

**MUSIC, POWER, AND RELATIONS: FIDDLING AS A MEETING PLACE
BETWEEN RE-SETTLERS AND INDIGENOUS NATIONS IN MANITOBA**

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

GRADUATE PROGRAM IN MUSIC

YORK UNIVERSITY

TORONTO, ONTARIO

JUNE 2013

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Abstract

This dissertation examines fiddling as a meeting place between Turtle Island's Indigenous nations and Manitoba's re-settler population. Based on archival research, interviews, and fieldwork in Manitoba, it argues that fiddling both reflects the broader relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers (which is marked by an unequal distribution of power) and is used to remake this relationship. The first section focuses on Indigenous fiddling. Using mainstream (re-settler) newspaper articles from the early twentieth century to the present day, it examines re-settler representations of Indigenous fiddlers and fiddling; it also explores Metisfest, a contemporary Metis rendezvous that functions as a space for Metis cultural resurgence, using fiddling as a central 'draw'. The next section considers the old-time scene by providing a working definition of the style, exploring fiddle contests, and addressing a number of key tensions in the old-time fiddle community. It argues that old-time fiddling functions as an unmarked centre that reinforces an unequal relationship between nations; at the same time, it acknowledges the significant contributions made by Indigenous fiddlers to Manitoba's old-time scene. The final section focuses on the Manitoba Open Old Time Fiddle Championships, a fiddle competition that explicitly brings old-time and Metis (style) fiddling together through the inclusion of a Metis-style category. This final section points to the tension between mainstream and Metis understandings of Metis fiddling and how Metis-style fiddling (at the competition) ultimately serves to affirm the dominance of an unmarked (i.e., old-time) style of fiddling. By exploring the Indigenous and old-time fiddle scenes from varied perspectives, this dissertation uncovers the complex relationships between central Turtle Island's two main fiddle styles. It also fills a significant lacuna in the research on Manitoba's fiddle scenes and recognizes that the burden to decolonize Turtle Island should not be placed (solely) on the shoulders of Indigenous nations.

Acknowledgements

Thank you first and foremost to all the fiddlers, accompanists, organizers, judges, and fiddle fans from Manitoba's old-time and Indigenous fiddle communities who took the time to assist me with this research. Thank you to everyone who answered my emails and phone calls, spoke with me in interviews, chatted with me at various events, and read sections of my drafts. Your names are too numerous to mention here, but I will never forget your generosity. Your contributions made this dissertation possible.

Thank you to the many people at York University who supported me in the completion of this degree. Thank you to Louise Wrazen, Sherry Johnson, and Bob Witmer: your feedback challenged me to become a better writer and more discerning scholar. I could not have had a better committee. Thank you also to Beverley Diamond, David McNab, and Mark Chambers: your comments gave me much food for thought and will undoubtedly help me develop this dissertation into a much stronger monograph. Thank you to Tere Tilban-Rios: your work does not go unnoticed! Knowing that you were there to assist with paperwork (and, as often happened, to solve my paperwork problems) saved me many weeks of stress. And, finally, thank you to my colleagues in the department: your friendships made York University a community, not 'just' a university.

This project received generous financial assistance from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). This assistance allowed me to spend an extended period 'in the field,' giving me the opportunity to learn about Manitoba's fiddle scenes on a level that otherwise would not have been possible. I also received

financial support through university scholarships and assistantships. Thank you to everyone who made this possible, including the professors at York University who taught me so much through my work as their assistants.

Thank you most of all to my partner, Michael (and, of course, to my 'research assistants' Charlie and Juno). We did it! Thank you for staying by my side through thick and thin and for being a sounding board for all of my ideas. While I did not always acknowledge your unwavering support, I always knew that it was there. You gave me your hand and kept me going even when the path became rocky and rough. For that I am more grateful than I could ever express. I am looking forward to continuing down our path together post-dissertation.

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A Note on Terminology

Indigenous scholars have pointed to the importance of names and of naming. Citing Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou) notes that “[n]aming the world has been likened...to claiming the world and claiming those ways of viewing the world that count as legitimate” (1999, 81). To Smith and other Indigenous scholars (e.g., Alfred 1999, 23), decolonizing must include “renaming the world using the original indigenous names” (Smith 1999, 157).

Yet the project of renaming is complex. My research, for example, covers the traditional lands of several nations, each with its own name for North America. Which name is most appropriate? Although not a perfect solution, I have chosen to use the name ‘Turtle Island’ to refer to North America. I use this name because it has been adopted by many contemporary Indigenous people.¹ Despite not being in an Indigenous language, the name serves as a reminder that the land was named by its original inhabitants.

New relationships have further complicated the process of renaming. Prior to the re-settlement of Turtle Island, an umbrella term for all of Turtle Island’s inhabitants was unnecessary; it was the imposition of the term ‘Indian’ and the common experience of colonialism that led Indigenous people to explore names for their group identity. The name ‘Indigenous’ has recently emerged as the most accepted term, especially on the global stage. Yet it is problematic because it is not generally used by Indigenous people outside the academy (Yellow Bird 1999, 14). Others have shown a general dislike for all

¹ For example, the term is used on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network. It is also used by Indigenous scholars including Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk) (2009, 13), David T. McNab (Métis), and Joyce Green (Cree-Scots Metis) (2002, 2) among others.

umbrella terms because they reinforce the Western belief in a monolithic ‘Indian’ identity (ibid., 3). Again, one is left to struggle with choosing the most appropriate name.

In the end, I settled on the term ‘Indigenous’ since it is preferred by Indigenous academics and is globally accepted. Nonetheless, I use specific tribal or national names whenever possible since this is preferred by the majority of Indigenous people (Yellow Bird 1999, 13; Alfred 2009, 23). Following Taiaiake Alfred (Kahnawake Mohawk), I use other terms for specific purposes (1999, 23). I use the terms ‘Indian’ and ‘Aboriginal’ as legal terms, and, in the case of the former, to point to Western constructions/stereotypes of the Indigenous other. I use the term ‘First Nation(s)’ to distinguish between the legal categories of Metis and First Nations, or to refer to particular Indigenous communities; in the latter case, I modify the term with the specific community and nation names (e.g., Lake Manitoba Ojibwe First Nation). I do not use the term ‘Native’ (except when quoting a source that uses the term) because it is so often used pejoratively in Winnipeg and surrounding area.

When referring to the Metis, I use the term Metis nation(s). I do this as a response to debate regarding who has the right to refer to themselves as Metis. This debate centers on whether the term ‘Metis’ should only be used to refer to mixed-blood (Indigenous/re-settler) people with ties to the Red River region of Turtle Island, to the exclusion of all other mixed-blood populations, or if the term should be applied more broadly to include multiple Metis nations (see Peterson and Brown 1985, 5–6; Chretien 2005, 8; and Andersen 2008 for a more detailed discussion). My intention in using the partially pluralized term ‘Metis nation(s)’ is to acknowledge the debate without seizing the power

to define. When I am only including Metis with ties to the Red River, I use the term ‘Red River Metis nation’. I spell Metis without an accent aigu, as is done by the Manitoba Metis Federation, unless referring to an organization that uses the accent or quoting someone who includes the accent.

Although the above sets out clear boundaries for the use of each term, in practice, the terms become messier. An example of this is when a fiddler who is a status ‘Indian’ takes part in a Metis event, and, in the process, comes to be seen as a Metis fiddler. Many people, furthermore, consider themselves to be both Metis and First Nations, even though, in legal terms, Indigenous people must choose between their Metis card and having status as an ‘Indian’ (field notes 17/01/2012).² Thus, these terms often become muddied when put into practice. While I use the terms as carefully as possible throughout this dissertation, this terminological blurriness is simply a result of the complexity of identity among contemporary Indigenous peoples.

Finally, instead of using the more common ‘settlers’ to refer to non-Indigenous Canadians, I borrow from the work of Emma LaRocque (Plains Cree Metis) and use the term ‘re-settlers’. LaRocque argues that “Native peoples were the original settlers, in the sense of being a deeply rooted and settled Indigenous presence” (2010, 7), and that “Europeans cannot own the notion of ‘settler’ and ‘settlement’” (ibid.). To LaRocque,

These words (and their kissing cousin ‘civilization’) represent a perniciously colonialist phraseology that Europeans have always assumed and from which they have justified the conquest and dispossession of peoples native to their lands. There are obviously many ways of settling. (2010, 7–8)

² On January 8, 2013, the Federal Court ruled that Metis and non-status “Indians” are “Indians” under the Constitution Act, thereby falling under federal jurisdiction. The Federal Government launched an appeal a month later. What impact this will have on a local level is, of course, yet to be seen.

For these reasons, I too prefer the term 're-settler'.

In some cases, however, I use the terms 'dominant,' 'unmarked,' 'mainstream,' or 'white' to refer to essentially the same group of people (although marginalized, non-white re-settlers are excluded). These terms are used strategically to point to situations or contexts where white re-settlers have undue power over Indigenous peoples, or where white re-settlers are constructed as the norm in a "sea of others' conspicuous, fixed differences" (FitzMaurice 2010, 354). The terms are also used to unsettle the settler (to borrow from the title of Paulette Regan's book). As Kevin FitzMaurice (professor of Native Studies at the University of Sudbury) notes,

[t]o be recognized and named as white, to someone who only previously understood herself as an individual, is to experience a marked loss of power and the corresponding feelings of insecurity and discomfort. (2010, 354)

By naming our power as white Canadians, I hope to play a role in destabilizing the assumed normalcy of white-ness.

Preface

Choosing to write about groups other than one's own can be interesting but also can cause anxiety to the author. I experience a nagging feeling that I am being nosy when writing about Others...If Cherokees want information about their traditions and thoughts published, let them write it themselves or recruit someone to write it for them. (Mihsuah 1998, 12)

Writing about Indigenous fiddling was not the trail³ I intended to follow. Although raised on the traditional land of the Assiniboine and Anishinaabe nations, Indigenous cultures were hidden from me. The biased colonial texts included in my school curriculum paid little attention to the lives of contemporary, or even historical, Indigenous peoples, except when related to the re-settlement of Indigenous lands; and, even though reserve lands were situated near my hometown, there was a clear segregation between (white) towns and ('Indian') reserves. The childhood and teenage interactions I had with Indigenous people were limited to brief encounters with Metis, Ojibwe, or Cree fiddlers at fiddle contests, and a much more meaningful (though short) friendship with a Nakoda girl who lived, for twelve years, with a white, foster family. When and why did the trail change?

This dissertation began as a response to the considerable gap in scholarship on old-time fiddling in Manitoba: while some research has been done on Metis fiddling in the province (Lederman 1986, 1988, 1991, Dueck 2007, Gluska 2011), nothing has been written about Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene.⁴ Yet as I began my research, the boundary between traditions began to blur, and the intersection between old-time and Metis fiddling emerged as one of the most important places for research and analysis. At the same time, as

³ I am indebted to Annette Chrétien who uses the metaphor of trails in her dissertation, pointing to the importance of process (2005, 6).

⁴ The Metis and old-time scenes are the most visible and widespread fiddle scenes in the province. Additional research on Manitoba's fiddle scenes might focus on Ukrainian fiddlers and explore the small Irish scene (centred in Winnipeg).

I delved into the growing body of Indigenous-authored critiques of Western research, I became increasingly uneasy about studying Indigenous music. How does a white woman study Indigenous culture in an ethical way? Should she? Or should research on Indigenous cultures be left to Indigenous nations?

The end result is a dissertation that takes the unequal relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settler scholars into account through critical analysis of re-settler constructions of Indigenous fiddling and re-settler attempts to control representations of Metis (style) fiddling. This dissertation is therefore not so much about Metis/First Nations fiddling, although I hope that I am able to represent it in a fair and accurate way, as it is an attempt to unravel the colonial worldview that informs definitions of fiddling in Manitoba. While acknowledging and valuing Indigenous voices throughout, this dissertation is, ultimately, written from a re-settler perspective. This approach recognizes that the burden to decolonize should not be placed on the shoulders of Indigenous nations; re-settlers have the responsibility to decolonize themselves, working as allies to Indigenous nations. As Emma LaRocque (Plains Cree Metis) writes, the task of deconstructing and reconstructing the relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers “must be shared by all Canadians, by all intellectuals, Native and non-Native alike” (2010, 147).

Introduction

Whatever the style, Western [Canadian] fiddlers seem to adjust it to the prairie landscape and people. Western fiddling is free, easy and sometimes very wild. (Hogan and Hogan 1977, 75)

Interest in North America's fiddle traditions has been growing—albeit rather slowly—since the 1960s.⁵ In Canada, interest has been especially strong since the 1980s with the scholarship of Roy Gibbons (1982, 1981, and 1980) and Anne Lederman (1988, 1987, and 1986) and a special issue of *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* (1985), marking the start of increased research on Canadian fiddle traditions. Published nearly thirty years later, Sherry Johnson's compilation *Bellows and Bows: Historic Recordings of Traditional Fiddle and Accordion Music from Across Canada* (2012) provides an updated overview of Canadian fiddling and points to the significant growth of research on, and interest in, fiddling since the mid-1980s. Yet research on Canadian fiddling remains spotty; some styles are relatively undocumented (especially urban and northern traditions), while others are only documented in certain regions of the country even though they are practiced much more widely (e.g., old-time fiddling). Furthermore, much of the early scholarship on fiddling in Canada now seems outdated or simply too vague to accurately represent Canada's complex fiddle traditions.

This dissertation builds on the work of scholars who have studied Metis fiddling in central Turtle Island, and those who have studied Canadian old-time fiddling. It fills a significant lacuna in the research on Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene (which, to date, has received no scholarly attention) and suggests that contemporary scholarship on fiddling

⁵ There was, of course, some scholarship on North American fiddle traditions prior to the 1960s (see, e.g., Bayard 1956, Artley 1955, Bennet 1940,).

needs to begin addressing the significant overlap between fiddle traditions. I argue, in particular, that understanding the relationship between the scenes is an essential part of understanding each tradition. This dissertation is responsive to the concerns raised by contemporary ethnomusicologists as well as those raised by Indigenous scholars. It thus provides a model for further research on Canada's fiddle traditions.

Relations: The Music between Us and Other

Focusing on either Metis or old-time fiddling builds a stronger understanding of the particularities found within each tradition. Yet the lines separating the Metis and old-time traditions, as discussed throughout this dissertation, are often quite blurry, and in some cases they are the direct result of unequal power relations between Indigenous nations and re-settlers. For this reason, important aspects of each tradition are missed when they are studied as discrete styles of fiddling; excluding Indigenous styles in a research project that focuses on old-time fiddling (at least in central Turtle Island) misses important aspects of old-time fiddling, just as excluding old-time fiddling when researching Indigenous fiddling misses important aspects of Indigenous fiddle styles. Exploring the relationship between traditions makes space for the examination of stylistic exchange between traditions and provides the opportunity to understand how fiddle music is used to construct, deconstruct, renegotiate, or remake the relationship between 'us' and 'other' (in this context, re-settlers and Indigenous peoples).

Emerging from this focus on relations, I argue in this dissertation that fiddling in Manitoba has been, and continues to be, a site for negotiation between Turtle Island's Indigenous nations and Canadian re-settlers. Fiddling is a site that both reflects the

broader relationship between nations—a relationship marked by an unequal power relationship between peoples—and attempts to remake this relationship; in other words, it is used as part of a process of resurgence that re-asserts Indigenous nationhood. In exploring these negotiations, this study addresses several questions. These include: What is the nature of the relations between fiddle scenes? How has each tradition influenced the other? Who holds the balance of power in the context of musical meeting places? In what ways is fiddling used as a method of negotiation? Who benefits from these relations? Has the recent revival/resurgence of Metis fiddling changed the relationship? And can fiddling be used to create more respectful relations between nations?

This focus on relations is not new within ethnomusicology. Beverley Diamond in fact suggests that “music’s capacity for defining relationships may well be as significant in the 21st century as studying music’s role in defining identities has been for the past few decades” (2007, 2). However, analyzing the styles that emerge(d) through exchange and exploring how fiddling is used to re-enforce old or create new relationships between peoples is a new approach to studying fiddle traditions. It is an especially relevant approach as new technology and increased travel renegotiates relationships between peoples. Using a site (such as music-making) that is often seen as nonthreatening (or apolitical) allows for an analysis of the implicit ways in which social inequities are reinforced or challenged, and thereby allows each of us to understand how we are implicated in the colonial legacy. It is my hope that this dissertation sparks interest in addressing these important questions in further detail. As noted in the preface, this focus on relations was influenced in part by my experiences growing up (seeing Metis fiddlers

at contests), but also, very importantly, by the work of Shawn Wilson who notes that relationships “do not merely shape reality, they *are* reality” (Wilson 2008, 7).

Methodology

This dissertation draws from a variety of research approaches, creating a multi-layered image of fiddling in central Turtle Island. The ideas and information presented in chapter one, which focuses on definitions of Metis fiddling in public discourse, are largely drawn from archival sources, in particular newspapers published in Manitoba through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. These newspaper articles were also important in my discussion of old-time fiddling in chapters four and five. This archival research was made possible because many local newspapers have been digitized and are now available on the website newspaperarchive.com (for a small fee), or on the website Peel’s Prairie Provinces.⁶ Because so many newspapers from Manitoba have been digitized, I was able to search key terms (e.g., fiddle, fiddling, etc.) in more than thirty-five newspapers. The search system is not perfect (e.g., searching the same term on different days sometimes brought up somewhat different results, and many local newspapers have not yet been digitized, or are only partially digitized), but it allowed me to explore a much larger sample of materials than would otherwise have been possible. This research was supplemented by research at the Legislative Archives in Winnipeg, which gave me access to the French language newspaper *La Liberté*.

Additional information for this dissertation (especially for chapters two to six) was gathered through fieldwork, in particular, through participant observation, a central

⁶ See <http://peel.library.ualberta.ca/newspapers/> (accessed 9 October 2012).

component of research in ethnomusicology. As ethnomusicologist Tina Ramnarine notes, participation in musical performance is considered an integral part of the process of analyzing musical and social structures in the field of ethnomusicology (2004, 227). John Baily points out that participant observation gives “insider” knowledge, allowing the researcher to understand the music operationally, that is “in terms of what you do, and, by implication, of what you have to know” (2001, 94). Baily further notes that learning to perform gives insight into learning institutions; can provide better opportunities for research; can build a connection between the researcher and the other musicians; can provide the researcher with an “understandable role and status in the community;” and can help integrate the researcher into the community at the early stages of research (*ibid.*, 94–96). Through participant observation the researcher develops a musical relationship that provides a foundation for a social relationship (*ibid.*, 96).

At the same time, as Ramnarine points out, critics of Mantle Hood (who encouraged learning the music of the ‘other’) suggest that the significant practice time required to learn a tradition keeps the researcher from more important tasks, such as transcribing, analyzing, and “seeking answers to research questions through dialogue with informants” (2004, 228). This critique certainly does pose a significant challenge to researchers: becoming competent in a tradition—even as an accomplished musician in another tradition—is difficult, at least within the confines of a (usually relatively short) period of time allotted for doctoral field research; becoming quite competent, it seems to me, would be necessary to take part in the “musical discourse” Hood suggests (cited in Ramnarine 2004, 228). As a fiddler who became competent in the old-time tradition long

before becoming a researcher, I was in a unique position as a participant observer. I did not need to spend inordinate amounts of time practising (although I did need to practise in order to keep up with new trends and to learn newly popular tunes), but could fully participate with all of my consultants at competitions, jams, and other events. In other words, by doing research on my own tradition, I was able to take advantage of all the benefits of being a participant observer without being hindered by the possible disadvantages.⁷

My research was augmented through interviews with a total of eighteen consultants. Interviews provided me with the opportunity to ask judges, fiddlers, accompanists, and others specific questions about their experiences in the fiddle scenes. Because I wanted to discuss issues that were important to my consultants, the interviews were only loosely structured. I prepared general (i.e., what Titon and Reck [2009, 557] refer to as open-ended) questions and, when appropriate, more specific questions, but allowed the interviewees a great deal of leeway in answering the questions; that is, I never immediately pushed the conversation back to the questions asked, instead allowing the interviewee to discuss other issues that came to mind as they were answering a question. This sometimes meant that I never got the information that I was looking for, but it gave me a much clearer understanding of what was important to my consultants. The number of interviews I conducted for this research was quite small in part because I found that many of my consultants were uncomfortable with formal interviews; many

⁷ Since the fiddlers in the old-time and Metis scenes play many of the same tunes, my ability to perform in my own tradition also helped me identify many of the tunes being played at Metis events. More broadly, I was able to relate to fiddlers in the Metis scene (and was accepted by fiddlers in the Metis scene) because of our common interest in fiddling.

seemed to feel pressured to come up with the ‘right’ answers in a sit-down interview. For this reason, these interviews were supplemented with numerous informal conversations (on the phone, in person, or over email) with participants who have attended Metis and old-time events over the past two years.

An important part of my methodology was to ask for feedback from my consultants. This approach is becoming more common among ethnomusicologists as a way to promote dialogue between the researcher and her consultants. Browner, for example, provided transcriptions of interviews to interviewees, giving them “the right to remove and/or edit” (2000, 216). McNally, in contrast, circulated drafts of his book at various stages, allowing his consultants to comment on the content (2000, x). Stock and Chiener similarly requested feedback on drafts from their field contacts (2008, 118). Since I found that the process of transcribing interviews, asking for feedback, and then making changes as necessary was too cumbersome and time-consuming for both me and my consultants, I chose instead to send my consultants first drafts (highlighting when their names were cited), allowing them to see how I had used the information that they had given. In one case, I received quite a bit of feedback, but, overall, I received few comments. This response may highlight a possible flaw in giving drafts to consultants since academic writing may be too jargon-filled and dense for readers who are not part of the academic world. Nonetheless, it gave my consultants access to what I was writing, and maintained an open line of communication.

Outsider/Insider (Relations)

[F]ieldwork is, in reality, just living—albeit a specifically framed and focused kind of living—that does not end when we return from some metaphoric ‘field’. (Reed 2003, 8)

Ethnomusicology was built on the work of outsider researchers—that is, by researchers studying cultures other than their own.⁸ However, the past twenty-five years have seen an increasing number of ethnomusicologists researching music in their own communities (Nettl 2005, 185; Stock and Chiener 2008, 110). As a result, a great deal of literature has emerged on the topic of insider versus outsider research (Stock and Chiener 2008, 110).⁹ The dichotomy between insider and outsider can provide an opportunity for researchers to understand their position as researchers in relation to their consultants. As ethnomusicologists Jonathon Stock and Chou Chiener note, the insider/outsider dichotomy can “temporarily produce clarity of emphasis” (ibid., 113). Yet Stock and Chiener also caution that the dichotomy is problematic, suggesting that it “carr[ies] much baggage” and that it “risk[s] reducing the often shifting and multiple identities a researcher carries during fieldwork to a single valency or position” (2008, 113). They suggest, then, that distinguishing between an insider and an outsider in any given culture is more complex than the dichotomy suggests.

Ethnomusicologist Gerhard Kubik takes this idea one step further, suggesting that the insider/outsider dichotomy “can easily degenerate into racism” (1996, 7). To Kubik, a

⁸ Tara Browner (Choctaw) notes, furthermore, that the music of Indigenous peoples was particularly important in the development of ethnomusicology as a field distinct from historical musicology (2009, 1).

⁹ The concept of insiders and outsiders is usually traced back to Kenneth Pike’s book *Language in Relation to a Unified Theory of Structure and Human Behavior* (1954), which differentiated between etic and emic accounts of culture and language (Rice 2008, 53).

strong adherence to the dichotomy promotes the “silent stereotypical assumption” that one can belong to a culture. Expanding on the issue, Kubik notes that,

Due to the universal learnability of culture any so-called outsider to any culture can eventually become an insider. Likewise, an original insider might well cross cultural borders that first separated his small world from the larger outside world until he or she eventually becomes an outsider to the culture into which he or she was first enculturated. In practice, nobody is ever 100% insider, and nobody is ever a 100% outsider to anything that exists. Transitions and shades persist in the real world while the desktop world prefers to perceive sharp contrasts and rigid distinctions. (Kubik 1996, 7)

Kubik argues, then, that the insider/outsider dichotomy can lead to the erroneous assumption that culture is innate rather than learned.

The usefulness of the insider/outsider dichotomy is also questioned in ethnomusicologist Timothy Rice’s article “Toward a Mediation of Field Methods and Field Experience in Ethnomusicology.” Noting that his research on Bulgarian *gaida* music led him “right into the gap between insider and outsider, into a theoretical ‘no place,’” Rice suggests that,

categories of insider and outsider may not be particularly helpful terms to describe the kind of dialogic relationships in language, music, and dance that develop between people who perform and appreciate traditions they have each made their own in varying degrees. (2008, 53)

Rice argues that it may be more useful to understand the relationship between researcher and the field of research as a hermeneutic arc. Those who interact with a tradition (or, in Rice’s words, “place themselves ‘in front of’ a tradition”) use this arc to “move from pre-understandings to explanation to new understandings” (2008, 58). This theory allows for movement between what has heretofore often been constructed as dichotomous outsider

and insider positions, as well as for multiple, and continuously evolving, insider understandings of cultural practices (ibid.).

Although I began my research assuming that I could position myself as an insider, at least in the old-time scene if not so much in the Indigenous scene, I ultimately found that my position was more complex. When doing fieldwork within the Indigenous scene, I felt as if I were an outsider. Yet I knew a number of the fiddlers and participants and was usually easily able to fit into the community; and as a Manitoban with a French name, people often assumed that I was Metis (in fact, in one case, the person who made this assumption insisted that I must be Metis even after I stated that I was not),¹⁰ and my ability to dance and fiddle made it easy for me to take part in the event and find common ground with the musicians. When doing fieldwork within the old-time scene, I had every reason to believe that I should feel like an insider given that I began taking part in old-time competitions and dances when I was only eight years of age. Yet I did not always feel like an insider. Has time away, living in the “big city” (i.e., Toronto) made me an outsider? Does my education make me an outsider? In many ways, I believe that it has. I can recall numerous times when consultants would express their sense of relief (for me) that I no longer *had* to live in Toronto (and they often could not understand how I could have, in fact, liked living in the city). At other times, people would convey surprise when I told them that I was *still* in school. In these instances, I felt like a veritable outsider—hardly someone returning to her “own kind” (to quote Stock and Chiener 2008, 109).

¹⁰ As David McNab rightly pointed out during my defense, it is highly problematic that the burden be placed on Metis (and Indigenous peoples more generally) to prove that they are Metis. The fact that European-Canadians are never required to prove their ancestry is an example of their white privilege.

Rather than focus on my position as either an insider or an outsider, I found it more useful to understand my position as part of a web of relations between me and my consultants, me and the communities as a whole, me and the environment around me (broadly defined), and me and the music. Some of these relationships are close, while others are more distant. Many are inter-connected, and often one leads to another. As I uncover a new idea, or new aspects of the traditions, I am led to other ideas and to new relationships. As time passes, the web becomes more and more complex, and new layers are added to the web of relations. The web is fragile, subject to myriad factors that may tear it apart; yet it is strong, with many connecting strands holding it together. Ultimately, I found that the concept of a web of relations made better sense of the kind of work I had to do as a researcher in the old-time and Metis fiddle communities, negotiating a variety of relationships that are wide-ranging in their closeness. The concept also points, perhaps most importantly, to the need for relational accountability, that is, the need to demonstrate “respect, reciprocity, and responsibility” (Wilson 2008, 99). In other words, as part of the web of relations, my own actions affect the lives of those around me; research must therefore be taken on with care and caution—that is, with respect for the lives of the people being documented—and with a willingness to give back to the community—that is, to reciprocate their support.

Literature Review: Research on Canada’s Fiddle Traditions

The study of Canadian fiddle music began in the 1960s with the work of George Proctor. His article “Old-time Fiddling in Ontario” (1963) is an invaluable source of

information on the 1960 Shelburne (Ontario) old-time fiddle competition.¹¹ However, his research was preliminary given that it was based on just six weeks of field research and seven interviews with fiddlers. The 1970s saw some American scholarly interest in Canadian fiddling, in particular through the work of Earl Spielman. In a short article from the early 1970s, Spielman compared the Cape Breton and Texas fiddle traditions (1972). A few years later, in a dissertation on North American fiddle styles, he included brief overviews of Scottish-, French-, Irish-, and English-Canadian fiddling, among other North American styles (1975). While groundbreaking in its scope, Spielman's dissertation covers such a significant amount of material (including a detailed discussion of instrument classification, a detailed discussion of approaches to instrumental music analysis, and a history of fiddling in North America) that his discussion of ten North American fiddle styles lacks specificity.¹² Furthermore, his article comparing Texas and Cape Breton traditions does not indicate how he learned about either tradition. (Was he drawing on the work of another scholar? Did he do field research in Cape Breton?¹³) In contrast to Spielman's work on a wide range of North American fiddle traditions, the 1970s saw some more narrowly focused work emerge, in particular research on the

¹¹ Proctor worked at the Canadian Museum of Civilization (then known as the Museum of Man) in the early 1960s, during which time he researched songs from the Gaspé region of Quebec and old-time fiddling in Ontario. The above-cited paper was published by the Canadian Department of Northern Affairs and Natural Development. Also see the CBC documentary on the fiddlers of Shelburne (CBC 1973) and Claridge's book on the same competition (1975).

¹² These are the Cape Breton, French-Canadian, Irish-Canadian, English-Canadian (or old-time), New England, Appalachian/Southern American, Texas, bluegrass, Midwestern, and Ozark styles. Spielman notes that there are also 'Eskimo,' Metis, and American Indian fiddle traditions but that he is not discussing them due to his "total lack of information about them" (1975, 424). Zenger, building on the work of Spielman, also included some discussion of Scottish and French Canadian styles of fiddling in her dissertation on North American fiddle styles (1980).

¹³ Spielman notes in his dissertation (1975) that he interviewed fiddlers in Cape Breton. He also cites Proctor's work on Scottish-Canadian fiddling in Ontario.

music of Quebecois fiddler Jean Carignan (Bégin 1979) and the fiddle music of Prince Edward Island (Hornby 1979).¹⁴

Interest in Canadian fiddling grew in the 1980s with the work of Roy Gibbons and Anne Lederman. Gibbons' work focused on fiddling in Western Canada, with a special interest in the connection between the "Red River Jig," a tune from Manitoba, and "La Grande Gigue Simple," a tune from Quebec (1980; 1981, 71–105). Gibbons published numerous transcriptions of the "Red River Jig" and "La Grande Gigue Simple" as well as thirty-two additional transcriptions of tunes popular in western Canada (1981). In 1985, ethnomusicologist and fiddler Anne Lederman guest-edited a special issue of *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin*. This publication can be seen as a call for more in-depth research on Canadian fiddle traditions; although the bulletin included articles on many of Canada's fiddle traditions, it ultimately demonstrated that research on Canadian fiddling was in its early stages.¹⁵ Lederman's thesis, completed the following year, soon filled part of the gap in literature, providing a detailed analysis of Metis fiddling in six communities in west-central Manitoba. Just a year later, Lederman released a set of LPs that included some of the nearly four hundred tunes she recorded in the field or collected from consultants (1987). The 1980s also saw the inclusion of an entry on fiddling in the

¹⁴ Hornby went on to write a thesis on fiddling in Prince Edward Island (1982) and contributed to the special issue of the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* (1985). For additional research on Canadian fiddling from the 1970s, see Hogan and Hogan (1977), Newlove (1976), and Krassen (1974). These articles/books are, in general, less 'academic' than those discussed above.

¹⁵ In fact, many of the articles were not written by scholars, nor by scholars specializing in the particular tradition, but, rather, by practitioners in the particular tradition, or scholars of other fiddle or non-fiddle music traditions. Although this can be seen as a positive—that is, encouraging a deeper connection between scholars and performers—there was, at the time, no other option. Interestingly, an article by folk musician Tim Rogers was included in the bulletin explicitly calling for more research on fiddling in the three most western provinces (1985).

Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (Proctor and Miller 1981), as well as research on fiddling in Lanark County, Ontario (Ennis 1986), the Ottawa Valley (Bégin 1985), Cape Breton (McKinnon 1989), and Prince Edward Island (Hornby 1982). Additional research emerged on Quebecois fiddler Jean Carignan (Begin 1981), as did research on fiddler Emile Benoit from Newfoundland (Quigley 1987).

Several important works on Canadian fiddling were published in the 1990s. Perhaps most notable is Craig Mishler's book, titled *Crooked Stovepipe*, on Gwitch'in fiddling in Northeast Alaska and Northwest Canada (the Yukon Territory). His book is in many ways carefully written, discussing changes in the region's fiddle tradition without positioning the new ways of playing as inauthentic (1993). Interestingly, Mishler released an LP of field recordings featuring Gwitch'in fiddler Charlie Peter in 1974, long before he published *Crooked Stovepipe*, pointing to his long term involvement as a researcher in the Gwitch'in community. While Mishler was interested in Indigenous fiddling, the 1990s also saw a small but burgeoning interest in Canadian old-time fiddling. Most important is the work of Neil Rosenberg, who discusses the role of Don Messer in the development of a national fiddle canon (1994). His article is important because it is the first detailed academic article to acknowledge a Canada-wide tradition and the role of technology in the development of the style.¹⁶ Interest in old-time music also led to Lisa Anne Stormer's thesis focused on an old-time fiddle club in Alberta (1997). Although her thesis is a welcome addition to scholarship on western Canadian fiddling, it is, unfortunately, mired with problematic assumptions that make it not particularly

¹⁶ Rosenberg also wrote an article on fieldwork, using his field research on the Don Messer show as a case study (1996).

valuable.¹⁷ Other regional studies emerged during this decade, most notably Johanne Trew's article on fiddling in the Ottawa Valley (1996), Ken Perlman's article on fiddling in Prince Edward Island (1997), and Colin Quigley's book on renowned (French) Newfoundland fiddler Emile Benoit (1995).

The 2000s have been an exciting time for the study of fiddling in Canada, with a much needed diversity of voices and approaches beginning to emerge. Interest in Don Messer grew with the publication of a second article by Neil Rosenberg, focusing on repertoire (2002), and an article by Johanne Trew linking the cancellation of Messer's television show to the particular brand of Canadian liberal nationalism taking root in the country in the late 1960s (2002). Sherry Johnson has done the most comprehensive research on old-time fiddling to date. Johnson's work focuses on old-time fiddle contests in Ontario and explores how the concept of tradition is articulated and understood within the community (2008, 2006). Johnson updates Proctor's work (1963) and is able to provide a more nuanced view of the scene given her thirty years of experience in the old-time community. She is also the first Canadian fiddle scholar to discuss fiddling and gender (2006, 297–313; 2000a, 2000b). In the prairies, research continued with the work of Byron Dueck (2007, 2005), Sarah Quick (2009), and Virginia Gluska (2011), all focusing on fiddling in Indigenous communities. On the east coast, Meghan Forsyth focused on the creation and maintenance of identity among Acadian fiddlers in Prince

¹⁷ For example, she makes the assumption that Canadian old-time comes from the same roots as American old-time. More problematically, she suggests that, while most of the styles she discusses in her history section (Irish, Scottish, British, French, Metis, and eastern European styles) are traced to an ethnic group, old-time is not associated with one, specific ethnic group (1997, 35). Although the roots of old-time in Canada are mixed, it belongs to the new, 'white' ethnicity—that is, Canadian-Canadians as discussed later in this dissertation and as pointed to in Rosenberg (1994, 2002) and Trew (2002).

Edward Island (2012, 2011), while Evelyn Osborne focused on fiddling in Newfoundland (2010, 2007, 2006). Other scholars studied the fiddle tradition of Cape Breton (Feintuch 2004, Graham 2004, and Thompson 2003). Although much work is yet to be done, scholarly interest in Canadian fiddling clearly continues to grow.¹⁸

Research on Fiddling in Manitoba/the Prairies

Research on fiddling in Manitoba is in its preliminary stages. Although some of the research has been mentioned above, the following provides a more detailed overview of what has been written about Manitoba's fiddle scenes. The first scholar to mention a Manitoba fiddler was Roy Gibbons. Although most of Gibbons' field recordings are from Alberta and Saskatchewan, he includes transcriptions of the popular "Red River Jig" as performed by Manitoba fiddlers Frederick Genthon (recorded in 1940 when Genthon was eighty-two) and Andy Dejarlis (no date, but likely 1962).¹⁹ Gibbons suggests that there is a Metis style of fiddling, using the "Red River Jig" as an example of the style. His analysis of the tune's meter, (asymmetric) phrases, opening and closing formulae, and tuning (cross tuned to a/d/a/e) thus provides a case study of the Metis style of fiddling (1981, 74–81). Gibbons' work is important because, although others scholars had previously mentioned a Metis style, none had provided detailed analysis of the style. Nonetheless, his research is preliminary given that the analysis of one tune cannot be used to make assumptions about the entire tradition. He also problematically dismisses change as inauthentic; in particular, when commenting on the influence of commercial

¹⁸ While this overview focuses on academic scholarship, numerous Canadian fiddle tune collections were published beginning in the 1930s. See Johnson (2006, 512–15) for a list of some of these collections.

¹⁹ Joe Mackintosh's list of Dejarlis recordings indicates that Dejarlis recorded a version of the "Red River Jig" with his Early Settlers in 1962 (2010, 151). Gibbon's likely used this version in his analysis.

recordings by Manitoba fiddler Andy Dejarlis, he notes that “the ‘pure’ folk tradition is rapidly disappearing” (1981, 84).

While Gibbons’ collection was a comparative study of two tunes, in 1984 Nicholas Vrooman released *Turtle Mountain Music*, a collection of field recordings from the Turtle Mountain Reservation, North Dakota. (Although not research from Manitoba, the connections between Turtle Mountain and Manitoba are so strong that it seemed fitting to include a discussion of the research in this section.) What is perhaps most striking about this collection is that it is in no way reductionist, providing a complicated definition of Metis-ness and a diverse range of music. Although the liner notes include a ‘typical’ history of the Metis that focuses on emergence in the Red River region, Riel, and dispersal after 1870 and 1885, the people from the Turtle Mountain Reservation are described as a diverse group, including Metchif, Pembina Chippewa, and Cree (Vrooman 1984, 2). The liner notes also complicate the relationship between First Nations and Metis people. For example, Francis Cree is quoted saying, “Indian culture is separated from what they call the Metis, that’s the French culture mixed. They believe in different things” (Vrooman 1984, 5). Yet Cree then adds,

A lot of the mixed-blood people have taken part in the Indian ceremonials, learning and believing in and things like that. That’s right, there’s some, now as it was in the past, you know, like say now her dad. His dad is French. Her mother is Indian. But he has taken part fully on the Indian religion and stuff like that. Her dad has helped perform the Sun Dance, sang there and he’s worshiped in things like that. That’s true, some of them has taken the whole of their mother’s side, follow that part fully, yup. (Vrooman 1984, 5)

This collection, then, acknowledges the emergence of a Metis Nation, while recognizing that being, or becoming, Metis or First Nations has to do with more than just ancestry.

The music included on the collection is, likewise, quite diverse, from traditional Chippewa drum songs to rock and country music. The two-LP set does, however, include a strong focus on fiddling given that one side of one LP is exclusively fiddle music, and two additional fiddle tunes are included on the second side. The fiddle tunes vary from track to track, including differences in structure, accompaniment, and overall style. While guitar accompanies most of the tracks, the guitar style varies (e.g., the accompaniment for “Big John McNeil” is quite sparse with individual notes clearly articulated while the accompaniment for “Woodchopper’s Breakdown” is straight-forward strumming). Two tunes do not have guitar accompaniment; instead, a second fiddle, droning on the tonic, accompanies the melody (e.g., “Soldier’s Joy”). Clogging (i.e., foot accompaniment) is frequently added as an additional accompaniment. Some of the tunes have four-bar phrases (e.g., “Woodchopper’s Breakdown”), while others have a mix of three, four, five, or seven-bar phrases (e.g., “Soldier’s Joy” and “Untitled”). Square dance calling is included on two tracks (“Woodchopper’s Breakdown” and “Ragtime Annie”), pointing to the importance of dance. Interestingly, the LP’s liner notes lists the first eleven tracks under the heading “fiddle dance tunes” and the final two tracks under the heading “contemporary fiddle²⁰,” yet the collection is ultimately more about the music being played on the reservation in 1984 than it is about trying to delineate ‘authentic’ Indigenous styles (see Chretien 2005, 118–20 for further discussion).

Soon after the release of *Turtle Mountain Music*, Anne Lederman began fieldwork in six Metis and First Nations communities (Pine Creek and Ebb and Flow Ojibwe First

²⁰ It would be interesting to discuss this division with Vrooman and others from Turtle Mountain reservation in order to understand the meaning it has for the community.

Nations, and the adjacent communities of Bacon Ridge, Eddystone, Camperville and Kinosota). After finishing her thesis (1986), Lederman released a set of recordings (four LPs) collected during her fieldwork (1987). She also published a paper in the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* (1988), and in the *Canadian Journal for Traditional Music* (1991). In these publications, Lederman concluded that a distinct style of fiddling, referred to as the 'old-style,' had emerged in the above-mentioned Manitoba communities, blending European fiddle music with structural and stylistic elements found in Ojibwe songs. In her very detailed analysis of some of the tunes she recorded, Lederman found that the old-style featured asymmetrical and overlapping phrases, alternate tunings, and clogging. She also found that tunes often started with a high first part followed by a low second part (unusual in other fiddle traditions), or that tunes had just one part, or even just one phrase repeated with variations. Finally, she found that fiddlers very often had their own versions of tunes; individuality, then, was a highly prized stylistic feature (Lederman 1988).²¹

Lederman's work was, for a long time, the definitive study on Metis fiddling. It was deservedly so given the unprecedented detail of analysis and numerous recordings she made available. Unfortunately, its success came at a price, as many (especially academics) came to see the style she documented as representative of all Metis fiddling.²² The 'old-style' became more entrenched as authentic Metis fiddling with Lederman's entry on fiddling in the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (1992). Although her article

²¹ Lederman goes into a great deal of detail about the stylistic features of 'old-style' fiddling, all of which cannot be summarized here. Her articles, thesis, and recordings should be referred to for a fuller understanding of the style of fiddling she found in western Manitoba.

²² Chretien critiques the way that western Metis fiddlers have come to represent all Metis fiddlers (2005, iv, 21, 107).

was a significant improvement over the original article, which simply stated that “Métis fiddlers have introduced elements of their own, unrestrained by strict metre or standard tuning” (Proctor and Miller 1981, 326), Lederman described the Metis style (referred to as one of Canada’s six main fiddle styles) borrowing almost exclusively from her own research. I do not believe that Lederman intended to represent the style she documented as *the* authentic style of Metis fiddling; rather, I believe that this was a result of a lack of complementary scholarship on other Metis fiddle traditions. Interestingly, Lederman revised the entry on fiddling in 2012, eliminating the style divisions. In doing so, Metis fiddling, referred to both in the context of early fur trade society and in the commercial era via Andy Dejarlis, is no longer presented in such clearly bounded terms.

Although there was no new scholarship on western Metis fiddling for many years, the past ten years have seen three scholars undertake research on the subject, each coming from a different vantage point and taking a somewhat different focus. Byron Dueck explored Indigenous fiddle music in Manitoba, publishing an article (derived from one chapter of his dissertation) on fiddling in the journal *Ethnomusicology* (2007). In the latter, Dueck focused on a performance by the Frontier Fiddlers, a group of mostly Metis, Cree, and Ojibwe youth from several schools in northern Manitoba’s Frontier School Division. He explored how different publics and their varying social intimacies shape the tradition, ultimately arguing that increased mobility has allowed fiddlers who have never met to perform together; because it is difficult to play asymmetrical tunes together (especially when each fiddler has her/his own, asymmetrical version), younger Indigenous fiddlers have adopted symmetrical forms in order to facilitate fiddling with

strangers (2007, 40). Dueck therefore understands the differences between the ‘old-style’ recorded by Lederman and the newer, symmetrical style as stylistic change, a result of a new kind of sociability, not necessarily the adoption of a new style. His work is important in that it allows for the tradition to change (in contrast to Gibbons) and recognizes musical style as embedded in social practice; it is also important because it focuses on a program that brings fiddle music to about 1500 students (Gluska 2011, 114). Its one downfall is that it does not address the power relationship between the teachers (usually re-settlers) and the Indigenous youth, and what this means for stylistic change within the community.

Virginia Gluska’s thesis (2011) complements the work of Byron Dueck (2007), focusing on the Frontier Fiddle program. Gluska conducted interviews with parents, instructors, former students, and community members, building on her own experience as a mother of two sons enrolled in the program. Noting that Indigenous people have been forced into an educational system that attempts to assimilate students, Gluska argues that the Frontier Fiddle program is part of “a culturally responsive curriculum” (2011, viii). In this way, Gluska highlights the positive impact that the Frontier Fiddle program has had, suggesting that the fiddle has become an “instrument of social change” for many northern communities through this program (ibid.). In this way, Gluska’s work tackles the issue of decolonization, seeing a return to the fiddle as a potential solution to broken communities. However, her work does not ask a number of important questions: Is the curriculum responding to Indigenous (specifically Cree, Ojibwe, and Metis, depending on the particular community) ways of learning? Or to Indigenous ways of knowing? Does it

matter that many of the instructors are re-settlers with little knowledge of traditional Metis/First Nations fiddling?²³

Working in Saskatchewan and Alberta, Sarah Quick's dissertation explores how Metis heritage is promoted through performance and analyzes both the aesthetics and symbolic associations attached to these performances of Metis heritage (2009). Although situated particularly strongly in Edmonton, Quick explores the interconnected venues that bring Metis people (and others) together through music and dance. One of the most interesting aspects of Quick's work (at least in the context of understanding how Metis fiddling is being represented academically) is her recognition of two models of Metis fiddling—that of John Arcand (from Saskatchewan) and that of Andy Dejarlis (from Manitoba). This is significant because it recognizes diversity in Metis styles. Nonetheless, like Dueck, she does not address the power relationships between Metis and old-time traditions. This, of course, is legitimate given that her focus is on Metis identity; yet the John Arcand Fiddle Festival—where she conducted a significant amount of research—would be an interesting space to address the issue of power relations given that it is run by Metis fiddler, John Arcand, and is the first (old-time) contest to include a traditional Metis-style category.

²³ I spoke with one instructor who told me that he tried to get elders involved, but that many refused to take part in the program and the few who agreed to take part only did so on one occasion. Although the instructor did not understand why there was little interest among elders, this may be due to negative associations elders have with the school system. It is also a symptom of the broken relationships between Indigenous elders and youth, a legacy of the residential school system. Others suggested that elder fiddlers do not have the skills to teach the fiddle, since traditionally one-on-one instruction did not take place (although this may be more an issue of confidence or cultural difference than skill per se). There are now a growing number of Indigenous teachers involved in the program, but many of these teachers are former students of the Frontier Fiddle program. Some may, in this way, be simply replicating what they learned about fiddling at school. (At the same time, some may have used their learning at school to reconnect with traditional fiddling from their community. More research needs to be done on this topic to better understand these power relationships in the context of the Frontier Fiddlers.)

While just three scholars have addressed fiddling specifically in Manitoba, two authors have written biographies on Andy Dejarlis, Manitoba's best-known fiddler. Watson's book, *Andy De Jarlis: Master of Métis Melodies* (2002), is accessible for all audiences and gives a good overview of Dejarlis' life, from his early years to his untimely death and the musical tributes that followed. As is often done at the community level, the book does not distinguish between Metis fiddling and old-time fiddling (and in fact uses the terms interchangeably), nor does it provide any stylistic analysis. His heritage as a Metis fiddler, however, is acknowledged and his music is positioned as Metis music (see 2002, 48). Dejarlis' life story is also documented in Joe Mackintosh's book *Andy Dejarlis: The Life and Music of an Old-Time Fiddler* (2011). In this book, the author clearly connects Dejarlis to his Metis roots, noting on the first page that Dejarlis "clogg[ed] in an ancestral tradition derived from both his Quebec roots and the long line of Prairie Métis fiddlers that came before him" (2011, 15). Drawing from his experience working in Dejarlis' band, Mackintosh also acknowledges the variety of new influences, from Dixieland to Latin (ibid., 22, 56), that shaped Dejarlis' music.²⁴ He thus presents a view of Metis music as responsive to contemporary demands.

Metis organizations have also begun conducting research on their fiddle traditions. Most notable is the book *Drops of Brandy: An Anthology of Métis Music* (2002), published by the Gabriel Dumont Institute. The anthology includes a brief history of Metis fiddling as well as transcriptions of tunes performed by Metis fiddlers from the western provinces and the Northwest Territories; recordings are available on the four

²⁴ As a point of comparison, see Dejarlis' tune collections (1969, 1961, and 1958).

accompanying CDs. The anthology points to two “streams” of Metis fiddling which “scholars generally agree” on: a smooth, evenly phrased, commercially influenced style and an “Old Time” style, with “irregular, ‘erratic’ measures” (Gabriel Dumont Institute 2002, 20).²⁵ *Drops of Brandy* purportedly focuses on the latter (ibid.) with its inclusion of a large number of tunes that have irregular phrases.²⁶ At the same time, the book points to Metis fiddling being passed down from elders, resulting in variety between communities (2002, 20). In fact, the authors suggest that the uniqueness between fiddlers, “combined with their general acceptance by the Métis people, define these songs as traditional Métis fiddle tunes” (ibid.). Although there is therefore some emphasis on one style, the anthology allows for a flexible, community-based definition of Metis fiddling.

As the above literature review indicates, research on fiddling in Manitoba has focused on Indigenous communities; with the exception of biographies of Andy Dejarlis (a Metis/Red River/old-time fiddler), there has been no research on old-time fiddling.²⁷ This dissertation begins to fill this gap, focusing on old-time fiddling in chapters three to five and on Metis fiddling at an old-time event in chapter six. Because nothing has been written about old-time fiddling, these chapters are often somewhat general, as constrained by space and time. In many cases, issues addressed (or sometimes just pointed to) deserve more attention. It is my hope that this dissertation sparks additional interest in Manitoba’s old-time scene and that the ideas contained herein serve as a starting point for further

²⁵ I interpret the former as what others might label the Red River old-time style and the latter as what Lederman referred to as the old-style.

²⁶ About fifty-six percent of the tunes are asymmetrical (i.e., have phrases that vary in length and, often, have phrases with an odd number of measures such as five or seven).

²⁷ Arguably, Dueck (2007; 2005) and Gluska (2011) are writing about Manitoba’s version of old-time fiddling. However, the style is not identified as such in their work.

research. At the same time, I hope that my approach of considering both old-time and Metis fiddling in Manitoba leads to new research on ways in which fiddling, and music more generally, can be used as a tool for decolonization (as suggested in Gluska 2011) or on how it has been or is being used as a way to maintain an unequal power relationship between peoples. Throughout this dissertation I avoid defining the Metis style; rather, I focus on ways in which it has been defined and explore what I hear when I attend Metis events. Although this may be frustrating to some, in this way I hope to leave the definition in the control of Metis communities.

Ethnomusicology and Research with Indigenous Peoples

Ethnomusicologists have a long history of researching Indigenous musics (Browner 2009, 1). Unfortunately, early (and sometimes not so early) research practices often violated the rights of Indigenous nations. Tara Browner (Choctaw) notes that early research practices allowed ethnologists to

...simply show up, and with the reservation agent applying appropriate pressures (or in the case of Densmore a sibling using her charms), recordings could be made, photographs taken, and people's lives turned into ethnographic description...[often with recordings] copyrighted by the Bureau of American Ethnology, as if by recording the songs ethnologists and their funding agencies *owned* them. (2009, 2)

Indigenous scholars and communities have responded to these unethical approaches to research, critiquing the way in which research has silenced Indigenous voices and the colonial worldview from which the resultant literature was written. Ethnomusicologists have addressed these critiques, significantly shifting their approaches to research. As prominent Canadian ethnomusicologist Beverley Diamond notes, (re-settler) researchers are now pursuing "more collaborative models of exchange and ways to speak with, not

for, our Aboriginal colleagues” (2012, 3). The literature review that follows explores this shift in more detail, and also points to an additional step that needs to be taken in order to complete this shift towards a more equal relationship between peoples.

One of the most fundamental aspects of the shift in the field of ethnomusicology is that re-settler researchers are now beginning to acknowledge their positions of power in relation to Indigenous peoples. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith (Ngati Awa and Ngati Porou) writes, “[r]esearch in itself is a powerful intervention” (1999, 176); instead of positioning themselves as objective researchers, ethnomusicologists are now starting to acknowledge this intervention. In doing so, they are leaving space for the reader to understand the vantage-point from which the research emerged and the power relations at play in their interpretations of the musics and music cultures. Approaches to this kind of positioning vary. Several scholars explicitly explain how their skin colour gave them privilege in the field (e.g., see Samuels 2004, 28–29; Cain 2003, 58; Vosen 2001, 19). Many use a more subtle approach, adopting an ethnographic narrative voice, a technique that helps situate the authors’ points-of-view (e.g., see Samuels 2004, 3–4; Cain 2003, 18–21; Goodman and Swan 2003, 3–5; McNally 2000). Notably, many are beginning to examine power relations between Indigenous peoples and re-settlers as a central part of their interpretive framework (e.g., see Troutman 2009, 152; Scales 2002, 42–43). Diamond’s argument for adopting an “alliance studies” approach to research similarly highlights the ways in which music-making is implicated in a network of relations between peoples, with technology and places of production, and between past and present (2007).

Ethnomusicologists have also become much more concerned with highlighting the agency of Indigenous peoples. Diamond points out, for example, that it is problematic for her (a re-settler) to speak “about cultures that are able to speak so eloquently on their own behalf” (2009, xiii). For this reason, she engages in dialogue with her Indigenous advisors, in fact essentially co-authoring some of her work (see, e.g., Diamond 2008). In this way, Diamond highlights the agency of her consultants (i.e., their ability to act upon and speak about the world in which they live). Troutman takes a very different approach to acknowledging the agency of Indigenous peoples (2009). Although he also engaged in dialogue with Indigenous peoples, it is the contents of his book that most clearly articulate the agency of the researched community. In particular, Troutman balances the recognition of Lakota agency in practices that could (and often are) seen as proof of assimilation. While he recognizes and condemns the Office of Indian Affairs’ attempts to eradicate Lakota culture, Troutman argues that Lakota used new cultural practices (i.e., practices forced upon them) as a way to sustain themselves as Lakota people. Troutman thus recognizes and highlights ways in which Lakota people use the available tools (that is, those allowed by the Office of Indian Affairs) to continue living as Lakota (2009, 150).

A closely related issue is that of voice. While early researchers often spoke for Indigenous peoples, (re-settler) researchers are now beginning to include Indigenous voices. Some ethnomusicologists are including long quotes from interviews with Indigenous performers (e.g., see Harrison 2009, Diamond 2008, 2002, Hoefnagels 2007, 2004, Scales 2007, Whidden 2007, Samuels 2004, Chretien 2002, Vosen 2001, Browner

2000²⁸). As noted above, others are engaging in research that is co-authored by the (re-settler) scholar and one or more Indigenous consultants (e.g., see Diamond 2008, and Goodman and Swan 2003). Others circulate drafts, often at successive stages of writing, allowing community members to comment on all aspects of the research (e.g., see Samuels 2004, 23–4; Cain 2003, 64; Goodman and Swan 2003, 6; Browner 2000, 216–117; McNally 2000, x). Some ethnomusicologists are, furthermore, beginning to draw organizational and analytical concepts from interviews, conversations, or field work instead of placing the research into a Western framework for interpretation and analysis (e.g., see Harrison 2009; Cain 2003; and Chretien 2002). This approach, however, remains quite rare (discussed further below).

While early ethnology focused on preserving or ‘salvaging’ (McNab and Lischke 2005, 12), contemporary ethnomusicologists are becoming more interested in Indigenous modernities. Ethnomusicologists are now reaching a balance between exploring genres that are traditionally significant (i.e., genres that were significant prior to colonization) and newly adopted and Indigenized genres. Samuels and Jacobson, for example, both explore how new modes of music-making have been adapted by Indigenous peoples and have thus become truly Indigenous genres, or sub-genres, of music (Jacobson 2009:452; Samuels 2004, 141).²⁹ Describing powwows in North Carolina, ethnomusicologist Chris Goertzen suggests that, while the musical tradition is new and intertribal, powwows

²⁸ Browner is in fact a Choctaw researcher. Her inclusion of additional Indigenous voices is important because, in doing so, she is challenging the idea that an Indigenous person can speak for all Indigenous people. In other words, she is acknowledging a diversity of Indigenous voices.

²⁹ However, in contrast, Draper (2007) creates a binary between Indigenous and acculturated musical forms, a dichotomy that to me suggests, or reinforces, an (artificial) frozen-in-time quality of (authentic) Indigenous music.

“embod[y] ideology with local and ancient roots” (2001, 80). He thus shows how new traditions can be understood as continuations of deeply rooted traditions. (Tulk [2006, 15], coming from a slightly different vantage-point, argues that the boundary between traditional and contemporary powwow is malleable.) Hoefnagels points out that Southern Ontario’s powwows are “not a long-standing nor fixed ‘tradition,’ but rather a meaningful and constantly evolving gathering, deliberately adapted and fostered by Native individuals” (2007, 138). Contemporary ethnomusicologists are therefore exploring how Indigenous communities use and change their own musical traditions, as well as how they adapt those of the colonizer.

Ethnomusicologists, perhaps most importantly, have responded to the “justifiable demands of [Indigenous] communities that research be valuable on their own terms” (Diamond 2008, 34). While research on Indigenous cultures has benefited the careers of scholars, it has often done little for the community, functioning as a facet of colonialism. Indigenous communities have, for this reason, become reluctant to allow researchers into their lives. As Smith points out, “[f]rom the vantage point of the colonized...the word ‘research’...is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary” (1999, 1). Ethnomusicologists have begun to address this issue, turning to Indigenous communities for guidance in choosing research topics (Browner 2009, Diamond 2008, Samuels 2004, Swan and Goodman 2003). Some researchers have also found additional ways to actively assist the community; in this way, they recognize that the relationship between the researcher and the researched should be reciprocal (i.e., you are assisting me, so I will assist you). This might mean supporting the community as an activist (McNally

2000, viii–ix) or donating the proceeds from the sale of a book to the community documented therein (Samuels 2004, 23).

It is clear, then, that (re-settler) ethnomusicologists have become more interested in doing research *with* Indigenous peoples. They are beginning to engage in real dialogue with consultants and to conduct research on the terms set by Indigenous communities. Beverley Diamond has been an especially strong voice in these changes, bringing a thoughtful awareness of issues raised by Indigenous scholars to her research and truly working to engage in research that foregrounds Indigenous voices. Her collaborative work with Indigenous peoples is a particularly inspiring model for respectful research that values Indigenous voice. The recently published book *Aboriginal Music in Contemporary Canada* is an excellent example of how much the field has shifted, with Indigenous voices totaling fifteen of twenty-seven voices included in the book. (Interestingly, just two were ‘academic’ voices.) Several Indigenous ethnomusicologists (namely Choctaw scholar Tara Browner, Metis scholar Annette Chretien, Mohawk composer and scholar Dawn Avery, Dena’ina/Scottish scholar Jessica Bisset Perea, mixed-blood Mescalero Apache scholar John-Carlos Perea, and Stó:lō-European scholar Dylan Robinson) have, furthermore, added their voices to the literature, providing an especially exciting possibility for collaborative research between Indigenous scholars and re-settler scholars. Although things have clearly changed, are we doing enough?

While ethnomusicologists have come a long way, the next step, I would argue, is found in Emma LaRocque’s critique of re-settler scholarship. LaRocque writes,

While our cultural and personal data are clearly and repetitively appreciated, our theoretical contributions are not substantially treated. There remains excessive

reference to our “traditions,” or to our personal or colonial “experience,” and these are further generalized or re-translated. What I find missing are our research, critical constructions, interrogations, and ideas...More often, non-Native scholars are taking our works as points of departure for the development of their own theories. (2010, 165)

In a survey of ethnomusicological research on Indigenous musics post-2000 (completed for my second comprehensive exam) (2011), I found that LaRocque’s words rang true. Although we are actively working to include the voices of consultants, it is still rare to see citations pointing to the work of Indigenous theorists. In other words, our research often features Indigenous voices; but this same research often turns to Western scholars to theorize the findings. (Of course, there were some wonderful examples of ethnomusicologists who did refer to Indigenous theorists, including Beverley Diamond and Klisala Harrison.) This is problematic because Indigenous scholars *are* theorizing; do we (white scholars) still believe that theorizing is the domain of Western academics?

This dissertation draws many of its analytic tools—that is, its ideas, theories, and frameworks—from the work of Indigenous scholars. The use of Indigenous scholarship is especially prominent in chapters two and six, which focus on Metisfest and Metis-style categories respectively. The intention is not to appropriate Indigenous ideas (or, to use LaRocque’s words, to take them as a “point of departure” for my own theorizing), but, rather, to take Indigenous theorizing seriously and to enter into honest dialogue with Indigenous scholars. For this reason, the work of Indigenous scholars is not (as much as possible) backed up by the work of re-settler scholars who, arguably, present similar ideas, or who provide a suitable framework for analysis. Indigenous ideas, in this way, are recognized as strong enough to stand alone. As Mihesuah points out, white scholars

are still taken more seriously than Indigenous scholars (2005, 120–1). When re-settler scholars insist on using Western theories to support Indigenous ideas, they continue to undermine the strength of Indigenous scholarship. Although I will undoubtedly make some mistakes along the way, and will perhaps occasionally misinterpret Indigenous research, this dissertation represents my current relationship with Indigenous scholarship. This relationship will undoubtedly grow and change through Indigenous critiques of my work; critiques are, after all, foundational to scholarly dialogue.

Overview of Chapters

The chapters that follow focus on a variety of contemporary and historical spaces where old-time and/or Metis fiddling are performed or discussed. Chapter one explores definitions of Metis fiddling in dominant mainstream discourse. Using newspapers published throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, it asks the following questions: How has the dominant culture represented Metis fiddling? And have these representations of Metis fiddling changed over the years? If so, in what ways? Most importantly, what power relationships are embedded in these representations? That is, what do representations of Metis fiddling tell us about Indigenous/re-settler relations? These questions are contextualized through the inclusion of a brief history of the colonization of central Turtle Island.

Chapter two explores Metisfest, a contemporary space for Metis fiddling. The chapter begins with an ethnographic overview of the event, giving readers the opportunity to better understand what it is like (for a non-Metis woman) to attend Metisfest. This is followed by musical/stylistic analyses of reels performed by four of the

paid entertainers. These analyses point to some of the key ideas that underpin the event's purpose and approach to the 'celebration' of Metis culture. The event is then explored more holistically, drawing primarily on the work of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. Ultimately, I argue that Metisfest is a space for Metis cultural resurgence—a far cry from the static representations found in multicultural spaces—and thus has important political implications.

Chapters three to five focus on old-time fiddling in Manitoba. Chapter three discusses definitions of the style, offering readers a working definition of the Canadian (specifically Manitoban) old-time style. Chapter four provides an ethnographic overview of a fiddle contest, the most important venue for old-time fiddling in the province. The chapter ends with a discussion of structural aspects of contests, including discussion of venues, demographics of fiddlers and audience, prizes, and repertoire. Chapter five focuses on a number of issues central to Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene. These include its changing relationship with dance; tensions between local and national, preservation and change, and classical and old-time; the status of women; and the issues of ethnicity and class within the old-time fiddle scene.

Chapter six explores Metis-style categories at an old-time contest (a mainstream event) using the framework for intercultural projects provided by scholar Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō-European) (2012a). This final chapter complements the first five by highlighting the significant disconnect between Metis fiddling in mainstream spaces and Metis fiddling in Metis spaces. In this way, chapter six points to the tensions between mainstream and Metis understandings of Metis fiddling and how Metis fiddling serves to

affirm the dominance of a mainstream, unmarked style of fiddling (i.e., the old-time style). This chapter should be read with attention to the issues and ideas raised in chapter one (which focuses on a mainstream space) and chapter two (which focuses on a Metis space); doing so brings the main concern of this dissertation—i.e., the power relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers—to the forefront.

Together these chapters uncover the complex ways in which fiddling becomes a site of negotiation between Turtle Island's Indigenous nations and re-settler Manitobans, arguing that Manitoba's fiddle traditions both reflect the unequal relationship between peoples and serve to remake this relationship. On the one hand, the meeting places between mainstream and Indigenous fiddling have been marked by inequity. For over one hundred years, the mainstream press has accepted Indigenous fiddling and fiddlers only when, or if, doing so has benefitted re-settlers. While the promotion of Metis (style) fiddling at some contemporary contests is a hopeful sign that there is interest in acknowledging a Metis presence in Manitoba, the inclusion, to date, does not rebalance the power relationship between nations; the power to 'tolerate' remains in the hands of re-settlers. On the other hand, the (mainstream) fiddle scene has served as a meeting place for Indigenous and re-settler peoples, both literally and figuratively; the "Red River Style" of fiddling that emerged in the twentieth century is a marker of a new, shared tradition between peoples, while contemporary old-time contests serve as a space for re-settlers and Indigenous peoples to get to know each other and share in a common tradition. Perhaps most hopeful, however, is the (re)emergence of a flourishing

Indigenous scene. In the context of this scene, mainstream fiddling is decentred and Indigenous fiddling becomes a vehicle for the promotion of a lived Metis culture.

PART I: METIS (STYLE) FIDDLING

Chapter One: Indigenous Fiddling in Public Discourse

Representations of Metis (style) fiddling are entangled in the power relationship between the Metis nation(s) and the dominant white culture. As anti-racist scholar George Dei argues, social oppression constructs and constrains identities “through inclusionary and exclusionary processes” (2005, 2). This insight allows for a complex understanding of music as a social, relational practice, and points to two dialogical areas of inquiry. First, when studying the musical traditions of nations that have faced the dominant culture’s attempts at forced assimilation (to use the kindest words), or complete annihilation (to use more accurate words) (see Churchill 2004, 1997), it is important to unpack how the dominant culture has shaped these traditions or otherwise used the musical traditions of the ‘other’ for its own purposes. Second, it is important to examine traditions, especially traditions that are seen as proof of assimilation, in terms of resistance; that is, it is important to explore how subordinated nations have used musical traditions in defense of their rights or as markers of their celebrated difference from the dominant culture.³⁰ This focus is not meant to suggest that issues of power are irrelevant to the mainstream culture’s musics; rather, it is used to highlight the dominant culture’s powerful hand in all aspects of the social fabric of a diverse society, a hand that extends into what is often seen as the apolitical arena of musical traditions.³¹

³⁰ For examples of researchers who have addressed resistance within Indigenous musical practice, see Jacobsen (2009), Troutman (2009), and McNally (2000).

³¹ Although I certainly do not believe that music is apolitical, it is a view held by many. As Duke Redbird points out in his book *We Are Metis: A Metis view of the Development of a Native Canadian People*, “[c]ultural development as a political strategy is a viable vehicle for change, simply because it is a non-threatening activity to most sectors of the establishment” (1980, 48). It is also worth noting that, beginning in the 1960s and 70s, grants were often made available for Metis cultural events, but were contingent on the event being apolitical (Redbird 1980, 40–50).

This chapter explores the relationship between Indigenous nations and dominant white Manitobans, using an analysis of public discourse to untangle what was and is at stake in the process of representing Indigenous (style) fiddling. The first section will provide a brief history of central Turtle Island, focusing in particular on the relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settler Manitobans. Given the limited amount of space in this dissertation for the discussion of a complex history, books and articles cited in the text should be consulted for a more thorough understanding of the region's history. The second section of this chapter will explore mainstream representations of Indigenous fiddling, drawing on articles published in some of Manitoba's newspapers between the early twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.³² This section expands on the introduction's discussion of academic research on Indigenous fiddling, highlighting the simultaneous emergence of Metis fiddling in (mainstream) public and (re-settler) academic discourse. The chapter will conclude by returning to the issues addressed in the first section, building connections between the history and power dynamics at work in central Turtle Island and representations of Indigenous fiddling. This final section will thus explore the politics of representing Indigenous fiddling—that is, how representations have been shaped by various agendas and what these representations mean for Indigenous peoples—and how the “concepts and social relationships of the past are embedded in the present” (Diamond 2007, 3).

³² The newspapers used for this research were retrieved through the database newspaperarchive.com. Additional articles were retrieved from the *Winnipeg Free Press* archive, available at the Millennium library (Winnipeg), and on the website manitobia.ca. Key terms searched were fiddle, fiddler, and fiddling, as well as jigging, jigger, and jig.

From Turtle Island to Manitoba: Contextualizing Fiddling

Canada, it used to be said by non-Indians with more or less conviction, is a country of much geography and little history. (Dickason 1992, 11)

Although Indigenous nations have lived on Turtle Island for thousands of years,³³ conventional history books often tell readers that nothing of note happened until Europeans immigrated to the region.³⁴ While this conviction is not made explicit, the exclusion of anything more than a brief reference to the history of ‘pre-contact’ Turtle Island speaks volumes (see Dickason 1992, 11 for further discussion).³⁵ This way of thinking denies the value of Indigenous cultures, placing re-settler Canadians at the centre as stand-ins for all the peoples, past and present, who have made Turtle Island their home. Including a full history of ‘pre-contact’ and contemporary Indigenous nations would not only fill in significant historical gaps, but it would also serve to redress the imbalance between

³³ If Indigenous peoples have lived in what is now Manitoba for 11,500 years (to use the orthodox number), ninety-seven percent of Turtle Island’s peopled history *did not* include European immigrants (Pettipas 1996, 8, 30). This percentage is even smaller if the starting point is the year re-settlers began moving into Manitoba in large numbers (1812 or 1870). There has been, furthermore, some disagreement regarding when Indigenous peoples settled Turtle Island with some scholars suggesting that Indigenous people have been on the continent for much longer (see Deloria 1997). Dickason provides an excellent overview of the key debates regarding Indigenous genesis on Turtle Island versus Indigenous immigration to Turtle Island and the various timelines offered by scholars (2002, 3–6).

³⁴ David Newhouse similarly notes that “we [Indigenous people] have a tendency to disappear” from history texts. He does point out, however, that there has been an increase in scholarship on Aboriginal history and that it is becoming “more balanced and respectful” (2005, 47–48).

³⁵ A striking example of this exclusion is found on www.manitobia.ca, a website intended for the use of educators. The history of the region included on the website makes almost no mention of Indigenous peoples, beginning with the formation of Manitoba as a province (in 1870). The *Manitobia* website is important because it is a significant source for online information (including a database of primary sources) on the history of Manitoba. In contrast, *A History of the Native People of Canada* (Wright 2004) is an important source of information on Indigenous history. Nonetheless, the volumes separate Indigenous history from the rest of Canadian history, as if it were a topic of special interest, not one of general interest to all Canadians. Furthermore, its historical overview ends with the coming of Europeans, reinforcing the stereotype of Indigenous peoples as historical, not contemporary, nations. Dickason’s Book *Canada’s First Nations: A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times*, now in its fourth edition (with the most recent edition updated and augmented by the work of Metis scholar David McNab) is an excellent source of information on Indigenous histories (2009).

Indigenous and re-settler nations; such an inclusion would affirm and re-value Indigenous histories, knowledge, and nations. As David Newhouse (Onondaga) notes,

...we must remember that not all stories are given equal time. We cannot separate the telling of history from issues of power. It is still a fact that those who have power still get to write their version of the story and have it accepted as 'truth,' to have other plausible stories pushed from the table, so to speak. (2005, 50)

An accurate representation of Turtle Island's history should, then, include much more than 'post-contact' European accounts. Rather, it should draw from archaeological records and, most importantly, from Indigenous texts and oral histories.³⁶ Accounts of pre-contact life would, ideally, make up a substantial, even majority, portion of all Canadian histories.

This dissertation is not, however, primarily concerned with Turtle Island's history, although its history is significant to contemporary relations. Moreover, Turtle Island's history is complex; this complexity is often highlighted in disagreements between Western and Indigenous scholars.³⁷ Vine Deloria (Dakota) argues, for example, that a prevailing orthodoxy shapes Western understandings of Indigenous history and that Indigenous views are ignored unless they "bolster the existing and approved orthodox doctrines" (Deloria 1997, 32). Deloria further argues that scientific 'facts' (such as the Bering Strait Theory) are shaped by the desire to understand Indigenous histories from the confines of a Western worldview, and are upheld by the continuous repetition of "scholarly folklore" (1997, 31,

³⁶ Vine Deloria points out that, while many people believe that oral traditions only deal with religion, Indigenous oral traditions in fact very often "deal with commonsense ordinary topics such as plants, animals, weather, and past events that are not particularly of a religious nature" (1997, 36). Brown and Vibert point out that Indigenous texts (oral texts or texts written on hides, cloth, wood, and other materials) are more common than is often realized (2003, 107). David T. McNab and Ute Lishchke also note that there is a growing Indigenous-led effort to document Indigenous histories (2005, 12). While these histories are often textual rather than oral, they are an important step in creating more complete and widely accessible histories of Turtle Island's first peoples.

³⁷ Of course, not all Indigenous scholars hold the same views on the history of Turtle Island, just as Western scholars often hold differing views on the same subject. The point is that Western worldviews tend to be taken more seriously or be seen as more scientific (a value-laden term) than Indigenous worldviews.

211). While these issues are of great importance, they are beyond the purview of this dissertation and cannot be given their proper due in just a few paragraphs. I therefore leave this early history to Deloria and others who are better able to untangle the issues, and turn to several themes gathered from the post-European period, focusing, in particular, on the twentieth century. Although this approach reinforces the narrowly defined parameters of Turtle Island's history, I hope that, by acknowledging the problem, I can mitigate some of the problematic consequences.

On Becoming Manitoba: Invisible Nations and White Immigration

Mainstream texts provide little information on Indigenous peoples living in central Turtle Island during the period of confederation.³⁸ Texts on Manitoba's history tend to focus on the fur trade (see, e.g., Innis and Ray 2001; Payne 2004; Ray 1998; and Van Kirk 1996), Metis resistance (usually referred to as rebellion), and immigration from Ontario and Europe.³⁹ The inclusions and exclusions found in mainstream histories—that is, histories written from a seemingly 'unmarked' position—provide an important glimpse into the relationship between re-settlers and Indigenous peoples. The often-repeated statistics on Manitoba's population when the province became part of Canada in 1870 are particularly telling. Texts often note that Manitoba had a small, mostly Metis population (although the

³⁸ While most often unavailable to outsiders, Indigenous nations have their own historical records. David Newhouse points out, for example, that he learned the history of his people (the Onondaga) from the early thirteenth century to the present day. The mainstream lack of recognition (or sometimes simply lack of access) does not invalidate the value of these histories.

³⁹ Histories filling in the gaps left by mainstream text are becoming more common (see, e.g., Berens et al. 2009, Dickason and McNab 2009, McLeod 2009, Warren and Schenck 2009, Bird and Gray 2007, Bird et al. 2005, and McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004). Yet they only begin to touch on the histories of the more than fifty Indigenous nations living in what is now Canada. Olive Dickason (Metis) provides an overview of the available histories in her chapter "The Many Faces of Canada's history as It Relates to Aboriginal People" included in *Walking a Tightrope: Aboriginal People and Their Representations* (McNab and Lischke 2005).

Metis are not always mentioned) of about 12,000 people when it joined Canada (e.g., see Manitoba, “Immigration and Settlement” 2012, 1).⁴⁰ What these statistics very often fail to indicate is that the First Nations population was *undocumented* (by re-settlers); thus, First Nations are not included in these statistics (Dickason 1992, 263). In this way, these texts embrace a *terra nullius* point of view, making central Turtle Island’s First Nations (and, less often, Metis) population invisible.

After Manitoba joined confederation in 1870, the Canadian Government put in place plans to fill the new province, understood as ‘empty land,’ with (white) re-settlers from New England, the United Kingdom, and Ontario. Treaties were signed with the Assiniboine, Anishinaabe, and Cree nations,⁴¹ asserting (in the eyes of the government) Canadian ownership of the land and its resources. A railway was built to connect the prairies, isolated by distance and terrain, to eastern Canada, enabling trade with the east and providing a sense of Canadian unity (Manitoba, “Immigration and Settlement” 2012, 1).⁴² The federal government also implemented the Dominion Lands Act, legislation that was intended to entice ‘desirable’ immigrants (i.e., white, English-speaking immigrants) to the prairies. Free land was promised to those who paid a ten dollar registration fee, built a permanent residence, worked the land, and lived on the land for at least three years (Powell

⁴⁰ Dickason states that Manitoba’s population was made up of 9,800 Metis (5,720 French-speaking, and 4,000 English-speaking), out of a total population of 11,400. She then notes that “Amerindians had not been counted” (1992, 263). This provides an interesting contrast to the website Manitoba, which refers to 12, 000 citizens in 1870 without reference to their ethnicity, and does not mention that this number did not include Indigenous peoples (Manitoba, “Immigration and Settlement” 2012, 1). The fact that the majority of the 12, 000 citizens were Metis is only mentioned on page four (“The First Wave of Settlement”), and only in the context that they were now outnumbered by white re-settlers.

⁴¹ Treaties one, two, three, four, five, six, and ten were signed with nations living in what is now Manitoba.

⁴² As outlined in articles in *The New Nation* (a newspaper published by the provisional government in 1870), this disconnect, coupled with a strong trade relationship with Minneapolis, led some to believe that a union with the republic to the south would be more beneficial to the peoples of Rupert’s Land than a union with Canada (see, e.g., “Confederation” 1870).

2005, 80). Although the Canadian government ultimately allowed those who were considered less desirable into the province (see Troper 2012 for the Canadian government's hierarchy of ethnic groups), resulting in group settlement agreements with Mennonites, Hungarians, Jews, and Icelanders (Powell 2005, 80), the important point to stress here is that the Canadian government actively sought to fill the land with re-settlers.

The re-population of the region did not, however, go as smoothly as the Canadian government may have envisioned, with tensions arising between the government and the Metis people. While giving away land to re-settlers, the Canadian government refused to recognize Metis land rights, dismissing the way in which Metis people used the land, and re-settling the area with little regard for the broader Indigenous population (McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004, 306; Dickason 1992, 264).⁴³ Metis discontent was exacerbated when the northwest council appointed an English-speaking Protestant (William McDougall) without including a representative from the region's French-speaking Catholic population. The Metis formed a provisional government to fight for their rights, and a resistance began when McDougall tried to cross the border before the official land-transfer date (Dickason 1992, 268–70). The resistances of 1870 (in Manitoba) and 1885 (in Batoche) were a last resort as Metis people fought to retain a land-base. Despite Metis success in negotiating terms of an agreement with the Canadian government (resulting in the Manitoba Act of 1870), the provisions the Metis fought for were later largely ignored (McMillan and

⁴³ Problems had arisen prior to this as the Selkirk Settlers moved into the area (1812). The Battle of Seven Oaks (1816) marked the first battle in which Metis people fought for their rights as free, Indigenous Peoples (Barkwell 1991, 10). However, the most significant changes for Metis people happened as the Canadian government negotiated the transfer of land from the Hudson's Bay Company.

Yellowhorn 2004, 306). The Canadian government was soon able to fulfill its vision, overwhelming the Indigenous population with white immigrants.

The drastic change in population post-1870 indicates the extent to which this vision was made a reality. Within ten years, the non-First Nations population increased to 66,000, and within forty years it increased to 450,000. Winnipeg went from a population of 100 to a population of 142,000, making it the third largest city in Canada.⁴⁴ The demographics of the province also changed, with the French-speaking (usually Catholic) population reduced from fifty percent of the population pre-confederation to about seven percent of the total re-settler population within just a few years. By the end of the nineteenth century, Manitoba's population was predominantly white, English, and Protestant. The population, however, also included 6,000 Mennonites who had emigrated from Russia in the 1870s, and a small number of re-settlers from Quebec. At the start of the twentieth century, the population further diversified as a large number of Eastern Europeans immigrated to the province.⁴⁵ More treaties were signed as the province's boundaries grew, moving First Nations onto reserves. Despite large land grants, few Metis people occupied the land they had been guaranteed, since the implementation of the grants was "plagued by delays, speculation, and outright theft" (Dickason 1992, 296).⁴⁶ Both Metis and First Nations were pushed out of the way to make space for a 'settled' farming lifestyle—to make room for Manitoba.

⁴⁴ The number of Indigenous people living in Manitoba at this time is never indicated in history books, and I have not been able to find any statistics that would fill in this significant gap.

⁴⁵ Most notably, 170,000 Ukrainians came to Manitoba between the late nineteenth century and start of the First World War (Manitoba "Immigration and Settlement" 2012, 2012, 1–5).

⁴⁶ On March 8, 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that the Crown failed to hand out promised land grants to the Metis in the Red River region of Manitoba. It is yet to be seen whether this ruling will have an impact on Manitoba Metis.

Controlling Indigenous Lives: State Intervention in Canada

It has been the recurring theme of this submission that non-Aboriginal people keep making decisions about and for Aboriginal people. The Manitoba Métis Federation's research and analysis of the impact of the justice system on the Métis is ultimately a study of the social control of Aboriginal people within the contemporary state. (Richard et al. 1991, 190)

Since the mid-1800s, the British and then Canadian governments have exerted extensive control over Indigenous lives.⁴⁷ The most fundamental mechanism of this control is the Indian Act (1876). Based on pre-confederation legislation, the initial goal of the Indian Act was the assimilation/annihilation of Indigenous nations through intense regulation. The starting point was the legislation of identity. As a system of registration, the Indian Act bestowed status (i.e., official recognition as 'Indian') on some Indigenous people (hence the terms 'registered' and 'status' Indian), denying Indigenous nations the right to determine their own citizenship (see Lawrence 2004, 52).⁴⁸ Indigenous people were, furthermore, initially registered in a haphazard way, missing people who were away (e.g., hunting) and, in the western provinces, forcing people to choose between what were seen as the interchangeable categories of 'Indian' and Metis (Sawchuk 2000, 74; Hourie 1991, 135).⁴⁹ Registration created artificial boundaries among mixed bloods/Metis, Indians, and non-status Indians; this initial registration process continues to shape who is recognized as 'Indian' by the state since having a registered ancestor determines current

⁴⁷ Bonita Lawrence (Mi'kmaq) provides an excellent overview of the implementation of colonial legislation beginning in the mid-1800s (2004, 32–37).

⁴⁸ Although now granted the right to determine band membership, band membership does not guarantee status/state recognition, creating divisions between Indigenous people with status and band membership, those with membership but without status, and those with status but without band membership.

⁴⁹ As Dickason notes, acceptance of script meant loss of the right to Indian status (1992, 316). The choice to accept script or Indian status would, then, be influenced by a person's perception of which choice would best serve her or him and his or her family.

eligibility for status. Once separated into the disparate categories, those identified as mixed-bloods and those denied status were forced to remain separate from their First Nations relatives through the reserve system (Lawrence 2004, 86), thereby weakening cultural and political ties.

Although Metis identity is not directly governed by the Indian Act, it is complicated by colonial legislation. Denied recognition post-1885, many Metis people, if they were able, began disappearing into the unmarked population—that is, they hid “in plain sight” (McNab 2007, 22)—as a strategy to diminish the oppression they faced as mixed-bloods (Lawrence 2004, 10; Sawchuk 1978, 33).⁵⁰ The recognition of Metis people as one of Canada’s three Indigenous groups (with ‘Indians’ and Inuit) in the repatriated Canadian Constitution (1982) was a significant step forward; yet, it nonetheless had complex consequences. On the one hand, government recognition encouraged mixed-blood people to ‘come out’ as Metis, acknowledging their Indigeneity and undoing some of the shame that had been (and often still is) attached to being Metis.⁵¹ On the other hand, government recognition of Metis, ‘Indians,’ and Inuit as distinct further engrained boundaries between Indigenous peoples. In the same way as it has for ‘Indians,’ it also created an overarching category that does not recognize regional or cultural differences between Metis people

⁵⁰ Sawchuk notes that Metis people began re-emerging in the 1960s to assert their rights as Indigenous peoples (1978, 33). However, it should be noted that the Metis Nation was not silenced during the period after the resistances as indicated by the continued activity of l’Union Nationale Metisse de St. Joseph, and various political and cultural events that will be discussed later in this chapter. Furthermore, Redbird notes that in the 1930s the Metis were able to assert themselves again in a political manner (1980, 27–28). A more accurate analysis would be that the dominant culture largely refused to acknowledge any Metis presence until the 1960s.

⁵¹ Over the course of my research, I found that this is changing quite rapidly, at least in Manitoba, as more and more people try to retrace their ancestry to the historic Metis nation.

(Sawchuk 2000, 74).⁵² Trying to come to terms with what this meant for their status as (a) nation(s), many Metis organizations began restricting their membership to those with ties to what is often referred to as the historic Metis nation (i.e., those with ties to the Red River region of Manitoba).⁵³ In the process, long-standing alliances between Metis and non-status people were broken (ibid., 78). While Metis organizations have the right to set their own boundaries of membership, non-status ‘Indians’ were left without local representation (ibid.). Even more problematic, while Metis organizations are allowed the right to determine their membership, the interpretation of the Canadian Constitution is left up to the courts,⁵⁴ meaning that official recognition is ultimately left up to apparatuses of the state.

The regulation of identity is just one way in which the Indian Act controlled (and continues to control albeit to a lesser degree) Indigenous lives. Once identified as ‘Indian,’ Indigenous lives were subject to the Indian Act’s myriad regulations. The oppressive legislation found in the Indian Act is distressing even when detailed in very incomplete form as it is here: potlatches and dances associated with spiritual rituals were banned in

⁵² For example, how do Ukrainian Metis (discussed in Ostashewski 2012) or Labrador Metis fit into the government’s definition of Metis?

⁵³ The historic Metis nation is also sometimes referred to as the Riel/Real Metis (Chrétien 2012, 175). Currently, the Manitoba Metis Federation requires that members be of “historic Metis Nation ancestry” (Manitoba Metis Federation, constitution 2008, 3–4). The board of directors determines whether an application is accepted and a person becomes an official member of the Metis Nation (ibid.). However, not all Indigenous organizations follow this model. The Metis National Council and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, for example, are at odds over who should be included, with the former trying to narrow the definition and the latter trying to broaden the definition (Sawchuk 2000, 86).

⁵⁴ R. vs. Powley is perhaps the most famous of such cases. In 1993, a father and son (Steve and Roddy Powley) killed a moose without a hunting license. They were subsequently charged, but pleaded not guilty on grounds of their right, as Metis, to hunt for food. Although the court decision was looked upon quite favourably by the Ontario Metis Nation (since it acknowledged the Powleys’ claim to Metis-ness based on their acceptance by a Metis community), the fact remains that ultimate authority to determine Metis rights (and even Metis identity) remains with the Canadian courts.

1884, Thirst Dances⁵⁵ were banned the following year, and all forms of Indigenous dancing were banned in 1906; in 1914, a ban was placed on appearing in Indigenous regalia and on performing at fairs and stampedes; beginning in 1920 (although repealed after two years and then reinstated in modified form in 1933), the Superintendent General was allowed to enfranchise Indigenous people he considered qualified (e.g., if an 'Indian' had significant Western-based education), even against the person's wishes; and, finally, a pass system was implemented requiring Indigenous peoples to obtain permission from the Indian Agent before leaving their reserve⁵⁶ (Dickason 1992, 284–88, 314–15, 319, 326). Although the most overtly oppressive sections of the Indian Act changed with the amendments made in 1951 (see discussion below), the idea that 'Indians' should be cared for (i.e., controlled) as wards of the state remains the fundamental premise of the act to this day.

The reserve system is equally significant to this discussion, serving as an example of how government policies of cultural genocide were put into practice. By isolating people on small tracts of land, and as noted above, regulating movement between reserve and non-reserve lands (Lawrence 2004, 35; Dickason 1992, 314), the Canadian government set out to destroy the self-sufficiency of Indigenous nations. Without access to hunting and fishing grounds, without the freedom to follow resources, and without access to traditional trade routes (see McMillan and Yellowhorn 2004, 111 for a brief discussion of the importance of trade between the Anishinaabe and Huron), traditional ways of life were broken. The small tracts of reserve land were, furthermore, often unsuited to farming (Dickason 1992, 325),

⁵⁵ Thirst Dances (now known as Rain Dances) are a ceremonial dance of the Anishinaabe nation. See Louttit and Keillor (2007) for further discussion.

⁵⁶ While people could not be forced to stay on their reserves (at least in terms of what Indian agents were legally allowed to enforce), threats of deprivation of rations and of other privileges could be used for this purpose (Dickason 1992, 314).

precluding the adoption of new methods for self-sufficiency. Once Indigenous peoples were cut off from traditional and new ways of survival, the Canadian government had an unprecedented amount of power. For example, rations (which were necessary since self-sufficiency had been made difficult if not impossible) could be withheld if people left the reserve without permission (Dickason 1992, 314). The Canadian government even insisted on its right to control reserve location, moving First Nations to new reserves without their surrender of land if the land was desirable to whites (Lawrence 2004, 36).⁵⁷ The reserve system should be understood, therefore, as yet another strategy of control and cultural genocide intended to force dependency.

Like the reserve system, residential schools were used as a means of government control over Indigenous peoples. Found in most of Canada's provinces and territories, residential schools were run and established by the federal government and various churches (Regan 2010, 4). While voluntary in the early years, attendance became mandatory in 1894 with an amendment to the Indian Act (Miller 1996, 129). With this amendment in place, Indian Agents and police officers had the power to remove children from their families against the will of their parents, withholding rations if they refused to allow their children to attend the schools (Regan 2010, 5; Miller 1996, 385). The stated goal of residential schools was the total assimilation of Indigenous nations, a task that the parties in power attempted to achieve through the removal of children from their parents, the suppression of Indigenous languages, the suppression of Indigenous spiritual and

⁵⁷ One of the most infamous cases is that of St. Peter's Reserve near Selkirk, Manitoba, home to Peguis First Nation. Located near Winnipeg, the land was desired by the local white population. In 1916, the band was relocated to a tract of land about one hundred kilometers north. Peguis First Nation was not consulted, and those who refused to leave the reserve were evicted, and, in some cases, convicted for trespassing (Dickason 1992, 325).

cultural traditions, and the systematic denial of Indigenous cultures as valuable (Regan 2010, 5; Grant 1996, 23–24, 193). Residential schools tore children from their families and from their communities; contact with families was almost impossible to maintain while incarcerated in schools; and, as Bonita Lawrence found in her interviews with mixed blood Torontonians, residential school survivors almost never returned to their communities (Lawrence 2004, 107). The community connections residential school survivors had prior to incarceration were thus torn asunder.⁵⁸

While these examples point to cultural genocide, residential schools must also be understood as sites for the physical genocide of Indigenous peoples, that is, sites of control through annihilation (see Churchill 1997 for a discussion of this topic). Schools were poorly funded, leading to undernourishment and illness that all too often went untreated and led to death. Those in charge were well aware of these deaths as attested to by Duncan Campbell Scott, superintendent of Indian affairs in the late 1800s and early 1900s, who admitted that fifty percent of the children were dying under their care (Miller 1996, 133). A *Globe and Mail* article found that children continued to die from tuberculosis at “alarming rates for at least four decades after a senior official at the Department of Indian Affairs initially warned in 1907 that schools were making no effort to separate healthy children from those sick with the highly contagious disease” (Curry and Howlett 2007). Although officials knew what was happening, they were unwilling to bring about systemic change to prevent further deaths; they *willingly accepted* an intolerably high number of deaths. The legacy of physical genocide continues today with patterns of family violence in

⁵⁸ For further information on Canada’s residential school system, see *They Came for the Children* (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2012) and *We Were Children* (Wolochatiuk 2012).

contemporary Indigenous communities that have been traced to residential school experiences (Lawrence 2004, 106), and the devastatingly high number of suicides among Indigenous youth (see Hallett 2006, 31–32).

While the legislation, schooling, and removal of children described above created a foundation for control over Indigenous lives, policing (both by the Indian Agent and by police forces) put this legislation into practice. Although numerous examples can be cited, an example from Winnipeg brings the issue of policing into local context. In the late 1800s, Winnipeg had a predominantly Canadian-born, English, Protestant police force. As scholar Megan Kozminski argued in her article on policing in Winnipeg, maintenance of middle and upper class ideals of morality and order were police priorities (Kozminski 2009, 44–47). It is not surprising, then, that between 1879 and 1889 Metis and ‘half-breeds’ were arrested more often than white residents (*ibid.*, 59). (Since the Cree, Ojibwe, and Dakota people of the area would have been confined to reserves, they would likely have had little contact with the Winnipeg police force.) This was not a simple case of Metis and ‘half-breed’ social deviance. Reading the extensive logs of a revered police officer, Kozminski found that the common practice at the time was to escort drunken men of privilege to their homes, all the while arresting those with less privilege (often mixed-bloods) for the same behaviour (*ibid.*, 56). This example points to the many layers of control imposed on Indigenous peoples, from federal legislation controlling their identity, cultural practices, land, and education, to over-zealous and biased enforcement of the law.

From the Status Quo to New Directions

The 1950s were a significant turning point as changes to the Indian Act (1951) reduced the number of regulations imposed on Indigenous people. The pass system was abolished; cultural practices were no longer outlawed (Hall 2009, 223); restrictions on political organization were removed; bands were given control over their funds; compulsory enfranchisement was eliminated; public schools became integrated (Dickason 1992, 331–36); and, in 1960, Indigenous people were allowed to vote without stipulations (Mathias and Yabsley 1991, 44). The rights of Indigenous people became entrenched in the constitution at last with the 1982 repatriation. As the relevant section of the constitution, section 35(1), states: “The existing Aboriginal and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples of Canada are hereby recognized and affirmed” (quoted in Turner 2006, 3). In 1985, with the passing of bill C-31, gender discrimination in the Indian Act was reversed, allowing women to keep their status if they married men without status; reinstating women, and their children, who had lost their status; and recognizing band control over band membership (Lawrence 2004, 64). The same bill reinstated status to those who had been enfranchised for receiving a university degree or by otherwise showing what was deemed a sufficient degree of ‘civilization’ (Dickason 1992, 331). In the 1960s, following the changes to the Indian Act, the Indian residential school system began to wind down (Lawrence 2004, 106), with the last school closing its doors in 1996 (Regan 2010, 4).

The changes in legislation and closure of residential schools mark a movement towards a seemingly more respectful relationship between peoples; however, the work of controlling Indigenous lives has continued in other ways. For example, and perhaps most

devastating for Indigenous communities, the Indian Act of 1951 made provincial laws applicable to reserves. Large numbers of Indigenous children were subsequently taken from their families and placed into foster care or for adoption, often with non-Indigenous families (Lawrence 2004, 37). Less than one percent of Indigenous children had been in the care of Child and Family Services prior to this legislation; yet, after this legislation was passed, anywhere from one-third to one-half of all Indigenous children were wards of the state, with numbers especially high in western Canada and northern Ontario. Most were in foster care, and most grew up in white homes, their culture and ancestry often ignored or even hidden (ibid., 112–5). Most disturbing is that decisions to take Indigenous children from their homes were often based on assumptions held by dominant Canada; differences in Indigenous ways of raising children were often ignored, and the need for material wealth was often unduly emphasized (RCAP 1996, 3:26).

Changes to the child welfare system began in the 1980s as First Nations established their own child and family services agencies. In Manitoba, Indigenous-run child and family services were allowed to serve the off-reserve, Indigenous population beginning in 1999 (MacDonald 2009, 180–83). This can, of course, be seen as an important step towards self-determination. Yet, as scholar Fiona McDonald argues, the shift from provincially run child and family services to Indigenous-run child and family services is less meaningful than it seems on the surface, given that ultimate authority still lies with the province. Pointing to the work of Indigenous scholars Taiiaki Alfred and Patricia Monture-Angus, McDonald suggests that “a meaningful change is not so much a change in who administers services but a complete overhaul of the value systems that lie beneath existing practices” (2009,

183). While some progress has been made, the provinces continue to retain ultimate control over Indigenous children. This paternal approach assumes that Indigenous nations should not (or cannot) be responsible for their own children. With the province focused on removing children rather than on supporting Indigenous communities in rebuilding shattered familial relations, the number of Indigenous children in foster care continues to rise and is especially high in Manitoba (Gough et al. 2005, 1). Child and family services (especially when run by re-settlers and when inattentive to maintaining ties between children and their culture) can be understood as a continuation of the debunked residential school system, once again severing ties between the older and younger generations.

The long history of policing Indigenous bodies continues to play a significant toll on the Indigenous population. Since the mid-1960s, Indigenous incarceration rates have steadily grown. By the late 1990s, fifty-nine percent of adults in custody in Manitoba were Indigenous; by 2005, the rate of Indigenous incarceration in Manitoba was more than five times that of the non-Indigenous population (Hallett 2006, 51). In response, some Indigenous people argue that policing in Indigenous communities or largely Indigenous communities should be turned over to Indigenous agencies. Some further argue that a “separate but parallel, alternative Aboriginal justice system” should be put in place (Barkwell 1991, 96). (That is, both First Nations and Metis should be ‘allowed’ to reclaim Indigenous forms of justice and restitution.) Barkwell, working with the Manitoba Metis Federation, argues that this would be a “major step in alleviating the dispossession that people feel as a result of the current infliction of the system” (1991, 96). Although change has been discussed for many years and some forms of Indigenous justice and restitution are

being put into practice (see Van Ness 2005), the expressed hope for significant change has not yet come to fruition.

Assuaging White Guilt with the ‘Indian’/Metis Problem

The settlers underwent untold hardships, perils of hunger and floods, fires and unfriendly tribes, both Indian and Metis but they won out against odds, tilled their soil, prospered, and started a successful and rich community. (“Five Short of a Century” 1948, 11)

The above-quoted article describes the transformation of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, from a “wilderness to a prosperous agricultural community” (“Five Short of a Century” 1948, 11). It reflects the belief that the ‘settler,’ seeking to civilize the land, had to fight against the wilderness in all its forms, including human. While the significant changes to the Indian Act of 1951 (three years after the article was written) began to re-shape the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler Canadians, a version of the above-expressed ideology remained deeply imbedded in the relationship between nations. With more freedoms in place, an increasing number of Indigenous people (seeking education, jobs, and an escape from the legacy of residential schools) were choosing to live in urban areas (Hall 2009, 223–4). Yet city life was not easy. Indigenous people struggled to find work, to adjust to a new way of life, to build new communities, and to stay away from a police force eager to arrest them.⁵⁹ At the same time, re-settler Canadians, who now came into direct contact with Indigenous peoples, became more concerned about what they understood as the ‘Indian’ problem (ibid., 223–6).⁶⁰ Instead of acknowledging the impact

⁵⁹ Hall notes that Indigenous peoples were arrested more often, and for less serious crimes, than other Manitobans in the 1950s (2009, 224).

⁶⁰ Yet Romantic notions of Indigenous people—the Noble Savage—continued into the 1950s. In fact, a “Pioneer Days” event that took place in 1956 at the Manitoba School for Mental Defectives used the theme ‘cowboys and Indians’ (“Pioneer Days Relived” 1956, 4): “Attendants and nurses dressed as Indians and

of systemic racism, the ‘Indian problem’ placed the onus for change on Indigenous people—that is, on the need for Indigenous people, not re-settler society, to change in order to fit into the white mainstream.⁶¹ This belief ultimately sustained the earlier-expressed idea that ‘Indians’ are a peril of the wilderness that whites have to civilize.

In Manitoba, as expressed in newspapers from the 1950s, a slight variation on the ‘Indian’ problem developed: the Metis problem. The first article of this nature was written a decade before this idea became mainstream, as a response to a convention organized by Metis people in Saskatchewan. Setting the stage for what became common parlance in the 1950s, this article takes a paternalistic tone, suggesting that Metis people are worse off than other citizens because all three levels of government have refused to take responsibility for them (“The Problem of the Metis” 1939, 2).⁶² As the 1950s rolled around, a veritable crop of these articles appeared, especially in the *Manitoba Leader* (Portage la Prairie, Manitoba). The attitude is clearly articulated in an article written by W. L. Belton. The article indicates that the federal government spends a great deal of money caring for the ‘Indians,’ although s/he notes that many feel that too much money is spent this way. The reporter continues by stating that the ultimate goal of this spending is to make the ‘Indian’ an independent citizen. Belton’s interest then turns to the Metis, who s/he describes as a

their squaws, added the color to the dull overcast of the afternoon...The music stirred the blood of some of the braves who commenced to do a mixture of a soft-shoe shuffle and a war dance around the stage...” (ibid.) The article continues noting that an “Indian nuptial dance” was performed by staff members, “as anxious suitors of the very pretty princess, daughter of the tribal chief” pursued the young woman to the tom-tom beat of the drumming by the students (ibid.).

⁶¹ The Winnipeg Friendship Centre, opened in 1959 with support from the federal and provincial governments as well as the Urban Indian Association, was a response to the needs of urban Indigenous people. It provided a space to build social networks and maintain Indigenous values and history (Hall 2009, 223–6).

⁶² In contrast, the article points out that ‘Indians’ are the responsibility of the federal government and new immigrants are the responsibility of the municipal governments.

“distinctly different problem” since the government has no special provisions for their care: “They are alike cast off by the treaty Indians, who want none of them in the reserve or in any way, and are alike regarded as none of the concern of other citizens” (“Critic’s Comment” 1954, 12).⁶³ Again, the article is paternalistic and does not acknowledge the causes of Metis poverty.

Some of these articles could, nonetheless, be described as ‘sensitive’ to Indigenous peoples. For example, an article reporting on the United Church women’s missionary society rally quotes a Mrs. Hardy who stated that, “The Indians are the original Canadians. We are the foreigners” (“Four United” 1956, 13). A second article, also from the 1950s, notes that re-settlers pushed the Indigenous population aside. Although the positive message is tempered since it is described as a result of bringing in “our standards of civilization,” it acknowledges that re-settlers created a “lot of difficulty for [Indigenous people]” and that re-settlers should help Metis peoples “without being too helpful, so as not to change their complete way of life” (“Local Council” 1952, 5). Unfortunately, a paternalistic attitude is betrayed when the author also notes that her committee took up the study of the Metis because, while the government takes care of the ‘Indians,’ the Metis do not have similar support (ibid.). Thus, while some writers were somewhat sensitive to Indigenous peoples, paternalism was a common motive; furthermore, even positive articles solidified a *Metis* problem and, with the rare exception described above, were careful not to implicate white re-settlers in the current state of affairs. Interestingly, it is with these

⁶³ Other examples come from 1955, when a women’s group went before the premier to present recommendations for Metis rehabilitation (“Portager Among” 1955, 5), and from 1961 when a Mrs. H. D. Wilson presented on the so-called ‘Metis Problem’ noting that there was a great need for more tolerance in order to bring about complete integration (“Langruth WI” 1961, 8).

articles that Metis people, and Indigenous people more broadly, begin to be constructed as contemporary (not just historical) in mainstream newspapers.

Multiculturalism, Immigration, Racism, and Pride

Canadian policies on human rights, immigration, and intercultural relations underwent significant changes in the 1960s and 1970s.⁶⁴ In 1960, Canada adopted a bill of rights prohibiting federal agencies from discriminating on the grounds of race, origin, colour, sex, or religion. Changes to Canada's Immigration Act were implemented in 1967, allowing immigration from previously denied countries. Just a few years later (1971), Canada's Multicultural Policy was put into place under the guise of helping cultural groups retain their distinct identity and overcome barriers to integration. The Canadian Multiculturalism Act (1988) and the multiculturalism program of the Department of Canadian Heritage (1993) built on this earlier policy. These policy changes led to an increase in ethnic diversity across the country and a significant shift in how Canadians defined themselves as a nation. Cultural celebrations featuring the 'ethnic' other became increasingly common as the Canadian government began funding cultural celebrations that emphasized Canada's new, multicultural identity (Redbird 1980, 48).

Immigrants from around the world have since chosen to make Canada their home, in the process, reshaping the nation. Although Manitoba did not, for a long time, receive its 'share' of immigrants, the implementation of a provincial nominee program, allowing citizens to sponsor family members, is credited with a twenty-four percent increase in

⁶⁴ The government of Manitoba provides a breakdown of these important changes on their website (http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/multi_sec/history.html) (accessed 28 March 2012).

immigration the year that it was put into practice (Government of Manitoba 2006, 2).⁶⁵ Manitoba has now reached, and in fact exceeded, its goal of ‘sharing’ Canada’s immigrants, drawing new Manitobans primarily from the Philippines, Germany, India, China, and Korea (ibid., 6, 14–15).⁶⁶ The changes that began in the 1960s have clearly reshaped Canada. The late nineteenth and early twentieth century saw Indigenous peoples being overwhelmed by newcomers from New England, Ontario, Britain, and then Eastern Europe; a hundred years later, with a new identity as a multicultural nation and an overwhelming unwillingness to distinguish between Indigenous ‘others’ and immigrant ‘others,’ Indigenous peoples face the real potential to be seen as just another one of Canada’s ‘ethnic’ groups (cf., LaRocque 2010, 172).

The Indigenous population is nonetheless growing faster than any other group in Manitoba. The Ojibwe, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota, Dene, and Metis live both off-reserves, primarily in Winnipeg, and on sixty-two first nations across the province.⁶⁷ Almost fourteen percent of Manitoba’s population identifies as Indigenous, a larger percentage than any other province (except Saskatchewan which reports a similar percentage). This number has more than doubled since the early 1980s (Hallett 2006, 6). Furthermore, in 2001, Winnipeg’s Indigenous population was higher per capita than in any other Canadian city, with a significant increase since the mid-1990s. This growth has been attributed to an

⁶⁵ The program began in 1998 with the first nominees arriving in 1999. The program is generally considered a success (see Carter 2009).

⁶⁶ About twenty-five percent of new immigrants are from the Philippines; just over sixteen percent are from Germany; between eight and nine percent are from India; between five and six percent are from China; and just over four percent are from Korea. Most (seventy-nine percent) choose to live in Winnipeg (Government of Manitoba 2012, 14–15).

⁶⁷ See <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/apm2000/1/c.html> (accessed 21 March 2012) and <http://www.gov.mb.ca/ana/apm2000/1/d.html> (accessed 29 March 2012) for further details.

increase in the number of people self-identifying as Metis; in fact, Metis people make up fifty percent of Winnipeg's Indigenous population. The increasing number of people identified as Indigenous in the census is also due to the reinstatement of people who had lost their status (C-31ers), more comprehensive census data, and higher birth rates among Indigenous peoples (ibid., 25–6).⁶⁸ The percentage of Manitobans identifying as Indigenous will likely increase in the coming years since almost one in four Manitobans, newborn to fourteen, are Indigenous. While these numbers point to a 'coming out' as Indigenous, especially among the Metis, the effects of colonialism—from high suicide rates, to poor health⁶⁹—continue to take a heavy toll on the Indigenous population (ibid., 10).

There is no question that the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler Manitobans needs to improve; and work to do just that is being done. For example, the first national Truth and Reconciliation event, held in Winnipeg in 2010, brought together thousands of residential school survivors, as well as some re-settlers, to uncover the history of residential schools. Educators in Manitoba have also implemented programming to make students more aware of Indigenous cultures (field notes 1/03/2012, and "Fancy Fiddling" 2005). A recent attempt to improve the relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers was a partnership between the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) and Wab Kinew, an Ojibwe reporter and hip-hop musician. Aired across the nation, the resulting program, titled *The 8th Fire* (2012), addressed the most common stereotypes and

⁶⁸ Birth rates have, in fact, decreased among the Indigenous population. In 1970, the average Indigenous woman had 5.7 children; in 1995, this number dropped to 2.55. Nonetheless, fertility rates for Status Indians are about fifty percent higher than for the general population (Hallett 2006, 24–25).

⁶⁹ Suicide rates are five times the national average for Indigenous males, and seven times the national average for Indigenous females age 15–24 (Hallett 2006, 7). Indigenous peoples have a much higher risk of contracting a number of diseases, including arthritis/rheumatism, hypertension, heart problems, diabetes, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, than non-Indigenous Canadians (ibid., 7).

misconceptions held about Indigenous peoples and promoted finding a way to work together for the prosperity of all Canadians. Although it is doubtful that the series reached those who had no interest in learning about Indigenous peoples, it created somewhat of a stir among those who were open to watching the series.⁷⁰ This series is an example of how a partnership between re-settlers (i.e., a mainstream corporation) and Indigenous peoples can bring Indigenous worldviews to the forefront. By highlighting positive, Indigenous role models, the series also reclaimed a sense of pride in Indigenous cultures.

However, a great deal of work still needs to be done in order to create a respectful and equal relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers. (In fact, for those who have followed the recently formed, Indigenous-led Idle No More movement, it is startling to see the vast amount of hate directed towards Indigenous peoples on online and other public forums.⁷¹) The foundation of this continued problem, as many Indigenous scholars and activists have been pointing out for years, is that Indigenous peoples have no real say in government policies that affect their lives. As Dale Turner notes, even though the Canadian government recognized and affirmed Indigenous rights in the Canadian Constitution (1982), the Supreme Court has the ultimate authority of interpretation; while this can be seen as a step forward, Indigenous rights, under this model, have legitimacy only within the context of the Canadian state. In other words,

...Aboriginal rights exist as a special class of constitutional rights that are bestowed upon Aboriginal peoples by the state and that are protected within the highest form of law in the Canadian state...But many Aboriginal peoples do not understand their rights in terms that are amenable to the state's legal and political discourses. This is

⁷⁰ I ran into both Indigenous and re-settler Manitobans talking about the series.

⁷¹ I noticed this on my own Facebook feed and in comments following articles published online by various news sources. It was also mentioned in an Indigenous-led Winnipeg Comedy Festival event that discussed (in a rather light-hearted manner) the Idle No More movement (14/04/2013).

because many Aboriginal peoples do not perceive the political relationship as one of subservience; that is, they do not view their rights as somehow legitimated by the Canadian state. (Turner 2008, 4)

Many Indigenous peoples (rightfully) see their rights as separate from the Canadian state, having existed long before the creation of Canada. (This could, in fact, be understood as the main issue being addressed by the Idle No More movement.) Rather than giving the Canadian state control over their rights—rights that the government could end with a stroke of a pen (Bird et al. 2005, 229)—this understanding places Indigenous nations and the Canadian state on equal footing, thus creating a true nation(s)-to-nation relationship.

Public Discourse on Metis Fiddling, 1900–2012

Winnipeg was born after Theodore Thomas [conductor of the Chicago Symphony] had become famous in artistic maturity—it is scarcely more than two decades from the Red River Jig of the Metis fiddler to the classic Blue Danube waltz [recently performed in Winnipeg] of the world’s greatest orchestra [the Chicago Symphony]. (Handscomb 1903)

Wagner opera with eminent soloists, superb orchestra and chorus, elaborate costuming and sumptuous stage mountings! Well, well, how this young town of ours away out here in the wild and woolly west does take on metropolitan airs to be sure. Why there are good people still with us who recall the days when the only music was the weird beating of the Indian’s tom-tom and it seems but yesterday that our most classic melodies were those scraped by the Metis fiddler for a Red River Jig. (Handscomb 1906)⁷²

The above excerpts, taken from articles printed in the *Manitoba Free Press* more than one hundred years ago, point to two issues that are central to the discussion of representations of Metis fiddling in Manitoba: first, at the start of the twentieth century the mainstream press recognized fiddling, and especially the “Red River Jig,” as a prominent

⁷² C.W. Handscomb (1867–1906) was an English immigrant who came to Winnipeg via Ontario when he was fourteen. He was a well-known critic for the *Free Press* until his untimely death from diphtheria in 1906 (Arrell 1999, 114).

marker of Metis culture; second, ‘progress’ (with Western art music as its marker) was seen as contradictory to Metis musical practice. These points provide a starting place for the exploration of mainstream attitudes towards Metis/First Nations fiddling, and by implication, white attitudes towards Indigenous people; in particular, they raise questions regarding Indigenous/white relations as seen through representations of Indigenous fiddling in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Are these attitudes still part of the mainstream? If not, when and why did they change? And what do mainstream representations of Metis fiddling tell us about the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler Manitobans?

With these guiding questions, this section of the chapter explores public discourse on Indigenous fiddling in Manitoba, drawing on articles, editorials, and advertisements printed in Manitoba’s local (digitized) newspapers. This section should be read with the previous chapter’s discussion of academic research on fiddling in mind; doing so highlights how (white) academics⁷³ endorsed and sometimes challenged popular understandings of Indigenous fiddling. The obvious drawback to this approach is the absence of Indigenous voices; with the exception of some French Metis voices from newspapers published between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the available newspapers are re-settler publications.⁷⁴ Given this limitation, it is important to acknowledge that the following is, largely, a history of white representations of Indigenous fiddling. While chapter two addresses Metis definitions and representations of Metis fiddling in

⁷³ Metis scholar Annette Chrétien (2005) is the only Indigenous scholar who has written about Metis fiddling. Her work explores ‘other’ Metis identities (i.e., Metis communities in Ontario) and the role of music in the process of being and becoming Metis.

⁷⁴ Those that are French/Metis are *Ouest Canadien*, *Le Metis*, *Le Manitoba*, *Echo du Manitoba*, and *La Liberté*. These papers, however, conflate Franco-Manitoban and French Metis identities. Furthermore, there is almost no mention of fiddling in any of these newspapers.

contemporary times, a broader exploration of Indigenous definitions and representations of Indigenous fiddling as expressed in Indigenous contexts throughout the twentieth century would be an important complement to this chapter.⁷⁵

A Thrilling Memory: Setting the Stage

...the names Dumont and Riel thrilled all Canada. Even at the time of the rebellion Dumont was credited with supplying the brains of the insurrection, Riel contributing the necessary fanaticism that drew to his side the Indians and half-breeds of the Northwest. Dumont was a more dangerous man than Riel for he brought to the camp of the conspirators a cold-blooded cunning that cost Canadian lives. He was not carried away by his chief's wild imaginings, but fought desperately like a man with a rope around his neck. ("Dumont and Riel" 1906, 3)

The representations of the Red River Metis Nation found in Manitoba's newspapers at the start of the twentieth century will come as no surprise to those familiar with the history of Indigenous/re-settler relations.⁷⁶ The above-quoted article, which later referred to the Metis resistance as "one of the maddest enterprises in all history" ("Dumont and Riel" 1906), provides an example of a typical representation from the early 1900s, drawing on two re-settler constructions of Indigenous peoples.⁷⁷ Mainstream newspapers, on the one hand, painted a picture of Indigenous peoples as primitive, wild, and savage; on the other hand, they used Indigenous peoples, represented as fading into the distant past, as fodder to create an exotic history of white re-settlement, a thrilling sense of adventure for white

⁷⁵ Lederman's interviews from the 1980s could be a starting point. Von Rosen's interview (available on the Native Dance website) with James Cheechoo, a Cree fiddler from Moose Factory, would provide an interesting point of comparison (von Rosen 2007).

⁷⁶ For further discussion of representations of "Indians" in Canadian texts, see Emma LaRocque's book *When the Other is Me: Native Resistance Discourse, 1850–1990* (2010). LaRocque's discussion of the "civ/sav" dichotomy is particularly relevant (2010, 37–47). Also see Daniel Francis' book *The Imaginary Indian* (1992) and Ute Lischke and David T. McNab's book *Walking a Tightrope: Aboriginal People and Their Representations* (2005).

⁷⁷ Eighteen years later, a very similar image was evoked in the same newspaper in an article that noted the passing of a man who was part of the "thrilling band who were eye-witnesses of Canada's wilder days" ("Passing of a Pioneer" 1924, 7). This points to the popularity, over an extended period of time, of the thrilling/savage imagery.

Canadians whose ancestors, according to these representations, dared to enter the wild, uncivilized lands now claimed for Canada.⁷⁸

“A Daughter of the Ranch: A Story of Romance and Adventure of Western Pioneer Days” (McLeod 1924) provides an example of the deep chasm between ‘us’ and exotic others and connects this chasm to early understandings of Metis/French fiddling (constructed as interchangeable) in Manitoba. Published in both the *Gazette* (Balduf, Manitoba) and the *Stonewall Argus* (Stonewall, Manitoba), this short story focuses on the life of a re-settler family and, especially, the budding romance between Mary, a young, presumably white woman,⁷⁹ and two potential suitors. A substantial part of the story takes place during a ‘shindig’ held in Mary’s honour. The shindig begins as a gathering of the region’s white English-speaking inhabitants (again presumably), but soon comes to include both ‘Indians’ and half-breeds/French-Canadians.

The ‘Indians’ had requested permission from the Indian agent (who “generously granted their request”) to leave their reserve so that they could honour Mary, “who was a great favorite among [the ‘Indians’]” (McLeod 1924, 6). Gathering outside Mary’s home, and attracting the attention of Mary and her guests, the ‘Indians’ began what is described as a weird wail, singing “Ya, ya, hu ya, hu yaa, hu yaa, yaa, yaa, hu ya, hu gaa, hu yaa” with a “tom tom” accompaniment of “[r]up-a-tum-tum, tu rup a tum tum...” (ibid.). Mary, recognizing the honour being bestowed on her (or so the story goes), “went about them, chatting with the squaws in their own language...calling each by name” (McLeod 1924:6).

⁷⁸ Deloria (1999) explores these issues in the context of American identity.

⁷⁹ The Metis/French-Canadians and “Indians” are all named as such, but Mary’s ethnicity is not mentioned. In this way, “A Daughter of the Ranch” creates a white, unmarked, English centre.

After the hour-long “pow-wow,” Mary, demonstrating her goodness, generosity, and tolerance, invites the ‘Indians’ into her home to take part in the festivities.

Five men, described as Frenchmen and half-breeds who were travelling through the area, soon join the shindig, attracting “unusual attention” by demonstrating dances that are described as unknown to the guests and starting an impromptu “Red River Jig” competition (McLeod 1924, 6). The author describes how Joe, one of the men from the French/half-breed group, “feeling the intoxication of the dance...was not quite satisfied” and, desiring more, said to his companion, Napoleon Dore: ““Poleon by tonaire, I beat you on de Red Reeveer jeeg, ah?”” Dore is quick to agree to the competition, stating “Ba gosh, Joe la Tour, I tak’ you on dad sure, me” (ibid.). With these words, a “Red River Jig” competition begins as the spectators watch, “some in silent admiration; some keeping time with their toes; and some with the clapping of the hands” (ibid.).⁸⁰

The story’s use of language, in particular the thick accent that distinguishes the French/Metis guests from the unmarked guests, is quite relevant in its positioning of ethnic others. (Interestingly, the ‘Indian’ guests never speak.) However, it is the description of the competition that creates the most significant chasm between unmarked Manitobans and the other (both Metis/French and First Nations). The “Red River Jig” contestants,

...quickly responded to the rhythmic motions indicated by the time and tune. Arms swinging, hands twitching kept time with the rapid motions of the feet. Faster and faster the time increased, faster and faster the feet moved in unison as they cut small circles in the centre of the floor. “Plus fort! Jean, Plus fort!” shouts la Tour. Quickly

⁸⁰ The “Red River Jig” is both a fiddle tune and a dance. The dance is usually done to the tune of the same name although in contemporary times it is often danced to the “Orange Blossom Special” or integrated into square dancing. It is not clear whether the jiggers danced to the “Red River Jig” or to another tune. The “Red River Jig” is now often considered the official anthem of the (Red River) Metis nation. As discussed later in this chapter, it is also seen, depending on the era, as a uniquely Manitoban tune/dance that represents all Manitobans.

in response, the time gained speed, and the feet kept time. On, on the furious pace kept on without sign of relaxation... Though drops of perspiration trickled from the brows of the nimble contestants. (McLeod 1924, 6)

The guests are described as taking all this in, watching with interest as the competition unfolds. Most telling is that, as described in the story, just the 'Indians' are pulled down to the French/Metis men's level of 'wildness'. This is apparent as the story continues, observing that,

Even the squaws, swaying to the intoxication and held in the grip of the exciting contest, first beat time and, finally, yielding to the call of their own wild music, gave way to a droning refrain that intensified in pitch as the music and the contest continued. (McLeod 1924, 6)⁸¹

The competition comes to an abrupt end when, immediately after the above description, the fiddler breaks a string; neither man is declared the champion.

The tone of the story changes significantly once the competition comes to an end and the instrument played by the (presumably) white fiddler⁸² is "put into commission" for a waltz (McLeod 1924:6). A sudden shift in imagery clearly demarcates the positionality of the ethnic groups present at the shindig:

This was the first waltz Ronald and Mary had during the evening. All at once they seemed to be the centre of attraction as they gracefully glided in and out among the dozen or more couples now occupying the floor. Both were good dancers. Ronald, tall and athletic, guided his graceful partner through the maze of other dancers with the skill and grace required with much practice. (McLeod 1924:6)

⁸¹ As horrifying as this description should seem to readers, the sexism is even more overt in other parts of the story, for example in a description of "squaws [who] kept time, tune and step with their lords and masters [the braves]" (McLeod 1924:6).

⁸² I believe that readers are supposed to 'read' the fiddler as white given that his ethnicity is never mentioned. However, the story is somewhat contradictory in that the same fiddler plays throughout the evening, even when the French/Metis men are demonstrating dances that were described as unusual to the white guests. Did they dance to 'white' fiddle music? Did the fiddler know Metis tunes? While these are interesting questions, as a piece of fiction, the issue of accuracy is less important than the way in which the story constructs Indigenous /re-settler relations and what this tells us about white attitudes towards Indigenous people when the story was written/published.

The stark contrast between the athleticism, grace, and skill of the ethnically unmarked couple, the somewhat wild dances of the Frenchmen/half-breeds, and the “weird wails” of the ‘Indians’ is telling. It is clear that the exotic others are simply a thrilling diversion before returning to a *normal*, unmarked way of celebration. Thus, when Ronald and Mary become not the centre of attention but the centre of *attraction*, they become representatives of an ideal ‘civilized’ culture (cf., the civ/sav dichotomy described in LaRocque 2010, 37).

Ultimately, “A Daughter of the Ranch: A Story of Romance and Adventure of Western Pioneer Days” uses Metis/French and First Nations characters to pursue a white agenda of superiority. The story uses the ‘other’ to paint the white centre as generous (opening their home to ‘Indians’ and Metis/Frenchmen) and willing to embrace difference (e.g., learning the ‘Indian’ language and showing interest in the French/half-breed dances). At the same time, the story maintains a stark contrast between the refined degree of civilization possessed by the white characters, but not by the Indigenous and Metis/French others. There is no question of who is at the centre of the story, ‘tolerating’ the ‘Indians’ and Metis/Frenchmen. Although the guests are enthralled by the ‘exotic’ performances, the exotic otherness is contained through the fictional genre and through the historical setting, and thus does not pose a threat to contemporary life. In this way, the ‘other’ serves to create a thrilling past for white re-settlers, while maintaining a safe distance from their difference. As a white construction of the imaginary Indian (Francis 1992), this story is a carefully planned representation that benefits the mainstream.

Metis Fiddling and the Thrilling Past, 1900–1940

The above sets the stage for a more detailed discussion of re-settler representations of Metis fiddling in the first half of the twentieth century. McLeod's story, along with the quotes that started this section, suggests that Metis people were known for their love of fiddling (and dancing); yet representations of Metis fiddlers were problematic. In the cases cited above, descriptions of Metis fiddlers are set in the past, and do not refer to real, or specific Metis fiddlers. This is, in fact, usual during the first half of the twentieth century, with newspaper articles using the term old-time or just fiddling to refer to contemporary fiddlers or events.⁸³ Ethnic origins of fiddlers are rarely mentioned and, if they are mentioned, the fiddler or style is almost always tied to Scottish origins. There was, however, some interest (in particular during the 1930s and 1940s) in the origins of the "Red River Jig" (discussed below) which is described as an important, locally-specific tune; but, even when the origins are debated and include mention of Metis people, the setting (i.e., early re-settler life) denies any connections to contemporary Metis practice.

Several examples of fiddling as ethnically unmarked are found in local newspapers from the 1920s and 1930s. For example, an article about the Rockwood and District Old Timers celebration reunion and dance indicates that the Stonewall Orchestra would be providing music for all the old-time dances, and that a Mr. Pruden would be fiddling for the "Red River Jig" ("Local and General" 1924). A few years later, an article in the *Manitoba Free Press* describes a dance and dinner held at the Royal Alexandra hotel in Winnipeg, noting that 250 members of the old-timers association of Manitoba were in attendance, and

⁸³ The only exception that I found was an article that mentions "John Bollie, a Metis fiddler and an adept, when it comes to scratching off the old-time tunes—Red river jigs and reels" ("Col. Harry Mullins" 1919).

that the dance numbers included a barn dance, the highland schottische, the rye waltz, a three step, and the “Red River Jig” (“Pioneers Cavort” 1929). The following year, an article describing the same event emphasized the pioneer/old-time flavour: “pioneers of Manitoba will once again perform the Red River jig, and the favorite square dances of bygone days...as it was done forty or fifty years ago” (“Old-Timers Will Gather” 1930). While these articles tie fiddling, and the “Red River Jig,” to a time past, they do not refer to specific ethnicities; rather, they refer to an unmarked ‘old-time’ (i.e., from long ago) style of fiddling, albeit a locally specific style.

An interesting contrast is created when the above is compared to an article that details an annual gathering of the Lord Selkirk Association of Rupert’s Land in Rivers, Manitoba (“Re-Union in Honor” 1935). The article begins with a discussion of Highland Scottish emigration to Manitoba 125 years ago (1810). The article paints a romantic picture of the day when Scottish re-settlers left their homeland, noting that the strains of “The Road to the Isles” were sung out on a fiddle as they boarded a ship for Canada. However, the article soon shifts its focus to discuss the “Red River Jig,” which is referred to as a favourite of those at the gathering:

Old hearts and feet lightened to the old-time music, and when the famous Red River Jig was called soon after, the old people went into the intricate steps with a will. Couple after couple performed the jig, with others cutting in and giving the fiddler no rest for almost half an hour. (“Re-Union in Honor” 1935)

The article thus begins with a discussion of a specifically Scottish tune, a tune that the Scottish emigrants look back on with fondness, remembering all that they left behind in the old country. Yet the emphasis placed on the “Red River Jig” is a particularly interesting inclusion that can, arguably, be read in at least two ways: it can be understood as an

affirmation of the Scottish-Canadian origins of the tune; or it can be seen as affirming the movement from being Scottish to being Manitoban, as a symbol of the true Manitoban-ness of the re-settlers who are now partaking to the fullest extent in Manitoban culture.

Articles printed in the 1930s and 40s indicate that the origins of the “Red River Jig” were of interest to readers. For example, a letter to the editor penned by a Mr. Thomas Johnston discusses the “doubt and argument concerning the origin of the Red River Jig” (1933). Wanting to add his own story to the mix, Johnston describes learning to play the “Red River Jig” from his uncle, who had learned it from his father (i.e., Johnston’s grandfather), who was an early Scottish re-settler. Johnston’s uncle often played the tune since it was, as he writes in his letter, “one of the principal dances at the time” (Johnston 1933).⁸⁴ Thomas Johnston concludes that the tune “must have had its birth at least eighty years ago in Manitoba, in the Red River settlement” (ibid.). A second example that points to public interest in the “Red River Jig” makes the Scottish origins more explicit, stating that the tune originated from a hornpipe that early Scottish settlers changed into ‘jig’ time. The same article notes that the tune was recorded by Bob Goulet’s old-time fiddle orchestra, and that, subsequently, the version played for the recording was recognized as the original by the Old-Timer’s association of Winnipeg (“Radio Flashes” 1933).

While a connection to Scottish immigrants was certainly a significant part of the mainstream understanding of the tune’s origins during the first half of the twentieth century, an article published in 1943 provides an interesting contrast to the articles

⁸⁴ The letter Johnston wrote also indicates that the tune had been written out by his daughter in 1925 for a “well-known violin player...who still plays it from CKY” and that Andrew Mulligan had also transcribed the tune. Andrew Mulligan copyrighted two versions of the “Red River Jig” on 9 June 1931. The first, as suggested in the letter to the editor, was by “Thomas Johnstone” with transposition by W. E. Delaney and the second by Frederick Genthon (Library of Congress 1931, 18177 pt. III. n.s., v.26).

explored above. In this alternate version of the tune's origins, the "Red River Jig" is described as a tune that emerged "when the settlers came to Canada, and the Indians and half breeds attempted to duplicate the sound of the bagpipes on their fiddles" ("Manitoban's Gather" 1943, 17). Although this version, like those above, potentially connects the tune to Scottish re-settlers (though not explicitly), it also highlights, unlike the previous stories, an Indigenous contribution to the creation of the tune. This version, then, acknowledges a true blending of cultures and can thus be understood as a true Red River origin story.⁸⁵ Nonetheless, even when Indigenous contributions are recognized in the early twentieth century, contemporary Metis renderings of the tune are invisible; that is, these stories remain safely situated in the past and do not acknowledge contemporary performances of the tune by Indigenous fiddlers.

The invisibility of contemporary Metis fiddlers in the first half of the twentieth century was extended to the overall invisibility of all Indigenous people in mainstream newspapers. Yet an interesting exception, found in a newspaper article from the 1930s, makes it clear that Metis people were actively working to keep their history and culture alive despite being generally ignored by the mainstream.⁸⁶ Written by the librarian in charge of the provincial archives, "The Ill-Starred Louis Riel" describes a meeting of the Metis Historical Society at the Riel home in St. Vital (now part of Winnipeg). The author, having attended the meeting himself, noted that some of the people in attendance had

⁸⁵ This version is now generally accepted by Manitobans as the most accurate origin story. Roy Gibbons, however, argues that the tune has roots in Quebec (1980; 1981, 71–105).

⁸⁶ Metis scholar Duke Redbird notes that Metis people were able to once again assert themselves politically in the 1930s. Redbird suggests that this was a result of social reforms that emerged during the depression, reforms that were intended to help whites (who now had a sense of what it was like for the Metis) and that ultimately also benefited the Metis (1980, 27–28).

known Riel personally and now remembered him as “a romantic figure on a horse” (Healy 1936, 21).⁸⁷ Over the course of the meeting, the librarian accepted a copy of a book titled *History of the Metis Nation in Canada* (1936), which was to become part of the Legislative Library. The article further indicated that a copy of *The New Nation*, the newspaper published by the Riel government in 1870, was available at the provincial archives. “The Ill-Starred Louis Riel” is striking because it acknowledges contemporary Metis people (even if they are described as working to preserve the past) and because it makes the public aware of resources on Metis history written from a Metis perspective.

The above-described article, however, tells a second, equally important story. The author begins the article by noting that those who had gone to school in Ontario learned that Riel was “a scowling, dark-visaged, savage, bloody, murdering half-breed rebel” (Healy 1936, 21). The declaration that this representation was specific to *Ontario* suggests, of course, that this was not being taught in Manitoba, nor generally accepted by Manitobans.⁸⁸ The reader is left with the image of Riel as a “romantic figure on a horse” (ibid.). Although it is hard to find fault with this positive (albeit rather vague) image of Riel, it is important to understand how and when positive representations are being used in mainstream media. Subtle as it may be in this particular case, Healy marks Manitoba’s difference from Ontario by contrasting the dark and savage image from *Ontario* with the positive image from *Manitoba*; in the process, he connects all of Manitoba, and all Manitobans, to the unique, rebellious, and exotic past embodied in this representation of a

⁸⁷ Healy wrote *Women of the Red River* (1923), a book based on the memories of women who lived in the Red River region in the late 1800s. Predictably, this book begins with the arrival of the first white woman.

⁸⁸ Healy seems to be a bit too generous here in his picture of mainstream Manitoba. As noted earlier, Metis people were painted as savage at the start of the century (see “Dumont and Riel” 1906 and “Passing of a Pioneer” 1924, 7) or at least as borderline ‘wild’ (e.g., see McLeod 1924).

Metis hero. (The theme of claiming Metis-ness as a unique marker of Manitoba's distinct identity becomes more evident in later years and is therefore further addressed in chapter six, which explores the addition of a Metis-style category at the Manitoba Open.)

The unusualness of the inclusion described above is particularly notable when compared with French/Metis newspapers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸⁹ Papers such as *Ouest Canadien* (see "Nouvelles Religieuses" 1889, 2), *Echo du Manitoba* (see "L'association Liberale Française" 1898, 2; "Les Droits des Metis" 1898, 2), *Le Manitoba* (see "Fete Patronale de L'Union Metisse" 1924, 4; "Metis et Canadiens Français" 1923, 4; and "Union Métisse de St-Vital" 1916, 4), *La Liberté* (see "L'Union Metisse" 1919, 2; "Union Metisse" 1916, 8), and *Libre Parole* (see "L'Union Metisse de Thibaultville" 1916, 1) point to the continued activity of Metis organizations, in particular *L'Union Nationale Metisse*, at least into the 1920s. Unfortunately, all of these newspapers, with the exception of *La Liberté*, discontinued publication by the mid-1920s.⁹⁰ This makes it difficult to determine how active Metis organizations were in the late 1920s and 1930s. Further research on articles included in *La Liberté*, Manitoba's only French newspaper published after the 1920s, would clarify the issue.⁹¹ Given that the *L'Union Nationale Metisse* has survived to this day, however, it is likely that French Metis were politically and culturally active throughout the twentieth century.

⁸⁹ These newspapers conflate Metis and French identities and, quite often, embrace a colonial worldview towards First Nations' cultures (e.g., see "Arrivee de Mgr Provencher a La Rivière-Rouge" 1918, 1–2).

⁹⁰ *Ouest Canadien* published for a few months in 1889, while *Echo du Manitoba* published its last issue in 1905. *Le Manitoba* ran from 1881–1925, and *Libre Parole* had a three-year run ending in 1919.

⁹¹ *La Liberté* is not available in digitized format post-1920. This makes it difficult to search for key words since the research is limited to perusing each newspaper on microfilm. Doing so would require a time commitment that is beyond the purview of this chapter. However, such research would greatly add to our knowledge of how widely acknowledged Metis activities were in the Franco-Manitoban/Metis community.

The newspaper articles surveyed for this section of the chapter indicate that the first half of the twentieth century was marked by mainstream ambivalence towards Metis and First Nations people and their musics. Positioned as the exotic other, and usually situated in the safety of a time long ago, Indigenous peoples served to create a unique and thrilling past for re-settlers. At the same time, by extending their ‘generosity’ to Metis and First Nations peoples, Manitobans could make themselves feel good about how they treated the other, as if they had lived a life paved with good intentions. Along the same vein (i.e., using the ‘other’ to benefit the mainstream), Indigenous peoples, and the Metis Nation in particular, were used to mark Manitoba’s unique heritage. For Metis fiddlers, this meant subtle and occasional mention in mainstream newspapers; but this certainly did not mean mention of Metis fiddlers actively participating in contemporary life. The contrast between mainstream papers and French/Metis papers, which reported extensively on Metis issues and cultural events, indicates that mainstream papers were simply not reporting on the lives of French/Metis people (or ‘other’ Metis). Mainstream newspapers were clearly unwilling to acknowledge a Metis presence, and even less willing to acknowledge a First Nations presence, unless it served to further a particular (white) agenda.

A Flourish of Dance to a Style of our Own: the 1940s and 1950s

Despite somewhat different origin stories, the above-cited articles identify the “Red River Jig” as uniquely Manitoban and, more precisely, of Red River genesis. Beginning in the 1940s and flourishing in the 1950s, mainstream newspapers reported on fiddling to an extent never seen before, emphasizing the unique style of fiddling found in the region. A particularly interesting reference to the Red River *style* as the region’s unique version of

old-time fiddling is found in a *Winnipeg Free Press* article from the early 1940s. The article that includes this reference focuses on an annual police fundraiser for “orphans, sick folks, old folks, and lonely folks” to be held in Winnipeg. The event was to include dancing in three ballrooms, one of which would favour “old time dancing for those who prefer the Red river style” (“Police Count” 1943). While this is the only newspaper that makes reference to the Red River style (among digitized papers) until the 1970s, it points to the beginnings of a new way of thinking about fiddling in Manitoba, that is, pointing to mainstream acknowledgement of Manitoba fiddling as unique.

Another article from the same period points to a similar idea by explicitly identifying the need to preserve Manitoba fiddling, although in this case not using the marker ‘Red River style’. The article reports on a fiddling and jigging contest recently held in Poplar Point, Manitoba (about eighty kilometers northwest of Winnipeg), noting that the hall was filled to capacity with fiddle and dance enthusiasts. It then indicates that,

Revival of this type of music and dancing of the early settlers day [sic] is finding great favor with the public and the people of Poplar Point are to be congratulated in their efforts in keeping alive a culture peculiar to early Manitoba history. (“Poplar Point” 1946, 5)

This article points to how fiddling was seen, at the time, as an important part of Manitoba’s distinct (mainstream) culture. While the popularity of fiddling grew in the 1940s (at least as reflected in newspapers), the resurgence bore fruit in the 1950s when newspapers were filled with details about a thriving (mainstream) fiddle scene.

A search of digitized newspapers from the 1950s uncovers a total of seventy-one references to fiddling printed in local papers. (Although this number may seem small, especially to those coming from regions with a denser population, there were just twenty-

five references to fiddling in the 1940s, nineteen in the 1930s, and seventeen in the previous three decades combined.) This surge in interest can be linked in part to the popularity of the Manitoba Championship Old Time Fiddling Contest and its junior counterpart and the reportage of the *Manitoba Leader* (a paper published out of Portage la Prairie, Manitoba): eighteen of the references from the 1950s are about the Manitoba Championships, whether offering details about the up-coming competition, or providing readers with the competition results; and ten are references to the Manitoba Junior Championships. (See chapter six for further discussion of the Manitoba Championships.) Nonetheless, forty-three references (about the same number as the 1930s and 1940s combined) are not connected to this particular competition. Articles indicate that contests were sometimes stand-alone events, but also took place at picnics, at fairs, before old-time and 'modern' dances (as referred to in newspapers), and even on the radio. Fiddling was, furthermore, often part of cultural and pioneer celebrations.⁹²

The number of references to the "Red River Jig" also reached a peak in the 1950s, with most of the fourteen references to jigging coming from performances at the Manitoba Championships. (In contrast, there were nine references to jigging in the 1940s and just one to five in the preceding decades.) Fiddle and jigging champion Jellicoe Lafreniere jiggled at the Championships for several years, creating what were always described as crowd-

⁹² For example, see "Griswold Pow Wow" 1959, 2; "Red River Exhibition" 1959, 10; "Trappers' Festival" 1958, 13; "Red River Families" 1955, 4; "Local and General" 1953, 1; "Selkirk Fair" 1953, 6; "Albert Cooper" 1951, 6; "CKSB ad" 1951; "Entertainers are Lined Up" 1951, 7; "Oakville Dance" 1951, 8; "Old Timers Will Vie" 1951; "Argyle Legion" 1950, 5; "Marquette" 1950; and "Oakville Plans" 1950, 8.

pleasing performances.⁹³ Since the competition was focused on crowning a fiddle champion, the inclusion of the “Red River Jig” marked its importance in the Manitoba fiddle scene; given the large audience, the competition brought the “Red River Jig” to a significant number of Manitobans.⁹⁴ Although references to the dance were most commonly connected to the Championships, other venues also featured the dance. For example, there were Red River jigging competitions; jigging was part of the entertainment at fiddle contests other than the Championships; and the “Red River Jig” was danced as part of pioneer and heritage celebrations.⁹⁵ These are, again, just a sample of some of the articles that discuss performances of the dance, yet they provide ample evidence that mainstream recognition of the “Red River Jig” was at an all-time high in the 1950s. The popularity of the fiddle and the jig in so many venues during the 1950s laid the foundation for what would soon be more widely referred to as the Red River Style, Manitoba’s unique, regional fiddle style.

Separate Spaces, Hidden Identities: Indigenous Fiddling in the 1950s

Articles from the 1950s typically did not mention Indigenous fiddling, nor did they name ‘mainstream’ fiddlers as Indigenous; and when fiddling in Indigenous spaces was

⁹³ See, e.g., “Winnipeg’s Andy” 1952, 37; “Keeps Promise” 1951, 6; “Manitoba Fiddling Contest” 1951, 1; and “Manitoba Championship” 1949, 6. Lafreniere also jiggged at a contest in Oakville, Manitoba, in 1950 (“Oakville Plans” 1950, 8), and on television in 1960 (“Portagers Make Debut” 1960, 1).

⁹⁴ The Manitoba Championship drew an exceptionally large crowd, from one thousand to three thousand audience members during its peak years, marking the significance of fiddling to Manitobans at the time. In September of 1949, the audience is cited as peaking at 3000 (“Portage Musician Wins” 1949, 7). This is a significant number given that the population of Portage la Prairie would have been circa 8500. The general trend was a decreased audience as the decade proceeded, in some cases, perhaps due to late harvest (“Manitou Fiddler Wins” 1956, 13). The contest had significant financial troubles in 1956 (“Curlers Hold” 1956, 13), but seems to have recovered for a few years afterwards, with, for example, about one thousand one hundred people in attendance the following year (“Lacroix Wins” 1957, 8). The current Manitoba Championships draw about one hundred and fifty audience members (field notes 24/09/2011).

⁹⁵ E.g., see “St. Boniface Jubilee” 1958, 14; “Birds Hill” 1955, 1; “Red River Families” 1955, 4; “Fine Weather” 1953, 2; “Entertainers are Lined Up” 1951, 7; “Old Timers Will Vie” 1951; and “Argyle Legion” 1950, 5.

discussed (e.g., on reserves), no attempt was made to distinguish between the style performed by mainstream fiddlers and Indigenous fiddlers. One such article was printed in a column titled “Party Line” (Childe 1951, 3). The author recalls an event that he took part in fourteen years earlier when he accompanied a reporter, who was investigating a drowning, to a reserve. While the reporter and author waited for the body to be retrieved, the women of Scanterbury, Manitoba (Brokenhead Ojibwe Reserve) asked the chief to invite the guests into a large house, where the “squaws and young boys and girls started up antics” for the entertainment of the guests (ibid.). Soon, the women and children had convinced an “old grandpa” to pull out his fiddle and play some tunes. The elder began to play “Red River jigs” and everyone, except the guests, began dancing, “calling to one another in Cree”⁹⁶ even for the square dances (ibid.). The blatant sexism and racism of this story—and what’s printed here is just a small part of the racist and sexist story—makes the details questionable;⁹⁷ nonetheless, the story did acknowledge, in a mainstream newspaper, the importance of the fiddle in an Indigenous community.

A second article, printed in the late 1950s, similarly acknowledges the importance of fiddling on a Manitoba reserve, this time without the overt racism and sexism. The brief article, printed in the *Brandon Daily Sun*, provides details on an up-coming powwow and “Indian celebration” to be held on the Oak River Indian Reserve (now known as the Sioux Valley Dakota Nation) near Griswold, Manitoba (about fifty kilometers west of Brandon,

⁹⁶ Scanterbury is on an Ojibwe reserve. The author’s lack of attention to their national identity points to the way in which First Nations are often seen as interchangeable.

⁹⁷ The women had to ask the chief to invite the men into the home. They are then grouped with the children, performing antics to entertain the white men. Indigenous women are thus presented as child-like in disposition and frivolous, without any real power in the community. These stereotypes are common in popular representations of Indigenous women and should be understood in the context of the Western idea that Indigenous women are unimportant (Bird 2008).

Manitoba, or 275 kilometers west of Winnipeg, Manitoba). This four-day event was first held in 1949,⁹⁸ and the year that the article was published, it was set to include “parades, pow-wows, fiddle dances, and races and games for children” (“Griswold Pow Wow” 1959, 2). The line-up also included what is referred to as a pow-wow contest with prizes for the best dancers and best fiddlers. While it is not clear what this celebration would have looked like, and it now seems unusual that a fiddle contest was integrated into a pow-wow, the article demonstrates, once again in a public forum, the importance of fiddling on reserves. Interestingly, as is the case in the article focused on Brokenhead First Nation, it does not distinguish between fiddling on reserves and mainstream fiddling. (However, tensions between re-settlers and First Nations are mentioned on the same page in an article about a Cree lawyer’s view on the treaties and in a second article discussing the power of Indian agents to over-rule band decisions. This focus on the tense relationship between nations makes the lack of emphasis on difference in the context of fiddling particularly interesting.)

The above-cited articles point to separate spaces (i.e., reserves) acknowledged by the mainstream for Indigenous fiddling in the 1950s. At the same time, newspapers began connecting the fiddle to less segregated Metis spaces (although typically still delineated from the mainstream) and even to traditional Metis practices (but not a Metis style). For example, an article published in the *Winnipeg Free Press* described a two-day annual event, then in its fiftieth year, that brought together 300 Metis people for a celebration at Louis Riel’s family home in St. Vital, Winnipeg. Sunday afternoon events included Red

⁹⁸ There were severe restrictions on all Indigenous ceremonies and dancing between 1885 and 1951 (Hall 2009, 223), but these practices continued underground (e.g., see Dickason 1992, 326) or sometimes in the open, depending on the whims of government officials (see Pettipas 1994, 146–166 for a discussion of the uneven way in which dancing was sometimes allowed and at other times not allowed).

River Jig, square dance, and old-time fiddling competitions (“Red River Families” 1955, 4). A second article, this time in the *Springfield Leader*, described an exhibit at the Saskatchewan House Summer Festival that was slated to include the fiddle that belonged to Louis Riel (“Festival Exhibitions” 1959, 7). A later article in the same newspaper noted that the fiddle was played by the director of the Regina Conservatory, thereby giving the instrument both status and legitimacy (“Louis Riel’s Fiddle” 1959, 4). While the latter two articles described the fiddle in mainstream contexts, the articles were ultimately about the “rebellion” and Riel, not the Metis as a contemporary nation; in contrast, the first article, set in a space delineated from the mainstream, linked Metis people with fiddling in a contemporary context as a still-lived practice.

Mainstream newspaper articles from the 1950s show the beginnings of a very subtle shift in representations of Indigenous fiddlers; that is, some mainstream articles pointed to fiddling as a traditional and contemporary Indigenous practice, albeit generally relegated to distinct spaces. However, this subtle shift did not mean that Metis or First Nations fiddlers could take part in mainstream events *and* make their identity as Indigenous people known to the mainstream public—or, at the very least, the mainstream press would not relay that information to their readership. This is particularly evident in an article that described Andy Dejarlis, the 1952 winner of the Manitoba Championships (discussed briefly above and in chapter six). Already a well-known fiddler in Manitoba and elsewhere when he was crowned champion, the newspaper article described Dejarlis as a “quiet, unassuming French Canadian” (“Des Jarlis Top Fiddler” 1952, 6). Although Dejarlis was at least somewhat open about his identity as a Metis man (Watson 2002, 48) and his Metis heritage

is now recognized by both Indigenous and re-settler Manitobans, mainstream Manitoba, with its flourishing 1950s fiddle scene, was clearly not willing to celebrate a *Metis* fiddler (acknowledged as such) as Manitoba's fiddle champion. The erasure of his identity in the mainstream press leads one to question how many other fiddlers at the time were, in fact, Metis or First Nations but not acknowledged as such in re-settler discourse.

Indigenous Fiddling Comes to the Forefront, 1960–1990

The subtle shift in representations that occurred in the 1950s was followed by a much more significant change in the 1960s as newspaper articles on, or advertisements for, Indigenous events both on- and off-reserve became more common. This is especially true by the start of the 1980s with the proliferation of newspaper articles reporting on numerous Indigenous cultural events, many of which included fiddling, across the province.⁹⁹ Fiddling and jigging were, furthermore, now quite often referred to as *traditional* Indigenous arts (i.e., not just something Indigenous people might do). This shift in representation is undoubtedly due in part to the work of Indigenous organizations that began putting on independent events and sponsoring 'Indian' components during mainstream events. (For example, compare "Indian Pageantry" [1970, 84], which describes a "day of Indian dance, pageantry and sports" organized as part of Thompson's Nickel

⁹⁹These include St. Vital's Metis Days celebration (St. Vital, Manitoba), Dakota Ojibway Tribal Council's Winter Tribal Days (Brandon, Manitoba), Native Pride Days (Selkirk, Manitoba), and Opasquia Indian Days (The Pas, Manitoba) among others. For more information on articles and ads that refer to Indigenous fiddling and/or jigging see "Opasquia Indian Day" 1987, n.p.; "Tribal Days Celebration" 1986, 3; Lindell 1984, 13; "Native Pride Day Ad" 1982b, 25; "Dakota Ojibway Ad" 1981, 11; "Metis Days Ad" 1980, 20; "Flin Flon" 1975, 10; "Old Time Picnic" 1975, 3; "Winter Festival Ad" 1975, 2; Connelly 1971, 8; "Cabaret Ad" 1971, 4; "Indian Pageantry" 1970, 84; "Indians Plan" 1969, 9; "Indians Plan" 1969, 9; Lowery 1969, 52; "Fort Alexander Ad" 1968, 9; "When It's Trout Festival" 1968; "Fort Alexander" 1967, 1.

Days celebration by the Thompson Indian-Metis Federation, with “Cabaret Ad” [1971, 4], an ad for a cabaret organized by the Manitoba Metis Federation.)

Native Pride Days is a particularly interesting example of both the changing relationship between re-settler and Indigenous Manitoba and the active approach Indigenous organizations were taking to promote change. An article in the *Brandon Sun* cites an organizer of the event (a director of the Selkirk Friendship Centre) noting that, in the past, cultural events such as these were held on reserves. This organizer states that, by holding the event off-reserve, the organizers hoped to bring Indigenous culture to the dominant culture (“Native Pride Days” 1982, 13).¹⁰⁰ The event is particularly interesting for the purposes of this chapter because of its structure: it was divided into a “Red River Hoedown” and a “Great Peoples’ Pow-Wow” (“Native Pride Days Ad” 1982, 15). The hoedown featured fiddling and jigging competitions, with Reg Bouvette performing “Canadian Fiddling” (ibid.). In other words, half of the event featured (primarily) fiddling and jigging and a Metis fiddler (i.e., Bouvette) who was very popular in the old-time scene. The structure of the event also created a connection, on the one hand, to Indigeneity, and, on the other, to the Red River region and Manitoba-style (or even Canadian) fiddling.

Although the number of references to Indigenous fiddling had grown to an unparalleled level, Indigenous fiddling was still historicized in a way not done with

¹⁰⁰ However, the article sanitizes the realities of Indigenous/re-settler relations. For example, it notes that a large percentage of Selkirk’s residents “are direct descendants of the great Chief Peguis who, over 100 years ago, extended his friendship and generosity to a struggling group of settlers. Their survival and ultimately the establishment of the town of Selkirk can partly be credited to the hospitality of this remarkable Indian whose memory is honoured annually by Indian and non-Indian alike” (“Native Pride Days” 1982, 13). What this does not tell readers is that the Peguis reserve (known as the St. Peter’s reserve at the time) was originally located in Selkirk, but was moved in 1907 almost two hundred kilometers north in order to open up land for white re-settlers.

mainstream fiddling. This historicization is perhaps most strikingly exemplified in an article that discussed the Centennial Caravan, a travelling exhibit created by the provincial government as part of Manitoba's centennial celebrations. The exhibit was being hauled across the province, covering 2400 miles of roadway, so that an expected half a million Manitobans (about fifty percent of the population) could view the display. Interested visitors would be able to view five, forty-five foot trailers "containing the colorful panorama of Manitoba's history" (Lowery 1970, 10). All the trailers were supposed to contain authentic artifacts, from Cree drums and "Eskimo chants," to Metis fiddle music that had been collected in the Red River region, to Paul Kane oil paintings. The exhibit notably linked fiddling to Metis culture, as was done early in the century; yet it also relegated Indigenous peoples to the past through the compartmentalization of history, covering five phases of Manitoba's history: pre-confederation (i.e., the Indigenous period), 1869–70 (the Metis period), a hundred years of progress (re-settlement), Manitoba today, and the future (left to the imagination of visitors). Considered in this way, the increased reportage on Indigenous events can be interpreted as part of the older trend of using 'Indian' imagery to create a unique identity for all Canadians. As stated in a newspaper article describing the 1967 Fort Alexander Reserve Treaty and Field days, "Why not make it a point to go and see Manitoba's Indians in action!" ("Fort Alexander Plans" 1967, 1). *Manitoba's* Indians, it seems, still served as fodder to create a thrilling, exotic history.

Interestingly, representations of the "Red River Jig" from this era point to both the desire to use Indigenous people—and Metis people in particular—to create Manitoba's unique difference (from the rest of Canada), while also acknowledging, for the first time,

the Metis-ness of the dance and tune. The first mention (since the early 1900s) of the “Red River Jig” as Metis is from an article printed in 1977 about Marcel Collet, a local filmmaker who was putting together a documentary, titled *Echos de la Rivere Rouge*, on fiddlers at the Festival du Voyageur. The article describes the style of fiddling as the “Red River style” and notes that it “generates a Red River style of jigging, done by the Metis” (Nudell 1977). The article, however, situates the style as a Manitoban style, noting that it is a “uniquely Manitoban phenomenon” (ibid.). Another article, this time advertising the Clearspring Village fiddling and jigging contest (1984), indicates that jiggers could only use Andy Dejarlis music as accompaniment;¹⁰¹ although Dejarlis was not necessarily always acknowledged as Metis, delimiting the accompaniment to his music creates a strict tie between the dance and a fiddler from Manitoba. Two years later, an article describing the upcoming 11th annual Old-Time Fiddlers’ contest, to be held at the Peace Garden (on the Manitoba/North Dakota border) in conjunction with a one-day “Red River Jig” workshop, described the tune and dance as Metis (“Old Time Fiddlers” 1986, 8). This is an interesting development because, even with the flourish of jigging in the 1940s and 1950s, the idea that the “Red River Jig,” or even the Red River style of fiddling, was a Metis cultural practice (not just a practice that had *originally* developed when First Nations and Metis fiddlers and dancers overheard Scottish bagpipes) had not been made explicit in mainstream newspapers since the early twentieth century.

Although events that included Metis or First Nations *fiddling* are mentioned more and more often beginning in the 1960s, articles from this era most often do not mention the

¹⁰¹ There is no indication of what this meant, that is whether the fiddler had to play Dejarlis’ version of the Red River jig, or if jiggers had to dance to one of Dejarlis’ recordings.

Indigenous identities of *fiddlers*. For example, the *Stonewall Argus and Teulon Times* included a short announcement noting that Cliff Maytwayashing had released a new cassette; his identity as Anishinaabe is not mentioned, and, instead of referring to the music as Metis or Indigenous fiddling, the author notes that “if you like *that style* of music, it is good” (emphasis added, Lindell 1984, 13).¹⁰² The same year, the *Steinbach Carillon* included an advertisement for a film titled “Old Tyme Fiddling” that featured, among others, Alex Carrière (“Rendezvous Ad” 1984, 14A); the article does not mention that Carrière is Metis. The following year, the *Gazette* (Baldur, Manitoba) printed an article about an up-coming fiddle contest put on by the Canadian Foresters that was to feature “Manitoba’s top fiddler Mel Bedard” (“Old Time Fiddling” 1985, 1). Interestingly, there is no mention of Bedard as Metis even though he had recently released an album considered the first to use the term ‘Metis’ (Bedard 1984). Finally (although many more examples could be included), Reg Bouvette, a well-known fiddler in the old-time scene at the time, was rarely ever referred to as Metis, although in an article from the late 1980s he was said to have been born into a Metis family (Campbell 1988). Although mainstream papers were acknowledging Metis and Indigenous fiddling between the 1960s and 1980s, there was a continued reluctance to openly acknowledge the Indigenous identity of specific fiddlers.¹⁰³

While representations of Indigenous fiddlers remained somewhat problematic into the 1980s, a discussion focused on the representation of Metis musicians had begun; this can be seen as a stepping stone for the openness that followed in the 1990s and, especially,

¹⁰² The following year, the same paper included an advertisement noting that Maytwayashing would be the fiddler for the jigging contest in Lundar, Manitoba. Once again, the article does not include any reference to his Indigeneity (“Lundar Hotel Ad” 1985, 11).

¹⁰³ Of course, some fiddlers may have been reluctant to identify as Indigenous due to racism.

the 2000s. This is evident in an article printed in the *Winnipeg Free Press* detailing claims from some Metis performers that they were being underrepresented at the Festival du Voyageur. Performer Ed Desjarlais is quoted, in fact, as saying that he thinks Metis are “being treated very unfairly” (Thompson 1986). Desjarlais notes that the Metis are direct descendants of the voyageurs, the people the festival is intended to celebrate, and that it is important not to let imported talent take the place of local talent (ibid.). Louis Paquin responds to Desjarlais’ comment in the same article arguing that there has been significant Metis participation, noting that Reg Bouvette performed last year but could not this year due to illness and that “[m]ost of the fiddling and jigging contestants were Metis” (ibid.) Paquin further notes that, while the festival does not have a policy regarding the inclusion of Metis acts, the role of both Native and Metis musicians “has been given more thought recently” and that, as policy, they must “have a certain amount of cultural exchange between Quebec and Manitoba each year” (ibid.). As the 1980s came to a close, mainstream newspapers were acknowledging the significant presence of Indigenous peoples and the significant work being done by Indigenous organizations; they were also beginning to engage with issues related to identity. A conversation had begun.

From the 20th to the 21st Centuries: Metis Fiddling in the Mainstream

The closing decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century saw increasing recognition of Metis culture within mainstream Manitoba as Metis people became more open about their identities. More and more locals of the Manitoba Metis Federation began organizing regional celebrations of Metis culture, drawing large

crowds;¹⁰⁴ and, most important for the issues explored here, mainstream newspapers covered these Metis-specific events, making the re-settler public more aware of this cultural renaissance.¹⁰⁵ Newspaper articles sometimes focused on how a particular gathering was a way to ensure the preservation of Metis culture. For example, an article describing St. Laurent, Manitoba's upcoming Metis Days noted that the celebration gives children the opportunity to learn about the ways of the past and ensures that Metis cultural practices will not be forgotten (Goranson 1990, 24). Other articles describe the importance of these events in expressing and restoring pride in Metis culture (Villeneuve 2006, 7). These articles made the non-Indigenous public aware that Metis culture was alive; that Metis people were working to rejuvenate their traditions; that Metis people were teaching their traditions to their children; and that Metis people were moving from the deep shame that had been imposed on them post-1885 to renewed pride in their culture.

Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, jigging and fiddling took a central place in newspaper articles describing Metis cultural events. The articles that mention Metis fiddling and jigging are too numerous to describe in detail or even list here. However, as a sample, these include articles on St. Laurent's Metis Day celebration ("Metis Days: A Celebration" 1990); a fiddle contest sponsored by the Manitoba Metis Federation during the Manitoba Indigenous Summer Games (Jones 2002, B1); the annual Assembly of Metis People ("Metis Welcomed" 2005); a Metis Heritage Day in Woodridge, Manitoba,

¹⁰⁴ Over one thousand people took part in St. Laurent's Metis Day celebration in 1990 ("Metis Days: A Celebration" 1990, 23), and about one thousand people took part in the first day of Metisfest in 2009, with a predicted three thousand participants by the end of the weekend (Austin 2009, A2).

¹⁰⁵ For examples of newspaper articles and advertisements that covered events put on by Manitoba Metis Federation locals see Villeneuve (2008, A3; 2006b, 7); Dowd (2008, A3); "Red River Metis Days Ad" (2005, 10); and Vivian 2002, A3.

sponsored by several Manitoba Metis Federation locals (Lachnit 2006, 11A); a jigging and square dance festival organized by the Asham Stompers, a popular local dance troupe (Jackman 2007, 2); fiddling and jigging performances, and a jigging and fiddling contest, at Metisville in Boissevain (Villeneuve 2008, 19), and, the following year, at the International Peace Garden (Austin 2009, A2); and a rendezvous organized by the southwest local of the Manitoba Metis Federation (“Metis Honour” 2008). The number of events organized in the 1990s and 2000s point to the hard work being done by Metis organizations; they also point to the attention paid to Indigenous fiddling and jigging, now usually understood as a Metis, not First Nations, practice by the dominant culture.

Mainstream recognition of Metis fiddling was most notable in the context of an increase in the number of Metis performers, usually fiddlers or jiggers, seen at non-Metis events, or in venues that were not specifically Metis.¹⁰⁶ Community-wide celebrations often included a Metis component, such as the Richer Raspberry Festival which featured a fiddle contest sponsored by the Manitoba Metis Federation, Richer Local (Richard 1994, 13B); the Manitoba Catfish Festival which featured the Mel Bedard Classic Metis fiddling championships (“Festivals and Fairs” 2000); and Canada day celebrations that included Metis fiddling and jigging (Clemens 1997, 7C; “Canada Day” 1997). Metis fiddling was also included at events in public schools (Lemieux 2005), and on a program featuring the revitalization of Metis fiddling aired by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in

¹⁰⁶ As indicated earlier, this trend began in the 1970s with the growth of interest in multiculturalism. However, the inclusion of Metis fiddlers and jiggers grew to a never-before-seen extent in the 1990s and, especially, the 2000s.

the late 1990s (Auch 1997, 7B).¹⁰⁷ The annual Festival du Voyageur also started listing artists who professed to perform not just old-time fiddling, but Metis (style) fiddling. For example, in a schedule advertising the performers set to take the stage at the Festival du Voyageur (an annual, winter festival celebrating voyageur culture) in 2002, the Frontier Fiddlers are described as a group of “[y]oung, Métis fiddlers from northern communities” who “join on stage to play great Metis fiddle music” (“Festival du Voyageur” 2002).¹⁰⁸

Perhaps more striking, however, is that non-Metis (re-settler) Manitobans were now professing to play Metis (style) fiddling. An article about the “Forty Fiddling Fanatics” (led by Cameron Baggins, a fiddler who later became a leading figure in the Frontier School Division’s fiddle program) points to this change. The article begins by presenting traditional fiddling as something to do in addition to classical study, noting that the “Forty Fiddling Fanatics,” a group of youth ages nine to thirteen, “enjoy letting down their hair from their traditional diet of Beethoven and Mozart” (Walker 1998, 5). In contrast to the advertisement for the Frontier Fiddlers’ performance noted above, this article does not indicate how many, or if any, of the youth are Indigenous, although it does note that one of the children is Mennonite; yet the article indicates that the group plays Metis, French-Canadian, and old-time dance tunes, and is, in fact, able to switch between styles. As one student is quoted saying, “[w]e take off our sashes and put on our tartan hats” (ibid.). An advertisement for the group’s performance at the Festival du Voyageur in 2001 further confirms this ability to switch between styles, indicating that they would be performing

¹⁰⁷ While the newspaper article states that the show featured Andy Dejarlis (who passed away in 1975), all mentions of the show that I have found online indicate that it featured Calvin Vollrath (who is not Metis, but plays some traditional Metis tunes) and Metis fiddler John Arcand.

¹⁰⁸ Dueck discusses a performance by the Frontier Fiddlers at the Festival du Voyageur (2007).

both French Canadian and Metis fiddle music (“Artistes/Performers” 2001).¹⁰⁹ These examples highlight the interest in the Metis style among Metis and re-settler fiddlers across Manitoba. Being Metis, or performing Metis music, was no longer positioned as a site of shame, but, rather, a style that anyone could choose to perform.

Sierra Noble can also be credited with expanding awareness of Metis fiddling in Manitoba. Noble began making the news in 2004 when she was fourteen and was soon taking part in numerous events in Winnipeg and elsewhere, including performances at Metis gatherings and a performance at Vimy Ridge, France, in 2007.¹¹⁰ Although she turned to singing and song-writing after her first album (2005), Noble remains a name that many Winnipeggers (and Manitobans) associate with Metis fiddling, even as Noble has moved away from a Metis focus. In fact, her website currently does not even mention that she plays, or played, Metis-style fiddling, listing, instead, her ability to move from Celtic to bluegrass to ‘other’ styles of fiddling.¹¹¹ This may be in part due to the controversy about a non-Metis woman (according to many people in the old-time and Metis fiddle scenes) representing Metis music, and even, to some extent, passing as Metis (field notes 12/10/2011). Yet the impact she had—albeit a somewhat controversial impact—was significant; in many ways, she brought Metis fiddling to a wider public than ever before. (For example, when I tell people outside of the fiddle community about my field of

¹⁰⁹ Two additional groups are listed as Metis in the 2001 Festival du Voyageur program. The “Ka-Wanni-Beck Eagles” are listed as performing Metis-style fiddle music, and the “Coyote Fiddlers” are listed as Metis fiddlers (“Artistes/Performers” 2001).

¹¹⁰ For examples of early references to Noble see “Cultural Connection” (2004) and Fostey (2004, 14A). For examples of her performances at Metis gatherings see Villeneuve (2008, 19; 2006, 7), “Metis Welcomed” (2005, 14A), and “Turtle Mountain” (2005, 13). For additional examples of Noble performing in mainstream venues see Walker (2010), Penner (2006, 2A), Delaurier (2005, 1–2), and “Fancy Fiddling” (2005).

¹¹¹ Noble’s web address is <http://www.sierranoble.ca/main.html> (viewed 8 May 2012).

research, it almost always leads to, “Do you know Sierra Noble?” or “I remember hearing Sierra Noble when...”) Sierra Noble brought Metis fiddling to the forefront of mainstream discourse, created a sense that all Manitobans know *something* about Metis fiddling and that Metis fiddling belongs to Manitoba.

Yet this ‘something’ was often vague; while most articles did not define the style (although situating it as something *different*), those that did mentioned just one or two features of the style or focused on fiddlers who are known in the old-time community. One article printed in the *Winnipeg Free Press* simply referred to the “Red River” style as the Metis style (“A Good Appointment” 1993), while another article, an interview with Sierra Noble, included a slightly more specific mention of alternate tunings (Villeneuve 2006, 7). The most significant discussion of the Metis style, however, was from an article about Metis/Ojibwe fiddler Mel Bedard. This article pointed to the mixed French, Celtic, and Native (the terms used in the article) roots of the style, noting the importance of off-beats, which are linked to an Indigenous influence. The article then provides the following analysis: “The melodies in Red River jigs [meaning Metis tunes] are quite squirrely, running up and down the scales, with minor, sevenths and augmented chords thrown in” (“The Way We Live” 1998). The article mentions the presence of subtle asymmetry, with sections of fifteen, fifteen and a half, seventeen, or seventeen and a half bars; and it is noted that Dejarlis straightened out the tunes in order to play with people who had not grown up with the tradition of crooked tunes. The article concludes by pointing to the importance of Andy Dejarlis, Reg Bouvette, Mel Bedard, and Marcel Meilleur (all well-known in the old-time scene) in keeping the tradition alive (*ibid.*). While mainstream papers were trying to

define Metis fiddling, ultimately only the fiddlers who were well-known in the old-time scene were acknowledged as Metis (style) fiddlers.

Power and Privilege in a Colonized World

The first section of this chapter explored the history of Turtle Island, focusing on the power relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settlers; the second section pointed to the changing representations of Metis (style) fiddling as articulated in public discourse from the twentieth to twenty-first centuries. As suggested at the start of this chapter, the seemingly apolitical arena of musical traditions can be used to understand the power relationship between the dominant culture and an oppressed group. That is, the dominant culture's powerful hand extends into the musical life of oppressed groups through the politics of inclusion and exclusion; at the same time, oppressed groups can, and often do, use musical traditions (even those seen as assimilationist) to contest their subordinated position—as a means to defend their rights, regain their power, practise their traditions, and assert their identities. The final section of this chapter puts the changing, mainstream representations of Metis (style) fiddling into the context of the historical and contemporary power relations between Indigenous peoples and re-settlers. While the changes have been somewhat uneven, mainstream understandings of Metis fiddling have shifted, moving from understanding Metis fiddling as a style situated in the past to frequent acknowledgement of both contemporary Metis fiddlers and a Metis style of fiddling. What do the mainstream culture's changing definitions of Metis fiddling tell us about the relationship between Indigenous nations and re-settler Manitoba?

From the Distant Past to Recognition

At the start of the twentieth century, mainstream newspapers recognized fiddling, and especially the “Red River Jig,” as a prominent marker of Metis culture; yet, ‘progress’ (i.e., Westernization of what was now called Manitoba) was seen as contradictory to Metis musical practice. Real, contemporary Metis fiddlers were thus almost never mentioned in mainstream newspapers from the first half of the twentieth century; when mentioned, Metis fiddling served to exoticize the past, highlight supposed re-settler generosity towards the Indigenous other, and create a unique history for re-settlers. The massive influx of re-settlers at the end of the nineteenth and start of the twentieth centuries undoubtedly played a role in these representations: the Red River Metis nation and the Cree, Anishinaabe, Ojibwe, Dene, and Dakota nations were seen as remnants of a past that had no contemporary relevance to—in fact no contemporary existence within—the newly British/European-dominated province, except, perhaps, for the splash of colour Indigenous peoples added to re-settler history. These representations can also be tied to the related treaty process, which relegated First Nations to reserves, and to the defeat and subsequent dispersal and/or disappearance of the Metis into the mainstream. Given that annihilation or, at the very least, separation followed by attempts at forced assimilation (and the subsequent erasure of memories of Indigenous settlement on the re-settled land) was the colonial strategy for ‘dealing’ with the Indigenous population, the representations of Metis fiddlers as irrelevant to contemporary life, or as part of a dying/dead culture, are not surprising; in fact, these representations clearly served the agenda of re-settlement and Europeanization of central Turtle Island (i.e., the ‘other’ no longer exists).

The 1950s saw significant changes to the Indian Act, resulting in increased freedom of movement for Indigenous peoples. Re-settlers now had to ‘deal with’ the reality that Indigenous people were still around and were pushing to regain their rights. Given the particular context of the time, representations of Indigenous fiddling from the 1950s into the 1990s provide a complex site for analysis. As noted earlier, Indigenous fiddling was (largely) not acknowledged as different from mainstream fiddling during this period. This conflation of traditions can be understood as part of the larger belief that Indigenous people were being assimilated. Although some articles suggested that fiddling was an ‘authentic’ Indigenous tradition, they can be understood (given the prominent ideologies of the time) as marks of the ‘progress’ being made to assimilate Indigenous nations, and as part of a process to reject the presence of Indigenous traditions (since a unique fiddle tradition was not acknowledged). This is especially problematic given that Indigenous nations often have to prove continued traditional practice—that is, that they are “the same people as their ancestors were” (Lawrence 2004, 4)—in order for their rights to be honoured by the colonial governments. Reportage on fiddling can also be understood as a way to create a ‘safe’ space for the white re-settler; articles on Indigenous fiddling could have been a way to alleviate the fearful responses of the re-settler population to the movement of Indigenous peoples to urban areas and the (re)emergence of Indigenous organizations. At the same time, Metis and First Nations agency should not be overlooked; Indigenous organizations sometimes used cultural events as a means to develop more positive relationships with the re-settler population. For this reason, representations of fiddling in the second half of the twentieth century can be understood as serving both re-settler and Indigenous agendas.

Something to Call Our Own: Appropriating Metis Fiddling for All Manitobans

All in all, it looks like a big four days fast approaching at the Fort Alexander Indian Reserve. Why not make it a point to go and see Manitoba's Indians in action! ("Fort Alexander" 1967, 1).

While the work of Indigenous groups undoubtedly played an important role in the change that moved Indigenous fiddlers and fiddling from a position of invisibility to one of mainstream recognition, the inclusion of advertisements and articles focusing on Indigenous cultural events (in mainstream newspapers) is an important point of investigation; that is, Indigenous cultural events have always taken place, but mainstream newspapers have not always been interested in reporting on them. As noted earlier in the chapter, the 1960s and 70s saw increasing interest in the ethnic other as articulated and developed through the federal government's official policy of multiculturalism. This policy resulted in funding that "reward[ed] musical institutions in Canada for demonstrating their commitment to multiculturalism" (Robinson 2012, 244). (It is perhaps not a surprise, then, that Ukrainian fiddling is first mentioned in mainstream papers in the 1970s,¹¹² and, during this same period, there is an increase in articles reporting on events that featured 'multicultural' performances, such as brass and pipe bands performing alongside powwow and Ukrainian dancers.¹¹³) The increase in references to Indigenous events in public discourse should be seen, then, as a reflection of changing identity politics in Canada, that

¹¹² See "Ukrainian Festival" 1979, 21; "Ukrainian Violinist" 1974, 1; "Ad" 1971, 7; and "Tolstoi News" 1970, 2:11. A Ukrainian Festival with fiddling and tymbally contests was held in 1989 in Teulon, Manitoba (Morrison 1989:2).

¹¹³ See, e.g., Olson 1984, 9; "Morris Music Fest" 1980, 6A; "Ad" 1971, 7; "Wonderful Winter" 1974, 7; and "Lundar Is Home" 1971, 1.

is, a change in how the mainstream constructed and understood its identity using ‘ethnic’ others as an integral part of that identity.¹¹⁴

Yet Indigenous/re-settler relations should not be conflated with white/‘ethnic’ re-settler relations; the power relationship between Indigenous and re-settler Canadians is not the same as relations between ‘multicultural’ re-settler groups. Given the continued legacy of colonial/Indigenous relations, increased reportage on Indigenous events needs to also be understood in the context of the older trend of using ‘Indian’ imagery to create a thrilling past for all Canadians. As suggested in the above-quoted newspaper article describing the Fort Alexander Treaty and Field days, *Manitoba’s* ‘Indians’ served as fodder to create a thrilling and unique identity for all Manitobans/Canadians. ‘Allowing’ Indigenous fiddlers to come out (i.e., the inclusion of Indigenous fiddling and, sometimes, Indigenous fiddlers in mainstream newspaper articles) needs to be understood not only as a part of the newly implemented multicultural policies of the Canadian government, but, just as importantly, as part of a much longer colonial legacy in which ‘Indian’ imagery was appropriated to create a unique Canadian identity (see Francis 1992 for further discussion). This analysis is not meant to negate the work of Indigenous organizations; the cultural practices of Indigenous peoples have survived largely due to Indigenous nations’ resistance to assimilationist policies. Rather, this analysis recognizes that Indigenous fiddling was not acknowledged in mainstream discourse until doing so benefited re-settler Canada. Although Indigenous

¹¹⁴ Scholarly interest in fiddling (discussed in the introduction) should be understood as a reflection of a broader interest in the ‘mosaic’ of fiddling found across the country. The best example of this interest in fiddling as a microcosm of ethnic diversity is the special issue of the *Canadian Folk Music Bulletin* (1985) which focused on fiddle styles from across Canada.

people have sometimes been able to use Canadian policies to their benefit, the shift from invisibility to recognition was dependent on the ‘good will’ of re-settlers.

By the start of the twenty-first century, the idea that Metis-ness *belonged* to all Manitobans had emerged in full force. This strengthened sense of ownership over Metis-ness was perhaps best expressed at the opening ceremonies of the Festival du Voyageur in 2012, where a deep-voiced speaker stated—as a representative of each of Manitoba’s founding nations (First Nations, French, Metis, and Scottish) stepped forward in era-appropriate costuming—that *at the heart of every Manitoban, lay the spirit of the Metis* (field notes 17/02/12).¹¹⁵ This sentiment has taken a prominent place in the mainstream consciousness over the past ten or so years. From the creation of a new holiday in February called Louis Riel Day,¹¹⁶ to an article in the *Rivers Banner* that linked the Metis resistance (referred to as the first western battle against Ottawa) to new, western Canadian-based political parties (i.e., the Reform Party and the Conservative Party)¹¹⁷ (Waddell 2006, 4), the past decade has seen mainstream appropriation of Metis culture as a way to create a unique, Manitoban identity. It is, of course, strongly reflected in the substantial increase in reportage on Metis fiddling in the 1990s and, especially, the 2000s. The idea that Metis-ness is part of the identity of all Manitobans speaks to the power relationship that transformed Metis fiddling (with First Nations influence now largely ignored) into a (more)

¹¹⁵ I was unable to immediately write down what was being said. However, my own wording is very close to the words used, and certainly captures the spirit of the statement.

¹¹⁶ This holiday is called “Family Day” in Ontario. An article in the *Gazette* (Balduf, Manitoba) discussed the name of the new holiday, noting that Louis Riel was a passionate Metis leader, and that he “was the driving force behind Manitoba becoming Canada’s fifth province” (2 October 2007). The article further pointed out that “Louis Riel’s dream of a province that embraces all cultures is still shared by Manitobans today as we strive to build a society that honours and respects all people” (ibid.).

¹¹⁷ The Conservative and Reform parties were seen by some westerners (at least when the article was written) as parties that could challenge the (supposed) dominance of eastern Canada.

mainstream style. Metis fiddling is now used as a marker of Manitoba's contemporary uniqueness, rather than as a remnant of the past. That is, Metis (style) fiddling is not just something Manitobans acknowledge; it is now something that Manitobans call their own.

Concluding Comments

This chapter explored the relationship between Indigenous nations and dominant white Manitobans using an analysis of public discourse on fiddling to untangle what is at stake in the process of representing Indigenous (style) fiddling (now usually identified as Metis-style fiddling). Ultimately, the issues addressed here are the broader issues that Indigenous nations are fighting for, namely, the issue of control—that is, who has the right to define Indigenous style(s) and who creates representations of Indigenous fiddling—and the related issue of voice—that is, who is speaking for Indigenous nations. For re-settlers, the most important issue is whether or not we are willing to contextualize the history of relations, including the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler fiddling, or if we simply appropriate Metis fiddling for our own purposes. As Dylan Robinson points out in a critique of Ralston Saul's book *A Fair Country: Telling Truths About Canada* (2008), an easy adoption of Indigenous art as “an expression of ourselves” is problematic, “smooth[ing] over the complex encounters of past and present between First Peoples and Canada by claiming that ‘we’ are a Métis society” (2012, 227). Robinson continues pointing out that we need to:

question how the nation-state acknowledges egregious wrongdoings while at the same time nominating the history of colonization, First Peoples' stories, and the general inclusion of First peoples as contributions to the ongoing development of the Canadian nation-state itself. (ibid.)

Many re-settler Manitobans continue to be ill-informed on colonial history, viewing, instead, the problems in Indigenous communities as Metis or 'Indian' problems. At the same time, Indigenous incarceration continues to grow, as does the number of Indigenous children taken from their homes. Little is being done (by re-settlers) to change these numbers, and Indigenous nations still have a limited say about how their citizens are treated by the colonial governments. While the growing interest in Metis fiddling marks a new moment of dialogue, it can, at least to some degree, be seen as covering up deeper problems, that is, standing in as a marker of a good relationship that excuses deeper work to change the structures that continue to work as colonizing forces. The next chapter moves away from re-settler contexts, focusing on Metisfest, a contemporary Metis event organized by Metis people and attended (primarily) by Metis audience members and fiddlers.

Chapter Two: Fiddling and Jigging in a Metis Space

My people will sleep for one hundred years, and when they awake, it will be the artists who give them back their spirit.

– Louis Riel (1844–1885)

Louis Riel’s words, quoted above, are often repeated by both Metis and non-Metis people, and in both Metis and non-Metis contexts¹¹⁸ (see, e.g., Wyman 2004, 85). In the context of Metis spaces, the recurrent use of this quote points to the importance of cultural activities to the Metis nation(s). Although there has been some tension between Metis who feel that promoting cultural activities takes attention away from the bigger issues facing the Metis nation(s)—issues such as political rights and land claims—for many, fiddling, jigging, and other cultural activities are the key to re-claiming Metis pride and independence (see, e.g., the event recalled in Redbird 1980, 47).¹¹⁹ For this reason, some Metis feel that the Metis nation(s) should “attack on a cultural, rather than political level” (ibid.). As Redbird argues, nurturing cultural life can be a political strategy. In his own words, he notes that “cultural development as a political strategy is a viable vehicle for change, simply because it is a non-threatening activity to most sectors of the establishment” (ibid., 48).

¹¹⁸ Of course the division between Metis and non-Metis people is more complex than this dichotomy suggests especially with regard to First Nations (see page xii). I use the division here to emphasize how Riel’s words have reached beyond the Metis nation(s).

¹¹⁹ Referencing a national convention of the Native Council of Canada, Redbird pointed to the tension that emerged between those who wanted to focus on economic/political issues and those who felt that cultural activities were an important part of the gathering. In conversations with Metis people organizing, or otherwise involved in, cultural events in Manitoba, this tension was often brought to my attention. Thus, on a local level, I have found that a similar tension still exists, although the tension is perhaps more subtle than in the case cited in Redbird (1980, 47).

This chapter explores the role of cultural activities to the Metis nation(s) through a discussion of Metisfest, a contemporary Metis gathering that prominently features fiddling and jigging. I will argue that Metisfest is an important Metis space,

where the impacts of colonialism [are] lessened, where [Metis people can] feel what it feels like to be part of a united, healthy community, where [their] children [can] glimpse [their] beautiful visions for their future. (Simpson 2011, 12–13)

I will argue that Metisfest creates a space for the contemporary expression of a lived, Metis culture, and thus for Metis cultural resurgence (to borrow a concept developed in Simpson 2011, 22). I will further argue that the version of Metis-ness presented at Metisfest is a far cry from mainstream or ‘multicultural’ versions of Metis-ness, which most often present Metis culture as bounded and historical (often a euphemism for dead). By creating such a space, Metis people are re-asserting themselves as Metis, an action that, although presented as apolitical and thus seen as non-threatening to the re-settler mainstream, has important, political consequences for the Metis nation(s).

The first section of this chapter is a narrative overview of Metisfest. Although focused on how the event unfolded in 2012, my fieldwork at the event in 2010, 2011, and 2012 has allowed me to highlight aspects of the event that are expected (i.e., typical over the course of three years) and the changes that have been made to the event since 2010. In this way, it combines the normative and particular into one narrative. This section builds the groundwork for the analyses that follow in sections two to four of the chapter. The second section focuses on the music heard at Metisfest, using musical analysis of four tunes (supported by four field video recordings from Metisfest 2012) as performed by four of the event’s paid fiddlers. These analyses provide an entry into a better

understanding of the fiddle style(s) promoted through the event and, in the process, a better understanding of the values endorsed through the performances. The final two sections take all aspects of the event into account, with the first exploring the connection between Metisfest and everyday life, and the second analyzing the event as an example of Indigenous resurgence and resistance.

Metisfest 2012: A Narrative Overview

Metisfest grew out of Metisville, a festival held in Boissevain, Manitoba from 2006 to 2008 (interview with Goodon 2012).¹²⁰ Since many Metis people were coming across the border from Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, North Dakota, for Metisville during these early years, the organizers decided in 2009 that it was time to go international. For this to happen, the event, according to key organizer Dan Goodon, had to take place on international ground, had to draw international guests (i.e., audience members), and had to feature performers from both sides of the American/Canadian border. In order to accomplish these goals, Metisville was moved to the International Peace Garden on the western edge of the Manitoba/North Dakota border, and was renamed International Metisfest. Organizers made a commitment to invite performers from both Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation and Manitoba (as well as occasionally inviting guests from elsewhere). From 2009 to 2011, the event was promoted as North America's only truly international Metis festival. This changed in 2012 when the festival moved to the small town of Killarney, Manitoba, just fifty kilometers northeast of the Peace Garden. Although the move was referred to as "bittersweet" by Goodon since the

¹²⁰ Further information on all interviews cited in this dissertation is included in the works cited list under 'interviews'.

festival lost its international status (becoming simply 'Metisfest'), the new venue was more accessible to senior event-goers and made financial sense since the town of Killarney donated the space (ibid.).

The following is a narrative overview of Metisfest 2012. The purpose of including this section is to acquaint the reader with a sense of what it is like to attend Metisfest as a non-Metis woman. It also provides readers with details about the event that would be out of place in the more topical discussion that follows; in this way, it points readers to issues that may deserve further research. Written as a first-person narrative, this section gives readers the opportunity to better understand my relationship with my field of study. As Cree scholar Shawn Wilson notes, oral traditions, unlike written texts, maintain relational context "by utilizing the direct relationship between storyteller and listener" and that, in this way, "[e]ach recognizes the other's role in shaping both the content and the process" (2008, 8–9).¹²¹ Giving readers some insight into my relationship with Metisfest replicates some of the dynamics of oral tradition, "build[ing] a relationship between the readers of this story, myself as the storyteller and the ideas I present" (ibid., 6). The narrative is, then, not so much about me as it is about understanding how the knowledge presented in the chapter emerged as knowledge.¹²²

¹²¹ Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson similarly states that "[o]ral storytelling becomes an even more important vehicle for the creation of free cognitive spaces because the physical act of gathering a group of people together within our territories reinforces the web of relationships that stitch our communities together... The relationship between those present becomes dynamic, with the storyteller adjusting their "performance" based on the reactions and presence of the audience" (2011, 34).

¹²² The field of auto-ethnography (which this narrative approach arguable draws from) has grown tremendously in recent years. (Examples from ethnomusicology can be found in Kisluk 2001 and Lortat-Jacob 1995.) Auto-ethnography is not, however, without critics. Sara Delamont, for example, points to the fact that most auto-ethnographies privilege those in power (2007, 2). In my future writing and research, I will further consider the ways in which to balance the benefits of highlighting my relationship with the field and my consultants and the possible problems embedded in a narrative (or auto-ethnographic) approach.

* * *

“Come as a friend, leave as family.”

–Metisfest Motto

It is early on a Friday morning in late July when I leave Winnipeg, looking forward to “three full days of exciting entertainment” (as advertised on the Metisfest website) in Killarney, Manitoba. The three-hour drive into southwestern Manitoba takes me across flat prairie land—almost ready for an early harvest—into the rolling hills of the Turtle Mountains, hills believed to have been created by erosion and glacial deposits, or, alternately, by volcanic activity (Turtle Mountain-Souris Plains 2009, 1). The weather is beautiful, in the low twenties with sunshine and blue skies stretching across the wide expanse of prairie sky (fig. 1). The car radio, set to CBC Radio One, hums faintly in the background until a voice, telling listeners across the province to head out to Killarney if they enjoy fiddling and jigging, prompts me to turn up the volume.

This is the third consecutive year that I have attended Metisfest, so I know what to expect—lots of fiddling, some jigging, some country music, a little bit of gospel, and a dance floor busy from morning until night. However, the organizers have moved this year’s event from the International Peace Garden, a popular tourist attraction on the North Dakota/Manitoba border that features acres of beautifully manicured parks, a small camping area, cabins, an indoor concert hall, and an open-air stage (used as the main stage at previous years’ events) to the small town of Killarney (population 2197 as of 2011). The event is now set to take place almost exclusively indoors, which is likely a

Recent work by Deborah Wong on performative ethnography (2008) might provide an especially interesting point of comparison/departure.

welcome change for both performers and audience members given that the event is being held a month earlier than in previous years—right at the end of July when the mercury often reaches into the thirties.



Fig. 1, Sunflower Field, Southwestern Manitoba

Handwritten signs greet me as I approach the town, guiding me to the Shamrock Centre,¹²³ a large recreational complex situated on the edge of town that will serve as this year's venue.¹²⁴ About one hundred cars, and a few RVs, are already parked on the hot asphalt when I arrive, the majority showing off Manitoba license plates. (A few hail from Ontario, Saskatchewan, Alberta, Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, and North

¹²³ According to Statistics Canada, Killarney includes 940 people of English ancestry, 825 of Scottish ancestry, 470 of Irish ancestry, and 380 people of German ancestry. Just 45 people indicated Metis ancestry (Statistics Canada 2006). The town has adopted Irish symbols and names, presumably building on the town's name as a way to distinguish the town from others in southern Manitoba.

¹²⁴ The venue is an ideal response to complaints raised regarding the facilities used at the Peace Garden; many of the audience surveys suggested that the Peace Garden venue was too spread out (field notes 28/07/2012) with about a five-minute walk across a grassy field and then down a paved road between stages, not a surprising complaint given that the average attendee is post-retirement.

Dakota.) In contrast to previous years, there is a limited American presence, perhaps an unintentional result of the change in venue, albeit a change that has taken the festival to a Canadian town just twenty kilometers from the American border. Although the number of cars in the parking lot indicates that attendance is low, if this year is like previous years, the numbers will increase throughout the day (Friday) and will be especially high by the next morning (Saturday).

After parking my rental car beside a large pick-up truck, I make my way to the front entrance of the Shamrock Centre where I am greeted by two senior volunteers. After taking my forty dollars (the all-inclusive cost for a weekend pass), they direct me to the information booth where programs are available for one dollar. This is the first year that organizers have charged for programs, reflecting the need to recuperate from previous years' deficits. The front cover includes the slogan "come as a friend, leave as family" as well as the Metisfest logo, a circle divided into thirds, each containing either the American, Canadian, or Metis flags; the words "Metisfest, fiddling, jigging, dancing" are superimposed on the logo (fig. 2).

The program includes all the information that I need to know to plan my weekend, from a listing of performers and performance times on both the main and 'udder' stages (a smaller stage named to jokingly refer to the way that some Metis pronounce 'other'), to notes about vendors selling their wares in the 'trading post'. Metis historians, the program indicates, will be giving talks; and displays and workshops will be available to those who want to "check out" Metis culture "first hand" (Metisfest 2012). The small booklet also notes that a 'rendezvous village' (a teepee and fire pit) is

set up outside, that ‘voyageur games’ will take place on the grass next to the village, and that alcohol is not permitted on the premises. The event sponsors’ logos, which include Manitoba Culture, Heritage, and Tourism, Canadian Heritage, and Manitoba Lotteries, decorate several of the program’s back pages (fig. 3).



Fig. 2, Metisfest Program 2012

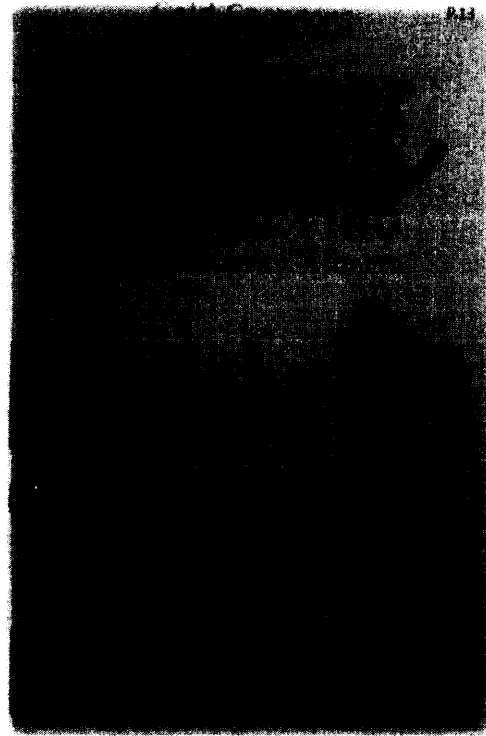


Fig. 3, Sponsors Metisfest 2012

Music drifts down the long, narrow hallway as I make my way towards the main stage, eager to catch some music. Garry Lepine, a Metis fiddler from Portage la Prairie, is just beginning his set with the Bob Wills tune “Faded Love” as I enter the large arena, cross the concrete floor, and find a seat on a metal chair facing the stage and dance area. The stage has a large blue Metis flag hanging on the wall behind the performers; a mix of blue and red Metis flags hang from the ceiling, alongside a combined Canadian/American

flag—a symbol of an event that was once an official international rendezvous (fig. 4). Two very large dream catchers¹²⁵ also hang from the ceiling, with the colours of the medicine wheel—red, black, yellow, and white—filling in each quarter of the circle.



Fig. 4, Main Stage, Metisfest 2012

I glance around at the mostly senior crowd (which includes a handful of familiar faces); a few younger adults, some teens (mostly musicians or dancers), and a few young children are also in attendance. The crowd is more visibly Indigenous than at Manitoba's old-time events; yet I quickly discover that some non-Metis people were drawn to the event because of an interest in fiddle music or dance. I do my best to respond to an older man who asks me what the sideways 'eight' hanging in the back of the stage means,¹²⁶ and then strike up a conversation with a woman sitting to my right; she tells me that she

¹²⁵ Dream catchers were traditionally hung in sleeping areas to protect people from negative dreams while allowing positive dreams to come through. They are now used as an important symbol of pan-Indigenous culture in North America.

¹²⁶ My understanding of the Metis flag is that the infinity symbol represents the endurance of the Metis nation(s) and the joining of two peoples.

is not Metis, but lives in the area and comes from a family of old-time musicians. She then relates her surprise that the performers are in ‘street’ clothes (instead of their ethnic costuming), but seems satisfied when I tell her that the jiggers scheduled for later in the day will, undoubtedly, be wearing ‘heritage’ costumes.

Part of Metisfest’s mission is “to provide, both established and emerging, Metis artists with the opportunity to showcase their talent” (Metisfest 2012),¹²⁷ a goal that is being fulfilled this weekend by including numerous dancers and nearly thirty musicians, mostly fiddlers, as guest artists. The oldest fiddler is in his early sixties, but he stands alone as a ‘senior’ fiddler; most are under forty, with the majority in their late teens or early twenties (and three are even younger). Likewise, the dancers are typically quite young (including several youth groups), although a few senior men and women are part of one of the dance troupes. In this way, the featured artists are predominantly from the younger generation, while the audience is primarily from the senior generation.

Each fiddler is accompanied by the house band, musicians from Winnipeg’s Indigenous music scene, made up of two electric guitars (lead and rhythm), bass, and drums. Dance troupes are scheduled for a one-and-a-half-hour block later in the afternoon and for the same amount of time the next day; most of the performances, then, revolve around a fiddler. Although it is still early in the day and the performers are not playing the typical ‘sets’ played at dances, the audience takes every opportunity to make their way to the dance floor with a partner, doing the polka, fox-trot, waltz, heel-toe polka, or seven-step on the concrete floor; the “Red River Jig” (played several times throughout

¹²⁷ The mission statement continues with, “...and to provide the opportunity for everyone to learn about our Metis heritage, culture and place in North American history” (Metisfest 2012).

the day) also brings audience members to their feet, including a few young children (usually members of dance troupes scheduled to perform).

As the day unfolds, I take note of the fiddlers' biographies, which are provided by the fiddlers and read to the audience by the MC as the performers prepare on stage for their sets. It strikes me as particularly notable that several of the younger performers (those in their teens and early twenties) indicate that they began learning to fiddle in school; in contrast, the older fiddlers typically described themselves as self-taught, pointing at most to local or familial influences. (This formalization of learning began in the early 2000s when the Frontier Fiddle program brought group fiddle lessons, usually taught by non-Indigenous fiddlers, to largely Metis and First Nations schools in northern Manitoba's Frontier School Division. Some of the Indigenous fiddle circuit's best known young fiddlers got their start through this program.)

The styles embraced by the performers are what I have come to expect at Metis events. Clogging (traditional Metis foot accompaniment) is rare; one young fiddler clogs during an impromptu performance on the informal 'half' stage (a small stage situated in the hallway between the main and 'udder' stages), and another young fiddler clogs for two tunes on the main stage and one on the half stage. Many of the fiddlers play the same tunes, with the most popular being "St. Anne's Reel," "Big John McNeil," "Whiskey Before Breakfast," and "Faded Love." (In fact, I was surprised to hear back-to-back sets where half of the repertoire was shared. A fiddler later told me that the performers need to play tunes that the backup band knows, limiting their choices.) None of the most

popular tunes are played with asymmetrical phrases, and crooked tunes are, in fact, rare (with the exception of the “Red River Jig,” which is played by almost every fiddler).

Stylistic differences are nonetheless notable, shining through even though all of the fiddlers are performing with the same, rather loud, band. (On the final day, after complaints from the audience, the band was asked to turn down their instruments, to which they rather grudgingly complied.) One of the most audible differences is between fiddlers who clearly articulate each note, using few ‘ghost’ notes (i.e., notes that are just barely audible, played more for rhythmic interest than for pitch) and little double-stringing, and those who use many ghost notes and whose drone notes sometimes drown out the melody. Since the former approach is especially popular among the younger fiddlers, this may be a result of the movement towards more formalized training¹²⁸; yet one of the fiddlers includes his very young son (who, I guess, is about five) as a backup musician playing the spoons, reminding me that there are a variety of ways to integrate informal learning into formal settings.

I am also struck by the strong repertoire connections—connections that I had not noticed at previous Metis events—to Cliff Maytwayashing (1939–2009), an Ojibwe fiddler from Manitoba’s Interlake-region.¹²⁹ Some fiddlers play “Lost Child,” an American tune that was included on Maytwayashing’s album even while not very popular in Manitoba. Another fiddler refers to a tune more commonly known as “Red Headed

¹²⁸ For example, in a formalized setting, students are often evaluated based on their ability to ‘get’ every note. I have found this to be the case in, of course, one-on-one fiddle lessons, but also in the somewhat less formal ‘group class’ setting common at fiddle workshops. When learning by ear without the guidance of a teacher, fiddlers may be satisfied with getting the general shape of the tune.

¹²⁹ Maytwayashing was one of the most popular First Nations fiddlers in the region in the 1980s and 90s. For this reason, his influence has been significant.

Fiddler's Waltz" (Dejarlis) as "I'll Be All Smiles," the name the tune is given on the same album. Later that day, one of the band members tells me that several fiddlers at the event are following in Maytwayashing's footsteps, a comment that confirms my own observations. When asked further, he tells me that, in his opinion, this is especially true of Shawn Mousseau (whose playing is analyzed below).

With these observations in mind, I meander over to the 'udder' stage, wondering if I will notice any differences between the stages. Since the fiddlers are all scheduled to play on both stages (with the exception of one beginner fiddler), the fiddle styles do not differ; yet the stages do have a somewhat different feel and do serve a somewhat different purpose. The 'udder' stage features more beginner backup musicians. In fact, while the band on the main stage is made up of professional musicians (with a guitarist who often takes solos, providing timbral contrast), the 'udder' stage has a band made up of musicians who look to be in their mid-teens and/or are beginner- to intermediate-level musicians. Furthermore, while the main stage band is the same all weekend, the 'udder' stage backup band changes over the course of a day in a kind of come-and-go fashion, depending on who is available and willing to play.¹³⁰

At four o'clock, I make my way back to the main stage, eager to catch the dance troupes scheduled for the last hour and a half before breaking for supper. The first troupe of dancers are just hitting the dance floor as I enter the arena: the women are in colourful dresses with billowing petticoats under knee-length skirts that lift up like a blossoming flower revealing their matching undergarments as they twirl across the dance floor; the

¹³⁰ I was unable to find out if there were differences in pay/honorariums between the main and udder stages. This is in large part because people do not really talk about money in these contexts.

men (and some women filling the male role) are wearing pants and collared shirts that are coloured to match the women's dresses (fig. 5). Although this first troupe is made up of very young dancers—the youngest not more than five—and the average age of the dancers is clearly very young (likely late teens), the troupes vary in age; some troupes are made up exclusively of youth dancers, while others are a mix of senior, adult, and youth dancers. (None are exclusively seniors.)



*Fig. 5, Jigging Troupe at Metisfest 2012*¹³¹

The dancers jig square dance sets, beginning with a first change (a tune in 6/8), a second change (a reel played at a moderate tempo), and finally a breakdown (a reel played at a very quick tempo). The “Red River Jig” is included by each dance troupe, often both at the start and end of their performance; each dancer takes a turn showing off their fanciest steps with the change in music. This brings the audience to their feet, cheering as the steps get more complicated, becoming especially noisy when one dance

¹³¹ This image is of the St. Ambrose Steppers. Although they are not the first group described above (with the very young dancers) their attire is typical of jigging/square dancing troupes.

troupe jigs to “Orange Blossom Special.” The crowd cheers more and more loudly and the music gets faster and faster; the young, showcased dancer’s feet move more and more quickly, never missing a step, as the fiddler pushes the dancer to her limits.

The excitement is still hanging in the air as the crowd exits the arena, moving towards the MmmmmMichif Café for a supper of roast chicken, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables (from the frozen food aisle), and pie. I use this time to set up my tent at a nearby campground, on the outskirts of Killarney. Although both of the town’s campgrounds (the other conveniently located downtown on beautiful Killarney Lake) were booked months before the event began, the owners have allowed me to set up behind the campground office, on a small patch of grass, infested, I soon find, with ants. While some of the RVs filling the campground are stationed semi-permanently for the summer holidays, others are owned by Metisfest audience members. Metisfest organizers have arranged for transportation between the venue and the campgrounds and motels, a service that is especially convenient for those who prefer not to move their RVs.

After setting up my tent, I make the short five-minute drive back to the Shamrock Centre, arriving just in time for the start of the evening show and dance. The evening performance features well-known Metis musicians Darren Lavallee and his band, with special guest Donny Parenteau (former fiddler, guitarist, and mandolin player for Neal McCoy), performing a mix of fiddle tunes and country hits (including tunes recorded by George Strait and George Jones). Interestingly, there is no clear division between the ‘show’ and the dance (in contrast to the old-time events that are more familiar to me), and

even though the audience has already spent the day dancing on the hard, concrete floor, the dance floor remains full until the band plays their last tune at ten o'clock.

Saturday's schedule follows the pattern set the previous day, with the addition of 'dignitary remarks' at noon. The dignitaries are Merv Tweed (MP for Brandon-Souris), Cliff Cullen (MLA for Spruce Woods), Rick Pauls (mayor of Killarney), Robert Pilon (President of the Oshawa Metis Council), Tony Belcourt (former president of the Metis National Council and former president of the Metis Nation Ontario), Barrett Racine (from the Turtle Mountain Metis Council), and a representative from Manitoba Lotteries. Noticeably absent are any representatives from the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF). (An organizer later tells me that he tried to get the MMF on board, but that he has not been able to garner any interest. He also noted that culture and politics do not mix, and that the MMF is essentially a political organization.)

Each dignitary is given a moment to say a few words. Most use the opportunity to congratulate the organizers and volunteers for their efforts. The importance of building a network of Metis events is also noted in an exchange between a Metisfest organizer and Robert Pilon, while Tony Belcourt suggests that there is a need for better representation of Metis artists online. Interestingly, the (Metis) organizer who speaks during the dignitaries remarks describes Metisfest using rhetoric drawn from multicultural ideologies, namely noting that the Metis are "first and foremost" Canadian citizens, and that their desire to "preserve and promote" their culture is like the desire of Ukrainians in Dauphin to do the same. This same sentiment is expressed by the representative of Manitoba Lotteries who points to the importance of Canada's "cultural mosaic."

At four o'clock, I head over to the 'udder' stage to see the jigging and fiddling contests. Since the hired performers are not allowed to participate, the contest turnout is very small, with just one fiddler and two jiggers in the two eighteen and under categories, and two fiddlers and four jiggers in the two eighteen and over categories. As is usual at Metisfest, the rules are decided upon just before the event begins, with the exception of one rule, posted on the website, stating that competitors in the jigging contest can use taps on their shoes.¹³² I listen to each fiddler play their two tunes of choice with interest, trying to guess who will win, and am therefore disappointed when, after the very short contest ends, no mention is made of who won or when prizes will be handed out.¹³³ (The prizes, it turns out, are announced just before the evening concert begins.)

I make my way into the arena just before seven, not wanting to miss the start of this evening's show/dance. A man with a long dark beard is speaking from a lectern on the main stage as I find my way to a seat for the evening show. Although not indicated in the program, it does not take me long to realize that this is a re-enactment of Louis Riel's last testament, a theatrical piece that has been part of the festival since it began. I am puzzled as to why it was not in the program, and when I speak with the actor later in the evening, he sounds quite disappointed about the omission; it is clear that this show has

¹³² There is some debate over taps in the Metis dance circuit. At the John Arcand Fiddle Festival in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, contestants are not allowed to use taps because Arcand wants to encourage traditional jigging. However, most dance troupes use taps.

¹³³ With a sample of just three fiddlers, it is difficult to come to clear conclusions about the style being performed at this contest. However, two of the fiddlers frequently attend old-time contests and several of the tunes they chose (e.g., "Country Waltz," "Short Bow Jig," "Maple Sugar," and "Red Headed Fiddlers Waltz") are tunes shared by both old-time and Metis fiddlers. Interestingly, there are no rules regarding style, in contrast to the John Arcand fiddle festival which quite clearly outlines that fiddlers in the traditional Metis category must play tunes in specific tunings and must clog (i.e., use their feet as accompaniment). It is also of note that none of the fiddlers clog, a detail that makes this contest markedly different from the Metis (style) category at the Manitoba Open (as discussed in chapter six).

been an important part of his life for many years and that he takes his role very seriously, even to the extent that his performance included ad lib lines telling performers preparing for the evening show to be quiet and stop disturbing his performance.

The evening show, featuring fiddler Ryan Keplin from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians, begins quickly after the testament ends. Although enticing audience members to the dance floor is never difficult at Metis events, Keplin makes the floor even more appealing by giving away CDs to the best jigger (in his opinion) and then to a lucky couple doing the waltz. A number of people that I know from old-time events come and chat with me throughout the evening, pointing to overlap between old-time and Metis events. The overlap seems particularly notable this year since in the past I rarely met audience members I knew from old-time events at Metisfest. As the evening draws to a close, the organizers station themselves by the arena exit, shaking everyone's hand in a fashion that truly marks their attempt to make sure everyone leaves as 'family'.

The next morning's schedule begins with a gospel hour followed by a 'Sunday service' (as referred to in the program). Although the inclusion of Christian worship programming is not surprising since the trading post included a few Christian and even evangelizing 'vendors,' the service—in particular its lack of connection to Catholicism, the stereotypical Metis religion—is of note (i.e., it breaks the stereotype). The first event is a performance by Yvonne St. Germaine, a multi-award winning Gospel singer who mixes Gospel songs with her personal story of redemption from alcohol, drugs, abuse,

and attempted suicide after a pilgrimage to Lac Ste. Anne, Alberta.¹³⁴ St. Germaine's singing and ministry are followed by an hour-long sermon led by a middle-aged First Nations preacher, who first asks his (First Nations) wife to share her story of finding Jesus, and then shares his own story, relating how the Gospel came to his reserve.

The service, held on the 'udder' stage, has not attracted many of the event-goers, and, after being told by the preacher that Jesus is the only acceptable path to salvation, I decide to see what other events are taking place concurrently. I am pleased to see that a crowd, larger than that in the 'udder' stage area for the Sunday service, has gathered around the half stage to hear JJ Lavallee, accompanied by a beat machine and a young boy on spoons, putting on an impromptu performance. Lavallee plays in a distinct style (associated in particular with the Lavallee family), with strongly accented off-beats and many ghosted notes (see analysis later in this chapter). His infectious feel quickly attracts a large crowd of on-lookers and, within just a few minutes, brings dancers, either jigging or doing the polka, to the tiny space in front of the small stage.

With Lavallee still playing on the half stage, I head back to the 'udder' stage to catch a fiddler—a young girl I know from old-time fiddle contests—scheduled to perform at twelve thirty. (There are just two girls and one woman fiddler at this year's event and, together, they only have a total of two hours of stage time.) Her father tells me that this is her first professional gig, and, when I speak with her, it is clear that she is quite nervous. After a great performance, however, she gains some confidence. Metisfest organizers, as

¹³⁴ Lac Ste. Anne, originally known as *Wakamne* by the Nakoda and *Sahkahigan* by the Cree, is a traditional sacred place for Indigenous peoples. After it was renamed by a Catholic priest, it became a Catholic/Christian site for pilgrimage, drawing thousands of people, mostly Indigenous, to the annual pilgrimage.

noted in their mission statement, make an effort to bring out young acts, even before other venues are willing to hire them. This fiddler is no exception since she is not playing at a high enough level for most organizers, and does not know enough tunes for a set that is longer than about a half hour.

Metisfest begins drawing to a close at about three o'clock Sunday afternoon; although fiddlers are scheduled to be on stage until five thirty the audience begins packing up by mid-afternoon (even though the fiddlers end up performing until after six since, by the end of the day, the performers are running behind schedule). Today's crowd is already sparser than yesterday's, so it does not take long before the arena, the hall, and the parking lot begin to empty. The trading post vendors clear off their tables and pack up their vans, heading home: some to nearby towns, others back to more distant locales including southern Ontario. The atmosphere is contented as people say their goodbyes and express their thanks to the organizers. The question of whether there will be a Metisfest next year is, like previous years, hanging in the air; a tight budget and the vast amount of time and energy required to put on the event makes its continued existence somewhat tenuous. Yet every year the organizers work from the principle that the event will continue for years to come, calling 'see you next year' as the audience, vendors, and finally the performers wander out the front doors.

Style and (Inter)National Relations: Four Fiddlers at Metisfest

The next section provides an analysis of reels¹³⁵ played by four fiddlers at Metisfest 2012. The goal of this section is to better understand what ‘Metis fiddler’ and ‘Metis-style fiddling’ means at this event. Style plays an important part in the creation of a lived Metis culture (as argued in section three); the analyses that follow are therefore critical to understanding this contemporary, Metis space. (This section is further relevant as a complement to the discussion of the Metis-style category included at the Manitoba Open Old-Time Fiddle Championships, which is the focus of chapter six.) Ultimately, in this section I argue that each fiddler has his¹³⁶ own unique style, emerging from his unique life experiences. Yet, at the same time, I argue that two inter-related musical values emerge as particularly important at Metisfest: 1) an emphasis on continuous, rhythmic motion and accented off-beats rather than on melody, and 2) a very strong connection to dance. In this way, the fiddlers at Metisfest define themselves as part of a specifically Metis/Indigenous circuit of fiddlers, somewhat (but not always) separate from the old-time scene; through this circuit, they maintain and/or develop these stylistically unique qualities. Put another way, certain aspects of style are clearly more valued in the Indigenous scene than in the old-time scene; and these qualities should be considered uniquely Metis/Indigenous qualities. The boundaries of Metis-ness, whether

¹³⁵ Reels are tunes in duple meter played at a quick tempo. Although most people argue that there is a difference between reels, polkas, and two-steps, the borders between tune-types can be difficult to discern. Generally speaking, has a greater number of shorter note values (e.g., mostly sixteenth notes) than longer note values (e.g., eighth notes). In contrast, a two-step or polka might have mostly eighth notes with just a few groups of sixteenth notes.

¹³⁶ Unfortunately, none of the female fiddlers were advanced enough or established enough to merit inclusion in this short section on style.

related to the identities of the fiddlers or to their style, are therefore present but are clearly fluid, pointing to the complexity of a lived Metis identity.

Although each fiddler played a variety of tune-types during the event (including waltzes, fox-trots, reels, and occasional specialty dances such as the heel-toe polka and seven step), I have focused on reels¹³⁷ for two key reasons. First, reels are the most common tune-type at Metis events; fiddlers often play sets made up almost exclusively of reels, with just a couple other tune-types mixed into the performance. Second, comparing fiddlers playing the same tune-types highlights stylistic differences between fiddlers rather than differences between tunes-types. The four fiddlers were chosen because of their experience (i.e., they have been performing at Metis and, in some cases, old-time events for years) and because of their popularity in the Metis circuit. Each analysis is accompanied by a short biography¹³⁷ and a video recording¹³⁸ of the performance. These videos should be referred to for a more thorough understanding of each fiddler's style; they also give readers the opportunity to add to, or contest, my analyses. I decided not to transcribe the music since I believe that doing so detracts attention from the most central aspects of the style (i.e., the subtle rhythmic emphasis that cannot be easily or accurately notated).¹³⁹ Although the backup band is sometimes overpowering, three of the

¹³⁷ Many would likely consider "Down Yonder" and "Buffalo Gals" (two of the tunes analyzed below) to be two-steps. Yet they are embellished in such a way (with many 'filler' sixteenth notes) that the difference is nearly imperceptible to anyone who does not know the 'basic' versions of the tunes.

¹³⁸ I submitted a DVD of these videos to be included with the hard copy of this dissertation.

¹³⁹ The problem of representing the music of the 'other' through transcription has long been debated in the field of ethnomusicology (see, e.g., discussion in Radano 2003, 204–5). In this dissertation I sometimes use transcription as a tool for analysis, and, at other times, choose to avoid transcription, relying, instead, on the reader's willingness to use video recordings as texts that notate the performance analyzed. The latter is the case in the performances considered Indigenous-style fiddling. Reading music is not important in the Indigenous fiddle circuit, and I have heard many people argue that learning by ear is central to the style, creating important differences between Metis and old-time fiddlers. In the same way, one could argue that

recordings are taken from main stage performances since the upper stage band was inconsistent while the half stage (which had the best acoustics for recording) did not have a schedule, making it hard to show up to hear a particular fiddler play. The remaining performance took place on the half stage.

Garry Lepine

Metis fiddler Garry Lepine (b. 1950) was the oldest fiddler at Metisfest 2012. Although originally from St-Lazare, Manitoba (northwest of Brandon), Lepine moved to Portage la Prairie when he was in his teens, where he still resides with his family. Lepine never took formal lessons, but his father and other family members (including his mom and sisters) fiddled, placing him in a milieu that allowed him to learn on his own, imitating, in particular, his father. As Lepine told me, he first had two little sticks that he would rub together in imitation of his father playing the fiddle. His uncle then bought him a tin fiddle from the Salvation Army. Lepine's father added a sound post and put strings on the fiddle, and then showed him how to play "Little Brown Jug" and "Rubber Dolly." By the age of nine, Lepine was playing for dances, receiving a case of coke as a payment for his performances, and, at the age of seventeen, he began competing at fiddle contests. Lepine has recorded five CDs,¹⁴⁰ one of which won him an Aboriginal Music Award, and was included on the Gabriel Dumont Collection *Drops of Brandy*, a four-CD set featuring Indigenous fiddlers from western and northern Canada. Lepine also provided some of the

reading transcriptions creates a different listener. Since reading music is much more important in the old-time circuit (especially among younger fiddlers), the tunes discussed in the next chapter (on the old-time style) are transcribed for readers.

¹⁴⁰ The titles of the CDs are *Whiskey Before Breakfast* (his first album, recorded in the 1970s), *Metis Hour*, *Drops of Brandy*, *Dancing Fingers*, and *Metis Trails*. Lepine does not remember when he recorded these albums (phone conversation 01/12/2013).

music for the documentary *How the Fiddle Flows* (Coyes 2002) and can be heard on the film *The Dances of the Metis* (Prefontaine, n.d.). He was inducted into the Metis Music Hall of Fame in 2005 and the Manitoba Fiddle Wall of Fame in 2012.¹⁴¹ Lepine is well-known in the Metis circuit, appearing at various Metis events throughout the year including regular appearances at Metisfest, an appearance at Batoche, and an appearance at the first annual Keplinfest in August 2012 (interview with Lepine 2012).

The accompanying video recording of Lepine playing “Andy Roussin Reel” (a tune written by old-time fiddler Randy Weslak from Manitoba) has several interesting elements. Although the form is not, strictly speaking, asymmetrical, the B part has overlapping phrases. That is, the section has sixteen beats, divided into phrases of 5 + 4 + 4 + 3 (to my ears); although some may hear the phrases differently, the way in which Lepine blurs the beginnings and endings of phrases is important to note. Lepine’s playing is very much groove-based,¹⁴² with a stronger focus on creating forward motion than on melodic content or rhythmic diversity. This is achieved through accented off-beats and a sense of propulsion towards the first beat of every measure. His time-feel (i.e., the underlying beat) is consistent and continuous with sixteenth notes filling in the beats; he does not allow stopped or longer notes to break the forward motion. Lepine nonetheless marks the ends of sections (and sometimes the middle of sections) by using one or two strongly accented notes, longer note values, and long bows (in contrast to the short,

¹⁴¹ The Manitoba Fiddle Association started the wall of fame, located in Carman, Manitoba, in 2006. I have not been able to uncover any information about the Metis Music Hall of Fame.

¹⁴² I use this term somewhat differently from Charles Keil who focuses on the interaction between musicians in a performance (and hence “participatory discrepancies”) (2010). My use of this term is intended to emphasize the sense of forward motion created by Lepine and the indescribable ‘feel’ that pulls dancers in the fiddle community to their feet and to the dance floor as Lepine plays.

smooth, and controlled bows that he uses most of the time) and then re-setting the bow on the string at the frog (near his bow hand). This demarcates the ends of sections and creates interest within the context of maintaining continuous motion. It is clear, furthermore, that Lepine is in control of the pulse, expecting the band to follow him, and using his foot to push them into his pulse. In addition to these notable rhythmic elements, Lepine uses a great deal of droning, adding a fullness to his sound. While not apparent on this clip, Lepine rarely speaks to the audience when he performs, suggesting that he is not putting on a show so much as he is creating music to draw people onto the dance floor; and without exception, he fills the dance floor.

Shawn Mousseau¹⁴³

Shawn Mousseau (b. 1979) was born and raised on Lake Manitoba First Nation. He received his first fiddle when he was just three years old and soon after began playing with his great-grandfather, fiddler Willie Mousseau (1903–1985),¹⁴⁴ and grandfather, guitarist Lawrence Mousseau (1931–2004). Feeling that no one could ever replace his great-grandfather, Mousseau quit playing after Willie Mousseau passed away. However, he was inspired to pick up his fiddle again after hearing Cliff Maytwayashing (1939–2009), also from Lake Manitoba First Nation, play at a social. Mousseau went on to (re)teach himself to play the fiddle, always trying to play tunes in the traditional way, or, in his own words, to “play them straight” in the way that he remembered hearing them

¹⁴³ Thank you to Shawn Mousseau for reading this biography and analysis and making corrections and suggestions. While Mousseau did not request changes in my analysis, he wanted to make it clear that he was self-taught. (In my first draft, he felt that I suggested that Maytwayashing was his teacher rather than just an influence.) He also wanted me to include the many performances he has done worldwide with the square dance troupe the Asham Stompers.

¹⁴⁴ Willie Mousseau can be heard on Anne Lederman’s collection of field recordings from the mid-1980s (2003, 1986).

played. Mousseau is not a regular at old-time fiddle contests (and has only competed in two) and is, therefore, not particularly well-known in southern Manitoba's contest scene. As he told me over the phone, his great-grandfather did not want him to play at competitions, telling him that his ability to play the fiddle was a gift from the Creator and that he should not use his gift to compete against other fiddlers. Yet this has not stopped Mousseau from becoming a sought-after fiddler,¹⁴⁵ playing for the Asham Stompers at the Vancouver Olympics and at the *XV Festival Zacatecas del Folclor Internacional* in Zacatecas, Mexico. He also plays for local square dance competitions (usually in the context of Indigenous events such as Peguis Days) and for anniversaries, wedding socials, and, more recently, for Metisfest in southwestern Manitoba, and Stomperfest in Reedy Creek/Kinosota, Manitoba (interview with Mousseau 2012).

Mousseau is performing "Buck Skin Reel" in the accompanying video. Although he uses strongly accented off-beats, Mousseau's playing is more detached and more rhythmically varied than Lepine's. For example, he includes stopped notes throughout, or, alternately, allows for more space between notes. This is in part a function of how he is using his right arm, moving it from the elbow rather than from the wrist (as is the case in Lepine's playing). This playing technique allows for 'clean' stops, creating a harder edge, and produces a more aggressive, and 'in-the-string' sound than bow movements that come primarily from the wrist (which have more of a soft bouncing quality). Throughout this performance, Mousseau uses many ghosted notes, just hinting at the presence of some notes (usually downbeats), while accenting the note that follows

¹⁴⁵ This points to the fact that there is a strong, First Nations/Metis scene that functions independently from the old-time contest scene where many fiddlers get their 'big break'.

(usually the off-beat). This technique is central to the ‘feel’ of his playing; that is, accenting the off-beats gives the music a lilt or ‘lift’ and creates significant forward motion; this is what many in the community would understand as a ‘danceable’ feel. Mousseau’s playing fits well with the country/rock sound employed by the backup musicians. This is in part because of his use of strong accents and a somewhat aggressive approach. Yet it also shows his ability to ‘fit’ his playing into a variety of contexts as appropriate. (I have heard him work equally well with just piano accompaniment.) Interestingly, Mousseau—although not clogging—taps his foot in a heel-toe motion similar to that used when Metis fiddlers clog.

JJ Lavallee

JJ Lavallee (b. 1980) is from the Metis town of St. Ambroise, Manitoba. He was born into a musical Metis family (which includes fiddler Darren Lavallee) whom he credits as important influences:

Those guys [his uncles] were a huge influence musically for me. It’s something you can’t, never goes away, and watching these guys growing up, when I was a little kid, it just stuck with me, and I said I want to do that! Mom, I want to do that! It’s been there ever since. (Interview on local radio station The Mix)

Lavallee is a composer (perhaps best known for his fiddle tune “Metchif Reel”), songwriter, and singer, and plays a variety of instruments including fiddle, guitar, mandolin, bass, and drums. His first CD, *Jimmy’s Breakdown* (named for his grandfather), won an Aboriginal People’s Choice Music Award for best fiddle album. He has since released a country album titled *Carry On*, and a second instrumental CD titled *A Fiddle Bit of This and a Fiddle Bit of That* (2011). He has opened for well-known country stars including Johnny Reid, Charlie Major, Jesse Ferrell, and Shane Yellowbird.

Lavallee is well known in the Metis fiddle scene and is a regular entertainer at Metis events. He is not, however, well known in the old-time fiddle contest scene.

One of the most striking aspects of Lavallee's playing is his use of 'filler' notes—what I once heard someone refer to as adding the 'jiggy jiggy' (i.e., underlying, constant, sixteenth notes). It is so strong in Lavallee's playing that, in some cases, the 'jiggy jiggy' drowns out the melodic line. The B part of "Buffalo Gals" (the lower section heard at the start of the video recording) provides an interesting starting point to understand this technique. In the B part, Lavallee includes many detached eighth notes without the addition of 'filler' sixteenth notes. When the A part begins, Lavallee starts adding the 'jiggy jiggy,' a contrast that highlights the effect of this technique; the use of continuous sixteen notes creates constant motion and thus a sense of momentum.¹⁴⁶ The effectiveness of this technique is augmented by the use of some ghosted notes and accenting of off-beats; the ghosted downbeat followed by an accented upbeat creates a feel of anticipation for the next downbeat. Lavallee's playing is also very percussive, more so than the other fiddlers analyzed here. Given that the melody is often buried in the 'jiggy jiggy,' as described above, and that drone notes are often played as loudly as the melody, this percussive element of his playing becomes more notable than the melody. Interestingly, the ends of phrases tend to have the clearest melody since he detaches the

¹⁴⁶ This tune varies a great deal between fiddlers. I have, in fact, heard some fiddlers play more sixteenth notes in the B part than in the A part. This indicates that Lavallee is making a conscious choice to create this contrast; it is not simply part of the structure of the tune (i.e., how it is 'supposed to' be played). Although it is somewhat common to add *some* 'jiggy jiggy' to this tune, I have never heard anyone use this technique (on this tune) to the extent heard in Lavallee's performance (especially the second time through the A part). An interesting comparison is a performance of the same tune by Metis fiddler Ivan Spence (son of Emile Spence, a fiddler included in Lederman's (1986) fiddle collection), available on YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bLUq5S3V2c>) (accessed 10/01/2013).

notes. All of these techniques are clearly heard in part because this performance was on the 'half' stage. Since it was an impromptu performance, Lavallee asked the little boy playing spoons to join him (and his drum machine), creating the feel of a house party.

Alex Lamoureux

Alex Lamoureux (b. 1991) began attending fiddle contests and dances long before he could play, following his mom (old-time fiddle champion Patti Lamoureux, nee Kusturok) to old-time events in Manitoba and elsewhere. He first began learning formally when he was about five or six years of age and continued studying with various teachers until he was about twelve. Although Lamoureux credits these teachers for helping him learn some of the technical aspects of playing, he ultimately learned to fiddle largely by listening to live and recorded performances of other fiddlers, picking up the tunes by ear. As he told me over the phone, he listens to the CDs featuring the Grand Masters finalists as a way to prepare himself for competitions¹⁴⁷; to Lamoureux, listening is the most important part of learning to fiddle (interview with A. Lamoureux 2012). By the time Lamoureux was in his late teens, he was starting to make a name for himself in the old-time circuit. Although born in Manitoba, Lamoureux moved to British Columbia long enough to become the B.C. old-time fiddle champion (2008 and 2009). He recorded his first CD, *Want to Have a Few Tunes*, in 2005, his second, *Groove*, in 2009, and just completed his third album *For Old Time's Sake* (2012). Lamoureux has been a guest entertainer at numerous events, including the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver. He has also been invited to represent both Manitoba and British Columbia at the Canadian

¹⁴⁷ Each year, a CD is released featuring the top eleven finalists at that year's Canadian Grand Masters fiddle competition.

Grand Masters, and has made it to the finals on three occasions. Lamoureux has become a well-known fiddler both provincially and nationally within the old-time circuits, and has performed at numerous Metis events, including events in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia. He is the current Manitoba Metis fiddle champion (as awarded at the Manitoba Open fiddle championships in 2011 and 2012) and the Manitoba old-time Champion (2010 and 2012).¹⁴⁸

In the attached video recording, Lamoureux is playing an embellished version of “Down Yonder,” a tune from the American south that is popular in Canadian old-time circles (and was played by several fiddlers at Metisfest 2012). The careful precision of Lamoureux’s performance is notable; this is a practiced arrangement with technically difficult passages that are articulated note for note with great clarity. The melody is strong throughout, never getting drowned out by droning; in fact, Lamoureux uses very little droning, just adding double-stops for emphasis. Although he adds some sixteenth notes to fill in the main melody, they are performed in such a way that they become part of the melody (in contrast to Lavallee). The melody, then, is important, even central, in this performance. Yet Lamoureux’s focus on melody does not detract from his strong and steady sense of time, with accents marking certain notes as important and creating the rhythmic feel. Lamoureux adds variety to the melodic focus through his articulations, using his whole bow in some cases, and shorter bows in others, and varying the part of the bow that he is using (hence varying from ‘on-the-string’ to ‘off-the-string’). His

¹⁴⁸ Thank you to Alex Lamoureux for reading over my biography and analysis and confirming the details! Although mixed-blood, Lamoureux does not identify as Metis or Ojibwe in his publicity materials or at performances.

overall feel is, nonetheless, less groove-based than that of the other three fiddlers discussed above; although he garners much applause, his performance draws few dancers to the floor. Ultimately, Lamoureux is drawing from a 'show-tune' old-time style; the performance is meant for entertainment, not necessarily primarily for dancing. The addition of a guitar solo (something the other fiddlers did some of the time, but less often than Lamoureux) adds to the show quality, creating a performance that keeps a listening audience entertained. This performance closely links Lamoureux to the Canadian old-time fiddle scene that he has been involved in his entire life. (Nonetheless, I also have heard him play tunes that are unique to Metis communities.)

Connecting Fiddle Styles to the Everyday

The above narrative and analyses pointed to the importance of fiddling at Metisfest; with the exception of just five performers, all of the entertainers were fiddlers or, at least, fiddled some of the time. Fiddling is, in fact, central to most Metis events. As ethnomusicologist Annette Chretien (Metis) notes, “[f]ew would dispute the widespread use of Metis fiddling as a cultural marker, and symbol of Metis identity” (2005, 179). Yet Chretien also cautions that Metis fiddling “has now come to constitute a musical stereotype” (ibid., 179). She is especially interested in challenging the myth that “‘real’ Metis music is the fiddling traditions of Western Canada, especially what has come to be known as the ‘Red River style’” (ibid., 107). The problem, as Chretien argues, is that “in constructing the image of ‘one’ Metis nation through ‘one’ Metis music, the rich and varied traditions of many other Metis are not only reduced, but are effectively erased, and thereby silenced” (2005, 21). While Chretien’s concerns are important and are at least

somewhat relevant to Metisfest, I would argue that, as identified in the above analyses which note the significant differences between fiddlers performing at the event, Metisfest organizers are promoting many styles of fiddling, including: 1) the style played by the Lepine family, 2) an old-time ‘down-east’ style (adopted by Lamoureux), and 3) two Interlake styles (as heard in Lavallee and Mousseau’s performances). Organizers, then, are mainly concerned with inviting Indigenous performers.

As organizer Dan Goodon told me, a major goal of the event is “to showcase our talent” (interview with Goodon 2012), that is, to showcase Metis fiddlers, not necessarily Metis fiddling (although this is not a distinction that was raised during Metisfest, and all of the fiddle music is considered, by most, to be legitimately Metis music). Goodon explained that there is so much Metis talent, but that many Metis artists are not well-promoted; some even lack an online presence:

...we have so much Metis talent and we had one fellow that came, Garry Lepine, and he had been fiddling for forty years, and, you know what...when I Googled his name, nothing was on there! And I said you know what, this is a forty year...veteran of Metis music...and the internet...the world wants to look at [it]. He didn’t come up! (interview with Goodon 2012)¹⁴⁹

The promotion of Metis fiddlers (and, in fact, Indigenous fiddlers more broadly) emerges, then, as a key component of Metisfest. There is no expectation that fiddlers *have to* play in a particular style. Fiddle music (including playing, listening, watching, and dancing to the fiddle) is understood as an expression of Metis-ness without necessarily being

¹⁴⁹ I searched ‘Garry Lepine’ using Google on 11 September 2012 and the first result to come up was a video of Lepine playing for the Four Nations dancers at International Metisfest 2011. Of course, Google results vary from computer to computer and change quickly over time. By 9 January 2013 Lepine’s Metisfest video did not show up until page two of my Google search. Interestingly, I got nearly 750 hits!

attached to one particular style. Fiddle music is, in fact, so important to some attendees that, as Goodon related to me,

Some of them [attendees] are junkies now...they have to have the fiddle going; they have to be able to watch a DVD of dancers, you know. They have to be able to see the dance. And that's good to see. (interview with Goodon 2012)

Although the fiddle may be somewhat of a musical stereotype, playing a CD or DVD of fiddlers and jiggers is a way for Metis to feel connected to a Metis cultural network after they return home from Metisfest. In this way, Metisfest moves into the everyday lives of attendees through the music and dance that they bring back into their homes.

Certain stylistic values do, nonetheless, emerge as important at Metisfest, and, as I have found by attending numerous Indigenous fiddle events, within the Indigenous fiddle circuit more broadly.¹⁵⁰ At Metisfest, the most important stylistic element was the focus on groove over melody, with this stylistic element achieved through ghosted notes and accents on the off-beats, or, in some cases, continuous motion (e.g., the addition of 'filler' sixteenth notes). This closely connects the music to dance, which is exceptionally important at Indigenous events, both as a performance for a viewing audience and (especially) as a participatory practice that brings the audience to the dance floor. In fact, as noted earlier, there was not a strict division between performances where people watched and performances that were positioned as 'dances'¹⁵¹ (although the audience was more likely to dance to certain fiddlers). The only exception noted in the analyses of the fiddlers provided above was the tune played by Lamoureux. Although his version of

¹⁵⁰ As I suggest in my biographies of Mousseau and Lavallee, fiddlers who are popular at Indigenous events are not necessarily known at old-time events, suggesting that there is a separate Indigenous fiddle circuit in Manitoba (although there is some overlap between the old-time and Indigenous circuits).

¹⁵¹ This provides an interesting contrast to old-time fiddle contests where such a division is quite clear most of the time (the jam session sometimes being an exception).

“Down Yonder” does not exclude dancers per se, it brought few dancers to the floor and clearly emphasized a level of showmanship not necessary for a dancing audience. (Of course, Lamoureux is also able to play the more ‘straight-ahead’ tunes that dancers love, and in fact often did during his Metisfest sets.) These stylistic similarities (i.e., the focus on groove and connection to dance) are important because they indicate that there is something unique about Metis fiddling; in addition, it takes place in a unique circuit, expressing the values of the Indigenous communities from which the style emerges.

The fiddlers attending Metisfest notably come from varied backgrounds, whether growing up on a reserve, in a Metis community, or in a non-Metis community. It is clear that Metisfest organizers are not concerned with enforcing strict rules regarding the identity of performers. Organizers do not require performers to be ‘card-carrying’ Metis; rather, as Goodon told me, they choose fiddlers who are accepted as part of the Metis (or broader Indigenous) fiddle circuit (interview with Goodon 2012).¹⁵² In contrast, the MMF has strict guidelines for membership. While every nation has the right to determine its own membership, these guidelines have excluded some who consider themselves to be Metis, creating what Sawchuk refers to as an accordion effect, with various organizations simultaneously trying to narrow and widen the definition of Metis (2000, 86). Beyond the issue of actual membership are the divisive effects of government policies on Indigenous identities. As Lawrence notes, government policies created false divisions between Metis and First Nations and forced Metis away from their First Nations cousins when, in some cases, a stronger connection would have been desirable (2004, 86). Metisfest, then,

¹⁵² This means that fiddlers often play at ‘sister’ events, including the Metis events in Batoche, Saskatchewan, and on the Turtle Mountain Chippewa Reservation, North Dakota.

becomes a space for community building where official identities, influenced by both government policies and Indigenous organizations, lose *some* of their relevance. In other words, regardless of their ‘official’ identity, each fiddler or jigger becomes an important part of the Metisfest community over the course of the weekend, and, in this way, the boundaries between First Nations and Metis in particular, and Metis and re-settler to a lesser degree, maintain some of the fluidity that they often have in day-to-day life.¹⁵³

While it is important to note the ways in which Metis musical practices continue to be shaped by the diversity of peoples that make up the Metis nation(s), a thorough analysis of Indigenous events must consider the impact of colonization. As an increasing number of young fiddlers learn to fiddle in schools (most often from re-settler teachers), they bring a new style of fiddling to their communities and to Metis events. This new style often has little connection to traditional, Indigenous fiddling, or traditional ways of learning. (Granted, new approaches to learning are influencing a vast array of traditional musics; the point, however, is that the consequences for cultural loss are especially salient within Indigenous communities as they recover from cultural genocide.) The presence of outside influences should not, of course, be seen as delegitimizing a style as ‘authentically’ Metis. In fact, new styles can (and do) become legitimate expressions of

¹⁵³ I do not wish to suggest that there is no real difference between Metis and First Nations. The issue that I am pointing to here is that Metis and First Nations do have some common history, as well as a history of exchange, whether through marriage or through work with organizations such as the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples or early Metis and non-Status organizations (see Sawchuk 2000 for further discussion of political organizations that included both Metis and non-Status ‘Indians’). As Lawrence points out, the strict division between Metis and First Nations was sometimes a forced division created by government policy, not a division that mixed-blood people wanted to maintain (2004, 86).

Metis culture through their acceptance by Metis communities;¹⁵⁴ denying their legitimacy denies the fact that Metis fiddling can change. As I have already suggested, Metisfest focuses on fiddling (an action with many forms including dancing and playing the fiddle) as an expression of Metis-ness, and is less concerned with issues of style (a particular way of performing that action). Yet the power of outside influences must be understood in the context of Canada's colonial history.

The power of colonialization is, in part, the power to convince the 'other' that they are less worthy, and that their cultures are less valuable than those of the colonizer. Colonial beliefs become internalized when a nation begins to accept the image created by the colonizer (Nicholas 2001). As scholar Andrea Bear Nicholas (Maliseet) notes,

The irony of colonialism is that the more oppressive and coercive the colonial regime...the more readily do oppressed people come to devalue their own beliefs, customs and languages and actually seek to emulate their oppressors in order to gain relief from their oppression. (Nicholas 2001)

With the introduction of the Frontier Fiddle program (led by re-settlers) in schools (see Gluska 2011 for a detailed discussion of the program),¹⁵⁵ will Indigenous styles become less valued?¹⁵⁶ Will young fiddlers turn to non-Indigenous fiddlers instead of Indigenous fiddlers because they have internalized the colonial belief that Indigenous ways of

¹⁵⁴ This is, in fact, the basic definition of Metis fiddling provided in the Gabriel Dumont publication *Drops of Brandy* (2002, 20).

¹⁵⁵ Gluska's interpretation of the Frontier Fiddle program is quite different from mine. Although I understand that the program has had a very positive impact on many youth, I question Gluska's whole-hearted acceptance of the program and her belief that it challenges colonial education (2011).

¹⁵⁶ My experience with the Frontier Fiddle program has led me to believe that the way in which fiddling is being taught (using tablature and learning one, correct version, down to correct bowings) has very little connection to traditional Indigenous fiddling. According to one teacher in the program, this lack of connection is due in part to the lack of interest among elders (field notes 04/26/2012). Although the reason for this lack of interest among elders is unclear, it is possible that elders, especially those who went to residential schools, feel uncomfortable in the school setting. Others may feel ill-prepared for work in a formal teaching environment.

playing are less valuable, less worthwhile, than non-Indigenous styles? Will giving all fiddlers who claim an Indigenous identity the right to perform at Indigenous events mean that those who have maintained close connections to traditional Indigenous fiddling become obsolete? These are important areas for further research and analysis.

Metisfest and the Metis Resurgence

For an hour that day, we created a space and a place where the impacts of colonialism were lessened, where we could feel what it feels like to be part of a united, healthy community, where our children could glimpse our beautiful visions for their future.

—Leanne Simpson 2012, 13

If through your life you don't know where you came from, if you don't know what's behind you, how can you go forward?

—Dan Goodon 2012

Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Simpson begins her book *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back* with a description of a “community procession of Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg dancers, artists, singers, drummers, community leaders, Elders, families and children” that took place on the main street of Nogojiwanong (also known as Peterborough, Ontario) in 2009 as part of a celebration that marked National Aboriginal Day. Simpson's book, which focuses on the purposefully undefined concept of resurgence (2011, 25), provides a useful framework for understanding the political implications of Metisfest. Like most Metis festivals, Metisfest is constructed as *apolitical*, never overtly addressing the obviously political issues of Indigenous rights or membership criteria—important issues to the Metis nation(s). The festival has not, in fact, been able to forge a relationship with the Manitoba Metis Federation. As indicated earlier in this chapter, one organizer suggested that this inability to forge a relationship is because “culture and politics don't

mix” (personal communication 29/07/2012). The purposefully apolitical nature of the festival is likely also related to the desire of some Metis people to have cultural spaces that are separate from the political spaces that have been rife with controversy.¹⁵⁷

Yet Metisfest should be analyzed as an act of resistance and of resurgence, if not, strictly speaking, as a political event. As Simpson points out, “[w]hen resistance is defined solely as large-scale political mobilization, we miss much of what has kept our languages, cultures, and systems of governance alive” (2011, 16). Simpson’s understanding of a political act, then, is much broader than that employed in social movement theory,¹⁵⁸ which, according to Simpson, “erroneously concludes that there has not yet been an Indigenous social movement in Canada” (2011, 16). Again, speaking of the procession in Nogojiwanong, Simpson writes:

This was not a protest. This was not a demonstration. This was a quiet, collective act of resurgence. It was a mobilization and it was political because it was a reminder. It was a reminder that although we are collectively unseen in the city of Peterborough, when we come together with one mind and one heart we can transform our land and our city into decolonized space and a place of resurgence, even if it is only for a brief amount of time. It was a reminder of everything good about our traditions, our culture, our songs, dances and performances. It was a celebration of our resistance, a celebration that after everything, we are still here. It was an insertion of Nishnaabeg presence. (Simpson 2011, 11–12)

Metisfest attendees do not actively demonstrate; they do not stage a protest. Rather, like the procession in Nogojiwanong, Metisfest provides a space, controlled primarily by Metis people, for resurgence. It provides a space to live as Metis people, that is, to insert a Metis presence into a re-settler context and celebrate still being there “after everything”

¹⁵⁷ This theme has come up several times in my research, with people noting that they became more involved in fiddling because their involvement with a Metis organization had become too political.

¹⁵⁸ Social movement theory attempts to understand social mobilization and its political, social, and/or cultural consequences.

(Simpson 2011, 12). Metisfest is, then, an important space where the Metis nation(s) can come together and reassert themselves as living, contemporary peoples.

Non-Metis (both First Nations and re-settler) people do, of course, attend Metisfest. In fact, when I suggested in an email that I was interested in Metisfest in part because it was an event put on by Metis people for Metis people, organizer Dan Goodon quickly clarified that the event was for everyone (email communication 28/08/2012). This clarification points to Goodon's desire to make all people feel welcome, and his desire to educate both Metis and non-Metis people about Metis culture. As he related during a phone interview, when Metisville began in Boissevain, many people in the community (including Metis people) knew little about Metis culture. He thought, for this reason, that it was time to "do some educating" (interview with Goodon 2012). Yet when speaking at length to Goodon, it became clear that providing a space for Metis people to gather and express themselves as Metis people was one of the most memorable and sustaining aspects of the event for Goodon, keeping him going even without financial recompense. Goodon told me with great enthusiasm about the many connections that were made at Metisfest as people got in touch with what he calls their "lost relatives" (ibid.). He further explained that hundreds of people have told him the same story, that "they had a feeling" that they were Metis but only discovered the truth in their later years. It is only now that they are able to understand where they came from:

When they die, they can die fulfilled now, die happy, die knowing that they know where they come from. They maybe feel sad that their parents or maybe even their grandparents didn't live that life, or they didn't, they weren't exposed to it. It was hushed up, and they might feel sorry that they didn't, but now they're living it. They're living it for their parents. They're living it for their grandparents that never lived it. (interview with Goodon 2012)

Here it is clear that Goodon wants to give Metis people a space to live as Metis people.

The importance of creating this space for the expression of Metis culture was perhaps most obvious when our conversation turned to the Pemmican Trail (interview with Goodon 2012). Borrowing from the concept of the Powwow Trail, the Pemmican Trail is a network of Metis-oriented festivals that take place across Canada and the United States. All of these festivals are going to be linked online through a 'one-stop-shop' website. As Goodon told me,

...if someone is in Washington State, they've come to Batoche or they've come to Metisfest, to Oshawa, and they don't or they can't afford to do that every year and they need a fix, they need a fiddle fix, right? Because they've gotten addicted to it. They never had that when they were younger and they're sixty years old now and they're ready to retire, or they're retired and they finally found out, this is the family that my parents left, but my grandmother lived it, right. And my great-grandmother lived it, but my parents didn't. And I'm finding out when I'm fifty-five years old that I'm Metis. Now I'm coming back to it, and I'm seeing it, and I can see the eyes of my sister in other people, or the nose of my brother in somebody else. I can see the connection here. And we live out in Washington State, but we know that our ancestry is from the Prairies, you know. So if they can't afford to go anywhere, we want to make sure that they can get somewhere without having to dig, and dig, and dig, and dig. Where do I find that festival, or where do I do this? We want them to come to Metisfest, sure. Does Batoche want them to go to Batoche? Sure, they do. But can they afford it, right? So with this Pemmican Trail of connecting it, there might be something in Montana, or they can look north into BC, or Alberta, somewhere that's closer so they don't have to travel for twenty hours to get there. (interview with Goodon 2012)

Although he wants his own event to be successful, Goodon places a priority on creating spaces that are easily accessible, where Metis people can re-build connections with other Metis people, and where they can freely live their Metis culture.

In fact, in my conversation with Goodon, it was obvious that the moments he most enjoyed and found the most memorable were the moments where community-

building was front and centre, moments when he saw lost connections being rebuilt. As he related to me,

...that's what you'll see at the festival. You'll see people smiling and laughing, and shaking hands, and hugging, and you know you'll see even crying, but it'll be more tears of joy, you know. I found a relative and I never seen you for the last fifty years, you know. We've made this connection here and you'll see people, they will come back and they'll just continue coming back. They are just kind of drawn to it. (interview with Goodon 2012)

Goodon, through the festival and his work promoting the festival, wants “to talk to people, and let them know, it's proud, it's okay to be Metis” (2012). Metisfest can be seen as a first step, a safe space to build a sense of pride that can then be taken into the everyday. Although Goodon's explicit goal is to promote and preserve his Metis culture, the closely connected, although somewhat implicit, goal is to rebuild the community, and create a space for Metis resurgence.

Metisfest does not, nonetheless, completely distance itself from the multicultural framework that continues to dominant re-settler society in Manitoba. On the one hand, Metisfest does not fit into the mold of multicultural festivity, where a premium is placed on marking clear cultural boundaries by donning ‘traditional’ garb, playing music that is markedly different from the mainstream, and serving culturally unique foods.¹⁵⁹ At Metisfest, a Metis style of fiddling is not strictly defined. Although some of the food is unique, most is the same food attendees eat day to day. Furthermore, the use of Metis symbols is overall quite subtle, and the musicians wear, for the most part, ‘street clothes’; although the dancers do perform in heritage costumes—this is expected of dance

¹⁵⁹ An example of Metis-style fiddling as part of a multicultural worldview will be discussed in chapter six, providing an interesting point-of-comparison. Greenhill and Thoroski's article on Folklorama is also a good example of music and dance performance in a multicultural framework (2001).

troupe—this may be because dance troupes are often featured at events marketed as multicultural, where such regalia is the norm. In other words, Metisfest does not create a strict divide between modern, contemporary Canadians and Metis people, or between the everyday lives of Metis people and their lives in the contemporary Metis space created by Metisfest. The boundaries of Metis-ness, that is, of ‘other-ness,’ are not delineated for a white audience. On the other hand, Metisfest is sometimes constructed (by both Metis and non-Metis peoples) as part of the multicultural, Canadian state. For example, it was paralleled with Ukrainians in Dauphin wanting to preserve (and promote) their culture—a distinct concept from ‘living’ one’s culture—and the representative from Manitoba Lotteries talked about the importance of Canada’s cultural mosaic.¹⁶⁰

Negotiating the accepted rhetoric of multiculturalism with the desire to move beyond the shallow concepts of tolerance evoked by a multicultural framework is tricky for two reasons. First, multiculturalism is rarely challenged in Manitoba; in fact, many of Manitoba’s towns and cities have one or more (often very popular) festivals intended as celebrations of multiculturalism. Given the continued racism that many Indigenous people face in their day-to-day lives and the fact that Metis people were forced to hide their identities (if they were able to) for many years, multiculturalism, with its ‘tolerance’ for and celebration of the other, is a step forward from overt hatred and erasure of the other. Second, funding for cultural festivals often comes from sources such as Canadian Heritage.¹⁶¹ As Duke Redbird notes (discussing funding for Back to Batoche), festival

¹⁶⁰ The representative also noted that Manitoba Lotteries was supporting thirty-five cultural events in 2012 (field notes 28/07/2012).

¹⁶¹ Metisfest was sponsored by Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism, and Canadian Heritage, among other sponsors.

organizers sometimes use language associated with multiculturalism as a way to make events appealing to funding agencies (1980, 48–50). Multicultural rhetoric can, in this way, be strategically adopted; that is, an event that uses the language of multiculturalism can still centre on resurgence in practice, moving beyond a “shallow multicultural education day for Canadians to feel less guilty about their continued occupation of [Metis] lands” (Simpson 2012, 13). While borrowing the language of multiculturalism, the “flourishment of the *Indigenous* inside” (Simpson 2011, 17) remains central to Metisfest; that is, it is not a spectacle for the benefit of the non-Indigenous outside, but a rendezvous or gathering for the Metis nation(s).

Concluding Comments

Although just one of the many annual Metis-centered events, Metisfest provides an opening into the priorities of a Metis rendezvous. While welcoming to all, I have argued that Metisfest is first and foremost a space for Metis resurgence, that is, a space for the contemporary expression of a *lived* Metis culture that is not strictly bounded in a particular place or time. As a central component of the event, fiddling is a particularly strong reflection of the diversity of a lived, Metis identity; it is not one thing, bounded within an unchanging, narrowly defined style, but is varied based on the life experiences of the fiddlers. In this way, the music at Metisfest is an extension of the everyday (i.e., it draws from and builds on the everyday lives of fiddlers and attendees) rather than a special form of music packaged for the event. It is, furthermore, integrated into the everyday as attendees, through video and sound recordings, bring Metisfest home (i.e., they bring the sounds, images, and sense of community home, albeit in a rather static

form), reminding them of their relationships with other Metis and to their Metis nation. Because fiddling is a cultural expression that is shared among First Nations, Metis, and re-settlers, the event also provides a space to negotiate complex identities. In the context of a Metis-controlled event, Metis people become united as a healthy, vibrant community (Simpson 2011, 12–13). It is thus a political space in so much as it has the potential to create and support a Metis resurgence.

PART II: OLD-TIME FIDDLELING

Chapter Three: Towards a Definition of the (Red River) Old-Time Style

The term ‘old-time’ began appearing in American newspapers in the early 1900s. In the United States, old-time was a broad label applied to several genres including “fiddle music, Victorian parlour songs, Anglo-American folk ballads and even sacred songs” (Trew 2000, 192). By the 1920s, the term had gained commercial currency and was being used to sell music of the American southeast (otherwise known as ‘hillbilly’ music). The main selling features of American old-time, according to ethnomusicologist Johanne Trew, included the nostalgia that it invoked in listeners and its (supposed) “location in the past” (ibid.). Newly developed radio and recording technology, paradoxically, became the means for its proliferation. The term spread to Canada shortly after it was introduced to American consumers (ibid.); in Manitoba, the first references to old-time music began to appear in local newspapers just before the 1920s (e.g., see “Present ‘Aunt Susan’ Tonight” 1918). Trew notes, however, that in contrast to American usage, the term ‘old-time’ was more narrowly defined in Canada, “encompassing only instrumental dance music—usually fiddle music—and its associated dance repertoire” (Trew 2000, 193); vocal genres, important in the American definition, were therefore excluded from Canadian definitions of old-time.

Canadian definitions of old-time are, in fact, quite different from American definitions. Although both refer to music with ties to European folk musics that are now often heard in competitive venues (offering a basic definition of old-time music, albeit a definition that says little about stylistic particularities),¹⁶² the styles have different Turtle

¹⁶² See Graff (1999) and Goertzen (2003) for further discussion of American old-time contests.

Island histories; that is, American and Canadian old-time musics followed distinct paths into the contemporary era. For this reason, many of the important issues explored by American old-time music scholars—such as nostalgia and revival—are irrelevant, or at least less relevant, when studying Canadian old-time (e.g., see Johnson’s discussion of revival [2006, 13–6]). Ultimately, the use of the term across North America masks many of the distinctions between the American and Canadian old-time styles. As a way to alleviate this complexity and provide a clearer understanding of the situated (i.e., Canadian and, more narrowly, Manitoban) use of the term, this chapter does not include discussion of American old-time music, unless directly relevant to old-time fiddling in Canada; rather, it focuses on Canadian (and especially Manitoban) understandings of, and contexts for, old-time music.¹⁶³ It ultimately seeks to provide readers with a working definition of the (Red River) old-time style (i.e., Manitoba’s version of old-time fiddling).

The chapter begins with an overview of fiddling in early Canada. This first section explores how diverse European-derived fiddle styles (understood as old-time in the broad sense of the term) spread across Indigenous lands. The second section points to the emergence of a nation-wide fiddle style known as the old-time style (but sometimes also referred to as the down-east style); that is, it points to the shift from a definition of old-time that includes all instrumental music with links to European folk traditions to old-time as a specific, and more narrowly defined, style of dance music that became popular across Canada via radio and television (and the music of Don Messer) beginning in the

¹⁶³ Sherry Johnson’s overview of the old-time style firmly roots the style in Canada without reference to American old-time music (2006, 94–99). Her understanding of the old-time style is closest to my own, as informed by my consultants, and was an inspiration as I wrote this chapter.

1930s. The section that follows uses interviews with fiddlers and accompanists, as well as my own observations as a long-time competitive fiddler and researcher in Manitoba's old-time circuit, to explore definitions of old-time fiddling that emerge from within Manitoba's old-time fiddle community. In the concluding section, the strands gathered from these varied sources are tied together in order to present a working definition of the old-time style. This definition takes regional differences into account and defines the (Red River) old-time style as a process—in particular a process of unmarking—that situates it as the norm within a sea of 'others'.¹⁶⁴

Fiddling Comes to Turtle Island

Little information is available about Turtle Island's earliest fiddle traditions. What is known has been pieced together from fragments uncovered in archives (Lederman 2012) and by retracing connections between contemporary and European styles (e.g., see Rodgers 1980). It is clear, nonetheless, that the first Europeans to re-settle Turtle Island—the French, Scottish, and British—brought fiddles, dispersing them across fur trade country (Johnson 2006, 93). Archival lists of supplies ordered by employees working for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) show that instruments (usually fiddles or flutes) could be ordered from Europe if requested; although orders for fiddles were very rare (perhaps because men¹⁶⁵ brought instruments across the ocean with them when they emigrated), the large number of requests for violin¹⁶⁶ strings points to the importance of fiddling in the early years of re-settlement (see Commissions of Goods to Servants,

¹⁶⁴ For a fuller understanding of the musical elements of the style, readers should refer to the accompanying recordings (discussed throughout the chapter) and to the attached transcriptions (appendix one).

¹⁶⁵ Women did not immigrate to Turtle Island until the fur trade was well established.

¹⁶⁶ I use the term 'violin' when it is used in the original source. Otherwise I always use 'fiddle' because it is the preferred term in the old-time and Metis fiddle scenes.

1787–1897). While it is likely that fiddles were brought to Turtle Island at an earlier date, the first known references to fiddling are from 1645 (a wedding with music played on a violin referenced in *Jesuit Relations*) and 1749 (a reference to fiddlers found in HBC records from Moose Factory) (Lederman 2012).¹⁶⁷

The dispersal of fiddles across fur trade country had a significant impact on First Nations, due in part to colonizers' attempts to eradicate Indigenous cultures (i.e., with the fiddle replacing outlawed Indigenous musical practices) (Lederman 2012); of course, some First Nations (and, later, Metis) were undoubtedly simply attracted to the fiddle and repertoire. This early period saw a mix of French, Scottish, and English tunes, influenced by Inuit and First Nations musics, spread across Indigenous lands via fur trade routes. As immigration increased, pockets of re-settlers from Scotland created a Scottish-derived style in Cape Breton, Prince Edward Island, and parts of Ontario, while pockets of re-settlers from Ireland created an Irish-derived style in Newfoundland, parts of New Brunswick, Ontario, and Quebec (Lederman 2012). Exchange between northern and southern Turtle Island (i.e., Canada and the United States), first as a result of the whaling industry (Johnson et al 2012, 116)¹⁶⁸ and lumber camps (e.g., see Goertzen 2004, 340),¹⁶⁹ and, later, through sheet music and travelling minstrel and vaudeville shows (Lederman 2012) further diversified musical influences and was particularly important in the

¹⁶⁷ The first document referenced here is now available online at Hieroseme Lalamen, "Journal Begun, 1645, November," *The Jesuit Relations and Allied Documents: Travels and Explorations of the Jesuit Missionaries in New France, 1610–1791, Vol. XXVII, Hurons, Lower Canada: 1642–1645*, ed. Reuben Gold Thwaites (Cleveland, OH: The Burrows Brothers Company, 1898), p. 100, http://puffin.creighton.edu/jesuit/relations/relations_27.html (accessed 29 January 2013).

¹⁶⁸ Johnson et al note that there was contact between British and American whalers and the local Inuit population in the early nineteenth century.

¹⁶⁹ Goertzen notes that fiddle music from Canada was brought down to Mississippi by a logger (2004, 340).

development of a new Canadian style that blended the diverse styles heard in the re-settled dominion.

The late 1800s saw a new wave of immigration as the Canadian government attempted to re-settle what had just become western Canada. Immigration from Ukraine was especially important in the Prairies, bringing a Ukrainian style of fiddling to the region that can still be heard today (Lederman 2012, Ostashewski 2012) and influencing non-Ukrainian styles of fiddling. (In fact, most of Manitoba's contemporary old-time fiddlers count at least one Ukrainian melody in their repertoire lists.) Influences from other countries of origin have likely also shaped fiddling in Canada. For example, fiddler Henri Hince told me about a tune that he learned from his father, which he referred to as "Albert Riel's Waltz" (because his father learned the tune from Riel). When a fiddler from North Dakota heard the tune, the American asked Hince where he had learned the *Norwegian* waltz (interview with Hince 2012). Although the roots of "Albert Riel's Waltz" cannot be confirmed, it is likely that music of immigrants that came to Turtle Island in small numbers—such as Norwegians, Poles, Romanians, Hungarians, and Icelanders—was integrated into the fiddle music that was played in their region of settlement. In fact, Lederman suggests that rural communities saw more mixing of music than urban communities because in rural areas ethnic groups were less segregated (1992, 455).

During this early period, fiddling was used in numerous venues; for many re-settlers, and for many Indigenous people, fiddling was simply a way of life—part of the everyday—and thus venues for fiddling were often ordinary, everyday places. Johnson

notes that lumber camps, house parties, old-time dances, and contests were all important venues for fiddle music (2006, 99–108). This mix of informal and (more) formal venues for fiddling was also important in Manitoba. In some ways, every event was an excuse to pull out the fiddle and dance. An article from 1902 in *Echo du Manitoba* reports on an “after harvest” dance during which fiddlers played “reels” and “gigues” (“La Grosse” 1902, 3). An article printed in *La Liberté* reported on a birthday party that started at seven in the evening, continuing until six in the morning, with entertainment provided by a fiddler and an accordionist (“Broad Valley” 1917, 6). Fiddling was part of Mardi Gras celebrations (“Les Jours Gras” 1916, 6); it was used to entertain between acts in theatre productions (“Present ‘Aunt Susan’ Tonight” 1918) and as part of minstrel shows (“Old Time Fiddling Contest” 1927, 5); it was featured at picnics (“Manitoba Old-Timers” 1945, 3); and was even heard in military barracks (“Stars in the Army!” 1943).

Although sometimes conceived of as a rural music, fiddling was important in both rural and urban Manitoba; in fact, musicians from the ‘big city’ (Winnipeg) have a long history of playing in both the city and the country (Mackintosh 2010, 22). The Royal Alexandra hotel in Winnipeg offered dances featuring fiddling beginning in 1906 (“Pioneers Cavort” 1929), if not earlier; and the Trianon ballroom, the Normandy, and the Rainbow Dance Gardens provided Winnipeg audiences with regularly scheduled dances featuring fiddle music into the 1950s (Mackintosh 2010, 15). Dances were also important in rural communities, again with fiddle as the main instrument. As accompanist Jean Snider, nee MacTavish (b. 1923) noted, dances would be held whenever a new building was constructed in Swan River, Manitoba, a town near her parents’ farmhouse:

Swan River was growing then, and there was always somebody putting up a big building for business, and he'd put the structure up on the cement floor, and cover it...and he'd have dances there for a year or more. And this is where the dances were. (interview with Snider 2012)

As Andy Dejarlis' former band mate, Joe Mackintosh, notes, Winnipeg musicians were often asked to play in rural communities, "from Clear Lake and Dauphin to Virden and Brandon, Treherne, Winnipeg Beach, Gunton, Gimli, Sprague, and more" (2010, 22).

Of course, many fiddlers came from rural areas and provided the music for local dances (Mackintosh 2010, 22). Local fiddlers typically played in one of the most popular sites for rural dances, the schoolhouse. Jean Snider remembers dances being held in the schoolhouse she attended as a child. As she recalled in an interview (2012), the desks would be pushed against the wall, and coats, and even sleeping children, would be piled on top, all to make room for dancing. Likewise, Beatrice Durupt (b. 1924), a fiddler from Haywood, Manitoba, affirmed that she used to attend and play for schoolhouse dances (interview with Durupt 2012). Others have similarly confirmed that schoolhouse dances were held near Portage la Prairie (interview with Bilton 2012) as well as near Brandon, Manitoba (interview with Curtis 2012). Schoolhouse dances were likely commonplace throughout the prairies until the 1950s, as attested to in an article on schoolhouse dances around Swift Current, Saskatchewan (Newlove 1976, 30–32). These dances were an important gathering place for families living outside of rural towns, and, as suggested by Lyla Bilton, when these schoolhouses closed, rural families lost an important space for community building (interview with Bilton 2012). Prior to the 1950s, therefore, the popularity of fiddling was reflected in the range of venues where fiddling could be heard,

from the most isolated, rural regions of the province into the dance halls of Manitoba's big city.

Commercialization and the New (Canadian) Old-Time Style

Andy Dejarlis got up to the microphone with a fiddle...he had seven thousand people in the palm of his hand. I never forgot it. It was an electrifying moment.

—Jeanne Carlson (2012), fiddler

The early years of fiddling in Canada saw both the development of distinct styles based on one country of origin (such as the Cape Breton Style based largely on the fiddle music of Scotland) and the development of styles amalgamated from the musics of several countries (such as the 'Anglo' or the Metis styles), although in reality the distinction is not always quite so clear. Yet with the advent of recording technology and radio, contact between fiddle styles (as well as between fiddle styles and other genres of music) increased rapidly. Local fiddlers gained access to recordings of fiddlers from other regions of Turtle Island and to the popular musics of the day, and these new influences began shaping local styles. During this period, the promotion of fiddling became a commercial endeavour, as fiddlers began vying for coveted radio spots and recording contracts; in a few cases, fiddlers became veritable Canadian idols. A tension between local and national fiddlers also emerged, as Don Messer brought a new style, now most often referred to as the old-time, or down-east, style to Canadians across the country via radio and television. Messer's success led some to lament the "homogenization of various fiddle styles into one" and the apparent demise of local styles (Trew 2000, 179), although it can also be understood as a style that unified Canadians from coast to coast. In Manitoba, this tension played out on several levels as local

fiddlers, especially Metis fiddler Andy Dejarlis, garnered commercial success using locally derived but adapted repertoire (influenced by old-time and popular musics), and as local fiddlers vied for continued appeal in the midst of Messer's unprecedented national success.

Manitoba's fiddlers were first heard on local radio stations during the early period of radio broadcasting. Bob (Robert Leon) Goulet was particularly well known in the early years of Manitoba radio broadcasts, performing with his orchestra on CKY (Winnipeg) in the 1930s, especially between 1933 to 1934 ("Radio Flashes" 1933). According to Andy Dejarlis, Goulet also recorded with RCA Victor (cited in Mackintosh 2010, 37).

Although it is not clear when Goulet began recording (Dejarlis does not give a date), he was likely the first fiddler in Manitoba, and one of the first in Canada, to release an album.¹⁷⁰ Del Genthon, son of Frederick Genthon (who garnered recent fame for his version of the "Red River Jig" recorded in 1940 and released on Johnson's *Bellows and Bows* in 2012), was also heard over the airwaves on a show called "Le Ranch" aired on the French radio station CKSB, broadcast out of St. Boniface (now part of Winnipeg) (Mackintosh 2010, 37). Other local fiddlers were also heard on the radio (e.g., Jimmy Gowler "old time fiddler" was heard on CKY in 1929) ("Radio" 1929), although many of the fiddlers broadcast on early twentieth-century radio in Manitoba are now forgotten.

¹⁷⁰ According to Lederman (2012) Quebecois fiddlers began releasing records just before the 1920s, while Cape Breton fiddlers began to record in the late 1920s. In Manitoba, Andy Dejarlis, who began recording in the 1950s, is usually cited as the first fiddler to release an album. It is likely, however, that Goulet was recording before Dejarlis. Unfortunately, copies of Goulet's 78s are no longer available to confirm dates. Interestingly, Lederman (2012) lists a Leon Robert Goulet as a Quebecois fiddler who recorded with Victor in the 1920s and 30s. Given the similar timeline and the fact that both have the same name (although the first and middle names are reversed), it is possible that the fiddler referenced in Lederman is actually Bob Goulet from Manitoba. A Leon Robert Goulet is also included in Moogk's *Roll Back the Years* (1980), but the recording date of the tunes listed ("*Petit Reel Indien*" and "*Reel Rouge*") are not included.

Metis fiddler Andy Dejarlis, born in Woodridge, Manitoba (circa 110 kilometers southeast of Winnipeg), had the most lasting impact on fiddling in Manitoba, beginning his career at the dawn of the commercial age. Dejarlis and his sister Dolly, the first member of his orchestra, began playing on a weekly program aired from the Royal Alexandra Hotel in Winnipeg shortly after moving to the city in 1934 (Watson 2002, 11). Dejarlis and Dolly also began playing for dances in both Winnipeg and St. Boniface with a group billed as “Andy’s Old-Time and Modern Orchestra” (ibid.). From 1935 to 1944, Dejarlis and his orchestra “The Red River Mates” were heard on a CJRC radio program. The group played what was described in a *Winnipeg Free Press* article from 1939 as “old-time swing” (ibid., 16–17). By 1937, Dejarlis and his orchestra were performing every Saturday night at the Norman Hall in Winnipeg, drawing an estimated thirteen hundred dancers (Mackintosh 2010, 53). From 1937 to 1943, Dejarlis became an increasingly familiar prairie performer as he toured western Ontario, Manitoba, and eastern Saskatchewan (Watson 2002, 17), and as he began winning fiddle contests, including the Manitoba Championship in 1937, 1938, 1948, and 1952 (ibid., 13).

Dejarlis adopted many of his tunes from local Metis repertoire (Lederman 2012). Yet Dejarlis also wanted to keep his music ‘modern,’ borrowing from Dixieland and swing repertoire (Mackintosh 2010, 55–56). It was this desire to bring a modern element to his music that led Dejarlis to hire vocalist Helen Lowe to perform popular hits from the radio (ibid., 56). With this addition (made in 1937), Dejarlis “could legitimately advertise his group as playing ‘old time and modern music’” (ibid., 57). Dejarlis’ history of incorporating modern music included “a fine program of old time and some of the latest

rock 'n roll numbers" at the Manitoba Open fiddle competition in 1957 ("Lacroix Wins" 1957, 8). His album of "Latin dances" (n.d.) is further evidence of his desire to draw from numerous sources and try new styles.¹⁷¹ However, Dejarlis' relationship with popular music was tenuous, as evidenced in his call for a return to old-time music, which he felt "prompted a more attractive style of dancing" (Watson 2002, 33). At the same time, even when he made this call in the mid-1960s, he continued to devote some of his performance time to rock 'n roll "for the young folks" (Lecker 1965, 63).¹⁷² In addition to these varied sources of repertoire, Dejarlis became known for his compositions, although some tunes credited to Dejarlis may have been arrangements of traditional tunes.¹⁷³

Two musical examples point to these varied influences. The first is a recording of Dejarlis playing "Early Settlers' Breakdown," a typical Dejarlis composition. (This recording, taken from a CD re-release titled *Red River Jig* (n.d.), does not include information about the original album. Mackintosh, however, includes this tune in his list of tunes from Dejarlis' LP *Square Dance with Andy De Jarlis*, recorded in 1961). As shown on the transcription of the tune provided in appendix one,¹⁷⁴ the form is AABB with four-bar phrases and eight-bar sections. There are a minimal number of ornaments;

¹⁷¹ Dejarlis' album *Old Time and Latin Dancing* was released by Sunshine Records long after Dejarlis' death. One online source (iTunes) suggests that it was originally released in 1974, but I have never seen a copy of the original LP (or even a picture of the original LP). Although I spoke to the brother-in-law of one of the musicians on the album, as well as the engineer who prepared the re-release, I have not been able to determine for certain if the tracks on this album were previously released. I was nonetheless told by one source that some of the tracks were previously released on an album titled *Latin Dancing* (email communication with Shane Ward 2012). I do not believe that any of the tunes on this album are original compositions.

¹⁷² It is hard to imagine what this mix of old-time and rock 'n roll would have sounded like; unfortunately, no sound recordings are available.

¹⁷³ For example, "Whiskey Before Breakfast" is credited to Dejarlis in one of his music collections. Dejarlis should only be credited, however, for the particular arrangement printed in the collection.

¹⁷⁴ All transcriptions included in this dissertation were completed by the author.

those included are mostly upper mordents. (The mordents noted in the transcriptions are sometimes omitted, or, in some cases, may be grace notes.) Slurring is also infrequent; the bow strokes, especially the eighth notes, are often detached, and the accents are placed on the downbeats. The sixteenth note/eighth note/sixteenth note figure found especially in the B part (and once in the A part) is also of note given that it is a common figure in Dejarlis' tunes. The melody, interestingly, tends to move downwards, a feature Lederman identified in her recordings of Metis fiddlers from western Manitoba (1988, 211). Although the tempo is quick (quarter note = 123), it is possible that the recording play-back was too fast when moved from LP to CD given that the pitch on the CD is quite sharp. The accompanying band is piano, bass, and drums (including wood block).

The second example, "When Lilacs Bloom Again," is taken from the Sunshine Records release *Old Time and Latin Dancing* (discussed in footnote 153), an album that includes a variety of 'popular' selections from the time.¹⁷⁵ (The track is likely misnamed by Sunshine Records or by Dejarlis since it does not sound like the popular tune by the same name.) The form of the tune is AA1BA1, and features seven- and eight-bar phrases. Although it includes some asymmetry in phrase-lengths (with seven measures per phrase), the sections have a symmetrical number of beats (32 beats per section) due to the mixed meter (i.e., two measures have six beats instead of four). In this way, the tune feels asymmetrical, but the larger structure remains symmetrical. (Some may even hear the

¹⁷⁵ The other tracks on the album are "Never on a Sunday," "Magic is the Moonlight," "Isle of Capri," "Ribbons and Lace," "Green Eyes," "Oh! Ma Cherie," "Harbour Lights," "Economy Swing," "Oslomin Waltz," "Village Carousel," "Banjo Novelette," "Coul Lass," and "Valse Blues."

tune as symmetrical, although, to me, the accompaniment suggests otherwise.)¹⁷⁶ The tune borrows its feel from the rumba (particularly noticeable in the drums) and includes some rubato in the fiddle melody, as well as some ornamental slides. Melodic syncopation is found throughout the tune and is especially prominent in the B section (measures nineteen and twenty-one). The recording features a mix of instruments including two fiddles (with Manitoba fiddler Marcel Meilleur playing the harmony), piano, bass, drums, accordion, and electric guitar. The guitar, accordion, and piano each take eight-bar solos. This tune (and the album as a whole) is a significant stylistic departure from Dejarlis' other recordings because of the tune itself (Dejarlis usually played old-time/Metis tunes or his own compositions) and, most notably, the rumba-influenced accompaniment. In this way, this example points to Dejarlis' experimentation with various sources of inspiration, including popular music.

Dejarlis quickly achieved a degree of fame unattained by any other local fiddler at the time. As his sister Dolly Dejarlis reminisces, "Girls wanted to date him. Some asked how old he was. Some girls wrote to ask if they could come and sing with the band, and some would send their pictures" (Watson 2002, 15). Others made a special effort to catch his weekly radio program. As fiddler Henri Hince (b. 1929) told me:

¹⁷⁶ The majority of Dejarlis tunes (both his own recordings and his versions of traditional tunes) have symmetrical structures. I examined sheet music for seventy-three tunes recorded by Dejarlis (mostly his own compositions) and only found one example of a 'crooked' tune. I also analyzed the tunes from his album *Red River Jig* (re-released by Sunshine Records) and found one with clearly asymmetrical form (the "Red River Jig," a traditional Metis tune) and two with more subtle asymmetry (phrases that overlapped or that were asymmetrical, but with sixteen-bar sections). I also spoke with Bob Kuzak, a local fiddler who has transcribed most of Dejarlis' records, and he confirmed that the tunes Dejarlis wrote, and the majority of the tunes that he recorded, were symmetrical. The only exception Kuzak found were a few of the old, traditional Metis tunes (specifically Dejarlis' recordings of the "Red River Jig" and "Drops of Brandy").

...we used to walk—it was about three-quarters of a mile—to my uncle’s. Andy Dejarlis had a program for fifteen minutes...he was playing at 11:00. I think it was 11:15 at night. So we’d walk to our uncle’s and wait for the program...it was nice. (interview with Hince 2012)

Hince learned some of his repertoire from the radio (from both Dejarlis and later Messer), remembering tunes if they were interesting: “It would stick to your mind, you know. You’d go home and you’d try to play it” (interview with Hince 2012). The effort that Hince made to catch the show points to the popularity of Dejarlis’ music at the time and the impact his music had on fiddlers from the area (who often tried to emulate Dejarlis).

While various influences shaped Manitoba’s fiddle styles throughout the century, Dejarlis’ reach was unprecedented. By the early 1970s, a *Winnipeg Free Press* critic was speculating that Dejarlis had achieved nation-wide fame, stating that he was “probably as well known across Canada as he is in his hometown” (King 1972). Before his untimely death in 1975, Dejarlis had recorded at least thirty-two LPs and four 78s (see listing in Mackintosh 2010, 151–56); had published sheet music; and had led the band on *Chez Isadore*, a Montreal-based television show (ibid., 113–116). Building his career when the medium of radio was growing and when travel between rural towns and urban centres was becoming more feasible, Dejarlis had become a local, and to a somewhat lesser extent, a national sensation. His influence was strong in Indigenous communities, especially west of Ontario (Gibbons 1981, 84), as well as in Manitoba’s re-settler communities. As the foundation for Manitoba’s unique (old-time) style, the Red River style, many still consider Dejarlis’ versions of tunes to be definitive (Lederman 2012). Although I have found that this view is less likely to be held by the younger generation, Dejarlis is, undoubtedly, one of Manitoba’s most influential fiddlers.

Despite Dejarlis' popularity, it was Don Messer who brought a new, nation-wide style to Canada. Like Dejarlis, Messer was first heard on the radio in the mid-1930s, becoming a nationally broadcast fiddler in the mid-1940s (Green 2012). Messer also began touring the country in the 1940s (Rosenberg 2002, 192), putting on shows that were popular with Manitobans. As fiddler Lynn Mitchell (1922–2011) told me:

Well I'll tell you, it's a lot of years ago, [Messer] went across Canada, twice, maybe three times. Making money like crazy going to dances, stopped at every province and every big hall that he could find. And...he was at Pilot Mound [Manitoba] one day...He had [performed in] a big hall, or a big arena; they put a floor in there, and it was jam packed...They came from as far as Winnipeg... After the thing was over, [Messer] went down to Bill Delorme's house, and they finished the night out playing down there with Bill Delorme [a local fiddler]. And Bill just idolized him too, you know. (interview with Mitchell 2008)

However, it was Messer's weekly television show, broadcast on CBC from 1959 to 1969, that made the biggest impact on fiddling in Canada, becoming one of the most viewed television shows in the country (Rosenberg 2002, 202). Messer brought a "smoother and less ornamented" style that was "heavily influenced by popular swing music of the 1930s and 1940s" to Canadians from coast to coast (Lederman 2012). Folklorist Neil Rosenberg argues, in fact, that Messer's performances "creat[ed] a national canon of repertoire and performance practice" (1994, 24). Messer's music and style are now seen as the roots of what is referred to as either the down-east style or the Canadian old-time style.

By the 1960s, Messer began pushing a nationalist angle, with a *Calgary Herald* article quoting him saying: "I hate that word hillbilly. What we play are songs that have been around for hundreds of years. They're folk songs that could almost be called 'Canadian' folk songs" (quoted in Rosenberg 1994, 28). As suggested in this quote, Messer's music was beginning to represent a unified Canada. In fact, Trew notes that

Messer used tunes from across the country, and, in this way, he “enabl[ed] Canadians from diverse regions [to] recogniz[e] their own particular tunes, to identify with his music overall” (2000, 187). Lynn Mitchell’s story about Messer (continued from the above quote) points to the veracity of Trew’s assertion:

...he taped it. [Messer] taped all the playing that he did with old Bill Delorme. And you know what? There’s a lot of numbers that Bill Delorme wrote, good old time waltzes and different [tunes]. [Messer] taped them and then [commercially] recorded them. On [sic] then he sent him a cheque for two dollars. Minnie Delorme—that’s his wife—she told me, she says “I framed that, and I still got it, and it’s going to be in my possession and then the kids can have it afterwards.” I didn’t think Don Messer would be that small. (interview with Mitchell 2008)

As is made clear in Mitchell’s comment, not everyone thought the practice was ethical; nonetheless, as suggested in Trew (2000, 187), Messer’s adoption of tunes by Delorme would have made his performances more familiar to Manitobans, allowing them to more fully “identify with his music” (ibid.).

An analysis of “Don Messer’s Breakdown” (from a medley that includes “Big John McNeil”) performed by Don Messer and his Islanders provides an example of Messer’s style. The tune was taken from a compilation LP put together in 1979 after Messer’s death. (The LP indicates that the medley is a re-release. I suspect that the tunes were put together as a medley for this compilation LP.¹⁷⁷) “Don Messer’s Breakdown” is a reel played at a quick tempo (quarter note = 130), although the original tempo may have been slower given that the pitch is quite sharp (which suggests that the playback is faster than Messer’s original tempo). The form is AABB, with phrases of eight measures. There

¹⁷⁷ I always prefer to work with original releases. However, many of the original LPs are now hard to find. I suspect that the medley was ‘faked’ because the switch between tunes is very stark with a slight pause between them. Also, the tunes are listed as different tracks on an earlier LP.

are very few ornaments and all included ornaments are upper mordents. Although the tune is played smoothly, Messer uses relatively few slurs. When he does include slurs, most are short (i.e., just two notes) and some cross the bar line (pick-ups slurred to the down beat). Some of the eighth-notes are detached (in particular measures 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 11), while others are sustained (especially measures 2, 6, and 13). The second section has a particularly large number of detached notes, creating significant contrast with the first section. Similarly, the detached notes in the first section create a mix of short phrases and longer phrases. Messer is accompanied by piano, bass, and drums (including a wood block). This tune is a clear example of the “smoother and less ornamented” fiddle style that Messer became particularly well known for (Lederman 2012); and it is this fiddle style that came to be known across Canada (especially through a network of fiddle contests) as Canadian old-time fiddling.

Messer was, in many ways, Canada’s fiddler; as Johnson notes, “[w]ithout distinctive regional stylistic traits, the tunes were easier for fiddlers from across Canada to relate to and learn to play by ear,” and for this reason his style was adopted by fiddlers from across the country (Johnson 2006, 96). By removing the most striking stylistic markers, Messer created a new, *unmarked* style of fiddling—a style that erased overt references to the ethnic other. Although Messer was sometimes criticized for being a homogenizer, that is, as “someone who did not represent the truly authentic fiddle music of any particular region” (Rosenberg 1994, 31), Rosenberg argues that “it took the emergence of his national fiddle music canon to draw out the advocates of competing canons” (ibid.). In other words, it pushed advocates of the ‘other’ styles to promote their

own particular traditions. While Messer was against bilingualism, biculturalism, and multiculturalism (Trew 2000, 48)—emergent issues at the peak of his popularity—his music can, ultimately, be understood as part of the emerging multicultural climate. As an unmarked version of Canadian fiddling, Messer’s music represented the emerging, new ‘ethnicity’ (i.e., unhyphenated Canadians, to borrow from Mackey 2002, 20); the competing canons pointed to by Rosenberg can be understood as representing multicultural others (i.e., hyphenated Canadians). The old-time style, in this context, is not ‘just’ a particular way of playing fiddle music; rather, it is also a style that represents a particular relationship with the state and with other fiddle styles in Canada.

Defining ‘Old-Time’ in Contemporary Manitoba

More than forty years have passed since Messer’s television show was cancelled (see Trew 2002 for further information on Messer’s career and the politics surrounding the sudden cancellation of *Don Messer’s Jubilee*); since then, recordings, the internet, and fiddle camps (which often hire teachers from across Canada who specialize in a variety of fiddle styles) have had a significant influence on the younger generation of old-time fiddlers in Manitoba. How, then, does the contemporary old-time fiddle community define the old-time style? Can old-time fiddling still be understood as an unmarked style of Canadian fiddling that represents *Canadian*-Canadians (borrowing once again from Mackey 2002, 20)? This section moves beyond the roots of old-time fiddling in order to explore current definitions. Since definitions of the old-time style may vary from region to region, the focus is on how Manitoba’s old-time fiddle community defines old-time,

either explicitly in oral statements or implicitly in the ways that they perform at old-time events or in the ways that they describe fiddlers or the fiddle scene.

When discussing the old-time fiddle style with members of Manitoba's fiddle community, it is often difficult to obtain a clear definition of the style. On the one hand, some consultants focus on the 'old' in old-time—music that was played long ago. When I asked what kind of music her parents played for dances, long-time accompanist Jean Snider (b. 1923) told me that it was “real old-time music”:

Real, old-time stuff, yeah, the old, old tunes. You know, “Peek-a-Boo Waltz” and “Turkey in the Straw” for the square dances, and, oh the real old-time stuff. You don't hear it...at contests anymore. Once in a while somebody will come out with that “Peek-a-Boo Waltz” but not too often...There's been so many people, come up with their own compositions that it has taken away from the real old-time stuff, I think. But now, that orchestra the other night, at Meadow Lea [Manitoba], they played some old-time stuff. (interview with Snider 2012)

Here there is a clear importance placed on repertoire, in particular *old* repertoire, as a marker of the old-time style. At the same time, Snider also believes that the old-time style has not changed significantly since she was young; that is, fiddlers who still play *old-time*, still play in the same way (ibid.). As she experienced in Meadow Lea, there are still groups who play the same old-time music that her parents introduced her to in her youth. Interestingly, her definition dates the style to the pre-Messer era.

Snider identifies instrumentation as a second, central aspect of the old-time style. Although a pianist herself, Snider feels that the fiddle, guitar, and banjo are the most important instruments in old-time music, and are, in fact, essential to the definition of old-time music:

The fiddle is the old-time music. The fiddle was one of the first instruments I think that people ever attempted to play. And it's an instrument that you can put

in a case and walk out with it. You can walk off with it... You can take it anywhere and play. I couldn't take my piano. Unless there was one there, I couldn't play. The fiddle, guitar, banjo... they were the base instruments of an old-time orchestra. And I love a banjo... To me it isn't really old-time unless there's a banjo. (interview with Snider 2012)

In this case, her definition focuses on the instrumentation that creates a particular sound, but also instrumentation that fits into a particular way of life—a way of life that includes playing instruments in impromptu venues. Snider's inclusion of the banjo in her definition of old-time is interesting given that banjo is no longer commonly used in old-time groups in Manitoba, nor is it ever heard as accompaniment at old-time contests.

Some fiddlers also point to the importance of playing tunes in a straightforward fashion, with the appropriate 'feel' so that it is danceable. As fiddler Shawn Mousseau (b. 1980) told me, fanciness is not old-time because extra flourishes were not part of the traditional approach to playing. For this reason, he plays the tunes "straight," that is, how he learned them and remembers them. Mousseau also noted that the old-time feel, that is, accenting certain notes, is a key aspect of the old-time style (2012). Similarly, fiddler Garry Lepine (b. 1950) told me that contests, in his opinion, are no longer truly old-time. In the past, if what you played was danceable (i.e., had the right feel) you would take home a prize. Now, Lepine related, "all they [the judges] do is they listen for notes" (2012). Lepine further noted that, when a fiddler learns a tune by ear, it sounds different than when a tune is learned using sheet music; fiddlers who play by ear focus on different aspects of the music, such as adding drones ("an extra string for back-up") so that the melody is supported even if the fiddler 'misses' a note (ibid.). Both Lepine and Mousseau

therefore emphasize both a connection to the past and the fiddler's feel (which is connected to learning by ear) in their definitions of old-time fiddling.

Definitions of the style often emerge not from direct questioning (e.g., asking what is the old-time style?), but from comments made while discussing other issues, such as judging. Lynn Mitchell (1922–2011) noted that, when judging, the most important element is time, along with tone, volume, intonation, and danceability:

You got to be judged on your time. If you haven't got good time you haven't got nothing, you're done. You got to [have] good tone, and, you got to have some volume to hear you...And true notes, none of this flat stuff. That's [what] I go by. Time, tone, and...like for an old time waltz...if you ever dance an old-time waltz and do it pretty good, you know what time you got to have. You know what it's got to be. (interview with Mitchell 2008)

Of course, musical aspects such as good time, good tone, danceability, and even good intonation are somewhat flexible concepts, not to mention being desirable elements in many styles (with three out of the four important in all styles), leaving a good deal of room for disagreement about the parameters of the style within the community, or, more positively put, allowing for varied conceptions of the style.

Fiddlers and judges in Manitoba do not, in fact, agree on the most important elements of an old-time fiddle performance. Lynn Mitchell, for example, recounted how a disagreement arose between him and another judge at a competition, pointing to a couple of interesting aspects of style:

Jenny Fletcher¹⁷⁸ played, and she was using that vibrato like crazy. Really she was killing herself with that, and [the other judge] thought this was, oh, "did you hear that, did you hear that!" Hear what? "That vibrato, I never heard the like of it," he said. "That is fantastic," he says. "What do you think Mitchell?" You want to know what I think? I'm going to tell you! There's no vibrato in old-time

¹⁷⁸ Name has been changed.

fiddling. You don't hear that with Don Messer do you?" (interview with Mitchell 2008)

The issue of vibrato—seen as too classical by some—points to a central issue within the old-time community, namely the way in which old-time music is often situated in contrast to classical music (discussed in further detail in chapter five). Fiddler Henri Hince (b. 1929) similarly pointed to this issue during our discussion of style, noting that a particular young fiddler, in contrast to fiddlers who (to him) sound classical, plays in the old-time style: "...you can tell [that it's old-time]. There's notes that are not in there that should be...But he's got such a style and he's such a wee [i.e., small/young] player that it's good" (interview with Hince 2012). Although Hince's comment may come across as deprecating, his statement is ultimately a recognition that classical players often get all the notes, but that getting every note is not required for a performance to be deemed good *old-time* fiddle music.

A second interesting aspect of Mitchell's comment is his use of Don Messer as a normative model of the old-time style ("You don't hear that with Don Messer do you?"). The importance of Don Messer has already been discussed, and as noted, older members of the old-time community often listened to, or watched, Don Messer's show; some fiddlers see his playing as the template for the old-time style. Yet fiddlers also often reference Metis fiddlers shaping the particular version of old-time fiddling found in Manitoba. When I asked three-time Canadian fiddle champion Patti Lamoureux (b. 1970) if she thought that old-time fiddling in Manitoba was different from old-time fiddling elsewhere in Canada she noted that it was: "I think the fact that Andy Dejarlis and Reg Bouvette [both Metis fiddlers] come from here kind of make it what it is...I think

definitely the Andy Dejarlis and Bouvette influences were huge” (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012). In other words, well-known, local fiddlers have shaped the old-time style in Manitoba even since Messer’s show (with Bouvette’s influence being particularly strong in the 1970s and 80s).¹⁷⁹ At the same time, suggesting that all of Manitoba has the same style is imposing artificial boundaries on a much more fluid tradition. As Lamoureux noted, continuing from above, “I think that there’s different pockets of the province where there’s different styles” (ibid.). There is, then, considerable interplay between national, provincial, and local influences.

While the above has done little to define the old-time style, perhaps just pointing to a few priorities, my attempts to discuss the old-time style have been even less fruitful with the younger generation (defined here as fiddlers in their late teens to early thirties). I sent a message to twenty-one young fiddlers that I know personally, asking if they could share their definition of old-time fiddling. I received one response.¹⁸⁰ This response, from Émilie Chartier (b. 1994) (2011 Manitoba fiddle champion), was,

Old-time music is a style of music, played most commonly on the violin, that is based on the style of tunes played many years ago. This style evolves with time, but keeps many key aspects of it alive. (email communication 2012)

When I asked Chartier what changes and what stays the same, she responded:

¹⁷⁹ Bouvette sold his trucking company in 1972 to pursue his music career full time (see <http://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/12008.pdf> for a full biography) (accessed 23 July 2012).

¹⁸⁰ I believe that the lack of response was due in part to fiddlers being unsure about how to define the style, as well as their lack of interest in defining the style, perhaps even viewing the stylistic boundaries of ‘old-time’ as meaningless or at least inapplicable to their own careers as fiddlers. I have also found that many of my consultants were uncomfortable with answering direct questions, feeling as if they had to give the ‘right’ answers. Those that I spoke with after sending out the question simply told me that they had forgotten or did not yet get around to answering my question. Two fiddlers, however, later answered my question in person.

I find that more and more, the cleanliness of the tune, clarity of the notes and dynamics are much more pertinent than in the olden days. But it's that feel, the tempo, that stays constant. We don't play waltzes, jigs or reels any faster, yet I find we play them much clearer...It's a higher caliber. (email communication 2012)

Chartier's definition points to a connection to the past, in particular to the significance of feel and tempos, but also highlights the professionalization of old-time fiddling; that is, old-time fiddling has become not so much something people do as part of the everyday in a variety of informal venues, as something that some people aim to do with exceptional proficiency in a variety of more formal venues.

Patti Lamoureux similarly points to changes in recent years, noting that the old-time style is not what it was in the 1960s, or, for that matter, what it was in the 1980s and 90s, at least in the context of old-time fiddle competitions. When Lamoureux was competing at old-time contests (often taking home the big prize) in the 1980s and 90s, she was playing in what she called an older style (pointing, in particular, to her use of shorter, more detached bows than the current fiddle champions). Yet, according to Lamoureux, she would not be able to win a contemporary contest if she played the way that she did when she was winning twenty years ago. Her own way of playing has changed over the years; she has kept up with old-time's stylistic changes and has absorbed new influences (field notes 16/03/2011). In other words, Lamoureux acknowledges the influence of fiddlers like Dejarlis and Bouvette, but she does not consider their way of playing definitive, recognizing that many of the championship-level fiddlers do not want to sound like the older generation and that this is a natural process of tradition. Johnson found a similar change in Ontario; although young contest fiddlers

continue to associate the old-time style with Messer, they know that they cannot play like Messer and expect to win contemporary contests (Johnson 2006, 98). Young fiddlers in Manitoba and Ontario recognize Messer and other local fiddlers as antecedents to modern old-time fiddling, but, at the same time, aspire to create a contemporary style.

A showcase held as a fundraiser for the five fiddlers chosen to represent Manitoba at the 2012 Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship provides a good example of the above-described attitudes towards the old-time style (see appendix two for an overview of each fiddler's performance). The showcase demonstrated that the younger generation of old-time fiddlers (in this case, between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five), especially when considered as a group, is drawing on a variety of sources and seems to have little interest in maintaining strict stylistic boundaries. Some of the fiddlers borrowed tunes and stylistic elements from Dejarlis or from what they defined as the down-east style, while others borrowed from Cape Breton (or a general 'Celtic' style), from Quebec, and from American styles such as the bluegrass and Cajun styles. One fiddler even included a solo, classical selection, chosen to showcase her skills as a violinist (field notes 6/07/2012). Ultimately, I was struck by the differences between the fiddlers; each was drawing from a unique selection of influences and their unique histories as fiddlers, meaning that there was very little overlap between what each fiddler played, both in terms of repertoire (with the exception of a few 'standards' that they played together as a group) and style. The young fiddlers each created their own, unique, but amalgamated style. (An exception was one fiddler who quite consistently sounded similar to Dejarlis.)

While differences in style were quite striking at the showcase, recordings by young Manitoba fiddlers point to a more subtle approach to borrowing—one more akin to the un-marking described in the above discussion of Don Messer (see appendix three for transcriptions of the tunes discussed below). The first recording is taken from Melanie Ostash's album *My Own Way* (2005). Ostash (b. 1988) includes a varied selection of tunes on her album, including the traditional tune "Reel Beatrice" (likely from Quebec, but recently popular in Irish circles via Liz Carroll). Although it stretches expectations in terms of form (AABBCC), key (A minor), and range (forcing the fiddler to shift to third position or, at the very least, stretch up to the high C), it became quite popular in Manitoba in the early 2000s, appearing on a handful of recordings released by fiddlers in the province. Ostash's version is played with a very strong, full sound and with clear articulation of each note. Overall, the fiddle line is very smooth; the bow is decidedly in the string (i.e., she uses a significant amount of bow pressure giving her a sound that is big with some 'edge'). The fiddle is in the forefront of the recording, with the guitar and other accompanying instruments (piano and bass) playing a very subordinate role. She uses just a few ornaments, all upper mordents. While the tune is unique to the CD in terms of its expansive melody, key, and form, it is only in these features that it stands out;¹⁸¹ it is not stylistically Quebecois (or Irish).

The second transcription is taken from a medley of tunes recorded by Randall Weslak (b. 1981) on his CD *Sociable!* (2007). The medley, titled *A Medley for Canada*,

¹⁸¹ While the way in which Ostash bows the tune (in particular, slurring across the bar lines) is different from the bowings used by Dejarlis and Messer, it is a common technique among contemporary old-time fiddlers (e.g., compare the transcription of Ostash with the transcriptions of Weslak and, especially, Lamoureux included in appendix three).

includes ten tunes: three were made popular by Don Messer (“Woodchoppers,” “Swamplake [Breakdown],” and “Mother’s Reel”); one is a tune by Scottish composer Scott Skinner (“Spey and Spate”); one is an American tune (a tune he refers to as “Manitoba Sawyer” but that is actually his version of “Mississippi Sawyer”); two are ‘Celtic’ tunes (“Celtic FC Reel” and “Tam Lynn’s Reel” by Scottish/Irish musician Davey Arthur); one is a tune with Irish/Scottish origins (with different sources indicating either Scottish or Irish) but that has a long history in the old-time fiddle community (“Mason’s Apron”); one is a tune popular across Turtle Island (“Devil’s Dream”); and one is an old-time favourite (“Big John McNeil”) that is likely of Scottish origins. While these tunes vary in terms of how integrated they are within Manitoba’s old-time community (e.g., the younger generation knows “Tam Lynn’s Reel” but not the older generation, while “Big John McNeil” is well-known to all fiddlers in Manitoba) and come from varied traditions, all are, overall, played in the same style. Although some cuts are included in the ‘Celtic’ tunes (see “Tam Lynn’s” and “Celtic FC”), even these are not clearly ‘cuts,’ probably because Weslak is not particularly practiced in executing them. The result is that, despite differences in origins, all of the tunes are played in essentially the same style, with few ornaments, similar bowing patterns, unchanging accompaniment (just piano), and moderate tempo throughout (quarter note = 116).

The final transcribed track is a medley from Alex Lamoureux’s CD *Groove* (2009). The medley begins with “Paddy Fahey’s,” named after the eponymous Irish fiddler, and ends with the traditional Quebecois tune “Reel Des Esquimaux.”

Lamoureux’s performance is very smooth, with a great deal of forward motion in the reel,

created by accenting the off-beats (especially the fourth sixteenth note in a beat). Interestingly, “Paddy Fahey’s” is not at a tempo that the old-time community would understand; that is, it is essentially unheard of to play a tune in duple time at a slow tempo unless it is a fox-trot. More than the other recordings discussed in this section, this medley uses stylistic elements that are unusual in old-time fiddling, tying the tunes to their styles of origin. Most notable are the ornaments in “Paddy Fahey’s,” which include clearly articulated cuts and the quick ‘finger flicks’ (like an upper mordent but quicker with less clarity of the upper note) and the clogging in “Reel Des Esquimaux.” Furthermore, in both tunes, the piano accompaniment moves away from the typical ‘boom chick’ that usually accompanies old-time performances. Interestingly, Lamoureux told me that his subsequent CD was a collection of real ‘old-time’ tunes, appealing to what he thought Manitoba’s old-time community would want to hear (interview with A. Lamoureux 2012). In other words, Lamoureux acknowledged that his first CD may have pushed the boundaries of old-time a little too far for some of Manitoba’s old-time audience. In this way, the recording by Lamoureux points to the careful negotiation between keeping it old-time (and keeping the old-time audience) and experimenting with other styles and repertoires; in contrast, the process of unmarking is especially clear in the recordings by Ostash and Weslak, highlighting how some old-time fiddlers take tunes from outside the old-time canon and make them old-time.

While old-time fiddlers explore styles outside their own tradition in some contexts, they are more cautious in the context of a competition; fiddlers most often do not play tunes with obvious connections to American, Cape Breton, or other ‘Celtic’

styles. In other words, I have never heard a fiddler play in the Cajun, ‘Celtic,’ Cape Breton, or Quebecois styles at a contest, although tunes from outside the old-time canon are quite common. (Tunes recently chosen by championship-level fiddlers in Manitoba include the French-Canadian tunes “Le Rossignol,” and “Quadrille Wilfrid Laurier,” American tune “Festival Waltz,” and an un-named jig that was learned from a Cape Breton-style recording.)¹⁸² However, the fiddlers are careful to negotiate the way that they play the tunes so that the origins are somewhat hidden; style-specific features such as bowing and ornaments are typically changed or removed to make the tunes sound more ‘old-time’. Some are careful to choose tunes that do not stand out structurally (e.g., avoiding minor keys) (personal communication 31/10/2012), and some only play tunes from outside of the old-time tradition if they believe the judges are open to a broad definition of old-time. Others take a different approach, playing very traditional tunes but borrowing stylistic elements from other traditions; as one fiddler told me, he “draw[s] on traditions of old time while trying to spice them up to constantly advance into newer types and styles of fiddle music” (email communication 29/10/2012). Although there is often a disconnect between what fiddlers are playing at contests and what they choose to play outside of contests (as indicated by tune/style choices for the showcase), suggesting that contests are constraining repertoire to some degree, fiddlers are finding ways to

¹⁸² Johnson points to the popularity of American waltzes at Ontario contests in the mid- to late-1990s, noting that some members of the old-time community were adamantly against their inclusion. She also points out that some of the winners in Ontario contests in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s played American waltzes (Johnson 2006, 220-1), showing that, even though the old-time community continues to debate their inclusion, borrowing from ‘other’ styles is not a new tradition in Ontario. This is certainly not a new phenomenon in Manitoba either. I recall the popularity of American waltzes at Manitoba contests being particularly strong in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with “Festival Waltz” by Kenny Baker being especially popular. Fiddlers in Manitoba could get away with playing these waltzes if they played them at an appropriate tempo (i.e., much faster than they would have been played by American fiddlers).

integrate new repertoire and new approaches to playing into the contest scene. Fiddlers, then, understand the boundaries of 'old-time' (given that they make the effort to play in the 'right' way for contests), but young fiddlers often try to push these boundaries.

A Working Definition of Old-Time Fiddling

What then, is the old-time style? As suggested in the above discussion, the old-time style is hard to define. Although there is agreement about the importance of Messer and Dejarlis and when the old-time style emerged, there is disagreement regarding what can now be legitimately labeled old-time. As Johnson's discussion of a failed attempt to come up with a definition of 'old-time' at a Canadian Grand Master's judging clinic suggests (2006, 462), this difficulty is not confined to Manitoba. It is, in fact, based at least in part on generational differences. As Johnson pointed out, the majority of Ontario fiddlers she interviewed felt that danceability (sometimes expressed as feel) was the most important characteristic of old-time fiddling; yet young old-time fiddlers in Ontario are often criticized for their lack of danceability¹⁸³ (Johnson 2006, 463–4). This too is an important concern in Manitoba; the key aspect of the style (danceability or 'feel') is often seen as absent in the playing of the younger generation of old-time fiddlers (who bring home the majority of prizes at old-time contests). What does this mean? What is old-time fiddling? And how is it defined in this dissertation?

In this dissertation, Manitoba's old-time style is defined as an unmarked style of fiddling, or as described by one young fiddler, 'regular' fiddling (field notes 27/02/2012). It absorbs various influences, whether Cape Breton, Metis, or classical, and erases overt

¹⁸³ I have not found a similar generational divide in the Metis scene, although further research comparing definitions of Metis fiddling across generations might uncover some subtle differences.

traces of the ethnic, and classed, other. In the process, it becomes a symbol of movement from the outside to the mainstream. This definition, admittedly, is not used elsewhere, although it is suggested in Trew (2002); yet it is this definition that takes the flexible way in which the community understands the style into account, making sense of the adoption of tunes from diverse traditions and the tradition's sense of cohesiveness. It also explains the relationship Manitoba's old-time scene has with Indigenous fiddling. That is to say, when Andy Dejarlis took tunes from Metis communities (and other sources), he erased the most striking markers of its Metis-ness (e.g., clogging and asymmetry¹⁸⁴) and created the local variation of old-time fiddling, that is, the Red River style. In this way, it became unmarked, 'regular' fiddling. Although old-time has changed since Messer and Dejarlis, an analysis of recent recordings by young Manitoba fiddlers indicates that the core—the process of borrowing and unmarking—remains strong.

The process described above, however, has begun to change in recent years. For example, the Red River style is now being referred to as “part of the Metis historical culture” (Watson 2002, 65); that is, the style's Metis roots are now being acknowledged more often and more explicitly. On a national level, the Canadian Grand Master's competition provides an interesting vantage-point on the issue; although the competition used to require contestants to perform in *the* old-time style (i.e., the nation-wide old-time style that was strongly influenced by Messer), this requirement was removed in 2009. As Patti Lamoureux told me, “we've asked [competitors] to keep it in...*an* old-time style, a recognized old-time style, like whether it's bluegrass, or...Texas, or even...Western

¹⁸⁴ See footnote eleven for discussion of symmetry/asymmetry in Dejarlis' recordings.

swing. [Anything] that's recognized in the fiddle world" (2012). In other words, the committee has embraced the broader definition of 'old-time' presented at the start of this chapter. The current relationship between Canadian old-time fiddling and other North American fiddle styles is therefore tenuous. What this recent shift will mean for old-time fiddling is yet to be seen. Will fiddlers revert to local styles? Or will an unmarked Canadian style continue to develop? While the definition of old-time fiddling remains tenuous, an old-time scene continues to flourish, as discussed in the next chapter on old-time fiddling contests.

Chapter Four: Old-Time Fiddling Contests in Manitoba

Fiddling contests are one of the most popular sites for Canadian old-time fiddling, both in Manitoba and across much of the country. Held year-round, especially during the summer months, fiddlers and fiddle fans travel between contests (usually within the boundaries of a province, part of a province, or a region) creating what has been referred to as a contest ‘circuit’ (e.g., see Johnson 2006, 2). While each province or region has its own circuit (i.e., a kind of community on wheels), and each circuit has regional particularities, there is overlap from region to region. Competitors from Manitoba sometimes compete in North Dakota, Saskatchewan, or Ontario; and fiddlers from across Canada come together at national competitions, in particular the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship and, to a lesser extent, at the competitions held in Pembroke, Ontario, and Shelburne, Ontario. This creates subtle interplay between regionally specific contest communities and the larger contest community comprised of participants from across Canada.

This chapter explores southern Manitoba’s old-time contest circuit, beginning with an ethnographic description of a typical old-time competition. Although based on one contest, this description borrows details from my experiences at several contests, making it a composite narrative (Johnson 2006, 133).¹⁸⁵ It is also a first person narrative, giving readers the opportunity to understand how my position in the field shaped the

¹⁸⁵ I struggled over this decision, originally writing the narrative as a particular description (Rice 2004, 12) based solely on one competition (as opposed to a normative description which “tr[ies] to capture what is typical about an event”) (ibid.). However, as I read through my original narrative, I realized that some of the typical aspects of contests were omitted, while some aspects particular to the contest I was writing about were unduly highlighted, as if they were typical of all (or most) old-time competitions.

knowledge I share (see Wilson 2008, 8–9).¹⁸⁶ The second section focuses on structural aspects of old-time contests, including a discussion of venues, purpose, and overall structure of contests; the categories typically included at competitions; the repertoire requirements and choices made by fiddlers; and the prizes handed out to winners. The third section focuses on the participants, exploring the changing role and demographics of the fiddlers, accompanists, judges, organizers, and audience. Both the second and third sections address these topics in their historical and contemporary contexts.

The research presented in this chapter is the first to explore old-time fiddle contests in Manitoba. For this reason, topics are often covered broadly rather than in a great deal of detail. In many ways, then, it is preliminary, opening the conversation about old-time fiddling in southern Manitoba rather than attempting to provide a definitive overview of the scene; each topic covered in this chapter would be an excellent starting-point for further research on old-time fiddling in Manitoba. This chapter complements Sherry Johnson's research on Ontario's contest scene (the only other research on old-time fiddle competitions in Canada), providing a starting point for the comparative analysis of Canada's contest circuits, and of Canada's old-time fiddle scenes more broadly (Johnson 2008, 2006, 2000a, 2000b). It also adds to the growing body of ethnomusicological research on music competitions around the world (e.g., see Goertzen 2008, Douglas 2007, Dudley 2003, Miller 2003, Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2003, and Williams 2003).

¹⁸⁶ In this way, my description, like Johnson's, is more personal than the descriptions provided in Rice (although he certainly acknowledges that even particular descriptions, though they may seem objective, include aspects of selection and interpretation).

Ethnographic Overview of an Old-Time Contest

I arrive at a community centre situated at the heart of a small rural town in southern Manitoba a little before seven on a Friday evening, just in time to catch ‘the show’ featuring a fiddler flown in from Ontario. The guest fiddler is known to Manitobans, since he¹⁸⁷ has entertained at other contests in the province and even at this one several years ago. I am quite familiar with his fiddle style since his CD often played in my parents’ stereo when I was in my mid- to late-teens. I pay the thirty-five dollar fee for a weekend pass (but not the ten dollar camping fee since I am staying off-site), and then join the slow migration into the hall, finding a spot near the front of the stage at one of the many tables set up along the perimeter of the large dance floor. I am somewhat surprised to see that the dance floor is clear, since, when I last attended this event about eight years ago, the dance floor was filled with chairs for the show; it was then quickly cleared off after the show for the dance. Attendance is clearly down since the early 2000s.

As I look around, I feel somewhat out of place among a sea of grey- and white-haired seniors. Yet I fit the mould of the typical attendee in others ways. In particular, in a crowd that is almost exclusively white, my own white skin marks me as part of the norm. Furthermore, many in attendance know me, having watched me participate in contests since I was about eight years of age, and I am therefore easily accepted as part of the old-time community. I soon find myself chatting with old acquaintances. Seated near the stage, I am pleased to spot two young women. Although they are likely in their late

¹⁸⁷ Although some women have been guest artists (e.g., April Verch and Patti Lamoureux have both been guest artists at Manitoba contests), it is much more common to see men in this position.

teens or early twenties, their haircuts, make-up, and clothing, borrowing from 1990s fashion, make them appear older. Intrigued by their presence, I make my way over to the table where they are seated to find out what brings them to a largely seniors event. The older of the two, who tells me she is twenty-one, says that they are sisters from a nearby town and just love dancing. They attend old-time dances whenever they are able.

The MC (a local man and one of the contest organizers) soon appears on stage to introduce the guest fiddler, interspersing his¹⁸⁸ introduction with a few off-colour jokes (centered on an intimate encounter between a husband and wife, and an awkward trip to the doctor). I feel somewhat embarrassed (feeling as if a dirty joke had been told in front of my grandparents), but am surprised to see the attendees laugh without reserve. The show is soon underway, as the fiddler begins a set of reels and two-steps, accompanied by local musicians on piano, bass, and drums; contests rarely hire entire bands, so guest fiddlers must be willing to work with locals. The fiddler plays a mix of old standards (e.g., “St. Anne’s Reel,” and “Big John McNeil”), tunes that are familiar to the audience, and tunes that are less familiar, borrowed from other Canadian or American traditions (e.g., Pierre Schryer’s “Cape Breton Dream” and Quebecois tune “*Pointe au Pic*”). These tunes are mixed in with novelty numbers, including the “Orange Blossom Special,” a perennial favourite, and some trick fiddling, in this case playing the fiddle with a tiny hockey stick instead of a bow. Tonight’s show is particularly exciting for the audience given that the guest fiddler also step dances, a rare treat for Manitobans.

¹⁸⁸ MCs in Manitoba are typically male, although some contests—in particular in Miami, Manitoba—have had local, female radio hosts emcee the competitions from time to time.

After an hour-long show, the MC comes on stage to thank the guest fiddler and to announce that tickets are available for a ‘Chinese auction’ (i.e., a raffle). Winnings are donated by local businesses or by individuals and, this year, include tea towels, soaps, lotions, tickets to see the Winnipeg Jets, and a certificate for a few lessons from a local fiddle teacher. The dance band, a group that often plays at local dances, quickly hooks a keyboard, bass, banjo, drum set, and fiddle into the sound system in preparation for the dance; fifteen minutes later, the musicians—a woman at the keyboard¹⁸⁹ and men on the other instruments—are ready to begin. As soon as the first strains of a polka are heard, the dance floor fills, as most of the one hundred and fifty people in attendance take to the floor. I am one of the few people left sitting at the tables. The young women I had talked to earlier, despite sitting at a table with strangers, are soon dancing with their new acquaintances. Since they have come as a pair (as most people do), they have no trouble finding partners the rest of the evening (i.e., swapping partners with other attendees).

The dance numbers are played in sets of two tunes of the same type (e.g., two polkas), with each set punctuated by eight bars of “The Girl I Left Behind Me.” The ‘regular’ sets (waltzes, two-steps, polkas, and fox-trots) are interspersed with specialty dances, including the “Seven-Step,” the “Heel Toe Polka,” a schottische, a square dance, and a butterfly. The guitar player adds further variety to the evening’s music with a few songs, stepping up to the microphone to sing country hits from years past, hits such as “Blue Rose” (Pam Tillis). Throughout the evening many dancers ‘double-step’ (jig) in couples, side by side; a woman demonstrates the step, encouraging me to learn, and soon

¹⁸⁹ At old-time events, it is more common to see a woman at the piano than a man.

a handful of dancers are giving me tips. Many couples are also doing pattern dances—that is, they are dancing choreographed patterns to specific tunes or tune types. I am somewhat surprised by the number of pattern dancers. When I ask around, I am told that there are two couples who have been teaching pattern dancing for the past several years, leading to an increase in the number of couples dancing patterns at local events.

After two and a half hours of dancing, a line forms in front of a snack table: ham and egg salad sandwiches, along with tea or coffee, are served free with the entrance fee. With renewed energy, the dancing soon resumes, although the crowd moving across the dance floor is now slightly smaller and continues to get smaller over the next two hours. When the clock strikes midnight, the band plays their last dance, Anne Murray's "Could I Have This Dance." The dancers remain standing on the floor after the last "for the rest of my life," as the keyboardist begins "God Save the Queen,"¹⁹⁰ marking the end of the dance. A few minutes after the queen is lauded, the hall has emptied; the dancers have made their way out into the cool evening air, most to their cars and a few to their motorhomes. Soon the tiny town is almost as quiet as an evening on an isolated farm. I jump into my parents' red pick-up truck and head down the highway, cutting across the country, over gravel roads, to the home where I grew up. It is a quick twenty-minute drive from the hall, something I am grateful for as I anxiously await a few hours of sleep.

I pull myself out of bed just before eight the next morning, dress, and eat a quick breakfast, opting out of the seven-dollar breakfast of pancakes and sausages served at the venue. I make the short trip back to town, arriving just in time for the scheduled jam

¹⁹⁰ This is a long-standing tradition at Manitoba's old-time dances, although it is a tradition maintained only by the more senior dance bands. I have not been able to uncover why this tradition arose.

session (nine o'clock). Noticing no signs of a session, I make an inquiry and am informed that the session will start in half an hour, when, with some luck, a few fiddlers will have made an appearance. At a quarter to ten, I grab my fiddle and join a handful of fiddlers, a pianist, and a guitarist who have gathered on the stage. Some of the fiddlers at this jam never compete in fiddle contests, usually because they feel that they are just beginning or because they get nervous; these are not average contest fiddlers, but enthusiasts who attend the entire weekend event. Each fiddler is given the opportunity to choose a tune, ensuring that everyone can participate. For those who are inexperienced on the stage, this jam gives them the opportunity to lead a tune knowing that the other fiddlers will support her or him, helping to dispel stage fright. Although we do not follow a typical dance format (i.e., grouping tunes by type), it is not long before a few dancers trickle on to the dance floor. As a fiddler, such an obvious acknowledgment of an audience's appreciation is encouraging, pushing me—and I suspect others on the stage—to continue.

By eleven thirty, the jam has come to an end, and sandwiches, available for a small fee, are brought out for those needing a light lunch. Competitors are only just beginning to arrive, signing up for one of the three under-eighteen categories or the senior category. Registration is free and competitors are admitted into the hall without charge, as are guardians of competitors under sixteen. The practice rooms, cubby holes at the back of the hall, begin filling with the sounds of waltzes, jigs, and reels, as the fiddlers rehearse their sets with one of the two house accompanists. As the fiddlers prepare, the guest entertainer is bought up to the stage for a second show. Requests are shouted out from the audience or else written on little slips of paper and brought up to the

edge of the stage; the guest fiddler is happy to comply when he is able. At two o'clock, the show comes to an end, and the MC announces the start of the competition. A judges' table has been set up in front of the stage, ready for the first round of judging. Before beginning, the MC calls up each of the judges to play a tune, that is, to show that they are qualified to judge. Two of the three judges can hardly play the fiddle, one because the fiddle is not his¹⁹¹ specialty and the other because of arthritis.

After reading the rules, which state that contestants must play a waltz, jig, and reel in the old-time style, the MC begins calling fiddlers up to the stage, beginning with the three fiddlers in the nine and under class and then moving to the two in the thirteen and under and six in the eighteen and under classes. Differences between fiddlers are already noticeable. Some play straightforward tunes with impeccable execution; others play more difficult repertoire, missing notes here and there and not always playing in tune, but performing with an emphasis on the overall feel—what some might call 'danceability'. One young fiddler has managed to find a balance between execution and feel and would, in fact, likely do well in the championship-level class. The MC punctuates the pause between classes—time for the judges to get their paperwork in order—with a few jokes and announcements, letting attendees know, for example, that alcohol and snack food is available for purchase. The final class to compete this afternoon is the senior's class (age 60–70), with just two fiddlers, both men; neither fact

¹⁹¹ The judges are more likely to be men than women.

surprises me since there is a golden age class (over 70) tomorrow (somewhat rare at contests these days) and because few women (over the age of eighteen) compete.¹⁹²

As soon as the preliminary round ends, the MC calls all of the fiddlers to the stage for a jam session, giving the judges time to deliberate. Today, the judges' job is easier than usual since all of the fiddlers will re-play with the exception of three of the 'eighteen and unders'. (Since there were so few competitors today, almost no one needed to be eliminated after the preliminary round.) Once on stage, the older youth fiddlers begin picking tunes; the two senior fiddlers encourage them to choose tunes that the youngest fiddlers will be able to play. There are always tunes that all the fiddlers have in common, tunes such as "Westphalia Waltz," "Boil 'Em Cabbages" (simplified for beginners), "Faded Love," "On the Road to Boston," and "Short Bow Jig" among others. Nonetheless, choosing tunes can be tough because teenaged fiddlers often want to play their most difficult repertoire, while the younger fiddlers as well as the senior fiddlers do not know this repertoire, or cannot play the more complicated tunes (in the latter case sometimes due to the effects of arthritis).

As soon as the jam session ends (at five o'clock), the MC announces the finalists. This gives fiddlers the opportunity to run through different sets of tunes (required for all fiddlers except those in the youngest class) with their accompanist before the finals begin. A few minutes later, a long line has formed for a supper of ham, scalloped potatoes, coleslaw, a bun, and cake (\$9), all prepared by community volunteers (usually women). Most of the audience stays for supper, but as usual, few of the fiddlers eat the food

¹⁹² I can recall one senior woman competing in the 1990s and 2000s and have found references to her competing in the 1980s. I have only ever seen one other senior woman compete.

prepared for the competition. Most eat food that they (or, more accurately, their parents) brought, or go to the local dive attached to the motel located a block from the community centre; many hang out in the practice room, bonding over tunes, food, and chatter.¹⁹³ By six thirty, everyone has been fed, and the tables have been cleared and cleaned by efficient volunteers; the finals are ready to begin.

The second round of competition is quite short; with just ten performers at about five minutes each—leaving time for set up, a quick chat with the MC who might ask where they are from, how long they have been playing, and so on—the finals are over within an hour (by about seven-thirty). Fifteen minutes later, the judges have made their decision, and the organizers are ready to hand out prizes. Each class is called to stage, and the trophies and cash are handed out, beginning with third, and moving to first place. As the winners are announced I notice that the fiddlers who played with more precision are preferred over those who chose difficult tunes and focused on feel rather than perfect execution. When I speak to a judge later, I am told that there was debate over who should win, and in the end, the judges struck a compromise, moving the fiddlers with less than perfect execution from the bottom rankings to the middle.

The evening that follows unfolds in the same fashion as the previous evening, beginning with a show featuring the guest entertainer at seven forty-five and a dance at nine. Like Friday evening, few of the competitors attend the show and dance; as soon as the prizes are handed out, most of the parents begin packing their kids into their cars or

¹⁹³ This is not true of the fiddlers in the senior category who typically eat the food provided at the competition. Families may find the meals offered at the hall unaffordable, and youth may also prefer to eat fast food.

minivans, setting out on a sometimes long drive home. The audience, however, is similar in number to the previous evening with about two hundred people in attendance. The dance band has been hired for the entire weekend, although tonight a different fiddler takes the stage, this time a fiddler who competes at many contests and will likely compete tomorrow in the seventy and over category. By eleven thirty, many of the dancers are beginning to retire, and at midnight, when the pianist begins "God Save the Queen," there are only about one hundred people on the floor, ready to clear out as soon as the pianist plays her last few notes, heading back to their homes or to the small gathering of about sixteen campers parked outside the community centre.

I arrive the next morning just before noon. The hall is still quiet when I arrive, and I stop to chat with the many people who, almost unfailingly, recount how they remember when I was just 'this' tall, and how much they liked watching me compete. Although I now usually prefer to not compete, it is difficult to turn down requests from organizers who are always concerned with keeping numbers up; furthermore, nearly everyone I speak to encourages me to compete. (If you can do it, you are *expected* to do it, that is, to play your part in the event.) By about one o'clock, I decide to enter the championship class (there is no adult class), a decision made in part in response to the small number of fiddlers who have made an appearance. This might change by the time the competition is underway at three o'clock, but the early showing is a good indication of what is to come. It does not take me long to track down an accompanist and run my three tunes before the start of the program. If the numbers stay low (there are still just three championship

fiddlers and many more prizes in that class), I will need to have three different tunes for the finals this evening, but I decide not to worry about that until the first round is over.

The ‘non-denominational’ (but very Christian) inspirational hour is underway by the time I exit the practice room. The show is put on by local musicians, mostly over sixty, with the help of the guest fiddler and one of the house accompanists; since the fiddler has not practised for this show, and perhaps because he is not used to playing backup, he seems uncomfortable and unsure of what to play, stumbling on some of his introductions, interludes, or endings. Some of the tunes chosen are ones I am familiar with from church services when I was young (e.g., the traditional gospel song “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”); others were made popular by country singers (e.g., “The Old Rugged Cross” by George Bennard and sung by myriad country artists); still others that are a somewhat humorous look at morality (e.g., “It’s a Sin to Tell a Lie” written by Billy Mayhew). The hour ends with a moment of silence in memory of the fiddlers who have passed away in the past year, followed by “Ashokan Farewell,” a tune composed by American folk musician Jay Ungar that has become popular among Canadian old-time fiddlers in recent years. As the hour comes to a close, the guest entertainer prepares for another show, his fourth this weekend, which gets underway by two o’clock.

By three o’clock, more fiddlers have arrived, to the great relief of organizers. Seven men (two in their late teens, three in their twenties, one in his thirties, and one senior) and four women (me and three in their mid- to late-teens) are competing in the championship class; four fiddlers signed up for the golden age class and two groups for the twin fiddles class. The fiddlers in the Golden Age class are up first, followed by the

championship class. I head outside, cutting out the sounds of the fiddlers, and try to concentrate on my tunes. Peering inside the hall every so often, I make my way up to the side of the stage when the third performer is playing his reel,¹⁹⁴ feeling my nervousness increase with each step. When my name is called, I step on stage, adjust the microphone, and then nod to my accompanist, letting her¹⁹⁵ know that I am ready. I try to keep my hands steady, but my sound is wobbly. After finishing my waltz, I transition into my jig and my nerves go into high gear. Comments from judges at past contests run through my head, and I try to concentrate on their advice. My performance goes fine until I stumble on my last tune (the reel). As I step off stage, I do my best to hide my disappointment, knowing that a mistake automatically takes me off the list of finalists.

As I head back to my chair, I am surprised to see an unfamiliar, adult face approaching the microphone with his fiddle. After years of participating at contests, it is rare for me to see a new adult fiddler. (Young fiddlers, of course, come and go quite quickly.) His playing is different from that of the other fiddlers, more groove-based, and not, as most fiddlers would say, as ‘clean’ as that of the other championship fiddlers. The MC announces that the fiddler is from a reserve. This too is surprising since it is rare to see fiddlers from reserves playing at contests, although Indigenous fiddlers (often from urban areas) have a long history of competing at old-time contests.¹⁹⁶ As he begins, I notice feet tapping in time to his playing throughout the venue. After his performance, he

¹⁹⁴ Fiddlers draw their position from a hat before the category begins.

¹⁹⁵ Accompanists are most often women.

¹⁹⁶ Contests also sometimes take place during Indigenous events (e.g., Metisfest or Treaty Day celebrations), but these contests are not part of the old-time circuit.

tells me that this is his first competition;¹⁹⁷ he also comments that the other fiddlers in the championship class sound ‘fancy’. The twin fiddles class begins immediately after the championship class; as usual, it is made up of last-minute pairings (i.e., fiddlers who decided just before signing up that they would play together). Today, there are no sibling teams, likely since the youngest fiddlers (who often attend as families) played the previous day; none stuck around for the second day of competition.

The finals begin at six thirty, after a short jam session and supper break. Again, few of the fiddlers eat in the hall, preferring to eat at the local restaurant, and then chat and play a few tunes in the practice room before running through their new sets. By seven forty-five, the finalists have re-played and prizes have been handed out to four winners in the Golden Age class, five winners in the championship class, and two groups in the twin fiddle class. The most interesting aspect of the results is that the fiddler from the reserve places fourth. This comes as a surprise to some attendees (the surprise notable in the snippets of conversation I overhear), and when I speak with one of the judges, he indicates that there was quite a bit of debate over this decision: one judge did not think that the fiddler from the reserve should move to finals (saying that he sounded amateur); another placed him in the top couple prizes (because he had a great groove and was fun to listen to); and the third judge placed him in the middle. This makes it clear to me that there is significant disagreement among judges about the most important aspects of style.

After the prizes are handed out, the fiddlers head home, congratulating each other as they leave the community centre. Soon the youth presence has almost completely

¹⁹⁷ This fiddler was displaced from Lake Manitoba First Nation to Winnipeg during the 2011 flood. He met fiddlers from the old-time circuit while he was staying in Winnipeg.

vanished; the two young women from the first evening are the only other young attendees this evening. The day ends with another show (the guest fiddler's fifth show), followed by yet another dance. Turnout has remained steady, with about one hundred fifty to two hundred dancers each evening. The band (now playing their third dance in one weekend) is not showing signs of exhaustion despite the fact that they are all over 70 years of age (one is in her late 80s). The organizers, too, are maintaining their stamina and good cheer and continue working until the dance comes to a close, and beyond, tidying up the loose ends into the next few days. One of the main organizers tells me that attendance is down this year, but that it fluctuates from year to year; perhaps, he speculates, numbers will be up next year.¹⁹⁸ I head home after "God Save the Queen" comes to a close, ready to spend a little extra time catching up on sleep. What a weekend.

Contest Infrastructure: From Early Roots to Contemporary Practice

Fiddle contests have been held in Manitoba since at least the mid-1920s. This early date is confirmed in an article from 1940 which includes an advertisement for Petersfield, Manitoba's fifteenth annual fiddle contest ("Old Time Fiddlers" 1940).¹⁹⁹ By 1927, the South Western Manitoba Fiddling Championship was being held in Hartney with a preliminary round in Baldur, Manitoba ("Baldur Contest" 1927, 1). Given that there was a regional championship by 1927, contests may have even pre-dated the mid-1920s; that is, a regional championship (with at least one preliminary round) suggests that contests were already well established. Fiddler Lynn Mitchell (1922–2011) confirmed

¹⁹⁸ Maintaining an audience is an ongoing struggle for contests in Manitoba. A number of contests have had so much trouble attracting an audience that they are beginning to think that holding a contest is no longer worthwhile financially.

¹⁹⁹ For additional references to other early fiddle contests, see "Old Time Fiddling" 1927, 5; "Our Exchanges" 1928, 7; "Local and Personal" 1929, 5; and "Fiddlers of Rivers" 1929).

that contests were running by the 1930s, noting in an interview that he competed at a contest before his eighth birthday (interview with Mitchell 2008). This start date is similar to those cited for contests in other areas of Canada, with contests in Prince Edward Island likely dating back to the early 1920s (Hornby 1979) and contests in Ontario dating back to, at least, 1926 (Johnson 2006, 106).

Throughout much of the twentieth century contests were single-day events. In fact, the first reference to weekend-long contests that I have come across only dates back to the 1980s. With the single-day format, all competitors would compete on the same day, performing either once, or at some contests, once for a preliminary round and a second time for the finals. (At a few contests, the final rounds were held several days or more after the preliminary round, but this was the exception.) Contemporary contests are either weekend-long events, or single-day events, with the latter becoming increasingly common in the 2000s. Although the decline in weekend-long contests signifies to some a decline in interest in contests, in reality, weekend-long contests did not become popular until the 1980s and 1990s. During this period Miami, Holland, Carman, and Austin, Manitoba, all had contests that spanned two days, with a dance the preceding evening. Yet even when weekend-long contests were at their peak, many continued to be single-day events, with the Manitoba Championships being a particularly notable example.

Venues and Purpose

Fiddle contests are most commonly held in community centres as stand-alone events (cf., Johnson 2006, 197–98). This has been the case since the earliest contests (e.g., both the Petersfield and Baldur contests were held in community centres) and is

also true of the contest described above. Yet contests have also been held in a variety of venues and as part of a variety of events. These include contests held outdoors during picnics; as part of sports days; at town or school reunions; and at fairs and other celebrations.²⁰⁰ Even the Red River Exhibition had a fiddling contest, at least in 1960 (“Red River Ex Ad” 1960, 5), as did the Winnipeg Folk Festival, at least in 1974 (“Elma News” 1974, 25). Contests were heard on the radio, in particular on CKSB in St. Boniface (“CKSB Ad” 1951, 4) and took place in formal venues such as theatres (“Old-Time Fiddlers” 1945, 2). Contests have even been held at malls (“Fiddlin’ Around” 1984, 1; Manitoba Fiddle Association 2009, 5). In fact, nearly all public events and venues in southern Manitoba have, at one time or another, hosted a fiddle contest, from rural regions right into the middle of Manitoba’s biggest city.²⁰¹

Competitions are often used as fund-raisers for charities or not-for-profit clubs. For example, the Rivers branch of the Canadian Legion British Empire Services League held a contest and dance in Rivers, Manitoba, in 1931 (“Legion Holds” 1931, 1). The junior championship profits, at least for a few years, went to services related to polio (“Junior Fiddlers to Compete” 1954, 1; “Junior Fiddlers” 1955, 7). The Elks have a history of putting on fiddle contests in Manitoba, organizing one in Lundar in 1972 (Goranson 1972a, 17) and organizing the Manitoba Open for more than thirty years. The competition in Holland, Manitoba, has been organized by the local Lions and Lioness

²⁰⁰ For example, see “Selkirk Fair and Rodeo” (1999, 40), Olson (1984, 9), Seward (1972, 4:1), “Argyle Re-union Ad” (1970, 3), “Indian Pageantry” (1970, 84), “Fair Gets Full” (1969, 1), “Selkirk Fair” (1953, 6), “Sports Day Ad” (1953, 5), “Local and General” (1951, 1), “It’ll be a Great Day” (1948, 9), and “Stonewall Sports” (1931, 1).

²⁰¹ For example, see Mellen 1972 and Food 1972. The Festival du Voyageur (held in St. Boniface, Winnipeg’s French quarter) continues to include a very well-attended, annual fiddle competition.

Clubs since the late 1980s (“Upcoming” 1988, 34). Of course, many contests are simply community fundraisers without affiliations to specific clubs or social groups, and are used to fund community projects. Contests are currently not making much money, however, forcing organizers to sometimes fundraise for the competition (interview with Bilton 2012). In other words, they are not always worthwhile for-profit endeavours; rather, they are sometimes put on because organizers feel that they are an important tradition.

Competitive Categories

The categories dividing contestants at fiddle contests have undergone significant changes over the years. Until the 1970s, Manitoba fiddle contests typically had just one category that was open to anyone wishing to participate. This is similar to contests in Shelburne and Dartmouth (Johnson 2006, 221), although this change occurred later in Manitoba than it did in eastern Canada. Despite being open to contestants of all ages and sexes, the participants were almost always adult men. In fact, in 1953, Harry Sadnicki competed in the Manitoba Open; at the age of fifteen, he was the youngest fiddler (“Curling Club” 1953, 5; and “Grant Lamb” 1954, 9). His appearance at the competition was exceptional enough for the newspaper article to make particular note of his age and how well he did at the competition. Of course, young fiddlers have taken part in contests since they started. For example, fiddler Lynn Mitchell first competed at the age of seven in the late 1920s and continued to compete in the years that followed, and there are even examples of contests prior to the 1970s that included junior categories (see “Pioneers At

Picnic” 1954, 1). For much of the twentieth century, however, youth participating at Manitoba fiddle contests was exceedingly uncommon.

The first concerted effort to encourage youth participation was the establishment of a junior Manitoba fiddle championship, started in the early 1950s by Florence Roberts of Portage la Prairie. The purpose of the competition was to “promote musical talent among children” (“Fiddling Contest Set” 1953, 17). This led to a network of contests in various areas of Manitoba that functioned as preliminaries to the contest that was, in the early years, held in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba (see “Amaranth News” 1958, 13; and “Fiddling Contest Set” 1953, 17). The exact relationship between the preliminaries and the finals is not clear, however, given that fiddlers could sign up to participate in the Portage la Prairie event without participating in a preliminary (“Teen-Age Fiddlers” 1953, 1). It is possible that the preliminary round provided the winner with funds to travel to Portage la Prairie. Nonetheless, in the early years, interest was fair, with about thirteen or fourteen youth (under nineteen) competing (“Junior Fiddlers” 1955, 6; and “John McKay” 1955, 9). By the late 1950s, the junior Championship had moved to McGregor (“Best in Manitoba” 1959, 10), and in the years after, there are no references to the competition in local newspapers.

Despite the efforts of Florence Roberts, it was only in the mid-1970s that junior categories began to appear as a regular part of Manitoba fiddle contests and only in the mid-1980s that they became an expectation. The 1970s were, in many ways, a time of experimentation for old-time contests. For example, in 1975 the Manitoba Open included a championship class, a “B” class (i.e., a second adult class), a junior class, a senior class,

and a ladies class (“Manitoba Open Ad” 1975). The following year just open,²⁰² senior, and junior classes were included (“Father and Son” 1976, 1). Then, in 1978, the Manitoba Open added a non-resident class (“Fiddling Title” 1978, 30); since this was a competition to choose Manitoba champions (and thus should only feature Manitoba residents), this class would allow non-residents to compete. That same year, the “B” class was once again part of the line-up (ibid.). Unfortunately, when I spoke to Marvin Monk (a key organizer of the competition in the 1970s), he was unable to remember the details of why various categories were added or removed (not surprising given the number of years that have passed) (interview with Monk 2012). Some of the paperwork from that competition has, however, been sent to the Manitoba Fiddle Association archives; combing through this material would be an excellent area for future research.²⁰³

The eventual addition of youth categories may have been due in part to greater exchange with Ontario. As Johnson’s chart on origins of fiddlers competing in Shelburne, Ontario indicates (2006, 113), the number of Manitoba fiddlers attending the competition was especially high in the mid-1970s. The idea to include youth categories may have been brought back by fiddlers attending the Ontario competition.²⁰⁴ Accompanist Jean Snider offered an alternate explanation, noting that a couple of teachers began giving fiddle lessons, encouraging their young students to attend competitions. According to

²⁰² Open and championship are most often used interchangeably at contests in Manitoba, simply referring to the class that anyone can participate in and that awards the winners the highest prize. Only rarely does a contest have an open class and a championship class. In this case, the open class is, essentially, an adult category or a second tier of the championship-level class.

²⁰³ Currently, the archives are housed in a shed located on the farm that belongs to the former president of the Manitoba Fiddle Association. The archives are not yet organized; much work needs to be done before they become readily accessible to the public.

²⁰⁴ Fred Claridge, an organizer of the Shelburne competition, claims that the Shelburne competition was modeled on fiddle contests in western Canada (1975, 7). However, it is possible that influence may have moved back and forth between east and west.

Snider, contests added youth classes in response to youth interest (interview with Snider 2012). Whatever the case, a major shift occurred in the late 1970s and early 1980s. At this time, it became typical for contests to include two or three youth categories (e.g., nine and under, thirteen and under, and eighteen and under), plus a championship (or open) category, and one or two senior categories (sixty plus and seventy plus, or just sixty-five plus). A twin fiddles category (where one fiddler plays the melody and a second plays the harmony) also became standard at this time, giving fiddlers an opportunity to play together and make some extra cash. Contemporary contests now include a combination of the above-noted categories and occasionally also include adult, Metis-style, and/or first-time competitor categories.²⁰⁵

From Tea Towels to Cash: Bringing Home a Prize

Cash prizes are currently the norm at Manitoba fiddle contests. The top contestants can earn a significant amount of money over a year of competing. The *Brandon Sun* reported, for instance, that the top fiddler at a contest held in Austin, Manitoba in 1987 earned \$2300 that season, with another high-earning fiddler winning \$1500 (Munro 1987, 2). Cash prizes have typically gone up over the years (see Johnson 2006, 115), with first place in championship classes now ranging from two to four hundred dollars, making contests financially appealing for those who place. Cash has not, however, always been the expectation. For example, a fiddle contest in southwestern

²⁰⁵ A Metis-style category is included at the Miami Fun and Fiddle Festival and the Manitoba Open. They will be discussed further in chapter six. The contests in Meadow Lea and Miami both include first time competitor categories. An own choice category was added to the line-up in Holland in the early 2000s, but discontinued the following year. For additional examples of differences between contests compare the categories mentioned in “Altona Fiddling Contest” (1995, 12A), Critchie (1989, 8A); Wightman (1978, 2:6); and “Fiddling Contest Held” 1978.

Manitoba in the late 1920s paid the winner's travel expenses as a representative of the town at the Western Manitoba Championship. The ultimate winner of the Championship received a gold watch ("Baldur Contest" 1927, 1). The prizes for the Manitoba Junior Championship included merchandise from local businesses, awarded to the top ten fiddlers ("Teen-Age Fiddlers" 1953, 1). A contest held in the 1950s in Lido Plage, Manitoba similarly gave away a variety of merchandise. As Jeanne Carlson, a fiddler who competed at the Lido Plage contest in 1954 told me,

...in those days, if you won anything you won a set of tea towels²⁰⁶ or something like that...beside the stage there was...a big bin full of stuff that they gave out for prizes. They didn't give out any money. (interview with Carlson 2012)

At least one contest gave some cash to all the fiddlers, as a way to off-set travel costs ("Fiddlers' Contest Highlights" 1972, 1).

Other contests gave prizes not only to the fiddler, but also to lucky audience-members. A contest held in 1930 in Balmoral, Manitoba, gave away a ten-pound bag of sugar to ten lucky winners ("Old-Time Fiddling Contest and Dance" 1930). Prizes would also be given, at some contests, to the oldest woman, the heaviest man, or the largest family (see, e.g., "Pioneers at Picnic" 1954, 1). Discussing the competition held in Lido Plage in 1954, Carlson recalls that,

...they had a contest for the largest family on the grounds, and they gave them a fan as a prize! And everybody just roared at that! Because they were saying that was to cool them off because they had like seventeen kids or something. (interview with Carlson 2012)

²⁰⁶ As Beverley Diamond rightly noted after reading a draft of this dissertation, tea towels seem to be a gendered prize. That is, would they not appeal to women rather than men? This could be a point for further investigation.

Given that I have only found one other newspaper report detailing these types of contests for the audience to participate in (see “Native Daughters” 1943), they were likely never very common. I have, furthermore, never seen this kind of audience competition at a contemporary fiddle competition. With the exception of an occasional door prize, all the winnings are now awarded to the fiddlers in the form of cash and trophies, with the largest amounts typically going to young fiddlers (i.e., fiddlers in their late teens or twenties) in the championship class.

Reel Repertoire: Required Tunes and Tunes of Choice

Contemporary fiddle contests almost always require competitors to play a waltz, jig, and reel, in that order. Occasionally, contests have required that fiddlers play only two tunes, or required that the youngest contestants play only two tunes.²⁰⁷ Nonetheless, the vast majority of contests follow the waltz, jig, and reel standard that was set in the late 1950s. Prior to this, the contests typically required a waltz, schottische, and a reel. This was the norm when fiddler Lynn Mitchell (1922–2011) began competing in the early 1930s (interview with Mitchell 2008; also see “Argyle Notes” 1930). An article printed in *The Manitoba Leader* indicates that this was still the practice, at least at the Manitoba Open, in the early 1950s; the contestants at this competition had to play an “old time waltz, as well as a Schottische, and a hoe-down”²⁰⁸ (“Provincial Fiddlers’ Contest” 1952, 1). Although I have not been able to determine the exact time when the repertoire

²⁰⁷ I remember attending some contests that required fiddlers to play only two tunes, usually a waltz and reel or two-step, although I have not come across this practice in recent years except at the Metisfest contest. I also found a newspaper article from 1947 that, in describing a contest that took place during a Mardi Gras celebration in Portage la Prairie, noted that each contestants had to play two tunes (“Mardi Gras” 1947, 8).

²⁰⁸ A hoe-down is a term used to describe a reel or other fast tune in 4/4 time.

requirements began to change, fiddler Henri Hince, who started competing in the 1970s, does not remember playing anything other than waltz, jig, and reel sets (interview with Hince 2012). Similarly, Jean Snider, who began accompanying at contests in 1960, does not remember fiddlers playing schottisches (interview with Snider 2012). This change, then, likely occurred in Manitoba sometime in the mid- to late-1950s. Like the addition of various age categories, this change may have been influenced by contests in the east, in particular, the contest in Shelburne, Ontario, which began in 1951 and by 1958 (if not earlier) required contestants to play a waltz, jig and reel (Johnson 2006, 264).

Beyond the particular tune-type is the issue of tune selection. While contestants at contemporary contests choose any tune of the correct tune-type, an article from 1954 notes that the Manitoba Championship required fiddlers to choose tunes from a list of six old-time waltzes and breakdowns.²⁰⁹ This, however, was only required of the finalists. In other words, while fiddlers in the preliminary round chose their own tunes, fiddlers who advanced to the finals had to choose from a very limited list of repertoire (“Fiddlers Looking Forward” 1954, 1). Interestingly, this article was printed just two years after the above-cited article indicating that fiddlers had to include a schottische; this change, then, points to a time of experimentation. It is possible, again, that this mandating of repertoire was in response to rules in Shelburne, Ontario, since Shelburne put the same policy in place; unfortunately, the year that this happened is not available, making it impossible to determine influence. (Interestingly, the contest in Perth, Ontario also had a list of required tunes for several years but only in the early 1970s [Johnson 2006, 212–3].) This practice

²⁰⁹ It is not clear if there were six or twelve tunes to choose from, although a later article (“Grant Lamb” 1954, 9) makes it sound as if there were just six tunes in total.

is, however, a rare exception that has not taken place in Manitoba for more than fifty years. More typical is a great degree of flexibility in repertoire choice, especially for fiddlers who are well established in the scene. Like contests in Ontario (see Johnson 2006, 215), some fiddlers in Manitoba are playing their own compositions (something that is not common among the teens and young adults in the championship class but somewhat common among senior fiddlers), or are playing tunes borrowed from other (i.e., not old-time) traditions (cf., Johnson 2006, 223).

The People: From Creating Venues to Making Music

Fiddlers: “Dumb Kids” become Stars

If contests are the measure of the average age of old-time fiddlers, one would have to conclude that old-time fiddling has become an activity for youth. For example, the old-time fiddle contest held during the 2011 Festival du Voyageur (the province’s best-attended contest) attracted twenty-nine fiddlers in the eighteen and under categories, four in the senior category, and fifteen in the open category. Almost all of the fiddlers in the open category were under thirty. Similarly, at the Manitoba Open the same year, there were twenty fiddlers in the under eighteen categories, four in the senior category, three in the adult category, and eight in the championship category. All three fiddlers in the adult category were under thirty and all but one in the championship class were under thirty (most under twenty-one). This is perhaps one of the most interesting changes in fiddle contest culture. Although there has never been a rule stating that fiddlers must be “genuine old timers, at least 50 years of age” (Hornby 1985, 9) as was the case in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, in the mid-1920s, prior to the late 1970s

competitors at Manitoba fiddle contests were almost exclusively adult men. Now, the majority of fiddlers are under eighteen.

The shift in median age has significantly changed the dynamics of fiddle contests. In the 1950s, children who participated were not taken seriously; certainly it was rare for a child or teen to win.²¹⁰ As Jeanne Carlson told me, she never really got to know the other fiddlers when she was competing in the 1950s. After all, she was “just a dumb kid” playing against fiddlers who were much older (interview with Carlson 2012). The adult fiddlers were, then, seen as the experts. With the addition of youth categories, children and teens began competing in their age categories and soon also began competing in the championship classes. These young fiddlers often took private music lessons (something the adult and senior fiddlers were less likely to have had access to) and for this reason often played at a higher level (technically) than adult and senior fiddlers. These young fiddlers may not have had the experience, the large repertoire, or even the feel that comes with a long relationship with the style, but their ability to play technically perfect sets gave them high points in competitions. Adults soon began dropping out of contests, and youth went from being “dumb kids” (to borrow the words used by Carlson [2012] in an interview) to being the stars at the centre of old-time contests.

Despite an increase in young fiddlers, there has not been a clear change in the overall number of fiddlers participating in competitions. The Manitoba Championship provides an interesting base-point for exploring participation since the late 1940s. In 1947, thirty-five fiddlers took part in the competition. Several years later, the number had

²¹⁰ Lynn Mitchell is an exception, winning contests against adults when he was as young as seven (interview with Mitchell 2008).

decreased to twenty-three. The number went down further in 1955, when just eighteen competitors turned up, but increased slightly two years later with twenty-one fiddlers participating.²¹¹ There are, unfortunately, no articles about the contest between 1957 and 1975²¹² and participants and organizers have not been able to give me a good estimate of the number of fiddlers attending during this time. By the mid-1970s, the number of fiddlers had grown, fluctuating between thirty-seven and fifty.²¹³ A huge gap in available information follows since the *Winnipeg Free Press* did not pick up the reporting on the competition after the competition was moved to Winnipeg, perhaps due to declining popular interest in fiddling. (Newspapers from surrounding areas occasionally mentioned the competition, but this reportage became increasingly spotty after the 1950s.) However, those who participated in the competition told me that there were ‘lots’ of fiddlers in the 1970s and 1980s (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012, and interview with Monk 2012). Currently, the contest attracts thirty-four (2010) or thirty-five fiddlers (2011 and 2012).

While the shift in median age is the most notable change, there is an increasing number of girls/women participating (as discussed in chapter five); competitions are also becoming more ethnically diverse, although this change is happening rather slowly.

Although the majority of fiddlers are white²¹⁴ (which, as far as I have been able to

²¹¹ See “Lacroix Wins” (1957, 8), “Large Entry Likely” (1956, 6), “Grant Lamb Wins” (1955), “Manitoba Fiddlers” (1955, 1), “Winnipeg’s Andy” (1952, 37), and “1700 Turn Out” (1947, 4).

²¹² It is unclear why there is this gap in reportage. It is possible that the contest was not held for several years (after all, there had been a decline in attendance), or it may be that newspapers were responding to the decline popular interest in fiddling. Whatever the case, by 1970 the competition had been moved to Winnipeg (“Father and Son” 1976, 1).

²¹³ See “Fiddling Champion” (1979, 21), “Father and Son” (1976, 1), and “Fiddling Contest Attracts” (1975, 9).

²¹⁴ While recognizing that the term white homogenizes different European-derived ethnicities, I use it here to highlight the unmarkedness of these fiddlers in this particular context. That is, they are simply represented as fiddlers, and not, for example, as Metis fiddlers, or Scottish fiddlers.

uncover, has always been the case), there has been a slight increase in the number of visibly Indigenous fiddlers taking part in old-time competitions. Of course, Metis fiddlers have a long history of participating in old-time fiddle contests. (Two of Manitoba's best-known old-time fiddlers—Andy Dejarlis and Reg Bouvette—were Metis; both won many old-time competitions.) Yet their identities as Metis were often somewhat hidden. At the moment, there is an increasing number of fiddlers who are 'out' about being Metis (e.g., wearing sashes) and an increasing number of fiddlers who are visibly Indigenous. These fiddlers, furthermore, often do well at contests. This is an important change, especially given that it makes contests one of the few spaces where re-settler Manitobans mingle with Indigenous Manitobans in a space that is positive, at least superficially.

Interestingly, while the number of Indigenous fiddlers at competitions has increased, new immigrants have not yet joined the fiddle community in a significant way. In fact, I have only seen two non-white re-settlers participate in contests as fiddlers, one in the 1990s and early 2000s and the other starting in about 2010.

Attracting Spectators: The Changing Audience at Old-Time Contests

Fiddle competitions could not take place without an audience. Since fiddlers do not pay a fee to enter, the audience provides the funds for prizes, with the remaining money covering other expenses and making the event profitable for the organizing committee.²¹⁵ Audience numbers, however, are difficult to measure, especially when looking at numbers across the twentieth century. Audience size varies from contest to

²¹⁵ Most contests are fundraisers. Few continue if the amount of money left over is too small to make the contest monetarily worthwhile for the organizers (the Manitoba Open being the most important exception to this rule).

contest and fluctuates somewhat from year to year. Furthermore, newspapers often do not report on audience numbers, or just provide estimates, and organizers often do not keep historical records of attendance, although many are able to provide a pretty good estimate of audience numbers over the years. Nonetheless, it is clear from a combination of reading newspapers articles and conversing with fiddlers and organizers that audience numbers have decreased over the course of the second half of the twentieth century. Available information points to a peak in audience size in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Newspapers reporting on the Manitoba Championship during this period point to audiences of seventeen hundred in 1947, three thousand in 1949, almost two thousand four hundred in 1950, eighteen hundred in 1952, and sixteen hundred in 1955.²¹⁶ In 1956, the audience size is not reported; the reporter nonetheless notes that the audience was down from the previous year, citing a late harvest as possible cause (“Manitou Fiddler Wins” 1956, 13).

The largest audience ever referred to was at a competition held in Lido Plage, Manitoba (about thirty-five kilometres west of Winnipeg), in 1954, with a reported seven thousand in the crowd (“Pioneers At Picnic” 1954, 1). The article includes a photo showing the audience, with the following as a caption:

Approximately 7,000 people attended the basket picnic of the Pioneer and Oldtimers association of the Assiniboine valley at Lido Plage Sunday to watch fiddling and Red River jig contests. In the photo at left part of the large crowd is shown listening to a young girl playing a hot fiddle. (“Pioneers at Picnic” 1954, 1)

²¹⁶ See “Grant Lamb Wins” (1955), “Winnipeg’s Andy” (1952, 37), “Poplar Point Man” (1950, 1), “Portage Musician” (1949, 7), and “1700 Turn Out” (1947, 4).

When I spoke to the “young girl playing a hot fiddle” (Jeanne Wither, now Jeanne Carlson), she recalled the event with much excitement in her voice. She told me about the sea of people in attendance and, pointing to the picture, commented on how people got dressed up for the event: “Some of them have even got hats on, you know. We used to dress up when we’d go to these things” (interview with Carlson 2012). Carlson also talked about how Andy Dejarlis, a judge that day, had the entire crowd in the palm of his hand when he played the tune “Growling Old Man and Woman” (ibid.). Audiences at old-time fiddle contests were, therefore, very large at some events in the 1940s and 50s.

Dejarlis’ one-time band mate Joe Mackintosh, writing about Dejarlis’ career in the mid-1950s, points to the growing influence of popular music and the subsequent decline in the popularity of old-time music. Somewhat romantically recalling the past, Mackintosh writes:

The mid-1950s appeared as a turning point for Andy—a point where change had to happen if Andy were to continue in the entertainment business. Andy’s world of music was in the throes of change. The old-time dance or any other venue of dance had passed its peak. Its popularity was on the decline. The diminuendo of the ‘old-time dance’ was a force of change facing Andy and His early settlers...Rock and roll was taking hold. Just as the puffing Billy of steam was replaced with the era of oil, the music and presence of Elvis Presley and the beat of rock and roll was dieseling over fiddling and old-time music...Guitars were in—especially electric guitars and if you played at dances you had better learn this music...Tony Beaulieu [Dejarlis’ piano player] recalls some dance crowds booing and attendance in rapid decline when the band didn’t play rock and roll—a tough act with two fiddles and an accordion. (Mackintosh 2010, 107)

Here Mackintosh is speaking about dances, not contests. Yet the connection between contests and dance is strong (as discussed in the next chapter) and a decline in audience for old-time dances would likely be mirrored by a decline in audience for contests.

Despite a decline post-1950s, the audience for old-time contests did not disappear, remaining vibrant spaces for old-time fiddling into the 1990s. Six-time Manitoba champion Patti Lamoureux (nee Kusturok) recalls very large crowds in attendance for the Manitoba Open, held in the Century Arena in Winnipeg, when she was competing in the late 1970s to late 80s. Lamoureux notes that the arena was packed and that “the whole atmosphere was electric” (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012). The organizers, furthermore, would hire a big country star²¹⁷ for the dance (ibid.), giving the competition a modern edge. When the Manitoba Open was moved to Holland, Manitoba, in the early 1980s, there were about seven hundred people in attendance (field notes 07/28/2012), not a bad number given that Holland’s population was just four hundred. The 1980s continued to see a large audience at least in some places, with a reported one thousand people in Austin, Manitoba, at the 1987 competition (Munro 1987, 2). The numbers varied from contest to contest, with another contest the same year reporting just three hundred in attendance (Gavin 1987, 9). A best estimate would be that crowds in the 1990s numbered about five hundred, with the audience filling fairly large community centres in towns such as Miami, Carman, and Holland, Manitoba. By the 2000s, however, this number began to drop significantly. This was particularly striking to me since I did not attend contests between 2001 and 2008. In 2001, the halls were still quite full, with chairs on the dance floor for the contest and shows; in 2008, chairs were no longer needed on the dance floor—tables around the dance floor provided more than enough

²¹⁷ Lamoureux could not remember exactly who these big name acts were since she was so young at the time.

seating. A best estimate would be that audiences are now down to about one hundred fifty to three hundred at the best-attended contests.²¹⁸

When asked about the demographics of the audience, Lamoureux recalled that it was mostly older people, generally seniors; there were not a lot of children in attendance when she was competing in the 1980s (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012). This, I believe, points to the most significant shift in audience, a shift that goes back to the 1950s. Prior to the 1950s, fiddling in Manitoba was a popular music; that is, it was a music that most Manitobans enjoyed whether as fiddlers, dancers, or audience members, rather than something that only a select few people, an affinity group (Slobin 1993, 56), enjoy and support as is the case in contemporary Manitoba. This is affirmed in the numerous comments from consultants who noted that fiddle music was the music played at every party, dance, or other social event prior to the 1950s. Some of my consultants even expressed surprise when I asked them to confirm that it was fiddle music being played at an event that they were discussing. In other words, of course it was fiddle music! Fiddle music was, then, mainstream music in Manitoba prior to the 1950s. Although fiddlers like Dejarlis (and Messer in the 1960s) did their best to keep the music modern and relevant to younger crowds, they were unable to keep up with youth preferences. The result is that the audience for fiddling is now a very small group of people made up of seniors who remember fiddling from their youth and young people who have developed a special interest in the music. In other words, playing fiddle music

²¹⁸ This estimate is based on what people have told me and from the audience-counting I have done at recent contests. For audience numbers in the 1990s and early 2000s see McKay (2004, 14), Nesbitt (2002, 4), “Stonewall” (1991, 21), and “Ag. Ex. ‘90” (1990, 9).

at a typical party attended by contemporary Manitobans would stand out as something odd, unusual, or quaint, and few guests would be familiar with the music.

Making Fiddlers Sound Good: the Role of Accompanists

Accompanists play an important role in the contest scene and in old-time music more generally. Although other chording instruments are permitted, piano has been a long-time favourite at fiddle contests. It is impossible to know for certain when piano became the dominant instrument for competitions, but when accompanist Jean Snider (b. 1923) began chording at contests in the 1960s, it was the typical instrument. Snider was born in Swan River, Manitoba and plays completely by ear. She is for the most part a self-taught accompanist, although her mother, who used to play with her father who was a fiddler, helped her learn. Snider has one of the longest musical careers of anyone in the fiddle scene (more than seventy years). She began playing with old-time orchestras (as they were called at the time) when she was only sixteen. She moved south to Manitou, Manitoba, in 1960 with her husband and children and began accompanying her husband, fiddler Lorne Snider, at competitions. Organizers soon began asking her to be the house pianist at fiddle contests. She notes,

I was the sole accompanist for years at the contests. Unless, maybe, maybe there'd be a couple like my mom and dad. She would play. But, for the majority, I was the sole accompanist for years until Yvette. (interview with Snider 2012)

Yvette Audette (formerly Carrière) began accompanying at contests sometime around the early 1970s. When I asked her about her influences she told me that Jean Snider was a very big influence for her when she was starting out (interview with Audette 2008). Both

Snider and Audette are accompanying at fewer contests these days, but both can still be found at the piano at contests such as the Manitoba Open.

Snider and Audette were the main accompanists at contests throughout the sixties (in the case of the former), seventies, eighties, nineties, and into the 2000s. A few other women, such as Pearl Carnahan (who was married to fiddler Gordie Carnahan) and Dorothy Granger, and an occasional man, such as Michael Bohemier, also played the piano for fiddlers. In the last year, however, the accompanying scene has been changing significantly, as many of the championship class fiddlers (about half the class) ask Jeremy Rusu to accompany instead of the house accompanists.

Rusu (b. 1984) is a young musician from Winnipeg. A multi-instrumentalist (playing piano, guitar, drums, and accordion, among other instruments) interested in a variety of genres (jazz, bluegrass, country, and old-time), he entered the old-time fiddle scene after meeting Patti Lamoureux in 2010. They soon began performing together (with Rusu most often playing the piano or guitar), and from there, young fiddlers (including Lamoureux's son Alex, the current Manitoba old-time and Metis champion) began requesting that Rusu accompany them at contests and at other old-time events. Although Rusu (who has been blind since birth) does not use music, he is able to play the more complex chord changes required in many of the newer tunes, picking up new tunes often after just a couple of tries. Rusu also borrows from other styles (in particular the Cape Breton style), making him increasingly popular with the younger fiddlers who are experimenting with style.

In some ways, the older accompanists are being pushed out by the younger generation of fiddlers because the older accompanists cannot or do not want to play in the newer styles, or in styles that did not originate in Manitoba. This closely mirrors what Johnson describes in Ontario:

Some of the changes to piano accompaniment style are a reflection of changes in fiddle style...stylistic elements from the Cape Breton piano accompaniment style, and popular and jazz musics have been introduced to the music by some particularly younger accompanists who are not content with always being relegated to the role of keeping time and adding supporting harmony. (Johnson 2006, 244–5)

Accompanists play an important role at contests, as attested to by the preferences of the fiddlers themselves. Nonetheless, there are few who get into it the way Snider and Audette did, perhaps because of the low pay (about \$150 for a long day of work). With Rusu coming to play—playing for tips from winners—it will be interesting to see if the role of house pianist disappears or otherwise changes.

Choosing Winners, Judging Ideals

In the early 2000s, the Manitoba Fiddle Association (MFA) created guidelines for judges. These guidelines have not been widely implemented, however, and contests currently do not have standardized judging criteria; judges are most often allowed to follow their own criteria.²¹⁹ Nonetheless, one part of the guidelines, the ordinal number system (as referred to by its creators) has been adopted by some judges. The ordinal system was developed after a fiddler won a contest because one judge skewed his scores (out of one hundred) to make sure that fiddler placed first. An MFA committee came up

²¹⁹ Although I have spoken to the people on the Manitoba Fiddle Association board responsible for putting the guidelines together, I have been unable to get a copy. Since they are no longer on the board, they have lost track of the guidelines.

with the idea that judges should simply rank fiddlers, giving a one for the fiddler the judge felt deserved first place, a two for second place, and so on (interview with Granger 2012). In this way, three judges could give one fiddler rankings of one, one, and two, and the fiddler would end up with four, still putting that fiddler in first place (since the next lowest score could not be lower than five). This does work to some degree, especially if there are only three prizes. But judges can still skew the results in classes where there are many placings, giving a fiddler that should have placed high a seven (for a total of nine if the other two judges place the fiddler in first) and giving a favourite fiddler a one (which, if the fiddler was placed in third by the other two judges, would give the fiddler the same score as the favourite of two of the judges).

The problem even with this attempt to make judging fair ultimately points to the difficulty of judging contests and the kinds of controversies that can arise. Certainly, the issue of a judge purposefully skewing results has not come up often in my research, leading me to believe that controversies are more likely the result of honest differences in opinion about what aspects of style and performance should be most valued. A related issue, of course, is that the qualification and background of judges varies significantly, although organizers typically try to find judges who have experience as judges or have been involved in the contest circuit for a number of years. Nonetheless, it is not uncommon for judges to play fiddle at a very low level, or to have a mix of judges that are highly trained (i.e., have learned through weekly, one-on-one lessons) and judges who have learned in a more traditional ways (e.g., learning from a family member, or learning entirely on their own, by ear). Despite these differences, only about ten to fifteen people

in Manitoba are considered qualified judges (at least by the organizers who invite them to the contests), meaning that a judge will typically judge at several contests every year. This means that a small number of people have a significant say in determining who wins the most contests in any given year.

The issue most commonly raised when it comes to judging is that of style, that is, what style the judges are looking for in the winning fiddlers. As mentioned earlier, some are more concerned with maintaining what they perceive to be ‘old-time’ within the contest setting; others are not. For example, Alex Lamoureux (b.1991) told me that he does not pick winners based on how close they stay to any given style; rather, he is interested in choosing the fiddler who does the best in their chosen style. He is not, however, necessarily supported in this approach by other judges (interview with Alex Lamoureux 2011). Henri Hince (b. 1929) feels that judges should be allowed to judge in the way that Lamoureux judges, but feels that he should be choosing an old-time style player if the contest rules specify that the fiddler should be playing in the old-time style; and most do. Yet, this puts him in what he feels is a tricky position: “...that makes it very difficult because how can you not give the points if it’s well-played? And, you know, that makes it a little, a little harder to judge” (interview with Hince 2012). Although the issue is generational to some degree, with younger fiddlers often pushing for more flexibility and older fiddlers, judges, or audience members more likely to raise concerns about the loss of the old-time style, Hince and Lamoureux’s views (with the former in his eighties and the latter in his late teens when I spoke with him) show that this is not strictly a generational issue.

Because of the tensions described above, some judges make a decision whether or not to judge a particular contest based, in part, on with whom they will be judging; and some fiddlers refuse to play for certain judges (field notes 15/07/2008). The latter is, however, somewhat uncommon, given that contests rarely announce who will be judging; fiddlers typically find out the day of the contest when they arrive at the community centre, although contests often keep one or two of the same judges every year (e.g., the Manitoba Open and the Festival du Voyageur contests). I know from personal experience that I have more chance of placing if certain judges are not judging. If I knew that these judges were judging a contest, it certainly would influence my decision whether or not to play. These examples point to two distinct ways in which judges can regulate style. First, if a judge is difficult to work with, he may, in fact, gain more say in the scene by driving away a diverse roster of judges. That particular judge's values, then, become stronger as differing opinions are silenced. Second, fiddlers who refuse, or who are unable, to conform to the ideals set by the judges may stop competing. In this way, they play an important role in shaping the tradition, at least as it plays out in the contest setting. Outside of the contest venue (although there are not many venues outside of contests), the opinions of judges have little bearing on how old-time fiddlers choose to play.

Making it All Happen: The Role of Organizers

When fiddlers arrive on contest day, everything is set up and ready to go. There is a house pianist, rules, judges, an audience, entertainment (often), food, and prize money and trophies. Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of contemporary contests is the stark contrast between the organizers, who are generally retired seniors, and the fiddlers,

most of whom are quite young. It is also interesting that many of the organizers are women, creating a contrast in the role of senior men (fiddlers) and senior women (organizers). Certainly, there are many men working behind the scenes, keeping contests going; Manitoba's most famous contest organizer (Winston Simpson) was a man (and also a fiddler). Nonetheless, women play a key role as organizers, and their work, although often taken for granted, should be acknowledged; contests would not happen if it were not for their efforts. As Lyla Bilton (b. 1939), the current main organizer of the Manitoba Open, told me, the work of the organizers begins the day after a contest; that is, organizing for a contest is a year-long activity (interview with Bilton 2012). For Bilton, much of these organizational tasks, such as booking the MC and judges and preparing the trophies, take quite a bit of time. Bilton also makes a point of attending contests throughout the year as a way to get a clear sense of what is going on in the fiddle circuit, so that she can keep up with current trends. She tries to make sure that the Manitoba Open is in line with other contests, but also tries to keep the prize money just a bit higher, since it is the provincial championship (*ibid.*). Again, this requires a great deal of commitment on her part.

Bilton's life story demonstrates a key reason why organizers agree to take on the responsibility of organizing a competition. Lyla Bilton grew up with fiddle music in her home. Her dad, Albert Moffatt, was a fiddler, and she learned to accompany him on piano. Bilton and her father played old-time music mixed in with popular spiritual tunes and Celtic songs. They played for various events such as schoolhouse dances. Eventually, country schools closed, and there was no longer a venue for dancing. Furthermore, like

many women, Bilton dropped much of her music-making after she got married. It was only after she retired in 2001 that she began reviving her interest in the fiddle and even began taking fiddle lessons. In 2005, Bilton joined the MFA and by 2008 took over the responsibility of organizing the Manitoba Open. The MFA had already been organizing the Manitoba Open for a couple of years (in Souris, Manitoba), but due to volunteer burnout needed to find a new location and new volunteers. For organizers like Bilton, the work she does to organize the contest is a way to stay connected to the music of her youth. She understands it as just one role among the many roles that keep the contest scene going. Although she still does not consider herself an accomplished enough fiddler to compete (she has only competed once), she has found a way to promote old-time fiddling through her work with the MFA and, in particular, as the main organizer of the Manitoba Open Old Time Fiddle Championships. Although not all organizers have followed the life-trajectory of Bilton, her brief life-story hits on the key points: organizers often have a childhood connection to old-time fiddling but are not fiddlers themselves.

Concluding Comments

This chapter explored southern Manitoba's old-time contest scene, providing an overview of a typical contest and discussing the structure of contests and the various roles of participants. Contests have clearly changed over the years, moving away from being adult-oriented competitions to an activity for children and teens. While contests continue to draw an audience, audience size dropped dramatically after the 1950s, as fiddling lost its status as a popular music, and again in the 2000s, possibly due to an aging audience. Since the number of fiddlers attending competitions has remained relatively consistent

over the years, the drop in audience size is most disconcerting, especially since the audience is made up of seniors. As fund-raisers, and given the large amount of prize money given out at each event, organizers need large audiences to make contests feasible; it is in this area that contemporary contests in Manitoba face the biggest hurdle to their continued existence. Beyond the decline in audience-numbers (or perhaps linked to the decline), old-time fiddling, at contests and elsewhere, faces the larger issue of fitting into the changing contemporary world. The final chapter in this section on old-time fiddling explores in further detail the various tensions and social issues outlined in the first two chapters of this section.

Chapter Five: Old-Time Fiddling in a Modern World

The previous chapter provided an overview of a ‘typical’ old-time competition, including an exploration of the roles played by participants in the old-time circuit. The shrinking audience was highlighted as a key issue. This decline occurred as old-time fiddling moved from being a popular music (in the 1950s) to a music enjoyed by a small affinity group. Clearly, the relationship between old-time fiddling and the mainstream public has changed over the course of the twentieth century. This chapter explores old-time fiddling as part of contemporary re-settler social life in Manitoba. It asks the following questions: What are the key debates within the contemporary old-time fiddle scene? How have women been integrated into a scene that, in the past, featured many more men than women (at least on the public stage)? And how has the old-time fiddle community addressed increasing diversity in Canada?

The first section of this chapter explores the relationship between old-time fiddling and dancing; it addresses dance as an activity for a viewing audience and as a form of audience participation. The second section focuses on tensions in the old-time fiddle scene, including the tension between local and national, preservation and change, and old-time and classical—or fiddling as folk music and fiddling as art music (a tension closely related to the changing relationship between fiddling and dancing). The third section explores identity, focusing in particular on the role of women fiddlers, but also addressing the issues of class, Anglo-centrism (addressed in further detail in chapter six), and the ties between the old-time fiddle scene and Christianity. By exploring these trends

and social issues, this chapter highlights the changing ways in which old-time fiddling is embedded in the lives of contemporary Manitobans.

Dancing to the Fiddle

Old-time dances were a major engagement for fiddlers in the first half of the twentieth century. As described by Mackintosh, Andy Dejarlis frequently played for old-time dances in both Winnipeg and rural Manitoba until the mid-1950s, when the old-time dance scene began to dry up and, as Mackintosh notes, audiences began preferring popular music heard on the radio (2010, 107). Jean Snider (b. 1923) recalls that dances were frequent events when she was a child growing up in Swan River, Manitoba (almost five hundred kilometres northwest of Winnipeg). Her parents regularly played for dances in the local school house, and dances were also held in town. Snider began playing piano for an orchestra (with a fiddler and a banjo player) when she was sixteen (as noted in the previous chapter) and soon was playing for dances around the Swan River area and then farther from the orchestra's home base (interview with Snider 2012). Lyla Bilton (b. 1939) recalls attending pie socials in her youth (events where the girls/women would bring a pie to be auctioned off to the boys/men) and box socials (events where the girls/women would bring a boxed lunch that they would share with the lucky boy/man who won the lunch in an auction). These were, according to Bilton, important occasions for old-time music and dance (interview with Bilton 2012). Old-time dances were, therefore, a main source of entertainment in both rural and urban Manitoba in the first half of the twentieth century, keeping old-time fiddlers busy.

Early old-time fiddle contests also had a close connection to dance, featuring dancers, especially jiggers, as part of the competition line-up (discussed below) and often including a non-competitive old-time dance afterwards. At some competitions in the 1930s, the connection between the fiddlers at the contest and the dance that followed was especially strong because the winners were required to play for the dance, and at least in one case, the fiddler had to supply his own accompanist (e.g., see “Neepawa Old-Time” 1933, “Argyle Notes” 1930; “Local and General” 1930, 1, and “Fiddlers of Rivers” 1929). Requiring fiddlers to play for the dance, however, was not a long-lived practice (the above articles are the only references that I have found). Fiddle contests in the first half of the twentieth century would also sometimes include square dance calling competitions,²²⁰ strengthening the tie between the music and dance traditions (e.g., see “Fine Weather” 1953, 2; “Argyle Legion” 1950, 5; and “Local and General” 1930, 1), and at least one dance that followed a contest gave a prize to the couple deemed best at dancing the old-time waltz (“Neepawa Old-Time” 1933). Although I have not come across any references to square dance calling contests after the 1950s, nor do any of my consultants remember square dance calling competitions, the waltz competition was revived in 2011 as part of the dance that followed the Manitoba Open Fiddle Championships.

Competitive Jigging/Step Dancing at Fiddle Contests

Until the 1980s, old-time fiddle contests in Manitoba often included jigging or step dancing competitions. (Newspaper articles from this period do not describe the

²²⁰ These were prizes for callers, not for square dance troupes.

dance, making it difficult to know if the term ‘step dancing’ was used at the time as a synonym for jigging.) Contest organizer Lyla Bilton told me that she distinguished between the two when she was young. Bilton believes that step dancing referred to a style of dance similar to that performed in Cape Breton, while jigging had a strong French influence (2012). Nonetheless, the terms do seem to have been used somewhat interchangeably in the first half of the twentieth century. The first reference to a step dancing competition dates back to an article from 1930 that describes a “step-dance” competition that took place as part of a fiddling contest (“Local and General” 1930, 1). References to jigging or step dancing contests are found in articles printed throughout the rest of the twentieth century (i.e., post-1930).²²¹ Jigging competitions were especially popular in mainstream Manitoba in the 1940s and 50s and during this period were often included as part of fiddling contests. In some instances, the same people won both the jigging and fiddling competitions, pointing to an especially strong connection between the two practices.²²² An example is Jellicoe Lafreniere, who won the Manitoba Open and was also crowned the Red River Jig champion in the 1940s (“J. Lafreniere” 1948, 1). Another example is Reg Bouvette, renowned Manitoba fiddler who was also a capable jigger (see “Fete Franco-Manitoban” 1973, 2:9). That both were considered champion fiddlers and jiggers intricately entangles the two practices.

Yet champion jiggers did not (and still do not) typically win as large prizes as the champion fiddlers, suggesting that fiddling was (and is) more highly valued. For

²²¹ For example, see “Red River Fiddle” 2005 (8A), Stammen (1994, 11), “Holland Open” 1990, (11), “Clearspring Village” (1983, 7B), “Selkirk Fair” (1977, 4:1), “Warren Shows” (1970, 1), “Argyle Legion” (1950, 5), “Poplar Point” (1946, 5), “Crossroads Dance” (1943), and “Native Daughters and Sons” (1943).

²²² I do not know how many of the fiddlers competing in the 1940s and 50s were also able to jig, although it certainly was not unusual for someone to be able to do both.

example, at a contest in 1930, the fiddler who won first place brought home fifteen dollars, while the jigger who won first place brought home just five (“Local and General” 1930, 1). Interestingly, a contest more than forty years later offered similar prizes, with the top fiddler winning fifteen dollars and the top jigger winning eight (“Old Time Fiddlers” 1973, 3; see also Goranson 1972b, 6). Although I have come across one instance where jiggers and fiddlers won the same amount of money (“Stonewall Fair” 1971, 10), equal pay for fiddlers and jiggers is not common in the old-time circuit. (For example, Andre Chartier told me in an interview in 2012 that the Festival du Voyageur competition still offers substantially less money to jiggers.) The lower prize money is similar to what Johnson found in Ontario, where, in the 1970s and 80s, dancers made about half what fiddlers made; although this is changing at some Ontario contests, it remains true at others (Johnson 2006, 304).²²³ Jigging was, nonetheless, highly valued in some instances, especially when it was the main or only event at a competition, such as for the Manitoba Jig Championship held in Poplar Point in 1948 (“J. Lafreniere” 1948, 1) and at the Columbus Hall in Winnipeg in the mid-1930s (Mackintosh 2010, 51). Even in the 1980s, jigging contests were sometimes held as stand-alone events (“Lundar Hotel” 1985, 11), and at least one joint fiddling and jigging contest drew more jiggers than fiddlers (“Lundar Fair” 1980, 11). Despite these exceptions, jigging contests in Manitoba never gained the momentum of fiddle contests.

²²³ It would be interesting to compare this trend with contests that took place during Indigenous celebrations (e.g., Treaty Day celebrations) since dance, at least today, is more highly valued in the Indigenous fiddle scene (as described in chapter two).

The Demise of Jigging Contests

In a recent interview, Henri Hince recalled that jigging contests took place as part of fiddle contests when he started attending old-time competitions in the 1970s (interview with Hince 2012). In the 1980s, fiddler Patti Lamoureux competed in fiddle competitions that included competitive jigging (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012), and my mother remembers seeing jigging at contests when my family first started attending fiddle contests in the late 1980s or early 1990s (personal communication 2012). In contrast, I do not remember jigging being part of fiddle contests when I was competing as a child and then teen in the 1990s; the demise of jigging contests can, then, be traced back to the early to mid-1990s. Currently, there are just three sites for competitive jigging in southern Manitoba. The *Festival du Voyageur* has a jigging contest, although it is not held on the same day as the fiddling contest and draws a significantly different audience. Metisfest²²⁴ and the Selkirk Fair and Rodeo also include jigging contests; in these latter cases, the fiddling and jigging competitions are held back-to-back. The reason for the demise of jigging contests is unclear. Certainly, it is interesting that this change occurred as Metis people began to (re)claim the jig as a Metis dance, moving jigging from a dance representing Manitoba more broadly to a dance representing Metis Manitobans specifically (as addressed in chapter one). Whether jigging contests (held as part of old-time contests) will make a comeback, especially as Metis communities re-teach the jig to their youth in greater numbers, is yet to be seen.

²²⁴ As noted in chapter two, the Metisfest jigging competition draws very few jiggers, likely because dancers hired as entertainers during Metisfest are not allowed to compete at the Metisfest jigging contest.

Jigging and Indigenous/Re-Settler Relations

Tops in the fiddling competition was Norman Sinclair of The Pas. The junior jiggers' trophy was awarded to tiny Cindy Godin of The Pas Indian band who put on an irresistible performance. Another member of the band, Irvin Constant, shaded Rose Brown of The Pas for the senior award. (Lowery, 1970, 2)

While competitive jigging is now rare at old-time contests and old-time events more generally, it remains popular (as noted in chapter two) among Indigenous peoples from central Turtle Island. In fact, the majority of jiggers at the three jigging/fiddling contests (that I am aware of) in Manitoba are Indigenous. Jigging, furthermore, has seen a surge in popularity in the Indigenous fiddle scene as indicated by the growing number of Metis and First Nations square dance troupes, many of whom integrate jigging into their performances.²²⁵ These dance troupes keep busy with performances at Indigenous events, at re-settler events, and at other, world-wide cultural events. (The Asham Stompers have been particularly successful, performing at the Celtic Colours Festival in Cape Breton and at the *Festival Zacatecas del Folclor Internacional* in Zacatecas, Mexico.) The demise of jigging contests at old-time fiddle competitions, therefore, has not led to a demise in jigging more broadly; it has simply changed the contexts in which jigging is most often seen by re-settlers.

The implications of this change warrant further investigation. As part of old-time competitions, jigging was integrated into the mainstream. It was not marked or labelled as 'other' (i.e., it was not 'Metis' or 'ethnic' jigging) but, instead, was an important part of Manitoba's fiddle culture as a whole. This can, of course, be seen as problematic

²²⁵ The majority of competitors at the Festival du Voyageur's jigging contest are Indigenous. In contrast, the majority of fiddlers competing at the fiddling contest the next day are white re-settlers.

because its Metis-ness was not overtly acknowledged, although certainly many (if not most) of the jiggers would have been aware of the roots of the dance.²²⁶ (At the same time, as discussed in chapter six, clearly marked ‘ethnic’ categories can also be problematic.) Yet the inclusion of jigging at old-time competitions can be understood in very positive terms because the inclusion provided an opportunity for Indigenous and re-settler Manitobans to come together in a way that did not clearly delineate the boundaries between re-settler and Indigenous identities; the relationship, in this context, could be negotiated in an organic way through the performance space. In more straightforward terms, the competition provided an opportunity for fiddlers and jiggers to come together and get to know each other as people rather than as ‘others’. Although fiddling contests still provide fiddlers with an opportunity to build cross-cultural relationships, an important piece of this cross-cultural exchange has been lost through the loss of dancers.

Once old-time competitions ceased to be venues for competitive jigging, the most important mainstream venues for jigging became multicultural festivals, events that remain very popular in Manitoba (with the biggest being Folklorama, a two-week festival that takes place in Winnipeg).²²⁷ Jigging now most often enters the mainstream as part of a very narrowly defined and static multicultural display. While the problems inherent within multicultural performances have been discussed elsewhere (see, especially, Mackey 2002, and Greenhill and Thoroski 2001) and are beyond the purview of this section, it is important to note that this shift from contests to events that celebrate all

²²⁶ In fact, my discussion of newspaper articles from the first half of the twentieth century shows that people were interested in the roots of the dance, although they did not always emphasize the Indigenous contribution that created the dance.

²²⁷ Interestingly, there has not been a Metis pavilion at Folklorama since 2010. However, there are many other events where re-settlers can see jigging.

'others' has allowed re-settlers to use jigging as a way to highlight their own normalcy (i.e., their constructed lack of ethnicity). In this way, in the context of re-settler venues (but certainly not in the context of Indigenous venues) jigging now serves as an additional tool through which re-settlers attempt to control and constrain Metis culture.

Current Trends

Until the late 1980s and 90s, old-time contests showcased dance performers *and* encouraged audience participation through old-time dances after the competition.²²⁸

While jigging contests are now rare, after-contest dances have remained important and still sometimes draw a larger audience than the competition; as Manitoba fiddler and contest organizer Winston Simpson put it, the dance is still the “big draw” for the audience (cited in Johnson 2006, 191). Yet the contest and dance that follows the competition are no longer closely intertwined. For example, Snider notes that those who attended the dances after contests “may not be big on the fiddling itself, on the contest, but they’re there for the dance” (interview with Snider 2012). More notable is that the young fiddlers (and the majority of contest fiddlers are young) rarely attend the dances. Perhaps for this reason, many older community members believe that there is a growing disconnect between dancing and fiddling at old-time events. This is a great concern to those who feel that a key aspect of the old-time style is danceability. As Snider notes,

...it’s supposed to be danceable. Now if that kid’s thinking, I’ve got to play so I can dance to it, if that child stayed for the dance and learned to dance, they would find out they can’t dance to their own tune...I’d like to see those kids stay. I’d willingly give my evening up for dancing, to get out with those little kids and

²²⁸ This is particular to Manitoba. As Johnson notes, fiddle contests in Ontario closely connect fiddle and dance performance, but do not typically engage the audience as dancers at an after-competition old-time dance (2006, 191).

teach them how to do something. Even if I only taught one kid how to waltz all evening, it would be worth it. (interview with Snider 2012)

Interestingly, contests have not changed their tune requirements to fit with what is heard at old-time dances. In particular, jigs are still required at old-time contests, but are rarely ever played at old-time dances since square-dancing is not especially popular in the old-time community; fox-trots, in fact, are some of the most important tunes at old-time dances, yet competitive fiddlers are not required to play this tune-type. This distancing of fiddling from dancing, as reflected in the tune-types showcased, is perhaps one of the most notable and important differences between the old-time and Indigenous fiddle scenes (as described in chapter two).

Although after-competition dances are an important part of the contest scene, they are just a small part of Manitoba's vibrant, and much larger, old-time dance circuit. As Jean Snider (b. 1923) told me, old-time dances happen across southern Manitoba throughout the fall, winter, and spring:

There was one here at Rathwell just a while ago...Glenboro had a Sunday afternoon dance back in the winter, and they're having another one this coming weekend...there's St. Claude, there's Miami, and the West End club in Portage here, they have dances most of the year. They go from...the end of September, to the end of May. And there's a dance every week at some places, or about every two weeks. The West End have dances every two weeks. And St. Claude and Miami have one a month. And they put out little cards that you can carry in your purse...St. Leon's another town that's in on this. It's just like a race track thing, you know. It's a program. St. Leon's the first Saturday of the month, Miami's the second Saturday, St. Claude's the third Saturday, then Miami have a second dance in the month, at the end of the month. (interview with Snider 2012)

Clearly, there continues to be a great deal of interest in old-time dances. The fact that a list of the up-coming dances is published on cards—something not done for fiddle contests—points to the interconnectedness of the old-time dance circuit in Manitoba and

the strong community support for these dances. Yet like the audience for fiddle contests, few young people make it out to the dances. As Snider notes, her daughter, who is fifty, is the “youngest of the bunch” that go out to the dances (ibid.). Interestingly, it is most often bands made up of seniors (e.g., the Tiger Hills Group, the Moonshiners, or the Fugitives) who provide the dance music, not the young, champion fiddlers.

Tensions in the Old-Time Scene

Tension (noun): a relationship between ideas or qualities with conflicting demands or implications. (Oxford English Dictionary)

The basic tension in today’s fiddle contest system pits nationally distributed virtuosic performance styles of relatively recent vintage and a relatively modern approach to competition against a mosaic of more old-fashioned styles and attitudes. (Goertzen 2004, 370)

The above section outlines a basic tension within the old-time scene, that between old-time fiddling as a dance music (i.e., dance as an integral part of the style) and old-time as a form of music that is independent of a dance scene. ‘Tension’ is used not as a way to focus on negative aspects of the tradition (i.e., as arguments between parties), but rather, as a way to highlight the different visions the old-time community has for the old-time style. These visions often place conflicting demands on the scene; for example, fiddlers choose their repertoire (and even how they play this repertoire) based on their relationship with the audience (i.e., whether or not the audience is a participating audience or a viewing audience); the implementation of these differing demands has, then, disparate implications for the scene, shaping the evolution of the style. This section explores some of the additional, but often interrelated, tensions in the old-time scene. These include the tension between classical music and old-time fiddling, between

preservation and change (or old and new), and between the local and national scenes.

Since the latter is discussed in chapter three, it is only briefly touched upon in this chapter as it relates to the other two tensions.

Fiddling as Art Music: Old-Time Fiddling and Classical Violin

The tension between ‘old-time’ and ‘classical’ is perhaps one of the most discussed and obvious tensions in the old-time community, one that I became aware of very early in my competitive career and continued hearing about throughout my field research. This tension is, in fact, a common one in the old-time scene nationally and internationally (although framed in somewhat different terms by Chris Goertzen [2004, 370]). The rules governing the Canadian Grand Masters competition, for example, allow a variety of fiddle styles, but clearly state that classical and other “non-traditional” styles are not acceptable (Canadian Grand Masters Rules 2011). In Ontario, Johnson found that ‘old-time’ is often used “in direct opposition to ‘classical’ playing” (2006, 460). This tension is, furthermore, not new; old-time fiddling has a long history of a complicated relationship to classical violin. Messer, for example, incorporated so-called ‘classical’ technique into his old-time style:

...he played with both a full, even tone and strong rhythmic drive; he learned tunes equally well by note and by ear; he played a combination of new repertoire and old standards; he used new media (radio, recordings, television) to bring his fiddling to the public at the same time that he continued to play in live dance contexts. (Johnson 2006, 98, see also Trew 2002, 44, and Rosenberg 1994, 24)

Fiddlers in Manitoba have a similar relationship to what might be seen as classical violin.

Although many played by ear in the first half of the twentieth century, reading music was not uncommon. As Mackintosh notes, a fakebook was available for fiddlers in the mid-

1950s, although sales were quite “hush-hush” (2010, 23). Notably, Andy Dejarlis took some lessons from classical teachers (Watson 2002, 15), demonstrating his willingness to learn from a variety of sources, even so-called ‘classical’ sources.

Many of the fiddlers from the younger generation (especially outside of Indigenous communities) are following in the footsteps of Messer and Dejarlis, taking lessons, and, very often, taking lessons from classical violinists (in addition to lessons from a fiddle teacher, or as a sole source of training on their instruments). Lessons are now more accessible and there is a growing expectation that fiddlers should take lessons in order to be competitive. (In contrast, my older consultants often noted that lessons simply were not available to them when they were growing up, especially if they were from rural areas.) In fact, most of the fiddlers who have done well at contests since the 1990s (and earlier, see “Musician Enrolls” 1983, 1) have had some, and often a great deal of, classical training.²²⁹ The controversy nonetheless continues. I have repeatedly heard judges and audience members suggest that a particular fiddler sounds ‘too classical,’ and that it is hard, if not impossible, to be good at both old-time fiddling and classical violin.²³⁰ What is perhaps most interesting about this controversy is that community members have a hard time expressing what makes a performance too classical. Is it that the fiddler lacks rhythmic drive? Is their tone inappropriate? Do they lack what is referred to simply as ‘feel’?

²²⁹ There are, of course, some exceptions and the balance between fiddling and classical training varies from fiddler to fiddler. Later in this chapter I connect lessons to economic class. Further investigation of this issue could address the possible connection between classical training and aspirations to become part of (or be seen as part of) the middle or upper classes.

²³⁰ The most often cited exception is Jane Cory, a young, classically-trained fiddler who often places in the Championship class and who attended the Grand Masters, representing Manitoba, for the second time in the summer of 2012.

What direction will this trend take? Will fiddlers continue to utilize classical training to win old-time contests? In the United States, Goertzen suggests that Texas-derived contest fiddling has become an art music (1988). He later makes a more subtle argument, suggesting that,

Variations of and additions to melody have produced new dramatic forms suited for the listening environment. In [the] old-time style, melodies remain much the same as in earlier decades. The changes are refinements in rhythm, pitch, and timbre, subtle transformations that do not take the music away from suitability for dance accompaniment (as long as amplification is possible), but make their versions of tunes just as suitable for careful passive attention as for dance. This yields a music that, by bridging two functions, also spans two historical eras. (Goertzen 2003, 143–4)

A similar change has taken place in Manitoba over the past three decades. Lessons have led to greater precision of playing; amplification has allowed for more nuanced playing; and the push of friendly competition has given fiddlers impetus to hone their skills.

Although dance, especially for the younger fiddlers, is less important now than it was in the past, the music, even if pleasurable for ‘just’ listening, does not preclude dancing. In fact, it is impossible not to notice the pleasure that fiddlers (including me) feel when playing for a crowd of tapping toes, or for couples gliding across the dance floor. Yet balancing these divergent demands can be difficult; herein lies, I believe, the underlying concern about fiddling that is viewed as too ‘classical’. Rather than being a concern about taking classical lessons or learning classical techniques, it is a fear that the music will no longer be a music for dancing—that it will become a music for passive rather than active participation. Although, as Goertzen notes, one does not preclude the other, each approach places different demands on the fiddler, creating a tension within the scene.

Preserving Old-Time, Changing Old-Time, Or the Tension between Old and New

The future of contest fiddling depends on the ability of the fiddle contest community to function within a fluid concept of tradition, one that successfully balances past and present, stability and change, preservation and innovation, and community and individual, so that the music continues to grow and adapt to changing contexts and aesthetics, without losing its connection to the past that gives it meaning. (Johnson 2006, v)

Music revivals can be defined as social movements which strive to “restore” a musical system believed to be disappearing or completely relegated to the past for the benefit of contemporary society...revivalists position themselves in *opposition* to aspects of the contemporary cultural mainstream, align themselves with a particular historical lineage, and offer a cultural alternative in which legitimacy is grounded in reference to authenticity and historical fidelity. (Livingston 1999, 66)

The tension between classical and old-time is closely related to the larger issue of preservation versus change. The concept of preservation or, more colloquially, “keeping the tradition alive,” points to the old-time community’s desire to maintain a style from the past, or at the very least, maintain a connection to the past. In American scholarship, this concern for the continued survival of fiddle traditions is intertwined with the concept of revival. Chris Goertzen, discussing the American fiddle scene, notes that,

Following a complex composite “grassroots” revival during the twentieth century—that is, a revivalist transformation of an endangered tradition conceived and fueled by tradition insiders—the total number of performers is now in the tens of thousands, with an avid fan base stretching the count of those involved into the low hundreds of thousands. (Goertzen 2003, 134)

Folklorist Richard Blaustein also uses the concept of revival to explore the American fiddle scene. While the fiddle revival began, according to Blaustein, when the folk revival was at its peak in the 1950s and 60s, it outlasted the folk revival and was driven by insiders who had different motivations from the outsiders of the folk revival: the former were concerned with the deterioration of tradition, which led to grass-roots

preservationism, while the latter were influenced by folk romanticism and dissatisfaction with urban life (1993, 266).²³¹

Johnson, in contrast, does not find revivalism to be the most useful way to understand Ontario's old-time community. This is because old-time fiddlers in that province do not understand contests as "restoring or resurrecting an art form from the past; they do not idealize the past, nor model their playing strictly on fiddlers from the past" (2006, 16). Johnson therefore argues that Ontario fiddling and step dancing competitions may originally have been conceived of as a revival, or may otherwise have been part of a larger revival of old-time music in North America, but, in their modern iteration, cannot be conceived of as such (2006, 16). As a scene that is closely tied to that in Ontario, revivalism is, overall, also not the most useful way to understand old-time fiddling in Manitoba.²³² Like Ontario, the concept of restoring old-time fiddling is not a central concern because it is understood as a tradition that has remained alive over the years; fiddlers are not, then, restoring or resurrecting an art form, but, rather, continuing in the tradition of their (grand)mothers and (grand)fathers. Furthermore, old-time fiddlers do not position themselves in opposition to the contemporary, cultural mainstream, as ethnomusicologist Tamara Livingston suggests is integral to revivalist movements (1999, 66). Rather, they borrow from popular genres and understand their style as mainstream fiddling, even though it is no longer mainstream in the sense of widespread popularity.

²³¹ Graf (1999) has also discussed the concept of revival and preservation, drawing from her research at the National Oldtime Fiddlers' contest in Weiser, Idaho, as has Goertzen in his book on Norwegian fiddling titled *Fiddling for Norway* (1997).

²³² This is perhaps not surprising given that, as I argue on page 261, there is not a strong urban/rural divide in Manitoba.

While revivalism is not central to the old-time fiddling in Manitoba, some members of the old-time community are concerned with authenticity, a concept that Livingston considers central to revivals. Livingston argues, in fact, that, once the “overriding concern for authenticity” is lost, a revival ceases to be a revival (1999, 80). The desire to maintain authenticity is especially prevalent among some of the older members of the old-time community who believe that fiddlers should model their playing on the older generation of fiddlers, especially Andy Dejarlis. This concern is quite notable in the Winnipeg-based group the Southglen Fiddlers. Originally an informal group who got together to play tunes by ear, the group now plays from several binders of sheet music (which include numerous Dejarlis tunes); members are expected to follow the printed versions of the tunes even though many do not read music, or do not read music well. The member who transcribes many of the tunes is very careful to make sure that every note and rhythm is the same as the original recording; and many of the members are quick to point out if someone is playing something ‘wrong’. One fiddler told me that s/he felt that the group did not want him/her to play on their new recording because s/he does not read music and therefore does not play the tunes exactly as written (personal communication 2012). On another occasion, I was asked to play a tune (of my choice) as a mini performance during a Southglen Fiddlers’ rehearsal²³³ and was told afterwards that I was playing wrong notes. (I had learned the tune from Patti Lamoureux, one of Manitoba’s top fiddlers.) I was emailed the ‘correct’ version, transcribed from a Dejarlis recording, later that day. Some members, then, wish to preserve the tradition as it

²³³ Every week the names of two fiddlers in attendance are drawn from a hat. The first plays just before the group’s mid-rehearsal coffee break while the second plays just after the coffee break.

was at a particular time in the past (i.e., mid-twentieth century), and in doing so, work to create a carefully bounded fiddle canon.

The concept of preservation, however, is tempered by the belief held by many that old-time fiddling needs to change or develop in order to remain interesting and relevant to the younger generation. As championship fiddler Matthew Cook-Contois told me, he “draw[s] on traditions of old time while trying to spice them up...to constantly advance into newer types and styles of fiddle music” (email communication 2012). When I asked Émile Chartier (2011 Manitoba Champion) to define the old-time style, she emphasized that the tradition was rooted in “tunes played many years ago” but that the “style evolves with time” (email communication 2012). In both these cases, change is seen as a positive and necessary aspect of the tradition. More relevant is the way in which fiddlers put the change and development of the style into practice. An example of this is the 2012 showcase featuring the fiddlers representing Manitoba at the Grand Masters (discussed in chapter three); at this showcase, each fiddler drew on a variety of styles, experimenting to a degree not permitted at Manitoba’s old-time contests. This experimentation points to the younger generation’s interest in shaping the style so that it fits their experiences (which include exposure to a wide variety of styles). According to Patti Lamoureux, the contests that are thriving (e.g., the John Arcand festival) are the ones that have been most willing to change (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012), thereby remaining relevant to the younger generation.

Preservation and change are not, however, necessarily seen as opposing categories within the old-time community. The Manitoba Fiddle Association (MFA), a group that

works to promote old-time fiddling in Manitoba, provides an example of how one seemingly unified organization employs both visions for old-time fiddling through their mandate, which, as stated on their website, is to “encourage, develop, and preserve fiddle music.”²³⁴ On the one hand, the mandate to both develop and preserve fiddling provides a straightforward example of the differing visions for old-time fiddling within the old-time community. On the other hand, preservation and development may not be seen by some as contradictory visions. According to Johnson, in Ontario preservation is focused on the activities of fiddling and step dancing rather than on maintaining a particular way of playing and dancing (a style), or a particular venue for fiddling and dancing (2006, 246). Thus, while some members of Manitoba’s old-time community may wish to maintain so-called authenticity, others may be more concerned with preserving the skill and the sense of community; in this case, preservation is divorced from authenticity.

The tension between preservation and change is also tied to the issue of individuality. In Manitoba’s old-time scene, fiddlers have to negotiate “adherence to stylistic norms of the tradition” (Livingston 1999, 71) with the value placed on individualism. This tension has played out in my own experience in a number of instances; the vignette that follows provides an example. A couple of years ago, I competed at a contest, placing second in the championship category. I believed that the fiddler who placed fourth should have taken my place given that s/he was able to take commonplace standards and make them his/her own (something I am not yet able to

²³⁴ See www.fiddling.ca (accessed 21 November 2012).

do).²³⁵ After the winners were announced, a senior fiddler approached me and told me that s/he thought I deserved my win, telling me that the fourth place winner was not old-time. In other words, s/he had veered too far from the stylistic norms of old-time fiddling, at least according to the one fiddler who related this to me and the judges at that particular contest. The negotiation between individualism and preservation is, therefore, a delicate one, balancing the desire to try new things, to shape the tradition in your own unique way, and to be part of the old-time community. This is an especially strong tension across generational lines with seniors tending to lament over change and youth craving change. Interestingly, this generational tension is not new, as indicated in an article from 1924 that suggests that too many “young-timers” were allowed to attend a dance organized by the Old Timers’ Association and that the organizers would be better advised to maintain the generational purity of the Old Timers’ Association (“Local and General” 1924, 1).

Despite occasional criticism for pushing the boundaries of new-ness, old-time fiddlers have a long history of drawing repertoire from popular music. An article printed in the *Manitoba Free Press* in 1927 notes, for example, that Jimmy Gowler, “old-time fiddler,” will be playing “old-time and popular orchestral and vocal selections” at an upcoming dance (“CKY” 1927). Thirteen years later, an advertisement for a dance series at the Columbus Hall (in Winnipeg) stated that Fred Hadaller and his Alberta Cow Girls would be featured playing both “old-time and modern” music (“Columbus” 1940). These kinds of ads for old-time and modern dances became much more common by the late

²³⁵ Fiddlers are often quite proud of having their own style/sound. I, like many other fiddlers in Manitoba’s old-time scene, have come to value this individuality.

1940s. Even the provincial fiddle championship had an integrated old-time and modern dance following the contest for several years (“Manitoba Fiddling Contest” 1951, 3, “Old Time Fiddling” 1948, 1; see, also, “Marquette” 1950, 4). As noted in chapter three, Andy Dejarlis tried to strike a balance between his love for the older tunes and styles of playing and his desire to play tunes that youth wanted to hear (see, e.g., “Barn Dance Ad” 1952, 6; Mackintosh 2010, 55–57; and Watson 2002, 11). This tension continued into the late 1970s (and, of course, beyond), as indicated in an article noting that Metis fiddler Emile Lavallee was well known for his “old-time and modern music” (Connelly 1979, 15). Interestingly, this tension is not limited to Manitoba; for example, Neil Rosenberg argues that the tension between old and new was a central component of Don Messer’s style. Messer played music that had varying connections to the past, and through the names used by his band, he even conveyed a band image that alternated between, or combined, old-time and modern connotations (e.g., Don Messer’s Old Tyme Dance Band²³⁶ or the New Brunswick Lumberjacks) (Rosenberg 1994, 29).

Yet fiddle contests, the main venue for old-time fiddling in Manitoba, change at a slow pace; this is the case in both Manitoba and Ontario (see Johnson 2006, 249). The slow pace of change is something that Johnson attributes, in part, to the age of the members of the organizing committees (*ibid.*). While Johnson is careful not to suggest that age is everything—and indeed I have noted examples where seniors and youth have similar opinions on the direction contests should take—organizers have often been

²³⁶ Rosenberg suggests that the use of the term “Dance Band” was an attempt to align the band with popular music from that era (1994, 29).

working at contests for decades, often without much help from new faces or young people who might bring in new ideas. As Patti Lamoureux told me,

There's been younger people that tried to kind of move things along, but it's met with a lot of resistance...the older people seem to be the ones who do the work...they have time to do the work, and the younger people come in with the ideas and then I think they sort of flutter in and flutter out and leave all these ideas and they never get implemented because, you know, they never have time to. They have jobs and families, and you get the older people who just say well it's fine the way it is. (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012)

It is, then, a two-way street. Organizers might be more willing to adapt competitions if younger community members were willing to put in the work to implement the changes; without the support of the people who present the new ideas, it is easier to just continue in the way that things have been done for decades. At the same time, younger community members might be more willing to put in the work if their ideas were met with less resistance, or if their input was sought out.²³⁷

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that contests have not made, or at least tried to make, changes over the years. The contest in Holland, Manitoba, for example, added an 'own choice' category in 2003, where fiddlers could play any tune-type (while in other categories they were required to play a waltz, jig, and reel). The addition of this category was an idea put forward by the MFA as a way to give fiddlers more freedom and as a way to create a more interesting varied competition. Unfortunately, the category was cancelled the following year because the organizers felt it did not garner enough

²³⁷ Of course, some contests organizers do seek out feedback from participants, including young participants. Lyla Bilton, organizer of the Manitoba Open, has been particularly diligent in asking for, and welcoming, feedback. The addition of the Metis-style category is the most significant change that she (with, of course, the organizing committee) has made to the competition. She has also added a prize for the couple deemed best at dancing the waltz (with a competition held at the start of the evening dance).

interest (field notes 28/07/2012).²³⁸ The best example of a recent change in Manitoba's contest circuit is the addition of Metis-style categories at two contests, one in Miami, Manitoba, and the other as part of the Manitoba Open, in Portage la Prairie. The latter is considered the contest that determines Manitoba's Metis (style) champion. Although changes to contest format do not come very often, these two contest committees are trying to keep their events relevant and fresh, something that is increasingly important in an era of decreasing audience-size.

The Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Competition is a good example of change on the national level. The Grand Masters began in 1990, providing a space for fiddlers from each province to come together, hear each other, and, of course, compete for the title of Canada's top fiddler. Originally, the fiddlers were required to play an old-time waltz, jig, reel, and tune of choice in the finals. However, since 2010 competitors who make it into the finals at the Grand Masters have been allowed to play four contrasting tunes in any accepted fiddle style. Thus, not only has the committee moved away from such a strong focus on the tune-types required at most fiddle contests (i.e., waltz, jig, and reel), it has also abandoned the focus on *the* Canadian old-time style. The open-ended list of recognized styles suggested by the committee includes country, old-time, Cape Breton, swing, Metis, bluegrass, and French Canadian, and notes that fiddlers can play tunes in contrasting styles (e.g., a fiddler could choose to play an old-time waltz, a Cape Breton jig, a western swing tune, and a Metis reel).²³⁹ This change can be understood as a

²³⁸ The organizers I spoke with could not remember how many fiddlers competed in the category. They just remember that it was not particularly popular among the fiddlers.

²³⁹ The success of this change in rules relies, of course, on the committee's ability to find judges who are able to judge diverse styles. It also raises questions about who is really able to judge a variety of styles.

response to the diversifying interests of the fiddlers who are part of the national, old-time community.

The changes made at the Grand Masters tie into the aforementioned tension between local and national. In the past, the Grand Masters reinforced a unified Canadian old-time style; by expecting all fiddlers to play in *the* Canadian old-time style, the event reified a narrow definition of old-time fiddling. Since fiddlers from Ontario have won most of the titles and typically make up a disproportionate number of the fiddlers who are selected for the finals,²⁴⁰ the competition encouraged fiddlers from Manitoba (and other provinces) to play like fiddlers from Ontario in the hope of winning the top prize. In fact, in 1999, Ontario fiddler April Verch notes that fiddlers from western Canada do not play at as high a calibre (a value-laden statement, of course) as fiddlers from Ontario; she believes, however, that this is changing, in part, because of the Grand Masters:

Competitors from across the country are able to see the best of contest fiddling at the contest, and most importantly, buy the CD produced by the contest each year in order to learn the more difficult tunes necessary to win the contest. (Verch cited in Johnson 2006, 192)

The Grand Masters is an important competition for young fiddlers in Manitoba, many of whom look forward to the opportunity to meet with fiddlers from across the country and

That is, should judges be able to play in all the fiddle styles allowed at the competition? Although many fiddlers are now familiar with a broad range of styles, how much knowledge of a style is 'enough' knowledge to judge a competitor? Although contestants list the names of their tunes, judges do not have sheet music and may not know the tune if it is not popular within their own tradition.

²⁴⁰ Just three fiddlers from outside of Ontario—one from Manitoba, one from Alberta, and one from Quebec—have won the competition since it began in 1990. This means that the top prize has been given to someone outside of Ontario just twenty-two percent of the time (since Lamoureux, from Manitoba, won three times). To put this into perspective, sixty-three percent of Canada's population lives outside of Ontario. In 2011, seventy-three percent of the finalists were from Ontario. The previous year the top five were from Ontario, while those ranked sixth to eleventh were all from outside of Ontario. Other years often five out of the eleven finalists have come from Ontario (<http://canadiangrandmasters.ca/competition/index.html>) (accessed 1 August 2012).

possibly win the title. To some, winning local contests is merely a stepping-stone to winning the Grand Masters.²⁴¹ Yet the recent change in required repertoire has reoriented the tension between local and national, as various local styles are put on (supposedly) equal grounds with the national, old-time style. It will be interesting to see what styles will be heard at the Grand Masters in the coming years and in what ways this change in policy shapes the tension between local and national styles.

Identities

In an article focused on the use of the term ‘identity’ in ethnomusicology, Timothy Rice suggests that contemporary research on the music of affinity groups²⁴² (a growing area of ethnomusicological concern) functions in opposition to research on the music of national or ethnic groups (in the sense that affinity groupings in some cases replaced national or ethnic groupings as a parameter to delimit research boundaries) (2007, 18). My earlier suggestion that the old-time fiddle community is an affinity group may, then, suggest to some that old-time fiddling is no longer a national or ethnic music. Yet the formation of affinity groups is informed by the multiple and fragmented identities of its members; ethnic or national belonging may not be the key determining factor of membership to an affinity group, but one’s choice to belong (or to try to belong to) an affinity group is informed by her/his understanding of the values endorsed by the group,

²⁴¹ One fiddler told me that s/he was no longer going to attend local contests if s/he made it into the top eleven at the Grand Masters. The reason given was that all the fiddlers from the top eleven are automatically invited to the next year’s event; therefore, s/he would not need to compete at local contests in order to be invited. Of course, this is somewhat of an extreme position. However, for a young person edging towards a professional career as a fiddler, the Grand Masters is the last big win before retiring from the contest scene. (Fiddlers typically retire from the contest scene once they have won the big titles.)

²⁴² This concept is similar to Wenger’s communities of practice (1999). However, affinity groups (in my understanding) can include a broader range of people than a community of practice (which only includes practitioners). I use affinity group in this dissertation for this reason.

or his/her sense of acceptance into the group. In this way, affinity groups, while not strictly ethnic or national groups (or sex-based groups for that matter), function in close relation to issues of identity and are implicated in the tensions found in the larger milieu in which the affinity group was formed.

The last section of this chapter addresses identity in the old-time scene, focusing in particular on the role of women and the issues of class and ethnicity. While women have always played an important role in the old-time scene (as argued below), scholars have largely ignored their contributions (but see Johnson 2006, 2000a, 2000b, Diamond 2000, and Skillman 1991-2 for several important exceptions). In fact, there is no scholarly literature on women in Manitoba's old-time or Metis scenes. In this way, this section fills a significant gap in the literature. Likewise, little has been written about the issues of social class and ethnicity, although Trew touches on ethnicity in her article on Messer (2002) and Johnson includes sections on both topics (2006, 313–117) and even suggests that “issues of inclusivity...will have to be addressed in the near future, particularly as contests look to expand their audiences” (ibid., 314). This section therefore complements Johnson's work and addresses some of the most important issues facing the old-time community as it struggles to remain relevant in an increasingly diverse province.

Women and Manitoba's Old-Time Fiddle Scene

Although the past thirty years have seen extensive growth in research on women in music (Diamond and Moisala 2000, 1), women are still largely missing from research on North America's fiddle traditions (Johnson 2006, 25); and when women who were

active in the old-time scene prior to the 1980s or 90s are acknowledged, they are most often constructed (both by academics and fiddle communities) as “musical anomalies” (Forsyth 2011, 199). While an increasing number of fiddle scholars recognize that a “comprehensive cross-cultural examination of gender in fiddling” is long overdue (ibid. 202), Johnson’s research in Ontario (2000a, 2000b) and Beverley Diamond’s research in Prince Edward Island (2000) remain singular examples of articles that take the role of women and gender relations in Canadian fiddling as a primary focus; the remaining articles and books on fiddling are satisfied with simply a passing reference to women, or the lack of women, in the tradition.²⁴³

The lack of research on women/gender and old-time fiddling may be in part due to the difficulty of addressing the topic of gender in old-time fiddling. As Johnson notes, the fiddle community tends to be quite socially conservative and consultants often have little interest in discussing the topic of gender (2000a, 5); this makes gathering information challenging. Yet this is not an uncommon problem for ethnomusicologists interested in gender. As Ellen Koskoff wrote in her ground-breaking book *An Introduction to Women, Music, and Culture*, both women and men internalize gender constructs often accepting them as natural or as “the way it is” (1987, 10). Consultants may, for this reason, be unaware of, or not care about, gender asymmetries. Despite the tendency for consultants to dismiss the topic, Koskoff remains adamant about the importance of research on gender and music. She notes, in particular, that music is an

²⁴³ While simply including mentions of women in passing was common in ethnomusicological scholarship prior to the 1990s (Koskoff 1987, 2), Diamond and Moisala point out that by 2000 gender-related studies had shaped nearly every aspect of music scholarship (2000, 1).

excellent context to observe and understand the gender structures of a society, allowing researchers a unique point of access into gender issues within a society more broadly (1987, 10).

Because my consultants, like many of those in Koskoff's book, were not particularly interested in discussing women's roles,²⁴⁴ the section on gender included here uses fragments of information drawn from newspapers, local histories, interviews, and biographies in an attempt to "uncover and make meaning of the traces of women and gender relations in the past" (Quataert and Wheeler 2011, 7). It also explores the contemporary roles of women fiddlers in light of these traces of past gender relations. Because women have been, to date, largely invisible in scholarship on fiddling in North America (and completely so in scholarship on fiddling in the Canadian prairies) this section is aligned with what Koskoff refers to as the first wave of ethnomusicological scholarship on gender, focusing more on women than on gender or the links between gender and other social structures (i.e., it is women-centric rather than gender-centric) (2000, x). It can also be understood as a compensatory study that fills in what has been left out by biased worldviews (Koskoff 1987, 1). This is in contrast to a study that contains "interpretive insights or tested theoretical models" (Diamond and Moisala 2000, 2). In this way, it is very much a first step—a reevaluation of women (Koskoff 1987, 15)—in the study of gender in Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene.

²⁴⁴ For example, the younger generation typically believes that girls/women and boys/men have equal status in the community, while the older generation seems uneasy or unwilling to speculate about possible reasons for the lack of women fiddlers prior to the 1980s/90s, simply saying "that's the way it was."

Setting the Stage: 1950 Versus 2011

The first entry ever received from a woman for the Manitoba Championship Old Time Fiddling Contest has been received here by the Portage Curling Club, sponsors of the event. The Lady entrant is Mrs. Barbara Beesco, of Winnipeg. (“Woman Entrant” 1950, 16)

The two history-making women entrants, Mrs. Barbara Beesco, of Winnipeg, and Mrs. Albert Montpetit, of Prairie Grove, were defeated in the semi-finals. However, Mrs. Beesco appeared at the final as a guest, and she was acclaimed by the crowd in a manner equally as enthusiastic as that accorded the trophy winner. (“Poplar Point Man” 1950, 1)

On October 19, 1950, *The Manitoba Leader* reported that the Portage la Prairie Curling Club, organizers of the Manitoba Open fiddle competition, had received, for the first time, an entry application from a woman, Winnipeg resident Barbara Beesco (“Woman Entrant” 1950, 16). The competition ultimately included two women, Beesco and a Mrs. Albert Montpetit, from Prairie Grove, Manitoba (southeast of Winnipeg); neither made it into the finals, going home empty-handed (“Poplar Point Man” 1950, 1). Given that the receipt of an application from a woman made headlines, it was clearly a novelty. Yet the positive way in which the paper reports on Beesco’s performance suggests at least some open-mindedness to women fiddlers, albeit perhaps open-mindedness based on an openness to spectacle rather than on an admission of women’s abilities as fiddlers.

Sixty-one years later, on September 24, 2011, the Manitoba Open Championships featured seventeen boys/men and eighteen girls/women. Girls placed first in the ten and under and eighteen and under classes, and a boy placed first in the thirteen and under class; women won first in the nineteen to sixty-four and championship classes and men won first in the seniors, twin fiddles, and Metis-style classes. Out of a total of thirty

prizes (including an audience choice award that a boy won) in eight classes, eleven went to girls or women (37%). A total of \$3425 in prize money was handed out, with \$1250 going to girls or women (36%). A young woman, seventeen-year-old Émilie Chartier of Winnipeg, was crowned Manitoba Champion, taking home the competitions' most prestigious prize, not to mention its biggest cash prize (\$400).

The increased number of girls and women in Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene mirrors the changing role of women fiddlers across a variety of distinct fiddle styles (see, e.g., Forsyth 2011, 200, Wrazen 2010, Marshall 2006, 104–19). Since the 1980s, women have been playing an increasingly important role as fiddlers in all venues, in both the public and private domains. The shift noted here therefore marks a much broader national and even international trend. Yet this shift may, in some ways, be less significant than the comparison between the contest in 1950 and that in 2011 initially suggests. On the one hand, women played a larger role in Manitoba's fiddle scene in the twentieth century than is sometimes portrayed; on the other hand, differences in winnings (among other differences discussed below) reveal traces of men's continued dominance.

Finding Old-Time Women

Women have been taking part in fiddle contests since at least the late 1920s. In 1929, a newspaper article listed a woman, Mrs. Ross, as third-place winner at a contest held in Cardale, Manitoba, one hour northwest of Brandon ("Fiddlers of Rivers" 1929). While it is possible that there were only three contestants—that is, her win does not point to her ability as a fiddler or to her relationship with the other competitors—it indicates that women could and in fact did compete in contests in the 1920s. The following year

the *Stonewall Argus* announced that a contest was being organized by the Argyle Social Club, in Argyle, an hour northwest of Winnipeg. The article listed contest rules, noting that it was open to anyone “regardless of age, sex or locality” (“Old-Time Fiddling” 1930, 5). Unfortunately, after this reference in 1930, newspapers became silent on female fiddlers until the late 1940s when an article noted that Sandra Taylor won a prize for being the youngest fiddler at a competition in Rivers, Manitoba (reprinted as “From Our Files” 2003, 5). The involvement of a young girl is again noted in the late 1950s in an article indicating that Glennis Foote was given a prize for youngest fiddler at a contest in Melita, Manitoba, two hours southwest of Brandon (“Lew Cameron” 1959, 1). By the early 1950s, girls had also begun to compete at the junior Manitoba Championship, with one or two girls competing each year that the competition was held. Girls and women were also involved in the competition in other ways, judging and providing entertainment as accordionists, vocalists, and dancers.²⁴⁵

While the above points to a rather limited number of female fiddlers, the fiddlers mentioned in newspapers make up just a small percentage of the total number of women and girls fiddling throughout the twentieth century. *Fiddlers of the Canadian West* (1976), edited by Harold Newlove, provides compelling evidence that female fiddlers have simply been forgotten. Focused on fiddle events that took place around Swift Current Saskatchewan, this self-published (and difficult to obtain) book lists the winners of the Swift Current fiddle contest, including the names of many women winners. The

²⁴⁵ See “Jr. Fiddling” (1956, 1), “John McKay” (1955, 9), and “Warren youth” (1953, 10).

biography section includes, furthermore, numerous women fiddlers from the region²⁴⁶ and notes that these women played for dances and other public events.²⁴⁷ While Newlove's book focuses on fiddling in southwestern Saskatchewan and is thus not directly related to Manitoba's fiddle scene, it provides ample evidence that women in Saskatchewan fiddled throughout the twentieth century; given that the contributions of these women are never mentioned in contemporary public discourse, the book makes the issue of forgotten women fiddlers in Manitoba more salient. It is also of note that fiddlers from Manitoba often participated in the Swift Current fiddle contest (1966–75), suggesting that the interprovincial connections are quite strong. The evidence in Newlove's book, more importantly, corroborates with the testimony of Garry Lepine (b. 1950), who told me that his sisters and his mother fiddled (interview with Lepine 2012), and Beatrice Durupt (b. 1924), a fiddler who comes from a family of women fiddlers (interview with Durupt 2012). These cases point to a large number of women fiddlers participating in both private and public domains and thereby challenge assumptions about gendered instruments and venues.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁶ Women winners of the contest include Dora McKenzie, Marjorie Olbrich, Julie Reynolds, Lena Jonescu, Mabel Sim, and Olga Sawby. Their dates of birth are not included. Women fiddlers from the region mentioned in the book include Dr. Katherine Benn-Aslakson (1893–1966), Bessie Cook (1898–1967), Edith Ewen (1918–?), Jean Gow (b. circa 1917), Greta Holmes (b. circa 1900), Lena Jonescu (b. circa 1925), Dora McKenzie (1910–?), Olga Sawby (b. circa 1925), Mabel Sim, Hazel Steinborn, and accompanists Eleanor Johnson, Eunice Leifson, Winnie Mock, Mabel Robertson (b. circa 1900) among others. The years of birth are my own estimates based on other information provided such as the year the women married, or the year they retired.

²⁴⁷ Newlove does not explicitly make this point nor does he analyze the issue of gender in the fiddle scene. Rather, the issue pointed to here becomes apparent to the reader when perusing the biographies of the included women fiddlers.

²⁴⁸ Ethnomusicologist and fiddler Erynn Marshall also suggests that women may have played a stronger role in West Virginia's music scene than is often acknowledged (2006, 108)

Further evidence of the forgotten women of the old-time scene—this time the forgotten women playing instruments other than the fiddle—is found in a brief section of Mackintosh’s book on Andy Dejarlis. Mackintosh recalls that many of the musicians in Dejarlis’ band fought in the Second World War. During this time, Dejarlis kept his band going by hiring women musicians. Quoting Dejarlis, Mackintosh writes:

There was Mona Bailey on sax, Mrs. Berg on piano, and Billy on drums and...someone on banjo. We had this group together until 1945. My wife would come along and take tickets at the door. If it hadn’t been for the girls we couldn’t have taken these jobs. These girls played very nice dance music. (Mackintosh 2010, 63)

Although Dejarlis indicates that he was pleased with the playing ability of these women, men returned to positions in the band after the war ended (Mackintosh 2010, 71). This tells us that women were playing music well enough before or at the time of the war to easily take the place of men in a professional dance band. In this case, however, women were only seen in professional settings as a last resort, if men were unavailable.

An Analysis of Absent Old-Timers

It should be clear by now that women were actively participating in the old-time scene as musicians in much greater numbers than a perusal of newspapers would lead one to believe. Yet it is also clear that throughout much of the twentieth century women fiddlers had a smaller role on the public stage than men. Although more research needs to be done to better understand the factors that dissuaded women from fiddling in public venues, the (rather limited) scholarship on fiddling in Canada points to two central possibilities. The first concerns gendered venues and the related idea of what could be referred to as the ‘fiddle lifestyle’ (i.e., the behaviour associated with certain venues); and

the second relates to household and child-rearing responsibilities. As discussed below, the available scholarship on women fiddlers is relevant to Manitoba, but certainly does not *fully* explain the relative absence of women on old-time fiddling's most public stages in Manitoba.

As noted by Erynn Marshall, venues are often gendered spaces; the fact that women often played in different venues than men may “partially explain why some academics studying fiddlers and dance music may have underestimated the extent of women’s involvement” in folk traditions (Marshall 2006, 108). While Marshall emphasizes separate venues (i.e., she makes it clear that there were *women’s* venues), Ken Perlman simply notes that in Prince Edward Island it used to be considered improper for women to fiddle at dances; this prohibition is significant because dances were the most important context for fiddling in the province (1996, 14). Johnson similarly points out (through her consultants) that in Ontario some venues were considered unsuitable for women (2006, 23). One of her consultants points out, more specifically, that fiddling was associated with so-called “unwomanly” conduct, such as dancing, drinking, and debauchery (2000, 5).

In Manitoba, venues for fiddling were also sometimes seen as improper spaces for proper women. As Jean Snider (b. 1923) recalled, when she was a teen in Swan River, Manitoba, women were not allowed in the local bar; although women *were* allowed in the local pool hall, it too was considered taboo (interview with Snider 2012). Yet Snider also pointed to the importance of the bar and pool hall, indicating that her father (a fiddler) met many people from neighbouring towns at the local pub (*ibid.*). This gave him the

opportunity to network, getting to know musicians from other towns and learning about possible opportunities for gigs, or, in one case, the opportunity to judge at a local contest. In a similar vein, Mackintosh notes that the men of Woodridge, Manitoba (where Andy Dejarlis was born), often got together for fiddle parties at the local bar (2010, 129). Venues such as these would have made it difficult for women to get to know and to play with local fiddlers, thereby becoming part of the local fiddle scene.

While this points to one reason for fewer women in public venues, the role of women accompanists complicates any easy understanding of venues as gendered; that is, women working as accompanists entered many of the same venues as male fiddlers. The most famous example of a woman accompanist is likely Dolly Desjarlais,²⁴⁹ Andy Dejarlis' sister and first band mate. Dolly accompanied Dejarlis on banjo and ukulele early in his career, yet by 1938, just as Dejarlis was becoming better known, Dolly left music "to pursue other interests" (Mackintosh 2010, 54). Dolly's story points to the problematic position of women as professional musicians; while amateur performance may have been more or less acceptable, professional performance and touring, with the reality of long periods away from home in addition to the reality of performing in a variety of questionable venues, was potentially looked down upon.

Despite these constraints, Jean Snider (b. 1923) was able to build a professional performing career as a pianist beginning with a position in an orchestra in the late 1930s (when she was sixteen). The orchestra she played in traveled to the areas surrounding

²⁴⁹ Andy Dejarlis changed the spelling of his name to make it easier for Anglophones to pronounce. I use his adopted spelling (Dejarlis) throughout, but use the original spelling (Desjarlais) when referring to his sister.

Swan River, Manitoba, and even played on a radio show in Yorkton, Saskatchewan (interview with Snider 2012). Snider married a fiddler after the war, and together they started playing for dances. The Sniders continued playing for dances even after they had children, taking them to the dances or leaving them with a grandparent. Snider built her performance career from there, eventually replacing the wives of fiddlers as the main accompanist at fiddle contests (interview with Snider 2012). Her story—and the note that wives often accompanied their husbands—points to the gendered construction of instruments in which the piano is seen as an appropriately feminine instrument for women; this too likely played a part in the invisibility of women fiddlers.

Another explanation given for the lack of women is household and child-rearing responsibilities (Johnson 2006, 23), which have traditionally fallen on the shoulders of women. Women would rarely have had the time to travel or to play at dances all night, especially once they had children. Snider, however, negotiated her playing career and her responsibility for her children by taking her children to the dances, placing them down to sleep on coats behind the band while they played (interview with Snider 2012). Yet as Snider told me, her mother-in-law thought that dances were “no place for [children]” and insisted that they bring them to her place when they performed in town (*ibid.*), suggesting that this practice may have been looked down on by some. Even though Snider was able to work around her responsibilities as a mother (and certainly not all women would have been able to manage both for a variety of reasons), it is clear that her role as a mother complicated her role as a musician.

A final related consideration is sex-based patterns of labour. As Goertzen notes, men traditionally worked hard for shorter periods of time and then had ‘down time’ when they could partake in leisure activities; women, however, worked for longer hours and could not get away, for example, for a weekend to play at a dance (1997, 21–22). These sex-based divisions of labour may, additionally, explain (at least in part) the division between men as fiddlers and women as accompanists: learning melodies requires a great deal of time, whereas learning chord changes (especially for older repertoire which often had simple changes employing just I, IV, and V) can be quite straightforward and can even be learned easily ‘on the fly’. Although gendered patterns of labour have changed significantly in recent years, studies show that women still do more child-rearing and home up-keep than men (Lee and Waite 2005, 61; and Bianchi et al 2000, 214–15). This issue, then, is one of continued relevance.

Women Contestants, 1975–2012

Women started to become more visible at fiddle contests in the mid-1970s; for the first time, girls and women began winning prizes, including the top prizes. Although girls and women had won in the past, the number of wins, and their inclusion in newspapers, was unprecedented. An article from 1976 is the first to list a girl or woman as first-place winner at a competition. The article indicates that Gail Neduzak (b. 1961) won a trophy at a competition in Emerson, Manitoba, an hour and a half south of Winnipeg. Two years later at the same contest, two girls placed in the junior category (Gail Nuduzak and Patti Kusturok) and a woman (Ella Cook) placed in the open category. That same year Joyce MacKay won second place in the junior category at a contest held in Belmont, Manitoba,

just over an hour southeast of Brandon.²⁵⁰ By the late 1970s, Patti Kusturok (b. 1970) began winning contests all over Manitoba, and by the early 1980s she began competing (and winning) in the championship class.²⁵¹ Another girl, Crystal Plohman (b. 1973), also began picking up her own wins, while Ella Cook continued winning contests in the championship class.²⁵² Interestingly, when I mentioned how often her name came up in newspapers in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Kusturok (now Lamoureux) told me that her mother submitted her wins to local papers (interview with P. Lamoureux 2012). While her wins were unprecedented, the importance of promotion clearly plays an important role in remembering her success.

Kusturok and Plohman, along with other female fiddlers competing in the 1970s and 80s, gave girls and women public role models that early generations did not have: not only were they competing, they were winning big. Kusturok became the Canadian Junior champion (1985), six-time Manitoba champion, three-time Pembroke, Ontario champion, and three-time Grand North American Champion. She also became the first woman, and the first western Canadian (there have only been two to date), to win the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship (in 1994, 1995, and 1996).²⁵³ Plohman also eventually placed at several prestigious contests, including placing second at the Grand Masters (1992). In just two decades, women went from being largely unnoticed, overlooked for professional endeavours and their contributions forgotten, to making it to the top of the

²⁵⁰ See “Fiddling Contest Held” (1978), Wightman (1978, 2:6; 1976, 34), and “Talent Show” (1976, 26).

²⁵¹ For example, see Reimer (1983, 25), “Lorette” (1982, 11C), and Mallette (1980, 6b; 1979a, 3:6; 1979b, 2:4; 1979c, 4b).

²⁵² See Guest (1985, 163), Turcotte (1985, 13A), Reimer (1983, 25), “Fiddling Away” (1982, 1), and “Lorette” (1982, 11C).

²⁵³ See her website at http://www.pattilamoureux.com/fr_home.cfm (accessed 5 July 2012).

old-time fiddle scene. Perhaps due in part to their successes, there was an explosion of girls (although still very few adult or senior women) fiddling at contests and other venues in the 1990s and 2000s, with many competing with and even becoming the province's top fiddlers. (Allison Granger, Monique Giroux, Melanie Ostash, Amberley Abey, Émilie Chartier, Kaitlyn Obedzinski, and Jane Cory all represented Manitoba at least once at the Canadian Grand Masters. Sierra Noble is another success story.²⁵⁴) The achievements of these women gave the younger generation of girls the role models that, as Johnson notes, are so important to their success as fiddlers (2000a, 6).²⁵⁵

Gender Relations in the Contemporary Scene

The number of women in Manitoba's old-time scene has continued to grow since the 1980s and 90s, so much so, in fact, that competitions now typically have an equal number of female and male participants. Yet traces of what was at one time an obviously male-dominated scene remain. At last year's Manitoba Open, for example, there was a slightly greater number of girls/women (eighteen versus seventeen). Yet only thirty-seven percent of the prizes went to girls/women and only thirty-six percent of the prize money went to girls/women. Furthermore, while all three of the competitors in the adult category were women, just three out of the eight competitors in the championship category were women. This difference is similar to one noted in Ontario where the division between

²⁵⁴ As a child and young teen, Sierra Noble (b. 1990) competed at contests. By the time she was fourteen, she had recorded her first album *Spirit of the Strings* (2005), which featuring Metis fiddle music. She quickly became quite well-known in Manitoba, even outside of the Metis and old-time fiddle communities. She has since gone on to record vocal tracks and music videos which can be seen on CMT Canada.

²⁵⁵ Meghan Forsyth also points to the importance of female role models, noting that the influence of a woman fiddle teacher (Anastasia DesRoches) was particularly important in the transformation of the role of girls and women in Prince Edward Island's fiddle scene (2011, 199).

adult classes and championship classes replicate the now defunct division between ladies' classes and championship classes (Johnson 2006, 300–1).

An even bigger issue, however, is that all three of the female championship class competitors at the Manitoba Open (2011) were high-school students, while all eight of the male competitors had graduated (and several had graduated many years ago). The tendency for girls to drop out of competitions as adults, or compete in the adult category rather than the championship category is a key gender difference in Manitoba (that I have not seen addressed elsewhere).²⁵⁶ Since contests that include adult categories are very rare in Manitoba (in fact the Manitoba Open is the only one that I am aware of that consistently has an adult category in addition to a championship class), this ultimately means that adult women generally do not compete in Manitoba's old-time contests; that is, *girls* have found a place on Manitoba's old-time contest stages, but *women* have not. It remains to be seen if the girls currently competing (several of whom are graduating from high school this year) continue to compete as they begin a new phase of their lives.

A final issue is that of professionalism; this issue moves beyond the contest venue, shaping the broader old-time scene. Although it is Manitoba's women who have recently achieved the most renown (e.g., Patti Lamoureux and Sierra Noble), it is boys or men that fill in the most day-to-day fiddle activities, such as local gigs and dances. Boys and men are also more likely to have CDs and are especially likely to have CDs recorded

²⁵⁶ The fiddlers competing in the adult category are usually noticeably less advanced than those in the championship category. In other words, the women in this category often only began competing as adults, or only began fiddling in their late teens.

before finishing high-school.²⁵⁷ For example, at last year's Manitoba Open, four out of the five male championship class competitors had recorded CDs but none of the female competitors had. Even though the average age of the male competitors was higher, three of the men had recorded CDs by the end of high school. Although more research would need to be done to understand this phenomenon, one mother told me that she felt that her daughter—one of the top fiddlers in the province—was just not yet ready, in terms of her ability as a player, to record a CD (personal communication 2011).²⁵⁸ It is possible that girls/young women are not being pushed towards the professional aspects of fiddling to the same degree as their male counterparts. In this way, the growing number of girls at contests may in fact create a veneer of equality that belies an underlying inequality.²⁵⁹

Socio-Economic Class

Social class is an interesting issue in southern Manitoba's old-time scene. On the one hand, southern Manitoba does not have a strong urban/rural divide nor does it have, at least within the old-time community, the attending (romanticized) division between sophisticated urbanites and simple rural folks. This is likely because the metropolitan areas are small and there is a great deal of movement, both historically and in

²⁵⁷ Patti Lamoureux, Crystal Plohman, and Sierra Noble were all exceptions, recording CDs at a very young age. However, these women were anomalies and do not represent the average fiddler in the scene.

²⁵⁸ This touches on issues of gendered feelings of competency and gendered parenting, issues that would be fascinating topics for further study.

²⁵⁹ This is in interesting contrast to the work of ethnomusicologist Louise Wrazen with a Górale ensemble. Wrazen found that, while traditional gender roles continue to be performed on stage through the music and dance routines, the leadership roles of women behind the scenes provides a counter-narrative (2010, 48). In this way, the enactment of traditional gender roles through performance remains in the realm of theatrics. (ibid., 51). In other words, gender difference is highlighted through performance but challenged and re-shaped off-stage.

contemporary times, between rural regions and cities.²⁶⁰ For this reason, contests held in urban areas are not markedly different from those held in rural areas. It is, furthermore, very rare to see contests using (stereotypical) images that suggest roots in a rural past. This is an interesting contrast to contests in Ontario, where “[s]tage décor and backdrops can be used strategically by contest committees to reference the past, the rural roots of fiddling and step dancing, and/or the locale of the contest” (Johnson 2006, 198). For example, the Shelburne, Ontario contest uses an image of a barn door with hay spilling out as a stage backdrop (ibid., 198–9). In this way, Ontario’s old-time fiddlers continue to negotiate the image of the ‘hick’ fiddler with the desire to be recognized as top-notch musicians (ibid., 315–6). In Manitoba, the stage is most often decorated with notes or cardboard cut-outs of fiddles and images of fiddling as a ‘hick’ music (or a music explicitly tied to rural life) are exceptionally rare. On the surface, then, class is not a visibly important issue in Manitoba’s old-time scene.

On the other hand, issues related to economic class are playing an increasingly significant role in shaping the old-time scene. As noted in the previous chapter, fiddlers are not required to pay registration or admission fees.²⁶¹ In contrast, fiddlers in Ontario are often required to pay registration fees—up to seven dollars per category—although this practice became less common in the 1990s (Johnson 2006, 207–8). This means that contests can be prohibitively expensive for some families (ibid.), especially when augmented by the cost of parents’ entrance fees, camping, and gas. In Manitoba, some

²⁶⁰ I believe that the divide between southern and northern Manitoba is more striking. However, since all of my fieldwork was in southern Manitoba, comparing north and south is beyond the parameters of this study.

²⁶¹ Occasionally fiddlers pay an admission fee if the contest is part of a larger event (e.g., if the contest is held during a fair). However, this is not typical.

contests have combated this problem by giving free admission to one parent or guardian; and since preliminary and final rounds are held on the same day, camping or hotel fees are also not an issue. Yet the rising cost of gas,²⁶² the distance between contests, the cost of food, and potential employment conflicts for parents who do shift-work can make attendance difficult for those struggling to make ends meet. The bigger issue, however, is that young fiddlers are now expected to take lessons, which cost between forty and fifty dollars per hour; this cost, along with the cost of a good instrument (for more advanced fiddlers), can make competitions cost-prohibitive for some.

Ethnicity

Fiddling has a long history in Indigenous communities and has, in fact, become an Indigenous practice. However, old-time fiddling is strongly rooted in a white, British, Christian past. Don Messer, for example, was a British patriot, voicing his dislike for the policies of bilingualism, biculturalism, and multiculturalism (Trew 2002, 48). His views became relevant to his career as a fiddler most notably when he refused to have his Canadian Centennial tour posters printed in both English and French, even though he was popular with French Canadians (*ibid.*, 49). Trew suggests that the Don Messer show was cancelled because of the “new vision of Canada which emerged during the 1960s” (2002, 45). This, of course, leads to questions about contemporary contests and contemporary old-time fiddling; if they are indeed influenced by Don Messer’s fiddle style, how much of Messer’s ideologies have also been integrated into the scene? And has ethnic diversity increased in recent years?

²⁶² There is no bus service to most of Manitoba’s contests, making a car essential for those who attend.

The old-time scene has, overall, held strongly to its British Canadian roots. For example, in the 1950s, dances typically ended with “God Save the Queen” (Mackintosh 2010, 21); this practice continues at many dances today (field notes 19/06/09). Related to this is the Christian connection: most weekend contests have a spiritual hour, intended as a non-denominational (but Christian) Sunday service; the assumption is that attendees are Christians. Although Indigenous fiddlers have a long history of involvement in contests, few contests integrate Indigenous cultural practices (i.e., beyond fiddling) into their events.²⁶³ The lack of Indigenous cultural practices became particularly notable with the disappearance of jigging at old-time contests in the 1990s. Yet the number of Indigenous participants has increased since the early 2000s, a change that can likely be attributed to the Frontier Fiddle program, which has increased the overall number of Indigenous fiddlers in Manitoba. Thus, while there is a change in demographics, old-time contests remain within the framework of white Christianity.

Concluding Comments

This chapter explored old-time fiddling as part of contemporary social life, discussing the key debates within the scene. The relationship between old-time fiddling and dancing was highlighted as one of the most notable tensions—one that is closely tied to the tension between old-time fiddling as an art music (for a viewing audience) and as a folk music (for a participating audience). The related tension between old and new, or preservation and change, is age-old and continues to play out in interaction with the tension between local and national old-time styles. Issues related to identity are also

²⁶³ This is an interesting comparison to contests in Ontario where Indigenous participation is rare, a fact that Johnson finds surprising given that fiddling is popular in Indigenous communities in Ontario (2006, 31).

important in understanding the old-time scene. Although female fiddlers are now an integral part of the old-time community, the results of the Manitoba Open (2011) show that girls and women bring home fewer prizes and less prize money than boys or men. Furthermore, girls and women continue to be less visible as fiddlers after graduating from high school and in the professional scene more broadly. Similarly, while there are more and more Indigenous fiddlers taking part in contests, old-time contests continue to be largely Anglo-centric and Christian. The old-time scene, therefore, has adapted to its modern context in some ways, but has not yet embraced the diversity of contemporary Manitoban life. The section that follows explores Anglo-centrism (and more specifically the *Canadian-Canadian* centre) at old-time contests in further detail, using the Metis (style) category at the Manitoba Open as a lens to analyze the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler peoples.

PART III: AN OLD-TIME/METIS ENCOUNTER

Chapter Six: Metis (Style) Fiddling at an Old-Time Contest

Collaborations between Indigenous musicians/composers and Western art musicians/composers have, in recent years, become increasingly important sites of encounter between re-settlers and Turtle Island's first peoples. Ethnomusicologists and others (e.g., musicians and composers) invested in these intercultural exchanges are, furthermore, beginning to study the issues that emerge through these musical encounters (e.g., see Avery 2012, Robinson 2012a, 2012b, and Wallace 2012).²⁶⁴ Some focus on the positive aspects of collaborations, suggesting that they "may stimulate dialogue and inspire a desire for change" (Avery 2012, 161). Without dismissing the potential power of musical encounters in the process of social transformation, others carefully examine the differences between musical encounters and the various social relationships they enact. Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō-European) suggests, for example, that musical encounters between re-settlers and Indigenous peoples "demonstrate a range of relationships, from the colonizing impulse of integration to agonistic dialogue that aims to make audible the rough edges of difference" (2012a, 224). Musical encounters, then, can challenge current relationships or serve to maintain the status quo.

This chapter explores the Manitoba Open Old Time Fiddle Championships (hereafter referred to as the Manitoba Open) as a site of musical encounter between dominant Manitoba and Indigenous peoples, in particular the Metis nation(s). Following in the footsteps of the John Arcand Fiddle Festival (near Saskatoon, Saskatchewan) and the Miami Fun and Fiddle Festival (in Miami, Manitoba), the Manitoba Open became, in

²⁶⁴ Ethnomusicologists have addressed musical exchanges and encounters more broadly in the context of a wide variety of musics. For examples of such work see Madrid (2011) and Brinner (2009).

2008, the second old-time contest in Manitoba to include a Metis-style category.²⁶⁵ As the provincial championship, the Manitoba Open's Metis-style category is now considered by some to be the competition that determines the province's Metis-style champion.²⁶⁶ Although the Manitoba Open is quite different from the contexts of encounter discussed by the scholars cited above, it presents similar potentials and problems, making an analysis of the contest a thought-provoking addition to studies focused on encounters between Indigenous musics and Western art music. Beginning with an overview of the 2012 Manitoba Open competition, this chapter builds on Robinson's analysis of musical encounters to better understand both the potentially positive and the potentially problematic aspects of this encounter between old-time and Metis-style fiddlers.

A Day at the Manitoba Open (2012)

I arrive at Portage la Prairie's William Glesby Centre at noon on the last Saturday of September, ready for an afternoon of competition and evening of old-time dancing.²⁶⁷ The hall is already humming with activity, even though the contest is not set to start for another hour. Fiddlers are in the practice rooms rehearsing with the house accompanists, or with their accompanist of choice; audience members are settling into their seats; and organizers from the Manitoba Fiddle Association (MFA) are selling entrance tickets (for

²⁶⁵ The John Arcand Fiddle Festival began including a traditional Metis category in the early 2000s (email communication 27/11/2012). The Miami Fun and Fiddle Festival became, in 2006, the first old-time fiddling contest in Manitoba to add a Metis-style category. Currently, the Manitoba Open and the Miami Fun and Fiddle Festival are the only two contests in Manitoba that include a Metis-style category.

²⁶⁶ One of the main organizers of the Manitoba Open told me that the Metis-style category simply determines first, second, and third prizes and is not, in this way, a championship. However, it is clear from the comments of competitors that the fiddlers who participate consider it to be the contest that determines Manitoba's Metis champion.

²⁶⁷ The Manitoba Open is a day-long (rather than weekend long) event, a format that is becoming more common due to declining attendance.

fifteen dollars) and programs (for two dollars), registering fiddlers, and selling MFA memberships. As I make my way to the registration table and then to the practice rooms, numerous people stop me to ‘make sure’ that I will be competing, expressing their pleasure when I tell them that I plan to compete, but some disappointment when I tell them I will be competing in the adult category. After running my tunes with the house accompanist, I head back into the hall and claim a seat. Like most contests in Manitoba, today’s core audience is seniors, although young competitors inevitably bring out their parents and siblings. The audience, furthermore, appears to be almost exclusively white, although some audience members appear to be Indigenous. While many more may be Metis, there are no symbols of Metis identity in the room (e.g., Metis flags or a table marking the presence of the Manitoba Metis Federation, the sponsors of the Metis-style category), a stark contrast to events in Manitoba that are intended as exclusive celebrations of Metis culture.²⁶⁸

At ten after one, the lights dim, marking the start of the competition. The master of ceremonies makes his opening remarks, introduces the judges (who each play a tune), and then reads the competition rules: each contestant must play a waltz, jig, and reel in that order, and the tunes must be old-time. Competitors quickly begin making their way on to the stage for the age-specific categories. The first three age-specific categories, the ten and under, fourteen and under, and eighteen and under all have six competitors. (The

²⁶⁸ One organizer commented after reading a draft of this chapter that there are no flags in the room; that is, the organizers do not include symbols of mainstream Canadian (or Manitoban) identity. She also noted that a few of the fiddlers (in particular the Lepines) sell their CDs at the event and that these CDs incorporate Metis symbols on the cover art. Yet the fact that there were no symbols of the larger Metis nation remains salient to me because, without these symbols, there was no visible presence of the larger Metis nation (just the occasional presence of Metis individuals).

first category includes one girl and five boys; the second includes five girls and one boy; and the third includes two girls and four boys.) These three youth classes are followed by an onstage jam session for the youngest fiddlers, giving the judges time to deliberate and the audience time to get a snack (either pie or a hot dog) and stretch their legs. The MC ensures that the jam session runs smoothly, holding up tune names on a piece of white paper as the fiddlers attempt to move seamlessly from tune to tune. After the short jam, the competition continues with the adult class, a category that, today, is made up of four women fiddlers (two beginner-level fiddlers and two more advanced fiddlers). The final age-specific category is the senior class, made up of five men over the age of sixty-five. The twin fiddle class (featuring pairs of fiddlers playing melody and harmony) make their way on stage immediately after the senior class comes to a close. The twin fiddle class is moderately popular, with four pairs of fiddlers taking part in the competition.

As the last duet ends, the eleven fiddlers registered for the Metis-style class begin making their way to the stage. Most are under twenty-five (one is in his early thirties and one is in his early seventies), and most are from urban centres, or are now living in urban centres. Interestingly, the majority are Metis or First Nations (about eight out of eleven), although all are regulars in the old-time scene; in other words, the category did not, and has not in the past, drawn out new competitors. As the first strains begin, it is clear that clogging (i.e., foot accompaniment) is the most obvious marker of difference between the Metis-style category and those that came before.²⁶⁹ The choice of tunes is also somewhat

²⁶⁹ This is a relatively new development at this particular contest. Originally, fiddlers played with piano accompaniment and many did not clog (or, in one case, clogged standing up!). This year, the rules did not allow fiddlers to use an accompanist, and just one fiddler did not clog.

different since, allowed to play just one tune, all of the contestants have chosen reels. As in previous years, the tune origins vary, from traditional Metis tunes to traditional Quebecois tunes; from tunes composed or recorded by Metis (style) ‘master’ fiddlers (e.g., John Arcand, Andy Dejarlis, or Calvin Vollrath) to tunes with unknown origins that are popular in old-time and Metis communities.²⁷⁰ Adding to the variety, several fiddlers use cross-tuned instruments.²⁷¹ What is perhaps most interesting to me is that the category has become more stylistically cohesive over the past few years; most fiddlers play using short bows, kept on-the-string, accompanied by what is, overall, understated clogging, making groove instead of virtuosity a priority. (Yet I notice that one fiddler draws on the Quebecois style, using off-the-string bows, highly articulated phrases, and aggressive, off-the-floor clogging.)

The Metis-style class is short (about twenty minutes), but many of the fiddlers are soon back on stage for the championship class. (Six of the eight fiddlers in this final class also played in the Metis-style category.²⁷²) The championship class is the culminating event of the competition; it is this category that the audience waits for in anticipation, listening to see if they can pick Manitoba’s next, top fiddler. Just over half of the eight competitors (five) are male, and all are young; one is in his early- to mid-thirties, while

²⁷⁰ The tunes chosen this year were the “Red River Jig” (traditional Metis played by two fiddlers), “Duck Dance” (traditional Metis), “Fred Elery Hornpipe” (John Arcand), “Reel of the Buffalo” (Calvin Vollrath), “Hangman’s Reel” (traditional Metis/Quebecois, also known as “Devil’s Reel,” played by two fiddlers), “Whiskey Before Breakfast” (traditional, known in both old-time and Metis communities), “Growling Old Man and Woman” (traditional, popular in Metis and old-time communities), “Blue Mountain Hornpipe” (Cecil MacEachern), and “*La Grondeuse*” (traditional Quebecois).

²⁷¹ That is, the pitch of one or more strings is tuned to something other than the ‘standard’ *g/d/a/e*. This was done for the “Duck Dance” (*a/e/a/c#*) and one version of the “Red River Jig” (*a/d/a/e*) and for the two versions of “Hangman’s Reel” (*a/e/a/c#*).

²⁷² Competitors can play in one of the age-specific categories or the championship class (not both). However, they can also play in the twin fiddle class and/or the Metis-style class. This means that each fiddler can choose to compete in up to three categories.

the remaining seven are under twenty-five. The style of fiddling varies somewhat among fiddlers in this class; some play standard, old-time tunes, with or without personal 'twists' (i.e., with or without added runs and licks), while others play somewhat more obscure tunes. (One of the fiddlers tells me later that s/he was originally going to play a tune set that included a reel by Irish fiddler Liz Carroll, among other tunes that are 'unusual' in the old-time scene, but changed his/her mind because of the judges, who s/he believed preferred more straightforward 'old-time' tunes.) Half of the fiddlers play with one of the house accompanists, while the other half play with Jeremy Rusu,²⁷³ regardless of which tunes they play at this particular competition, their choice to play with Rusu signifies (to those who are on the inside of the youth fiddle scene) a desire to move away from traditional, old-time tunes to more challenging and genre-bending repertoire. With three tunes each, the category comes to a close about thirty minutes after the first competitor put the bow to his strings.

After the eight competitors have each had their time on stage, there is a short intermission, giving the judges time to make a decision. The results are slow to come in this year; to the great angst of the competitors, who are anxious to head home, the prizes are not announced until supper has been served (catered by local restaurant, Bill's Sticky Fingers, at a charge of \$12 per plate) and cleared off the tables. At 7:30, the small group of fiddlers hanging outside, enjoying the last few hours of warm weather, are given word that the results are about to be announced. With relief, they head into the chilly hall and settle into their seats. The winners are, overall, easy for me to predict. I have been to

²⁷³ See chapter four for further discussion of Rusu.

enough contests to know what is considered most desirable in an old-time fiddler, at least in southern Manitoba. The Metis-style category is, then, the most interesting because I do not know what to expect. Because the category is still new (in its fifth year), a clear precedent has not yet been set; expectations are still being negotiated between fiddlers and judges. When the first prize winner in the Metis-style category is announced, I am surprised, on the one hand, but not surprised on the other. The winner was, quite clearly, the strongest player in the class; his timing was right on, his tuning was excellent, his energy was high, and his tune choice was unique. Yet he was also quite clearly (to me) playing in the Quebecois style (and chose to play a Quebecois tune). To some, the Metis and Quebecois style are at least somewhat interchangeable (and in fact the winner has told me this on several occasions).

The results are interesting on a number of additional accounts. For the first time (as far as I am aware), all of the winners in the Metis-style category are Indigenous, specifically Oji-Cree, Metis, and mixed-blood Ojibwe (although one does not publicly identify as such). In past years, just one or two of the top three were Indigenous. This is in contrast to the championship class where just half of the finalists (three out of six) are Indigenous. (This is still, of course, a significant number since just thirteen out of the thirty-five competitors are Indigenous.) Yet the fiddler best known in the old-time community as a Metis fiddler—a fiddler whose name unfailingly comes up when I ask about Metis-style fiddlers—does not win a prize in either the Metis or championship classes. (He won the Metis-style category a few years back, but has since been unable to defend his title.) Also interesting is that no girls/women placed in the Metis-style class

(although four of the eleven competitors were girls/women). This is no surprise; in the three years that I have attended, I have never seen a woman place in the Metis-style category. Perhaps most interesting, however, is that the Metis-style class winner is also the championship, twin fiddles, and people's choice winner (bringing home \$825).²⁷⁴ This sweeping victory is well received by the audience, as indicated by their applause and chatter afterwards—he was their pick after all! With the prizes handed out, the hall quickly empties of fiddlers. None show too much disappointment or even too much excitement, both breaches of contest decorum. Next year brings another chance for the title.

Encountering the 'Other' Through Music

In his essay “Listening to the Politics of Aesthetics: Contemporary Encounters between First Nations/Inuit and Early Music Traditions,” Dylan Robinson presents a model that classifies symbolic and embodied modes of encounter between musics in three ways. The first mode of encounter is integration, which occurs when two “musical languages enter into dialogue, speaking over top of each other or with one another” (Robinson 2012a, 229). The examples given by Robinson are works that integrate Indigenous musics and Western art music into one cohesive composition. The second mode of encounter, musical presentation/trading, takes place when the musical traditions “alternate as a form of cultural presentation or trading of traditions” (ibid.). The purpose of this type of musical performance, according to Robinson, is to “situate the ensembles

²⁷⁴ The Manitoba Open is the only fiddle competition in Manitoba that I know of that includes a people's choice award. (The competition in Shelburne, Ontario has included a people's choice award for many years.) Its inclusion is an example of organizers trying to do new things at contests. Worth \$200, it is double the winnings of first place in the Metis-style class.

as equal partners in a meeting that has as its aim a sharing of traditions” (ibid., 235). The example of musical trading/presentation given by Robinson is a concert where a baroque ensemble (including two baroque dancers) shared the stage with the Squamish Nation Eagle Song Dancers (S’pak’wus Slulum). The third mode of encounter combines the first two, and, in this way, “entails a progression from the presentation of musical languages to a single composition within which both languages occupy the same sonic space” (ibid., 236). Robinson characterizes this final mode of encounter as “homologically...demonstrating the development of trust between Indigenous communities over time” (ibid., 236–7).

Although Robinson’s modes of encounter are perhaps less useful in the context of the Manitoba Open than they are to the analysis of Western art music *compositions*, the issues that he raises (both the positive and the negative aspects of the encounters that he analyses) are highly relevant to understanding the encounter between Metis and old-time fiddling at the Manitoba Open. The questions that follow all emerged as key points of discussion in Robinson’s analyses: Does the musical encounter focus on the positive aspects of the encounter, eliding confrontations or the presence of racism? Are the sonic qualities separated from their cultural significance? Are cultural practices dismembered? Who is allowed to speak for the Indigenous community, who is considered the authoritative voice on Indigenous music, and who gives permission for its use? What venues are used, and do they bring the performance to both Indigenous and re-settler audiences? Does the encounter reinforce the dominance of re-settlers? Is a hierarchy established between music traditions? Does the performance require that both Western

and Indigenous musicians adapt? And is Indigenous music being used for its colour rather than for its significance? These issues provide the foundational material for the rest of this chapter, which focuses on the power relationship between old-time and Metis fiddling (and, more broadly, Indigenous and re-settler peoples) at the Manitoba Open. Like Robinson, I examine both the positive and the problematic aspects of this encounter between traditions.

Indigenous Voices: Maintaining Agency and Power

...in many communities elders believe it inappropriate for those outside of Inuit communities to manipulate throat songs. Even if a composer is to travel to the North to understand the harshness of the landscape, spend time in a community, and consult with a cultural “representative” for permission to use a throat song or other song, there remains the question of who is able to speak for the community and give permission. (Robinson 2012a, 234)

Protocol around the use of Metis fiddle tunes, including permission to use Metis tunes, has never, in my several years of experience studying in Metis and old-time fiddle communities, been raised as an important topic of concern. Anyone and everyone can and in fact does use Metis fiddle tunes in any and every context they desire. Metis fiddle tunes can be learned through recordings (often done without asking permission), online, at fiddle camps, and sometimes from Metis elders (although the latter is generally done in a more informal manner than one-on-one lessons). This openness to use by all, regardless of national identity, is in stark contrast to many First Nations and Inuit traditions where protocols around use and permission to use have been hotly debated by community insiders and between insiders and outsiders. Yet, while more subtle, the issue of voice is important in the context of Metis fiddle music—even though it is *just* fiddling (i.e., secular music used primarily for the purposes of entertainment and ‘good-timing’). In

other words, who has the right to speak as an authority on Metis fiddling? And who defines the parameters of Metis fiddling?

At first glance, it seems that Metis voices are heard at the Manitoba Open. The Metis-style category began as a collaboration between the Manitoba Fiddle Association (MFA) and the southwest division of the Manitoba Metis Federation (MMF), the official governing body of the Metis in Manitoba. Larry McLennan, MFA president, initiated the conversation with the MMF. He felt that it was important to solicit the endorsement and sponsorship of the MMF prior to adding the category. In doing so, he gave the MMF a voice in the creation of the category (interview with McLennan 2009). The MMF's southwest division vice-president, Leah LaPlante, represented the MMF in this negotiation. In a phone conversation, LaPlante told me that the MMF's continued sponsorship would be on a year-to-year basis, contingent on the continued promotion of the 'true' Metis style. She noted that the MMF makes sure that the judges are qualified to judge the Metis style and that there is no favouritism (interview with LaPlante 2009). Although the MMF has not required that different judges be put in place for the Metis-style category, LaPlante was quite clear about the MMF's continued prerogative to maintain control over the Metis-style category at the Manitoba Open.

While the above words are strong, the MMF's voice is, in reality, quite weak in the context of the Manitoba Open. On the one hand, the MMF has made little effort to control representations of Metis fiddling at the contest. One of the main organizers told

me, for example, that the MMF only once sent a representative to the competition.²⁷⁵ (In other words, in reality it does not hold the MFA accountable.) On the other hand, the MMF would have little actual power even if it attempted to gain a stronger voice. While the MMF can withdraw support (i.e., no longer providing the prize money), it does not have ultimate control over whether or not the category is included in the competition. The MFA president made a point of building a relationship between the MFA and the MMF, but should a disagreement arise between the organizations, the MFA would have the last word on the category since the Metis Federation is not an equal partner in the organizational fabric of the competition; the competition is not an enactment of the nation-to-nation relationship that many Indigenous people envision (Turner 2006:4).²⁷⁶ Ultimately, competitions can add or drop Metis-style categories, or change the rules, whenever the organizers feel it is beneficial to do so.²⁷⁷

The majority of the competitors in the 2012 Metis-style category were, however, Metis or First Nations, as has been the case in the three years that I have attended the competition. The music in the category, then, can be seen as representing Indigenous voices. Here the slippage between Metis and Indigenous can be seen as positive because

²⁷⁵ One prominent MFA organizer is a member of the MMF, and there were, likely, other MMF members at the event. I was told that LaPlante likely felt as if she had a hand in the competition because this particular organizer was in attendance. However, the organizer was not representing the MMF at this event but, rather, was representing the MFA (field notes 30/11/2009).

²⁷⁶ An interesting contrast to this is the International Peace Garden's fiddler's weekend which includes significant participation by members of the Turtle Mountain reservation (North Dakota), including members at the level of organization. The weekend includes a wall of fame induction ceremony which, in the past, included an inductee from Manitoba and another from North Dakota. However, beginning in 2011, the annual wall of fame inductees began including (in addition to someone from Manitoba and another from North Dakota) one person from the Turtle Mountain Reservation, chosen by a committee of reservation members.

²⁷⁷ In fact, I was told by a main organizer (after s/he read this chapter) that s/he would try to keep the category running even if the MMF withdrew their funding.

it challenges the stark divide between Metis and First Nations identities constructed, in part, by the Canadian government (Lawrence 2005, 212).²⁷⁸ It also reflects the reality that fiddling is popular in both Metis and First Nations communities and that the Metis fiddle circuit includes First Nations fiddlers and dancers. Yet it also erases the specificity of Metis-ness, creating a general, Indigenous ‘other’. These Indigenous voices, speaking for the Metis community, are important given that many contest attendees know little about Metis-style fiddling; the category is therefore an important space for audience-members (the dominant culture) to learn about the Metis style. Although these fiddlers are regulars in the old-time circuit, their prominence in this category makes their presence and their voices more resonant, even if just for a brief moment.

It is, nonetheless, the judges who determine which fiddlers best represent the Metis style. The best example of the power given to the judges occurred at the contest in 2010, when the MC asked the judges, just as the Metis-style category was about to begin, if they would allow fiddlers to clog standing up! (The MC prefaced this question noting that the issue was somewhat controversial in the Metis community.) The judges were able to make an important decision about what is considered traditional even though none of the judges that year were Metis or known as experts in the style. This decision therefore points to the judges’ power to delineate the parameters of the Metis style. (Interestingly, there has only ever been one fiddler who clogged while standing and s/he only did so one year). When I asked one of the main organizers about choosing judges, s/he noted that the

²⁷⁸ While the divide between First Nations and Metis can be dated, at least in Manitoba, to the 1870s (when scrip was given to Metis families), the Constitution of 1982 further recognized the uniqueness of the Metis. Although this division is presented here as at least somewhat problematic, it should be noted that the recognition in the Constitution was considered a victory to many Metis who wanted to their difference from other Indigenous peoples to be acknowledged by the Canadian government.

organizers try to find judges who can judge both old-time and Metis categories. Often, however, this means that the judges are non-Metis with assumed competence in Metis-style fiddling. Only once have I seen an Indigenous judge at the Manitoba Open (in 2012). Ultimately, in this venue the authority to define Metis fiddling, that is, to speak for the Metis nation(s), is given, with some rare exceptions, to non-Indigenous judges.

Metis Music for an Old-time Audience, or Metis-Flavoured Manitoba

Despite the success of the Metis-style category (defined by the class size and by the audience's reaction to the class) and the significant number of Indigenous fiddlers participating in the category, the number of Indigenous fiddlers at this contest is not significantly different from the number of Indigenous contestants at old-time contests in Manitoba more generally; in other words, the category does not draw out new fiddlers, that is, fiddlers who would not otherwise participate in the competition.²⁷⁹ The category, then, can be seen as a 'display case' (Bolton 2009, 147) that serves a primarily white audience. Bringing Metis fiddling to mainstream culture can, of course, have positive repercussions. LaPlante told me, for example, that the addition of the category was an opportunity to promote Metis music and bridge some of the gaps between Metis people and other Canadians (interview with LaPlante 2010). Robinson points to intercultural music-making as a possible social lubricant, a "spoonful of sugar" that can be used to begin the tougher conversations (2012b, 121). Since "[i]ntercultural harmony, in both senses, is something Canadian concert-goers are willing to 'buy into'" (ibid., 114), it can

²⁷⁹ However, the number of Indigenous fiddlers participating at old-time contests does seem to have increased somewhat over the past ten years. (Or at least, there are more fiddlers who openly identify as Metis or First Nations.) This is likely due to the Frontier Fiddle program, which brings fiddle music to youth living in Manitoba's most northern school division.

be used to reach a larger audience than other, more direct, approaches. While this point does not seem immediately relevant to the Manitoba Open given that ‘serious’ issues are never broached, it is possible that Metis-style categories have encouraged non-Metis people to begin attending Metis events (such as Metisfest) where such topics are occasionally addressed. (In fact, as noted in chapter two, the audience for Metisfest and for contests has begun to overlap in recent years.)

The Metis-style category can also be understood as a way for re-settler Manitoba to acknowledge Manitoba’s Metis-ness, or, otherwise put, the importance of the Metis in Manitoba. The Metis-style category emerged, at least in part, from a desire for regional specificity. (This is related to the tension between local and national discussed in chapter three.) McLennan noted, for example, that Portage la Prairie has a large Metis population, and that a Metis-style category was added, in part, for this reason (interview with McLennan 2009). Interest in Metis-style fiddling among fiddlers is similarly linked to place. As one fiddler told me, s/he grew up in a community that had a “big Metis influence where the original Metis [resistance] was led by Louis Riel” (email communication 2009). Perhaps most interesting, however, is participants’ surprise when I asked why they thought a Metis-style category was added (instead of, for example, a novelty or own choice category), or if they thought the addition was a good idea.²⁸⁰ The addition seemed, to most participants, to be a ‘natural’ addition that needed no explanation.²⁸¹ Given the long history of Metis fiddling in Manitoba and the significant

²⁸⁰ Novelty categories are sometimes included at Ontario contests (Johnson 2006, 205). One Manitoba contest added an ‘own choice’ category but discontinued it after a year (field notes 28/07/2012).

²⁸¹ Just twice have I come across critiques of the category, both framed using the multicultural rhetoric of the category being unfair to Ukrainian or other ‘other’ fiddlers.

influence of Metis fiddlers, the addition can be understood as a way to emphasize the uniqueness of Manitoba's fiddle scene, emphasizing Manitoba's Metis-ness.

The adoption of Metis as Manitoban can be interpreted as positive since it marks the importance of the Metis in Manitoba. Yet this claim on Metis fiddling as Manitoban belies the unequal relationship between peoples. Rather than acknowledge the influence of Metis fiddlers and the Metis style on old-time fiddling, the Metis-style category provides a safe space that contains Metis-ness. It can then be used to add a Metis flavour to the ordinariness of everyday life.²⁸² Although the style of fiddling heard in the Metis-style category has 'settled' over the five years that it has been included at the Manitoba Open, the style, in reality, does not really matter in this context; in fact, for the past three years, the same fiddler (who draws heavily from the Quebecois style, even playing Quebecois tunes) has won the category. What does matter is that the category is different from the old-time category—different in a way that is obviously visible/audible to the audience and judges. As Plains Cree/Metis scholar Emma LaRocque notes,

There is tremendous pressure today for all Native artists and intellectuals to produce works expressly and manifestly different from the dominant culture. In a continuing attempt to find a culture unspoiled by contact, difference has been fetishized. (2010, 135)

Difference, according to LaRocque, "affords the colonizer the room to exploit Native culture(s) for economic, entertainment and even spiritual purposes" (2010, 138). The 'difference' contained in the Metis-style class thus serves as a display case providing a

²⁸² I borrow the idea of 'flavour' from the work of Eva Mackey (2002, 98). Robinson also draws on Mackey in his analysis (2012a, 233, 237).

Metis flavour to an old-time event, without ever having to acknowledge the importance of Metis fiddlers in the development of Manitoba's old-time scene.

Centering Old-Time, Multiculturalizing Metis

The most important issue raised by Robinson and referenced above is that of hierarchy or the way that one tradition is positioned in relation to the other (Robinson 2012b, 115). It is clear, in the context of the Manitoba Open, that Metis-style fiddling is less valued than the old-time style. The most notable example of the hierarchy set up between styles is the time spent on the seven old-time categories versus the single Metis category. Despite having eleven competitors in 2012, the Metis-style category was finished within twenty minutes (since contestants were only required to play one tune). Allotting such a small amount of time to the Metis-style class (when an entire afternoon is dedicated to old-time fiddling) sends a clear message about its value in relation to the old-time categories. The prize money is a further indicator of the hierarchy between styles. While the first place winner of the championship class wins \$400, the first place winner of the Metis-style class wins just \$100. This is less than the winner of the eighteen and under class and just twenty-five dollars more than the winners of the ten and fourteen and under classes. Even the winners of the twin fiddle category make more (\$125 each for first place). Although this might be seen as appropriate given that the Metis-style fiddlers have to play just one tune, this excuse ties together the two main ways in which a hierarchy is created between categories: that is, through the amount of time spent on the style and the money awarded to winners. While these examples are the most obvious marks of hierarchy between styles, the most important indication of this hierarchy is that

the addition of the Metis-style category did not “destabilize the conventions” of the old-time style (Robinson 2012b, 119–20); that is, the Metis-style category was worked into the existing, old-time contest, without requiring changes from the old-time style or from the conventions of the tradition, including how the competition is judged and the relationship between the fiddlers and the audience.

The Metis-style category, named for its cultural specificity, can nonetheless be understood as erasing the cultural specificity of Red River/old-time fiddling, a style greatly influenced by Metis fiddlers, and reinforcing the normalcy of the old-time style. (For example, why are the old-time categories not named white, Anglo-style fiddling, or perhaps even white, middle-class, Anglo-style fiddling?) In this way, the Manitoba Open is steeped in the rhetoric of multiculturalism. Although it can be seen as a step up from the overtly racist policies of previous years, multiculturalism is problematic because it does not challenge the dominance of English Canada. Rather, it uses ‘others’ to enforce the normalcy of the white, English-speaking centre. As anthropologist Eva Mackey notes, through the policy of multiculturalism, the Canadian government, rather than attempt to erase difference, sought to “institutionalise, constitute, shape, manage, and control difference” as a way to create a unique Canadian identity and dissipate the threat of ‘others’ (2002, 70). This point is especially salient at a time when Metis people, and Metis fiddling, are becoming more and more visible on the public stage; the addition of a Metis-style category at this important moment speaks to the dominant culture’s attempt to manage what has become, to re-settlers, a “problematic diversity” (Day 2000, 73). That is, the inclusion of a Metis-style category can be understood as a way for the dominant

culture to define and include Metis-style fiddling, and Metis people, on its own terms—as a way to keep old-time fiddling ‘regular’ (unmarked) *Canadian*-Canadian fiddling.

The multicultural approach to intercultural relations is a far cry from the kind of international relationship envisioned by Indigenous nations. As Indigenous scholar Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) states, “[a]t their core, Indigenous political movements contest the very foundation of the Canadian state in its current expression, while most theories of group politics and social movements take the state for granted” (2011, 16). Anishnaabe scholar Dale Turner similarly notes that

many Aboriginal peoples do not perceive the political relationship as one of subservience; that is, they do not view their rights as somehow legitimated by the Canadian state. Rather, many Aboriginal peoples understand the political relationship as one of ‘nation to nation’. (2006, 4)

Instead of engaging in dialogue with the Metis nation(s) as equals, the Manitoba Open replicates a relationship where re-settlers retain the power to tolerate. This relationship is very problematic because, as explored in Mackey, “tolerance can and often does shift easily into intolerance” (2002, 105); this happens if tolerance comes to be seen as a threat to the white Canadian centre (ibid.). Tolerance, furthermore, does not go so far as to acknowledge the value of the ‘other’ culture; rather, tolerance is an act through which a group with assumed legitimacy delineates the degree to which the ‘other’ is accepted within dominant society.

The inclusion of a Metis-style category, the act of providing a space in the dominant culture’s space (since it now belongs to us) for Metis fiddling (and by extension Metis people), remains an act that demonstrates the supposed ‘good will’ of re-settlers, a mark of re-settlers’ openness to diversity. Just as the Canadian government’s ultimate

authority is not challenged when it ‘bestows’ rights on Indigenous peoples—and we rarely recognize that the rights of Indigenous peoples preceded the establishment of the Canadian state—the Manitoba Open’s addition of the Metis-style category does not remodel the foundational quality of the old-time style. This parallel structure points to how deep this belief in the legitimacy of the Canadian state runs, bleeding into the seemingly apolitical arena of a fiddle competition.

Concluding Comments: The Good Colonizer

The title of this conclusion plays on two ways to understand ‘good colonizer’. The first references the myriad ways in which colonizers recast their actions as positive. In including a Metis-style category, the Manitoba Open becomes a space for re-settlers to be good colonizers in this first sense, to feel virtuous, tolerant of the other, and accepting of their ‘different’ traditions (a relationship that is reminiscent of the story penned by McLeod and discussed in chapter one). While created with good intentions (certainly, I do not believe that the old-time community has intentionally tried to harm the Metis nation[s] or intends to treat the Metis nation[s] as undeserving of equality), the category falls short, replicating instead of re-envisioning the current relationship between re-settlers and central Turtle Island’s Metis nation(s). The second way to understand ‘good colonizer’ is to recognize that we (re-settlers) can, if we approach our actions in the right way, become the good colonizer that we sometimes pretend to be. That is to say, we can reshape our relationship with Indigenous peoples, not so that we are no longer colonizers, but so that we no longer insist that the power to define, control, limit, accept, or tolerate belongs to us. Some of this work to rebuild a relationship can, as Robinson suggests, be

achieved through intercultural music, music that has the “immense potential to bring together First Peoples, non-Native creators, and their audiences in dialogue to rethink the ways by which different worldviews might cohabit the same territory” (2012b, 124).

What needs to change so that we lay legitimate claim to the second, rather than the first, definition of a ‘good colonizer’? Returning to the questions posed through the work of Dylan Robinson provides some answers. If we (re-settlers) want to include Metis music, Metis voices need to be part of the structure of the competition so that the Red River Metis nation can take their rightful place as an authority on their own music. This means engaging in dialogue with Metis communities.²⁸³ The judges would, furthermore, have to be judges that the Metis community has chosen, likely Metis judges. It is possible that the process of judging the competitors might also change. At Metis events (such as Metisfest described in chapter two), dance remains of central importance. Could this be worked into the Metis-style competition? Could winners be determined by the number of dancers they draw to the floor? This would remedy the dismemberment of the tradition, maintaining the connection between the music and its cultural significance. Of course, the changes made to the contest would have to be contingent on what is important to the Metis community. The active involvement of the Metis community might continue to produce a contest where differences between styles are highlighted, or it might produce a contest where stylistic similarities to old-time fiddling are more notable than differences; like the styles heard at Metisfest, Metis organizers may not be as concerned with defining

²⁸³ The Manitoba Metis Federation may not be the best place to go to create this dialogue given that they are more concerned with politics than culture. It may be more fruitful to go into a Metis community, such as St. Laurent, and begin a dialogue in that way.

strict parameters as creating a space for a lived Metis practice. Whatever the result, the active and equal involvement of Metis communities would destabilize the hierarchy between the old-time and Metis styles.

Another way to destabilize the centrality of old-time fiddling would be to move the competition to an Indigenous venue, either to a reserve, or to an MMF building (which often include venues suitable for performing and dancing). Or, what if the competition sometimes took place in Winnipeg's north end?²⁸⁴ In moving the venue for the competition, old-time fiddling would be brought into an Indigenous space, eliding the expectation that Metis fiddling, to be heard by mainstream audiences, must be presented in a mainstream space. In this way, the Red River Metis nation would seize the power to include (i.e., including old-time fiddlers and fiddling), thereby creating an "inversion of inclusion" (Robinson 2012a, 238). The structure of the space would also have to change. In particular, more time would have to be allowed for Metis fiddling (ideally including an equal number of old-time and Metis categories); this goes hand in hand with providing winners in the Metis and old-time categories with equivalent winnings, a symbol of their equality. Although fiddle contests may never be the kinds of spaces for tough confrontations, or even the kinds of spaces where more accurate histories can be taught, they can become spaces where a more equal relationship between peoples is enacted, where Metis music becomes, rather than just a colour, a music in equal relationship with the old-time style. In this way, fiddle contests could be used to reshape the relationship between re-settlers and the Metis nation(s).

²⁸⁴ Winnipeg's North End (an area of the city just north of the downtown) has a large Indigenous population. Many Winnipeggers believe that it is dirty and unsafe and therefore avoid the area.

As many may point out, these ideals are not easy to attain. Organizing events like the Manitoba Open are time consuming and finding volunteers who are willing to do the work necessary to keep the contest running is already, for many contest organizers, a constant struggle. The workload may, then, become unmanageable if organizers were to add the additional layers of finding new venues (perhaps alternating between re-settler and Indigenous venues); finding a group of judges for the old-time categories and then a second group for the Metis-style categories (assuming that more Metis-style categories were added); putting together committees (of volunteers) made up of an equal number of Indigenous people and re-settlers to discuss new directions; and re-structuring the event more generally. Furthermore, for many participants, such a radical restructuring of contests (especially if this re-structuring became common practice) may be seen as compromising the integrity of their own uniquely Canadian cultural tradition. In other words, it may be seen as an action that affronts rather than supports diversity.

Yet the implications of including a Metis-style category without working towards reshaping the relationship between the Red River Metis nation and re-settlers are clear. We (re-settler Canadians) need to ask ourselves whether we want to be colonizers who accept the 'other' only in so much as it benefits us (i.e., adds interest to our lives and makes us feel good about ourselves), or if we are truly committed to building a more equal relationship with Turtle Island's Indigenous peoples. If re-settlers are unable to fulfill the ethical obligations that a cross-cultural musical encounter requires, we need to relinquish our desire to 'include' Metis music at re-settler events, accepting that two separate paths of peaceful co-existence (to borrow from Indigenous views on the treaties)

are more acceptable than one path built on a foundation of inequality. In doing so, we can move beyond the multicultural framework that justifies our use of the cultural heritage of 'others' as an assertion of our power.

Conclusion

This dissertation explored the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler nations using Manitoba's two main fiddle traditions—Indigenous/Metis fiddling and Canadian old-time fiddling—as a point of departure. I argued that, given the complex layers of overlap between traditions (which are, in fact, both sometimes referred to, in Manitoba, as Red River style fiddling), a thorough analysis of fiddling in the province needs to take both Indigenous and old-time fiddle traditions into account. Important aspects of each tradition and, in particular, important aspects of how each influences the other or is otherwise used by the other were addressed in a way that could not have been done had they been explored as discrete styles. By addressing both traditions, I was able to identify ways in which fiddle music is embedded in a power relationship between unmarked Manitoba and Central Turtle Island's Indigenous nations; that is, I was able to better understand how fiddling is (or can be) used to construct, deconstruct, re-make, or re-negotiate the relationship between 'us' and 'other' (i.e., re-settler and Indigenous).

Emergent from this focus on relations, this dissertation uncovered several central, but often overlapping, aspects of Manitoba's fiddle scenes: 1) Metis (style) fiddling has recently been accepted into the mainstream by dominant Manitobans who had previously largely discounted Metis influence on the province's version of old-time fiddling; 2) Metis (style) fiddling is often accepted into mainstream spaces because it benefits the mainstream; 3) the old-time style reflects the multicultural framework from which it emerged, absorbing multiple influences while erasing markers of otherness and, in the process, creating (or strengthening) the *Canadian-Canadian* centre; 4) the old-time scene

is marked by a series of tensions, all critical to assess given that the scene's continued survival is tenuous; 5) in the context of Metis spaces, Metis fiddling is used as a way to promote and support Metis cultural resurgence; and 6) the way in which Metis (style) fiddling is defined in the context of a re-settler space (the Manitoba Open) is vastly different from how it is defined in a Metis space (Metisfest), and this difference has significant implications for the Metis nation(s).

My methodological choices were an important part of my theoretical focus on relations. In particular, I suggested that scholars have the ethical obligation to include the voices of Indigenous consultants (which ethnomusicologists are largely doing) *and* that scholars must also include the voices of Indigenous academics (a less common practice in ethnomusicology); ignoring the “research, critical constructions, interrogations, and ideas” (LaRocque 2010, 165) of Indigenous academics is tantamount to suggesting that theorizing is the domain of Western scholars. Until there is a solid body of Indigenous-led ethnomusicological theorizing (related to Indigenous musics), ethnomusicologists interested in studying Indigenous music must read and engage in dialogue with the work of Indigenous scholars working outside of the field of ethnomusicology. As a way to begin this dialogue, this dissertation drew on the work of Indigenous scholars, often using their work as a primary framework for analysis. In so doing, it acknowledged the relevance of Indigenous theories—theories that are strong enough to stand on their own; it acknowledged the importance of Indigenous voices, especially in research that addresses Indigenous music; and it encouraged re-settlers to begin listening to the academic, theorizing, and interrogating voices of our Indigenous colleagues.

Overview of Key Issues

This dissertation addressed the relationship between old-time and Indigenous fiddling from a number of vantage points, beginning and ending with a discussion of Metis (style) fiddling in mainstream contexts. This discussion focused on the power dynamics at work in the process of defining and representing Indigenous fiddling. As a careful analysis of discourse on Indigenous/Metis fiddling in Manitoba's mainstream newspapers reveals, changes in how Indigenous fiddling was represented over the course of the twentieth century can be linked to broader changes in the relationship between Indigenous and re-settler Manitoba. Although recognition of Indigenous fiddling in re-settler contexts is due, in part, to the efforts of Indigenous peoples (i.e., Indigenous resistance to the assimilationist policies of the Canadian state), I ultimately argued that public interest in Metis fiddling was fuelled by the official policy of multiculturalism, a policy that refashioned the colonial legacy in which 'Indian' imagery (i.e., imagery constructed by re-settlers) was used to create a unique Canadian identity. Indigenous peoples have, in some cases, been able to use Canadian policies to their benefit; yet the shift from invisibility to recognition depended on its value to re-settlers. In other words, recognition of Indigenous fiddlers and fiddling was not an act of redress. Instead, it needs to be understood as an act that served to solidify, for re-settlers, Canada's identity as a diverse, multicultural society.

A discussion of the Manitoba Open provided a contemporary example of how Metis (style) fiddling is sometimes used for the benefit of re-settlers. As a site of encounter between Indigenous and re-settler people, I argued that the Manitoba Open has

the potential to create new, more positive relations between peoples, bringing Metis music to a wider audience and serving as a bridge between peoples. However, I also argued that, despite its *potential*, the competition replicates the problematic, unequal relationship between re-settlers and Indigenous nations. In fact, I suggested that the competition re-enforces the white, unmarked centre, emphasizing Metis otherness by employing the rhetoric of difference—difference that need not be particular to the Metis nation(s) but simply different from the ‘norm’. Drawing on the work of Dylan Robinson (Stó:lō-European), I presented ways in which the Manitoba Open could serve to create a more equal relationship between peoples—that is, ways in which it could fulfill its potential. Central in these suggestions was the importance of re-structuring the competition so that the Red River Metis nation (or a community within the Red River Metis nation) becomes an active and equal partner in the competition, not just a silent symbol of Metis presence. In this way, the competition would enact the nation-to-nation relationship envisioned by many Indigenous people, a relationship based on true equality rather than one based on the ‘tolerance’ of re-settlers.

While Metis (style) fiddling in mainstream contexts was a central topic, this dissertation also explored Metis fiddling in a Metis space. Metisfest, a three-day Metis cultural event that prominently features fiddling and jigging, was used as an example of a Metis-run event that primarily serves a Metis audience. I argued that, unlike mainstream venues, Metisfest is an event that facilitates the contemporary expression of a lived Metis culture. That is to say, the organizers are less concerned with setting up boundaries of Metis-ness (including the boundaries of the Metis style) than in providing a venue for

Metis people to reconnect with their nation(s) and a Metis way of life. Borrowing from the work of Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg), I argued that Metisfest is a space for Metis cultural resurgence, a space where the Metis nation(s) can do work that lessens the impacts of colonialism and where the Metis nation(s) can re-unite as a healthy and vibrant community. The version of Metis-ness presented at Metisfest is, in this way, a far cry from 'multicultural' Metis spaces, where Metis-ness is useful only in as much as it benefits the dominant culture. Although not completely free from the effects of internalized colonization, Metisfest creates a space where Metis people can re-assert themselves as Metis people and as part of a Metis nation; although presented as apolitical by the organizers (perhaps in order to mitigate what could otherwise be seen as a threat to the re-settler mainstream), this assertion has important political consequences for the Metis nation(s).

The final topic area addressed was Manitoba's old-time scene. Since the old-time style is defined in different ways depending on place, the focus was on how a narrow, but nation-wide, definition of old-time emerged in Canada, that is, how it shifted from being a term applied to all European-derived folk musics to a term used to refer to a specific genre of European-derived folk music. Drawing from interviews and my fieldwork in the province, I addressed how Manitobans define the old-time style and how the local and national old-time styles continue to inform each other. Most importantly, I provided a working definition of the style, suggesting that it is more than simply a way of playing: it is also a way of relating to the Canadian state and to other fiddle styles. I argued that old-time fiddling is implicated in the multicultural framework that began to emerge when

Don Messer was at the peak of his career (the 1960s). That is, the old-time style (broadly defined) became the *Canadian old-time style* (now narrowly defined) when the most obvious markers of its ethnic, or even classed, other-ness were erased; it thereby became the mainstream Canadian style, or the *Canadian-Canadian* style (to borrow from Mackey 2002, 20). In Manitoba, the erasure of the Indigenous other is particularly notable given that Andy Dejarlis (a Metis fiddler who became exceptionally influential within the old-time scene) drew heavily from the Metis fiddle tradition, often changing the tunes to fit the expectations of white re-settlers. In this way, his music became old-time.

A discussion of old-time fiddling contests, the main venue for old-time fiddling in contemporary Manitoba, served as a way to better understand the scene. Using information uncovered in newspaper articles and drawn from my fieldwork, I presented a broad range of information on both historical and contemporary contests, exploring ways in which contests have changed since their inception. I also pointed to fiddlers active in the old-time scene whose Indigeneity was hidden. In this way, I suggest that the old-time scene—which was so significantly shaped by Indigenous fiddlers—needs to be understood, at least to some degree, as Metis fiddling. Building on the issues that emerged through discussion of old-time contests, key tensions and social issues relevant to the contemporary scene were identified; the controversies over which (or whose) values should be endorsed, and the old-time scene’s relationship with issues that have become prominent within contemporary consciousness since the 1960s, (e.g., gender, race, and class) arose as particularly relevant. I argued that while contemporary contests are vastly different from early contests, they have not yet responded to social changes

(except perhaps for their increased inclusion of women), holding on to a particular image of a white, Anglo, middle-class, Christian centre, even as Canada becomes a more diverse country. I further argued that the worldview endorsed at contests is especially pertinent if contests want to expand their declining audience-base.

Ultimately, this dissertation pointed to the complex relationship between old-time and Indigenous fiddling in Manitoba. On the one hand, scholars have often presented the scenes as separate, delimiting their research to Indigenous communities. Certainly, coming from the old-time scene, I found myself less connected at Metisfest (and other Indigenous events) than at old-time events. Metisfest organizers are often not involved in the old-time scene; some of the Metisfest fiddlers have little connection to the old-time scene in Manitoba; and many of Metisfest's audience members do not come out to old-time events (although this is starting to change). On the other hand, many of the fiddlers at Metisfest are connected to the old-time scene; more broadly, Manitoba's old-time scene was shaped by Metis fiddlers and Metis fiddle styles, and in recent years, the old-time scene has integrated Metis (style) fiddling into old-time events. In other words, it no longer attempts to divorce itself from Metis fiddling. Yet, in the processes of including Metis (style) fiddling, the old-time scene has (problematically) re-affirmed the normalcy of the old-time style (i.e., as 'regular' fiddling). Thus, as an analysis of both scenes was able to uncover, the relationship between the scenes is complicated, with the divergent interests of the old-time community and Metis nation(s) at stake. That is to say, both communities have an interest in how the scenes develop; the unequal power relationship

between nations becomes the battle-ground for affecting change not just within the world of fiddling, but also, potentially, within Canada/Turtle Island more broadly.

Contributions to the Field

This dissertation builds on the work of scholars who have studied Indigenous fiddling in central Turtle Island (Gluska 2011, Dueck 2007, Lederman 1991, 1988, 1987, 1986) and those who have studied Canadian old-time fiddling (Johnson 2006, Rosenberg 2002, 1994, Trew 2002, 1996, Stormer 1997). As the first research to address Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene, it begins to redress the lack of research on Manitoba's old-time scene in scholarly discourse. With a strong focus on the contest scene, it complements Sherry Johnson's research on Ontario fiddle competitions (2008, 2006, 2000a, 2000b), providing a starting point for the comparative analysis of Canada's contest circuits and of Canada's old-time fiddle scenes more broadly. It also adds to the growing body of ethnomusicological research on music competitions around the world (e.g., see Goertzen 2008, Douglas 2007, Dudley 2003, Miller 2003, Nannyonga-Tamusuza 2003, and Williams 2003). Finally, it adds to growing interest in intercultural music-making (see Avery 2012, Robinson 2012a, 2012b, and Wallace 2012), pointing to ways in which music can be used to either maintain the status quo, or build new, intercultural relations. In this way, this dissertation is responsive to the concerns raised by contemporary ethnomusicologists. By including many Indigenous theorists throughout (and by not attempting to 'back up' their theories with the work of Western scholars),²⁸⁵ it also

²⁸⁵ This is not intended to de-value the work of Western scholars. Certainly, if the balance of power was more equal, one might more ethically include the theories of Western scholars in research focused on Indigenous music. The point here is that, until Indigenous scholars and Indigenous theories are taken seriously, Western ethnomusicologists have the ethical obligation to actively seek out the work of

engages in dialogue with Indigenous scholars, responding to the call from Indigenous researchers that their ideas be taken seriously.

Future Directions

Because the research presented in chapters three, four, and five constitute the first research to explore old-time fiddling in Manitoba, the topics addressed are often covered broadly rather than in a great deal of detail. In fact, each old-time chapter could serve as a starting-point for further research on the topic contained therein. For this reason, the research on old-time fiddling in this dissertation is preliminary, opening the conversation about old-time fiddling in southern Manitoba rather than attempting to provide a definitive overview of the scene. Similarly, Metisfest is just one contemporary space for Metis music; there are many other Metis spaces that have yet received little or no attention. These include the Big H.A.R.T program in Winnipeg (specifically the Happy Fingers fiddle program and the Happy Feet jigging/square dance program), Stomperfest (a jigging festival), the Frontier Fiddle program (which has received some attention from Gluska 2011), and the countless other Metis 'heritage' performances put on in Manitoba throughout the year, from Indigenous fiddlers and dancers performing during Manyfest (an annual street festival in Winnipeg), to Indigenous fiddlers and dancers taking part in Winnipeg's Santa Claus parade. There is, furthermore, an urgent need for researchers from central Turtle Island's Indigenous nations. (Currently, none of the research on fiddling in Manitoba has been done by Indigenous researchers, although Metis ethnomusicologist Annette Chretien included some discussion of Manitoba fiddling in

Indigenous scholars even though their work is often not discussed in foundational courses and is not part of the ethnomusicological canon.

her dissertation on Metis music in Ontario.) Only then will a true dialogue begin between re-settlers and the Metis nation(s).

Closing Remarks

When I began research on fiddling in Manitoba, I knew that I would learn more about Manitoba's old-time fiddle scene, a music scene that has been part of my life since before my eighth birthday. I was, furthermore, looking forward to sharing my 'insider' knowledge and giving my colleagues in the old-time scene a voice in the world of academics. While I believe that I have been successful in this regard, this research turned into so much more than I had ever anticipated. My engagement with Indigenous authors came perhaps as the biggest surprise, becoming what was, to me, the most exciting and engaging part of my research; it is through the work of Indigenous scholars that I began to better understand what I should be doing, as a descendant of people actively implicated in the process of colonizing Turtle Island, to support Indigenous peoples as they work to rebuild their nations. Although I am sure that I have made mistakes along the way and have perhaps sometimes written in a way that uses, rather than reveals, my privilege as a white woman, everything contained in this dissertation has been written with a desire to support and assist Indigenous nations in the process of decolonization. With this in mind, any critiques of this dissertation will serve as a starting point to engage in more active collaboration and dialogue with my Indigenous colleagues. In this way, this dissertation (and any subsequent research that I will undertake) actively seeks out direct engagement between Indigenous and re-settler scholars and calls for re-settlers to commit to the work of decolonizing Canada.

Appendix One (Early Red River Style/Old-Time)

Early Settlers' Breakdown

As played by Andy Dejarlis

$\text{♩} = 123$

5

10

15

*Sixteenth notes are played with a slight swing feel; that is, the first and third sixteenth notes in each group of two are held longer than the second and fourth (although difficult to hear full speed)

*Mordents may in some cases be grace notes or may be omitted; the difference is simply a function of when Dejarlis changes the direction of his bow (i.e. if the b or e is re-articulated before playing the c or f#)

*Notes marked with a staccato in the first part are especially detached; those marked staccato in the second part are more subtle or are sometimes omitted

*Form is (AABB)x7, ends with AA

*Instrumentation is fiddle, piano, drums (including wood block or snare rim), bass; accompanying instruments often double notes or pitch range making it sometimes difficult to ascertain which instrument is playing which line

*Fiddle accentuates the down-beats

*Of note in the above transcription is the descending melodic lines at the end of each section

When Lilacs Bloom Again

As played by Andy Dejarlis

$\text{♩} = 126$

3

8

12

15

19

23

27

30

*Tune title is likely incorrect; could be a mistake from when the album was re-issued by Sunshine Records or could be mis-named by Dejarlis

*Form is (AA1BA1) \times 3

*Borrows feel from rumba (in drums)

*Instrumentation is fiddle, second fiddle, piano, bass, drums, accordion, and electric guitar

*Second time through form the piano solos through A and A1. The accordion takes the next eight bars (the B part) and the electric guitar solos for the remaining seven bars (A1). The third time through, the fiddle plays the melody throughout, except for the B part, which features accordion for eight bars: the third time through, the accordion takes the first half of the second part

*There is some rubato in the melody line

Don Messer's Breakdown

As played by Don Messer

$\text{♩} = 130$

5

9

13

*Form is (AABB)x2, tune is followed by "Big John McNeil"

*Instrumentation is fiddle, piano, bass, drums (including wood block)

*Tuning is almost a semi-tone sharp; metronome marking is likely faster than Messer played the tune

Appendix Two (Grand Masters Showcase)

Overview

- Showcase was held July 5, 2012
- Purpose was to raise funds for the five fiddlers representing Manitoba at the Canadian Grand Masters Fiddling Championship
- Three out of the five fiddlers are Indigenous (mixed-blood Ojibwe, Cree-Ojibwe, and Metis)
- Each fiddler performed a twenty to thirty minute set
- The performances were followed by an old-time dance (with the showcased fiddlers providing the music)
- Performers are listed in order of performance
- Prior to their individual performances, the five fiddlers played a short set together featuring several popular old-time tunes (“Fisher’s Hornpipe,” “Whiskey Before Breakfast,” and “St. Anne’s Reel.”)

Matthew Cook-Contois

- Included a mix of tunes in his set, pointing to the wide variety of influences that have shaped his playing
- Guitar and piano accompanied his set
- Played a reel that included cuts (Cape Breton ornaments) and had his pianist (Jeremy Rusu) accompany him in the Cape Breton piano style for another tune
- Played “Big John McNeil” adding many of his own variations
- Included a Cajun-style tune followed by a tune in the Western Swing style
- Matthew commented that he learned one of the tunes included in the set when he was part of the Frontier Fiddlers
- Set was a mix of traditional tunes (with no known composer), tunes that Matthew composed, and tunes written by American fiddler Randy Howard, Cape Breton fiddler Jerry Holland, and Western-Canadian fiddler Calvin Vollrath
- Waltzes included in the set were interesting because they were slower than waltzes usually played for dances (or were meant to be ‘slow waltzes’)

Jane Cory

- Set was accompanied by guitar and piano
- Began with a ‘down-east’ medley (meaning tunes from Ontario)
- Included a tune by Howdy Forrester (American bluegrass) and a couple of Quebecois tunes, although she did not change the way she played when she switched styles
- Also included a classical selection (Kreisler’s “Preludium and Allegro”) in the middle of her set, which (her mother explained) was supposed to show the range in what is able to play

**Michael
Audette**

- Played many of the most popular old-time tunes, including “Fisher’s Hornpipe,” “St. Anne’s Reel,” “Redwing,” and “Big John McNeil”
- Was accompanied by Yvette Audette (formerly Carrière), who often plays with Audette for dances and other events, and who has been accompanying at contests since the 1970s
- Included a waltz medley (“Norwegian Waltz,” “Waltz Quadrille,” “Over the Waves,” and “Peek-a-Boo Waltz”)
- Includes very few ornaments and very few variations on the melody
- Sounds very much like Dejarlis because of the way in which he articulates his notes (usually using short, somewhat detached bow strokes)

**Émilie
Chartier**

- Began with a Celtic-rock fusion tune and throughout the set included a number of tunes recorded by Natalie MacMaster
- Accompanied by an all-male backup band (piano, drums, bass, and guitar), made up of musicians that are not typically seen/heard at old-time events
- Included cuts in some of the ‘Celtic’ tunes
- Played one waltz (“Josephine’s Waltz”) using a very slow tempo with some rubato (again, moving away from typical dance tempo)
- Overall, the articulation is smooth and sustained (with long bow strokes used to achieve this sound)

**Alex
Lamoureux**

- Plays a number of popular old-time tunes (e.g., “Golden Rod Jig,” and “To the Ladies”) and a tune by Dejarlis but also includes the tune “Only Love Will Set You Free” by Quebecois country singer Patrick Norman
- All-male band is made up of piano (Jeremy Rusu), guitar (Matthew Cook-Contois), and bass
- Adds clogging (foot accompaniment) to some of his tunes
- Concludes with a Cape Breton set (including a strathspey moving into a reel)
- Playing style is very energetic and varied in terms of articulation, from smooth to detached and even off-the-string bow strokes

Appendix Three (Contemporary Old-Time)

Reel Beatrice

As performed by Melanie Ostash

$\text{♩} = 120$

3

8

14

18

23

29

34

*Form is (AABBCC)x2, ending with AA plus a tag

*Instrumentation is fiddle guitar, piano, bass, drums

*Fiddle is very much front-and-centre in the recording

*Tune is a Quebecois tune, also popular among Irish fiddlers (via Liz Carroll)

A Medley For Canada

- *Medley of tunes from North America
- *Begins with the sound of tuning the fiddle and "Ready? Here we go!"
- *Instrumentation for all tunes in this medley is fiddle and piano
- *Tempo remains consistent throughout
- *Tuning is quite inconsistent, with little distinction between C natural and C sharp, and F natural and F sharp

As played by Randy Weslak

$\bullet = 116$ Woodchoppers

5

10

14

- *Sheet music for "Woodchoppers" was printed in *The Don Messer Anthology of Favorite Fiddle Tunes*
- *Form is (AABB)x2
- *Very little variation when melody is repeated (notes in brackets are sometimes omitted)
- *Staccato notes are somewhat accented (off-beats)

Mother's Reel

Last time

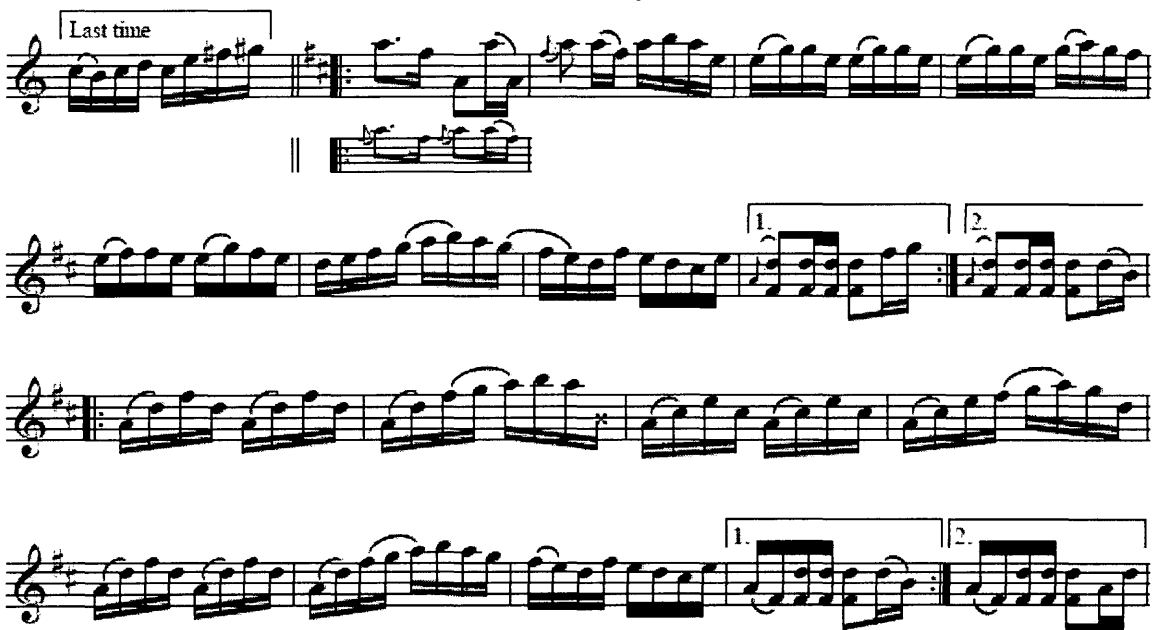
1.

2.



*Sheet music for "Mother's Reel" was printed in *The Don Messer Anthology of Favorite Fiddle Times*
 *Form is (AABBCC)x2, ending with AA
 *Slurs are difficult to make out, and change somewhat each time through a section

Manitoba Sawyer



*This tune is a rendition of "Mississippi Sawyer," a popular tune in the southern States
 Form is (AABB)x3
 *Slurs and many of the notes are difficult to make out even when slowed down

Swamplake

The musical score for 'Swamplake' consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, key of D major. The first staff begins with a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' and a slur. The second staff features a first ending bracket over the final two measures, with a second ending bracket below it. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff also has a first ending bracket over the final two measures, with a second ending bracket below it.

*"Swamplake [Breakdown]" is a traditional tune that was made popular by Don Messer

*Form is (AABB)x3

*Quite a few minor variations in the melody throughout

*Slurring changes quite a bit from time to time; however, as noted above, there is significantly more slurring in the second part than in the first part

*Eighth notes on off-beats are accented

Spey and Spate

The musical score for 'Spey and Spate' consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, key of D major. The first staff starts with a first ending bracket labeled 'Last time' over a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3'. The second staff has a first ending bracket over the final two measures, with a second ending bracket below it. The third staff continues the melodic line. The fourth staff also has a first ending bracket over the final two measures, with a second ending bracket below it.

*Composed by Scott Skinner, and recorded by Sean McGuire in 1954 (although this version is quite different from McGuire's)

*Form is (AABB)x3

*Some variation in melody

*Second half has more slurring than he typically uses

Celtic FC Reel

*Form is (AABB)x2

*Weslak plays a cuts on the first 'A' in bar three of the second part on the first repeat of the part. and a cut on the first 'E' of bar three in the first part the second time through the tune

*Slurs change somewhat between repetitions

Tam Lynn's Reel

*Tune written by Scottish/Irish musician Davey Arthur

*Form is (AABB)x3

*Some variation between run through (but minimal other than what is marked in line three)

Big John McNeil

Last time

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. It consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a 'Last time' bracket over the first four bars. The second staff continues the melody and includes first and second endings. The third staff contains a triplet of eighth notes. The fourth staff also includes first and second endings.

*Tune is likely of Scottish origins

*Form is (AABB)x2

*Slurs are very difficult to make out; the above is an approximation of the second time through the first part, and first time through the second part. The first time through the first part uses many more slurs for the first four bars.

*Some variation in melody (e.g., triplets are not always played)

*Medley is concluded with "Mason's Apron" (trad. Irish) and "Devil's Dream" (popular North American fiddle tune of unknown origins)

Reel Des Esquimaux

As played by Alex Lamoureux

$\text{♩} = 112$

5

10

15

*Tune is traditional Quebecois tune

*Form is (AABB)x2

*Instrumentation is fiddle, clogging (by Alex Lamoureux), guitar, and piano: begins with just fiddle and clogging for first sixteen bars, guitar is added for the next section, with all instruments last time

*Smooth, forward motion created by accenting off-beats of sixteenth notes (in particular the fourth sixteen note)

Glossary

Aboriginal: umbrella term used in Canada to describe Indigenous peoples (including 'Indians', Metis, and Inuit peoples).

Indian: umbrella term imposed on the Indigenous nations of North America by European colonizers. Although generally rejected by the Indigenous peoples of northern Turtle Island (i.e., what is now known as Canada), it remains the legal term used by the Canadian government. It is also used by scholars to point to Western constructions/stereotypes of the Indigenous other.

Indigenous: term used to refer to the descendants of people living in a country or region when it was colonized by outsiders who later became dominant through occupation, conquest, genocide or other means.

Metis: people of mixed Indigenous/non-Indigenous ancestry. The term is sometimes used narrowly to refer to the mixed-blood population that emerged in the Red River region of Manitoba in the late 1700s (the Metis nation). Others use the term more broadly to refer to several or all mixed-blood populations from across Turtle Island (i.e., it is used to refer to many Metis nations).

Multiculturalism: in Canada, official policy set out in 1971 and affirmed through the Multiculturalism Act (1988). The policy and subsequent Act set out a framework that encouraged the celebration of Canada's ethnic diversity. Although now embraced by many Canadians as a central part of their identity, multiculturalism has been criticized for positioning Indigenous nations as simply one of Canada's many ethnic others, for discouraging Canadian unity, and for reinforcing an unmarked centre.

Re-settlers: here used to refer to the immigrant peoples who moved to Turtle Island beginning in the 1500s. The term acknowledges that Indigenous peoples were settled and deeply rooted on the land prior to colonization.

Turtle Island: name used by some Indigenous nations to describe the region that is now more commonly known as North America.

White: a term used to describe a power relationship in which peoples of European ancestry are constructed as the norm in relation to the 'difference' of others.

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