in recording dates. Maher is a McNulty fan who attended all of the 1953 concerts in St. John's and learnt directly from the original recordings. As Maher's version is an exact note for note replica of the McNulty recording I have not reproduced a transcript of it here.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

McNulty Family 1936

Wilf Doyle 1956

Rawlins Cross 1997

Shanneyganock 2004

5

11

15

Figure 2 'Rollicking Skipper B'.

In the versions examined, the McNultys are the only ones to recap back to a full rendition of 'Rollicking Skipper' before the end. Rawlins Cross (1997) pairs 'Rollicking' with 'The Shimmy' and Shanneyganock (2004) combines it with 'Pussy Cat Got Up in the Plum Tree' as recorded by Wilf Doyle on *More Dance Favourites* (1962). Although there are significant differences in tempo (McNultys 140bpm; Rawlins Cross and Shanneyganock 160bpm; Wilf Doyle 180bpm), the form within the tune is consistent with the exception of Doyle who recorded it as a dance accompaniment for the Lancers. He plays the tune thirteen times ending with a single A turn. Each of the other groups, including the McNultys, have paired it with another tune and play 'Rollicking' three times before proceeding to another tune.

The ensemble arrangements vary between the groups. The McNultys use accordion, fiddle, piano and on the very last turn they add the sound of Eileen's step dancing which is used sparingly as a percussion technique in the McNulty recordings. She only 'steps out' every few turns of the tune amounting to a total of sixteen to thirty-two bars. Doyle has recreated this element in many of his tunes demonstrating his admiration of the McNultys, substituting a wood-block or similar for the tap shoes' metallic click – and he uses it more frequently. This unique rhythmic element was only used by Doyle and Hibbs.⁴⁰ Both of the later groups, Rawlins Cross and Shanneyganock, use a band, including bass, guitar, and drum set along with accordion. Rawlins Cross also adds a bodhrán introduction and layers a tin whistle, instead of a step dance sound, on the last turn of 'Rollicking'.

Tunes tend to change slightly over time through variations introduced by individual musicians. Sometimes this happens when a tune is remembered or learned inaccurately, when variations are deliberately introduced to provide a personal mark, or to reduce repetitive monotony. The versions of 'Rollicking' presented here are surprisingly consistent through the decades. The McNulty and Doyle versions are almost identical except for a few extra passing notes in bars 6, 10, and 12. Considering the small amount of variation, coupled with Doyle's respect for the McNultys, it is almost certain that he learnt this version from their 78. Forty-eight years later Shanneyganock recorded a version of 'Rollicking Skipper' that mirrors Doyle's version in the use of quarter note in bars 5 and 10 rather than step wise passing notes. There is slightly more variation in this version but not much, with only a change of interval in bar 2 and a slight variation in the high strain when accordion player Mark Hiscock drops down to an A on the middle repetition of BDD in bar 14. The majority of note variations, which are still slight, occur in the 1997 Rawlins Cross version. Rawlins Cross is known as a band willing to experiment with music and blends of Irish, Scottish, Newfoundland music and American-Canadian rock-pop. Thus Rawlins Cross's decision to introduce variations into such a long standing stable tune is not surprising; however they keep the identifiable motifs of the tune intact and primarily play with passing notes in bar 3. The high strain is kept consistent with other versions.

The McNulty and Newfoundland versions differ in their general 'feel'. The McNulty 'Rollicking' has more of a swing to it with heavy and weak beats with a particular lean on the downbeat of the phrases which would make me, as a dancer, want to stomp my foot harder on those first beats. The Wilf Doyle version is consistent with the aesthetic I found in my research with Newfoundland dance fiddlers. In Newfoundland dance music there are often no significantly heavier or weaker beats within a tune measure. Each beat is equal to

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

the others so it gives less of a swing and more of a steady pace. At Doyle’s tempo one might say a steady sprint! Even though Shanneyganock and Rawlins Cross’s versions are slower than Doyle’s they have retained this straight-ahead feel to the music. This is an example of adaption to local aesthetics, slight but noticeable.

‘Maggie in the Woods’ as ‘Mussels in the Corner’

The image displays a musical score for the tune 'Maggie in the Woods' as 'Mussels in the Corner'. The score is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves, each representing a different recording:

- McNulty Family 1941
- Wilf Doyle 1956
- Island to Island 2003
- Melvin Combden Fogo Island, 2007

The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5. The second system begins at measure 6 and includes a repeat sign (double bar line with two dots) after measure 8, followed by measures 9 through 10. The third system begins at measure 11 and includes a repeat sign at the end of measure 14. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

Figure 3 ‘Maggie in the Woods’ as ‘Mussels in the Corner’.

In the 1930s the McNulty Family recorded the ‘I’ve Got a Bonnet Trimmed with Blue’ and ‘Maggie in the Woods’ set which is another interesting case. ‘Bonnet’ is certainly a common tune played around the island and has been re-recorded at least three times with

perhaps, the most memorable being a chin music version by Nellie Musseau.⁴¹ ‘Maggie in the Woods’ is a version of the extremely common polka known in Newfoundland as ‘Mussels in the Corner’ which has been recorded in Newfoundland at least sixty-one times. ‘Mussels in the Corner’ has become exceedingly popular in the past few decades and was the tune used for the previously mentioned ‘Accordion Revolution’. The significant changes the tune has undergone suggests that, either it was part of the local tradition to begin with, or it was naturalised quickly into the repertoire and subjected to local variation. I present four different variants of ‘Mussels in the Corner’, all transcribed in D major. Wilf Doyle’s recording is from his 1956 album and was originally performed in G major as was Melville Combden’s 2007 performance, while the McNulty’s recorded it in B originally. Only the 2003 *Island to Island* recording was in D.⁴²

Doyle’s variant is the fastest at c. 170bpm. As a dance musician, his version is also the longest with six repetitions of the tune ending on the high section. The McNultys are the slowest at c. 40bpm, next is Combden at 145bpm and then the *Island to Island* recording at 150bpm. The McNultys and *Island to Island* both play the tune three times through with repeats of both strains and both versions start on the low turn first. Doyle is the only one who starts on the high turn, in the same manner that I learned the tune from as a child from fiddler Christina Smith. However, Doyle’s form is AA B rather than AA BB. Combden, an accordion player from Fogo Island, is the least consistent in the repetition of form and is the only player to include a third strain. His performance was also the least formal – as I recorded it myself in a fieldwork interview setting. When I asked about his form he explained that:

I got no set pattern. I might play one part twice and then the other part once and then play the first part twice, once, and the other part twice; but if you’re playing with someone you sort of want to know, because [...] I might be going for one part and you’ll be going for the other part.⁴³

This is an important point made by Combden and one I’ve experience with other solo dance players in Newfoundland. The other recordings are all played ensemble, and logistically a set pattern must be followed for performance or recording. A solo dance musician needs only to keep a beat for the dancer’s feet rather than adhere to a fixed pattern of melodic repetition. The instrumentation is quite varied. The McNultys use accordion, fiddle, and piano. Tap dancing enters on the second repeat of the tune. Doyle has a full band with accordion, bass, woodblock, and snare. The *Island to Island* set uses only fiddle and accordion with guitar accompaniment. Combden’s version is solo accordion. There are far more variations and differences between versions of ‘Mussels in the Corner’ than found in ‘Rollicking Skipper’. The 2/4 polka form, known as single jig in Newfoundland, allows for more experimentation without disturbing the identifying motifs. The low strain has two possible introductions. The first, played by the McNultys and *Island to Island* drops down and back up a perfect fourth, D-A-D-E while the second popularised by Wilf Doyle, uses only F#, E and D. I have heard various combinations of this including the most popular F#-F#-E-D, followed

by Combden's F#-D-D-E, and Doyle's slightly embellished F#-G-F#-E-D. All of these are common introductions in Newfoundland.

The high strain is the most consistent with all four variants playing the same notes in bars 9/13 with only the McNultys adding a dotted rhythm. Bars 10/14 show that if Newfoundland musicians did learn this from the McNultys they have since developed their own stable variation. The final two bars also show local standardisation amongst the non-McNulty versions. The low strain contains the most variation. Beyond the opening bar and bar 7, Doyle's version is similar to the McNulty's and Combden's follows Doyle. However, Doyle simplifies bar 4 to two quarter notes while Combden follows the McNulty version. The *Island to Island* version uses patterns that almost sound like accompaniment or improvisation on the motifs. This is not surprising as both Wells and Carrigan are willing to experiment with tunes to provide new and interesting variations. In my opinion they are part of a group of musicians who are at the forefront of continuing the transition of Newfoundland music from functional, participatory, dance music to presentational-high fidelity music in the manner theorised by Thomas Turino. According to Turino, there is little arranged accompaniment in participatory music but accompanying figures and harmonies become more prevalent as the music is arranged for listeners rather than dancers or other participants.⁴⁴ Combden explained that the third strain is new and has only been introduced in the past few years but he liked it and 'latched on to it'.⁴⁵ I first learned this third turn from Colin Carrigan in 2001 and have heard it many times since.⁴⁶ In a passing conversation with an English musician in 2010 they admitted that they have started pairing 'Donkey Riding' and 'Maggie in the Woods' in the previous ten years at their home sessions. This strain does sound similar to 'Donkey Riding' at points. It is an interesting timeline comparison for the introduction of the strain in St. John's, Fogo Island, and the United Kingdom. I have no theories as to why musicians both in Newfoundland and the UK might have started adding this third strain around the same time period other than a potential influential recording of which I am unaware. One possible source could be Great Big Sea's 2000 recording *Road Rage* which made the song 'Donkey Riding' quite popular in Canada and perhaps the UK.

Conclusions

So how does a detailed tune comparison and analysis help us better understand the larger picture of a musical tradition? For one, it shows us that there is a range of change and stability within a tradition; some tunes stay remarkably stable while others are subject to more change within the parameters of acceptable interpretation. Active musicians are like magpies: they pick up appealing tunes from a variety of sources including radio, recordings, printed materials, and other musicians. In this case the stock of McNulty records imported by J. M. Devine to the Big 6 was clearly one common source of tunes. Although I do not subscribe to the notion that music learned from recordings inherently becomes static and uncreative, it would seem that in this case the availability of 'Rollicking Skipper B' on LP has encouraged a more stable version than that of 'Mussels in the Corner'.

'Mussels in the Corner' was not on the Devine's stock list in 1953 and shows significant variation in the melodic structure, beat patterns and form. Therefore, I assert that 'Mussels in the Corner' was already in the tradition and has developed a variety of local

variations independent of the McNultys. On the other hand, ‘Rollicking Skipper B’ was offered to Newfoundlanders through Devine’s stock and has stayed extremely consistent over a period of sixty years. I contend that due to J. M. Devine’s preference for their music, the McNulty family has had a major influence on the Newfoundland recording industry and instrumental tradition. Unlike other popular musicians who toured or distributed records within the province, the McNulty Family had a continuing and consistent presence in the Newfoundland soundscape which reached beyond their own performing career. At the same time that Newfoundlanders adopted the Irish-American McNulty repertoire they also adapted it to their own style of playing.

Notes

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Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

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OSBORNE *Change and stability in Irish-American-Newfoundland fiddle tunes*

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Cape Breton ‘crossroads’: cultural tourism and the nature of ‘traditional’

JANINE RANDALL

The last few decades have seen the emergence of Cape Breton style Scottish Music make huge advances in the world arena of ‘Celtic’ music. Scholars can debate whether or not the fiddle music was exactly the same as it had been played in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland; but what is certainly true is that the adoption of the piano following the earlier pump organs was what perhaps brought Cape Breton music its distinctiveness from other ‘Celtic’ music genres and its rising audience appeal. Unlike the traditional use of a variety of other instruments in both Ireland and Scotland, Cape Breton predominantly favoured the fiddle and piano (see Figure 1). This strong music combo had two traditional venues, dances and house parties. Concerts as such, or ‘paid’ venues other than dances, were mainly local, parish-sponsored and were held out of doors. More recently, stage concerts (and smaller, paid house concerts) have tended to replace the dances as these dwindle in Cape Breton and are close to ceasing in Boston and Detroit (two cities that swelled with Cape Breton emigrants in the twentieth century).

The emergence of cultural tourism and professionally-trained fiddlers who choose performance as a career have created many new fiddle duos and bands both inside and touring outside of Cape Breton Island. Although we no longer worry about *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*¹ there may nevertheless be cause for concern for vanishing Cape Breton fiddle music. This concern is not based so much on the number of fiddlers *per se*, but more on the lack of dancers; in particular, dancers for the Cape Breton Square Set which because of the nature of Cape Breton traditional dance music depends on the actual dance itself. Cape Breton is not a country unto itself as are Ireland and Scotland, but is a small sub-culture without the kind of institutional guardians of traditional music that those countries have (such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Fleadh Cheoil in Ireland, and the Traditional Music and Song Association and Fèisean nan Gàidheal in Scotland).² As this music moves more towards the concert stage, and is found less in the dance halls and at house parties of former times, how does it survive as a truly ‘traditional’ music? This paper explores how that move has been affecting the music, traditional dancing, and the musicians.



Figure 1 Mom (Mary Cameron Edmonds Muise) accompanying Cape Breton fiddler Cameron Chisholm at our home in Dorchester, MA. (1962).

In 1972 the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) aired the documentary *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, a half-hour program which explained a worry that the preference of the young generation of the 1960s and 1970s for modern music was leading to the decline of learning and playing the tunes traditional to Cape Breton. This turned out to be more myth than reality, as there were actually many young and old players continuing the tradition – including the remarkable John Morris Rankin, Kinnon Beaton, Jerry Holland, Howie MacDonald, and Brenda Stubbert – to name a few. Most of these were playing quietly at home, however, or, if together, at house parties, kitchen ceilidhs, and Church fairs, and so were not visibly recognised as the sizeable body of practice that they were. Yet the documentary did help to raise concern for the fiddle, sparking (through Fr. John Angus Rankin) the first Festival of Scottish Fiddling which was held in the town of Glendale shortly after. The Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association was created too, in July of 1973, to teach traditional Cape Breton fiddling and piano accompaniment and make it more available to young and old.

Fast-forward to 1996 when I founded the Ceilidh Trail School of Celtic Music along the western shores of Cape Breton Island in my father's hometown of Inverness to promote the learning of traditional Cape Breton fiddling, piping, piano and guitar accompaniment, and step-dancing in the traditional ways as I had known them all of my own life, from the many older and now-deceased fiddlers and pianists I knew, growing up in our home. Our school was based on information I had gleaned from reading of the founding of the Glencolmille cultural initiative in County Donegal, Ireland, and how such an endeavour could create economic development for a marginalised area through promotion of indigenous

skills.³ Inverness being a once-thriving coal-mining region with local fishing and farming had seen much better days before the last of the coal mines was closed in 1958. The craft that Western Cape Breton Island was best at was traditional fiddle music and dancing, which never seemed to cease even if the towns had long since ceased to thrive.

Although many of the traditional dances that were once widespread in Cape Breton had ceased, ‘The Ceilidh Trail’ (Route 19 on the western side of the island) was vibrant with fiddle and piano players and step-dancers for much longer. Square dances were held nightly all along the trail at one parish hall or another, an amazing musical mecca that was for many years privy only to the locals and to those who descended from families in that area. Even the Gaelic College would bus its students over to the Ceilidh Trail side of the island to take in dances at Glencoe and West Mabou, and to experience the Broad Cove concert. For eleven summers we hosted top musicians and dancers from Cape Breton and also, for the first couple of years, from Scotland and Ireland too. I recall criticisms in written and vocal form – everything from the ‘worry’ of bringing ‘Irish’ fiddlers onto the Island and concerns about whether or not we would truly be teaching ‘Highland Gaelic’ music, to the fear that ‘sessions’ that we held in local taverns would destroy the music culture since these were not indigenous to the area; they might not have worried on the latter count, for, as our Irish musician guests were soon to be exclaiming: ‘Where are the pubs?’ We didn’t have any by their standards.

So it is with a sense of irony and bemusement that I observe some of the ever-so-slow changes that seem to have been taking hold since *c.* 2002. Conversations with older musicians living in Cape Breton and away also confirmed some of my thoughts about these changes I have witnessed. When I spoke of my concerns with other colleagues of Cape Breton descent I would be challenged by the comment that ‘There will *always* be Cape Breton music as we know it!’ Although these people could not prove their point, and I myself couldn’t prove the contrary, I started making mental notes of changes that might be troublesome in years to come. First it would be important for me to preface this discussion with my understanding for the *need* for change in everything – especially in music. Traditional music was the ‘pop’ music of its time, and music always reflects the taste of a particular group at a particular time. So surely the music I heard and appreciated at the age of three would not be to the liking of young music-lovers today? I myself had a need to disengage from what I thought to be just my parents’ music. But with adulthood I could already see a changing of the guard, and with that I found that this music held a place for myself also. It was a music that indeed belonged to everyone. This was also the time of musicians in my own age group – Jerry Holland, David MacIsaac, and Hilda Chiasson – and soon it would be the years of the Barra MacNeils, Natalie MacMaster, Ashley MacIsaac, and the Rankin Family.

The natural tendency of musicians is to expand their repertoire and continue to learn and grow with their music. Looking at the last few decades of contemporary Cape Breton musicians this expansion has included new ways to present traditional Cape Breton music to its audiences, and so step-dancing has always been included in the shows of Natalie MacMaster, the Rankins, the Barra MacNeils, and Ashley MacIsaac. Fiddle and piano were the major instruments, but others were brought in to form a larger ‘band’ sound. Jerry Holland remarked in 2003 on such changes he had seen in the music:

In recent years there has developed a considerably better understanding for what Cape Breton music is in the outside world, better than I would have ever expected. Coming here to Cape Breton even just once will cause people to go home with a different view and understanding of our music. I've known people who come here with the idea in their mind that everything Natalie plays is Cape Breton or that everything Ashley plays is Cape Breton, but then they'll go to a house party session with just two or three fiddlers and an accompanist and change their old ideas about everything. Sure, you'll have the odd one that isn't satisfied with what they hear [...] but they're really the exception.⁴

In 2012 our cultural tourism thinking is quite different, with the belief that tourists would not be as happy with the traditional fiddle playing and music as we have known it. There is a tendency towards a more visual performance with eye-pleasing acts and virtuosity with multi-instrumentalists and various forms of step-dancing. Today, Cape Breton fiddlers in particular – and musicians in general – are able to travel globally in a way not possible or even thinkable in previous decades. When Buddy MacMaster was asked by fiddler Frank Ferrell if he would come to the town of Port Townsend in the state of Washington to participate in a new fiddle camp called *The American Festival of Fiddle Tunes* back in the summer of 1986, Buddy asked if Ferrell thought anyone outside of Cape Breton would really want to hear his music? Cape Breton musicians were asked to teach their style of bowing, and other aspects of the style of Cape Breton fiddle-playing, but few, if any, of these musicians really knew how to describe what they were doing in order to teach others. Today, many Cape Breton fiddlers are technically trained in music theory in university as well as being taught in fiddle camps and workshops, so bringing an ease of transition in styles to the table that was not possible before. Celtic Colours International Festival⁵ in particular has brought large numbers of musicians from around the world to the island, lending itself to natural musical collaborations and the sharing of genres and styles. Today, one is likely to hear any number of collaborations when attending a Cape Breton house concert: French guitar accompaniment, jazz via Stefan Grappelli, Irish flutes, Norwegian tunes, and repertoire from other provinces of Canada such as the Ottawa Valley, Alberta, and Western Canada. The past couple of decades have seen such a resurgence of Cape Breton fiddle music that there are now more fiddlers, more concerts, and more music than ever. At the same time, however, we are also seeing some decline in the outdoor summer festivals and the square set-dancing that was the hallmark of Cape Breton music (see Figure 2), with fewer dancers at the halls on the island, and the closing of dance halls in both Detroit and Boston (the two areas of substantial Cape Breton emigration to the United States).

Detroit was a thriving area for Cape Breton emigrants in the late 1950s and 1960s as the major car manufacturers there absorbed large numbers of migrant workers. Dances thrived in the city, with fiddle and piano players and large numbers of dancers looking forward to coming together to shed the stress of the working week. Players included fiddle greats Sandy MacIntyre and Gordon MacQuarrie as well as pianist Barbara MacDonald (Magone). In addition, young and old players living in Cape Breton Island were continually being invited to Detroit to play for these dances, so continuing the link of traditional music in that area. Boston too, and its Canadian American Club in Watertown in particular, was

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

a similar economic and cultural heartland. Dances in both Detroit and Boston were not put on by parishes, but by fiddlers themselves as an extra source of revenue. Bill Lamey started dances in the Boston area, and later the Canadian American Club was formed (1960s). By the early 1970s the dance halls were packed, and musicians who had emigrated to the United States would play weekly. Often fiddlers and pianists were asked to come and play at these dances for more variety in tunes and styles; carloads of dancers from Cape Breton Island would often drive down just for the weekend to enjoy and experience the great music. Both cities are now in decline in this regard, as both membership and dance attendances have fallen off. Long the bastion of Cape Breton emigrants, 'The Boston States' saw its numbers of emigrants decline as the USA restricted the number of emigrants allowed into the country. Additionally, as younger people left Cape Breton and went on to college, more stayed within Canada and worked in the larger cities there.



Figure 2 Dad (Johnny 'Walker' Muise) on the 'clappers' (1959).

Fast forward to the present, with the children of many Cape Breton emigrants married into families of other nationalities, and the culture of music and dancing in particular, have become more difficult to maintain. Fewer descendants took up learning the fiddle or piano as their culture became more americanised. Of all first-generation descendants who came from Cape Breton to the Boston area not one was taught or learned to play Cape Breton fiddle, and only a few learned Cape Breton piano accompaniment. Older fiddlers retired back to Cape Breton Island or passed away with no replacement; surviving older dancers now might only come to a dance if the weather is good and then may only be able to dance one set.

Unlike Ireland, whose descendants in the United States outnumber by a factor of eight the five-million population of the island of Ireland, Cape Breton is neither a 'country' nor a 'culture'; it is a 'sub-culture'. Those of us of Cape Breton descent, who grew up in a strong Cape Breton music culture do know exactly what that culture is, but trying to recreate this today seems not only impractical but impossible, at least in the United States. The Canadian American Club of Boston is, however, valiantly trying to revitalise itself with step-dance and square-dancing lessons for free and even offers free, regular fiddle lessons. But our Cape Breton community suffers from too many years of its natural tendency to clannishness: in dances where everyone knew everyone else there would be a *caller* for the dance, but never any instruction beforehand (as one would find in *Contra dancing* throughout New England); it was assumed that all participants knew the dances. Thus, many people not from Cape Breton who took part said they felt 'unwelcome'. Again looking at 'Irishness', it can be seen that there are generations calling themselves Irish who will search back four generations or more in order to link to a relative born in Ireland, but I have known many first-generation Cape Bretoners who have never or rarely stepped into the one institution in the Boston area that was initially formed for them. Since it was not a Cape Breton tradition to share its music publicly, there was no outlet for people from 'away' to hear the traditional music of Cape Breton; when it came to Boston for instance, there was just one venue (Joe MacPherson's); contrast that to the plethora of venues which showcased talented Irish musicians in the same city.

What of the dances on Cape Breton Island itself? Only one dance remains year-round on the western side of the Island, at West Mabou Hall, a parish-run dance. During the Ceilidh Trail School of Music's summer programme (1996–2006), we would send our students to the nightly dances in the area as a way to enable them to absorb more Cape Breton style music, fiddle techniques and tunes: Monday nights (Brook Village); Tuesday (ceilidh/concert in Mabou); Wednesday (Normaway Barn, Margaree); Thursday (Glencoe Hall); Friday (Southwest Margaree Parish Hall); Saturday (West Mabou Hall); Sunday always had outdoor festivals in the summer in each of the towns. From all accounts the premier venue for serious dancers is at Brook Village on Monday nights, where 100 to 200 can be found square-dancing and step-dancing. Although the other dances have good attendances, there are complaints about 'people not knowing the dance, ruining it for others that do', and the proverbial 'young people horsing around on the dance floor' making it 'dangerous' for some! Some dances have closed due to competition from other events, usually concerts. This suggests that there is a need for communication and cooperation among venues, or that organisers should try not to compete for valuable tourist dollars on the same evening.

Since today there is less square-dancing, what of the Cape Breton style being called a predominantly 'dance music'? This is probably because when it comes to slow airs and marches one might not find a lot of difference between the playing of a Scottish violinist and a Cape Breton violinist. But where the true differences come out is in the playing of 'Gaelic style' repertoire that is mostly heard in the strathspeys, jigs, and reels. Here is where you will hear the difference that defines a traditional Cape Breton style of playing, whether or not the tune was composed in Scotland, Ireland, or Cape Breton. This style's syncopation reflects the staccato articulation of the Gaelic language, something not heard in other fiddle

styles. Almost the same difference as one would hear in the differences between Irish and Scottish Gaelic languages is found in their playing, Irish Gaelic being more ‘flowing’, and Scottish Gaelic a bit more ‘edgy’, perfected in the fiddle through the use of cuts in the bowing. At the same time that there are fewer dances we also have more musicians playing professionally. Up until quite recently our older Cape Breton players were dance musicians who had full time jobs of other descriptions: Angus Chisholm (teacher), Buddy MacMaster (railroad worker), Joe Cormier (electrician), John Campbell (heating engineer); even Jerry Holland was a carpenter until his later years. Following the professional leads of Natalie MacMaster and the Rankin Family more and more young musicians are trying to make their living from performance. In a small place like Cape Breton Island this is significant; especially considering that it pretty much shuts down for nine months of the year, especially along its western side. A hotbed for summer tourism, after October inclement weather makes travelling to and around the Island less inviting.

Young Cape Breton musicians now travel throughout the United States, Canada and around the world, often playing in small, paid ‘house concerts’. The latter is a new phenomenon aided by the internet, through which social media can set up an entire tour of the homes of people who enjoy having these musicians, giving all or most of the door fees to them. This is both advantageous and detrimental to traditional music. The benefits are obvious in that more people are hearing traditional music live in small venues, musicians have more venues to perform in, and such tours are usually more lucrative than playing for dances. The downside could be that it represents the nail in the coffin for traditional dancing as dance halls cannot compete with home venues for two reasons. Firstly traditional dance halls and venues sponsoring dance have to concern themselves with the economic realities of preserving and maintaining the dance hall (light, structural maintenance and heat being the biggest costs). This necessitates taking a percentage of the door revenue or bear the liabilities intrinsic in a fixed fee; especially if there is poor weather or for other reasons poor turnout. Secondly traditional musicians have noticed the benefits of the short-duration house concert, typically two sets of 45 or 50 minutes, compared to a three- or four-hour dance of continual playing at the faster tempo of jigs and reels. In honest conversation, traditional musicians (both Irish and Cape Breton) state a preference for a session, concert, or house concert rather than a traditional set or square dance.

What does this change mean for our traditional Cape Breton musicians? Here I speak of those who travel solo or in duets abroad making their living professionally from playing Cape Breton traditional fiddle music. Rarely do we now see what might be regarded as a solely ‘traditional’ performance by them, such as one might see at the Beaton Ceilidh on a Tuesday night in Mabou. More often than not it is a collaboration of different music styles with performers of different genres and different instruments. And although there is always a smattering of traditional Cape Breton fiddle in the performance, this may be without Cape Breton’s second most notable contribution to ‘Celtic’ music, Cape Breton style piano accompaniment. Scholars might debate whether or not the fiddle of Cape Breton carries a ‘true’ sound of the Highlands of Scotland, but there is little debate about the unique style of piano accompaniment which may or may not have started as a Scott Joplin style but

nevertheless has come to emulate more and more the percussive of the dancers' feet, and perhaps, like the fiddle, even the staccato rhythms of the Scottish Gaelic.

Larger bands might include lots of non-traditional Cape Breton instruments too, including drum sets and accordions, all of which are fine, for it is still traditional Cape Breton music. Yet over the years there has been a *cachet* to being a fiddler who plays Cape Breton music. Imagine the disappointment when one doesn't hear any or very little of this at a gig? Perhaps therefore there should be full disclosure in advertising for 'Cape Breton' music events? When I started the Ceilidh Trail School it was beyond question that a Cape Breton fiddler had to be *born* in Cape Breton. It is ironic today however to have the inverse – 'Cape Breton fiddlers' who may indeed have been born in Cape Breton, but who do not play traditional Cape Breton music but advertise themselves as 'Cape Breton' fiddlers. Jerry Holland, who somewhat revolutionised the promotion of Cape Breton music in the 1970s with his CD *The Master Cape Breton Fiddler*, addressed this:

But in anything I do, I try to explain that this is an Irish tune; that this is a French tune and so forth, so that's there's no misconception about what I'm offering. So if I say, 'That was an Irish tune, played in the Cape Breton style', I hope that they'll understand that it is not full of the Irish rolls or embellishments but that there are more bow cuts in it than in the Irish style. Through discussions like that I try to define the differences that the Cape Breton music offers.⁶

In speaking with Cape Breton fiddlers of every age they will tell you that they will forget how to play for a dance if they don't keep it up. Those that play only concerts with a rehearsed show will find that they have a difficult time getting back into the swing of knowing the multitude of tunes needed for one Cape Breton Square-set. So now we have a situation where we have fewer dancers at the dances, fewer dances being held, more professional fiddlers/pianists looking for venues to make a living, more musicians playing concerts than dances, and more genres being played in the concerts. More people knowing about Cape Breton music is a good thing. But while we have concerts and Cape Breton musicians showcasing different styles and genres is there a way that we can always continue the more traditional presence of fiddle music? Can a place as small as Cape Breton Island maintain its connection to the older Highland Style of bowing and playing? Can it continue its education of younger players in older tunes? Will younger 'hot players' who come along also know the repertoire of great tunes which allow them to play for dance halls?

Fiddlers once learned their repertoire by listening to someone else, and each individual's repertoire was diverse; tunes were held close to the vest as a fiddler's tunes could be what got him hired for a dance or invited to a home to stay for a while. In the absence of this, organisations step in today to teach, and publishers provide the repertoire. Although there are plenty of arguments to be made about how larger organised institutions – such as Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the TMSA – might discourage inventiveness and standardise tunes, these have become the modern way to maintain traditional tune-playing in their respective traditional styles; even though certain performers do experiment with all types of collaborations. We do have the Cape Breton Fiddlers' Association, but it is only one organisation and only in Cape Breton. There are no competitions, and there is a fierce pride

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

that this is the case, for it is seen as another way to assure the continuation of tunes being played ‘correctly’. The Gaelic College too does a wonderful job of teaching traditional Cape Breton fiddle by fine teachers,⁷ and fiddle as well as Gaelic is being taught in some of the schools with good music programmes. These are wonderful advances in efforts to maintain ‘the tradition’ (which is basically learning a style on fiddle and piano) and to learn the legacy of traditional tunes.



Figure 3 Janine Randall and Jerry Holland.

The success of establishments like the Ceilidh Trail School of Music, and the ongoing world success of groups such as the Rankin Family and the Barra MacNeils, and soloists such as Natalie MacMaster and Ashley MacIsaac, have led to the institution of more government-sponsored organisations and the development of annual events notably Celtic Colours and facilities such as the Judique Celtic Interpretative Center⁸ and the Father John Angus Rankin Cultural Center in Glendale.⁹ Millions of dollars in development of these cultural tourism sites were largely attributed to the then Minister of Tourism Rodney MacDonald who had been a popular local fiddler and step-dancer in the Mabou area; his eventual rise to become Premier of Nova Scotia is seen as key to the awarding of government recognition and funding to Cape Breton’s music culture. But now, instead of local parish-sponsored dances and festivals we have more professional venues displaying traditional Cape Breton music – a stage-scene of an old kitchen stove and table for the ‘kitchen ceilidhs’, allied to more modern attributes like gift shops and restaurants. The outdoor festivals themselves have changed somewhat too. The parish of St Margaret’s of Scotland in Broad Cove still

runs the oldest outdoor cultural festival on the Island. But this now hosts 'big' bands, such as the Barra MacNeils, or a 'big' name, such as Natalie MacMaster. The summer months are no longer packed with parish-run concerts, and the Big Pond outdoor concert, once one of the Island's largest, had to be discontinued owing to dwindling attendance; this also happened to the once-thriving Glendale Ceilidh in Glendale. There is a 'Big Pond Event' during Celtic Colours in October, but it features multi-national talent playing for pre-reserved audiences at \$30 a seat in the updated Fire Hall, rather than being, as in the past, a day-long event with local fiddlers, Gaelic singers, step dancers, and piano players that one could enjoy outdoors for a nominal \$6.



Figure 4 Great Aunt 'Liz' (Betty Maillet) and piper Malcolm Gillis of the Inverness Serenaders (1952).

Following the showing of the film *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler* in 1972 we saw a change from 'partner' to 'solo' dance styles, setting up problems for future 'partner' social dancing such as square dancing. Perhaps the next warning call should be to ensure the preservation of Cape Breton square dancing so that the plethora of future fiddlers can maintain what is perhaps the best in traditional Cape Breton fiddle music? I conclude with Jerry Holland's words (see Figure 3):

There's a connection that's made through the music and dance that I think is maybe more pleasing than any other style of playing. Having been both a step dancer and a square dancer, I know just how I felt when the fiddler played the right tune: if it put you right in that groove, if it had the right drive and made you respond to it because it tickled and enthused you. If you ever have the opportunity to attend one of the dances

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

at West Mabou or Glencoe, go outside where you're out of sight and where nothing will take your attention away from what you hear. Now in that region you'll find the best dancers who will step dance even during the square dance part of the set. Just put your head against the wall while they're in the midst of the jigs or the reels aspect of the dance. If things are really working dead on, you'll hear this amazing connection between the fiddler and the dancers – it'll sound like it's just one thing happening – that one person is creating it all: the dance, the music, the atmosphere, all of it. There's a wicked chemistry in dance playing that's like nothing else that I've experienced and I don't think there's anything finer than encountering that kind of communication back and forth. I mean, I do love playing for people that will sit down and listen in a concert and I thrive off that kind of energy as well, but it's really special when you've got all the people answering you in their dancing and you can hear their enthusiasm coming back at you: letting you know it's worth it; letting you know that your music is tickling their funny bone or good spot.¹⁰

Notes

¹ *The Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, written and narrated by Ron MacInnes, CBC, 6 January 1972. In 2017 MacInnes released a sequel *The Return of the Vanishing Cape Breton Fiddler*, see <https://ronmacinnis.com/> [accessed June 2018].

² Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann and the Fleadh Cheoil in Ireland, and the Traditional Music and Song Association (TMSA) and Fèisean nan Gàidheal in Scotland

³ See Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí <http://www.gleanncholmcille.ie/fiddle.htm> [accessed June 2018].

⁴ Mark Wilson, interview, *Rounder Records*, 2003. See North American Traditions Collection, 1967–2007, <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/20503/#> [accessed June 2018].

⁵ Celtic Colours International Festival <https://celtic-colours.com/> [accessed June 2018].

⁶ Mark Wilson, interview, *Rounder Records*, 2003.

⁷ See <http://gaeliccollege.edu/study-with-us/summer-school/course-descriptions/fiddle/> [accessed June 2018].

⁸ See, for example the Celtic Music Interpretive Center's Buddy MacMaster Fiddle Camp, <http://www.celticmusiccentre.com/education/camp/> [accessed June 2018].

⁹ See <http://glendalecommunitycentre.blogspot.com/> [accessed June 2018].

¹⁰ Mark Wilson, interview, *Rounder Records*, 2003.

The FiddleLights project: an artist's recording of bow-hand movements in fiddle tunes

ELISA SERENO-JANZ

Fiddling and dancing are inextricably entwined. Just as fiddle music moves the body of the dancer, the act of fiddling moves the body of the fiddler in its own dance. The performer executes complex movements in the manipulation of the bow, of the fingers, and of the entire body to release the voice of the instrument. I experience fiddling as part of the practice of haptic art, that of aesthetic touch. In this, the corporeal experience is as much a part of the music making as the aural result. FiddleLights is a new media visual art project in which I record the gestures of the bow, presenting a kinetic 'drawing' of the actual movements which create the bowed sound on the fiddle.

In the year 2010, after 27 years as a professional musician and private violin/ fiddle teacher, I entered the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary, Canada, to study for a degree in Fine Art. In one of my drawing classes, the students were led in a discussion about how to access ideas for abstraction. My teacher, Mark Mullin, is an abstract painter. He suggested, 'In using the body as a subject for abstraction, don't think of how the body looks, but rather how the body moves'. The challenge was how to then represent that movement in a two dimensional form. This abstract drawing assignment proved to be pivotal in exploring new avenues of creative production.

The project

I have always been fascinated by the shapes that my bow hand draws in the air when I play the fiddle. Sometimes when teaching fiddlers and violinists, I have drawn my students' attention to the shapes their bow hand makes as they play. When they smooth out the curves and pay attention to their movements, their playing becomes more graceful, with smoother transitions between strings and between bow strokes. As a subject for drawing abstraction, I was curious as to how I could represent the bow hand movement in a two dimensional form. My theory was that I would discover basic shapes such as circles, ovals, and figures of eight. I tried many different methods of actualising the shapes which I create with my bow hand when I play the fiddle. I tacked a piece of paper to the wall. Holding a felt pen between the fingers of my bow hand, I played my fiddle, transferring for the first time the shape my

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

bow hand was making in the air onto paper. Immediately, I was surprised by the diversity of gesture which these drawings began to show. Figures 1–3 are the result of taping Arches paper to the wall and holding a watercolour crayon between the fingers of my bow hand, drawing on the paper while I played.



Figure 1 The traditional reel, ‘The Mason’s Apron’. The A and B sections and the repeats are separated in colour and in space on the page.



Figure 2 Slow air, ‘The Bunch of Keys’. In this one, the A and B sections are also different colours, but layered in the same area.



Figure 3 'Snow in April', a waltz by Tim Janz, where the A and B sections are presented in the same colour (watercolour crayon).



Figure 4 'Snow in April' (kinetic).



Figure 5 'The Bridal Jig'.



Figure 6 'The Mason's Apron'.

Although this method was showing me how varied the shapes were for each tune, the resistance of the drawing tool with the paper confined my gestures. The result was an inexact representation of the movement. At this time I was also taking a photography course and experimenting with the possibilities in time-lapse photography by tracking the movement of lights at night. I was curious as to whether I could somehow use that technology to show the bow-hand gestures more clearly. Laser pointers are small, weigh only 10 grams and discharge a very bright, focused beam. I taped a laser pointer to my bow hand, so that the light was pointing off my knuckle, and shining at the wall at a 90° angle. I turned out the lights, so that the only light recorded in the photograph would be from the laser pointer. I set my camera to a 22 second exposure which gave enough time to play the A section and the B section of the tune once, without repeats. Because the laser pointer weighs so little as to be almost imperceptible, I was able to play with much greater freedom of movement. This now provided me with an exact two-dimensional representation of the movement used to play that particular tune.

Figure 4 is a laser kinetic drawing of the same tune ‘Snow in April’. In this digital time-lapse photograph, we can see how much freer the movement of the bow hand is compared to the more angular movements recorded in Figure 3. Note however, that the general shape of the drawings are similar.

Figure 5 ‘The Bridal Jig’ and Figure 6 ‘The Mason’s Apron’ further demonstrate the variety of shapes and gestures used to give voice to the fiddle, creating a unique drawing for each tune. I found that fiddle tunes provided much better material for working with than classical music. Classical music tends to have sections where the ideas are developed over a long period of time, with more similar motivic repeated gestures, while fiddle tunes encapsulate a diversity of motion within only 16 bars of music. For all of these examples, I played the A section and the B section only once, without the normal repeats. This allowed for more space in the drawing. When I tried it with the repeats, the lines became cluttered. From examining these first examples of kinetic drawings of fiddle tunes, I became intrigued by the idea that certain categories of fiddle tunes – reels, jigs, airs, waltzes – seemed to have their own individual gestures and visual character. This led to a question. Could gestures be related not only to the type of dance, but also the genre of tradition, such as Irish, Scottish, Old Time, etc., or even individual players? FiddleLight images provide a new visual representation of the language of music. There is significant potential to further explore these kinetic signatures in the realms of musical analysis, pedagogical development, and abstract visual art.

Descriptions and comparisons

Following the visual clues, the music itself can be analysed through these kinetic drawings. The position of the lines can be related to pitch. The density and length of lines are indicators of the speed of the music. Circles and figures of eight represent string crossings. Correlating the position of the lines in the photograph to the movement and position of the bow hand, the lower notes on the fiddle, played on the G string are represented by the higher lines in the drawing. High notes played on the E string are represented by the lines in the lower areas of the drawing. In Figure 4 ‘Snow in April’, one can see that there is more density to the lines

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

in the upper regions of the drawing, showing that the melody has a higher proportion of low notes. The sweeping gestures from the upper right corner to the middle on the right side represent long bow strokes. These long bow strokes indicate a slower tempo. The curls and stylised figure eights represent string crossings, where the bow-hand changes levels from string to string. Following the curls at the very bottom of the page, which represent the E string and high notes, we can follow the line right up to the top of the page, which represents the G string. From this we can deduce that there is a part of the melody which jumps from the high notes to the low notes. As the lateral movements are those which indicate the length of bow, we can also see that in this part of the melody it is an abrupt string crossing, with few, if any, notes played between. Exploring and analysing the static image of a melody is one method by which the viewer can experience fiddle music in a new way. Listening to the music while looking at the drawing enhances the viewer's appreciation, entwining the visual with the aural experience.

In contrast to 'Snow in April', 'The Bridal Jig' (Figure 5) has much more density in the line-work. This suggests a faster tempo, encompassing more gestures in the same amount of time. The densest part of the drawing is the bottom left hand corner which suggests high notes on the E string. There is very little on the upper right hand side, letting us know that there is little or nothing on the G string, concentrating the melody between the D, A and E strings. The angular gestures at the top of the drawing indicate that there are sections of bow strokes which remain on the same string. The wavy lines, curly shapes, and small circles are the string crossings. In listening to the recording, notice that the lilting gestures in the music are directly represented visually by the curvilinear gestures of the bow movement.

Figure 6, 'The Mason's Apron', is an example of a reel, and has the most density of the three examples so far. This indicates that it is the fastest tempo with the greatest frequency of bow strokes. There is a lot of angular movement similar to what we saw in the 'The Bridal Jig', yet the lines are much shorter and there are more of them concentrated in a small space. This also suggests shorter bow strokes overall. The angular strokes on the left hand side of the drawing, which are more vertical would be those on the E string. The densest section of the angular strokes are in the middle at a slight angle. These would be on the A string. There is some activity on the right hand side of the drawing which is indicating notes on the D string. There is nothing on the G string in this melody. The circles at the bottom and middle of the drawing illustrate the string crossings found in the B section of the reel. Although there are some curly gestures in 'The Mason's Apron', there are far fewer than there are in 'The Bridal Jig'. In listening to the recording of 'The Mason's Apron', we can correlate the sound of the strong, repetitive bow-strokes with the visual density of similar line.



Figure 7 Reels.

Studying the line work has led to some interesting discoveries. I have noticed that jigs in compound duple time (6/8), have many more curly lines while reels which are in simple duple time (2/4), have more angular shapes. Simple time has an even subdivision of each beat, which works well with the binary up and down motions of the bow. Compound time has a triple subdivision of each beat leading to an asymmetrical division of the bow strokes. Generally, the strong beat is a down-bow and the weak beat is an up-bow. We still, on occasion add asymmetry to the bow strokes in the performance of reels. However, in observing examples of my own playing, I maintain a greater proportion of symmetry in the bowing of a reel. When considering how I bow a jig, there are far more asymmetrical bow-strokes with common sequences of long, short, short that contribute to the curly lines and stylised figure eights.



Figure 8 Jigs.

In Figure 7 (reels), we can compare the kinetic drawings of ‘The Mason’s Apron’, ‘Growlin’ Old Man and Old Woman’, and ‘The Swallow’s Tail’. Although there are some circular forms in each of these, there is a profusion of angular lines; all three reels have a similar visual vocabulary. However, ‘Growlin’ Old Man and Old Woman’ has an increased density of the circles and sweeping gestures which, indicate an abundance of string crossings, not common to the other two reels.

If we compare three jigs, ‘The Bridal Jig’, ‘The Fairhaired Boy’, and ‘The Gaelic Club’ in Figure 8, we notice that the lines contain more curly shapes and stylised figures of eight. This is indicative of the asymmetrical bowing used in playing the jigs. This comparison of the three jigs confirms the asymmetry of the bowing produces the lilting rhythm and characteristic feel of the jig music.

Figure 9 shows three examples of slower tunes: two waltzes, ‘Snow in April’ and ‘The Lone Pine Waltz’, and one air, ‘The Bunch of Keys’, for comparison. It is evident that with these slower tunes, the drawings are less dense, and the predominant gestures indicate longer bow strokes with many curls and stylised figures of eight. The gestures are similar to those in the jigs (Figure 8) yet they are looser and on a larger scale. This corresponds with my use of the bow in slow airs and waltzes. I use much more bow, incorporating some bow strokes which travel the full length of the bow, from heel to tip and tip to heel. They are interspersed with shorter bow strokes as well, providing variation and emphasis. The use of the whole bow makes the gestures more expansive in these kinetic drawings of slower tunes.

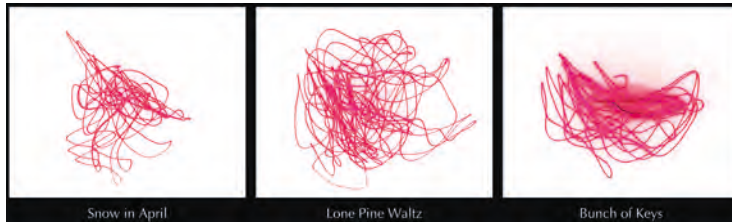


Figure 9 Slow Tunes.

In the first stage of the FiddleLights Project, experimentation was conducted with recording music performance on the fiddle through a static visual image. I discovered how different dances incorporate diverse gestures both in the movement of the body and the sound of the music. Through examination of the lines in the time lapse photos, visual signatures of pitch, tempo, and the use of symmetrical and asymmetrical bow strokes can be observed.



Figure 10 'Growlin' Old Man and Woman'.

Videos

The static images of the FiddleLights drawings are the entry point into a time-based, animated experience through video. In the static image, it is often difficult to find the starting point and the end point of the drawing. It is one thing to look at the finished drawing and

imagine how it sounds. Another dimension of information and experience is incorporated when a recording of the tune is played while observing the static drawing. The next step was to record the music and the gesture with video. Initially I experimented with video capture of the point moving in space, but this did not give the sense of line found in the drawings. The moving dot needed an afterimage to show its path.

To accomplish this, I experimented with several methods and programs which did not provide a high enough resolution in the finished result. Dr Alan Dunning, one of my professors at ACAD, suggested that I process the video with Quartz Composer. This is a computer program which can add a delay to the video. This leaves a trail long enough to give the viewer the sense that they are watching a drawing being made of the bow hand movement. This now enabled the kinetic signatures to be observed concurrently with the unfolding of the music audio.

My video examples demonstrated this relationship between the path of the bow and the music. Video 1 (Figure 10), representing ‘Growlin’ Old Man and Old Woman’, revealed synchronisation of gestures and music, while the still photo shows the accumulation of the gestures over the entire sixteen bars of music. Similar relationships were found with my comparison of Video 2 with Figure 11 (‘The Fairhaired Boy’) and Video 3 with Figure 12 (‘The Swallow’s Tail’); a remarkable nuance of gesture can be seen with the processed video.



Figure 11 ‘The Fair-Haired Boy’.

The FiddleLights Project thus far has been comprised of three major components: time-lapse photos, still photo with background audio and digitally processed video. Each of these components allows the viewer to gain deeper insight into fiddle performance through an

intersection of the audio experience with the visualisation of the exact movements used to produce the sound on the fiddle.

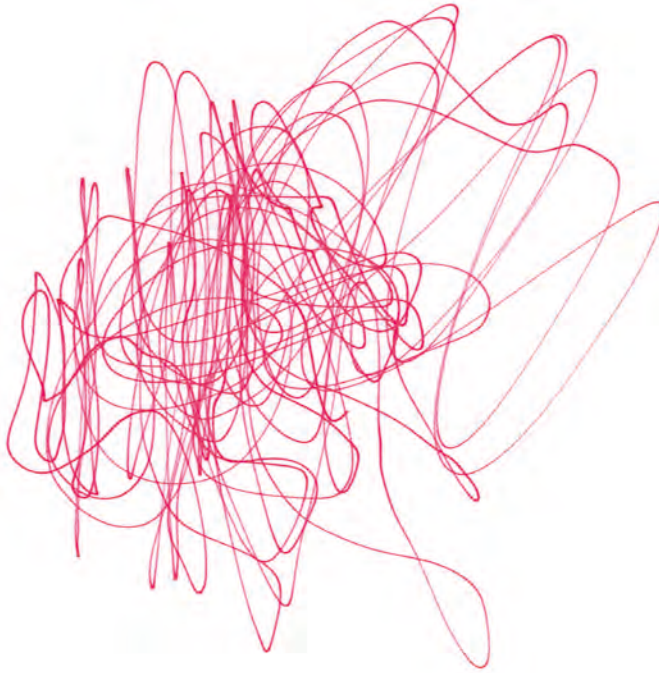


Figure 12 'The Swallow's Tail'.

Value as visual art

While the above analysis is concerned with music interpretation, the outcome of this process can also be appreciated on its own as a visual abstraction of aesthetic merit. The kinetic signatures, in the form of stills, with their curvilinear, organic shapes suggest form and meaning through repetition and variation. The contrast of the black background with the red drawing leads to a perception of vitality in the pieces. Viewed as a collection, these digital photos vary from the quiet curvilinear forms of the waltzes and airs, the playful curls and circles of the jigs, to the very intense, layered mark-making created by the reels. The videos, viewed without sound, suggest purposeful movements: there is rhythm and repetition, yet the speed at which the marks are made vary. It references handwriting, suggesting meaning, and yet is ephemeral, as the drawing disappears even as it is being created. To appreciate the stills or the videos as works of abstract art, it is not necessary to know the origins of the mark-making which are the foundation of the process.

Further research

All of the drawings which I have discussed in this paper are the documentation of one fiddler: myself. This is a record of my personal gestures and my personal style. The kinetic

drawings of my airs, waltzes, jigs and reels reflect my own movements, and although there would be some similarities between fiddlers, this is only a glimpse of the variations which can be explored.

As every fiddler has a unique sound and interpretation of a tune, every kinetic drawing will record the exact movements made in the manipulation of the bow. This becomes a unique signature, generating a unique visual reference of the artistic expression of each individual fiddler. I suggest that every genre of fiddle tunes will also have its own particular set of gestures. A Hardanger fiddler will have different elements in the line than will be found in those of an Irish fiddler or a Scottish fiddler. Styles also vary widely within any national tradition, with regional diversity from north to south and east to west. Because of this, the possibilities for the exploration of gesture between and within style sets are endless.

This work also informs us pedagogically, providing more clues in our pursuit of the performance of different styles. It can become another facet of learning, along with listening to, and watching other fiddlers play. A laser pointer taped to the bow hand uses commonly found technology in a simply, yet highly effective way, and can easily be integrated into the music teaching studio. New music compositions could also find departure points for these techniques. After seeing the results of the FiddleLights videos, I wondered what it would be like if I could compose my own music thinking of the gestures, so that the ultimate result would be a synchronisation of the drawing and the music, in process as well as result.

To further develop all of these concepts, I am hoping to work with Dr Sheelagh Carpendale at the University of Calgary with the Vicon MoCap System. It is a machine and computer programme which tracks movement in 3D. This will present more possibilities for recording the movements of individual fiddle players. Although my documentation of bow movement through the FiddleLights Project gives a true representation of the bow-hand movement of the fiddler, it neglects to incorporate the movement of the whole body of the fiddler. Rather, the fiddler must remain at the same angle to the wall, with the light pointing at 90° to the wall, which can be restrictive for the player. This new imaging system will record the movement of the entire body of the fiddler in 3D, allowing complete freedom of movement.

Conclusion

The corporeal experience of the fiddler, in which the manipulation of the bow creates the sound on the fiddle, is something which is largely known only through a kinaesthetic sense experienced by fiddlers themselves. The FiddleLights Project enhances the haptic experience of fiddling into a visual realm of documentation. For non-fiddle players, the only connection to this experience is visually, through watching a fiddler play. With the FiddleLights Project, deeper insight through the visualisation of kinetic signatures is open to all. The kinetic drawings and videos of the FiddleLights Project also present examples of abstract visual art as impactful images created with intention and aesthetic merit.

The video and audio can be accessed at: http://www.elisaserenोजanz.com/NAFCO_2012.html

Constraint and innovation in the traditional fiddle repertoire of Cape Breton

SALLY K. SOMMERS SMITH

The palaeontologist Stephen J. Gould characterised the process of evolution as a constant struggle between constraint and innovation. The traditional fiddle music of Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, presents an interesting case study of constraint and innovation in repertoire and tune identity. In Cape Breton, fiddle music remains strongly linked to the identity of the people of that island. This music is a closely-held cultural expression that reflects the Highland Scottish ancestry of many of the first European settlers of Cape Breton and the so-called Golden Age of Scottish fiddling. It is a music that is closely tied to community practices of dance, an almost unique situation in traditional music today. During the past two decades, the music has experienced a surge in worldwide popularity. Due in part to this increased attention, as well as the fact that Cape Breton island has also become a mecca for musical tourism, traditional practices associated with the performance and the reception of traditional fiddle tunes, according to some observers, have undergone noticeable changes.

This is not an unusual phenomenon. The term ‘traditional music’ implies that such music is bound by strict adherence to forms, styles, and performance norms that are agreed upon by the people who play, enjoy, and transmit the music to succeeding generations. This is often true. But, in the spirit of Stephen Gould, we must recall that the music is a living – and therefore evolving – entity. It must change. If we are to acknowledge that performance practices for traditional music in Cape Breton are changing, it is instructive to examine how changes in the contexts and reception of the music may affect tune identity and evolution of repertoires. A number of influences can be identified that constrain innovation and change in the repertoire associated with Cape Breton tradition; these include a strong reliance on the written tune as the accepted model for performance, use of written models in instructional settings, and the desire to maintain the close association between the Cape Breton musical tradition and that of Scotland.

Claims that a traditional music is changing often bear a flavour of intergenerational critique in the community of musicians who practice the tradition. If a traditional music achieves widespread popularity, there inevitably arrives a time when purists and older musicians will shake their heads and declare that the music has been irretrievably altered.

The impetus to this change is often believed to be the influence of players not born to the tradition, or the effect of commercial recordings on musicians and audiences alike. Younger players in the tradition may be more rigorously trained and therefore bring a higher level of technical skill to the performance of traditional melodies. Other influences, such as the change of audience and presentation style that often attend the translation of a traditional music to the professional stage are sometimes blamed for the perceived change in the music.

It is often difficult to verify these claims about change in traditional music, particularly if that music is most often perpetuated via aural transmission. In this paper, however, I will attempt to evaluate one such claim: that the repertoire of the traditional music of Cape Breton has changed since about 1990 to include a larger proportion of newly-composed tunes at the expense of the older, more identifiably Scottish melodies (the newly-composed tunes are sometimes referred to as ‘Route 19 tunes’, a reference to the roadway that traverses Inverness County, a seat of the music). This claim takes several forms. Most benign, perhaps, is the assertion made by recording producer and guitarist Paul MacDonald that trading of homemade music tapes among Cape Breton music aficionados in Boston in the 1950s contributed to growth in the fiddle repertoire of Cape Breton fiddlers.¹ I have heard fiddlers and avid followers of the music complain that more new tunes are heard at dances these days, and fewer older Scottish tunes. A more comprehensive claim is advanced by folklorist and fiddler Burt Feintuch, who recounts that musicians and journalists alike have begun to refer to ‘Cape Breton fiddle music’ rather than ‘Scottish violin music’ over the past few decades.² This change in nomenclature is momentous, a metamorphosis that encompasses the entire cultural identity of the residents of Cape Breton, and examining the full meaning of this change is beyond the scope of this paper.

Instead, I’ll simply present a statistical model that can be used to track changes in the recorded repertoire of Cape Breton fiddlers, from the earlier recordings on 78s and LPs through more current recordings of today’s bearers of the tradition. Using this model, I hope to test some of the subjective impressions that the music has changed; in particular the claim that more newly-composed Cape Breton tunes are being played and recorded during the past two decades than in the past.³ I will also use the model to assess whether, as a result of these newly-composed tunes, the repertoires of Cape Breton fiddlers have become more diverse, and thus more inclusive of new tunes or tunes not derived from the received Scottish tradition.

First, I’ll introduce the model, and the types of data one might be able to assess through using it. There are biases related to the collection and analysis of these data, and I’ll consider these biases as well. Then, I’ll show some sample results from my analysis and discuss what they might mean.

The statistical model I’ve chosen to test the claims of repertoire change in Cape Breton fiddle tradition, the Shannon Index of Diversity, is borrowed from the mathematically-based science of population dynamics. Field biologists investigating environmental change use the Shannon Index as a tool to measure the number and distribution of species in an ecosystem. Fiddle tunes are not species, but the diversity of a fiddler’s repertoire, in terms of the provenance of the tunes therein, may be measured in much the same way as the diversity of a biological community. The model is a simple mathematical expression, shown here:

$$H' = -\sum (P_i) \ln (P_i)$$

where sigma (\sum) represents the sum of the categories, P_i represents the proportion of the total, and \ln is the natural log of this proportion. H' represents the diversity of the population – in this case, recorded fiddle tunes – being studied. The power of this model is that it can be used to examine differences in individual repertoires, regardless of the sizes of those repertoires. A smaller recorded repertoire can therefore be confidently compared with a very large one. H' can also be used to describe, in a single number, the overall ‘Scottishness’ of an individual’s recordings. What is the bottom line? Smaller H' values mean greater reliance on the received Scottish repertoire. Greater H' values mean a more diverse repertoire, with less reliance on older Scottish tunes.⁴

I began with the database compiled by Alan Snyder,⁵ which lists recordings made by Cape Breton traditional musicians (as well as musicians from closely related traditions, such as that of Prince Edward Island).⁶ It is important at the outset of this analysis to note that a recorded repertoire is only one measure of the actual number and diversity of tunes played by a fiddler. Use of recorded repertoire only is thus an important bias in the present study. It is, however, also worth noting that recorded repertoire may also be one of the most important measures of what a traditional musician plays, as it constitutes the body of work by which he or she will be known to audiences over time. The choices that a musician makes about what to record will mould that musician’s legacy. I feel confident, therefore, that use of a recording database for this study is not merely a convenience; it also provides a means of measuring a musician’s deliberate contributions to the evolution of the tradition.

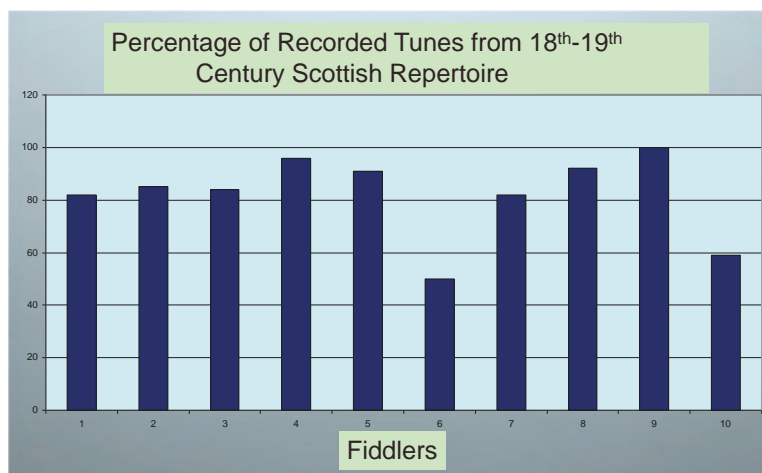


Figure 1

In order to use the Shannon Index for this analysis, tunes must be grouped into categories that will help show the diversity – or lack thereof – in a fiddler’s repertoire. The choice of these categories is important, although prone to bias. In order to minimise this

bias, I first compiled the recorded tunes from the database which were listed as ‘traditional’, or whose composers were clearly associated with either the older Scottish repertoire (such as Niel Gow, Joseph Lowe, or William Marshall) or the famed Scottish composer/fiddlers of the last century (such as J. Scott Skinner or J. Murdoch Henderson). These sources made up a huge percentage of most fiddlers’ recorded repertoires, as expected. I divided each fiddler’s recorded repertoire into Scottish and non-Scottish tunes, and the results of this preliminary analysis are shown in Figure 1. As you can see, the percentages of older Scottish tunes in the recorded repertoires of ten randomly selected artists ranged from about 53% to 100%. The average fell between 75% -90%. Two outliers to this group, which are not shown in the figure, recorded only 3% and 5% older tunes – and I’ll speak more about these outliers presently.

After this first division between traditional Scottish and non-Scottish tunes, I looked more closely at the tunes in these fiddlers’ recorded repertoires that did not come from the older Scottish tune-books. Where did these tunes come from? From two places, principally: from Irish tradition, and from Cape Breton composers. The Irish component is not surprising, as Irish emigrants also found their way to Cape Breton Island in large numbers in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Irish traditional music is a time-honoured (although little-discussed) strain in the distinctive fiddle music of the island. Suffice it to say that most CB fiddlers of the last fifty years have heard and been influenced by recordings and performances of Irish traditional tunes.⁷ The last category, Cape Breton composers, was the most interesting. Three composers stood out from all others, in terms of the number of different tunes recorded by CB fiddlers, and the number of times these tunes were recorded. Both of these measurements strongly suggest the extent to which the music of these composers has penetrated (and helped to define) the present Cape Breton tradition.

These composers are Dan R. MacDonald, Donald Angus Beaton, and Dan Hughie MacEachern, among whom MacDonald and Beaton appear more frequently than MacEachern. These three influential fiddler/composers belonged to a common generation; they knew and played with each other (although each lends a very different legacy to the tradition, something I’d love to discuss but is beyond the scope of this paper). Their generation, however – significantly – is the (circa) World War II-generation (approximately from 1940–1950), and not the present generation of fiddlers and composers. Compositions from a younger generation of fiddlers also were prominent in the ‘non-Scottish’ category. Of these, the names of Kinnon Beaton and Andrea Beaton (the son and granddaughter of Donald Angus Beaton) appear most frequently. These two contemporary composers, along with their patriarch Donald Angus Beaton and cousin Glenn Graham, form a ‘Beaton family’ category of composers. Last, there was a large number of tunes with an eclectic variety of composers. Some of these composers had few tunes to their credit (such as Wilfred Gillis, Peter MacPhee, and Gordon MacQuarrie), but these few tunes appear to be very popular (such as the well-known Wilfred Gillis strathspey, ‘Welcome to the Trossachs’, and the lovely Gordon MacQuarrie air, ‘The Bonnie Lass of Headlake’, which has close ties to Irish models). I think it’s significant that these composers are also from the WWII generation. A few modern composers, such as the late John Morris Rankin and Jerry Holland, also appear prominently in this category. Surprisingly, the Cape Breton musician who, it is claimed,

composed the largest number of tunes (about 34,000, by one count) is all but absent in this database of recorded tunes: John MacDougall.⁸ Based on this preliminary analysis, I've chosen the following categories from which I can estimate diversity in CB fiddling repertoires, and thus ask whether the repertoire has, indeed, changed over the past 20 years: (1) 'Old' Scottish tunes, from the received Scottish repertoire; (2) 'New' Cape Breton tunes; (3) Irish tunes; (4) Beaton family tunes; (5) Dan R. MacDonald tunes; and (6) tunes from 'other' new composers. Because recordings are often means of showcasing one's own tunes, I have also added a (7) 'self-composed' category as well. Now, some of these categories have overlap; for example, Andrea Beaton's recordings contain a large percentage of her own tunes, which will fall into both the self-composed and Beaton family categories. But given the overwhelming predominance of the Scottish repertoire in even quite recent recordings, I feel this overlap will not mightily skew the numbers.

What does an analysis using the Shannon index tell us, then, about whether Cape Breton repertoires have changed in the past two decades? I first looked at two fiddlers whose recorded repertoires would, I felt, show the greatest divergence in terms of inclusion of newly-composed Cape Breton tunes and tunes from the other categories I've listed: Dan R. MacDonald and Andrea Beaton. Dan R. was a prolific composer; by some accounts he may have composed as many as 22,000 new tunes.⁹ Yet in his own fiddling, he preferred the music of the Scottish masters he had known from childhood. His wartime posting in Scotland permitted Dan R. to become acquainted with published collections of Scottish tunes, and he worked with the renowned fiddler J. Murdoch Henderson to master these tunes 'from the page'. Dan R. loved, however, to hear other musicians play his tunes. His compositions form a large part of the current Cape Breton repertoire, perhaps because he is so well and fondly remembered, as well as the fact that his tunes are very much to the taste of today's musicians. Andrea Beaton is a young and very popular fiddler, from the most prominent music family on the island, whose roots extend clearly back to Scottish Highland musicians of the early nineteenth century. She is a dance player of great virtuosity and drive, and preserves in a special way the Scottish fondness for the dancing strathspey. Figure 2 shows a comparison of their recorded repertoires, using the Shannon Index of Diversity: Andrea's recorded repertoire is more than twice as diverse as that of Dan R. (in terms of this statistical measure that is an enormous difference).

Next, I compared the Shannon Indices for several other fiddlers, some of whom recorded in the past, and some in the present. All present interesting individual cases, as shown in Figure 2. Jerry Holland's and Brenda Stubbert's indices appear to differ from each other, for example, but both their repertoires draw strongly on new tunes, and are especially rich in self-composed tunes. Buddy MacMaster's index shows a medium level of diversity, which may be attributed to the fact that in his playing and recording career he preferred older Scottish tunes, but also championed the new compositions of Cape Breton fiddlers such as John Morris Rankin, and fiddlers beyond the tradition whose music he found compelling, such as those of Maine fiddler Frank Ferrell. Bill Lamey's repertoire shows little diversity, but he recorded very little. Although a well-known radio personality before his emigration, Bill Lamey lived much of his adult life in the Boston area, and played there for dances attended by fellow emigrants from Cape Breton. Emigrant communities tend to preserve

tradition more carefully than do native communities – this norm of ethnomusicology can readily be observed in traditional Cape Breton repertoires, as well as in the playing of those who left the island for greener pastures in ‘The Boston States’ and elsewhere.¹⁰ Winston Fitzgerald’s index shows little diversity, but his playing coincides with the first wave of recording that presented Cape Breton music to a larger world. This was also the era of the so-called ‘tartanising’ of Cape Breton; that is, presenting the Scottish heritage of Nova Scotia as a tourist attraction.

What does this analysis show? By itself, the data merely highlights differences in sources for tunes among Cape Breton recording artists, both past and present. These data do lend strong support, however, to the subjective impression of some musicians and observers of Cape Breton music who contend that fiddle repertoires have undergone rapid enlargement and increased diversity during the past few decades. Why has this happened, and what might this shift mean for the future of traditional music in Cape Breton?

First of all, we can identify practical pressures that act to foster change in the repertoire; these are related to the close link between the music and dance, and to the demands placed upon fiddlers by the dancers. The music was for generations enjoyed as a listening music or as a music played for informal dances; played by a solo piper or (more and more commonly) a fiddler, perhaps accompanied by pump organ, improvised percussion (such as knitting needles), and – later – piano. The square set dances that are currently popular in Cape Breton are actually imports from New England,¹¹ and are comprised of a series of figures, usually three, that have jig and reel rhythms. The accepted practice for fiddlers is to play a single tune only twice through in a single figure of a set; in practice, this means that one jig figure might require the performance of five, six, or even more different tunes. A typical ‘Boston set’ consists of two jig figures and a final reel figure. Dance fiddlers in Cape Breton must thus possess a considerable personal repertoire in order to play even a single three-figure set. And tunes are rarely repeated during an evening’s sets. The dancers and listeners are extremely conversant with the repertoire of particular fiddlers, and will often request specific tunes, even if the specification is on the order of, ‘Play that nice reel in F that I heard you play last week’. The fiddler has to know the tunes, even when they are vaguely described.

Second, we can identify social pressures that also influence the performance of the music. In recent years, social dances have become more frequent and more populated, perhaps because they have become tourist destinations as well as community get-togethers. In addition, concerts of traditional music have also become commonplace. The twin social pressures of tourism and commercialism have acted to expand the repertoire shared by many fiddlers on the island. The newer ‘Route 19’ repertoire is shared and performed by younger musicians not only at dances but also in concert performances. The present study confirms, however, that the recordings of fiddlers from the younger generation of Cape Breton performers feature a far larger percentage of newly-composed tunes than do the recordings of their elders (the outliers in my first analysis fit this picture). Older fiddlers, in contrast, retain a larger number of older tunes in their performance and recorded repertoires. The competing pressures of constraint and innovation in Cape Breton are resulting in the evolution not of individual tunes, as Samuel Bayard documented, but of

an entirely new repertoire. Accompanying this new repertoire is another shift that might have even more profound consequences for the cultural identity of Cape Breton Island, as well as its artistic expressions. As more Cape Breton compositions have entered the shared repertoire of traditional musicians, the language used to describe the players and their music has also changed. Cape Breton musicians were frequently described on covers of recordings as ‘Scottish fiddlers’ or as playing ‘Scottish violin music’. Sometimes, as with the 1975 Rounder LP titled *Joseph Cormier*, the designations end up sounding geographically confused: ‘Scottish Violin Music from Cape Breton Island’. By c. 2001, Buddy MacMaster was being hailed as ‘Cape Breton’s Master Fiddler’ on *The Judique Flyer*. At the same time as the tradition was expanding to encompass melodies composed on Cape Breton Island, it was also in the process of claiming for itself a separate and unique identity. The data presented in this paper would argue that the repertoire is changing as a result of the music’s popularity beyond Cape Breton Island. Nor is it difficult to conclude that repertoire-change signals the very real emergence of a unique Cape Breton form of traditional music, distinct from that of its Scottish parent.¹²

Fiddler	Diversity Index
Jerry Holland	H' = 1.38
Brenda Stubbert	H' = 1.10
Buddy MacMaster	H' = 1.12
Winston Fitzgerald	H' = 0.80
Bill Lamey	H' = 0.29

Figure 2 A comparison of the diversity of the recorded repertoires of five well-known Cape Breton fiddlers. Older fiddlers Winston ‘Scotty’ Fitzgerald (1914–1987) and Bill Lamey (1914–1991) recorded mostly older Scottish tunes; Buddy MacMaster’s (1924–2014) repertoire is almost equally divided between older Scottish compositions and very new tunes in the Cape Breton tradition. The repertoires of Brenda Stubbert (b. 1959) and Jerry Holland (1955–2009) include a number of self-composed tunes.

This study tested subjective perceptions suggesting that a transition to a more Cape Breton-centred fiddle repertoire has occurred only recently, perhaps since about 1990. In fact the shift has not happened within the last twenty or thirty years. The transition from Scottish tunes to tunes composed and played by the fiddlers of Cape Breton seems to have begun in the 1940s. Successful composers of the present generation whose tunes have penetrated the tradition are following on the heels of their fathers and grandfathers, two generations ago – the real innovators? They were the composers and players of the World War II era, those who defined the Cape Breton sound their children and grandchildren continue today. Although still bounded by constraints in the style and performance practice of the music, Cape Breton fiddlers today are free to innovate in their choice of tunes, and free to add to the rich tradition they have received. It is rare to observe evolutionary change; the struggle between constraint and innovation seldom produces identifiable change in a single generation. Despite subjective observations to the contrary, repertoire evolution hasn’t happened in a single generation in Cape Breton, either.

Notes

¹ Paul M. MacDonald, *Bill Lamey – Full Circle: From Cape Breton to Boston and Back*, liner notes, Rounder Records 82161-7032-2, 2000.

² Burt Feintuch, *Cape Breton Fiddle and Piano Music: The Beaton Family of Mabou*, liner notes, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings SFW40507, 2004.

³ This is not the first time that subjective impressions about musical change have been tested with quantitative methodologies. Please see Eric Clarke and Nicholas Cook, eds, *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Cary, NC: Oxford University Press, 2004) for a selection of similar analyses.

⁴ A compact introduction to indices of species diversity and evenness can be found at ‘Diversity Indices: Shannon’s *H* and *E*’, <http://www.tiem.utk.edu/~gross/bioed/bealsmodules/shannonDI.html> [accessed June 2015]. Note that I do not use the measure of ‘evenness’ mentioned in this initial study, but it could be used to simply estimate the penetration of a particular tune or body of tunes into the fiddle tradition in Cape Breton and beyond. I hope to extend this study to include this kind of evenness measurement in the future.

⁵ The database can be found at ‘Cape Breton Fiddle Recording Index’, *Alan Snyder’s Cape Breton Fiddle Recording Index* (2002–2015), <http://www.cbiddle.com/rx/> [accessed June 2015].

⁶ The database lists 261 recordings, ranging from 78 rpm singles to LP and CD albums, by 91 individual artists (plus several groups of artists), and 4178 different tunes. Many of these tunes have been recorded numerous times by different artists.

⁷ The influence of Irish music on Cape Breton fiddle music is a subject that must be approached carefully. It is, however, important to note that dance musicians from any tradition will borrow tunes and techniques that they find useful or interesting. No tradition, in this sense, is ‘pure’ in its antecedents.

⁸ Glenn Graham, *The Cape Breton Fiddle: Making and Maintaining Tradition* (Sydney, NS: Cape Breton University Press, 2006), p. 98. This figure is probably greatly exaggerated, however; another source quotes MacDougall as supposing he had written ‘about three hundred tunes’. See Allister MacGillivray, *The Cape Breton Fiddler* (Marion Bridge, NS: Sea-Cape Music Limited, 1997), p. 119.

⁹ Graham, *Cape Breton Fiddle*, p. 97.

¹⁰ Please consult Dr Liz Doherty’s dissertation, ‘The Paradox of the Periphery: Evolution of the Cape Breton Fiddle Tradition’ (PhD dissertation, University of Limerick, 1996), for a fuller discussion of preservation of the Scottish tradition in the (peripheral) Cape Breton musical communities.

¹¹ Graham, *Cape Breton Fiddle*, p. 98.

¹² Another important piece of evidence that dates this transformation in repertoire to the 1940s is the publication, in 1940, of the first collection of locally-composed tunes, selected and edited by Gordon MacQuarrie. This collection (*The 1940 Cape Breton Collection*) marks the first publication of several famous Dan R. MacDonald tunes (such as *The Red Shoes*), as well as MacQuarrie’s own ‘Bonnie Lass of Headlake’, which may have been based on an older Irish melody. See Gordon F. MacQuarrie, *The Cape Breton Collection of Scottish Melodies for Violin* (Medford, MA: J. Beaton, 1940).

'Jack is yet alive': fiddle lessons in Shetland Isles schools, 1973–1985

PAMELA SWING

In 1918, eight-year-old Tammie o' Moarfield was sent for by his grandfather, who had heard he was trying out tunes on the fiddle. His grandfather listened as Tammie played, holding the fiddle low against his chest and grasping the bow well above the frog as fiddlers did in those days. Then his grandfather took his fiddle from the drawer of the resting chair and played the reel 'Jack is Yet Alive' a few times until Tammie could pick out most of the notes, and told him to come back again in a few weeks. Fifty-five years later, Tammie o' Moarfield (better known as Tom Anderson), was sent for again; this time by the Director of Education. It was 1973, and Tom had recently retired from the insurance business. He phoned the Education Office about a position for a school violin teacher. He told me:

I could hear John Spence, the Director of Education in the background saying, 'Send him along'. So I went and told him that I didn't have any degrees or training, but that I could teach the basics of fiddle. Spence looked thoughtful and asked if I had ever considered teaching my own traditional music. I said I hadn't.¹ 'Well, I'll tell you what I'll do. How about if I give you a Saturday forenoon at Islesburgh House? It might be a bit difficult to get past the Education Committee but I'll see what I can do'. The first Saturday came, and I was snowballed: thirty-five pupils and parents showed up with different instruments, all expecting tuition [...] After two weeks, Spence said, 'We'd better give you Fridays as well.'²

And so Tom became a fiddle teacher. In this paper, I look at how Tom chose to 'teach his own traditional music', as John Spence put it. Ethnomusicologist Bruno Nettl recognised the importance of focusing on the way a music is transmitted or taught, saying that 'we must be concerned with the way it is learnt and even with the materials that are used to teach it'.³ Nettl was referring to music traditions that are ongoing. What makes Shetland music especially interesting is that a new form of transmission, 'a school fiddle lesson', was created with the specific goal of reviving a tradition. The way tunes have been taught and the form the revival has taken are intertwined. As Hobsbawm and Ranger have noted, there is a sense in which all traditions are reinterpreted, or even reinvented, by each generation.⁴ This process

is even more pronounced when a tradition is consciously revived, for that leads to all sorts of decisions about what is and how it is revived. I am going to discuss three implications of this interconnection between reviving music and a new approach to transmission.

First, the shift from picking up tunes informally at home and at dances to being taught in institutional school fiddle-lessons has created new roles of fiddle teacher and fiddle student, with the teacher choosing what tunes are learned, and how they are taught. Second, there has been a major shift in context for Shetland music – whereas formerly, fiddle music was played for dancing, the fiddle has become a listening instrument and students learning fiddle in schools are trained to be concert performers. And third, in both new contexts – fiddle lessons and the concert stage – Tom presented Shetland music as a positive source of cultural identity. There are questions, however, about how far one person can go in reshaping cultural attitudes.

A little more background is required: when Tom learnt to play fiddle as a boy, he was at the cusp of a fading tradition. By the time he was fifteen and asked to play at his first wedding, he was no longer holding the fiddle low down against his chest, and was avidly learning Scottish tunes he heard on records, especially the music of Scott Skinner. New dances with new tunes were the order of the day – waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, Boston two-step, and eightsome reels – and he could play for all of them. New instruments were also coming in, and musicians, including Tom's family, were forming dance bands. Tom developed a dismissive attitude towards Shetland music that was echoed all over Shetland:

The Shetland tunes, somehow there was a time in my life when I was inclined to look down on them [...] My regret is that I had a period where I really tried to forget [Shetland music] and tried to imitate the Scottish thing [...] I lost a lot of tunes because there were old fiddlers dying and there were old fiddlers who were saying in disgust, 'Oh well, dere no use playing these things because the records are in now'.⁵

It took leaving the islands for Tom to see the value of his own culture and music. During World War II, he was stationed in India, and saw how local folk music was integral to people's lives, in sharp contrast to the way Shetlanders had discarded their own music.

I made a decision [...] after the war, I would devote the rest of my life to preserving the culture, which even then was being affected by incoming things. And I decided then that I would give everything I had to collecting my own music and really studying it.⁶

On his return from India, he joined the recently formed Shetland Folk Society (founded in 1945) and became leader of the Folk Society Band. He worked as an insurance agent by day, and collected tunes in his off hours, amassing an enormous collection of recordings and interviews of fiddlers from all over Shetland. The records he made, and extensive BBC coverage, saw him well-known throughout Great Britain and helped consolidate his position as the key figure in the revival of Shetland fiddle music. Nevertheless, when he began teaching fiddle in school, few bairns were taking up the fiddle and the traditional tunes were rarely heard in Shetland.

The fiddle-teaching experiment in Lerwick did not go unnoticed in the rest of Shetland. In 1974, at the request of the Baltasound School Headmaster and a Shetland Islands Council member from Yell, the program expanded to two schools on the island of Unst and three schools on the island of Yell. As it happened, I had taken time off from college to spend the year in the Shetland Isles learning fiddle myself, and I assisted Tom with the teaching. So I was in a unique position – what I later learnt was termed ‘participant-observer’ by anthropologists – to both witness and participate in the way that fiddle was taught in schools. My personal journal is the only documentation of the early days of teaching fiddle in schools. The Shetland fiddle teaching programme would eventually become the topic of my doctoral dissertation.⁷

There is something inherently special about beginnings. I could tell you stories about somewhat tense early morning trips in the car trying to be on time for two ferries, so as to get to the Uyeasound School by 9:30 am, and how on the first day, a group of students and I all collapsed in giggles as they squawked out a scale together while Tom was outside trying to calm his nerves with a quick cigarette. I could tell you about writing out tunes on slips of paper, and how we spent weeks bringing back fiddles for Alec Leask, the fiddle-maker in Lerwick, to repair.

Establishing a program of teaching fiddle in school in the North Isles was a seat-of-the-pants experiment that evolved over time. From the start, Tom made lessons fun, always bringing in a bit of humour, and instinctively building a personal connection with each student. He emphasised the joy of making music with others – both men and women. For offering fiddle lessons in school had unexpectedly opened the door for girls to join what had formerly been a male tradition. In both Lerwick and the North Isles, the majority of fiddle students were girls. It made no difference to Tom, and, though remarked upon by Shetlanders, it was totally accepted.

We had to figure out what actually would be taught during a lesson. There were so many students that we had to teach in groups. Tom had a true talent at bringing out music in a fledgling fiddler, but we had to first get the students going with the mechanics of playing. This was already a major shift from the past, when boys might have been given a few pointers by a fiddler, but were otherwise left on their own. We tried starting out with handing out the music for ‘Da Merry Boys o’ Greenland’, a tune once familiar throughout Shetland, and as such, one that boys might have tried to pick up first. It was a failure. The students didn’t know the melody, they didn’t know how to read music, and they floundered with the string crossings. We soon realised that we needed ‘bridge’ tunes, such as ‘Baa Baa Black Sheep’, that would help students become comfortable with the basics of fingering and bowing. We then came up with simple polkas and waltzes that could allow the student to continue gaining mastery of the instrument, but still be playing tunes. And so the repertoire, and the way tunes were transmitted, began to be reshaped by the exigencies of the classroom.

Once students became comfortable with the instrument, then noticeable progress could be made. I am going to read a few quotes from my journal, to give you a sense of the excitement that was being generated by learning to play the fiddle. Both quotes are about the Uyeasound School, where the entire upper primary class was learning fiddle:

SWING *'Jack is yet alive': fiddle lessons in Shetland Isles schools, 1973–1985*

Oct. 8: Kim was really making music today, smiling as she played and moving her body. Maureen's little sister Caroline has suddenly started to come on fast, so much so that Maureen told us she could hardly get the fiddle away from her to practice herself. Steven Spence, boy wonder, has had four lessons and can already play 'Da Merry Boys o' Greenland' up to tempo and three other tunes as well.⁸

Nov. 4: Teaching with the piano, a high energy day when a half hour [per group] just isn't enough. Richard was promoted to the middle group; happy blue eyes. He's a very determined worker. Both David and Peter, the other beginners, came back proud because they could play part of 'Baa Baa Black Sheep'. [In the top group], Caroline is really playing and so is Kim, a proud beautiful person in her pink pantsuit. I had a glimpse of Angela as a wise old woman [as she played] [...] Tammie banged out accompaniment on the piano, blissfully unaware of how well they really were doing and what went wrong when they got lost.⁹

Before we started teaching in the North Isles, Tom and I had discussions about whether to teach from printed music or aurally. I advocated the latter; having recently begun learning tunes by ear and experiencing first-hand how it changed my relationship to a tune. When Norway began reviving folk music traditions, they incorporated aural transmission as an integral part of passing on the tradition because it allowed you to pick up elements of style that are difficult to notate, and much simpler to learn by example. This certainly was the way it had been done in Shetland in the past. Not only that, learning tunes by ear was informal – you weren't expected to get the tune note for note, and in fact, value was placed on making a tune your own.

For the North Isles, however, Tom was adamant that we teach from music. This presented a challenge, as the Shetland Folk Society book of traditional tunes, *Da Mirrie Dancers*, was long out of print.¹⁰ We had to write out tunes many times over. Nevertheless, I think it was partly from expediency – the sheer numbers of students meant he had to use short cuts to teaching the tunes. Reading music was also a tool that he wanted his students to have, so that they would have access to a much broader range of music. But I also think there is another issue at play here. I found there was an attitude amongst many of the older fiddlers in Shetland that learning by ear was limiting. A number of fiddlers who I approached said, 'What can I show you? I can't even read music'. There was a sense that since Shetland music was passed on aurally, it was of lesser value than published music. Since music transmitted aurally had been stigmatised in this way, teaching Shetland music from written music can be seen as a way of giving it a higher status, and putting it more on a level with other music.

I should mention that some of the fiddle students ignored the printed music, at least initially, and picked up tunes by ear from Tom's playing. Such matters are rarely clear-cut. Peter Cooke was very critical of this decision, as it formalised the tune melodies, so that they tended to be played similarly by all the students. Tom knew this, and did his best to mitigate this effect. He often referred to printed music as the 'skeleton' of a tune, and told pupils he never played a tune the same way twice. He insisted again and again that he did not want his students to sound like carbon copies of him. But then, when practicing for a performance, he would insist that everyone's bowings be identical and that they all play the same notes.

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

This brings me to my second point, which is that fiddle students were being trained to play on stage. Tom used to love to play for dancing, and did so for many years. Yet he taught his students to be concert performers. This was not something we discussed; it simply was the way it was done. On our last visit to the Uyeasound School before summer break, we put on a short concert for the lower primary class:

July 1: The little ones were all seated in two rows of tiny chairs [...] With Tom at piano, five music stands stuck up and twelve children plus Pam behind, we launched into ‘Da Merry Boys’, then ‘Mrs Macleod’s Reel’, and ‘Starry Nights in Shetland’ for the most advanced. There were three who were lost for most of the time, but the rest of them plugged on very well. It was a very joyous moment [...] I grinned and enjoyed tasting the fruits of my labours.¹¹



Why did he make this choice? Once again, in parallel with raising the status of Shetland tunes by teaching from printed music, putting Shetland music on stage was a way of setting it off from the current dance music scene, and marking it as something special. Tom had a vision of creating a ‘classical’ Shetland music corpus, consisting of dance tunes, descriptive and listening tunes, and some contemporary compositions:

There are certain tunes in Shetland [that] are classical, as in any folk music. What is classical? That which is put in a class [...] Shetland has a right to its own classical music. It should come near to its natural sounds, that is, the sounds of nature [...] What we’ve got here are these beautiful old melodies.¹²

Most Shetland tunes, however, were reels. Even on stage, it was critical to Tom that his students play Shetland Reels with the lilt of a danced tune. Over time, Tom identified and taught specific stylistic elements that grew out of playing for dancing such as ‘lang draws’, ringing strings, and stop and go rhythm. Tom told me that when he played a reel, he could see the dancing feet in his mind’s eye. But the students do not have access to that memory. Tom’s playing is their link to the past. So these stylistic elements become isolated techniques learned through fiddle lessons, more formulaic than improvisationally grounded in an ongoing music/dance process. This approach has reduced the range of styles of playing that formerly existed in the islands. Nevertheless, they can be very effective when performed on stage.

My third point is that training performers rather than dance musicians was part of Tom’s overarching goal in teaching fiddle in school: that playing their own music would instil a positive sense of cultural identity. Shetlanders have had a very ambivalent attitude towards their past, which had many hardships. Over years of collecting fiddle tunes, Tom learned to always ask where a fiddler had learned a tune, and if there was a story associated with it. Tom discovered that Shetland tunes were a way of bringing history alive and reclaiming the past by transforming hardships into a source of pride. The stories associated with the tunes imbued them with significance far beyond that of a reel played for a long night of dancing. Tom would teach these stories along with the music, and introduce tunes on stage with them.

40. JACK IS YET ALIVE

JACK IS YET ALIVE Bobby Gear
Anderson High

Dere wis aince a fiddler caaed Jack it was taen wi da Press Gang. Dey took him out o' a boat along wi da rest o' da crew an naebody kent what hed happened te dem. Dey tocht da boat hed been lost wi everybody in her. Dey were pitten ida Navy an Jack wis awa fir five years. Finally dey slippit him an he made fir hame as fast as he could. Dey wir nae roads denadays so it took him a braw while to win hame. Whin he got to da hoose it wis dark, an whin he guid in his midder tocht he wis a feyness. Hooever, shū saw it he wis real an made him a cup o' tae. Whin he'd finished his tae he rekkeed doon da fiddle it was hangin' upa da wa' an efter he'd gotten her tuned he played a tūn. His midder wha kent aa da tūns at dat time saed, "Boy I'm never heard yon-een afore; what's yun?" Jack said, "Yun's een I made up as I wis maakin fir hame an I caa him, "Jack is Yet Alive". Dis wis da first tūn I learned fae me grandfaider.

Figure 1 'Jack is Yet Alive' in *Haand Me Doon Da Fiddle*.¹³

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

The first tune that Tom learned from his grandfather, ‘Jack is Yet Alive’, for example, is a redemptive tale about the destructive practice of press-ganging, in which the British Navy would abduct Shetland men to serve as unwilling recruits. Families were left to wonder what had happened and many men never returned. One Shetlander, the story goes, did make it home again after five years. When he walked in the door of his house, his mother thought he was a ghost. After a cup of tea, he took the fiddle off the wall and played a tune. When his mother asked what it was, he told her he had composed it as he was making his way home, and called it ‘Jack is Yet Alive’ (see Figure 1).

Such stories were powerful in another way as well. Often, they were verbal clues about how to bring out the musical intent of a tune. When playing ‘Jack is Yet Alive’, a young fiddler might imagine himself as Jack triumphantly playing the tune for the first time after arriving home, and bring out a sense of joy and defiance inherent in the melody. If a tune didn’t have a story, Tom would create a description that had the same effect. Tom was a genius in his ability to help a student ‘get inside’ the music. The students responded strongly to Tom’s approach to teaching fiddle, and to the underlying message that their music was a source of pride. One pupil described what learning fiddle in school meant to her:

Just the fact that Tammie was my hero. I thought of him as famous [...] It was a traditional instrument – gone through the past – being able to play yourself; the thrill of being able to play. And to think [...] my granddad had [played fiddle too]. You’d learn a tune and rush home and play it. It was a gift, something to be proud of. I couldn’t wait to get to me fiddle lessons.¹⁴

At the same time, however, that Tom presented Shetland music as a positive source of cultural identity, he worried that he had attached too much weight to something that used to be done ‘just for a fun’ as Shetlanders would say. The corpus of traditional Shetland tunes that survived is quite small – around 200, with somewhat fluid boundaries as to what constitutes a Shetland tune. Is it possible for a cultural artefact to become overlaid with value, and backfire as a source of identity? Possibly. Arlene Leitch, an American fiddler, told me Aly Bain once said to her, ‘Shetland music is really very simple, of humble origins. Now it’s being heard around the world and made much of, beyond what it really is’.¹⁵ Over and over I met Shetlanders who spontaneously told me they thought Tom had done a tremendous job bringing back fiddle playing in Shetland. They were less enthusiastic, however, about his desire to keep the old tunes going. Tom was well aware of this – and equally aware that his students would need to expand far beyond the Shetland repertoire as they grew as musicians. One student told me, ‘Folk don’t want to hear the old tunes. We just play them to please Tammie’.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Tom ultimately hoped that the Shetland tunes would run deep for them, as a touchstone of cultural identity, even as they embraced other traditions.

What has been the result of the fiddle teaching program? In sheer numbers of students taught fiddle, it has been an astounding success. In 1985, when I returned to do doctoral research on the fiddle program, there were three instructors teaching in fifteen schools on six islands, and over seven hundred students had received lessons. Since 1973, thousands of students have learned fiddle at school. Music is now thriving in Shetland. Fiddlers trained

through the Shetland schools add greatly to the cultural life, including participation in the Shetland Folk Festival, Accordion and Fiddle Festival, Gala days, Lifeboat Days, Tall Ships, Island Games, Johnsmas Foy, Young Fiddler of the Year, School Music Festival, as well as smaller but equally important local venues in schools and in the community.

Many students have become professional musicians known worldwide. They include Catriona MacDonald, Degree Programme Director for the Folk and Traditional BMus Degree at Newcastle University, Kevin Henderson, who replaced Aly Bain in the Boys of the Lough, and Chris Stout, who has composed commissioned works for national and international groups such as the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention. There have also been a number of music groups formed by fiddle students including Fiddlers Bid, Filska, and Shetland's Young Heritage, now known as the Heritage Fiddlers. This last group has toured extensively, made recordings and had numerous television appearances both with Tom Anderson and on their own. The success of the fiddle teaching programme is a tribute to Tom Anderson and the crowning culmination of his work in reviving Shetland music. His love and dedication to this cause cannot be emphasised strongly enough.

What effect has teaching fiddle in school had on the tradition? That's more complicated. Shetland music would possibly sound quite different today if teaching had been through aural transmission, and regional styles of playing had been taught. Similarly, if it had been revived as dance music, it also might have a different character, and also play a very different cultural role. The way that Tom taught fiddle has reshaped the tradition. Did Tom succeed, as he put it, in 'instilling a part of the culture that they won't forget?' What is the meaning of playing Shetland tunes for his students? It may not be possible to answer these questions, in part because meaning is often not easily articulated, and may change from year to year, even day to day, or from one time of playing a tune to the next. One hopes, in fact, that there is a rich vein of meanings associated with the tunes the students learned in their lessons. It would be restrictive and limiting for them to be played for just one reason.

What Tom accomplished *par excellence* was to impart a passionate love of making music to his many students. I watched, at times in awe, as students began to play tunes when just weeks earlier they had struggled to draw a bow across the strings. I met pupil after pupil well on their way to becoming very accomplished musicians. It is remarkable and noteworthy that many of the students who learned fiddle in school continue to play. Fiddle music in Shetland is very much 'yet alive'. And if a tradition of playing fiddle music in Shetland is to continue, it is vital that there be many fiddlers who play because they love to play, for whatever reason.

Addendum

While attending NAFCo 2012, I learned that the Shetland fiddle teaching programme, along with the entire instrumental teaching programme, might be eliminated due to educational budget constraints. I wrote a petition, signed by 44 NAFCo attendees, to Malcolm Bell, Convener of the Shetland Islands Council, asking that the programme be retained. I travelled to the Shetland Islands that fall and met with Shetland Island Councillors, Education administrators, members of non-profit arts agencies, fiddle and other instrumental

instructors, and Tavish Scott, Member of the Scottish Parliament, to see if a solution could be found. I quickly learned that Shetland's overall financial difficulties were indeed a challenge. Nevertheless, there was support to keep the programme going if at all possible. I explored various options to find outside sources of funding, but left without reaching a conclusive outcome. Subsequently, a 'working group' was formed under the auspices of the Shetland Islands Council. It was comprised of individuals drawn from all of the above groups. They met for eight months. Their proposal was to cap cuts to the programme at 75%, in return for which they would make the programme work within that budget. This proposal was passed by the Shetland Islands Council. The instrumental teaching programme continues to thrive.

Notes

¹ This was not true. Tom Anderson had been promoting this idea for years, as can be seen in the following quote from an article about the Shetland Fiddlers' Society: 'Tom Anderson feels that if we want our folk music to survive, traditional music as well as classical music should have a place in the school curriculum as it does in other countries, particularly Norway'. See Margaret Henderson, 'The Forty Fiddlers', *The Scots Magazine* (April, 1969), p. 25.

² Pamela Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland Isles Schools, 1973–1985' (doctoral dissertation, University of Texas, Austin, 1991), p. 78.

³ Bruno Nettl, *The Study of Ethnomusicology: Twenty-Nine Issues and Concepts* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 323.

⁴ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

⁵ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 127.

⁶ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 67.

⁷ I assisted Tom Anderson for the spring and fall terms of 1974. I returned to Shetland in 1976, and Tom Anderson and I began work on a book about Shetland music, which was never completed. We also started work on a book of fiddle tunes to be used in the schools, which was published in 1979 – see Tom Anderson and Pamela Swing, *Haand Me Doon da Fiddle* (Stirling: Department of Continuing Education, University of Stirling, 1979). In 1984–1985, I returned for seven months to do doctoral fieldwork. I observed fiddle lessons and interviewed the three instructors – Tom Anderson, Margaret Robertson (now Scollay), and Trevor Hunter, as well as many of the fiddle students; Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland'.

⁸ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 98.

⁹ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 98.

¹⁰ Tom Anderson and Tom Georgeson, eds, *Da Mirrie Dancers: A Book of Shetland Fiddle Tunes* (Lerwick: *Shetland Times* for the Shetland Folk Society, 1970).

¹¹ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 95.

¹² Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 289.

¹³ Anderson and Swing, *Haand Me Doon da Fiddle*.

¹⁴ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 170.

¹⁵ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 289.

¹⁶ Swing, 'Fiddle Teaching in Shetland', p. 290.

Examining the Irish connection in the southern American fiddle repertoire

PAUL F. WELLS

Two or three years ago at the annual Breakin' Up Winter old-time music festival, an event held every March at Cedars of Lebanon State Park near Lebanon, Tennessee, I was playing guitar in a nice jam session led by two fiddler friends. At my request we played 'Indian Ate the Woodchuck', a driving three-strain tune associated with the legendary eastern Kentucky fiddler, Ed Haley. After a good romp through the tune we took a bit of a breather, and, as often happens, fell into conversation about the piece just played. In response to someone's musings about possible origins of 'Woodchuck', one of the fiddlers piped up and said: 'It's Irish'. This comment took me by surprise, because whereas this friend is a fine old-time fiddler, he has only a passing interest in and knowledge of Irish music. When I pushed a bit and asked why he thought it was an Irish tune, he replied simply: 'It's gotta be'.

On another occasion I attended a house concert by an American native who is a first-rate exponent of Irish fiddling. The couple who hosted the event are people who are deeply immersed in Irish music, but many members of the audience were their friends and neighbours for whom this would be their introduction to the tradition. Because of this, the hostess felt obliged to offer some introductory remarks to help put the music that people were about to hear in context. She explained to them that Irish traditional music was the source of much American old-time music, particularly that of the Appalachian region.

I offer these two anecdotes to illustrate some of the conventional wisdom regarding the relationship between Irish and Southern American traditional fiddle music. Note that in one instance the speaker is someone who is well-versed in old-time music and less so in Irish music, while in the other the opposite holds true. The assumption that there *is* a strong link between the two musical worlds – and that one forms a significant source of the other – is remarkably widespread in today's culture.

Among other things, this assumption drives a great deal of musical programming, both recordings and live performances. The Chieftains, Cherish the Ladies, and the Brock-McGuire Band have all recorded CDs in Nashville, in collaboration with some of Music City's finest players. These albums are based on the theme of perceived historical connections between Irish music and American country and bluegrass. Coming from the

opposite direction, American bluegrass musician Tim O'Brien has also recorded two CDs that explore the 'connections' theme.¹

Comments in the user reviews of these recordings on Amazon.com provide abundant evidence of the degree to which Irish music is perceived as constituting an ancient, deeply-rooted source of American country music. Listener Barry Bowman writes of Tim O'Brien's CD *The Crossing*: 'If you are at all interested in Celtic/fusion, this is for you. I am also interested in the Celtic roots of American and Appalachian music. This album perfectly traces those roots'.² Another listener, writing under the name 'DJ Joe Sixpack', characterizes the Chieftains' *Down the Old Plank Road* as: 'Another all-star country-Celtic guest-fest, exploring once again the centuries-old links between Irish folk and American country and bluegrass music'.³

Music journalists are equally certain of the role that Irish music played in the history of southern American music. The Amazon.com listing for the Chieftains' *Another Country* CD includes a brief review by veteran music writer Geoffrey Himes, whose work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, *Rolling Stone*, on NPR, and in many other respected outlets. Himes begins his description of the CD with the statement: 'It's a truism that Irish music was the basis of many of the Appalachian ballads and dance tunes that in turn evolved into country music...'⁴ Of *Down the Old Plank Road*, Amazon offers the following uncredited review: 'Leave it to the Chieftains to once again plunge an all-star cast of musicians into the Celtic wellsprings of old-time music'.⁵

Public programming that plays up the 'connections' theme is similarly abundant. On 23 September 2011 a concert in New York City by master uilleann piper Jerry O'Sullivan and old-time musician Rafe Stefanini was built on the idea that 'Jerry and Rafe will explore the many links between Irish and American traditional music'.⁶ In March of 2012 a more ambitious programme titled 'Celtic Appalachia' was staged at Symphony Space in New York City, under the aegis of that city's Irish Arts Center. This show featured several leading Irish-American musicians together with bluegrass and old-time players from the 'Crooked Road' region of southwest Virginia. Promotion for the concert enticed music lovers with the appeal: 'This St Patrick's Day season, join us for a real toe-tapping, knee-slapping, singing and dancing fête celebrating the Irish traditional music influences on old time American, country and bluegrass music'. The event was repeated in 2013 and 2014.⁷

Bluegrass musician Ricky Skaggs, who has participated in some of the recording projects noted above, is well-known for having an interest in Irish music. On the *Three Pickers* CD that he did with guitarist Doc Watson and banjo virtuoso Earl Scruggs, Skaggs introduces one of his original compositions by talking about travelling to Ireland and participating in an Irish session. After noting that he had 'thought so long and hard about the roots of bluegrass music...[it] wasn't no strain at all for me to jump right in and play the tunes I knew, and they mixed right in with the tunes they knew, and many of 'em were the same tunes, just with different names'.⁸

The context in which Skaggs made these comments did not allow him to be explicit about what these tunes might have been, but one wishes that historian Grady McWhiney had been more specific in his own discussion of shared fiddle traditions. In his 1988 book, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South*, McWhiney offers testimony from two

Alabama fiddlers on the relationship of southern American and ‘Celtic’ fiddle repertoire. McWhiney writes:

In 1981, after hearing tapes of traditional Irish and Scottish fiddling, James Brock, an outstanding country fiddler from Aliceville, Alabama, said that he recognized many of the tunes, which were similar to southern ones, and that he was certain that much traditional southern music originated in Ireland and Scotland.⁹

He continues:

Arlin Moon, a skilled instrument maker and old-time musician from Holly Pond, Alabama, who heard the same tapes, remarked that the tunes and the fiddling styles were like those he learned from his father and were still played in the rural South. He fiddled some of the same tunes himself and then, to show that he was not simply copying what he had heard, played a tape made earlier in which J. T. Perkins, a traditional fiddler from Arab, Alabama, fiddled a number of tunes that sounded quite Celtic. [He then quotes Moon:] ‘They ought to sound Irish and Scottish’, said Moon; ‘most old time southern fiddle music came from Ireland and Scotland’.¹⁰

So, there you have it. Prominent musicians, academic historians, concert promoters, fans and players of both American old-time and Irish music, music journalists, all speaking with absolute certainty regarding the notion of Irish roots of southern American traditional fiddle music. What more could one want? At the risk of spoiling the party, I suggest that there is one very important thing missing from this scenario: *evidence*. A great many assumptions are being made, but very little in the way of hard evidence is offered in support of them. Claims of this sort require a careful examination of the history of both the Irish and American fiddle repertoires. Doing so results in a much different picture than that suggested by these assumptions.

The idea that there is a strong Irish element in southern fiddling is relatively new. It has become popular only within the past fifteen or twenty years – in other words, during the period in which Irish traditional music has risen to unprecedented heights of popularity. Perhaps even more striking than the assumption itself is the degree to which people *want* it to be true. Why this should be the case is something that I find more than a little perplexing.

While I certainly do not claim to be familiar with the entire American fiddle tune repertoire, in all time periods, and in all regions, I have spent rather a large amount of time over the course of my life listening to, studying, and playing American fiddle music. In the past fifteen or so years I have supplemented this knowledge of American traditions with a corresponding immersion in Irish traditional music.

The American fiddle tune repertoire is large and complex, and is comprised of tunes from many different eras and sources; I have come to think of it as being made up of a number of *layers*. Older, imported tunes form one of these layers, but it is one that is relatively small in the overall scheme of things – particularly in the South. Studies that I have done of the repertoires of individual fiddlers from various parts of the South, and from various eras, reveal that, on average, the percentage of tunes that can clearly be traced to Old World

originals – primarily Scottish ones – is something on the order of 10–15%. This is a good deal less than the number of tunes in the same fiddlers' repertoires that derive from popular culture sources of different eras: blackface minstrelsy from the middle nineteenth century; the work of Tin Pan Alley songsmiths from later in the nineteenth century; and commercial country music from the twentieth. The remainder – and by far the largest portion – are tunes whose histories are difficult or impossible to trace prior to the era of sound recording. Some of these are known across a relatively wide geographic area, but others are strictly local in circulation. These numbers argue against viewing the southern American fiddle tune repertoire as being primarily a received body of tunes, and in favour of understanding it as a dynamic, living tradition with many regional variants.

Let's turn to a consideration of the broad history of fiddle tunes, and then to how this history relates to the history of the movement of peoples from the Old World to the New. The most common form of fiddle tune known in the American South, and in virtually all other fiddling regions of the English-speaking world is the reel. Reels – or 'hoedowns' or 'breakdowns' as they are called in the South – are fast tunes in 2/4 or 4/4 time, consisting of two contrasting, but often melodically related, sections or strains. Strains typically are eight bars long, though four bar strains are not uncommon. As is the case with most types of fiddle tunes, each strain is played twice for one complete rendering of 'the tune', yielding an overall structure of AABB.

According to Scottish music and dance historian George Emmerson, the reel as a form coalesced in Scotland during the first half of the eighteenth century. Emmerson cites manuscripts containing reels that date from the 1730s (Drummond castle MS), and the first published collections of Scottish dance music (Bremner) from the decade of the 1750s.¹¹

Following the crystallization of this new type of tune came a period in which composition flourished in Scotland and a large repertoire developed. Emmerson notes that the earliest collations of Scottish tunes from the mid-eighteenth century 'were the forerunners of a veritable spate of collections of reels and strathspeys set for the violin'.¹² The years from roughly 1780 to 1810 formed arguably the greatest period of composition of new reels in Scotland, when the most famous Scottish fiddler-composers, such as Niel Gow, his son Nathaniel, William Marshall, and many others, were producing and publishing prolifically. The Gows' collections, for instance, appeared during the span of years from 1784 to 1809. The fixing of this repertoire in print ushered in a new era in the preservation and distribution of fiddle tunes.

As the reel form spread to other areas of the English-speaking world we can suppose that a similar growth of repertoire occurred in these regions as well. Unfortunately, nowhere else had as strong a practice of publishing fiddle tunes as did Scotland, so our knowledge of this development in other regions is much less clear. Documentation of tunes from the northeast USA in the late Colonial and early Federal eras is fair. A few reels that might be familiar to players today can be found in hand-written music manuscripts from around the time of the Revolutionary War, and begin to show up in increasing numbers in printed collections from New York, Boston, Albany, and elsewhere, early in the nineteenth century. Some of these were imported Scottish tunes, such as 'Flowers of Edinburgh', but many were new tunes – American tunes – built on the same model as the older ones. The new country

might not have produced anyone on the level of Niel Gow, but American fiddlers in the northeast clearly were writing new tunes and creating a distinctive New World repertoire.

The situation with the American South, however, is far different. There are no known manuscript collections of southern fiddle tunes from this era – that is, the late eighteenth to early nineteenth centuries. It is not until the publication of George Knauff's *Virginia Reels* in 1839–1840 that we have any documentation at all of southern repertoire, and there are only a few other scattered sources between then and the advent of hillbilly recording in the 1920s.

Ireland is also a bit of a black hole in terms of documentation of tunes, particularly reels. The collections of piper O'Farrell from the first two decades of the nineteenth century contain many jigs, marches, and other airs, but only a smattering of reels – and most of these are identified as 'Scotch'. It is not until the Levey collections, published in London in 1858 and 1873, and then some of the works of Elias Howe in Boston from the third quarter of the nineteenth century – up to and including *Ryan's Mammoth Collection* in 1883 – that any substantial quantity of Irish reels found its way into print.

This begs the question: did a body of Irish reels develop during the same era in which Scottish and New England composers were at work, and simply elude documentation, or did they not appear until later in the nineteenth century? Finding an answer to this question is far beyond the scope of this paper, and beyond the range of my own serious work, but evidence suggests that perhaps the latter case holds true. After all, if there was an extant corpus of Irish reels in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, would not O'Farrell have included them in his books?

Moving from matters of musical history to social and cultural concerns, it is my understanding that prior to the famines of the 1840s and 1850s, the vast majority of the people who emigrated from Ireland to America were the so-called 'Scotch-Irish', i.e. people who had left lowland Scotland in the seventeenth century and settled in Ireland in the province of Ulster, and then, in turn, went to the American colonies during the first half of the eighteenth century. These people were primarily Presbyterians, and they emigrated in several waves. Historian Roger Daniels identifies five 'pulses' of movement. The last of these was in the period of 1771–1775, but most of the Ulster immigrants who settled in the Appalachians had gone there earlier, by 1750 or before.¹³ Catholic Irish from other parts of the country moved to America as well, but many went as indentured servants or other labourers, and tended to become dispersed throughout the general population. Kerby Miller writing of seventeenth and eighteenth century Irish emigration, notes that for a variety of reasons 'most Irish Catholics in North America [...] never coalesced into permanent, distinctive ethnic communities', and, further, that: 'Since the great majority [of early emigrants] were single males, marriage usually entailed absorption into colonial Protestant family and community networks'.¹⁴

It is important to understand and underscore the chronology here. The migrations of the Scotch-Irish took place before or around the time in which the reel was evolving in Scotland, and most were already in America well before the time in which extensive repertoire of reels had developed in the Old World. In regard to fiddling traditions that the Scotch-Irish emigrants might have taken with them, quite frankly we know nothing

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

whatsoever. If the music in Knauff's *Virginia Reels* tells us anything about the music of the Scotch-Irish who settled in the South, it is that there was a strong Scottish flavour in early southern fiddling – but this collection was not published until nearly a century after the heavy Scotch-Irish movement into Appalachia. There certainly is no evidence that would allow us to conclude that there was a strong identifiably Irish element in their music.

Let's look at the tunes that do, in fact, constitute something of a common repertoire between American and Old World fiddlers. Again, although neither Ricky Skaggs nor the Alabama fiddlers cited by Grady McWhiney give specifics about the tunes that they characterize as being 'the same, just with different names', pieces that are often played at festivals and concerts when musicians from various traditions are called upon to perform together include: 'Soldier's Joy', which is easily the most universally-known fiddle tune; 'Miss [or Mrs] McLeod's Reel', known to southern old-time musicians as 'Did You Ever See the Devil Uncle Joe' or 'Hop High Ladies, the Cake's All Dough'; and 'Lord McDonald's Reel', known in old-time tradition as 'Leather Breeches'.

A somewhat longer list of common tunes might include:

- Soldier's Joy – McGlashan, Edinburgh, c. 1781
- Miss McLeod's Reel/Did You Ever See the Devil – Gow, Collection 5, Edinburgh, 1809
- McDonald's Reel/Leather Breeches – Aird 4, Glasgow, 1794
- Fairy Dance/Old Molly Hare – Gow, Collection 5, 1809
- Fisher's Hornpipe – J. Fishar, London, c. 1780,
- Miller of Drone/Grey Eagle – Aird 1, 1782/Gow Repository 2, 1802
- Mason's Apron/Wake up Susan/Redbird etc – Aird 5, 1797
- My Love She's But a Lassie Yet/Sweet Sixteen – Aird 2, 1782
- De'il among the Tailors/Devil's Dream – Riley's Flute Melodies, New York, c. 1815
- Braes of Auchtertyre/Billy in the Lowground – Aird 2, 1782

Several things are notable about the tunes on this list. The first is that virtually all of them are clearly of Scottish origin. The second is that they all first appear in the documentary record in the last two decades of the eighteenth century or the first decade of the nineteenth century, long after the Scotch-Irish emigrations were concluded. They do not constitute evidence of any ancient, deep-seated 'Celtic' root of southern American fiddling. Third, they all have extensive histories of publication, and most likely owe their widespread popularity as much to print as to oral tradition.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they also occur in modern Irish tradition, a fact which underscores the tremendous influence that Scottish tradition has had on the fiddle music of both Ireland and America. At the recent 'Celtic Appalachia' concert, for instance, Dan Neely, one of the performers who took part in the show, playing tenor banjo, reported that at the end of a segment that featured all the assembled banjo players, the group got together and 'all played 'Miss McLeod's', which the old timey/bluegrass guys called 'Did You Ever See the Devil Uncle Joe?' It was one of a small number of tunes raised that we could all agree upon on the spot'.¹⁵

In contrast to this body of Scottish tunes, the number of tunes common in southern Old Time tradition that may be of Irish origin is quite small. The most popular tune that is often perceived to be Irish, one known under a dizzying array of titles but most commonly called ‘Stony Point’, ‘Pigtown Fling’, or ‘Wild Horse’, actually surfaces first in America, not in Ireland. It was used as the melody for a minstrel song by Dan Emmett (who was of Irish heritage), ‘Old Dad’, and it may very well owe its popularity to dissemination via the minstrel stage. Arguably the second most popular ‘Irish’ tune among southern fiddlers, though a distant runner-up to ‘Stony Point’, is what Irish players today know as ‘Teetotallers’ Reel’, and which also travels under a variety of titles in the USA. The earliest known publication of this tune is in the first Levey collection, from London in 1858. There are numerous American printings soon thereafter and it, too, seems to have been associated with the minstrel stage. Other tunes of possible Irish origin include variants of ‘Over the Moor to Maggie’ (‘Waynesboro’), ‘Green Fields of America’ (‘Shippingsport’), and ‘Tom Ward’s Downfall’ (‘Meriwether’), but these are all rare tunes in southern American tradition; their circulation seems to have been restricted to certain areas of the upper South.

I must emphasize the fact that none of the ‘Irish’ tunes listed above are documented until well into the nineteenth century – nearly the middle of it, in fact. They may have been in circulation prior to that time, but we have no way of knowing that. In any event there is no evidence to support the idea of Irish repertoire comprising any sort of ‘root’ of southern American fiddle music. To extend the botanical metaphor, it is more appropriate to conceptualize the relationship of Irish tunes to southern old-time music as that of a scion – and a rather small one, at that – that has been grafted onto an already flourishing trunk. Or, as Alan Jabbour has characterized the relationship, they are perhaps best perceived as musical cousins.

If the evidence of an Irish strain in southern American fiddle music is so thin, why, then, is the notion of ‘Irish roots’ so prevalent? What is going on here? In an earlier era – that is the first half of the twentieth century – there was a widespread belief that American folksong, particularly Appalachian folksong, represented some sort of pure, Anglo-Saxon past of our culture. This phenomenon has been well-studied and much discussed among folklorists in more recent times. We seem now to be replacing this with the notion of a ‘Celtic’ past. Bill C. Malone, the dean of country music scholars, has discussed this puzzling switch in presumed cultural ancestry in many of his writings. In a 1997 article, titled ‘Neither Anglo-Saxon nor Celtic: The Music of the Southern Plain Folk’, Malone comments:

We have been assured on record-liner notes, in the public statements of a few country musicians, and in at least one book that Celtic musical traits/styles can easily be discerned in the playing and singing of southern country musicians. Buttressed by that faith [...] or perhaps by the desire to deny the prominence of black influence in country music, such observers imagine the strains of a Celtic bagpipe whenever they hear the drone of a country fiddle or banjo. They seek cultural legitimacy for modern country music by linking it to an ancient tradition, but instead obscure our understanding of it under a murky veil of romanticism.¹⁶

And herein lies what is, to my mind, the biggest problem with the promotion of the concept of ‘Irish roots of American fiddling’; that is, it promulgates a romanticized, superficial view of complex matters of musical history. Rather than seeking an informed, nuanced understanding of the history of the broad repertoire of American fiddle tunes, a body of music that is both musically and culturally diverse, the matter is reduced to the intellectual equivalent of a sound bite. Why should we privilege what is really quite a small portion of the overall repertoire at the expense of all of the other threads and layers that comprise the whole? I suggest that instead of attempting to invest the entire world of southern fiddling with the artificial patina of antiquity and notions of ‘Celticism’, we should applaud and celebrate what is, after all, a vibrant, living musical tradition – a tradition that is, by its very nature, American.

Notes

¹ In the interests of full disclosure, I must note that, at the invitation of Paul Brock, I contributed a brief essay to Brock-McGuire Band’s *Green Grass Blue Grass*, CD, Alliance B0055RT53Q, 2012. It was a *very* carefully-written essay.

² Barry Bowman, *The Crossing*, https://www.amazon.com/Crossing-Tim-OBrien/dp/B000QZSPJ2/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1465420563&sr=8-1&keywords=tim+o%27brien+the+crossing [accessed 8 June 2016].

³ DJ Joe Sixpack, *Down the Old Plank Road: The Nashville Sessions* (The Chieftains) http://www.amazon.com/Down-Old-Plank-Road-Nashville/product-reviews/B00006AG7G/ref=cm_cr_ar_paging_btm_next_2?ie=UTF8&showViewpoints=1&sortBy=recent&pageNumber=2 [accessed 8 June 2016].

⁴ Geoffrey Himes, *Another Country* (The Chieftains), http://www.amazon.com/Another-Country-Chieftains/dp/B000003F7Z?ie=UTF8&keywords=chieftains%20another%20country&qid=1465421236&ref=sr_1_1&s=music&sr=1-1 [accessed 8 June 2016].

⁵ The Chieftains: *Down the Old Plank Road*, editorial reviews, http://www.amazon.com/Down-Old-Plank-Road-Nashville/dp/B003O5MNTO/ref=cm_cr_ar_p_d_pl_foot_top?ie=UTF8 [accessed 8 June 2016].

⁶ ‘The Blarney Star Concert Series: Jerry O’Sullivan and Rafe Stefanini’, *Glucksman Ireland House, New York University*, <http://irelandhouse.fas.nyu.edu/object/ne.osullivanstefanini> [accessed 8 June 2016].

⁷ ‘Celtic Appalachia’, *Symphony Space*, <http://www.symphonyspace.org/event/8259/Music/celtic-appalachia> [accessed 8 June 2016].

⁸ Earl Scruggs, Doc Watson, Ricky Skaggs, *The Three Pickers* (Rounder Records, 2003).

⁹ Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa and London: University of Alabama Press, 1988), p. 120.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ George S. Emmerson, *Rantin’ Pipe and Tremblin’ String: A History of Scottish Dance Music* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1971), pp. 55–56.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ Roger Daniels, *Coming to America* (New York: Harper Collins, 1990), pp. 78–80.

¹⁴ Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 147.

WELLS *Examining the Irish connection in the southern American fiddle repertoire*

¹⁵ Dan Neely, private e-mail, 3 April 2012.

¹⁶ Bill C. Malone, 'Neither Anglo-Saxon nor Celtic: The Music of the Southern Plain Folk', in *Plain Folk of the South Revisited* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 25.

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Contributors

Håkon Asheim is an associate professor and coordinator of performance studies in traditional music at the Ole Bull Academy in Voss, Norway, and plays the Hardanger fiddle. His book *Ole Bull og folkemusikken* [Ole Bull and Folk Music] (2010), written in collaboration with Gunnar Stubseid, explores the history of Hardanger fiddling during the transition to modern times, particularly in the context of concert playing. In 1992 Asheim recorded *Ulrik*, an album of fiddle tunes based on old transcriptions. He has also contributed to a number of other recordings and has held concerts, workshops, and lectures in Norway and abroad.

Jørn Borggreen has been dancing and instructing traditional American square and contra dance in Denmark since the early 1980s. He has also been dancing Irish set dances for more than a decade, and became aware of the uniqueness of Cape Breton square sets during a visit to the island in 1999. Surprised that only a few of the dances were actually in a printed form, he was inspired to research them, and with the support of a travel grant from the Danish Ministry of Research he interviewed several of the older people involved. From this he assembled a monograph which describes more than a dozen different Cape Breton dances.

Katie Boyle is a fiddler, and graduate of Traditional Music Performance from the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance, Limerick (2008). A fiddle tutor there from 2008–2010, she was an All Scotland, All Britain and All Ireland award winner on her instrument, and was a finalist in BBC Scotland's Young Musician of the Year, 2012. She has taken part in many significant performances in Ireland and abroad. Her music roots are in the Donegal region complemented by a strong Scottish connection in Glasgow. A PhD candidate in the field of human rights law as the recipient of the Anna Lindh Fellowship from the Department of Foreign Affairs, she continues academic research on the fiddle and on Néillidh Boyle, and has worked with *Cairdeas na bhFidiléirí* on 'Feeling in the Blood', the collection of Boyle's music.

Éamonn Costello is from An Cheathrú Rua in the Conamara Gaeltacht. He plays button accordion and uilleann pipes, and has guested on collaborations with a number of musicians and groups, including Mactíra (2000), Frozen Fish: 6-pack (2006), and *Papua Merdeka: Tribal Songs of Love and Freedom* (2004). In 2010, along with Cathal Clohessy, from Limerick, on fiddle, he released a critically acclaimed duet album of traditional music called 'Bosca Ceoil and Fiddle'. His BA is in Irish Music and Dance from the University of Limerick and his MA in Ethnomusicology from University College Cork. He lectures at the University of Limerick where his research concerns the aesthetics of Sean-nós song.

Liz Doherty comes from Bunrana, Co. Donegal. She was taught fiddle by local music and dance master Dinny McLaughlin, and her 1996 PhD research was on the Cape Breton fiddle tradition. From 1994–2000 she lectured in Irish traditional music at University College Cork, and in 2007 was appointed Irish traditional music lecturer at the University of Ulster, Derry. She has also held visiting and guest lectureships at RSAMD, Scotland, La Coruna, Spain, and the National University of Australia, Canberra. In 2001 she was appointed Edwards Distinguished Visiting Professor of the Arts, Marshall University, West Virginia, USA. As a Traditional Arts consultant she has worked

on projects with Irish local authorities and with European organisations. From 2005–2008 she was the Traditional Arts consultant with the Arts Council of Ireland, responsible for setting up funding schemes, was a member of the board of the Irish Traditional Music Archive 1994–1997 and of TG4's *Gradam Ceoil* panel (2005–2009). Elected chair of ICTM (Ireland) in 2009, her publications include *Dinny McLaughlin – From Barefoot Days: A Life of Music, Song and Dance in Inishowen* (2005); *Crosbhealach an Cheoil/The Crossroads Conference* (co-editor, 1999); *Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (major contributor, 1999 and 2011). As a fiddle player she has performed and recorded with Nomos, the Bumblebees and Fiddlesticks. Known for her strong Scottish and Cape Breton influences, she has two solo albums: *Last Orders* (1999) and *Quare Imagination* (2002). She took on the Directorship of NAFCo 2012 in 2010.

Jean Duval is a performer and recording artist on flutes. His current PhD research in ethnomusicology at the University of Montreal under the supervision of Monique Desroches and Nathalie Fernand concerns crooked tunes of the Québécois tradition. His Master's thesis was on the singularities and similarities of twelve contemporary composers of the Québécois, Irish, and Scottish traditions. He has been an active traditional musician and composer in southern Québec since the early 1980s.

Ånon Egeland learned his craft directly from seminal fiddle players in southernmost Norway. A well-respected player of the fiddle and Hardanger fiddle, noted for his archaic style – true to the tradition yet intensely personal – he has an extensive repertoire of little-known tunes. He has been an active performer over four decades, and has lent his artistic weight to a dozen albums. He has documented and transcribed a wealth of material that would otherwise have been lost to the tradition. Centrally engaged in Norway's traditional music education for some twenty-five years, he is an assistant professor at Telemark University College, Rauland.

Stuart Eydmann is a musician, academic and heritage consultant from Edinburgh, Scotland. He received the Glenfiddich Living Scotland Award for his oral history on free-reed instruments in Scotland which was the basis of his subsequent doctoral thesis. A lecturer at Edinburgh College of Art and a post-doctoral research fellow at the School of Celtic and Scottish Studies, University of Edinburgh, he is active in field recording and curates the rareTunes.org online archive of traditional and popular music of Scotland. A presenter at the inaugural NAFCo event in 2001, he was also a member of the Scottish culture minister's Working Group on the Traditional Arts which reported in late 2009. He has played fiddle with the Scottish traditional music band the Whistlebinkies since 1980.

Alfonso Franco has a veterinary degree from the University of Santiago de Compostela (1990), a professional degree in the violin from Santiago de Compostela Conservatory (1996), and completed his doctoral studies in traditional Galician music at the University of Santiago de Compostela in 2003. A teacher of the fiddle in the Traditional Music Conservatory of Vigo, he is responsible for the string section of the Galician folk orchestra Sondeseu. He has given workshops and performances in Spain, Portugal, Newfoundland, Scotland, and in 2011 taught at Alasdair Fraser's Sierra Fiddle Camp in California. He has played and recorded with several folk and rock groups, and most recently with the concert harpist Paula Oanes and the Bulla Timpánica Trío.

Ronnie Gibson is a violinist and musicologist who combines a passion for performing with music research. He graduated from the University of Aberdeen with first class honours before reading for

Contributors

an MPhil in musicology as a Pirie-Reid scholar at St Catherine's College, University of Oxford. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Aberdeen under the joint supervision of Dr David Smith, Head of Music, and Prof. Ian Russell, Director of the Elphinstone Institute. His research, on Scottish fiddle music, reconciles the historicity of tradition with so-called 'living traditions' by investigating performing practices.

Chris Goertzen teaches music history at the University of Southern Mississippi and has been researching listening-oriented fiddling for over thirty years. His books include *Fiddling for Norway: Revival and Identity* (1997), the Europe Volume of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music* (co-editor with Tim Rice and James Porter, 2000), *Southern Fiddlers and Fiddle Contests* (2008), *Alice Person: Good Medicine and Good Music* (with principal author David Hursh, 2009), and *Made in Mexico: Tradition, Tourism, and Political Ferment in Oaxaca* (2010). He is now writing a history of American fiddle styles using Knauff's *Virginia Reels* (1839) as a point of departure.

Len Graham, a singer and song collector from Co. Antrim, who picked up local Derry and Antrim song initially from his parents. His mother Eveline Robinson – a cousin of hammer dulcimer player John Rea – sang and danced old set dances; she had been familiar as a child with the Irish language from the last of the Irish speakers in the Antrim Glens, and had heard keening women at funerals. With his father, Len attended gatherings of the Counties Derry and Antrim Fiddlers' Association, this introducing him to a wider repertoire. In 1964 he met singer Joe Holmes, this beginning a friendship that was to last until the latter's death in 1978. He recorded *Chaste Muses, Bards and Sages with Holmes* in 1975, and *After Dawning* in 1978, a solo album *Wind and Water* in 1976, *Do Me Justice* (1983) and *Ye Lovers All* (1985). He started the group Skylark with Gerry O'Connor, Gary Ó Briain and Andrew McNamara in 1986 and for many years performed with Mullaghbane, Co. Armagh storyteller John Campbell. His major collecting project has been a field recordings series, *Harvest Home*. In 2010 he published a study with memoirs and songs of his old song partner: Joe Holmes, *Here I am Amongst You: Songs, Music and Traditions of an Ulsterman*.

Ingrid Hamberg is a first year MA student at Telemark University College (TUC), Rauland. From Seattle, WA, USA, she has a BA in Scandinavian Area Studies from the University of Washington (2004) and a BA in Folk Music from TUC (2011). She began performing Scandinavian folk dances at the age of four, and is also a fiddler and singer. She has played for dancing for more than fifteen years, has directed an a cappella choir with a focus on dance music since 2008, and is currently on the board of Folkemusikksцена at Rauland.

Gregory Hansen is an Associate Professor of Folklore and English at Arkansas State University, where he also teaches in the Heritage Studies graduate program. He has completed numerous public folklore projects for a range of organizations, including the Smithsonian Institution, Danish Immigrant Museum, Florida Folklife Program, and the Kentucky Center for the Arts. In addition to his academic publications, Hansen has also produced documentary videos on oral history and folklife, and he has assisted with the production of audio recordings of traditional music. He has recently published *Florida Fiddler: The Life and Times of Richard Seaman*.

Daithí Kearney is a graduate of University College Cork. A banjo player, he has toured as a musician, singer and dancer with a number of groups including Siamsa Tíre, the National Folk Theatre of Ireland, and was Artistic Director of the Cork International Folk Dance Festival, 2005. An All-

Ón gCos go Cluas – From Dancing to Listening

Ireland champion musician, he has recorded with a number of ensembles including the band Nuada. He lectures at the Dundalk Institute of Technology and is an examiner with the London College of Music. His doctoral research dealt with the construction of geographies and regional identities in Irish traditional music.

Sandra Kerr began her long and distinguished career in folk music with Ewan MacColl's Critics Group. Well known as the writer of the music for Bagpuss (voted 'best-loved BBC TV children's programme' in 1999), she directs folk choirs (including the award-winning Northumbrian ensemble Werca's Folk), and is greatly respected as a tutor of folk arts. The solo album of self-penned songs, *Yellow, Red and Gold* by this multi-instrumentalist is highly regarded; she plays guitar, dulcimer, autoharp and English concertina. She has taught at concertina gatherings including the Swaledale Squeeze and Concertinas at Whitney, and at the National Folk Festival Easter School in Canberra. She performs at all the major folk festivals, solo and with the feminist group Sisters Unlimited. Her publications include *My Song Is My Own* (Pluto Press) and *The Song Sampler* (Folkworks). She lectures on the degree programme in Folk and Traditional Music at Newcastle University.

Gaila Kirdienė is a senior researcher and lecturer at the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre where she graduated in violin and ethnomusicology in 1992. Her doctorate (1998) is in ethnology, and she has published over 70 works on traditional music and fiddling, among them a monograph *Fiddle and Fiddling in Lithuanian Ethnoculture* (2000), instrumental music collections (2007, 2010), and four digital method books (2003, 2006, 2008). A well-known and acclaimed traditional instrumental performer, she is leader of the Griezikai ensemble.

Ragnhild Knudsen studied music at the Bergen Academy of Music and the University of Oslo. She is an assistant professor in the Department of Folk Music and Folk Art at Telemark University College in Rauland, Norway (now part of the University of South-Eastern Norway), where she teaches folk music presentation; she also teaches violin and Hardanger fiddle at Seljord School of Fine Arts. She performs in a number of ensembles, including Seljord Spelemannslag, the Telemark Chamber Orchestra and the string trio Glima (Hardanger fiddle-based, with viola and cello), in which she arranges music and plays viola.

Gjermund Kolltveit was originally trained as a classical violinist, but he later changed the direction of his career to ethnomusicology, music anthropology, and music archaeology. His research projects include studies of minority music in Norway, documentation of football chanting and the archaeology of musical instruments. His doctoral thesis 'Jew's Harps in European Archaeology' was published by Archaeopress, Oxford (2006). He currently teaches ethnomusicology at Telemark University College at Rauland, and is the editor of *Musikk og tradisjon*, the journal of the Norwegian National Committee of the ICTM.

Caomhán Mac Aoidh is a fiddle player, researcher and author whose work has concentrated dominantly on the fiddle tradition of County Donegal. He has played with and collected the music of many of the iconic performers of the county. He is a founder member of *Cairdeas na bhFidilíirí*, an organisation committed to the development and promotion of the Donegal fiddle tradition through the principle of education. His published works include both textual documentation of the tradition as well as a number of collections of tune transcriptions.

Contributors

Mats Melin is a Swedish born traditional dancer, choreographer and researcher who has worked professionally with dance in Scotland since 1995 and in Ireland since 2005. Currently lecturer in dance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick, he has been engaged in freelance work nationally and internationally, was traditional dancer in residence for four Scottish local authorities, and co-founded the dynamic Scottish performance group *Dannsa* in 1999. He is an office bearer for Dance Research Forum Ireland and completed his PhD on Cape Breton step dancing in 2012. His monograph, *One with Music: Cape Breton Step Dancing Tradition and Transmission*, was published by Cape Breton University Press in 2015.

Nicole Murray, Australian painter, is documenting contemporary players of traditional music, and their instruments, in a series of paintings. The works draw on techniques from Byzantine icon painting and are realistic yet symbolic. Her first solo exhibition in 2003, 'The People of the Music', showed paintings and sculptures about Australian folk musicians. Since then her work as an internationally-touring musician for nine years with folk duo, *Cloudstreet*, in the UK, USA, Europe, Japan, and Australasia, has given her a profound insight into the portraiture, and the opportunity to travel to interview her subjects.

Deirdre Ní Chonghaile is a fiddler, writer, researcher, lecturer and broadcaster from Árainn, the largest of the Aran Islands. She was NEH Keough Fellow at the Keough-Naughton Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame in 2011–2012, and has since taken up the Alan Lomax Fellowship in Folklife Studies at the Kluge Center, Library of Congress, Washington DC. She has worked in theatre, has been consultant and contributor to numerous radio and television programmes in Ireland, and contributed to the Irish Film Institute's 2011 programme of silent films in Ireland and in the USA. Currently she is preparing a book on music collectors and music-collecting.

Emma Nixon is a concert performer and teacher from Brisbane, Australia. She holds a Master of Music degree from Newcastle University (UK) in Scottish fiddle performance and research, a classical music degree in violin performance and string pedagogy, and teaching qualifications. She directs a community-based fiddle club and presents workshops and short courses. She won the Australasian Golden Fiddle Award in the Best Teacher category in both 2010 and 2011. Her current PhD at Monash University examines the transmission of style by Scottish fiddle summer schools in Scotland and Australia.

Josie Nugent is active as a fiddle teacher and performer. She trained as a music therapist at Anglia Ruskin University, Cambridge, UK, graduating in 2010, and providing music therapy services to children in a hospice setting and to adults with profound communication difficulties while resident in Cambridge. She currently works in Derry for the Northern Ireland Music Therapy Trust in the areas of dementia, acquired brain injuries and autistic spectrum disorder. Her 1996 PhD from Queen's University, Belfast (1996), is in virology, an area in which she worked prior to a career change to music therapy.

Leah O'Brien Bernini is an American-born Irish fiddle player and dancer currently pursuing her PhD in Ethnomusicology at the University of Limerick. Coming from a performance background, she received her Bachelor of Music in Commercial Music Performance (violin) and Music Business from Belmont University in Nashville (2009). While in Nashville she worked for the major Irish/Celtic record label, *Compass Records*. Following graduation, she moved to Limerick to pursue Masters in both Irish Traditional Music Performance (2010) and Ethnomusicology (2011). Her doctoral research

is concerned with identity, capitalism, and the creative process of professional Irish traditional musicians and the music industry.

Evelyn Osborne completed her PhD in Ethnomusicology at Memorial University of Newfoundland in 2013; she holds a Bachelor of Music (Violin, University of Ottawa) and a MA in Canadian Studies (Carleton). Her research examines the construction of Newfoundland as an Irish musical place through media and the interactions of Irish and Newfoundland musicians since the mid-twentieth century. Osborne is a performer and teacher in St. John's, NL and has given Newfoundland fiddle and dance workshops in Newfoundland, Labrador, Ontario, Singapore, and Australia. Her publications include CD liner notes, academic websites, and journal articles.

Janine Muise Randall is a first generation descendant from two musical parents – her father from Inverness, Cape Breton Island, and her mother (and grandmother) from Margaree. Janine grew up with house parties as a common occurrence because of her mother's aunt's involvement as pianist for the Inverness Serenaders (the first group from Cape Breton Island to be recorded – Decca, 1930). A step dancer as a young girl, she grew up with fiddlers Angus Chisholm, Alec Gillis, Alcide Aucoin always at the home. Later, fiddlers Bill Lamey, Joe Cormier and John Campbell were regulars, with Mary Muise playing accompaniment. Janine became piano accompanist to fiddlers in the area and for visiting musicians playing for dances. She went on to create and found the Ceilidh Trail School of Celtic Music in Inverside, Cape Breton Island in 1995 and continued the legacy of traditional, acoustic Cape Breton fiddle, piano, guitar and step dancing in structured learning and live daily performance. She has six recordings as accompanist to Cape Breton fiddle music, including a Grammy nomination, and has performed with most of today's Cape Breton fiddlers including its legendary players Buddy MacMaster, Jerry Holland and Brenda Stubbert.

Neil V. Rosenberg is a leading figure in Folklore studies and in Bluegrass music circles. A native of the western United States (Olympia, Washington; Los Alamos, New Mexico; Berkeley, California) who has been a performing musician (violin, voice, guitar, mandolin, and five-string banjo) since childhood, his music skills and experiences have helped him gain a closer understanding of music and music performance. This led to a PhD in Folklore from Indiana University in 1970, and to his teaching from 1968 until 2004 in the Department of Folklore at Memorial University of Newfoundland where he specialised in the study of contemporary folk music traditions. There he investigated the ways in which popular music interacts with local and regional folk music traditions and examined processes of cultural revival. His research – in Canada and the United States – focused upon professional, semi-professional and amateur old-time, bluegrass, country and folk musicians. Now Professor Emeritus of Folklore at Memorial, Rosenberg's highly regarded writing includes *Bluegrass: A History* (1985, the definitive work on that form of music, reprinted with a new preface in 2005). His other well-known publication has been the editing of the influential essay collection *Transforming Tradition* (1993), a unique examination of folk music revivals. Other works are *Bluegrass Odyssey: A Documentary in Pictures and Words* (2001), co-authored with photographer Carl Fleischhauer; and *The Music of Bill Monroe* (2007), a bio-discography co-authored with Charles Wolfe; he has published more than sixty articles and review essays. Formerly Recorded Sound Reviews Editor of the *Journal of American Folklore*, he has edited and annotated many recordings, including a contribution to the brochure for the Smithsonian/Folkways reissue of Harry Smith's Anthology of American Folk Music for which he won a 1997 Grammy Award. A Fellow of the American Folklore Society, Rosenberg is a recipient of the Marius Barbeau Medal for lifetime achievement from the Folklore Studies Association of Canada.

Contributors

Elisa Sereno-Janx is a graduate of the University of Western Ontario, Canada in Music and in Education. As a music educator, fiddler and classical violinist, she has been active in the Calgary music community for twenty-seven years and is currently taking a BA in Fine Arts at the Alberta College of Art and Design in Calgary. Her visual art practice explores new media where she integrates fine art and music. She presented at the North Atlantic Fiddle Convention 2006 and her paper, 'Bridging Fiddle and Classical Communities in Calgary, Canada: The Baroque and Buskin' Strings' was published in *Driving the Bow* (2008).

Sally K. Sommers Smith is Associate Professor of Natural Science at Boston University and Lecturer in Biology at Wellesley College. She holds a doctorate in human anatomy and cellular biology from Tufts University School of Medicine, and completed a postdoctorate at Harvard Medical School. She also has been a Visiting Researcher in Traditional Music at the University of Limerick. A fiddler in the Irish and Cape Breton traditions, she has published widely on adaptation and evolution in traditional music, particularly in migrant traditions. She is currently at work on a book on traditional music transmission at summer music camps.

Pamela Swing has done extensive research on Shetland fiddle music, wrote her doctoral dissertation on fiddle teaching in Shetland Isles schools, and with Tom Anderson, MBE, co-authored *Haand Me Doon Da Fiddle* (1978), Shetland fiddle tunes and stories illustrated by Shetland children. As a musician and artist, she is deeply interested in how we access and sustain creativity. Her performances include Clearwater Festival and NEFFA; her photographs have been shown in the Boston area. Now based in Concord, Massachusetts, she is currently a Visiting Scholar at the Women's Studies Research Center, Brandeis University and is developing a curriculum for women entitled 'Thresholds', which focuses on how ritual and art support women's inner transformation.

Fintan Vallely, the NAFCo 2012 conference convenor, is a musician, writer, lecturer and researcher on traditional music. He began to play traditional music on the flute in the early 1960s and compiled his first Irish-music tutor in 1986 (new edition, *Learn to Play the Irish Flute*, 2012). He later studied ethnomusicology at Queen's University Belfast, subsequently working as a traditional music journalist and reviewer and lecturing in it at university level. His books deal with people and place: *The Blooming Meadows* (essays on musicians with Charlie Piggott and photographer Nutan, 1998), *Together in Time* (on Antrim flute player John Kennedy, 2002), *Tuned Out: Traditional Music and Identity in Northern Ireland* (2008), *Ben Lennon – The Tailors' Twist*, a text and photo study of a Leitrim fiddler (2011). Compiler also of a satirical song collection – *Sing Up! Irish Comic Songs and Satires for Every Occasion* (2008) he was an instigator of *Crosbhealach an Cheoil* – The Crossroads Conference series in Irish music (1996 and 2003). His 2004 PhD research was 'Flute Routes to 21st Century Ireland', and his major publication is *The Companion to Irish Traditional Music* (1999 & 2011).

Paul F. Wells plays North American and Irish traditional music on fiddle and flute. He is Director Emeritus of the Center for Popular Music (CPM) at Middle Tennessee State University. As first director of CPM, Wells guided every aspect of the Center's development, including laying the intellectual foundations for its collections and programs, and building the collections. He has published and presented on many aspects of American folk and popular music, with traditional fiddle music always at the core of his work, and is a past-president of the Society for American Music.